

Presbyterian Church.

MISSION WORK IN THE NORTH.

At the meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly, held in Adelaide on Thursday, 14th March, Mr T. W. FLEMING submitted the report of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest Committee. It announced the commencement of mission work in the North, with Beltana as centre and Rev. R. Mitchell as mission agent, and indicated the manner and amount of his work during the past six months. The work had been cordially welcomed by the settlers, and fruit was already seen. The report announced Mr Mitchell's plan of work for the future, and recommended his being set apart entirely for the mission, consequently he had given up the pastoral charge of Port Augusta and been declared a member of the Belalie Presbytery. It announced that the entire fund will be transferred to the Church in a few days, indicated that the income is now much less than formerly, and therefore that means must be devised by the committee for increasing revenue, and recommended that Assembly powers be continued to the committee for the next six months.

The Rev. W. F. MAIN moved, and Mr FLEMING seconded, the adoption of the report with thanks to the committee and expressing gratification at the efficiency with which the work had been begun notwithstanding the lack of funds and agreeing to dissolve the pastoral tie subsisting between the Rev Robert Mitchell and the congregation of Port Augusta so that his time and energies might be entirely devoted to the work.

At the request of the Moderator (the Rev. G. O. Love M.A.B.D.), the Rev. MITCHELL addressed the Assembly on the work of the Smith of Dunesk Mission. Mr Mitchell said that in keeping with a great desire to prosecute missionary work in the North he had accepted the position of agent to the scheme, but he regretted that the acceptance of the new position necessitated his severance from the Port Augusta congregation. He was satisfied, however, that in due time a successor would be found. He had spent ten weeks on the mission field, and during that time had preached forty-six times to various audiences in the northern towns of Beltana, Leigh Creek, and Hergott Springs, and also railway camps. This he believed had been heartily appreciated. He desired to state that he was not the first missionary. The people amongst whom he moved were neither cannibals nor bushrangers. They were chiefly those who possessed qualities showing that they had received a good early training. He hoped that now it was

showing that they had received a good early training. He hoped that now it was decided that his full time was to be devoted to the work, he would reach the stations lying east and west of the line of railway, believing as he did that much success in the work would be ensured by this course. Mr Mitchell then described the work, its nature and possibilities, referring to several incidents experienced illustrative of it. He had to play the part of missionary, general adviser, peacemaker, doctor, and schoolmaster combined. The young people had called forth his special concern, and he was hopeful of being made helpful to them in various ways. The rev. gentleman in a humorous way dealt with his experience, and at the close appealed to his hearers for their active co-operation and prayers.

The motion was agreed to.

A motion was then carried in accordance with which the MODERATOR formally declared the pastoral tie between the Rev. R. Mitchell and his congregation to be severed.

It was moved by Mr T. W. FLEMING, seconded by the Rev. A. LAW, that the Rev. J. Lyall be appointed to declare the congregation of Port Augusta vacant on Sunday, March 17, and that the circumstances of the congregation be commended to the special consideration of the Home Mission Committee.—Carried.

At the close of the Assembly and by its permission the Presbytery of Belalie met, and appointed the Rev. R. Mitchell Moderator of the Port Augusta congregation.