

The only Diocese on the Pacific Coast represented was that of *British Columbia*: Venerable Archdeacon Woods and Mr. Lacey Johnson, New Westminster, B. C.

The Rev. Canon Matheson, B.D., Winnipeg, and Dr. Davidson, Q.C., of Montreal, were elected Secretaries of the Conference.

The Metropolitan of Rupert's Land stated that the Synod of his Province had thought it best to have the whole of its members present, especially as the number of its lay members was small, but that in case of a vote being taken if it were taken by dioceses it would prevent any preponderating effect, and this was agreed to.

The Lord Bishop of Toronto, Chairman of the Committee of the Provincial Synod of Canada, by which the necessary steps to procure a meeting of the Conference had been taken, then explained that in 1886 the question of the Union or Consolidation of the several branches of The Church of England in Canada had been brought before the Provincial Synod of Canada and resolutions, indicating a desire that such consolidation should take place were passed. Like resolutions were passed in 1887 by the Synod of the Province of Rupert's Land, and in 1889 the Provincial Synod of Canada appointed a Special Committee of both houses to take the steps necessary to bring about a Conference on the subject; and the result was the Conference then assembled. His Lordship stated that the Joint Committee of the Provincial Synod of Canada had not come with any cut and dried scheme to which they were committed, and to which they were about to ask the adherence of the Dioceses of the other Province. The wording of the resolution of that Synod showed that the whole ground was open before the Conference, the object of which was to devise some scheme for submission to all the dioceses of British North America. It was quite true there had been certain definite plans put forward by individual diocesan synods, but it must be clearly understood that they do not in any way prejudice the deliberations of the Conference. There was in the minds of the majority of those who earnestly desired to forward the unification of The Church no desire to interfere with the existing Provincial organizations. He expressed the profoundest conviction of every member of the Church of England over the scattered dioceses of the importance of The Church in Canada being able on all great moral and religious questions to give one unanimous decided voice. When the Church was separated into isolated provinces with nothing to bind them together there was a possibility of their drifting asunder in the course of time, not merely in minor practices, but in fundamental truth. Nothing was to be more seriously apprehended. They all earnestly desired that it should be one in doctrine, one in truth and one in charity.

Canon Matheson, Secretary of the Lower House of the Province of Rupert's Land, read the resolution passed by that house expressing sympathy with the object of the Conference and a desire to promote it, but at the same time its opposition to the dissolution of provinces and provincial synods.

The Metropolitan of Rupert's Land then addressed the Conference, concurring entirely in every word spoken by the Bishop of Toronto. The question before the meeting was what practical steps the Conference should advise for this confederation. They had three subjects to consider: 1st, the character or position that they were to give to the General Synod and the steps necessary to give it this position; 2ndly, the powers that were to be possessed by this General Synod; and thirdly, the composition of the General Synod—who are to make it up. With regard to the first, it would largely depend upon the view entertained of the objects of this Confederation. His own view was, first, he would look from it for a voice from the united Church on all questions of interest to

The Church and to Christ's work; second, he would look for common action in all missionary, educational, and other church work; in the third place he would hope to get from it an executive body to deal with all other bodies, whether ecclesiastical or civil. There he would be inclined to stop, but he supposed some would not be satisfied with this, but would like to have a Synod with powers for what he may call coercive legislation; for example, the formation of an appellate tribunal and the enacting canons and resolutions involving penalties. He would not limit the powers of the General Synod to deal with all such questions; but, at present, he would wish that these should not be operative in any province or independent diocese until accepted by the Provincial Synod or the Synod of the diocese. To those who would not be satisfied with such a limit, he would say their first great object was unity; they would secure wonderful advantages as a Church simply from unity; secondly, if they agreed to such limitations as he indicated, there would be no difficulty in forming this General Synod; but, if they went farther, Acts of Parliament would be required, and there would be many difficulties; and with regard to his own province he believed that for many a day union would be impracticable. His Lordship referred to the action of the Church in Australia, reading from an account thereof by the late Primate, Bishop Barry, and concluded by saying that with the view he took of the General Synod it should have power to treat of anything it liked, but at present at least, there should be certain limitations with regard to what he had called coercive legislation.

The Bishop of Huron then moved that a committee be appointed to consider a form or draft of the proposed union, to put to the Conference in an hour, and that the Conference adjourn accordingly.

