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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 6th, 1891.

FIFTY Presbyteries of the American Presbyterian Church have overtured the General Assembly to deal with the Briggs Inaugural address. Why is all this overturing needed? Is not the Supreme Court capable of attending to its business without so many reminders from the lower courts? Besides, the fifty Presbyteries will be represented in the Assembly, and their representatives will constitute about one-fourth of that body. Looking at the matter from a legal standpoint these overtures seem needless, and still it is highly gratifying to see the Presbyteries so ready to stand solidly for sound doctrine.

D. R. STORRS is of the opinion that what the Churches need in order that more money may be obtained for missionary purposes is not changes in committees and other parts of the ecclesiastical machinery. The thing specially needed is "nothing less than lifting the entire level of Christian feeling and purpose in all our congregations." Exactly so. Tinkering at a locomotive will do little good without steam. The ecclesiastical parliaments will meet next month, and there will, of course, be the usual criticism on the work of the boards, committees and other parts of Church machinery. If everybody, but especially the critics, would come to the conclusion once for all that the principal thing the Churches need is more spiritual life something would be gained.

RIGID economy may be all very well as a matter of theory, but when the Hon. Commissioner of Public Works proposed the other day to move the old desks from the Legislative chamber and put them into the chamber of the new building, there was a loud "no, no" chorus from both sides of the House. There was a good deal of human nature in that chorus. We all admire economy provided somebody else practises it. The man who advocates the cutting down of salaries in Church or State is generally careful to exempt his own. If any of the funds are short at next Assembly no doubt there will be the usual speeches about retrenchment. The right way to meet criticism of that kind is to propose something that will touch the critic's own salary. It is always easy to advocate retrenchment provided somebody else does the retrenching.

THERE can be no reasonable doubt that the dead-line of fifty theory is largely responsible for the falling off in the number of theological students in certain quarters. How could it be otherwise? What young man of spirit, and spiritless young men are no use in the ministry, would wish to enter the ministerial profession if he felt reasonably certain of being thrust aside when his working power is at its best simply because his hair is beginning to turn a little grey or to fall out. Few fathers care to spend between \$1,500 and \$2,000 in giving their sons a seven years' course in college if they know that their sons in the ministry must stop work at an age when their sons in law and medicine are at their best. The dead-line of fifty business soon thins out theological colleges, and will, if adopted, do so in Canada as certainly as it does elsewhere. The worst feature of the case is that it keeps out of college the young men that it is most desirable to have in the pulpit. A young man willing to be kicked at fifty will never do much before he is fifty.

WHY should the General Assembly be asked every year to endorse organizations of one kind and another not closely connected with our Church work and not in any way under Church control? Before endorsing any organization the Supreme

Court should carefully enquire into its origin, object and modes of working, and pay some little attention to its *personnel*. Has the Assembly time to do all this? Is the business of the Church not quite as much as any body of men can attend to in ten hot days? We have a Church extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with six or seven hundred congregations, six theological colleges, a large Foreign Mission field and nearly a thousand Home Mission stations. If this Church with all its varied interests does not bring work enough into the Supreme Court to last ten days, there is something wrong somewhere. The plain English of the matter is the Assembly has more work of its own than it ever does with any degree of deliberation. When was there an Assembly that did not refer a large number of things to a committee to "report at next Assembly"? We all know that phrase. The Assembly never renders such good service to the Church as when it sticks closely to its own work. Besides endorsing organizations outside of the Church is always risky. No one knows what they may do. The Church that endorses everything that comes before it soon gets into the position of the business man who endorses every note placed before him.

WITH six theological colleges of our own, most of them full of students, it will not be necessary for the General Assembly to receive any specially unsuitable ministers from other Churches next month. Whether we have ministers enough is not a question that need be discussed. We have as many as the Church is willing to find bread for, and a minister, however devoted, cannot live without bread. If the Church would double its contributions for Foreign Missions, and treble the amount raised for Home Work and Augmentation, we might of course employ double the number of men in the Home and Foreign field and through an increased Augmentation fund maintain many pastors at points where they cannot live now. But the Church does not seem to be in any humour for trebling or even doubling its contributions at the present time. Many of our people could not do so if they tried. In a new country like Canada, where there is not much accumulated wealth, the giving power of many people is easily reached. Besides all this the fact that a minister wants to leave his own Church is no reason in the world why we should take him into ours. There may be good reasons but the simple fact that he desires to come is no reason at all. The Church is not now in special need of outside ministerial help. The old saw about room in the upper storey does not apply. There is no guarantee that any given man will get into the upper storey.

