

FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

(Continued.)

THIRD DAY—EVENING SEDERUNT.

The evening sederunt opened at 7.30.

HOME MISSION WORK.

Rev. Dr. Cochrane presented the report of the Home Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Western Section.) The Committee after returning thanks to the great head of the church for the success which had so far crowned their efforts stated that in consequence of the continued financial depression, many givers had been obliged to curtail their subscriptions, owing to which the receipts had not equalled the disbursements, and the operations of the Committee had been somewhat restricted. The Committee had continued its grant to British Columbia of \$1,200 a year, the congregation of New Westminster agreeing to guarantee \$800. In Manitoba the mission work had extended from Rat Portage to Battleford, and from Pembina to Battleford, and the demands of that district were increasing from year to year. There are now two self-sustaining congregations, and forty-four preaching stations there. The report gave a minute account of the work there, referring with pleasure to the appointment of Messrs. McKellar, Ross, Campbell and Strath, as missionaries in the district. Fort Frances and Fort Macleod were still unoccupied. Mr. J. R. McLeod, a graduate of Montreal, had succeeded Rev. Mr. Stuart at Sault Ste. Marie; and at Prince Arthur's Landing, Rev. Mr. Keracher, was continuing his labours with acceptance. In Muskoka district there had been numerous missionary meetings, and on Manitoulin Island there were fifteen stations at which service had been held during the winter. The state of religion on the Island was, however, very discouraging. Boats called there on Sundays as well as week days, and saloons and stores were open. A change for the better was looked for and indeed there was every evidence of it. The Owen Sound Presbytery had charge of the Indian Peninsula and Parry Sound District, and with reference to the latter it was stated that a proposal had been made to join it with the Muskoka missionary district, and put it under one Presbytery. The Hamilton Presbytery had reported that spiritual deadness was characteristic generally of the people of the Niagara District, with individual exceptions. A generation indeed seemed to have grown up without the knowledge or fear of God, and the mission stations had consequently languished. Unless continuous support could be given to this field little could be accomplished. In the Presbytery of Toronto two new congregations had been formed during the year, one at Ballinacree and one at Leslieville. Three new mission churches were in process of erection and Horning's Mills Station had become a self-sustaining congregation. The report also added an account of visits to the missions under the Kingston and Ottawa Presbyteries, which were generally flourishing. The total missionary contributions had been \$30,435, while the expenditure had been \$36,302, or a balance against the Mission Fund of \$5,867. The Committee recorded its indebtedness to the Students' Missionary Societies of Knox, Queen's and Montreal Colleges for their assistance in overtaking hitherto neglected districts. It urged upon Presbyteries the necessity of dealing with such congregations as made no contributions to the Mission Funds. It was hoped that the Mission might be relieved from supporting the Manitoba College. It was hoped that Queen's College Association, like that of Knox College, and that of the Montreal College, would find neglected fields to work and raise the money to support students in them. The rev. gentleman strongly urged the sending of more missionaries to Manitoba, and suggested that in the future the Assembly should state how much was wanted for mission and other schemes, and expect the people to furnish the amount specified. The statistics of the Home Mission were as follows:—120 mission fields, 355 preaching stations, 89 supplemented congregations, 102 churches, a Sabbath attendance of 24,400, 7,908 families in connection with the Church, 4,700 communicants in the mission stations, and 4,336 in the supplemented congregations. In conclusion, the rev. gentleman stated that having a somewhat large congregation, he did not feel able to continue the work of Convener of the Home Mission Committee, and he hoped the Assembly would receive this as his last report. The work could, in his opinion, be very well done by one of the Professors in the College.

The Rev. Dr. McGregor presented the report of the Home Mission Board of the Eastern section of the Church, or in the Maritime Provinces. The work had not been so large as that of the Western section of the Church, but it had been a good one. There were now fourteen preachers and an increased number of young men in the field; one of the fields was Newfoundland. A Presbytery had been formed there since the union, and two new churches had been erected; New Kincardine, N.B., also a new church, had been erected. The work was very much like that of the Western section, but the mission fund was more necessitous there. The report expressed great regret at the loss of Principal Grant, who was the Chairman, and who had become Principal of Queen's College, and the Committee hoped that in the great work of Christianizing the world, he would not only have many followers, but many equals. (Applause.) The receipts of the Eastern Section Mission Committee were \$9,572, and its expenditure \$10,202.

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The Moderator at this point expressed his pleasure at having received a commission from the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, which had been handed in by its bearer, appointing Rev. W. Russ, of Rothesay, to represent that Church at the Assembly. The Commission expressed regret at being unable to do more in assisting evangelistic work in Canada, but gave a promise always to lend a helping hand. (Applause.)

HOME MISSIONS.

Rev. Mr. Sedgwick read a supplementary report from the

Eastern section of the Home Mission Board, giving details as to contributions to the Mission Fund.

