

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 1881.

## SUSTENTATION.

WE invite the attention of our readers to the article in another place, by Mr. Laing, of Dundas, on a Sustentation Fund. It will be found interesting to all who have given thought to such subjects. Mr. Laing had much to do with framing the present Supplemental Home Mission Fund, and is thoroughly acquainted with its working for the last twenty years, and we have pleasure in giving our readers any thoughts upon the subject with which he may favour us. Our columns are open for criticism of Mr. Laing's article, or for any other contributions on the general subject.

## THE SABBATH—WHAT NEXT?

HAVE we a Sabbath in Ontario? The Toronto papers of Monday last gave as news two items of Sabbath desecration—but they had not a word to say in condemnation of this glaring immorality. Have they come to the conclusion that the majority of the people of Ontario have said there is no Sabbath, and therefore it is not immoral to travel and do business on the Lord's day? Have they no higher standard of morals than the will of the people and pecuniary profit?

But our readers may ask what was done? Well—

1. Some syndicate magnates and others travelled from Woodstock to Toronto by special train on last Lord's day, and afterwards held "an informal meeting" at the Queen's Hotel. Another company came by special train from Hamilton on purpose to meet these magnates and returned in the evening. At that meeting "there is reason to believe that the prospects of the Ontario and Quebec Railway and the Credit Valley as a connecting link were satisfactorily discussed." The better the day, the better the deed!

That no guiltless party may be unjustly reproached we give the names as they appear in the "Globe." Nor is our sorrow and indignation the less that so many of them came from Sabbath-blest Scotland, and are, or were at one time, connected with the Presbyterian Church. It only shews how strongly the current is setting against the Sabbath in this age of railways, and how vain it is to think to stem the tide by any other means than the authority of God. The names are Messrs. Charles Rose of London, Eng., D. McIntyre, Hon. P. Mitchell, E. B. Osler, John Proctor, W. Hendrie of Hamilton.

2. A steamer on the same day, at 9.30 a.m., left Yonge street wharf, as advertised, with an excursion party for Niagara. Steps had been taken if possible to prevent the open profanation of the Sabbath, but in vain. The mayor of the city, a prominent Presbyterian, an elder in Knox Church, and well known for his openly avowed regard for the Christian religion, found that "interference was not within his province." And the Chief of the Police did not see fit to interfere.

We may as well open our eyes to the facts. If there is a law to protect the Sabbath in Ontario, it is a dead letter; and the Christian community are satisfied that it should remain such. When Methodist and Presbyterian Christians forget the Lord's day and its sanctity so far as to get special trains put on that hearers with itching ears may come into cities where a popular preacher is holding forth, or special services are being held, they cannot say a word to other Churches or blame men of the world. The judgment is on us—our Sabbath as a national privilege is gone. Any man who wishes to travel for pleasure may do so without a plea of necessity or

mercy or seeking shelter behind exceptions in the Lord's Day Act. Any who have money or influence enough to get a special train, or to charter a boat, may go about on business or pleasure at their own sweet will. The poor railway officials and boat-hands must labour or lose their situations. Mammon has at last succeeded in destroying our national day of rest. It remains for Christians to see that they and theirs do the unfashionable slow duty of obeying God rather than man, and "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

THE value of technical "religious tests" as a means for securing the services of efficient and at the same time religious teachers for the instruction of the youth of a community which by profession is all but universally Christian, has after long trial been found to be practically nothing at all. The careless and the conscientious will, it has been found, sign any such formula, and at the same time ostentatiously boast of their proceeding as at best but a dead formality, if not even a pitiful jest. But though such formal "tests" have been all but universally dispensed with in the case of those who are to act as public instructors in countries where national systems of education have been adopted, it does not at all follow that the religious character of such teachers is looked upon as a matter of small moment or that there is anything which might properly be called persecution in a man in other respects very competent being prevented from occupying a position of honour, influence and emolument because his religious opinions, openly and honestly avowed, as they ought always to be, are regarded by those whose children are to be instructed as so false, dangerous and misleading as to be in the last degree likely to exercise a very injurious, if not destructive, influence on the minds of his pupils, and through them on the community at large. A Christian father will not choose to have his son taught by anyone who casts contempt and scorn on those things which to him are the grandest and most important of all possible verities, even though that instructor be a very great philosopher and a very learned man. In the estimation of such a father the risk is too great, while the compensating possible gain is all too small. Nor would there be any ground in such a case for raising the cry of persecution, or for declaiming against the narrowness and bigotry thus exhibited, as if it were something intolerable. A man who strongly and earnestly believes in Christianity has in such a case no choice, for he holds that it is better for his son to be a Christian than for him to enjoy the instruction of the ablest man that ever lived, if that instruction can only be had by parting company with his Saviour and his God. If this is true of one Christian man it is true of all. They cannot help wishing that their children should be instructed by those whose views on religious matters are so far in accordance with their own. It is quite true, as has often been said with a sneer, that it is not possible to teach arithmetic "on religious principles," and that though all the sums in such instruction were taken from incidents in the Bible the religion thus imparted might after all be very poor and very unprofitable. Quite true. But it does not at all follow that a teacher even of arithmetic may not do far more harm by his scandalous life and his sceptical innuendoes, than he could ever counterbalance by his official work, though he were the best instructor in numbers that ever put chalk to blackboard. And so with every other department even of secular instruction. It is consequently not merely allowable for those who have the selecting and appointing of teachers in our public schools and universities to have a regard for the religious character and opinions of the different candidates; it is indispensable that they should do so. As far as the public schools are concerned this will be practically well cared for, in the fact that the selections are made by the community itself through its annually chosen representatives. The same thing will so far apply to the High Schools. Where the character of the community is generally indifferent about religious matters, this indifference will often be reflected in the choice of teachers as well as in other matters calling for united action. As the tone of religious feeling rises in a neighbourhood, so will the likelihoods of a godless or immoral teacher being either chosen or kept diminish. "Like people, like representative," it has been said with a great deal of truth, and "like people,

