

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1883.

THE special attention of ministers, missionaries, and catechists is directed to an announcement by the convener of the Home Mission Committee which appears in another column. The requirements of the great North-West are numerous and urgent. It is hoped that many suitable labourers may be induced to respond to the application.

NUMERICALLY considered, Presbyterians must now take a back seat in ecclesiastical company. Since the union of 1875 we have been the largest Protestant denomination in the Dominion. According to the last census, the Presbyterian Church numbers 629,280, and the Church of England 574,818. We outnumbered any one Methodist body when the census was taken; but the four united the other day outnumber us. The figures are as follows:—

Methodist Church of Canada.....	582,963
Episcopal Methodist.....	103,272
Bible Christian.....	27,236
Primitive Methodist.....	25,680

Total..... 739,160

It will thus be seen that the Methodist exceeds ours in numbers by 109,880 and the Church of England by 164,342. If there is any truth in the theory that Methodism does not thrive as well in the older parts of America as in the newer we may overtake our neighbours in a few years. The Wesleyans could always beat us in very new settlements. Their machinery was admirably adapted for taking possession of a newly settled country. It is not by any means clear that they can work an old field better than we can or take a better hold in cities. We always come to stay.

OUR fall shows may be used for many other purposes besides the improvement of stock and machinery. Patriotism may be cultivated at these annual gatherings. A man that can visit our Toronto Exposition or the Provincial Fair and not conclude that Ontario is one of the best countries in the world does not know evidences of national prosperity when he sees them. A better dressed, better behaved, more intelligent, more enterprising, more comfortable looking crowd of people cannot be brought together in any country in the world than that which met in Toronto last week. There may not have been many millionaires among them; but they struck as high an average in all that goes to make a country great as an equal number gathered promiscuously in any part of the world would strike, perhaps we should say a higher average. The same is true of the gathering at the Provincial. No intelligent, reflecting man can look at that surging mass of intelligent, well-dressed, comfortable-looking people without feeling that God has given us a goodly heritage. These are not picked men taken from sections that abound in paupers unable to come to Guelph. These are our average Ontario citizens. They are well provided for in this good land. Would that we were all more grateful for our national blessings.

UNLESS we entirely mistake the signs of the times female suffrage is one of coming questions. Both political parties are squinting at the question though apparently unwilling to commit themselves for the present to any very pronounced measures. The Methodist Conference declared the other day in favour of this franchise. Just let the Presbyterian Assembly and one or two other bodies incline a little that way and the politicians will make female suffrage a plank in their platform at the earliest possible moment. Many temperance men are in favour of the movement. They assume that the vast majority of women are ready to vote for prohibition. The "Globe" assumes the same thing in an article last week. Might it not

be well before we make arrangements for bringing our wives to the polls for some one to give us a few of the facts on which this assumption is based. It is quite easy to make a rhetorical flourish about women driving King Alcohol out of the country. A flourish of that kind does not count when the ballot boxes are opened. Even supposing a large majority of women voted for prohibition would their vote make up for the degradation that the franchise would bring upon them. Just fancy a number of respectable women leaving their homes to take part in the Muskoka election! We must have more light before we put Canadian women into the mire of Canadian politics.

THE Conference had a somewhat breezy debate just before adjournment on the propriety of ministers engaging in speculation and giving their time to secular pursuits. The Committee on Discipline recommended that a resolution be passed making it incompetent for ministers in active work to hold membership in any secular board, trading company, or corporate body organized for purely commercial purposes. The motion was passed but almost immediately afterwards a motion was carried to reconsider. After a lengthened debate it was agreed that Conference do nothing more than recommend ministers not to become members of boards, trading companies, or corporate bodies organized for purposes of trade. As matters now stand a minister in his private capacity may invest his money any way he pleases, but he must not figure as the President or Director of Banks, Land Companies, Loan Companies, Insurance Companies or other concerns of that kind. We never heard that any considerable number of ministers were in danger of being made presidents or directors of monetary institutions. Some of the Methodist brethren, we understand were interested in land companies in the North-West, but are very certain they "won't do it again." It would be well for the country, though perhaps not for the churches, if ministers were quite frequently made directors of monetary institutions. A man that can raise a family of six or eight children respectably on \$500 a year and keep out of debt is qualified for a seat on any monetary board. Raising a large family on \$500 a year is a far greater financial feat than managing the Bank of Montreal.

CHURCH CONGRESSES.

