

# CHURCH UNION QUESTION GOES TO THE PEOPLE

### Presbyterian General Assembly Adopted Report.

## VOTE WAS 366 TO 84

#### DEBATE CONTINUED ALL MORNING AND AFTERNOON

#### Judge Farrell Declared That the Spirit of Parsimony Prevailed in Union Churches He Had Observed in Saskatchewan.

By a vote of 366 to 84, the Presbyterian General Assembly on Tuesday afternoon adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Church Union to submit the question of organic union of the Presbyterian Methodist and Congregational churches to a vote of the presbyteries and congregations and to have the vote reported to the meeting of Assembly in June, 1916.

Nearly the whole of the morning and afternoon sederunt was devoted to the discussion of this great question. Those opposed to union had their case ably presented by Rev. Dr. McLeod, Barris; Rev. Dr. Fullerton, Charlottetown, P.E.I.; Rev. Dr. Campbell, Montreal, and others. The union cause was championed chiefly by Rev. Dr. John Neil, Toronto; Rev. Dr. Herridge, Ottawa; Rev. Dr. Bryce, Winnipeg, and Rev. Dr. W. J. Clark, Montreal, chairman of the committee, who closed the debate briefly.

A committee was named by the Moderator to prepare the voting papers to be submitted to the presbyteries and congregations so that the

question would be more thoroughly understood than on previous occasions when votes were taken.

Dr. Herridge, in supporting the sending of the question to the people, stated that unless the vote was larger and more decisive than the previous one, he would be the first to move that the Assembly go on further in the matter.

#### The Discussion Continued.

Dr. Robert Campbell in continuing the discussion on the opening of the Tuesday afternoon sederunt, held that the proposed Basis of Union does not carry out what is contained in the confession of faith, the Presbyterian standard. He declared that the compromises in the Basis showed the desire to be in agreement with men rather than in the work of God. Surely, said Dr. Campbell, the union party has made a mistake when they think that the opposition should quietly submit to the proposal to uproot the Presbyterian church. They mistake the character of Presbyterians who always stood for their rights and privileges.

"I am not speaking from the popular point of view, I know," said the doctor.

"I deny," he continued, "that denominational differences are a stumbling block in the way of Christianity. Look the good that has resulted by the growth and development of Calvinism, Methodism and Anglicanism."

Dr. Campbell asked what account was to be taken of all the Presbyterians who did not choose to vote on the question of union. Many of these held to the view that the General Assembly had no right to ask them if they were willing to change their religion?

Rev. D. D. Miller, Glengarry, held

that the Presbyterian churches instead of being covered, as was alleged, were urging the courts of the church to go into union. "Britain had gone into a union to destroy Kaiserism," said Mr. Miller. "Let the churches of Canada unite to destroy the Kingdom of Satan." Mr. Miller stated that if the Basis of Union failed, the Congregational Church stood to gain. "If the Basis did fail," said Mr. Miller, "the polity of our church must and will undergo a change."

#### Rev. Dr. Herridge Speaks.

Dr. Herridge, ex-Moderator, said he had kept silence during the past year on the question of church union, because he was Moderator of the whole church, but now he was unmuzzled and free to speak his mind. "We are agreed that this matter must go on," said Dr. Herridge, "and that the final court of appeal must be to the membership of our church. Unless the next vote is larger and more decisive than the previous one, I will be the first to move in this Assembly that we go on further." (Applause.)

Regarding the suggestion of a truce, the speaker claimed this was not the time for such action. The war time he felt was the best time to bring this question to an issue, because the membership of the church was inclined to look at all things in the most careful way. This was the best time to bring this question to the people on this great question. If there ever was a time when we should put asunder all differences, this war time is the time in the history of our church in Canada.

"It was not on my tour of Canada as Moderator of the Presbyterian church, I had been an opponent of church union, that tour would have converted me," declared Dr. Herridge, amid applause.

"A policy of water, such as pursued by the church if carried out by the British Empire just now would lead to the disintegration of the Empire."