like teacher," is a phrase which will often be found equally appropriate. But when appointments are made to the higher educational positions of a country and made by the rulers for the time being, is the same law not to be followed? Is the religious character and the avowed religious opinions of a candidate not to be taken as at least one element, and a very important one, in determining whether he is to be selected or passed over? We humbly think that it ought to be; nay, that there will be, great dereliction of duty on the part of those who have the appointing power if this element is altogether lost sight of or even ostentatiously ignored. It is in vain to plead that in his own particular department this man or that may be *faute primis* when there are other counteracting influences and characteristics which tell against him. We should hope, for instance, that the fact of a man being a drunkard or a debauchee, a convicted liar, or a public rake, would effectively bar the way to his receiving any educational appointment in Canada, though he were the most learned man and the most efficient teacher in his special line that ever walked the footstool. And may there not be other objections, equally important and equally to be considered, apart from the mere question of great professional fitness? Professor Stewart Blackie, in the days of University Tests, made himself endlessly merry at the dextrous way in which he got out of the difficulty of signing the Confession of Faith, by saying that in teaching Latin he would take care that nothing should be said or done contrary to that venerable document. That might all be, but even in teaching Latin it is quite possible for a man, if he has a mind for it, to cast ridicule and contempt on all the verities of the Christian faith, and to make his pupils as heathenish as the books they read, so that wise men and prudent will take care not by the imposition of ineffectual "tests," but by much more effectual measures, to prevent those who have such proclivities from ever having a chance to follow them out in practice at the expense of their boys. Of course it is quite possible for a *crypto-sceptic*—of whom we have been lately assured there are so many—to so effectively keep his own counsel that no one could possibly know what his religious or irreligious opinions really were. In such a case no one could either be astonished or indignant at such a person being appointed to a position for which he was otherwise eminently fit. Of such, however, we are not speaking, but, on the contrary, of those who honestly and frankly make no secret of their having absolutely parted company with Christianity and all which that implies. "What matters it," we are asked, "what a man thinks of Jesus of Nazareth or the immortality of the soul, so long as he is an eminently competent scientific instructor, a marvellously skilled linguist, or a thoroughly good educational organizer?" Matters! we reply. It matters everything. To the careless, indifferent, or totally irreligious, it may indeed be a matter of no moment, but to the Christianly devout it is all in all, and surely these last are neither so few nor so insignificant in such a country as Canada, as that their opinions and feelings should be thought worthy of no respect, and be treated without even the appearance of defence. The cry of "get the best men" is thought to be so sensible that not a word can be said against it. So it is, if it be once settled what is meant by "best." But in the settlement of that there is sometimes considerable difficulty, even when the question of merely technical and professional fitness may, to a very considerable extent, have already been determined.

## BUSH FIRES AND BROTHERLY HELP.

THE losses that have been sustained, and the sufferings which have been passed through during the last few weeks from bush fires in almost every part of our Province will never be fully known, but all are well aware that in amount and severity they have been very formidable. In very many cases the fruits of laborious years have been swept away, and not a few who thought themselves fairly independent, or at least with the best prospects for becoming so at an early day, have found themselves literally penniless and forced to begin life again in much more difficult circumstances and with much less buoyancy and hopefulness of spirit than when they first addressed themselves to the work of hewing out homes in the backwoods of Canada.

No doubt these fires, we are thankful to know, have