

THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

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The Presbyterian Church has always deemed the education of its ministry an object of the highest importance; nor have the Colonial branches of that Church shewn less appreciation of their duty in this regard, than the stock from which they sprang. In view of the great efforts on behalf of ministerial education, which, considering their comparatively limited resources they have been willing to make, we might even say, that they have furnished evidence of the value they set upon ministerial training still more emphatic than it has been permitted the mother churches, at least for a considerable period, to furnish.

In the matter of securing an educated ministry, the record of our own Church in all the sections of it previous to union, is extremely honourable. With very limited means and in very unpretentious edifices, the Church began to train a native ministry. In the growth of Presbyterianism in Canada, it has, however, been found necessary to give the work larger proportions, and to prosecute it under conditions which entail a much larger expenditure than sufficed in the earlier days of these Colonies. Neither censure nor regret should be expressed on this account.

There is much in the present state of our Theological Seminaries to be regarded with devout gratitude, and to afford the highest encouragement to still further efforts on their behalf. We should be grateful for the goodly number of promising candidates for the ministry, who are presenting themselves, and for the acceptance which those already trained among us, have met with in the Church. The efforts put forth to secure suitable buildings for the Theological Seminaries have been very successful; and in a short time we may expect to see these respectable edifices free from debt.

But a matter which it now behoves the church to consider with much earnestness, is the best method of providing funds for the *efficient maintenance* of her theological schools. Their financial position is in the mean time far from satisfactory. The last two years have shewn a serious deficit in the ordinary revenue of several of the Colleges; and it has become imperatively necessary to direct our attention at once to this question. The Church cannot be allowed, in any of its schemes, to go deeply into debt.

Obviously it were here out of place to discuss the question of consolidating our theological work and reducing the number of our institutions; for however desirable this may seem on various grounds, no person who has carefully considered the matter will suppose that were it effected, the present expenditure could be much, if anything, reduced. The main advantage would be in the possibility of having more adequate teaching staffs in the consolidated institutions.

There are two methods in which the seminaries may be supported:—*Annual Collections* or Subscriptions, and *Endowment*. As to the first of these methods, we shall not forget that it has been already followed with very remarkable success, considering the many schemes which the Church has had on hand—all equally claiming support from annual collections. Pro-