

## MELVILLE CHURCH, FERGUS



As the country became cleared and settlers grew in number, new congregations were formed at outside points where Mr. Smellie had been in the habit of holding services periodically. Six years after the formal opening of Melville Church the first "swarm" hived off and was organized as Chalmer's Church, Elora, nearly sixty certificates of membership being transferred at one time. Another "swarm" formed the nucleus of St. John's Church, Belwood, and in 1864 another found a more convenient church home at Cumnock. As the area of the parish contracted, the minister was set free from some of his wide journeyings and could do more work at the centre of his charge.

Hitherto but one Sabbath service had sufficed, but of course that one was sufficiently lengthy at times. It is recorded that the first Sunday service conducted in old Melville lasted from eleven in the morning till five p.m. An afternoon service was accordingly commenced beginning at four o'clock. Later on the hour was changed to half-past six, and then to seven, Sunday School being held in the afternoon; it had previously been held immediately after morning service.

The names of many faithful workers in the Sunday School might be mentioned did space permit. Mr. James McQueen was the first superintendent and there has never been a time when one or more of his family has not been teaching, two of his daughters doing splendid work in connection with the Infant Class. Mr. James Argo was Mr. McQueen's successor, and he was followed by Mr. Peter Rennie, who superintended the school for twenty-six years. The present staff includes Mr. Adam Armstrong as superintendent, Mr. J. C. Templin as assistant and Mr. J. B. Bayne as secretary and librarian.

In 1836 the Kirk Session was composed of Messrs. A. D.



James McQueen, Esq.