"I believe that union, instead of destroying the Presbyterian church, will yield it, a life more abundant. You cannot destroy Presbyterianism, and we would not if we could. This question is not going to be settled in debate. It must be settled on our knees. The question we have to ask is how we can best serve the religious and moral interests of this land—whether by remaining as we are or by getting together with other churches and working shoulder to shoulder."

Rev. Dr. Bryce, Winnipeg, held that under the basis of union it was not proposed to be anything else than Presbyterianism. The system of government was still to be Presbyterian. He deprecated the appeal entirely to the past. Church union would be a great aid to the west.

#### The Debate Prolonged.

The time (3.30) having arrived for the putting of the question to a vote, as agreed at the morning sederunt, it was agreed to continue the debate until 4.30 o'clock.

Judge Farrell, Mosomin, Sask., asked how the church was to advance if the Assembly was to wrangle over questions instead of uniting. He said that his observations of union churches in Saskatchewan showed him that the churches gave no more money to missions nor to the pastors. The spirit of parsimony prevailed.

Rev. F. R. Larkin, Seaford, declared that nine-tenths of church disunion was between Presbyterian and Presbyterian, and between Methodist and Methodist rather than between Presbyterian and Methodist.

"I think that this question has perhaps been left too much to the ministers of the church," said John Fleming, Winnipeg, "and the laymen have not been heard enough." "I have every sympathy with those who stand in defence of the Presbyterian church. My belief is this: 'What will co-operation do? What will come of those members of the Presbyterian church who are handed over to the care of the Methodists. I would favor continuing negotiation with the other churches and in a few years more there will perhaps not be any difficulty at all.'"

G. M. Macdonnell, K.C., Kingston, asked: "Is the Presbyterian church worth preserving?"

"We are invited to terminate its existence, and forget the name in which we were nurtured. That is the keynote of this Basis of Union," declared this Chalmers church elder, who remarked that it was due to the Scottish church that Scotland had sent more of its men to the war than had England and Ireland.

Rev. J. L. Gourlay, Lancaster, said that "as you are going to kill the Presbyterian church, I came to speak at the funeral. I say with gladstone, 'Let's trust the people.' I voted twice against union in the west; but if union is to be for the benefit of the whole church, I'll work for it, and all the Presbyterians of Glengarry will back me."

P. Fisher, Davidson, Sask., referred to an editorial which he said appeared in the Whig of Saturday last, in which "we were called 'midnight sectarians.'" He declared that the writer of that editorial should apologize. The speaker said that he had never sowed a seed of sectarianism in his life.

Rev. Peter Walker, Calgary, remarked that he would like to see a man in the General Assembly rise up and say his wife lost her identity when she married him. It was the same regarding Presbyterianism in the Basis of Union.

Rev. D. W. McRae, Mitchell, Ont., son of an ex-Moderator said he had voted against church union on four occasions. He came to this Assembly open-minded, and he had come to the conclusion that the matter should again be submitted to the people.

"I hold in my hand the names of over 700 worthy ministers and laymen who are pledged to hold the minority together," said Rev. F. B. Wilson, Trochu, Alberta.

In closing the debate, Rev. Dr. Clark, said he was more than satisfied with the weight of argument presented in support of the committees report. He pointed out that the clear-cut issue before the Assembly to-day was whether we should ask our people if we should unite forces, or whether we should stay to the other two churches that we will go no further towards union.

The Vote Taken. The vote was then taken and re-

sulted 366 to 84 in favor of the committee's report.

Rev. Dr. E. F. Scott, Montreal, then moved, seconded by Rev. Dr. Heines, Montreal; that the taking of the vote be referred to the next Assembly, in view of the present war conditions. This resolution was lost by a vote of 368 to 74.

It was decided that a committee should prepare the voting papers to be submitted to the presbyteries and the congregations. The Moderator named as committee members, Rev. Dr. Bryce (convenor), the two clerks, Rev. Dr. McLeod, Rev. D. R. Drummond, Hamilton Cassels and James Muir.

