

**SPEAKERS URGE CONTINUATION
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Anti-Union Meeting in St. Andrews Addressed by Dr. Geo. Duncan.

That it was time a fiery cross went through the land warning of the vivid peril of the threatened yoke of the new organization that might never be thrown off, was the declaration of Rev. Dr. George Duncan, of the church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, in his address before the mass meeting in St. Andrews church last night when, with Mr. Justice Crockett, LL. D., he spoke in the interests of the continuance of the Presbyterian church in Canada. Murray MacLaren, C. G. M., M. P., M. D., was the chairman of the meeting and the opening prayer was offered by Rev. J. S. Bonnell, minister of the church. The whole of the large auditorium of the church was filled and the congregation overflowed into the gallery. A large choir led in the singing.

Dr. MacLaren explained that the meeting was held under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church Association in the interests of the continuance of the Presbyterian church and having thanked the people of St. Andrews church for the use of the building he drew attention to a recently published pamphlet written by a former secretary of the Church Union Committee and giving facts concerning why he had changed his mind with regard to the advisability of proceeding with church union, under the present conditions.

Judge Crockett.

Judge Crockett spoke as a lay member of the executive of the Presbyterian Church Association to vote his earnest and confirmed disapproval of the so-called Church Union movement, and what tens of thousands of Presbyterians regarded as an unjust coercive legislation by which its promoters wished to establish it. He dealt with the various clauses of the Enabling Bill, explaining that it would blot out of existence in Canada the three churches, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational, as it was the intention of the promoters that it would have a name that was an implied falsehood, "The United Church of Canada." The name was as preposterous as it was fictitious, he declared, as there was no attempt to unite all the churches in Canada. The Bill would further invest all the property of the churches in a new church, giving to its general council the control of funds which had been provided for the teaching of Presbyterian doctrines in Presbyterian colleges. These funds, if the Bill were enacted, would be used for teaching the new church.

The worst and boldest feature of the Bill in Dr. Crockett's opinion was that it would legislate into the new church the entire membership of the Presbyterian church, willing or unwilling. That clause should interest every free citizen he considered, as if it passed it laid down the principle that religious belief and conviction were subject to parliamentary control. He would not object to the members who wished to withdraw to form a new church doing so, but by the clauses providing that six months after its enactment on a majority vote any congregation might withdraw and in the meantime the Presbyterian church would have been swept out of existence. The Bill ignored the rights of minorities and made provision for a commission of

Dr. Duncan recalled the steps taken in the General Assembly to promote church union. He declared that the framers of the bill had no authority to proceed to prepare legislation and had ignored the fact that 75,000 had voted against church union when the people had last been given an opportunity to express an opinion and when a much less drastic measure was proposed. Now it was made plain that the principle of the bill must stand unaltered if it was further discussed at any meeting. In no other country but Russia could an order be issued that a question must not be discussed.

To Dr. Duncan the bill meant serious danger that the church would become a Parliamentary church, a bondage which Covenanters and Free Church Presbyterians had suffered and sacrificed to be free of.

He felt that a vote of the people should be taken before any definite action was entered upon and gave statistics to show that a large number of self-supporting churches in the eastern provinces had given large majorities against church union and in the west 380 missions had given more votes in favor of church union than there were people entitled to vote. The announcement of Dr. Duncan's evoked some laughter.

He told of the recommendations that he had submitted as a member of the union committee which had urged patience and guarding against disruption and of the over-riding of the recommendations of the General Assembly of 1921 by the new bill. With the determined campaign of the Presbyterian

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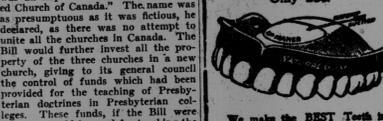
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