

congregations, approximately equal financially and numerically, of both denominations, was mapped out and wisely planned as we thought. These congregations were visited by ministers and officials of both denominations, but the people objected so strongly that we abandoned the project.

“The best laid schemes o’ mice and men
Gang aft agley.”

We then tried the matter of amalgamation of certain congregations and the re-adjustment of others, within our own bounds and with our own people, with the result, after two years of precious time, trouble and expense, two of the congregations appealed to the General Assembly against our decision. The Assembly upheld the Presbytery and the appellants acquiesced in the finding only to come home and renew the same agitation and get all their own way, causing no end of trouble in the neighboring congregations, and the end is not yet. The Presbytery is sorry they ever tried to save men and money in this way. Perhaps it may be worth noting that the congregations referred to voted strongly for organic union. There is nothing so strange as human nature.

Regarding the average length of pastorate within the past ten years we find it about four years; over all eight years. We have had more changes within the past five years than at any time in our history as a Presbytery. Twenty changes from deaths, demissions and translations within the past ten years, sixteen of these within the past five. But we have long pastorates. Dr. Andrews ministered to the same people for fifty-two years, and Rev. P. M. Duncan for fifty years in the one charge. The longest pastorate at present is thirty-one years, and that to the same congregation. The average vacancy, so far as we could judge, was about four months.

We recorded strong disapproval of reducing the representation to the General Assembly. We approved of the remit re the status of assistant pastors providing there is equal representation of laymen in Presbytery and Synod. The session and deacon’s court of a congregation asked us to overture the Assembly in favor of having contributions from the Women’s Missionary Societies added to the budget. The overture was approved and transmitted.

The statistical report shows a decrease of families, principally from our rural congregations. The boys and girls are forsaking farm life and removing to the industrial centres, and the parents follow. Rural congregations are so depleted of their young people that in most cases it is difficult to obey the Assembly when asked to organize a Y. P. S. The best rural pastors can do is to get as many as they can of our young folks into the Bible Class and Sabbath School.