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TWENTY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from last week.)

FIFTH DAY.

MONDAY MORNING.

The Assembly was thin at the opening, many members having not returned from Sabbath duty, but filled up as the session went on. An invitation from His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor to Government House for Tuesday, from 4.30 to 6.30 p.m., was accepted. A telegram was read from Dr. G. I. Robinson, accepting his appointment as Professor on condition that he be released by his congregation. The Presbytery of Toronto was instructed to make arrangement for his induction to the chair. Principal Caven was, on motion, congratulated by the Assembly on his reception of the Honorary Degree of LL.D. from Toronto University.

The reports of the Widows' and Orphans' Funds, Eastern Section, Maritime Provinces, and of the former "Kirk" Synod were presented. The fund in the east is in a highly prosperous condition. Mr. T. B. Macaulay, Actuary of the Sun Life Assurance Association of Montreal, having, after a careful examination of the whole fund, given the following opinion:

"Such a showing cannot be but highly satisfactory to all the friends of the fund, and I feel that you are to be congratulated. You are not only solidly established but prosperous."

The Western Section is not in so fortunate a position. The report states:

"It is to be regretted that the congregational contributions are this year \$1,224 less than last. It is to be feared that there is a misapprehension in the minds of not a few as to the needs of the fund. The Endowment is not nearly sufficient, as some have supposed, to meet the ever-increasing demands. This year the income from all sources was \$3,590.78 short of the expenditure. This fact should be brought prominently before every congregation in the Church. The fund has suffered from depreciation in the value of property on which investments had been made and also from a reduction in the rate of interest."

"It is very desirable that every minister at his ordination should connect himself with the fund, and that all who are in arrears should pay their dues as soon as possible."

An overture was taken up from the Presbytery of Toronto, supported by Rev. J. A. Grant, asking that the widows of those ministers who were not contributors to the fund be allowed some benefit. The overture was referred to the committees East and West for consideration. A request was made by the Presbytery of London, that the name of Mrs. Wright, widow of the late Rev. Walter Wright, be placed on the fund. Mr. Wright was not a contributor, but, as Dr. Proudfoot, who supported the request of the Presbytery, said, he did seventeen years of hard service in Canada. The request was referred to the Committee on the Widows' and Orphans' Fund (Western Section).

Principal Caven gave notice of motion, to be seconded by Principal King, in regard to the Manitoba School question, and the Committee on Bills was instructed to provide a time for its discussion.

The notice elicited applause.

On the report of the Committee on Leave to Ministers to Retire, permission was given to the following: Rev. Dr. Isaac Murray, Hector B. McKay, of the Maritime Provinces, Rev. D. Wishart, Rev. W. L. Chead, Dr. James, W. S. Ball (when Presbytery certifies that he has retired from active duties), Professor Gregg, Dr. Bell (as soon as he retires from Registrarship of Queen's College), J. S. Burnett (Jan. 1, 1897), W. Forrest (replaced on the list), A. Sutherland (when pastoral tie at Ripley shall be dissolved), W. K. McCulloch (for one year), D. Mitchell (continued for another year). Rev. Dr. McClelland's case was referred to the Committee on the Fund with power to issue it, as the papers were incomplete. The application of the Presbytery of Sarina for a year's allowance from the fund to the widow of the late Rev. A. Urquhart in lieu of what he would have been justly entitled to before his death had he so applied, was referred to the committee for favorable consideration.

The overtures from the West bearing on salaries, and what was left over from last week, were referred to a special committee, with Dr. Somerville as convener.

Overtures were presented from the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West and from the Presbytery of New Westminster, asking for the appointment of a committee in which the various boards and committees should be represented, and which should seek to give greater unity and consistency to the policy of the Church. Rev. R. G. McBeth, of Winnipeg, and Rev. J. C. Herdman, of Calgary, and Rev. G. A. Wilson, of Vernon, supported the overtures. It is desirable, the speakers urged, that the present multifarious appeals from the different boards and committees should be lessened and that the salaries of the missionaries of different sorts, say Home and Foreign, working in the same locality should not

be so diverse in amounts as in some cases they are now.

