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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19th, 1889.

THE Bishop of Toronto gave his clergy a sound lecture one morning last week for not attending the opening services. His Lordship thought that only ten were present at prayers, but a member of Synod corrected him and said there were *eighteen*. The Bishop gave additional point to his lecture by gravely informing the members that they would all be present if there was to be a debate on the division of the "surplus." Probably they would, and the surest way not to have any money to debate about in a short time is to remain away from prayers and attend largely when a money question is being discussed. We do not wish to make comparisons, but it is pleasant to state that the opening exercises in the General Assembly were perhaps never as largely attended as during the present meeting. On Wednesday morning the large church was full.

THE fact that some of the reports submitted to the Assembly last week show a small deficit need not distress anybody. The whole amount paid by the people is \$212,471 larger than the amount paid into the funds last year. So long as the gross amount increases at the rate of nearly a quarter of a million a year, a small deficit in this or that fund is not a matter of much importance, and can easily be put right the next year. Economists of a certain class may say that the church expends much more money now than in former years. Certainly she does because she does much more work. The germ of the Allan line of steamers was a tug-boat that Sir Hugh used to sail on the St. Lawrence; of course as much money was not required to run that tug as is required to run the Allan line. The church is much larger than it was, is doing much more work than it ever did, and therefore much more money is needed. And it comes too and will continue to come if we have power in our pulpits.

NO motion passed by the Assembly so far will produce more discussion than the following instruction given to the Home Mission Committee:

In order to secure the co-operation of the women of the Church, instruct the Committee, instead of taking action in the direction of forming Woman's Home Missionary Societies, as sanctioned by a previous General Assembly, to confer with the Foreign Mission Committee and with the Executive Committee of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society with a view to widening the basis of said Society so as to include Home Missions in its operations.

If the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society wish to do Home Mission work, there is no reason why they should not do it. If they don't wish to widen the basis of their society so as to include Home Missions, they may put an end to the matter by simply saying "No." The only serious feature of the case is that in order to ascertain the mind of the Society, every auxiliary will have to discuss the relative merits of Home and Foreign Mission work. Twelve months hence it will be seen whether a discussion of that kind has done good or the reverse. It would have been more satisfactory if the request to widen the basis of the Society had come from the women themselves.

IN presenting the report of Knox College, Principal Caven took substantially the ground in regard to selling the present building that THE PRESBYTERIAN has taken since the question was started. We have a good site and a fair building. There is no reason why we should sell. Still, if the people who wish to buy offer enough to make it an object to sell the property let it go and put up a larger and better building. Ten years ago the present building was one of the best college buildings in the country. Ten years hence it may be one of the poorest. Presbyterians are not in the least ambitious to take a back seat in the matter of college buildings, more especially if a much better building

can be put up without any additional cost. We notice that a portion of the press, and some of those who discuss the matter, always allude to the sale of the property as if it were merely a Toronto question. The inference sought to be drawn is that the college authorities should be willing to sell in order that an additional park may be given to the city. It should be remembered that Knox College is not a Toronto institution. The people who built and endowed it live in all parts of the country, and not one in a thousand of them are in any way interested in providing Toronto with an additional park.

GEORGE BROWN used to say that the man who originated and carried reforms in either Church or State rarely got any reward from those benefited by the reforms. In fighting for good measures, at first unpopular, he usually treads on the corns of a sufficient number of people to put and keep him out in the cold when the measures are recognized by everybody as the right thing. Dr. Laing has suffered more in this way than any minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Years ago he worked hard for the appointment of an Examination Board for Knox College. The move was very unpopular. The Presbyteries did not wish to surrender the right of examining students and the students did not want an examining Board. Who would think of abolishing this Board now? Years ago he fought hard for centralization in our Home Mission work. This movement too was unpopular, many contended that each Presbytery should have full control of their own Mission field. Who would dream of going back to that old system now? Just fancy Barrie or Bruce working their own Mission field without aid from the Home Mission Committee. We could mention two or three other questions that Dr. Laing was closely connected with that were very unpopular when he began advocating them, but are not so unpopular now. It seems not a little hard that a man should suffer for advocating measures that are generally admitted to be highly beneficial to the church.

IT is said that Gladstone is the only man in the world who can make an eloquent speech about figures. The following figures don't need Gladstone or any other man to make them eloquent. They show that in fourteen years the Presbyterians of Canada have increased their contributions for religious purposes nearly *one million dollars*. In 1875, the year of the Union, the gross income was \$982,672; last year it was \$1,942,723:

	Total income.	Increase
1875-76.....	\$ 982,672
1876-77.....	986,115	\$ 3,443
1877-78.....	1,030,386	44,271
1878-79.....	1,110,381	79,995
1879-80.....	1,162,154	51,773
1880-81.....	1,245,495	83,341
1881-82.....	1,409,748	164,253
1882-83.....	1,422,783	13,035
1883-84.....	1,453,624	30,841
1884-85.....	1,558,218	104,594
1885-86.....	1,580,818	22,600
1886-87.....	1,533,517
1887.....	1,730,252	196,735
1888.....	1,942,723	212,471

Next year the amount raised will most likely be considerably over two millions. The increase last year was the largest since the Union. And last year was not a very good business year. In several localities the harvest was a failure. Manifestly our people are waking up in the matter of giving. And be it remembered giving to the Lord is one of the best tests of the spiritual life of a church. It is not by any means the only test, but it is a good one.

