

The General Assembly.

Continued.

On Monday of last week, the Assembly dealt with several questions of great importance. The overture from British Columbia, on the re-organization of the Home Mission Committee was the subject of an animated discussion. The overture, in effect, asked that the various Synods should deal with the details of Home Mission work as is at present the case so far as the Western Synods are concerned, the Committee to devote itself to the larger question of finding the men and money for the entire field. The overture was sent to the Home Mission and Augmentation Committees for report next year.

In bringing forward the proposed act of incorporation Mr. Mortimer Clark M.A., Q.C., explained that there was no intention to incorporate the Church, as the danger then might be that it would be brought more under the control of the civil power, but it was proposed to incorporate a body of trustees, in which the property of the Church might be invested. It was intended to apply to the Legislatures and Parliament to incorporate a body to be known as the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which would be empowered to receive gifts and conveyances, and to make a legal transfer of them. It was agreed on Mr. Clark's motion that the Committee on Legislation appointed at the last Assembly be re-appointed, with instructions to obtain such an Act of incorporation from the various Legislatures and the Dominion Parliament.

The Moderator named the following to compose the First Board of Trustees in connection with the proposed incorporation:—Rev. Dr. Warden, Rev. Dr. McLaren, Rev. Dr. Morrison, W. Mortimer Clark, Q.C., Hamilton Cassels, Hon. Justice Maclellan, and A. R. Creelman, Q.C.

AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

Mr. J. K. Macdonald presented the report of the Western Section of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, and in doing so, he paid an eloquent and deservedly high tribute to the memory of the late Rev. William Burns, Agent and Secretary of the Fund.

In regard to the "Ordinary Fund," the report stated it was a matter calling for congratulation that, notwithstanding the widespread statements regarding the rules and the administration of the Fund, congregational contributions are \$712.71 greater for the eleven months than for the previous full year. The Committee was however, brought face to face with a serious question in regard to the payment of annuities, inasmuch as the Church had failed to respond in making up the adverse balance from the preceding year, and there was a shortage in the Fund for the current eleven months. After due deliberation, the Committee felt that it would fail to do justice to the annuitants if it did not pay them on the modified scale that has been acted upon during the last few years, and decided therefore to do so, and to go forward to the Assembly with an increased indebtedness.

\$1 annuitants have received more or less benefit from the Fund during the period covered by the report, and twenty-two ministers have made application to connect with the Fund. Ten of these were within the four-year limit, and entitled to connect. The Committee made the following special recommendations—

First. That the Executive Committee of the previous year be continued until the November meeting of the following year.

Second. That Rule 6 be repealed and the following substituted:—"That the rates shall be paid on or before the 15th day of January in each year."

Rev. Dr. Moore moved a series of resolutions in regard to the report, which was adopted. These resolutions declared the report received, and expressed satisfaction at the faithful way in which the committee had discharged its work, and especially recognized the services of Mr. Macdonald, the Convener; sustained the action of the committee in paying annuities in full under the modified scale, and regretted that it was found necessary to incur increased indebtedness in order to do so, and hoped that the deficit would be made up by liberal contributions from congregations

in the Church; concurred in the recommendations as to the ministers who should be allowed to connect with the fund; authorized and decided that the rates shall be paid on or before January 15th in each year; authorized the committee to take the necessary steps for adjustment of the matter in regard to capital account, and endorsed the expressions of appreciation of the late secretary.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Rev. Dr. McCrae (Convener), reported on behalf of the Special Committee appointed to confer with the Committee on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, to look into the whole question of the regulations and administration of the Fund, with a view of inducing a greater number of the ministers to connect themselves with it, and of drawing out towards it a larger liberality on the part of the congregations. The Committee recommended among other things, that the office of Agent and Secretary be abolished; but in the event of the Assembly deciding that a canvass of the congregations of the Church shall be continued for the purpose of bringing the endowment up to the minimum of \$200,000, a minister or layman who has special gifts for such service be appointed for a limited period; that a minister who has not paid the annual rate into the Fund shall not be entitled to make any claim upon the Fund as a matter of right, but his case may be made the subject of special consideration by the General Assembly. That every minister, on being ordained, be required by Presbyteries to connect himself with the Fund and pay the fixed rate; that when a minister who has paid rates to the Fund attains the age of 67 years he may claim the privilege of retiring from the active duties of the ministry, and of being placed upon the Fund, and that the ministerial rate be sufficiently increased to place the Fund on a more satisfactory basis, and that Presbyteries be instructed to have the claims of both the ordinary and endowment branches of the fund effectively presented to all the congregations within their bounds.

Dr. McCrae expressed the hope that the endowment of \$200,000 would be made complete. The congregations did not contribute this year because of the discussions regarding the administration of the Fund. Their ministers and elders were entirely out of harmony with many of the regulation of the Fund, and he would like to see it made acceptable to all. He moved that the report be received and the recommendations be considered seriatim, which, after much discussion carried, and the consideration of the report was taken up at a later stage.

During the debate Rev. J. Cleland characterized some of the statements which had been made by Mr. Macdonald as untrue.

This the Assembly would not tolerate, and cries of 'withdraw' were heard all over the House.

'You must withdraw such a remark, Mr. Cleland,' the Moderator said.

'Well, does the Assembly want me to say they were true?' was the naive retort, at which the House laughed heartily.

'No, but it is unparliamentary to say what a member has stated is an untruth.'

'Oh, well, if the Assembly will take the responsibility—'

'It is not a question of the Assembly's responsibility,' said the Moderator, severely, 'it is a question of decorum and proper usage. Tell the Assembly that you withdraw the expression.'

Mr. Cleland was disposed to hold out, but was finally persuaded to withdraw the improper expression.

FUNERAL SERVICE.

At the close of the afternoon sederunt a funeral service was held in connection with the accidental death of Rev. R. J. Grant, praise and prayer being offered.

AUGMENTATION FUND.

The report for the Eastern Section was presented by Rev. Mr. McGillivray, Lunenburg, and for the Western Section by Rev. Dr. Campbell, both brethren making clear explanations of the main features of the Fund. On motion of Rev. W. J. McCaughan, seconded by Rev. D. R. Drummond it was resolved—