

PART ONE

A Brief History of the Church Union Movement in Canada

ORIGIN AND MOTIVES

There are two main factors underlying the Church Union Movement in Canada. In the first place it is deeply spiritual. The men who led the movement that brought about the Union of the Presbyterian and Methodist and Congregational Churches believed that the will of God for His Church is a unity of spirit expressed outwardly in so striking a fashion that it will convince the world of the truth of Christianity. Men of Catholic spirit were distressed at the torn body of Christ. The divisions within the Church were a sore reproach to them. Many regarded them as a source of weakness in that the forces of the Church, which should have presented a united front in the conflict of winning the world for Christ, were sadly divided. They did not belittle the advantages that had come through divisions in the past when denominations arose to witness to some particular aspect of the truth, but they began to realize more and more fully that the things on which the denominations differed were of small account in comparison with those upon which they agreed. They could not believe that Divine

truth is divided into separate compartments of which each denomination is the guardian of one particular part. Christ is one and indivisible and all agreed that believers everywhere had a real although unseen spiritual unity with one another in Him. But the conviction was growing that the Christian ideal was to make this unseen spiritual fellowship into a visible unity. There were stirrings beneath the surface of denominationalism which showed that spiritual currents were flowing towards the realization of a more complete fulfilment of our Lord's Prayer, "That they all may be one: as Thou Father art in Me and I am in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Questions were being asked as to the deepest implications of that prayer. What did it lead to? Did the existence of denominations really fulfil its meaning? It was increasingly felt that as long as divisions persisted the prayer could not be adequately fulfilled and that visible as well as spiritual unity was the most complete fulfilment.

This was the vision of some of the religious leaders of earlier days. The Rev. Enoch Barker was Chairman of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, which met at Toronto in 1874, and in his Chairman's address he advocated organic union of certain branches of the Christian Church which had much in common. In the course of his speech he said: "Some argue that spiritual union such as we already have to some extent, is the only

kind to be sought, as well as the only kind practicable. It is indeed pleasant to note greater unity even among the various denominations of true Christians than is to be found in some systems of uniformity. But were it not that Christian love is mighty, the existing divisions, with the rivalry and the contractedness that they foster, would be too heavy a strain upon it. It is useless attempting to persuade people that real union already exists when denominations so jostle one another. . . . Would it have been felt that the Church at Jerusalem was united, had it been divided into so many branches as the Christian Church is now? Would not such divisions have incurred Apostolic rebuke? . . . In order, then, to remove occasion of discord, to cultivate broad views and large charity, to arm the Church with its divinely given power, to economize the labor and funds of the Church for missions, to convince the world that Christ and His religion are from above, and especially to please Him whose heart yearned for the oneness of His people—these glorious objects would urge us to seek so close a union as possible among all Christ's people and to make any sacrifices, except those of principle, in order to accomplish it."

In 1890 the following address, signed by Dr. A. Carman and S. F. Huestis, was adopted as an expression of the view of the Conference of the Methodist Church (Canada): "With all sincere Christians we desire to see a closer union among those who labor for the universal prevalence of

Christianity. We feel the urgency of the command 'Preach the Gospel to every creature,' and we are painfully satisfied of the sad fact that the dissensions and divisions of Christendom tend rather to emphasize denominational interests at home, than to spread a knowledge of Christ among the teeming millions abroad. . . . We rejoice in the manifest signs of the times, in the willingness exhibited by so many to merge their minor differences for the sake of the common good: to remove the emphasis from ideas that for generations have been almost rallying points, if by such concessions more united action could be secured."

Principal G. M. Grant, in preaching on 1 Corinthians 1: 13, "Is Christ divided?" put the case strongly.* "This is St. Paul's terribly emphatic summary of what the existence of parties or denominations in the Church meant. The words are enough to fill with horror the mind of anyone who loves the Saviour. . . . But in opposition to Paul who says, 'I exhort you to call yourselves by one common name; modern denominationalism offers a regular argument in its defence. Its plea is substantially this: Men must be faithful to the truth that has been revealed to them, and to allow differences of opinion in the same church is to be unfaithful to the truth. Well, Paul evidently thought nothing of this argument. The differences between believers in his day were more formidable than any that separate our Canadian Churches,

*Queen's University Sunday afternoon addresses 1893.

yet he concluded that the Church should not be divided." Again, in lecturing to his Divinity Class in Queen's University, Principal Grant used these words: "Gentlemen, you and I are not responsible for the existing divisions of Christendom, but I beg you not to accept ordination until you are convinced that should you by word or deed perpetuate these divisions by one unnecessary day you will have been unworthy of your ordination." No less noteworthy were the words of Principal Caven, who was revered and beloved by all for his deeply spiritual nature, and whose utterances were listened to with sincere respect because of his insight, tact and practical wisdom. At the Conference on Christian Unity held in Toronto in April, 1889, Principal Caven expressed his convictions in these words: "While in the wise and merciful providence of God divisions in the Christian Church have often been overruled for good, yet, in themselves, these divisions are to be lamented as productive of many and sore evils. The ideal of the unity of believers set forth in the Scriptures—especially in our Lord's Intercessory Prayer—while chiefly spiritual in its nature, can be fully represented in an undivided state of the visible Church, in which perfect fellowship shall be maintained throughout the entire body of Christ; and it is the duty of the Church, and of all its members continually, to aspire towards, and labor for, the completeness of this manifested union in the Lord." On another occasion he pointed out the higher purposes that secession and disruption had served

in preserving the life of the Church in times of crisis, even as amputation of a limb sometimes saves a life. But denominationalism is not the ideal condition of the Church. If things are right with the Church there should be no divisions or schisms. Many excellent persons do indeed hold that denominationalism is better than organic union and that spiritual unity is all that is needed either for efficient service or in order to fulfil Christ's prayer, "That they all may be one." "For myself," said the venerable Principal, "I do not so think. Union, real organic union, such as we desire, would not only enable us to deal more economically with our resources but what is more important, would represent in a far truer and more perfect way the body of Christ. Spiritual union, if complete and unhampered, must seek adequately to represent itself in outward organic unity." Here is the true basis of the Church Union Movement.

CONCERTED ACTION NECESSARY

The particular needs of a rapidly-growing country provided the other great factor which led many to believe that organic union of the Churches was necessary in Canada. Perhaps the main incentive was the condition of Western Canada where the population was scattered and where the difficulties of maintaining denominationalism were very great. The building of the Trans-Continental Railways prepared the way for settlers, and in the footsteps of the early adventurer there came an ever-increasing

stream of immigration. The Churches strove to keep abreast with this influx. Principal King, Principal Sparling, Dr. James Woodsworth and the heroic James Robertson strove to keep the missionary moving forward with each new settlement. From the beginning there had been denominational rivalry, but it was becoming obvious that if the denominations remained apart the task ahead of them was well-nigh impossible. There was danger that the dis-united churches would not be able to keep pace with the needs of the rapidly-growing population. The problem of the foreign elements alone was most serious. Their peoples were for the most part good settlers on the land, but they lived in segregated areas, isolated from the life of Canada as a whole. There were even some English-speaking areas settled for years in which the people had never had the services of a resident minister. There were Protestant children growing up isolated from the influence of Christianity—a condition not confined to the West. The overwhelming urgency of meeting such needs as these showed the folly of divisions and competition. The important thing was to gain Canada, its men and its life, for the Kingdom of Christ.

