

## PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

## Lively Debate on the Troubles in St. Andrew's Church—Decision Deferred.

## The Case of the Petitioners and the Counter Statements Considered.

The Synod resumed business yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, when the chair was taken by Rev. Thomas Scoullar, the newly-elected moderator. The proceedings were opened with prayer and the reading of scripture.

The first subject taken up was ecclesiastical legislation, which was reported upon by Rev. Dr. Campbell, on behalf of the committee consisting of himself, Mr. Thornton and Mr. Milne. Their object was to secure such legislation for this Province in church matters as was enjoyed in the other provinces of the Dominion. Such legislation was deemed advisable so as to prevent any trouble as to sale or transfer of property, etc. But the committee, after consultation, doubted their powers to act, and thought it better that action should emanate from the Synod. He therefore proposed that a committee consisting of the following be appointed to secure legislation for British Columbia similar to that existing in the other provinces of the Dominion: J. C. Brown, M.P.P., Mr. Thornton, Mr. D. C. Milne, M.P.P., and Rev. G. Murray.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald suggested that Calgary and Kamloops presbyteries should be represented on the committee.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald concurred. He thought it desirable that there should be a full representation on the committee.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald suggested that it would be better to have a committee the members of which would be on the ground for action. The committee suggested appeared to him to be a very good one.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald moved that the name of Rev. A. Lee, Kamloops, be added to the committee.

Rev. Dr. Campbell approved of the addition, and the committee thus added to was approved of.

Mr. Henderson rose to a question of privilege. He explained that he had given a newspaper reporter a copy of the petition sent in to the Presbytery on the previous day, because he had been informed that a copy of the counter petition had been supplied him.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald explained that there was no breach of trust in the matter. It was better for all concerned that the full facts should be made public. The documents had been read in public at the Presbytery, and there was therefore no harm in handing them over for publication.

The case of the troubles in St. Andrew's church, thus introduced, was then taken up. The petition, counter petition, reference, etc., a summary of which has appeared in the Colonist, were read by the Clerk of the Synod.

Mr. McKicking, one of the petitioners, claimed the right to file answers to the counter petition, on the ground that new matter had been introduced which they had had no opportunity of dealing with.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—If this be done, the answers must be handed in to the session, so that they may have an opportunity of dealing with them.

Mr. J. R. Robertson thought the petitioners should be afforded an opportunity of answering the new matter introduced.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—That will mean that we cannot go on with this today.

The Moderator—If you insist upon this course I don't see how we can go on.

Mr. McKicking—You will see that new matter has been introduced which we have had no opportunity of answering.

The Moderator—But this is the case as it comes to us from the Presbytery, and I don't see that we can interfere with it now.

Mr. Ballantyne—I was about to—

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—I protest against this being gone into here. We have not said anything in that direction, and it is a horse out by facts, and if this is done I shall certainly appeal to the general assembly.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald suggested that as the petitioners would have a full opportunity of speaking, they could accomplish their end in that way, without asking to give a written reply to what they claimed to be new matter. There were ten names to the petition and the other side was represented by, he supposed, the session and the congregation. Now, as they could not hear from every member of the congregation, he suggested that each side should appoint two or three representative speakers.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald named Rev. Mr. Winchester, Dr. Milne and himself, should the Moderator be present, to represent the session's contentions.

Mr. Ballantyne thought it an injustice to limit the number.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—Let them all come forward—the more they say the better for us.

It was agreed not to limit the number of speakers.

Mr. Ballantyne then called for the production of the minutes of the managers of the church, the minutes of the congregational meeting held on the 16th October, the minutes of the session, the statement submitted to the managers on October 24, the resolution submitted by the Board of Managers to bring the matter before the Presbytery, a copy of the instructions to the managers sent to the pastor, and the pastor's reply thereto, the annual statement submitted at the last congregational meeting, a statement as to the number of circulars sent out by the clerk of the session and the replies received to those circulars, and a statement showing the collections in the church since January last.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—Then we might as well adjourn this until the next meeting of the Synod. There are papers mentioned that cannot and will not be produced here today, and if it is insisted that they shall then it is evident that we cannot go on.

The Moderator—We are dealing with the case as it comes to us, and if you insist upon the production of the papers, I think we must refer you back to the Presbytery.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald—In the counter-petition it is stated that the minutes were produced. The minutes of the managers' meeting and those of the session are here, and if you want extracts from them they will be handed in to the Synod, but not placed in the hands of these men.

Mr. Robertson explained that the petitioners were afforded no opportunity of refuting the charges preferred against them at the Presbytery. They got half an hour to look over the counter-petition, and when they returned Rev. Mr. Young "sprung" a resolution upon them referring the whole matter to the Synod.

After some further discussion, it was decided to proceed with the case.

Mr. Robertson proceeded to read the

counter-petition and the answer of the petitioners to the same.

From these the following quotations are made:

Reply to par. 2.—As to two-thirds of the elders and the board of managers resigning: Up to the middle of October last the session consisted of six members, four of whom, Messrs. McKicking, Henderson, Bryden and McKicking, resigned. On 31st October all the elective managers resigned with the exception of one member, who was in Europe, and who upon his return sent in his resignation. Previously to the resignation of these elders, calls were made from the pulpit for congregational meetings, for the purpose of receiving nominations for six elders. At the first meeting ten names were proposed, two of whom declined nomination and four who were not present subsequently refused to act. At the second meeting two new names were proposed, completing the six asked for by the session. These were declared duly elected. Subsequently four of these elders elected resigned, leaving three. The difference existing between the pastor and the congregation. These eight elders, including four elders elected, have resigned since the delivery of the address from the pulpit of 16th October last.

