

Thursday, April 10th

Quotes Old Precedent.

"May I also say—and I think this is the first time I have thrust myself into this discussion—that it is a matter of deep regret to me that the representatives of the various groups who have taken such an active part in this discussion did not see fit to give consideration to the bill that has been laid on the table this morning by the Law Clerk of the House. I am not going to say for one moment that I believe all truth was compressed in that measure, but in the light of a resolution passed in the General Assembly in June, 1923, and which is reported in the Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, page 90, and reads as follows: 'President Murray moved, seconded by R. M. Dickey, that the following be added to the report on Church Union and become Clause 6 of that report: "The committee is hereby empowered to use its best effort by amendment of proposed legislation or otherwise (consistently with the objects and general form of legislation as approved by the Assembly), to maintain the unity of the Church, or if that be impossible, then to reach a satisfactory agreement with the minority in reference to the name and status of non-concurring congregations and division of denominational property and rights of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, without recourse, as far as possible, to the commission referred to in the said legislation'." And the motion carried.

Thinks Opportunity Lost.

"If I may read between the lines of that resolution, and catch what I believe was the spirit of the Presbyterian Church, may I not at this juncture express the hope that if those representing the discordant groups in the Presbyterian Church—and at the moment I do not touch on the problem of the Methodist or Congregational Churches, because, with general unanimity, they have expressed a desire to enter the Union—may I say that, had the discordant groups in the Presbyterian Church only seen fit to get together and consider this amended bill, was there not a possibility, if the spirit of conciliation had been in the air, if there had been a desire to get together, that through this amended bill a via media might have been found that would have religious peace, spiritual freedom, and that would have at least brought us some way toward the observation of the eleventh commandment?"

Appeal for Unity.

"I don't know whether or not I speak the voice of this committee," said Mr. Nickle, in conclusion, "but I do hope this one thing—that, between now and the time Parliament again meets, those who had a vision of a great thing and a tremendous advance to unity of the spiritual life of this country may be able to get in contact with those who have a warm and close attachment to the religion of their fathers, and, by mutual concession and good-will, reach a conclusion that will make possible the attainment of a great ideal, and at the same time recognize a conviction of many people that stirs them to their very depths."

Copies of the amended bill were distributed to members, with the suggestion that it be studied, in view of a possible new bill next year.