What solution could there be? To divide the areas into districts for which one or other of the denominations accepted responsibility, would be an arbitrary proceeding. The formation of Community Churches was suggested and Federation was mooted. Different plans were suggested and tried

and some good results followed. A degree of co-operation was attained, but the attempts showed the almost insuperable difficulties of any such plans. Before long men's minds turned seriously to the plan of organic union as ultimately the only satisfactory solution. Unions within the different denominations were widening men's outlook to a vision of wider and yet wider unions, not only for the sake of expediency but chiefly to express the inward and spiritual necessity.

NATIONAL UNITY AND CHURCH UNION

The whole history of the political and religious life of Canada is a story of the knitting together of separate units to form a larger and more complete whole. National union and Church union have gone side by side. The Canadian spirit has been moving steadily towards wider unity. Politically that spirit found expression in Confederation, religiously it was manifested by movements among the churches towards unity. The Methodist Churches in the Dominion had made a definite move towards nation-wide unity by a union in 1874, and eight years after Confederation the dream of a united and Dominion-wide Presbyterian Church for all Canada was realized. These unions not only broadened and deepened the spiritual life of the churches, but had a definite effect upon national life, by bringing about a better understanding between the people of the different provinces and the

realization of a common interest. Canada was a nation in the making and only the ties of religious fellowship could lay the foundations in righteousness.

Thus it may fairly be claimed that union is a characteristic of Canadian life. From the early days of British occupation, nearly all the great religious bodies in Canada have taken shape as the result of a series of Unions which have occurred with great regularity. Christians of varying creeds were brought together by the spiritual needs of a scattered population and by the intermingling of members of different denominations in each small settlement. In many cases the slender resources of pioneer communities admitted of the support of only one minister or meeting-house. Often they found that the grounds of difference existing between them in the country of their origin did not exist in this new land. It was but a step to establish a principle that differences between churches in the Old Land should not stand in the way of unity in the new. It became increasingly clear that it was absurd to reproduce the sectarian divisions which were historically justifiable in the land of their origin but which had no *raison d'être* in the new. The history of the development of the church in Canada shows that the principle became extended for men felt that when the need for which a particular sect had arisen no longer existed, there was no further barrier to wider union.

HISTORY AND PROCEDURE

The first non-Episcopal Church in what is now the Dominion of Canada was the "Protestant Dissenters' Chapel," established in Halifax in 1749. Formed as a union church partly of Congregationalists and partly of Scotch Presbyterians, it was organized at a meeting held in an Anglican Church and for many years got its ministers from both Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. It is also interesting to note that the first Presbytery meeting was held at the Protestant Dissenters' Church at Halifax in 1770 to conduct the earliest Presbyterian Ordination in what is now Canada. For this purpose a Presbytery was constituted consisting of two Presbyterian and two Congregational ministers. It was a union but for a moment and for the particular object of conducting the Ordination, but it is significant of the broadening influences of the new conditions. The first organic union took place in 1817 and following this there was a succession of unions among the Presbyterian bodies, until in 1875 all were united as The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The union negotiations had not been easy, and nearly every step had been vigorously opposed at some point. But within eight years of the birth of the Dominion there was constituted a Dominion-wide Presbyterian Church free to work out its destiny in the new land; free from all ties with the mother churches, yet bound to them as truly as the Dominion is bound to the

mother land. This was the first complete Union and was the result of a long series of Unions, nine in all, in addition to seven absorptions of formerly independent bodies.

The same process was going on in the Methodist Church and there is an imposing array of Unions among its groups to give further proof that we have here a national process. Altogether there were eight unions in the Methodist Church and these unions included some sixteen bodies. Some of these had been separated simply through geographical conditions, others because they sprang from different parents and yet others arose from internal dissensions. The tendency in the succession of union movements was to widen the church on the scale of the growth of the provinces. With the formation of the Dominion, Methodist Unions began to be of a national scale until in 1884 all their bodies were united as The Methodist Church.

The Congregational Churches of Canada also exhibited the same tendency, for their congregations organized The Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1846, and The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec in 1854. These two bodies united as The Congregational Union of Canada in 1906. The nature of these unions was somewhat different from those of the other churches, for it was not a matter of uniting different communions, but of consolidating the church throughout the Dominion.

Within the Anglican Church the trend towards

unity was manifest in the formation of the Anglican Synod in 1890.

Clearly union is rooted in the past history of Canada. Equally clearly the churches which united in the past looked for larger unions in the future. The contentious features of the different bodies created long before by particular circumstances were bound to be out of place in the virile Protestantism demanded in a young country such as Canada. The hope of a general union of Canadian Protestant Churches had been expressed by responsible leaders of the Church from early time. At the time of the Nova Scotia Union of 1860, Professor Ross of Truro said: "We accept what has been done most thankfully as a token of further union. The thought is transporting. When the spirit of union begins to move, who will venture to set bounds to its influence?" At the consummation of the Presbyterian Union of 1861, Dr. Ormiston closed an address at Montreal in these words: "May God grant that not in this church alone, but in all churches the spirit of union may prevail . . . till it covers the whole land."

An article in the *Presbyterian Witness* (Halifax), of 18th June, 1874, is strikingly suggestive of the movement towards union. "If all Presbyterians can become one church and all Methodists another in this generation" it asks, "why should not a future day make these two bodies one? It would be no stranger than the facts which our eyes now behold." It goes on to point out the absurdity of people who

agree otherwise being kept apart by dead issues. Equally suggestive is the Resolution carried by the Anglican Synod of Quebec in the same year (1874) giving "expression to its earnest desire that under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, some suitable measure may be adopted, so that representatives of the various religious bodies, especially those among the Protestant Christians, may meet and consult how they may best advance the blessed cause of union in heart and in church membership." Words were carried into action by the appointment of a committee to consider the best means for bringing the various branches of the church together again in one body. In referring to this resolution of the Episcopal Synod of Quebec, the *Presbyterian Witness* remarks: "The Congregational Union and this (Anglican) Synod, representing communities very far apart in their outward form have both of them given utterance to views on the subject of Church Union which have surpassed, probably, anything that has been mooted in these (Presbyterian) Churches which during this year have brought actual Unions to the verge of consummation."

In that same year Principal Grant gave an address, "The Church of Canada—Can Such a Thing be?" His forecast seemed Utopian, but within twenty years it was giving promise of ultimate fulfilment, and he was able to say: "Union is in the air and we all breathe the air." Ever since 1875 The Presbyterian Church in Canada had foreseen

a greater union. When the church was first brought into being the inaugural address of the Moderator, Dr. John Cook, dealt with this subject in these prophetic words: "I may perhaps take the opportunity of saying what I have said elsewhere, that far larger union is, I trust, in store for the Churches of Christ even in Canada than that which we effect this day. That is but a small step to the union which our Lord's Intercessory Prayer seems to contemplate. . . . It behooves us in this matter of union as in regard to all Christian duty, to be looking and pressing forward to greater attainments. . . . We justly revere the men of Glasgow in 1638 and of Westminster in 1649, but they were not inspired prophets more than we; and no larger union will be accomplished if we hold in regard to them . . . that every part and parcel of what they established is as little to be touched or altered as the words of the Evangelists or Apostles. . . . There has been a strong tendency everywhere to expose and protest against the errors and deficiencies of other bodies. There would, I apprehend, be greater profit in looking for and marking the good that is in them. I am deliberately of the opinion that there is not one Christian organization from the Church of Rome down to the last-formed gathering of the Plymouth Brethren from whence some good lesson might not be learned, and which could not be added for its advantage to our common Presbyterianism. . . . It is in the prevalence of such reasonable humility

in respect to themselves and charitable constructions in regard to others in the Protestant Churches of the Dominion, that I look for a union in the future, before which the present—blessed and auspicious though we justly count it—shall appear slight and insignificant. May God hasten it in His time!"