Principal King thought the Assembly would all agree that the work of the Church should receive support in accordance with the relative importance of the various schemes, and not be left as it now is to the aggressiveness and activity of conveners or committees. The defect was admitted on all hands, although the remedy may not be so evident. Dr. Proudfoot and Prof. McLaren continued the discussion until the hour of adjournment.

MONDAY AFTERNOON.

Some time this afternoon was taken up in the discussion of an alleged grievance in the administration of the fund for Aged and Infirm Ministers, in which the Rev. James Cleland, of Port Hope, a beneficiary of the fund, presented very fully the complaint of himself and others in the matter. Mr. J. K. Macdonald, convener of this committee, explained points with respect to which Mr. Cleland and those whom he represented were under a misapprehension, and defended the action and rules of the committee, which, after discussion, were sustained by the Assembly.

The consideration of the overture of the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West, and a similar one from that of British Columbia and several Western Presbyteries, praying in substance that a committee should be appointed to take into consideration the total amounts needed for carrying on the work of the Church under its various committees, with a view to unify it, and avoid even the appearance of rivalry, was resumed and spoken to by the Rev. Dr. Robertson. The estimates, he said, presented to the Assembly by the different committees were often passed without much thought or adequate knowledge. This committee would be representative, and it would be its business to carefully consider the amounts asked for by each, and so to use every dollar contributed to the treasury of the Church as to turn it to the very best account. The plan proposed was that followed by the Methodist Church—it was Presbyterian and common sense. He did not fear, as some did, that congregations would consider this an interference with their liberty. Cases were referred to by Dr. Robertson in regard to which the charge had been made that the money of the Church was not wisely spent, in attempting to sustain a weak cause where there were already other evangelical churches working and struggling to live. The Doctor showed that there was much less of this than was usually supposed, and that in the cases which had been spoken of, this was not done.

He was followed by the Rev. James Buchanan, who strongly supported the overture on the ground of the unity of our Church. Ministers and missionaries were perplexed and worried by circulars coming from all the different committees pressing their claims and adding to the expense of administration, while missionaries had not a living salary. He made statements showing in his opinion excessive cost of administration, by which money was taken which should go to pay missionaries' salaries, and contrasted the favourable position of the Foreign missionaries of the Church in several particulars with the less fortunate position of her Home missionaries.

The Rev. Dr. Warden challenged directly the correctness of the charges made by Mr. Buchanan as to administration. He showed that he (Mr. Buchanan) was incorrectly classing as administration, payments that did not at all come under this head. He showed, by giving the actual figures, of what was properly administration, that Mr. Buchanan was altogether astray in his calculations; and that the cost of administration, properly speaking, was very small indeed compared with the statements which had been made, and which he deprecated as being both wrong and most injurious.

Mr. Hamilton Cassels showed similarly and most convincingly that the cost of administering the Foreign Mission funds of the Church was most rigidly careful and economical; and instead of being the extravagant sum which had been mentioned, was not more than five per cent. of the total amount expended. The committee did not see how this central committee would effect any saving, because they could not be expected to have that minute knowledge and to give that minute attention to the work and needs of each committee which the members of it now gave. The whole power was in the hands of the Church members, who gave what they saw fit for each object, and all the separate committees could do was to spend as wisely and economically as possible what they were entrusted with.

The Rev. Mr. Macrae, of Collingwood, was glad the debate had arisen and to know that the cost of administration was so small, because in all their northern country a different opinion prevailed. Revs. M. H. Scott, Hull; Gracey, Ganaroque; Drs. Mackay, Woodstock, Thompson, Sarnia; Macrae, St. John, N.B., and others took part in the debate. Rev. R. P. Mackay pointed out the difficulty of mastering thoroughly all the details of the work of any of the great committees so as wisely to advise as to items of expense in every case, and mentioned that lately members of the executive of the Foreign Mission Committee, familiar with all its details, had spent two whole days in carefully considering the estimates of that one committee. The Rev. J. B. Fraser

suggested the combining of several committees into one large one, which could subdivide itself as it felt necessary to take charge of separate matters.

