

THE OLD CRY—MORE MINISTERS WANTED.

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In your last issue, you notice Mr. Layton's overture to revive in some form the right of a Presbytery to initiate steps for the settlement of a minister should the congregation neglect this too long. You also noticed Rev. J. McGregor McKay's "impressive statements of the evils, the total ruin brought upon whole congregations by the neglect to secure settled Pastors." It is to be hoped that these matters will be well considered. You add, "Our church should adapt her measures to the necessities of the time and place." True, and I wish a Committee of Inquiry had been appointed by Synod, to investigate and report, next year, on the causes of the inadequate supply of ministers, and means to be used to obtain a sufficient force. Such an inquiry could do no harm, and it might do a great deal of good, by presenting the claims of Christ to Christian parents and youths and especially to young men attending Academies and Colleges not a few might be led to thought, to prayer for direction, and to a decision in a way which would tell powerfully in our future prosperity.

You may say "Settle over congregations the best men you can lay your hand on." Very good—put where can you get them? I had almost said "First catch your hare," but it seems irreverent. The difficulty is that one cannot get "good men" on whom to "lay hands" and neither the *jus devolutum* nor any change in the line indicated will furnish them. Not that I would object to that overture going to the Assembly, but I do object to the idea going abroad, that the proposed change will meet our want, or give us any appreciable relief. I cannot see that it will add a man to our working force, and still am under the conviction, that what is wanted is not more Presbyterian power, but *more young men* from Christian families in town and country, studying for the ministry and more zeal in ministers in encouraging young men of piety and promise to prepare for the work.

Let us deal briefly with facts, and I shall first refer to Mission Stations. In April last there were 36 of these in the Maritime Provinces unsupplied with religious services from the Presbyterian body. In another month the whole 36 had young men, and *for no other cause*. If the men were obtainable, they would

be located by the Presbyteries quickly, without any new power, for the next six months. There might be an extra call for funds but that could be met. The want that cannot be met is want of Preachers.

Messrs. Pitblado and Gordon in their report respecting the North-West say, "Students do excellent work the first season, but as soon as they leave the field their places should be supplied with ordained missionaries. We shall then reap where we have sown, and not leave our crop to be harvested by others, or worse still to go to waste. It is found that the continuous presence of a missionary, is essential even to financial success.

What is here delineated is exactly what has happened in districts described by Mr McKay, and is happening now in some places in these Provinces not however from deficiency of Presbyterian power, but from the want of money and men. We can get the first, for when the case is fairly presented our people do respond, but they have not yet so appreciated the work to be done as to furnish in sufficient force the labourers, and for want of these "our crop is in some places neither harvested by ourselves nor by others but 'going to waste.'"

Let us next look at congregations. Seven young men left our Pine Hill College at the close of April and licensed let us say before the end of June. Four months have elapsed, and four of these had seats in Synod, while two others had calls presented and accepted, and the time of their ordination appointed, and the seventh will doubtless soon follow. Have the people proved themselves either careless or slow? Besides these, within the year or thereabout Rev. Messrs. Maxwell, Robert Rogers, Crawford, Thorpe, McLeod, McKenzie, McDougall and Naira have all been called and settled. Here the sixteen harmonious settlements in less than as many months, and most of them unanimous. Would anything better than this be gained by Presbyterian interference in any form?

But have we not a lot of uncalled men on your list? We have eight. Now suppose that by some short and easy method they are settled, or to put it mild, located, where is the advantage? Some old minister, in a recent *WITNESS*, showed that 28 men were at present wanted, for Congregations, Foreign Missions, and Lumber camps; now when the eight are located, what becomes of the twenty places left out in the cold, for the time abandoned? Will they not be in greater