Discussions among the Congregationalists in 1887 brought out the fact that the distinctive principle of Congregational individualism was being more and more adopted and acted upon by other religious bodies, while on the other hand the necessity for general co-operation and mutual assistance among churches was being acknowledged even by the most ardent Independents and was being carried out more fully everywhere. In such circumstances it was frequently being asked if a union between the Congregational Churches and some of the other religious bodies could not be effected on terms which would be honorable and acceptable to all concerned. Some were quite prepared for such a union but many thought the difficulties were insuperable. The *Toronto Globe* of 24th March, 1887, expresses the opinion, "That the more the question is stirred the more the desire for its realization will grow in strength and the more its feasibility and its varied advantages will become apparent and attractive." Correspondence in the columns of the *Globe* at this time showed that interest was being taken in the subject.

A little later in the same year a book, entitled "Organic Union of the Christian Churches," was

issued by the Very Reverend Dean Carmichael, of Montreal, in which the author set forth many potent arguments in favor of Protestant union, emphasizing the fact that Canada was in an admirable position to test such union. He showed that when the authoritative documents of the churches were examined there was a wonderful amount of agreement on all the great leading fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

Undoubtedly it was an age of union and communion. Christians of all denominations were drawing more closely to one another, and the hope was freely expressed that the drawing together of the various bodies was but part of a wider, deeper and more magnificent movement which would embrace all believers.

WIDER UNION

The first steps toward wider union were taken in 1885 when the Provincial Synod of Canada (Anglican) appointed a committee on Christian Union and invited conference with the Methodists and Presbyterians. Next year the Methodist General Conference appointed a committee to confer and the Presbyterian General Assembly appointed a similar committee in 1888. A conference on Christian Unity was held in the following year between the committees appointed by the general organizations of their churches, and as a result the idea of organic unity gained a great hold upon the minds of many. This was the period of the emergence of the Lambeth

Quadrilateral, and when details of the historic Episcopate came to be discussed it was found that no real progress towards union could be made. Opinion was now becoming clarified, and it was seen that the next great union in Canada was likely to be among the non-Episcopal Churches. In 1892, the Presbyterians took the initiative when a deputation from the Assembly, meeting at Montreal, addressed the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and "in holding out the right hand of fellowship, practically invited closer corporate Union. In response to this suggestion ten Congregational ministers in the following January, though not claiming to represent their brethren, presented through three of their number, to the Presbytery of Toronto, a request for a conference with representatives of the Presbytery on the subject of Union of the two churches. "You have the privilege of overture, of initiation," they said, "and if we must remain apart it is well we should know why." After holding two conferences by joint committees, the Presbytery memorialized the Assembly in 1893, asking for the appointment of a committee on union with the Congregational Churches. The Assembly, however, took a wider view and appointed a committee on the general subject of union, with instructions to hold itself ready to confer with any similar body from other churches, should the way be opened up for such conferences. Evidently the Assembly was looking towards the Methodist Church. Moreover, dis-

cussions in the press and elsewhere at this time show that a number of the leaders were beginning to feel that there was no vital reason why the Presbyterians and Methodists could not come together. In the course of an address upon "Points of Agreement," Principal Caven said, "In any case the amount of doctrinal harmony is so great as to afford large grounds for hope that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the matters respecting which we differ, and which are now deemed sufficient reason for separation, may, on all hands, come to be so well understood, as to remove every obstacle to Union." The Presbyterian Assembly showed their interest in organic union by appointing Principal Caven Convener of a large and thoroughly representative committee in 1893, giving it instructions to hold itself ready. This committee was reappointed year by year until and including 1901, with Principal Caven as Chairman throughout the period.

The idea of Federation was also brought forward at this time and the proposal of the Methodist General Conference of 1894 to establish a Federal Court composed of representatives of the negotiating churches was approved by Assembly. Steps towards co-operation in Home Missions were taken but no satisfactory scheme of Federation could be agreed upon. Principal Patrick, of Manitoba College, examined the situation and found "that no adequate or final settlement could be reached in this way" (that is, by co-operation) "and that it would indeed be an easier task from the practical stand-

point to unite the Churches" The attempt at Federation having proved unsuccessful, the proposal was dropped, but efforts were made to prevent over-lapping of work and interdenominational rivalry. The foundation of the Canadian Society of Christian Union by members of different communions expressed the growth of sentiment in favor of Union at this time.

METHODIST ACTION

The year 1902 marked a distinct advance. The *Presbyterian Witness* (Halifax, June 21, 1902), in reporting the visit of delegations from other churches to Assembly, said, "Our Congregational brethren went farthest, farther indeed than any delegation I am able to recall. They pronounced distinctly in favor of union on terms which our church would not have the slightest hesitation in accepting." The Moderator, Dr. Bryce, reciprocated the sentiments of union. Later in the year a delegation from the Presbyterian Assembly visited the Methodist General Conference where Principal Patrick, while disclaiming any title to speak for the Presbyterian Church, spoke strongly on behalf of union, outlining proposals already discussed by unofficial groups. His words gave expression to sentiments that were already widespread in both churches. Without any reference to his speech, the Conference two days later adopted with enthusiasm a Resolution definitely proposing the organic union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. This

important Resolution was referred by the next Presbyterian General Assembly to a committee which met with similar committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches. The meeting was distinguished by a great speech on behalf of union by Principal Caven, who showed that the working creed and fundamental positions of the negotiating churches were almost identical, and pointed out the growth of the Presbyterian system in the Methodist Church. He pled for the earnest and practical facing of the problems of Church union, not merely for economy in men and money, but especially because he believed it to be the desire of the Lord and the burden of this prayer on the eve of His Passion. "Brethren," he urged, "we ought to do it." The committees found that "organic union is both desirable and practicable" and commended "the whole subject to the sympathy and favorable consideration of the Chief Assemblies of the Churches concerned for such further action as they may deem wise and expedient. This finding was reported to the General Assembly and to the Congregational Unions. Each appointed a committee to confer on the subject of Church Union with the committee previously appointed by the Methodist Church. Principal Caven was Convener of a strong Presbyterian Committee but was removed by death shortly before the meeting of the joint committee. His place was taken by Dr. Warden. The Convener of the Methodist Committee was Dr. Albert

Carman, and of the Congregational, Rev. Hugh Pedley.