IT is generally thought, not without reason, that the official meetings of the various church courts sufficiently tax the time and the energies of their members. Many ministers feel that they interfere in no small degree with pressing duties of their pastoral work. In addition to the ordinary official assemblages connected with the Episcopal Church in Canada, a new and more popular gathering is contemplated. It is new so far as Canada is concerned. In England and the United States, Church Congresses have come to be established institutions, where their success has been remarkable. A few months since an experiment on a limited scale was made in Hamilton, and so satisfactory were the results that the desire was generally expressed for organizing the Congress as a permanent institution on a wider and more comprehensive basis.

The memorial addressed to the Provincial Synod at Montreal asking that a general Congress be sanctioned was favourably received. Most of those taking part in the discussion of the question contended that this new ecclesiastical assemblage should be perfectly free and untrammelled by any official connection with the regularly constituted Church courts. There is much wisdom in this contention. While in the various diocesan and provincial synods most questions affecting the welfare and government of the Church come up for discussion, the number of such subjects is too great, and the time for their discussion necessarily limited, that but little opportunity exists for the careful consideration of moral and religious subjects of immediate and direct popular interest. The reading of carefully prepared papers on such subjects and the discussions to which they give rise contribute greatly to the awakening of popular interest in Christian thought and work. The Church is brought into more direct relation with the people who become more interested and helpful in active effort for the advancement of religious and benevolent enterprises. These church congresses, especially in England, have awakened much interest; and, from the fact that some of the ablest men of the day have taken part in their proceedings, the popular mind has been directed to

subjects of great importance which might have been otherwise overlooked.

The propriety of holding a Presbyterian Congress might at all events be considered. It is true the reasons for such a gathering are not so strong as in the case of our Episcopal neighbours. There is not so much of a chasm between ministers and people as there too often is between clergy and laity. The meetings of local Presbyteries afford frequent opportunities for the consideration of questions of immediate interest, though of necessity the stated business monopolizes most of their time. It was generally supposed that the district synods would afford excellent opportunities for the consideration of subjects specially bearing on practical religion, but somehow the expectation has been unfulfilled. Of late efforts have been made with more or less success to popularize these intermediate courts, still they lack the interest that attaches to either Presbytery or Assembly. It is admitted that efforts in the direction attempted at the three Synod meetings recently held might in time wonderfully increase the interest and usefulness of these annual gatherings. Even then there would still be room for holding a Congress. In all our Church courts there is the utmost freedom of discussion and a degree of manly independence that leaves nothing to be desired in this respect. The advantage to be derived from a Congress would be that divested of official and formal responsibility, the different phases of Church life and work could receive more time for consideration than can possibly be allotted to them in the debates of the Assembly. Year by year its business is increasing in magnitude, and matters of importance have to be shelved, and adjudicated upon without being sufficiently discussed.

Besides a more thorough ventilation of questions of current interest to the welfare of the Church, thereby facilitating the work of the Assembly, topics of vital importance to the Church and the people at large would receive adequate and timely attention. A Presbyterian Church Congress might at all events be tried, and, if as successful as some of those held by other bodies, there would be no reason to regret the experiment.

EARL CARNARVON AS A CHURCHMAN.

THE Earl of Carnarvon while in Montreal paid a visit to the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church then in session in that city. The report of his speech addressed to the Synod does not contain anything very striking. It was characterized by a fine spirit of loyalty and affection to the Church to which he belongs. The most noteworthy portion of his remarks relates to the estimate he has formed of present state of the Church of England. Being an experienced statesman, Lord Carnarvon takes no narrow or prejudiced view of the actual condition of the English Church. He not only recognizes the difficulties and labours of that great ecclesiastical body, but, as the worst of all her troubles, the party division and strife which seem every year to increase in bitterness. These things he says occasion sorrow and perplexity.

Such a state of things is inevitable when the broadly marked tendencies in the English Church are observed. Tolerance is becoming all the more difficult. The ritualistic party is earnest, energetic and aggressive. They have a strong popular sentiment in many quarters in their favour. More than their zeal for vestments, postures and mediævalism generally their fervent labours among the poor in neglected districts have gained for them much respect. Their zeal in self-denying missionary work has given vitality to a movement which antique sentimentalism alone would have imperilled. Extreme ritualistic leaders have been ready to brave martyrdom for their convictions. Whether they took the spoiling of their goods joyfully we cannot say; but they preferred imprisonment to submission to the fines imposed upon them, and the rulings of their bishops. Like all zealots they entertain the assumption that they—of all men except it be Roman Catholics—are positively right and all others wrong. The Broad Church might at first sight be supposed to be the most tolerant of existing parties in the Church of England. Even they can denounce both ritualist and evangelical in vigorous Saxon. It is in speculative thinking that Broad Churchmen show any signs of activity. The zeal that animated F. W. Robertson, F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley has not descended to their successors. The large body in the English Church who adhere to evangeli-