

pulsory, but if an order was established most congregations would gladly fall into it. The change he aimed at was only in the substance and order of the service, not in mere details. By substance he meant the prayers, reading of the word, sacraments and praise. In many congregations there is an undue proportion of the time taken up in singing or in prayer. In his opinion many Presbyterians had a wrong idea of the purity of worship as authorized by the church. Many think the use of liturgies was prohibited, but that was not so, and liturgies exist in branches of the Church in Scotland, Holland and elsewhere. "Popish innovations" are another matter altogether. He was in favour of liberty in the use of a liturgy in the various congregations. He said that there are at least four Books of Forms used in Canada, and it should not be left to the sweet will of every clergyman to choose his Book of Forms. The reverent tone of the services, even, have been changed in some instances. A revision is necessary because the circumstances are changed and the old days when services lasted two and three hours are gone by. In the United States the form of worship has been revised, but no change has been made here, the form being the same as it was 200 years ago. A modernized rule is needed, adequate to the wants of the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is a matter in which the church will have to proceed cautiously, for prejudices will have to be met. It will be a matter of years to accomplish it properly, but the speaker was confident that when the united wisdom of the church will evolve the proper form the congregations will adopt it readily. The tendency to ritualism is one that will have to be considered. He would recommend an amended directory on the same form as the Westminster directory for public worship. If the Synod passed the overture it would be presented to the General Assembly, and when that body passed upon it the result will be again referred back to the presbyteries.

Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Sarnia, asked if Dr. Laing would give his opinion on the use of written or printed prayers in connection with a liturgy.

Rev. Dr. Laing said that if a minister found he could do better by using prayers previously written by himself, he would be in favour of him doing so.

Rev. Dr. Thompson expressed pleasure at the reply. He had, on occasions, prepared written prayers himself. Though the preaching is in advance of most denominations, the form of worship in the Presbyterian Church is often slovenly, and he would go in for the congregation taking part in the service by responsive reading. (Hear, hear.)

It was agreed to receive the overture, and the Synod proceeded to consider the subject.

Rev. Dr. Laidlaw said the subject was so far-reaching that the Synod should have something more definite to consider than the present overture as it stood. He moved that the Synod overture the General Assembly stating definitely what is wanted. Otherwise the Assembly might think they had something revolutionary in view.

John Cameron, of London, spoke strongly in support of Dr. Laing's overture. He said the Presbyterian service needs enriching. The music especially is a thousand miles astern of what it ought to be. If the power of music was properly introduced into the service it would strengthen the hands of the ministers 100 per cent. He warmly congratulated Dr. Laing on the liberal-minded views expressed, and he moved that his overture be forwarded to the General Assembly.

Wm. Stevely, of London, was somewhat inclined to approve of changes in the present service, but said they will have to proceed slowly. "We don't want to fall into this ritualistic system that a good many don't think much of," he said. He thought the old fashioned prayer from a full heart was the best, and though he had taken part in responsive reading occasionally, he confessed he never cared much about it. Perhaps it was his inborn prejudices, or it might have been because he was not a good reader. (Laughter.) He believed in improving the music especially, and didn't even object to the introduction of a solo, if the surroundings were suitable and in keeping. "If you can get the

solo without having to pay for it, it will be all the more acceptable," he added. (Laughter.) He objected to ritualistic movements on the part of a Church that has always been looked upon as a stand-by. While others have been wiggling about, the Presbyterian Church has been looked upon as a rock that stands fast.

A. I. Mackenzie I trust we will always leave room for the Spirit of God in our Church. (Hear, hear.) We do not want to turn our churches into concert halls. There is talk of wanting new hymns, but some of the people have not heard half of the hymns they have. (Applause.)

Thos. Houston, of Sarnia, said that an improvement of congregational singing is what is needed. He objected to innovations that interfered with the united personal worship and praise of the individual members of the congregation.

Rev. Angus McKay, of Lucknow, said that as an offset to the ritualistic tendencies of the age, the Presbyterian Church should aim at a purity of worship based on the Westminster confession.

Rev. Dr. Laing agreed that prayer should come from a full heart, but he thought that the Holy Spirit guided him in his study when he wrote a prayer equally as when in the pulpit. Referring to the situation generally, he said that the Church is at a turning-point, and unless the Church gives direction a diversity of practice is sure to ensue.

Finally Mr. Cameron withdrew his resolution and Rev. Dr. Laidlaw, seconded by Rev. J. McDonald, substituted a motion slightly modifying the terms of Dr. Laing's overture to the Synod, and transforming the application to the General Assembly with the endorsement of the Synod of Hamilton and London.

This resolution was unanimously passed, and Rev. Dr. Laing, Rev. Dr. Laidlaw, Rev. Dr. Thompson and John Cameron were appointed a committee to support the overture before the General Assembly.

THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. W. G. Jordan, of Strathty, presented the annual report on the state of religion. The report stated that much difficulty was experienced in getting returns, 54 congregations having failed to answer the inquiries. Hamilton Presbytery is one of the most exemplary in attention to this duty. The state of religion on the whole is healthy and progressive. The committee thinks the Shorter Catechism should be more used in the Sabbath schools. The attendance at the Sabbath schools is from 70 to 90 per cent. of the children, and many young people have become church members through its means. Reports as to family worship are not sufficiently definite, but there can be no doubt of the value of this observance as an adjunct of Christian life. The attendance at prayer meetings is not so large as it should be. There is a tendency noted on the part of the young people to be drawn away by fine choral services to other churches. There is a distinct revival in the popularity of missionary effort. Reference was made to the multiplicity of church societies of various descriptions, but the opinion was expressed that this is but the natural outgrowth of the church's varied life and the activity of the age. The report concluded with the result of inquiries as to the hindrances to religion. Three returns brought in a formal indictment against our old friends the world, the flesh and the devil. Card playing, dancing and skating, when excessively indulged in, political partizanship, Sabbath bicycle riding, and cranks were also enumerated as among the hindrances to the progress of religion.

The report was such a full and interesting one that it was received with applause.

In connection with the report recommendations were made concerning the ill-effects of long vacancies in charges, and in the discussion of it Rev. Mr. Lyle and other speakers said that one of the chief causes of this is the number of preachers who preach in pulpits they do not intend to accept the pastorate of.

The recommendations and several others arising out of the report were adopted. A motion of Rev. Dr. Fraser, seconded by Rev. James Murray, that a conference on the state of religion be held during the Synod next year, was laid over until Wednesday.

REPORT ON TEMPERANCE.

Rev. W. J. Clark, of London, presented the report on temperance, which stated that there seemed to be a strong feeling in favour of prohibitory law, and that the enforcement of such legislation would be feasible. There has been a continued decrease in the number of licenses issued in all sections, and a general advance in temperance sentiment is apparent. Reports from the various Presbyteries showed that the number of licenses issued varied from one per 150 to one per 1,000 of the population. Reference was made to the plebiscite majority of over 81,000.

A feature of the report was Rev. Mr. Clark's interpretation of Prohibition, to the effect that through Prohibition will prevent the manufacture of liquor for sale it will not prevent a man making wine or whiskey on his premises with which to treat his friends, as long as he does not sell it.

APPEALS.

An appeal against the Presbytery of Maitland by James Munro, was referred to committee.

An appeal against the same Presbytery by Rev. Angus McKay, Lucknow, was heard at great length. It was referred to a committee consisting of Rev. Drs. Laidlaw, Lang, Rev. Geo. Sutherland and Mr. A. I. Mackenzie, who reported twice. The second report which was adopted ordered the Presbytery of Maitland to remove from its records any reference to the matter beyond a statement of the facts.

REPORTS.

The report of the Committee on Systematic Benevolence was presented by Rev. Dr. Cochran and adopted.

Rev. W. McGibbon reported for the Sabbath Schools Committee. There had been an increase in the number of schools and the contributions. The latter amounted to \$20,210, and \$6,486 had been contributed towards various schemes of the Church.

The report of the Committee on Sabbath observance was presented by Rev. S. Lyle. It referred to the "harvest of Sabbath desecration" caused by trains, boating, bicycling, speeding horses, besides cock-fighting, dog-fighting and gambling. The report contained this clause:—"What fair-minded man can have respect for those who denounce Sunday papers and at the same time are themselves stockholders in companies which are making large dividends by the hired services of stray star preachers and acrobatic Sabbath performances under the cloak of worshipping God!" During the discussion that arose Rev. F. McCuaig and A. F. Tully, referred to the management of the Grimsby Camp Grounds, Mr. Tully expressing the wonder how church union could be looked for when the Methodists tolerated such an institution. The report was adopted.

COMMITTEES.

The following were the standing committees appointed:

State of Religion.—Rev. W. G. Jordan (convener), Dr. McIntyre, G. C. Patterson, W. A. Cook, I. Nattress, ministers; Messrs. Harrison, St. Helms; Houston; Sarnia; Stevely, London; George Thompson, Stratford, elders.

Temperance.—Rev. J. S. Henderson (convener), James Fitzpatrick, W. J. Clark, D. Perrie, A. H. Drummond, ministers; Dr. Duncan, Chatham; James Collin, Stratford; Major Eckford, West Brant; James Shiels, Belmont, elders.

Sabbath School's.—Rev. W. M. MacKilbin (convener), G. A. McLennan, J. A. McDonald, J. M. Maclearen, K. Pottigrew, ministers; D. H. Hunter, Woodstock; W. N. Hossie, Brantford; T. W. Niabot, Sarnia; James A. Young, Glencoe, elders.

Sabbath Observance.—Rev. S. Lyle (convener), J. L. Murray, Nathaniel Smith, J. C. Tolmie, J. Crawford, ministers; John Charlton, M.P., Robert Laurie, D. K. Mackenzie, John Cameron, elders.

Systematic Benevolence.—Rev. E. W. Sawers, (convener), H. McQuarrie, J. G. Shearer, W. S. McTavish, ministers; D. D. Wilson, Seaford; James Lomble, Windsor; Adam Spence, Brantford; Alex. Campbell, Kincardine, elders.

The next meeting will be held at Woodstock.