THE JOINT UNION COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the new Joint Committee on Union was held in 1904. The Rev. Dr. R. H. Warden was unanimously elected chairman, the Rev. Dr. Sutherland was appointed Secretary and Rev. F. J. Day and Rev. E. D. McLaren associate secretaries. There were grave initial difficulties but these were overcome and the way was cleared for further progress. This conference was one of the most significant ecclesiastical gatherings held in Canada up to that time. Under the heading, "A Significant Gathering," the *Globe* of December 23, 1904, remarks, "The composition of the conference, the personal worth and representative character of the members, the purpose of the meeting, the questions under deliberation, the temper of the discussions, and the tendency and prospects of the movement, all combine to make the gathering significant. In its issue it may be epoch-making. The organic union of these three Churches in Canada is by no means assured, but the most conservative and doubtful man in the conference was impressed with the apparent yielding of even the stubborn obstacles. It may take years, it may take more than a decade, but a movement was begun yesterday which will tell powerfully not only on the three churches named, but on all the churches in Canada, on the public life of the country, and on

the history of the world. The action of this joint committee was the first formal step. That step was the beginning of a new era in the religious history of Canada." On being interviewed by the *Daily Mail and Empire*, Dr. E. D. McLaren, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Home Mission Board and one of the associate secretaries of the Joint Committee, said, "The effect can hardly fail to be very considerable. The direct effect—the effect upon those who were present at the conference—was very marked. Those who were strongly desirous of union before had their desire strengthened and found in the discussions that took place an enlarged basis for their hopes; while those who were of a different view, if not converted to the union idea, were at least powerfully impressed by the considerations urged and by the spirit displayed." At the same time he thought that the chief peril to the union movement was the possibility of zeal outrunning discretion and undue haste arousing a spirit of antagonism.

It was universally recognized in the joint committee "that a question so important and far-reaching in its results was not one to be unduly hurried; that a union of the Churches, to be real and lasting, must carry the consent of the entire membership, and that no final step could be taken until ample opportunity had been given to consider the whole question in the courts of the various Churches and by the people generally." At the same time, it was recognized by many in the

Churches that no movement of this kind was ever put into effect with absolute unanimity. The union of Presbyterianism in Canada in 1875 did not carry with it every member or even every congregation, and it seemed almost too much to hope that the wider union proposed could be consummated without dissentients.

The practical result of the conference was that five sub-committees were appointed to consider, respectively, all questions of Doctrine, Polity, The Ministry, Administration and Law. The following were the members of the committees on Doctrine and Polity:

DOCTRINE—Presbyterian: Principal Scrimger (Convener), Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Battisby, Rev. G. S. Carson, Dr. DuVal, Principal Falconer, Principal Gordon, Dr. MacKay, Dr. J. L. Murray, Principal McLaren, Dr. Ramsay, Dr. Sedgwick, Rev. T. Stewart, Hon. W. M. Clark, Dr. Robert Murray and Dr. Walter Paul. Methodist: Chancellor Burwash (Convener), Revs. Drs. Carman, Shaw, Paisley, Langford, Curtis, Stewart, Antliff, Crothers, Ryckman, Revs. R. F. Stacey, D. W. Johnston and S. Bond, and Messrs. Ames, Ferguson and Mann. Congregational: Rev. Dr. Warriner (Convener), Revs. F. J. Day, J. P. Gerrie, T. B. Hyde, Hugh Pedley, J. K. Unsworth and Messrs. J. R. Dougall and H. O'Hara.

POLITY—Presbyterian: Prof. Walter C. Murray (Convener), Revs. Drs. Bryce, Campbell, Farquharson, Herridge, Lyle, MacGillivray, Millar, Rev.

J. B. Mullen, Principal Patrick, Dr. James Stewart, and Messrs James Gibson, T. C. James, J. A. Macdonald, G. M. Macdonell and W. B. McMurrich. Methodist: Mr. Justice McLaren (Convener), Revs. Drs. Carman and White, Revs. Mavety, Steel, Crews, Griffith, Langille and Messrs. Harris, Inch, Fudger, Bishop, Bell, Aikins, Senator Cox and Mr. Justice Britton. Congregational: Rev. J. W. Pedley (Convener), Revs. F. J. Day, J. L. Gordon, W. T. Gunn, W. H. Warriner, D.D., and Messrs. J. R. Dougall T. B. Macaulay and H. O'Hara.

THE BASIS OF UNION

In June, 1905, the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted as a whole the report of the Joint Committee. In December of the same year at the second Conference of the Committee, interim reports from the sub-committees were received. The report of the Committee on Doctrine showed that the object of those charged with finding a common basis of doctrine had been to include the characteristic features of each communion and to fuse these elements in the new statement rather than to reach a compromise. The committee embodied in its report a tentative Doctrinal Basis derived in the main from (1) A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, published by the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. in 1902, (2) A Doctrinal summary prepared by the Montreal Section of the

Joint Committee on the basis of the English Presbyterian "Articles of Faith." There were nineteen articles in this preliminary statement and some years later an Article on Prayer was added. Presbyteries, Sessions and Congregations were asked to give information and suggestions for the guidance of the Union Committee, but subsequent changes were few and were mainly of sequence and wording. Sub-committees were formed to deal with the questions of ministerial support, missions, benevolent funds, public interests and colleges. The work of drawing up the Basis extended over a period of five years, and was done with ample deliberation and full co-operation. Each conference of the Joint Committee received and revised the results reached by the sub-committees. Then after being considered, analyzed and revised by the denominational sections meeting separately, the documents were again considered by the Joint Committee in the light of any suggestions offered. As thus amended, the Basis was published each year for the information of the negotiating churches and was finally endorsed by the Joint Committee in full session in 1908.

By this time the Presbyterian General Assembly had recorded its satisfaction that union seemed practicable. Not only were the main terms of union now defined but it was clearly seen which churches would be prepared to continue negotiations. Approaches had been made to the Baptist and Anglican Churches. The Baptist reply was a polite

but firm refusal, in which was set forth definitively the characteristic Baptist principles. These principles, it was stated, made it necessary for the Baptists "to maintain a separate organized existence." The Anglican Church was sympathetic but the question of the historic episcopate was still an insuperable barrier to organic union. Negotiations were thus limited to the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches.

Meantime the negotiating Churches had moved definitely towards union. The Congregational Union of Canada had already decided in 1904 that organic union was both desirable and practicable. In 1909 it sent down the documents of the Basis of Union to the churches for consideration, with the result that of a membership of 10,689 there were 2,933 votes for and 813 against the Basis. The Congregational Union thereupon decided that it had already taken sufficient action and would wait until the other denominations had tested the feeling of their constituency.

The General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1910 declared its approval of the documents agreed upon by the Joint Committee as a Basis of Union. It directed its special committee to send the documents "to the District Meetings for consideration, and to the Annual Conference for consideration and adoption or rejection." If the reports of the Annual Conferences warranted such action the Basis of Union was to be sent to the Official Boards and the membership of the churches

"for consideration and adoption or rejection." The result of the vote by Conferences was that eleven Conferences voted approval and one non-approval. The whole question was then referred to the Official Boards and membership of the church. Of 29,820 officials, 23,475 voted for and 3,869 against. Of 293,967 members, eighteen years and over, 150,841 voted for and 24,357 against. Of 29,373 members under eighteen, 17,198 voted for and 2,615 against. Of adherents, 42,115 voted for and 7,234 against. Thereupon the General Conference Special Committee declared itself "satisfied that the Methodist Church is now prepared to proceed toward the union of the three negotiating churches on the Basis of Union heretofore agreed upon." (Minutes, July 16 and 17, 1912.) The minority in the Methodist Church was vigorous and determined, but once the verdict of the church was given to enter the union, they deemed it their Christian duty to follow the decision of the majority.

Hereafter the history of the union movement is largely a record of the course of events within the Presbyterian Church. The Methodist Church and the Congregational Churches had decided the question according to their prescribed constitutional procedure and were prepared for union. They now awaited the verdict of the Presbyterian Church. Within the Presbyterian Church there was sharp difference of opinion and determined opposition to the scheme of union.

