

Knox Church, Galt, Ontario. June 5/1924

The Hon Arthur Meighen,

036508

House of Commons, Ottawa.

June 6/24

My dear Mr Meighen,

During the past few days I have been in communication with every section of Western Ontario, and I find that the Church Union Bill now before the House is very unacceptable to the vast majority of Presbyterians on account of its coercive character, legislating—as it proposes to do—scores of thousands into a Church which they do not wish to join, and destroying the identity of the Presbyterian Church. There is no objection to any who wish to form a United Church with other denominations being given full liberty to do so, but those who do not wish to enter the Union claim the same liberty—viz. to remain where they are, in possession of their Church and property. The Duff Amendment, I find, is acceptable. It leaves the question of the Constitutionality of the Bill to the Courts, and this seems fair to both sides. There is a feeling, however, that in view of the strong opposition which has arisen the Bill should be defeated unless the Union Committee or General Assembly see fit to withdraw it.

If the reports in today's press are true that the Union Committee is likely to make it a