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THE CHURCH UNION BILL WAS

CARRIED BY TWO TO ONE VOTE

(Continued from Page 2.)

Churches. It seemed to him that no good reason had been pointed out by which one could believe that the General Assembly did not act legally and constitutionally in agreeing to that basis of union. It was only on that ground that he could be led to support the bill. It was on that consideration that he had opposed the motion that this Legislature did not consider the bill until after action should be taken by the Parliament of Canada. So far as property was concerned the matter must be dealt with by the provincial legislatures. Provincial acts could not take effect until the Dominion Parliament should pass a Federal Act, which would give the church a corporate name. Having decided that the General Assembly had acted legally and that the property rights of the minority were protected he must decide for the adoption of section 3 as it stands and vote against the amendment.

A Baptist View.

MR. ESTABROOKS said he was at a loss as to the stand he should take. During the present session he had advocated Church Union, basing his opinion upon the great improvement it would make in the smaller communities of the country. But when an amendment was proposed which was to enable a church to vote itself in or out of union he felt that he favored it as a principle of his own church, the Baptists. And he might say that any of his Presbyterian friends who might find themselves without a church, should union become a fact, might turn to that church where their cantankerous selves could be dipped beneath the healing waters. He had gone home about decided to vote for the bill, but had met a good Methodist divine who had threatened an application of the big stick if he did not support the bill. Of course there was nothing that would make him vote more quickly the other way, even against the dictates of conscience. He would refrain from voting unless actually called upon.

MR. YOUNG said that the opponents of the bill were not against Church Union and believed it was coming, but they wanted to preserve the identity of the three churches. It might be asked what was in the name but it easily could be answered that there might be very much. He felt that he should give each congregation a right to say whether its members should go into Union or stay out. That was the deciding point.

Mr. Scully.

MR. SCULLY said he would rather not vote on this matter. Certain Presbyterians in his own constituency had appealed him to support an amendment such as that which had been moved. As far as actual Church Union was concerned he was not interested. The church to which he belonged had held out the olive branch for many years, and there was a good class of union in that. He was aware that literature had been distributed through the House which had attempted to make out that there would exist something sinister in the voting of hon. members belonging to his church in this particular matter. However, he was bigger than that. His wish, as far as this bill was concerned, was to protect the rights of the minority.

Favored Union.

MR. SCOVILL said he was for union, not only of the three churches named but all. He had satisfied his mind that it would be a great thing. However, he believed that a serious mistake was made in trying to force this bill through. He felt that the bill would be amended before becoming law and he regretted that it had not been withdrawn until after the Federal Parliament had reached a decision. The bill must be passed in all Parliaments of Canada to make Church Union effective. And he believed the only thing to do was to amend it so as to be fair and to protect the Presbyterian people who were not willing to go in.

MR. BENTLEY said he would like his hon. friend to point out where the bill was not fair.

MR. SCOVILL said the unfairness consisted in forcing people in. He believed fifty per cent of Presbyterian congregations were wholly against it.

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If the matter were to be decided on the basis of numbers the bill would have to be supported for seventy-five or eighty per cent of the three denominations concerned were for Union. However, he conscientiously must oppose the bill. He believed that if it was laid over amendments would be made which would satisfy all parties. It being six o'clock the Committee arose to resume at eight.

The Farmer Leader.

MR. FAWCETT, on the Committee resuming after recess, said that the question had been pretty well discussed and there was very little to be added. The churches had formed a Union without consulting Parliament or the Legislature, and it was apparent that they must have had the necessary authority for so doing. He did not see any reason why the Legislature should seek to break up that Union. Some amendments had been moved, but it seemed to him that their only object was to kill the bill. Personally he considered it his duty to vote for the bill, as he scarcely felt like taking the responsibility of doing anything to retard such a great movement. He was aware that in the rural districts there were many small churches with poorly-paid ministers, and he regarded Union as a measure calculated to advance the cause.

MR. YOUNG said that as some objections had been raised to the bill on behalf of the Methodists and Congregationalists, he would ask permission to withdraw his amendment and substitute an alternative amendment. He proposed to strike out the words "Presbyterian Church of Canada" from Section 3, and make minor changes in Sections 4 and 5.

MR. STEWART said that he was in favor of Church Union, but had not at first been in accord with some of the provisions of the bill before the House. There were some matters in regard to the government of the Presbyterian Church on which he had not been quite clear, but possibly it was due to lack of knowledge on his part. It had been made clear that there was no other way of consummating the union without taking in all three churches concerned. In the case of the Methodist and Congregationalist churches there had been no difference of opinion. So far as the bill before the Committee was concerned, he was correct in assuming that it would be null and void unless the bill passed at Ottawa and he had made up his mind to vote for it after having listened to the exclamation of the Hon. Attorney General and the Hon. Minister of Lands and Mines.

The amendment to the bill was voted down, and the measure having been read over section by section was agreed to by the Committee.

HON. MR. VENIOT moved an amendment to the effect that the bill should not come into force until after the bill of incorporation shall have passed at Ottawa.

MR. HAYES presented the report of the Committee on Corporations.

HON. MR. MICHAUD moved that leave be granted the Special Committee to whom was referred The Rates and Taxes bill to meet during sittings of the House.

MR. FLEWELLING moved that the fee payable on a bill relating to the town of Woodstock be refunded, it having been withdrawn.

Electoral Districts.

The House again went into Committee, with Mr. Hayes in the Chair, and took up further consideration of a Bill relating to Electoral Districts and Sub-districts.

HON. MR. BYRNE said that as the Hon. Premier had an amendment to substitute for Section 1, he thought that it should be dealt with forthwith so that necessary alterations could be made in other sections of the bill to make it conform to the new section.

HON. MR. VENIOT submitted the section, which defined the electoral districts of the province and the number of representatives each was to have in the Legislative Assembly. He said that the only changes were in connection with the constituencies of York and Charlotte. In the case of Charlotte the towns of St. Stephen and Milltown would return one member and there would be three members for the remainder of the county. In York, Fredericton and the towns of Marysville and Devon would be made a separate electoral district, returning one member, and there would be three members for the remainder of the county. The section would make provisions for the appointment of returning officers for the new constituencies.

Mr. Richards Opposed.

MR. RICHARDS said that while it had been intimated for some days, it was only on Friday last that the House was informed of the nature of the proposed changes. He was sure that hon. members on both sides must have experienced a large degree of surprise at the nature of the proposed changes. It seemed that the object of the amendment was to create two new constituencies, one in York and the other in Charlotte; and no other changes in representation had been suggested. It had been stated that it was simply following a precedent which had been established when Moncton was separated from the county of Westmorland for increased representation and the demand had been met by making Moncton a separate constituency. There was no such reason to justify the proposed changes in Charlotte and York as neither county was entitled to increase representation.

It looked to him as if the whole proposition was nothing but a complete and obvious attempt at gerrymander (Continued on Page Six.)

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