In 1910 the General Assembly of the Presby-

terian Church declared its approval of the documents agreed upon by the Joint Committee as a Basis of Union and directed that "this resolution, along with the Basis, be transmitted to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act." Exception was taken to the employment of the Barrier Act at this point on the ground that the next Assembly could enact the union without consulting the people, and an organized party of opposition came into being. During the period of the voting, an anonymous pamphlet advocating federation and "solemnly and earnestly protesting" against union, was circulated. The report of the vote by Presbyteries was, that of the seventy Presbyteries of the Church, sixty-seven voted on the question. Fifty Presbyteries voted to approve while twenty did not signify approval in terms of the Barrier Act. The votes cast in Presbyteries were—793 approved, and 476 voted non-approval.

The Presbyterian General Assembly resolved to find out the views of Sessions and Congregations and sent the whole question to them for their judgment. The vote was as follows: In answer to the question, "Are you in favor of organic union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches?" the percentage of those voting in favor was sixty-one per cent. of the elders, seventy-two per cent. of the communicants, seventy-two per cent. of the adherents. The Basis was voted on separately, and approved by seventy per cent. of the Elders, seventy-four per cent. of the communicants and seventy-

three per cent. of the adherents who voted. The meeting of the next Assembly at Edmonton in 1912 was a memorable occasion, and the conviction seemed almost overwhelming that the guiding hand of the Lord was leading His Church in the direction of union. When, however, Principal MacKay strongly urged delay for further conference and discussion, and advanced the prospect of greater and possibly practical unanimity, the advocates of union hesitated. According to Presbyterian constitutional methods, the decision of Presbyteries warranted the immediate consummation of union. But in view of the extent of the minority the Assembly delayed action, hoping that by further conference and discussion practically unanimous action could be secured within a reasonable time. (Minutes of Assembly, 1912.)

In the meantime, the Basis was reconsidered in the separate committees and by the joint committee and slight amendments were made. When the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1915 met at Kingston the interest was at fever heat. This Assembly was the largest in the history of the church up to this time and everyone regarded the result as critical and to a degree decisive. The amended Basis had been accepted by the other negotiating churches and they were reported to be ready and waiting with appreciable impatience the word to go or stop from the Presbyterians. To accentuate the tension, just before the Commissioners started for the General Assembly, a plausible

and strong appeal, signed by Dr. E. Scott, Editor of the *Record*, Montreal, was issued broadcast from Vancouver to Sydney, urging the Presbyterians, on account of the present war, to call a halt in the union negotiations. And as if to balance matters, a circular came round, issued by some friends of union, entitled "Church Union, an Opportunity and a Duty," written by a number of prominent Presbyterians. It was no wonder, then, that this debate was considered to be crucial. Moreover, for years the opposition seemed to be increasing, judged by the voting of the Assembly. The previous year the opposition vote in the Assembly reached the high-water mark of 109 as against 286 in favor of union, or twenty-nine per cent. of the entire vote. A larger number than usual had come to the Assembly halting upon the question and it was more than ever uncertain how the Committee's report would be supported. The debate, although heated at times, was conducted with perfect good nature on both sides. The result was that the amended Basis of Union was approved by a vote of 368 for and 74 against, and the General Assembly directed that the Basis be submitted to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act and that the Appendix on Law be also submitted to Presbyteries for their judgment. The General Assembly further directed that the question of union be submitted to Sessions and also to communicants and adherents of the church, reminding them that the decision must be reached on the basis of votes cast.

Thus in 1915, after twelve years of discussion and revision, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada declared its approval of the Basis of Union as a basis on which the Church might unite with the Methodist and Congregational Churches. Again, according to the constitution of the Church the matter had been sent down under the Barrier Act to all the Presbyteries for their verdict. But in order that everyone who had any right to give an opinion might have the opportunity, it had also been sent to the congregations. The vote of the people, which in the Presbyterian Church has no constitutional authority in such matters, was considered to be worth much as giving information for the guidance of the Court.

When the vote was taken it was found that the usual slowness of a people to exercise their franchise had shown itself again, for not much more than fifty-two per cent. of the members voted. On the whole, there was an increase in the number of votes against the Basis of Union. Of the communicants voting, a fraction over sixty per cent. voted for and a fraction under forty per cent. voted against. The vote of adherents was sixty-three per cent. in favor. Ninety-six per cent. of the entire eldership voted on the question, and of those voting, sixty-five per cent. were in favor of the Basis. The results of this vote were announced to the Church before the Presbyteries acted, in order that they might know the mind of the eldership and the membership before considering the question. Next, the Presby-

teries took up the matter, and their vote was more favorable to union than before. Of those who sent in valid returns, there were three ties, fifty-three in favor and thirteen disapproved the remit.

The results of the vote were reported to the General Assembly at Winnipeg in 1916, and on the ground of the vote in favor of union by adherents, members, elders and Presbyteries, this Assembly decided to consummate union. The majority for Union was still a large one, in spite of the vigorous campaign of the opposition. The people had given their opinion by a majority that in any other case would be considered overwhelming. Assembly believed it was large enough to warrant advance, and resolved, by a vote of 406 to 90, to unite with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada. Such a decision seemed to be amply justified by the vote although a number disagreed with it. A committee to carry out the Assembly's policy and co-operate with other committees in preparing legislation to be sought in the Dominion and Provincial legislatures was appointed. At the same time it agreed to postpone the reception of the Committee's report until the "first Assembly following the end of the first year after the close of the war."

The next General Assembly urged upon the people that debate and organized propaganda should be discontinued until the question should again be taken up in Assembly, and an agreement was reached that there should be a truce. At the same

time this Assembly unanimously agreed upon a method of co-operation. A number of independent union charges were being formed in the West, and it was felt on all sides that since such action broke their connection with historic Christianity and cut them off not only from their parent Churches but also from the great missionary enterprise, it was inadvisable in their own interests as well as in the interests of Canadian Christianity. So the General Assembly adopted a new policy drawn up by representatives of the three negotiating Churches; namely, to encourage the formation of local unions but to keep each union church in connection with one or other or both or all of the historic denominations until the consummation of the larger Union. This scheme was unanimously adopted and many local unions were formed, particularly in the Western Provinces and in New Ontario, all organized according to the policy outlined in the Basis of Union for The United Church of Canada, and always with a view to the approaching Union. The scheme was successful as a temporary measure, but could not have been possible unless the wider union had been in view. At the same time this directed and controlled a movement that would have continued, and undoubtedly gathered momentum, had organic union not ultimately been consummated.