Dr. Davidson suggested that the motion was premature: and referring to an impression that seemed to prevail that the delegates from the East had come pledged to a particular course of action, declared the idea utterly unfounded: that true the Diocese of Montreal had affirmed its conviction that but one Province for the whole of Canada was the best form of consolidation, in which view he at present concurred; yet its representatives were not pledged to vote for this and nothing else. They were ready to hear the views of the delegates from the different sections of the country, and then, having determined that union was necessary, it would be right to have the committee the Bishop of Huron had proposed. He wanted the delegates to be entirely disabused of the idea that those from the Diocese of Montreal had come pledged to any course, though like the Diocese of Qu'Appelle that diocese had expressed the opinion that one Province would be the best.

Archdeacon Woods also thought it a little too soon to receive His Lordship's resolution. They were not at present so much a convention as a committee of the whole. They should consider first the advisability of unification; secondly the practicability; and thirdly His Lordship's resolution as to how it should be accomplished, supposing the first two to have been carried in the affirmative.

The Bishop of Qu'Appelle then moved in amendment, seconded by Ven. Archdeacon Lindsey, that the simplest and most efficacious method for the consolidation of The Church in British North America would be to amalgamate all existing dioceses into one Province, at least until such time as the Church become more powerful. His Lordship said he was speaking in opposition to the strongly expressed feeling of the great majority of those who had spoken; also against the expression of the province to which he belonged. He regretted to have to seem to be in opposition to the so very pronounced expression of his most esteemed Metropolitan. He was sure it would not be considered

disrespectful to him if he expressed his opinion as strongly as he could, and it would not be thought for a moment a reflection on the wisdom of what had been done in the past. He knew there had been a good deal of misunderstanding. When the Province was formed it was under totally different circumstances from those of to-day. He did not think because anything had been done in the past it must necessarily remain forever, when there had been a change of circumstances. A debt of gratitude was due the Metropolitan for these admirable educational institutions of which Winnipeg might be proud. But the Metropolitan would be the first to admit that in a matter of such importance all private feelings should be put aside and he (the speaker) should express what he felt so deeply for the welfare of the Church throughout the Dominion. Perhaps it was more suitable that he being from this Province (Rupert's Land), should propose the amendment, rather than that some one from Eastern Canada should do so, because there was an altogether unfounded idea that the eastern delegates wished in some way to swamp; those here. He did not believe there was any such feeling. The readiness shown to meet the whole of the members of this Province was an evidence that such was not the case. Why did he advocate the forming of one Province? He believed it was the only really efficacious means of obtaining that which he believed they all desired to obtain, the consolidation of The Church, in one feasible scheme. What did they really mean? In the first place, to create and to foster a more thorough and perfect unity of the Church in the minds of its members throughout this vast country. There was not that realization of unity at the present time, he believed. One great bane, if not the greatest, he believed to be parochialism and individualism. Parochialism he saw frequently in the parishes, which were doing for themselves what they could, each thinking its own little entity the chief object it had in view. That parochialism, he feared, extended too much to the diocese and even to the provinces. They all knew the Church was one; but they wanted the fact to be realized by the members of the Church more than it is. One member cannot suffer without the whole body throughout this vast Dominion feeling it in some manner. They wanted unity of legislation on such important matters as discipline. Discipline could only be obtained by one legislative assembly. Unity was wanted in such matters as the marriage laws in which the Church ought to be able to speak plainly, loudly and authoritatively as what are its laws as apart from the laws of the State, and it ought to be able to constrain amongst its members obedience to the laws. Unity was wanted in matters of administration of Christ's church as a whole, of evangelization, of education of the Indian population, of the proper training of candidates for Holy Orders, and other matters which certainly ought to be considered of importance to the Church as a whole. The Church ought to speak with voice of authority and power that would compel the attention of the legislators of the land upon matters that touch the moral welfare of the people. They wanted to speak as they could not possibly do now by scattered dioceses, or even by provinces.

2 They might be prepared, as they could only be prepared by such a body for the day, which, he ventured to say, could not be far distant, and which, if church people had a little more faith in the ruling of the Holy Spirit, might be nearer than it is, when the Church should act boldly with the freedom which was already hers, and not to be content continually to abide under the fetters which, he was sorry to say, the Church at home had, but which, we thank God, we are free from, and could act with freedom if we only would. When he was in England the Church was continually yearning to be able to do things which