

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The minutes of the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada have been forwarded to us. They form quite a large pamphlet, and will be read with great interest, not only within the bounds of the now united Church, but all over the world: forming as they do a most important document such as shall be a historical instrument for all time to come. There are two or three things however, which, it seems to us, are at fault. Some of these cannot now be remedied, but some of them can; and, therefore, we draw attention to them in the interest of our Church, of which each and every adherent has just reason to be proud. We think it a pity, therefore, that the minutes entered upon the several books of the united Churches have not been published in full as well as that of the "Presbyterian Church of Canada," published on pages 3 and 4. We can see no reason, except that of economy of space and money, why the one should be published in full and the other three merely *explained*. The explanation is further couched in such terms that it is supremely difficult to reconstruct these several important minutes exactly as they were passed. In fact the process would be a much simpler one to write to the Clerks of the three Churches and from them get extracts of the same, than to attempt the problem.

The preamble, basis of union and accompanying resolutions are given in full, so that for all time to come a member of the Church can understand precisely the conditions under which he finds himself where he is. A moment's reflection must satisfy any reasonable man that these conditions are fair and honorable to all concerned.

As one reads over those interesting minutes, there is one thing which must appear very striking indeed, namely, the appointment of the Assembly's standing Committees. It was not at all judiciously done—as a few facts will show. These are such facts as follow. One minister is on six Committees, two others on eight each, two others on five each, and one on seven. This would be unavoidable if the Church was a small one and the number of Committees

large. But such is not the case. The number of Committees is comparatively small, and the number of ministers upon the roll of the Church very large. As a consequence of these things, when we look over the names of the four old Churches as given in the minutes, we find that there are many names of ministers who held important and influential positions in the Churches now united, some of whose names appear on one or two unimportant Committees, and others appear nowhere. This state of matters is much to be regretted, seeing that those who are upon so many will find it a simple impossibility to attend to the work entrusted to them; whereas many of those whose names are omitted would be pleased and delighted to share in the work of the Church, for whose common good all her followers are anxious to work. It is hoped, therefore, that the very first thing taken up at next Assembly will be a revision of the Assembly's Standing Committees, and it is further hoped that the Committee to mature measures for next Assembly will have taken this matter up at the meeting held on the first.

The appendix contains the minutes of the first meeting of the two Synods of Montreal and Ottawa, and of Toronto and Kingston, and also of Hamilton and London. Why the minutes of the reconstructed Synod of the Maritime Provinces have not seen the light through the pages of the interesting document under review we cannot tell! Who was remiss in duty? The Synod was ordered to meet like the others; did meet, and kept its proceeding effectually to itself. We look upon this as a great misfortune. Strange that our Synod of the Maritime Provinces—the Synod of the East—and that of Manitoba—the Synod of the West—should be together in this matter! As it is, these two Synods have kept their proceedings to themselves.

There are evidences of the haste with which the sheets were prepared for publication. We say nothing of punctuation, as that is an unimportant matter. On page 2, and as Convener of the Education Board, P. O. L. P., we have G. M. Grant, Esq., of Halifax—a gentleman we have never heard of under that designation. On page 11, again,