"The late board had no knowledge of any petition having been in circulation, neither did any discussion take place in the board as to the petition. The board of managers was in any sense responsible for the utterance of the public press.

The congregational meeting referred to on page 1 of the counter petition was called by the session at the special request of the then board of managers, for the purpose of replacing the matter before the people. This request from the board of managers was necessary, for the reason that the pastor had failed to give effect to a declaration contained in a communication addressed to the board of managers, dated 7th October last, in which he stated among other things, 'unless I receive before Sabbath a definite answer to the statement, I will resign my office as pastor of this church, and will leave the church to the session and the congregation to elect a new pastor.'

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of calling a meeting to decide whether he was to remain or not.

"Reply to par. 6.—Concerning the reference to the differences existing between the pastor and the congregation, which the counter petition characterizes as a fallacy, we would most emphatically reiterate that substantial differences do exist, and are daily increasing, very much to the detriment of the spiritual interests of the church, and that there is no prospect of a peaceful settlement except by the dissolution of the pastoral staff.

Mr. McKicking said it was a very unpleasant duty for him and those associated with him to perform, and had they consulted their own personal interests they would simply have withdrawn from St. Andrew's Presbyterian church. It was from small matters that all the trouble arose. The starting point of the present controversy was in connection with the pastor's stipend and the board of managers' refusal to pay it. After the death of the late Mr. Robson it was found that there was a very heavy financial liability to be handled, but the board of managers refused to do so. When the new board of managers took office, instead of a balance to credit, there was an overdraft of some \$900. The treasurer had been justifying himself in this, and a meeting was called at which it was resolved to pay \$150 of the pastor's stipend and the balance at the end of the month, and to the board of managers at the end of the month instead of in advance, until the trouble was in a position to pay as usual. The board thought the pastor would have a letter repudiating the arrangement, and demanding his month's stipend in advance as usual, otherwise he would bring this request from the board of managers before the congregation. This was really the beginning of the trouble. Mr. McKicking proceeded to repudiate the statement made in the counter petition, and claimed that the great majority of the congregation were in sympathy with the pastor. Some of the old members—the bone and sinew of St. Andrew's church—were to-day in rebellion against the pastor. The counter petition was a piece of mischief, and the board of managers was not to be misled by it. The question of salary, and the proposal to pay \$150 on account, were read by Mr. McKicking.

At this stage of the proceedings there was an adjournment of the Synod for lunch. On resuming business, Mr. McKicking again took the platform and asked if the petitioners would have the right of reply.

The point was discussed at considerable length, and it was finally decided that each party would have the right of being heard only once.

Mr. McKicking read voluminous correspondence passing between the pastor and the Board of Managers on the question of salary, and claimed that the petitioners appeared on behalf of the majority of the congregation, and that their action throughout was consistent and in the interests of the church. He did not dispute the ability of Mr. Macdonald, but he said that the gentleman was unworkable and unmanageable.

Mr. Ballantyne submitted a financial statement of the affairs of St. Andrew's church for the past five years. In 1888, when Mr. Macdonald became pastor, the general revenue was \$7,765; the expenditure, \$8,182; deficit, \$416. In 1889, revenue, \$7,047; expenditure, \$8,483; deficit, \$1,436. In 1890, revenue, \$6,564; expenditure, \$8,112; deficit, \$1,548. In 1891, revenue, \$6,439; expenditure, \$8,391; deficit, \$1,952. In 1892, revenue, \$7,162; expenditure, \$8,187; deficit, \$1,025. In 1893, revenue, \$8,581; expenditure, \$9,404; deficit, \$823. It would thus be seen that with one exception there had been a deficit every year. There was a deficit on the building account, which was a serious loss to the church, and a showing of \$2,916 on the wrong side of the ledger. There was, in addition, an interest account. St. Andrew's church owed some \$29,000 on the building account, and the interest on this was contributing \$14,000. A sum of \$48,000 was borrowed from the late Hon. John Robson, and a subsequent \$50,000 from the same source. The sum of \$98,000 was paid, and the interest on this was added to \$12,340. In other words, the church was behind \$14,897. To pay interest on this, the board of managers had to raise \$4,797 per annum, which was a very serious burden on the congregation, and would in five years run the church into bankruptcy. Mr. Ballantyne declared the action of the petitioners and the board of managers to be a piece of mischief, and concluded by stating that he believed the only salvation of the church was a change in the pastorate.

Mr. Henderson, as a lay member of St. Andrew's church, declared his opinion that Mr. Macdonald's position as a preacher here had been much impaired, and that he ought to resign.

This concluded the case for the petitioners.

Rev. Mr. Macdonald took the platform in support of the action of the session and himself. He declared he would much prefer to have left the case in the hands of the board, but there were certain points which, perhaps, he could make clear better than the board could. For twenty-one years he had labored in the ministry, and this was his first experience in defending himself before a Synod, or of having any disagreement with the congregation with which he was connected. He proceeded to review the statement made by the previous speakers, stating there were but 390 circulars printed asking the board of managers to resign. There were but 346 members of the roll, and only 150 had voted in support of the continuance of his pastorate, and but six against it. He declared that at one of the congregational meetings the members of his family had voted; but it should be remembered that the families of the managers were also present, and exercised their right of voting. Speaking of the retired board of managers, he stated that when they resigned, October 31, no vote of thanks was tendered to them, but they subsequently had a paper put on the door to door, getting signatures to such a vote. The petitioners did not honestly avow their real intention in their petition—the dissolution of the pastor. At least two of the speakers had just let it out. If he believed that the support of the lay majority of the congregation, or that the assurance of the pastor, he would be benefited to the church, he would not have done so. No doubt Mr. McKicking, in all he had said, and done, was acting from a sense of duty, but it was a sense of duty which had led him to the production of old forged round the bodies of Christian managers. 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