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THE DISPATCH OFFICE

## Anti-Unionists Take Pledge Like the Old Covenanters

Toronto, Oct. 20.—Amid a scene reminiscent of Scottish ecclesiastical history, the Presbyterian delegates became Covenanters and the Presbyterian Church Association (for the continuance of the Presbyterian Church in Canada), developed this morning from the Presbyterian convocation, which, after a three days' session in St. Andrew's Church, closes here tonight.

At this morning's sederunt the financial proposals of the Rev. Dr. Brown were also disposed of. The closure was made without a moment of open discussion.

Just before noon, came the solemn moment of acceptance of the resolution received as the new covenant to continue the church.

After Professor D. A. Murray, of McGill, presented the resolution with all its stern, simple argument of fact the Rev. Dr. Robert Campbell, of Montreal, led in prayer, and the 300, by standing vote, pledged themselves to maintain Presbyterianism, while the chairman, the Rev. Dr. Robertson, read the document and all united in singing Psalm 102, beginning: "Thou shalt arise and mercy yet to Zion shall extend."

Six stanzas were sung with much feeling. Then, as one delegate shouted, "Bring forth the red ink and the stone," the historic convention resolved to make provision for the signing of the continuance resolution.

"We, the members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, assembled in St. Andrew's church, Toronto, whilst affirming our belief in the spiritual unity of all believers, our cordiality towards our brethren of other communions and our willingness for all feasible co-operation with them in the interests of the Kingdom of God, express our conviction that the time has not yet arrived for the discontinuance of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"For, whereas the Union Committee in its first report, and the General Assembly of 1905, in adopting that report, laid down as a condition of organic union 'that a union of the churches to be real and lasting must carry the consent of the entire membership.'"

And whereas the first vote of the people in 1911 was taken upon that understanding, and out of a total membership of 298,916, 113,000 voted in favor of organic union and 50,733 voted against it.

"And whereas in the vote of 1915, out of a total membership of 338,322, 113,600 voted in favor of organic union and 73,735 voted against it;

"And whereas, according to the foregoing, from 1911 to 1915 the membership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada increased approximately 40,000 the vote for union increasing only 600 while the vote against union increased 23,000;

"And whereas only about one-third of the entire membership has declared itself in favor of the proposed organic union;

"And whereas the action of the General Assembly at Winnipeg was manifestly untimely and ill-advised;

"And whereas the foregoing facts indicate that a case in favor of the proposed organic church union has not been established;

"Therefore, in view of these facts, as well as for other reasons, it is hereby resolved that our present duty is to maintain and continue the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to this duty we solemnly pledge ourselves."

John Penman, who had pleaded for the standing vote, called for a meeting for intercession and an afternoon session was accordingly called. Mr. Penman entertained all delegates from the Western and Maritime Provinces at luncheon. The resolutions are to be spoken at the final sederunt tonight.

A fairly complete national organization, designed to meet all contingencies for the coming crucial year, was effected in the morning. Enthusiasm rose as the framework of organization and the personnel of permanent committees were given by C. S. MacDonald, Ottawa, for the nomination committee.

The name of the Rev. Dr. Fraser, principal of Montreal Presbyterian College, for president, was warmly received. The active head of the association, Dr. Andrew Robertson, vice-president, is to have associated with him a strong control executive from Ontario and Quebec province. Provincial vice-presidents were also added to the executive committee to head the organization in each province, as legis-

lation to consummate union will be provincial.

Principal Fraser and the Rev. Andrew Robertson, Toronto, were appointed to prepare a letter. The latter pointed out from the chair that the communication must go to opponents as well as friends. "The committee recommended that it be a 'pastoral' letter, but on motion of Dr. E. Scott, the adjective was omitted. Delegates everywhere rose to insist that the letter be sent direct to the people and not through the pastors.

A recommendation was that a field secretary be appointed by the executive. Members urged that remuneration be now provided for. Several seized the opportunity to urge that the publication of the proposed weekly journal be definitely arranged for before prorogation. The matter of a field secretary, impressed upon the association by Mr. MacDonald, as "absolutely essential" was left to the executive, who are also to select and empower a publications committee.

The Rev. A. B. Winchester, Toronto, reporting on Dr. Brown's finance measures, stated that a "substantial contribution" had been made to the debate, but as Presbyterians the committee could not consider the church already disrupted or the convocation empowered to advise the withholding of contributions from the church.

The committee's recommendation, therefore, was that Dr. Brown's position could not be debated at the present gathering with profit. On motion of Dr. E. Scott, the report was adopted and discussion shelved.

Accepting reluctantly the pigeonholing of his paper, the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Red Deer, insisted that the question of financing the association's propaganda be taken up. Controller John McKeen, Halifax, was moved to the rostrum. Immediately he charged that ecclesiastical had come to dominate the church's finances, but the funds could not be abandoned.

The "maladroitness" of the unionists had made it difficult for the association to do its duty by itself and by the church funds, he said. He advocated overtures to the General Assembly that the mission funds be not "tapped" for the union propaganda.

"They have been tapped," interjected William Ferrier, Mimico.