Rev. R. N. Grant moved:—"That the reports before the House be received, and that the thanks of the Assembly be tendered to the Home Mission Committee, and especially to the Convener, for their diligence; and further, the General Assembly expresses its gratitude for the many encouraging tokens of God's blessing on the Home Mission work of the Church during the past year; and refers the reports to a committee to consider and report on at a future sederunt." In making the motion, he expressed his regret that there was a deficit of \$6,000, but he rejoiced that the receipts had raised from \$4,000 in 1861 to \$36,000 in 1877. That, however, was not a very large amount considering that some congregations spent \$30,000, \$40,000, and \$100,000 in building churches. As to the depression, he quite agreed with Principal Caven that when it was considered that each member of the Church only gave a certain number of cents for Home Missions and colleges, it was not to be expected that the state of trade should affect the Church to any great extent. He strongly advocated the sending of more missionaries to Manitoba. It was necessary to send ministers to Manitoba and the North-West now that people were going there. In fact missionaries ought to go on in advance of the people, so that when our sons and daughters went up there they would find ministers up there to look after them, and when missionaries went up there they should not go up with their hats in their hands, apologizing for being there. They should go believing and stating that their system of Church government and doctrine was the best in the world for the prairie Provinces. (Laughter.) He was strongly opposed to the supporting of mission stations within five miles of a regular congregation, and he could not bring himself to ask those who drove seven or eight miles to Church to give of their means to build up mission stations for persons who did not feel disposed to drive five miles to Church. He was of opinion that the Gospel would not be preached effectively unless the missionaries were sent out by organized bodies, because the tendency on the part of those who were not thus sent out was to stay where travelling was reasonably comfortable and board tolerably good. The mission work was a great work. It had for its object the preaching of the Word all over the country, and nothing would make this country worth living in, or fighting for, unless it was well leavened by Gospel influences.

Rev. Mr. Simpson, briefly seconded the motion.

Hon. Alex. Morris gave a brief account of the Church in Manitoba. He referred to the fertile soil, vast resources, and healthy climate of the Prairie Province, and said he had often wondered whether if that country had been better known the Eastern Provinces would have been filled up as they were. The accession of that territory to the Dominion was one of the greatest boons which had ever fallen to Canada, for as cities and towns had sprung up like magic in the Western States, so they would in our North-West, and no longer would the sons of our farmers feel it to be necessary to forfeit their allegiance and go to a foreign country to seek a living. He found Winnipeg, a hamlet of 500 people, and he left it a city of 7,000, and he was happy to say that there was a Presbyterian Church being built there which would cost \$20,000. In his opinion the rush of population to the North-West and Manitoba could not be checked, and the question now was whether the Church in this part of the country would allow people to go there and remain there without pastoral care. He thought not. Another point was the care of the Indians, which he hoped to speak on at another time. The Church of England, he said, was doing a noble work in Manitoba, and in the North-West—(Applause)—and God bless her in it. When the Scottish Church forgot her children, the Church of England took care of them until Dr. Black was sent up there. He hoped the Church in the more thickly populated portion of the Dominion would see to it that assistance was sent up there to the Presbyterian Church.

The motion was carried, and the Assembly adjourned.

FOURTH DAY—MORNING SEDERUNT.

The General Assembly opened this morning at ten o'clock. Devotional exercises were conducted by the Moderator and Rev. Mr. Mason of Galt.

THE HOME MISSION REPORT.

The Moderator nominated the following committee to which to refer the Home Mission Report:—Revs. Dr. Waters, Dr. Cochrane, D. M. Gordon, Principal Grant, A. Simpson, R. N. Grant, D. H. Fletcher, John McKinnon, Dr. McGregor, Thomas Sedgwick, John Scott, T. G. Smith, J. Gray, George Cuthbertson, and A. Currie; Hon. A. Morris; Messrs. Thomas McRae, Hon. J. McMurrich, J. Pardee, J. McLennan, M. Lindsay, John W. Robson, and Alex. Leask.

COMMISSION.

The Chairman of the committee on Commissions read a report recommending that Mr. George Black, of Hamilton, be allowed to sit in the Assembly in the place of Rev. Dr. Duncan, of Miramichi.

The report was adopted.

APPEAL OF THE SYDNEY PRESBYTERY.

Rev. Mr. Farquharson asked that Rev. Thos. Sedgwick and Rev. Robert Murray be permitted to support the appeal of the Sydney Presbytery before the Judicial Committee of the Assembly.

The request was, on motion of Principal Caven, granted. Rev. Dr. McNeil requested permission to have associated with him in watching the case for the Synod:—Rev. Dr. Waters, Kenneth McLennan, Prof. J. McKnight, and John McKinnon.

Objection was taken to the large number of gentlemen asked for, and Rev. Mr. McNeil accepting a suggestion from the Moderator asked only for the assistance of Dr. Waters. The request was granted.

LEAVE TO RETIRE.

