

A subject which has attracted their attention is the debts which in some instances, though of but small amount, are yet suffered to rest as an incubus upon the energies of some churches.

Our Church is now passing through a transition stage. The Synod is, and that in an eminent degree, legisating for the future. All its interests spiritual, as well as material, are demanding increased attention, and in appealing to the sympathies of the people to come to the aid of our church, to help her by strengthening her hands, and enlarging her borders, it will be well for the matured wisdom of the Synod to be brought to bear upon the consideration of the matter, with the view of devising some scheme for grappling with this difficulty, and extinguishing these debts. The efforts of some of our churches in church erection, and the extinguishment of church debts have been noble. Their example may well stimulate others to follow it.

The Committee feel constrained to bring another matter under the consideration of the Synod, that is, the mode in which church property in Upper Canada may be disposed of.

The Act which gave the power, was the 12th Vic., cap. 91; but it expressly required the assent to the sale of the Synod, or other Superior Court.

This Act was modified by the Act 18 Vic. cap. 119, which gave the power of sale to the congregation, solely on consenting thereto, but without repealing the provisions of the previous Act in express terms at least.

Recently, too, several churches have obtained private Acts of the Legislature authorizing them to alienate certain of their properties.

The Committee without entering into or expressing any opinion upon the merits of these cases are clearly of opinion that the interests of the whole church would be best promoted were the consent of the Synod required in all cases of sale of property. That body can take a calmer and more dispassionate view of the whole circumstances of such cases with a view to the future, as well as the present interests of congregations than they may perhaps do themselves, if under the influence of any temporary pressure, or other local excitement.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Synod should petition the Legislature to place the law in such a position that the consent of the Synod should be requisite in all cases of sale of church property. The Committee think also that all Trustees of church property should be required to report annually to the several congregations on whose behalf they hold the trust as to their gestion of it.

The Committee, in the exercise of the power given them, at a recent meeting associated the Rev. Dr. Mathieson, and the Rev. W. Snodgrass with them. They have only further to report that two of the congregations in Lower Canada took advantage of the Act prepared by the Committee to overcome the difficulties arising from the omission to provide for successors to the original Trustees, and if any others are in like position they should act immediately as the statute will speedily expire. The whole respectfully submitted.

ALEX. MORRIS, *Chairman.*

JOHN GREENSHIELDS, *Secretary.*

Montreal, 22nd May, 1857.