#### Social Service and Evangelism.

The report of the Board of Social Service and Evangelism, of which Rev. C. W. Gordon, D.D., Winnipeg (Ralph Connor) is chairman, was presented at the evening sederunt and gave a splendid résumé of the work done during the year. Dr. Gordon, owing to being attached to a Winnipeg Battalion for service at the front, was unable to be present.

This is the eighth anniversary of the establishment of the Department of Social and Evangelism by the Presbyterian church. Its work includes Evangelism, Moral and Social Reform, Redemptive and Preventive Work for Girls, Church and Congregational Districts, Men's Work in the Church, the Church and Rural Life, the Church and Industrial Life and the Church and Business and Politics.

With regard to the Lord's Day, the report said that it was at least as well observed as in the recent past. Progress was reported in suppressing social vice.

The Board reported that the weakest part of the church's life is the men's work, which is perhaps true of all the churches. It recommended as a practical ideal, towards which all churches are invited to work, an organization under the general direction of the local church leadership of the members of the congregation, in which a proper programme of religious training to meet the needs of the men shall be provided and through which a complete programme of Christian activities shall be undertaken.

With regard to "graft" in business and politics the report said: "Let the light be ruthlessly and continually turned on, as darkness disappears necessarily, before the light."

Let the pulpit and press persistently apply the application of common honesty to political life alike in the constituencies and in the halls of legislation."

In connection with the report, short addresses were delivered by Miss J. C. Rattie on "The work among girls," by Rev. Principal John Mackay on political graft, and by Rev. Dr. Shearer.

Principal McKay, Vancouver, addressed the court on the political situation in Canada. He showed how difficult the position is for a minister to take a share in politics, and escape the charge of partizanship. He later received two anonymous letters in which he was abused for being a dyed-in-the-wool Grit, and a sanctimonious hypocrite. Continuing he said that Canada's political history had an unsavory notoriety through out the Empire. The worst foe of a free people is corrupt Government. The greatest fallacy is to hold that a man is loyal to his party when he denounces a mis-demeanor. "I would like to see a new party, or the existing parties decide to throw overboard the patronage evil. The Christian conscience demands this and such a party will win out," said Principal McKay.

(See Also Page 8.)

## COUNTY COURT CASES

### AGED MAN ACCUSED OF REMOVING RAILWAY SIGNALS

Three Slander Cases On Docket Dismissed Without Costs—Convict Who Tried to Escape From "Pen" To Stand Trial.

Thomas Beverley, aged, and of unsound mind, so it is alleged, stood charged before Judge Madden, in the county court which opened on Tuesday afternoon, with a very serious offence—that of having removed three signal lamps from the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Mountain Grove.

A most pitiful part of the case was that a son of the defendant, who is employed as a signal man for the company at this place, was called to give evidence against his father. He regarded his father as being of unsound mind, and it was stated in court, that medical evidence would be secured to show that the accused was not in his right mind. As Dr. I. G. Fogart, jail physician, could not be secured to give evidence at this session, the case was allowed to stand over until the morning.


The offence took place on May 11th last. The case was given a summary hearing before Justice of the Peace George Hunter who committed the accused to stand his trial. The proceedings were most unarranged, admitted the offence.

"I did the act all right," he said to the judge, and proceeded to mumble something, which could not be heard in the court room.

Then the judge and spectators smiled as J. L. Whiting, K.C., who was conducting the prosecution was heard to remark, "Tell the court you are not guilty."

Mr. Whiting then referred to the circumstances surrounding the case, and stated that if the accused was laboring under any disease at the time he committed the offence he could not be found guilty. The jury as securing this evidence could return a verdict of "not guilty."

The son Thomas J. Beverley in his evidence, told about his father getting up out of his bed on the night in question and taking down three signal lamps which had been placed in position. One of the lights had been left by his father on the station platform, and another on the verandah of his home. The light on the station platform had been the means of "holding" up one of the fast passenger trains for half an hour. The engineer thought that something was wrong and had stopped. It was not



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