Rev. Mr. McBeth, who introduced the overture, closed the debate. It was no reflection upon the administration of the present committees, it was not West against East, or salaries of Foreign missionaries against Home missionaries; nor need it interfere with perfect spontaneity in giving, for everyone would still be at full liberty to give to any object he chose. The committee would be a representative one, and it was simply an effort to secure the utmost unity and economy possible in the working of the great schemes of the Church. After amendments of various kinds were proposed and lost, it was agreed to send down the overture to Presbyteries to consider and report to next Assembly.

MONDAY EVENING.

The report of the Church and Manse Building Fund was next taken up, and presented by the Rev. Dr. Robertson. This fund was a most important one. In the fourteen years of its existence it had been instrumental in the erection of 269 churches and 56 manses, worth well up to half a million of dollars. The rent saved in the manses erected alone would repay interest at nine per cent. A crisis had now been reached in the state of the Fund, as the committee could now only lend from the interest of the capital amount, which it was feared would seriously interfere with the progress of the Church's work in this department. Dr. Robertson dwelt upon the importance of giving the Church visibility by the erection of a building, how weak congregations were encouraged to undertake building by the help of a small loan, but that also it was not always possible to loan money, because of the opposition in some localities to having churches erected. He told of the many and important uses which the church-building fund in the West served, and the real help it gave to the missionary in his work. He referred to the great kindness, as regards this fund, of Mr. J. P. Morton, of London, England, who had again placed at the disposal of the committee \$5,000 without interest, on the condition simply of paying back one-fifth of the principal annually. The report was adopted by the Assembly.

The Augmentation Fund (Eastern Section) followed, and its report was presented by the Rev. Dr. Morrison, Halifax. The total receipts of all kinds by the fund last year were \$8,270.92. There were still congregations which had failed to come up to the amount asked of them and others which had done nothing at all. The Church as a whole, however, had given more than in the preceding year, and the reason why every minister had not received his full promised amount from the fund was because more settlements of ministers had taken place, and so more had to be assisted. They had got ninety-two per cent. of the amount promised, some of the Presbyteries had already made up the balance and it was hoped that all would yet do so. Rearrangement of the fields is taking place with a view to relieve the fund as far as possible; a spirit of self-help on the part of congregations is being developed which promises well for the future. The applications next year for help are sixty, and grants have been made to fifty to the amount of \$9,003. The history of the fund during the year as a whole has been one of progress and usefulness, and the prospects for the future are hopeful and encouraging. The aim of the fund was the noble one, that every congregation should have a settled minister, that every minister should receive an adequate support, and that to secure this, the strong should help the weak.

The report of the Western Section, of which a summary follows, in the absence of the Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Renfrew, who since the death of the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell had acted as chairman of this fund, was presented by the Rev. Dr. Warden. In opening he paid a tribute to the memory of its late convener, Mr. Macdonnell, of whom he could scarce trust himself to speak.

After referring in feeling terms to the great loss which the committee and the fund have sustained by the death of its lamented convener the late Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, the report proceeds: It seems peculiarly appropriate that at this juncture we should recall and emphasize the work accomplished from the inception of the scheme in October, 1883, to the present time. In May, 1883, there were on the list of the Home Mission Fund 108 congregations supplemented up to \$600,00. Most of these were transferred to the Augmentation Fund, giving immediately immense relief and impetus to the purely Home Mission work. Besides these, about 160 congregations, where stipends were less than \$750, were placed on the list, making in all 256. Within the year eighty-seven congregations became self-sustaining, and almost all the others made decided advance in contributions. Since then 194 congregations, principally Home Mission fields, have been placed on the list, whilst 174 congregations have become self-sustaining, and fifty-four have either been returned to the Home Mission list or removed from other causes. Probably no movement to which our Church has set its hand has equalled this in stimulating and fostering its weaker fields, and in giving heart to

the workers in them. Certainly, it is not too much to say, that the present position of our Church and her prospects for the future had been altogether less satisfactory had it not been for the movement so ably guided by our late convener.

