

## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, January 16, 1896.

### Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund.

The following letter from the Secretary of this fund is of such general interest that we give it special prominence.

To THE EDITOR,—Will you allow me to lay before your readers a few facts in regard to the claims of this Fund, on the consideration of those who are either giving to missions, or dividing the congregational funds among the different schemes.

1. We have this year on the list 74 annuitants.
2. The sum required will be about the same as last year.
3. We had much less on hand at the beginning of this year than the previous one.
4. The amount of interest from investments will not be larger than last year, owing to the reduction in the rate of interest.
5. The amount from Minister's Rates will be less this year,—there are not many arrears to collect.

6. We have no royalty from the Hymnal Committee. Therefore congregational collections should be 20% larger this year than last, if we are to meet the demands properly, made by our aged brethren, even under the modified rule.

Shall we cut down their allowance, or shall we pay them the amount promised?

Did your congregation give anything last year? If so, can you increase a little? If you did not give, will you try and help?

A fair consideration of this scheme, and a little increase in the amount apportioned with a contribution from every congregation, would put the Fund in a good position. Yours truly,

W. BURNS, Sec'y.

### Our French Work

As many congregations make their allocation for the various mission scheme of the church at this season of the year it is desirable that the condition of the different funds should be clearly understood. We are sorry to learn that while most of the schemes seem to be suffering somewhat from the hard times, that for French Work is in danger of becoming seriously embarrassed unless something unforeseen occurs before the end of the financial year. The receipts at the present time are about 40 per cent short of what they were at the corresponding period of last year. It is not that the returns from congregations are fewer but that the amounts sent in are smaller, and several generous individual contributors to the work have passed away.

As the expenditure is based on the income of the previous year this makes it necessary to borrow much more largely than in former years, with the possibility that there will be nothing to meet the notes when they

mature. At least \$10,000 will be needed on the 1st, of February when the grants for the current quarter are due. The Board are very unwilling to contract the work. But they have never yet reported a deficit to the Assembly and trust that it will not be necessary to close any of the missions in order to avoid a serious one this year. There never was a time when the work was more hopeful than now. There is no need to be specially aggressive in order to get a hearing for the gospel among the French Canadians to-day. Many of them in all parts of the country and in almost all classes of society are looking for some way out of their religious perplexities. All that is needed is that the light of the gospel should be held up sufficiently high at the important points to attract many inquiring minds who know not where else to turn.

But altogether apart from that there are many whom we have already encouraged to look to us for the religious nurture of themselves and their families. To withdraw from any field means practically to leave them without ordinance, or to drive them back to Romanism with which they are profoundly dissatisfied. There is no other Protestant church in as good a position to care for these as our own or upon which they have as strong a claim.

It is to be hoped therefore that congregations will respond liberally. But we have also many individual members who are in a position to help by giving over and above what is now contributed through their several congregations. Will not some of them take the place of men like the late Mr. Fergusson of Fergus who for many years gain an annual subscription of \$800? The offer of half a dozen such would go far to relieve the Board of its financial anxieties at the present time.

### The Church's Prosperity.

There is probably no minister in Scotland whose advice on church work is so much sought for and so generally appreciated as Rev. Dr. Stalker. He and Rev. Dr. J. Marshall Lang, occupy an enviable position in this respect. And why? Because they are careful thinkers; men who closely examine the actual conditions of their work, who give much thought to details and to basic principles, who are extremely cautious in their utterances where doubts exists and ably emphatic where the path to them is clear. Dr. Stalker's counsels to young preachers touching preparation for the pulpit and the delivery of the message are gratefully remembered by many ministers who have benefited by them; his advice to young church workers has often proved of wide application and great advantage to city and country congregations, with Dr. Howie he shares distinction in matters of church finance and with Dr. Wells in church extension. The opinion of a man thus tried and tested is of great value wherever conditions of work are similar. Speaking lately in Dundee to the office-bearer's Union, on the conditions of a church's prosperity be advised making the most of the state of things that exist, with an openness for a gradual and reasonable change. What most of them were needing were not changes in form of worship and arrangements, but a fresh power into the forms which they at present had. The Church could only live and thrive as it adapted itself to the changing conditions of the population. It seemed to him that among the younger ministers there was a growing determination to put an end to drunkenness, which was by far the greatest obstacle in the path of the Gospel, and which they had tolerated far too long.