The debate on union was resumed at the General Assembly of 1921, which took a further step towards union by resolving to consummate organic union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches

of Canada "as expeditiously as possible." The vote was 404 to 107. A committee on union was appointed composed of both those in favor of union and those opposed to it, with Dr. Geo. C. Pidgeon as Convener.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE

The controversy within the Church was resumed with great intensity and minority protests were lodged at every important stage of the proceedings. The previously organized opposition to union, known as the Committee for the Preservation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, had become the Presbyterian Church Association in 1916, pledged "to maintain and continue The Presbyterian Church in Canada." Practical unanimity was now impossible for it was clear that the price of obtaining it would be the surrender of the whole principle of organic union. The church was sharply divided on the question of majority and minority rights. Union had been repeatedly delayed in the hope that the unanimity which had been expected in the first place might be brought nearer. Progressive steps had led the church to the verge of consummating union and she was already committed by the large number of Union congregations in the West. But the minority was organized to prevent the will of the majority from being carried into effect. Was the minority to be allowed to block so great a movement? The Presbyteries first and then the Assembly had decided on union, and in the Presby-

terian system the decision of the Courts is binding on the whole Church.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Presbyterian Church, as one great branch of the Church Catholic, has, by its own choice, a particular constitution and a particular method of common action, namely, through representative Courts—in other words, through Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies. This government by Presbyters is the very genius of Presbyterianism. It is a representative system, not a system of direct government. It is government by the will of the people certainly, but by the will of the people as expressed through their representatives in the Courts of the Church. An appeal to the people against their own Courts is something apart from Presbyterianism. There has always been, of course, the right of dissent, and that has often been acted upon; but it always has been an act of dissent *from* the action of the Church and the Church itself followed the lines of the constitutional decision of its Courts. Article II of the Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual (1921) states, "Its government is Presbyterian and is executed through Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies." That is, the Presbyterian Church acts through its Courts. The General Assembly is the highest Court of the Church and

when the Assembly acts by a majority, under the authority of the Barrier Act which refers certain questions under discussion to the vote of Presbyteries, the final constitutional action has been taken. Minority protests do not alter this fact. The action of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, for example, followed Presbyterian order, when in 1921 the proposals for union between the Church of Scotland and The United Free Church were embodied in a Bill which was never sent down to the congregations but was decided by the Courts of the Churches. In The Presbyterian Church in Canada a strictly legal and constitutional procedure had been followed and the church had decided to enter the union. Consequently the majority felt that they were bound by their principles to act in accordance with the decision of the church's Court, acting as these had done, in a constitutional manner.

LEGISLATION

The Joint Committee on Church Union met in 1921 and appointed a standing committee to consider and report on the legislation necessary to give effect to the union. It also received a representative of the General Council of Local Union Churches who assured the committee that the local union churches were ready to merge into The United Church of Canada as soon as the contemplated union was effected. Meantime, after much careful deliberation, the Presbyterian Committee united in an effort to explore the legal requirements of the

situation to the extent of preparing drafts of the legislation which would be required to give effect to the instructions of the Assembly. Able legal counsel was obtained and the whole field of legislation affecting the Presbyterian Church in Canada was surveyed. Counsel were of opinion that "in order to combine and co-ordinate properly the various funds and schemes of The United Church, it is necessary to have all these organizations combined, and in our opinion, this can be done effectively only through legislation which unites and merges these many corporations into one body. The Committee then instructed Counsel to prepare such draft Bills as would be necessary for the confirmation of union, in such a way as to conserve the rights and interests of all concerned. The preparation of the Bills was a serious task but was carried out thoroughly by the Joint Legal Committee. In April, 1923, the General Assembly's representative Committee on Church Union met and considered the Bills and a number of amendments were suggested which were referred to the Committee on Law for consideration. One of the points emphasized in these and preceding discussions was that no legislation was necessary for an ecclesiastical union: legislation is necessary only in the church's temporal affairs and relationships. Already in 1908 the Joint Legal Committee (after considering for a year a report on the principles of legislation) had decided upon the necessity of legislation and the general form it should take. The method consis-

tently followed in Canada had been to seek enabling legislation prior to consummating the union of Churches. In accordance with this principle, legislation was now sought, in order to incorporate the United Church, to preserve property rights and render impossible a repetition of what happened in Scotland in 1904. An example was given by the Church of Scotland Act passed by the Imperial Parliament in 1921 which states: "The declaratory articles are lawful articles and the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual is as therein set forth." Among these is Article VII which reads, "The Church of Scotland, believing it to be the will of Christ that His disciples should be all one in the Father and in Him, that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him, recognizes the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches in which it finds the Word to be purely preached, the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance, and discipline rightly exercised; and it has the right to unite with any such Church without loss of its identity on terms which this Church finds to be consistent with these Articles."

PRINCIPLES OF THE LEGISLATION

This principle was carefully provided for in the legislation sought by the uniting Churches in Canada. The principle was set forth that when a church by its own constitutional procedure decides to unite with another Church, it does not thereby

vote itself out of existence, but enters as a unit into a new relationship, and carries its rights and privileges and powers with it. It was made clear that the United Church would possess spiritual freedom, and be independent in all matters of doctrine, discipline and polity. The right of the church to re-state its faith was carefully safeguarded. The legislation provided that the negotiating churches would take with them into the Union all the denominational property which would then be vested in the United Church. But at the same time provision was made for dissenting minorities. Any congregation, which within six months of the proclamation of Union decided by a majority vote not to concur, could hold its property solely for its own benefit. Subsequently this clause was amended at the request of the supporters of union, when the Bill was before the Private Bills Committee at Ottawa, in order to remove any appearance of coercion. The Act as passed allowed the vote to be taken by all congregations throughout the Dominion with the exception of those in New Brunswick and Manitoba during the six months' period between 16th December, 1924, and 10th June, 1925. The votes according to the New Brunswick and Manitoba Statutes could be taken by congregations in these Provinces only between 10th June, 1925, and 10th December, 1925.

The principles and form of the proposed legislation were approved by the three negotiating churches. The Congregational Union in 1922 de-

plored any further delay, and in accordance with its constitution submitted the draft legislation for the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures and Trusts of Model Deed to the various Congregational incorporated Societies and Funds, and to the individual churches. All the incorporated Societies and Funds and an overwhelming majority of the churches gave their approval. At the next meeting of the Congregational Union in 1923, the draft of the proposed legislation was approved and the Union Committee was appointed with power to act with the Committees of the other two negotiating Churches in procuring legislation and taking any action necessary to consummate the union. At the General Conference of 1922 the Methodist Church approved the principle and in general the form of the proposed Acts and appointed a committee of forty with full power to act on its behalf in securing their enactment. The General Assembly of 1923 decided by a vote of 427 to 129 to "proceed forthwith" to the consummation of union upon the terms of the draft Bills as presented.

A new scheme of Federation was brought before this Assembly by Dr. Daniel R. Drummond and fully discussed, but was rejected in favor of union by a vote of 444 to 92. Federation had been brought forward several times but had never captured the mind of the Churches. It was proposed as early as 1894 and had been under discussion for years afterwards. The scheme of Dr. Drummond went further in the way of compromise than those

brought forward in the General Assemblies of 1909 and 1910, but, like them, it involved co-operation and the union of small charges only. In other words, it recognized the principle of union for economic but not for spiritual reasons. This was regarded by the General Assembly as an unworthy compromise. If union was good enough for some districts, why was it not good enough for all? It was felt that the principle of union was already involved where, in Federation, rural congregations of different denominations might meet for worship under the care of one denomination.

Later in 1923 a Bureau of Literature and Information was instituted under the charge of Dr. R. J. Wilson in an attempt to spread knowledge of the principles of union and the procedure that was being followed.