THE new Dominion Parliament is in session and the proceedings will in all probability be lively. It should be understood by all patriotic citizens that Canada is a particularly hard country to govern. Our legislators have difficult problems to solve and their solution is not helped by unfair criticism or by unreasonable demands on the part of the people. The shape of the country and the diversified interests of its different parts make fiscal legislation extremely difficult. The tariff that suits British Columbia best might injure important interests in Nova Scotia, while the fiscal arrangements that would please many in Manitoba might be ruinous to many in Quebec. Even in Ontario we have the cities and large towns arrayed against the country and farmers making fiscal war against manufacturers. Differences of race, language and religion do not simplify matters. Then too there is a loud cry from all quarters for millions to be expended in making improvements and the millions have to be borrowed if obtained and expended. Besides all this there is no use in denying the fact that many Canadian people, especially among the Liberals, are unreasonably exacting in their demands on public men. Even ministers of the Gospel who complain often and bitterly about the unreasonable demands of their congregations are not unfrequently found among the harshest critics of those who serve in Parliament. Let us all remember that serving the public in any capacity is no sinecure and that governing this Canada of ours is in many respects much more difficult than governing the British Empire.

THE tendency of human nature to go from one swing of the pendulum to the other was well illustrated in the Local Parliament the other day. For nearly twenty years the Province has paid the Hon. Oliver Mowat about one-fourth the salary that he could easily earn at the Bar. Towards the close

of last session a number of members from both sides of the House seem to have thought that it was high time to give the Premier "a raise." But that was not all. Acting on the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire it was proposed to give Mr. Meredith an allowance of \$2,000 a year as a recognition of his services as Leader of the Opposition. This proposition is said to be unique in the history of parliamentary government. Well supposing it is, there is no reason why Ontario should not do a unique thing provided the thing is right. Were all Opposition leaders like Mr. Meredith few would oppose the proposition except those who oppose paying anybody. Mr. Meredith renders valuable service to the Province. He has an immense amount of ready information on every question. He rarely criticizes without suggesting something that he thinks better—a most invaluable quality in an Opposition leader. But who can tell that the next Opposition leader may be anything more than a snarling obstructionist or a demagogue who plays for the pit? As regards the Premier perhaps it would be better to let him die poor as William Lyon McKenzie died, as George Brown would have died had he not made money himself and as the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie may die some day. One of the conditions of parliamentary service in this country is that a statesman who does not steal must die comparatively poor.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL HORIZON.

ATMOSPHERIC disturbances are partial, not general, in their effects. Cyclones sweep over particular localities, leaving wreck and ruin behind them, but there are whole regions not far from their destructive track left untouched by their violent fury. So when the ecclesiastical atmosphere is agitated there are quiet nooks undisturbed by the commotions occasioned in the storm centres. At the present time the Presbyterian Church in Canada is one of these quiet resting places where only healthful breezes fan the cheek and stir the pulses to steady and sustained endeavour. The quiet is not the result of inaction or torpor, but because the activities of the Church are in a healthy state. There are no signs of morbid excitement, no restless discontent moving to feverish impatience, but a vigorous practical life felt in its robust glow throughout the Church from the Atlantic to the Pacific. That this happy state is the present possession of the Canadian Church is a matter calling for gratitude, not for boasting, most will be disposed to admit. Yet in recognizing such a condition it would be folly to assume that as compared with sister Churches in other lands it afforded ground for invidious contrast. The pharisaic spirit can be denominational as well as personal.

The Scottish Churches are agitated over several matters, and it is probable that their approaching Assemblies and Synod may be stirred by lively discussions on questions on which people think deeply and feel keenly. The Higher Criticism has come to be a living issue in the Scottish Churches, and has several men of marked distinction among its exponents. How far sympathy with a movement, new in Scotland though old in Germany, has permeated the life and thought of the Scottish people it would be difficult to say. It is the novelty that attracts attention, the deep and steady currents flow onward with little noise. That the men who are most conspicuous in the new movement have much popular sympathy with them is apparent to all observers, but the exact nature of that sympathy is not so easily defined. There are many who coincide with them on intellectual grounds, and are ready in advance to receive the theories on revelation and inspiration the theologians of the new school from time to time advance. Others, and possibly in larger numbers, do not disturb themselves with the character of the views propounded, but they have unqualified admiration for the mental vigour, the ripe and varied scholarship and the high moral and personal worth of the leaders who occupy so prominent a place in the Scottish Churches at the present time.

Whether questions arising out of the development of current religious thought may occupy a prominent place in the discussions of the Church of Scotland Assembly is at present uncertain. Animated speech will no doubt be mainly confined to a subject of a religio-political rather than a theological character. In Scotland as well as in Wales disestablishment is a question of some practical vitality. Throughout the Church of Scotland defence leagues have been formed and much impassioned oratory has been expended with a view to stem the rising tide in favour of disestablishment.