In this connection we give a more detailed statement of the year's work. Twenty-one congregations have reached the self-sustaining stage as follows: Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, 7; Synod of Toronto and Kingston, 4; Synod of Hamilton and London, 2; Synod of Manitoba and North-West, 4; Synod of British Columbia, 4.

Whilst so many congregations have been removed, it is to be noted that others, chiefly from the Home Mission list, have been received, as follows: Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, 1; Synod of Toronto and Kingston, 4; Synod of Hamilton and London, 4; Synod of Manitoba and North-West, 1; Synod of British Columbia, 2.

Thus the goodly rotation of Home Mission field, augmented congregation and self-sustaining charge is going on, and may well be rejoiced in as being the very strength and honour of our Church.

It is pleasant, in view of all the circumstances, to be able to report that after paying grants in full there remains a small balance, \$1,090, at credit. The receipts total \$24,333.61; but as there was a refund of \$440.91, the contributions from all sources should be set at \$23,892.70, as compared with \$25,436.05 last year, a decrease of \$1,543.35.

The strongest expressions might be quoted from Presbytery reports as to the great value attached to the work of this committee in building up, strengthening and encouraging struggling Churches.

And now, what of the future? It seems difficult to judge, but we remember almost the last message of our late Convener: "If we get through this year without a deficit, confidence will be restored and we shall do well." We have escaped the deficit, and it rests with the Church to fulfil the preface of his message. May we not go on with confidence, believing that there shall be even a forward movement?

This year we again ask that \$28,000.00 be placed at our disposal but we are convinced that if it could be made \$30,000.00 or \$32,000.00, there could be no better investment made in the interests of the Church. For then we could at once relieve the Home Mission Fund of some forty or more congregations, whose interests would be best promoted through a settled pastorate. We invite such sympathetic consideration and action on the part of Presbyteries, Ministers and Sessions throughout the coming year as may place us at its end in so favourable a financial position that we shall be able to report that such a helpful forward movement has been well begun and is likely to be carried on to a successful issue.

In support of this Fund Dr. Warden pointed out, in addition to other evidences of success, that relatively, a much larger number of conversions were reported from augmented congregations than from others, and that from them no arrears of salary had to be reported. If it was asked what are these congregations doing to help themselves? It might be answered that while the average of contributions for salaries during the year in the Church is \$4.41, in 130 augmented congregations it is \$7.09. Last year a new departure was made in appointing Synodical Committees in addition to Presbyterial to aid in the working of this fund, and these committees, Dr. Warden said, were doing "excellent work." This year every grant had been paid in full, and not only was there no debt, but an adverse balance of last year of \$700 was changed this to a balance in favor of \$1,090. He, Dr. Warden, knew of no more helpful fund than this, and all that was needed to enable it to do more was more money. With a powerful appeal on its behalf, he moved the adoption of the report.

Rev. Dr. Caven seconded it, and in doing so also bore very high testimony to the character of him whose loss all deplore, and especially to his well-known and noble service on behalf of this fund. It had not been at first favorably received, because it was thought that every congregation should support itself. But it was a Scriptural principle, and therefore a principle of our Church, that the strong should help the weak. "The ministers," he said, "of augmented congregations held a position in the Church just as honorable as those who occupy places in which are paid the highest salaries; they hold a relationship to the whole Presbyterian Church in the same way as does every minister who is doing its work. If the principle of this fund was Scriptural, of what use was it if held only as a theory; every congregation therefore should lend its help through this fund to our weak charges." He concluded by moving a resolution in connection with the death of its late convener, which was heartily agreed to.

The next subject taken up this evening was the report of Young People's Societies. The expectation of this report had drawn many of them out to the meeting. The report was presented by the convener, the Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, Bowmanville. It was the first report, and the origin of this committee and details were pretty