Rev. Mr. Winchester, as convenor on the Brown recommendations, reported as follows:

"Whilst we regard many of the suggestions as of great potential value, we deem it unwise to introduce them for the following reasons:

"(1) It might be interpreted as assuming that the Presbyterian Church was already disrupted and without the proper and legitimate means for initiating and effecting necessary reforms or changes in the methods of administration.

"(2) It might be interpreted as assuming that this convention was arrogating to itself powers which inhere only in Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies.

"(3) As the Presbyterian Church still exists with its constitutional government and administration, we, as mem-

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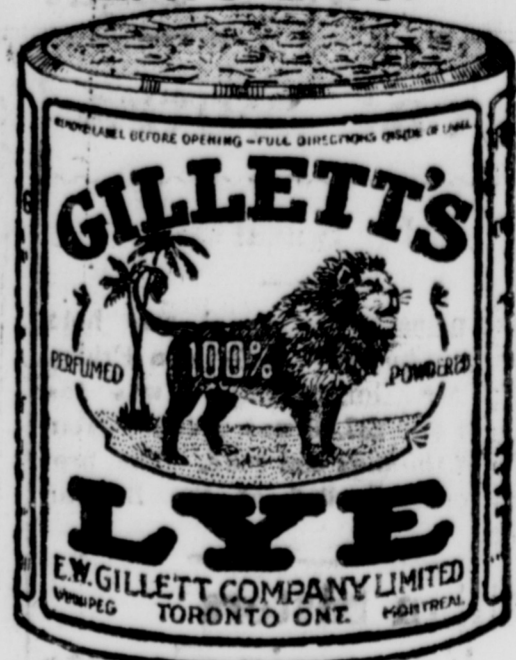
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bers, elders and ministers, are bound to continue to fulfill our respective duties and obligations.

"(4) Since it would be imprudent at this stage to anticipate future possible reorganization or adjustments, and since it is not contributory to the defence purposes for which this convocation was called, we, therefore, respectfully submit that the discussion of the recommendations at this time would serve no useful end."

Toronto, Oct. 23.—A page of old Scottish history, the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, was recalled by the scene when Presbyterians from all over the Dominion gathered last Thursday at St. Andrew's Church for the closing day of the convention called to oppose church union. It was a scene that will not lightly be forgotten by those who saw it. The two hundred odd men heard read a resolution, prepared by the Committee on Resolutions, setting forth in full the reasons which actuated the convocation, and concluding:

"It is hereby resolved that our present duty is to maintain and continue the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to this duty we solemnly pledge ourselves."

There was a pause as the reading of the resolution closed, and then, spontaneously, came the request for prayer and that the signatures of the convocation be put to the resolution. Rev. Dr. Campbell then led in a brief extempore prayer, and the chairman asked: "Do we so pledge ourselves?" Standing in absolute unanimity, the assembled voted "Yes."

All else in the long morning session lost interest before the unyielding sternness of the resolve of men who claim descent through a line of hardy Canadian pioneers from the Covenanters of old Caledonia.

The convocation decided to adopt the title of the Presbyterian Church Association, and elected Rev. Principal Fraser, Montreal, as first president, with Rev. Dr. Andrew Robertson, Toronto, first vice president. A central committee for executive work, drawn largely from Ontario and Quebec, was agreed upon, and the following vice presidents chosen to represent the provinces on the executive: Prince Edward Island, T. C. James; Nova Scotia, John McKeen; New Brunswick, Hon. L. J. Tweedie; Quebec, John McEwan; Ontario, John Penman; Manitoba, Judge Robson; Saskatchewan, Judge Farrell; Alberta, F. W. Monteith; British Columbia, Hon. J. C. Brown. Newfoundland will be provided for later.

The following central executive was elected: Rev. Dr. A. Robertson, C. S. MacDonald, Rev. Dr. Eakin, J. Ross Robertson and John Turnbull, Toronto; A. B. Dewar, Hamilton; Rev. W. H. Sedgwick, Hamilton; E. O. McCulloch, Galt; Rev. J. K. Fraser, Galt; Rev. A. J. McGillivray, Guelph; G. D. Roberts, Hespeler; G. M. McDonnell, K. C. Kingston; Rev. Malcolm Campbell, Rev. R. A. Montgomery, James Podger, G. A. Campbell, Professor D. A. Murray, Montreal; Hon. R. M. McGregor, New Glasgow, N. S.; E. Kaulbach, Halifax; Dr. W. McK. McLeod, Sydney, C. B.; Rev. R. Baird, Woodstock, N. B.; C. S. Everitt, St. Andrews, N. B.; Donald McKinnon, K. C., Charlottetown, P. E. I.; Mr. Galbraith, Winnipeg; A. F. Angus, Regina; W. M. McConnacher, Calgary; Rev. W. G. Brown, Red Deer, Alta.; Rev. R. G. McBeth, Vancouver, and A. B. Fraser, Victoria, with power to add.

It was agreed to send out a letter, not to bear the name pastoral, but of the same nature, to all Presbyterians within each, whether for or against union. The appointment of a field secretary was left to the executive.

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