HOME MISSIONS.

IN point of importance the Home and Foreign Mission Schemes of the Church are unquestionably first in rank. They are so regarded by the Assembly and in the estimation of the people. They are the first to receive the attention of the Assembly, and thus secure the careful consideration to which they are rightly entitled. However necessary and important other departments of Church activity may be, and there is not one that could without injury be dispensed with, no one denies that either Home or Foreign Missions should be displaced from the order of business they now occupy. The preparation of the Home Mission report has evidently been a work of great care and painstaking. In the wide and complete view it presents of the work of the Church in this department, it is a marvel of skillful condensation, a merit that many will greatly appreciate. Any one who carefully reads it will have no difficulty in arriving at a full and satisfactory

understanding of the wisdom with which the Home Mission work of the Church is conducted by the respected Convener and those associated with him, its nature and extent, much of the good it has been the means of accomplishing, its great value in promoting the highest well-being of many thousands, and the urgent necessity for its extension if the usefulness of the Church is to be preserved and its progress maintained.

In the Maritime Provinces during recent years the work of Home Missions has been prosecuted with a degree of zeal and energy that is already fruitful in most encouraging results. By diligent inquiry and careful observation the needs of neglected districts have been to a large extent recognized, and their wants met as fully as resources in men and means permit. As a consequence of this renewed activity, hitherto neglected localities now enjoy the means of grace that a few years ago were beyond their reach. There ought to be no abatement in the efforts to sustain this work; they must be continued till the entire field is overtaken and every part of the Provinces by the sea provided with Gospel ordinances, so that not only those who have a claim on our Church for the supply of these, but the provision should be so abundant that none may be in a position to complain of neglect.

In the older settled parts of the central provinces, Quebec, for many reasons, has most important claims on the Home Mission Committee. Those most intimately acquainted with the condition of affairs there cannot help expressing their regret that in the past these claims should have remained so long comparatively unheeded. It is a well-known fact that many Presbyterian families, by reason of their neglected spiritual interests, have, it may be with lingering regrets, been absorbed in that Church which has corrupted the simplicity of the Christian faith and brought vast masses of people into spiritual bondage.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the Home Mission Committee will be placed in such a position that it will be able soon to give such aid to evangelistic work in the Province of Quebec, that what, in too many places there is ready to die, may be strengthened. Protests against Romish error and papal aggression cannot be too earnest and direct, but the most effective of all protests against error is the dissemination of the truth. The welfare of our fellow-citizens and our national progress are conditioned by the diffusion of Gospel light and liberty.

The Home Mission report gives a condensed yet adequate view of what is being done throughout Ontario. Here as elsewhere it is made manifest that the Church is awaking to a fuller sense of responsibility. Remote mission fields and newer settlements cannot, without injury, be left to struggle as they best can, alone and unaided. In an important sense these are the nurseries of the Church. From them will go forth large numbers of energetic youth to find place for themselves in the great centres of activity. If they are left in their most impressionable days without the strongly formative force of Christian influence and training what is likely to be their condition when they join the populations of great cities? Will they enlist in the ranks of the virtuous and the good, and take their places in the membership of the Christian Church, or will they recruit the growing army of the careless and the indifferent? It is not difficult to understand what should be the duty of the Church in view of these conditions. Much has been done in the Algoma district to minister to the spiritual wants of the settlers under the faithful, efficient and intelligent direction of the Superintendent, the Rev. Allan Findlay. One aspect of the work mentioned in the report is peculiarly gratifying. Under the fostering care of the Presbytery of Toronto, and within the boundaries of the city, no fewer than eleven mission churches have been organized. They have been a rich blessing to many, and have been abundantly blessed. The report states that only two missions out of the eleven receive any aid from the Home Mission Fund. All the others, with one exception, are supported by the congregations with which they are connected.

Not the least interesting part of the Home Mission Committee's report is that detailing the work under the care of the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, communicated by the energetic and indefatigable superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Robertson. In addition to what immediately and strictly pertains to his work he has supplied a few interesting and important particulars concerning the vast region over which his field ranges—information that may be relied upon, gleaned by one who is a disinterested and keen observer. He is earnest and unrelenting in his advocacy of the claims of the North-West. As to the present capabilities and future prospects of the Western Provinces, there is