THE WRIT

Following the action of the General Assembly, in 1923, the approved legislation was sought in the Dominion and Provincial Parliaments. To prevent this a Writ was filed in the Supreme Court of Ontario in January, 1924, claiming that the General Assembly had no right to effect the Union, because in modifying its adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith in the interests of Union, it had departed from and renounced adherence to certain essential doctrines of the Presbyterian faith contained in the Confession, in such a way that it forfeited all right to call itself Presby-

terian. Among the omissions cited were the clauses stating that "God has eternally predestined a fixed number of men and angels to eternal life" and that "others God has decreed to death." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 3); that "Christ died only for those who shall be saved," i.e., the elect, and that "those not appointed unto life God passes by" (Confession of Faith, Chapter 3); that "man is born totally depraved and utterly helpless to accomplish or even to prepare for his own salvation" (Confession of Faith, Chapter 9). These, among others, were claimed to be the "distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism." But Presbyterian Churches throughout the world already held the right to adapt the expression of their faith to new truth. In 1887 the Presbyterian Church in Canada had affirmed its right constitutionally to revise her standards and had deleted a clause from the Confession of 1889. In this she was not departing from Presbyterian standards, for the Scottish Churches themselves had modified their adherence to the Westminster Confession. The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church passed Declaratory Acts recognizing and sanctioning liberty of judgment and diversity of opinion on certain points and declaring in what sense alone they accept certain positions referred to in the Confession. Other Churches, the Church of Scotland, for example, modified their formulæ of subscription to the Confession, while the English Presbyterian Church went further and drew up a new doctrinal

statement setting forth in twenty-four articles "the fundamental doctrines held and taught by this Church." American Presbyterian Churches also made distinct revisions in their standards. That is to say, all the chief branches of the Presbyterian Church exercised the right, though in different ways, to modify their confession or their adherence to the Confession. The Writ was not pressed in the Courts.

DOMINION LEGISLATION

Application for legislation was made to the Dominion Parliament in April, 1924, and the Bill was passed at that session of the Federal Parliament. The Presbyterian General Assembly met at Owen Sound, and, after a spirited debate, by the decisive vote of 429 to 96, defeating a contrary amendment by 444 to 92, urged the Federal Parliament to grant the legislation applied for without proposed amendments. The Bill had been introduced into the House of Commons as a Private Members Bill by Robert Forke, Esquire, leader of the Progressive Group, and after receiving its first and second readings was referred to the Private Bills Committee. Here the applicants and those opposed to the Bill presented their case and a keenly-contested struggle followed. Both employed the ablest Counsel and the atmosphere of the Committee Rooms was tense. For several weeks lawyers, clergymen and members of Parliament cross-examined each other on Creed, Property Rights, Church History, Church Constitu-

tions, Foreign Missions, Calvinism, Armenianism and the rights of dissenters. It was a courageous and intense struggle in which the opponents of union contested the Bill up to the last few hours before the Committee. An amendment was passed by a vote of 27 to 23 by which the coming into force of the Act was deferred until 1st July, 1926, with a provision that in the meantime the question of the power of the General Assembly to bind the church by their agreement to unite with the other two negotiating churches, should be referred to the Courts. At subsequent meetings of the Committee, the remaining clauses of the Bill were passed without division and a motion to rescind the amendment was ruled out of order. The Bill was then reported to the House.

In the Debate in the House the leaders of all three parties took an active part. The chief proponent of the Bill was the Right Honorable Arthur Meighen who set forth the position of Parliament in respect to this legislation. He made clear the power of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to change its doctrine and pointed out that even if such were not the case, Parliament should pass the Bill in order to remove any disability under which the church might therefore be laboring. On the 26th of June, an amendment was passed by the House by a vote of 110 to 58 which rescinded the Private Bills Committee's amendment and substituted a clause by which the Act, with the exception of the voting provisions, was brought into

force on 10th of June, 1925. Further suggested amendments by opponents of the Bill were negative and on the 4th of July the Bill received its third reading. The Dominion Act was finally passed on the 19th of July, 1924, and followed in the main the legislation applied for. It provided for a Dominion Property Commission with power to make settlements in regard to the Colleges and in the sharing of denominational property.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

When the Bill came before the Ontario Legislature in the winter of 1924 strenuous efforts were made to defeat it. An amendment was adopted by the Private Bills Committee which destroyed the central principle of the Bill for it would have prevented the three churches, as such, from uniting, and authorized instead only a union of congregations which might separate themselves from the parent churches. The union leaders felt that this denied to the churches all right of corporate action and self-determination. For, if after more than twenty years of prayerful study and deliberation, and by constitutional methods, the three churches had decided that for the furtherance of true religion in Canada they should come together, it was raising the whole question of spiritual freedom in its most acute form for the State to interfere. The Bill was therefore withdrawn. Next year the Bill was passed in a somewhat altered form, but with the main principle intact. An amendment provided

for the vesting of the lands and buildings of Knox College in the non-concurring congregations subject to joint occupation by The United Church for three years. The Bill provided for the creation of a Church Property Commission to relieve cases of hardship alleged by minorities in congregations. This Provincial Commission held frequent sittings and made a number of property adjustments.

In 1924 the Act was passed by the Legislatures of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan with comparatively little opposition, while in British Columbia the only important change provided for the appointment of a Provincial Commission on congregational property. In Nova Scotia, in New Brunswick and in Prince Edward Island it was passed with some minor amendments in each case, but at Prince Edward Island the Lieutenant-Governor refused his assent and the Bill had to be re-enacted the following year.

Application was made to the Quebec Legislature in February, 1925. It declared itself ready to adopt the principle of the Bill and to give effect to the Federal Legislation providing that the Province of Ontario, the province which, owing to the large percentage of its Protestant population was most interested in such union, ratified the Union Act as adopted by the Parliament of Canada. As the Ontario Legislature passed the Bill the following month, application was again made to the Quebec Legislature in March, 1926, and the Bill was passed in form somewhat different from the Acts passed in

the other Provincial Legislatures. The Quebec Act confirmed and made valid the Dominion Act to the same extent as if repeated in the Provincial Act. After lengthy negotiations an amendment was made whereby the real property and Charter of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, was vested in the non-concurring Church. Provision was also made for the appointment of a Commission with powers practically the same as those conferred upon the Ontario Commission.

THE CONSUMMATION OF UNION

On the 10th of June, 1925, the three Churches united to become The United Church of Canada. The union was consummated at a large and inspiring inaugural service held in Toronto, when The United Church hallowed the union and dedicated itself before God to its great task. This initial service was wholly religious and deeply spiritual, culminating in the celebration of the Holy Communion. The Basis of Union was signed by the duly appointed representatives of the uniting Churches, the Rev. Geo. C. Pidgeon, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Rev. W. H. Warriner, D.D., Chairman of the Union of Congregational Churches, Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D., LL.D., General Superintendent of the Methodist Church and Rev. C. S. Elsey, Chairman of the General Council of Local Union Churches of Western Canada. This was followed by Prayer constituting the three Supreme Courts of the uniting churches

as the General Council of The United Church of Canada. At a subsequent meeting, Dr. Geo. C. Pidgeon was elected as the Moderator of the first General Council, after the venerable Methodist leader, Dr. Chown, in a "fine act of self-effacing renunciation," had asked that he be not nominated and moved that Dr. Pidgeon be elected.

As a result of a vote by congregations, 784 Presbyterian congregations, of a total of 4,512, refused to enter the Union, and eight of the Congregational Churches did not follow the Congregational Churches into Union. The total membership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which voted non-concurrence was a little over thirty per cent. Thus the numerical strength of The United Church of Canada was impressive. Into the Church there entered 4,797 congregations of the Methodist Church, 166 congregations of the Congregational Church, and 3,728 congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, bringing the total on June 10, 1925, to 8,691. The union of the three denominations was actually effected with a loss of less than eight and one-half per cent. of the total congregations, and with a loss of about twelve per cent. of the self-sustaining charges. Still more striking has been the attitude of the foreign missionaries in distant lands. Of the 655 missionaries in the three uniting churches on June 10, 1925, only 17 (including men, wives and single women) did not enter the union.