The Clerk read a request from the Presbytery of Sydney for leave for Rev. Dr. McLeod to retire from the active duties of the ministry.

The matter was referred to the proper committee
LEAVE TO RECEIVE A PROBATIONER.

An application from the Presbytery of Toronto for leave to receive as a probationer Mr. Samuel R. Wallander, was referred to the proper committee.

THE QUEBEC APPEAL.

The Clerk announced that a telegram had been received from Mr. McMaster appointing Rev. Mr. Lindsay to appear for him in the case of the appeal of the Quebec Presbytery.

REV. MR. CHINIQUY.

Rev. Dr. McVicar, of Montreal, said he had been requested to ask the General Assembly to be kind enough to allow Rev. Mr. Chiniquy to address the Assembly for a few minutes on the subject of missionary work among French Canadians, also that the Assembly would grant Mr. Chiniquy leave of absence for some months in order to recruit his failing health.

Leave to speak before the close of the sederunt was granted.

HYMNOLGY.

The Clerk read overtures from the Synods of Montreal and Ottawa, Hamilton and London, Toronto and Kingston, and from the Presbyteries of Whitley, Paris, Miramichi and Hamilton, respecting the hymnology of the Church. The overtures referred to the diversity of hymn books and psalmody, and suggested that it was desirable that in the future there should be something approximating to uniformity.

A discussion having arisen as to whether all the parties appointed to support the overtures should be heard,

Rev. Dr. Robb said he had a point to raise which he thought would dispense with the speeches altogether. The overtures asked that the Assembly should proceed to the compilation of a hymn book. That was, in the first place, proceeding on the assumption that the Church found warrant in Scripture for the use of a book of uninspired hymns. He held that the Church had never affirmed that there was such warrant.

A delegate said Dr. Robb would first have to show that the overtures did hold that the hymn books were desirable; they only introduced the question for consideration.

The Moderator ruled that the overtures could be considered, and the speeches in support of them made.

Rev. Mr. Wilson objected to the overture from the Presbytery of Whitley, in which it was stated that the Assembly had already given its sanction to the use of hymns in the Church. He contended that no legislation sanctioning the use of hymns had been passed.

The Moderator said the overture was correct, inasmuch as the Assembly had allowed congregations to use hymns.

Rev. Mr. Armstrong supported the overture of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa. He held that the question of hymnology was in such a state that the Assembly should take action with reference to it. It was, in his opinion, the duty of the Assembly to regulate the worship of praise, but the question now was not whether hymn books should be used. Hymn books were used and would be used, and the question was, what books should be used. Great difficulty was felt in consequence of the variety of hymn books used. In Ottawa, for instance, there were four different hymn books used—the United Presbyterian hymn book, the English Presbyterian hymn book, the Presbyterian Hymnal, and in one church the pastor had several books in use. What he wanted to see was a good hymn book, one from which worthless hymns were excluded, and in which good hymns and the Psalms of David were included. He did not care how long the Assembly was in getting a hymn book prepared, but he hoped one would be prepared sooner or later.

Rev. Mr. Laing supported the overture of the Presbytery of Hamilton. He quoted from the terms of union that it was the duty of the Supreme Court to deal with matters concerning worship. He also said that at the time of union it was resolved that further action in the matter of worship should be left to the legislation of the United Church.

Rev. Dr. Robb said the word was "future" action and not "further" action.

The Moderator after referring to the terms of union said the word was "further."

Rev. Mr. Laing said it was evident that action could be taken in the matter and he thought that those who were overturning were taking legal course.

Rev. Dr. Robb—No.

Rev. Mr. Laing contended that overturning the Assembly was the legal course. No one, he said, would deny that there were hymns of an objectionable character in use. There were twenty-six different collections of hymns in use in the churches and Sabbath schools, and many of the hymns instead of producing a strong religious feeling brought on a kind of weak sentimentalism. What was wanted was uniformity in the hymns. The use of hymns in churches had already been sanctioned by use.

Rev. Dr. Robb—No.

Rev. Mr. Laing—Yes.

Rev. Dr. Robb—No.

Rev. Mr. Laing—Well, if Rev. Dr. Robb wants to contradict what everybody knows, I cannot help it. There was no denying it that many of the churches did use the Psalms, paraphrases, and hymns in the church. In concluding, he contended that the use of good hymns was advisable, and he moved, "That the overture be received, and that a committee be appointed to consider the subject in accordance with the prayer of the overture."

Rev. Dr. Robb objected to the introduction of a motion until all the overtures had been heard.

The Moderator thought it would be as well to wait until the overtures had been heard.

Rev. Mr. McMullen, in supporting the overtures, said he never could see why—if it was his privilege to stand up and pray in words of his own—he should not be allowed also to worship, and why it should not be equally scriptural to worship, in words carefully composed. (Hear, hear.) It required a very intelligent and mature Christian to sing the Psalms with intelligence; and if the Psalms were strong meat, he did not see that in singing some of the milk of the