THE DOMINION PROPERTY COMMISSION

The Dominion Property Commission was faced with a heavy task in the division of the assets of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but attacked its problems with great thoroughness. The Boards of The United Church and the non-concurring Presbyterian congregations were able to reach an agreement for the division of Home Mission Property and Foreign Mission Fields and property. British Guiana, North Formosa and the Gwalior and Southern Bhil districts in Central India went to the non-concurring congregations and in the interests of the work some of The United Church missionaries remained voluntarily for a time in these fields. The following fields founded and maintained by The Presbyterian Church in Canada remained with The United Church: Trinidad, Honan (North China), South China, Shanghai, Korea and the remaining sections of Central India.

The final award of the Dominion Commission was issued in April, 1927. Out of assets (of the Presbyterian Church in Canada) totalling approximately \$10,500,000.00, the non-concurring congregations received property and funds valued at \$3,261,000.00 (apart from their share of legacies vested as at June 10, 1925) or about thirty-one per cent. of the whole. This corresponded generally to the proportion of congregations and members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which did not enter the union. Of this total the non-concurring

congregations received approximately fifty per cent. of the College Buildings and endowments of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Knox College Building and the building and Charter of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, had already been vested in Trustees for the non-concurring congregations by the Ontario and Quebec Legislatures respectively. The Commission awarded them in addition the Charter of Knox College and about \$550,000.00 of endowments belonging to these Colleges. The other six Theological Colleges, their property and endowments, remained with The United Church. Of the total assets of the Pension Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 77.96 per cent. continued vested in The United Church and the non-concurrents received 22.04 per cent. Similarly the latter received 23.3 per cent. of the Home Mission Funds and Properties and approximately 25 per cent. of the Foreign Mission Assets.

THE SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

Far more impressive than the numerical strength was the spiritual heritage that entered the new church. Each of the uniting churches had a great heritage and there was no surrender of their particular inheritance when they entered the union. The Congregational Church looked back to those stirring days of the sixteenth century when the Divine Right of Kings took shape as a degrading

tyranny and men were found ready to lay down their lives to secure spiritual freedom against the tyranny of man. It held in honor men like Milton who stood for the liberty of the individual. It brought with it the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers and the devoted Pastor John Robinson. Historic Congregationalism put emphasis on loyalty to God and His truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. It brought to the union the inherited conviction of the rights of individual congregations and Christian freedom—a spirit which can continue in finer and more fruitful service in the larger fellowship.

The Methodist Church brought its inheritance of the great spiritual awakening which swept as a purifying ocean over the souls of men and saved the life of eighteenth-century England from infidelity and corruption. Its history proclaims the value of personal testimony to the saving grace of God and of the disciplined Christian life. It stood for the combination of zeal and discipline. It brought the ideals of John Wesley, the spirit of the Wesleys, Whitefield and many another who was afire with evangelical zeal. It brought its concern for social righteousness and, above all, for personal and experimental religion which has known and apprehended the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The Presbyterian Church entered the union with its whole heritage from the past unbroken. From the great days of the Scottish Reformation, through the later controversies when the freedom of the Church was contested in many a hard-fought battle

the Presbyterian Church stood for the headship of Christ and the spiritual freedom of the Church under His sovereignty. She would allow no alien to dictate to her, whether in creed or in polity or in any other matter. It brought to the union the heritage of its spiritual heroes: Calvin in his production of strong Christian character, Knox and his demand for the freedom and authority of Assemblies. It brought the spirit of the Covenanters, some of noble and some of humble birth, but together facing death with the declaration on their dying lips that Christ's Kirk "maun be free." It was for Christ, for His words and His Gospel that they stood, rather than for particular standards. They died for the freedom of the Church under Him.

Such were the three streams of tradition which entered the new Church. The United Church was proud of this heritage and took its stand upon the sovereignty of God, the Headship of Christ over the Church, the freedom of the Church under Him, the denial of worldly interference and the universality and power of the Gospel as the only agency for making Canada a true nation and winning the world for Christ. At the same time its new outlook was to the future and it determined to overcome the errors of the past, in order that those elements for which each Church stood and which to a certain extent were common to all, should find even fuller expression than before.

There has been no break with the historic continuity of Presbyterianism, Methodism and Con-

gregationalism the world over. In spite of the regrettable loss of non-concurring minorities, each of the uniting churches entered union as an entity, taking with it what was vital in its life and traditions. The "Pan-Presbyterian" Alliance admitted The United Church of Canada as one of the Presbyterian family. Its documents and statements of doctrine and polity were examined separately by the Eastern and Western Committees of the Alliance, both of which recommended recognition. Their reports were presented at Cardiff to the full Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System which met in June, 1925. Both in the Business Committee and in the Council without any hesitation or any question being asked, The United Church was admitted as a member of the Presbyterian body. This was done by men who knew that application was being made for association with world-wide Methodism and Congregationalism.

The Presbyterian Churches in Ireland and Scotland have extended their recognition to The United Church of Canada. In June, 1926, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland unanimously resolved "That the fraternal relations which subsisted between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and this Church shall subsist between the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada and this Church, and that there be similar fraternal relations between The United Church of Canada and this Church." The Assemblies of the

Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland took up the matter in the spring of 1927, after special committees had carefully considered the whole question of relationships. The Assembly of the Church of Scotland received, but did not adopt the report of a special committee. Instead it adopted certain findings which stated, among other things, that it was pleased to enter into fraternal relations with the General Council of The United Church of Canada, stating further that "The Church of Scotland cherishes an especial affinity with the Presbyterians of Canada, both with those who have deemed it their duty to maintain a Presbyterian Church, and with those who have allied their devotion with like-minded brethren in The United Church of Canada." The United Free Church adopted the recommendations of the Assembly's special committee including a statement that "the United Free Church of Scotland while deploring the existing division, desires to maintain cordial relations with both The United Church of Canada and the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada. . . ." Further, the committees on union of the Church of Scotland and of the United Free Church of Scotland, consisting of one hundred members from each church, appointed sub-committees on Relations with Other Churches. The report of its sub-committees was adopted unanimously in joint session of the Union Committees and approved generally by the Assemblies of both Churches. The effect of the recommendation is

that The United Church of Canada will bear exactly the same relation to the proposed (United) Church of Scotland as will other Presbyterian Churches in the overseas Dominions and in the United States of America.

The United Church of Canada has also been acclaimed as a member of the Methodist family. The representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America on the International Methodist Committee adopted a resolution on 13th January, 1926, stating that "this meeting while recognizing that The United Church of Canada is not entirely Methodistic in all its marks and characteristics, hereby endorses without dissent, the request from The United Church of Canada that it be recognized as a member of The Ecumenical Methodist Conference, and of its committees. On the 19th of May, 1926, the Eastern Section of the International Committee of Methodism, after careful consideration of all the issues involved, unanimously passed a resolution to the same effect, recognizing The United Church of Canada as a member of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference and its Committees, together with the privileges and responsibilities thereby entailed.

The United Church of Canada also made application to World-wide Congregationalism for recognition, with the result that both the Executive Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Committee of the National Congregational Council of the United States of

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America gave their hearty approval to The United Church.

The fact that The United Church is a member of these three families makes Church Union significant beyond the bounds of Canada. It is the first practical proof that the separate denominations may become one, without loss of identity, and so bring about gradually even greater unions in the years to come.

—KENNETH H. COUSLAND