

Ministers and Churches.

Our Toronto Letter.

Holidays being now a thing of the past, work of all kinds is again proceeding in the usual way. Previous to the observance of the "Week of Prayer," held under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance, the attention of the different religious bodies, and in many cases of congregations, had been called to the small attendance at the daily meeting for prayer conducted by the Toronto branch of the Alliance. The result has been an increased attendance, although it is yet far from what it might be and ought to be. Reasons for this are that, in one part of the city at least, and perhaps in more, contiguous congregations held union meetings among themselves, instead of attending the one general meeting. The latter is held at 4 p. m., a most unsuitable hour for very many, and until this is changed, the attendance will never be very greatly increased. It surely is most desirable that the practical unity of all the Protestant Evangelical churches should be made in some way and at certain times visibly manifest. This might well be done through the Evangelical Alliance, and it is to be regretted that some better means than are now employed could not be devised to secure such a desirable result.

The numerous residential schools and Colleges have all again reopened and are hard at work with the long session before them, except the short breathing spell for some, not all of them, at Easter. With respect to our own Knox College, it is encouraging to see it equipped with so good and full a staff of professors. But from the point of view of the earnest student, and the needs and demands of our day, growing more and more exacting, if we deduct from only a six-months' session, the necessarily broken time, the period allotted for theological study, is surely very short, too short we think, and either a longer session or one more additional, would be little enough with which to send a man forth to do the laborious work of preacher and pastor. The professors, and especially the Principal, are, we judge, putting upon themselves, which is surely wise, a greater restriction than they once did upon the frequency of their preaching during the College session. On Sabbath the twelfth, Professor Halliday Douglas occupied in the forenoon the pulpit of College street church, and Rev. Dr. Parsons was the preacher in the evening. It is very pleasant to the many friends of the latter, to see him, since being relieved of the cares of the pastorate, giving such indications of restored health and strength.

On the same Sabbath, more full reference was made than could be on the previous one, to the death, the great service which he rendered to the Church, and the lessons to be gathered from the life and work of the late Rev. Dr. Robertson. In some cases the whole service was made a memorial one, which was most fitting. It is touching to think that, on that day there probably would not be a single Presbyterian pulpit throughout the whole of our North-West and on to British Columbia, in which his death, his eminent services to the Church, his strong personal qualities, would not be lovingly referred to, and though acquiescing humbly in God's will, our great loss as a Church through his death lamented.

Both in the denominational and general Ministerial Associations the question of a house to house visitation of the whole city, with the view of reaching and drawing into the Church the non-Church going part of the population, has been lately under consideration. Such a visitation was made with good effect two years ago, but owing to the constant movement of population within the city, and the large influx to it within that time, it is thought desirable to do the work again, and there is every reason to believe it will be undertaken before long. As the downward tendency, in spite of all saving agencies, is constant, it can only be counteracted by eternal vigilance in the use of all uplifting appliances on the part of the Church. Other subjects considered at the meeting of the general association were gambling, and the preservation of the Lord's Day for rest and worship. Committees were appointed to prepare and guide the action of the Association as regards both subjects. Rev. Principal Caven presented at some length the objects, claims, work and progress of the Dominion Lord's Day Alliance, and received, as he always does, a sympathetic and interested hearing on a subject dear to his heart, and most vitally affecting all the best interests of the country. In connection

with this subject it might be mentioned that the "Single Tax Association" is holding in the Horticultural Pavilion every Sunday afternoon, a public sort of semi-religious service, addressed by well-known advocates of single tax, chiefly from the United States, to call public attention to this reform as they believe it to be, and which lies at the root, as they say, of most of the evils of society as at present constituted.

The time for annual congregational meetings is upon us, no fewer than fourteen being held on last Wednesday evening including those of nearly all the largest and strongest congregations. It is very gratifying to see that the reports presented, almost without exception, are of the most satisfactory character as regards finances, membership, Sabbath Schools and other departments of Church work. It is still a serious drawback in reports, generally so favorable, that so many of our Churches are still burdened, as they have for years been, with mortgages for such formidable amounts. In every case, almost, something has been done towards their reduction. Now, while times are prosperous, is the opportunity to lessen or wholly remove them, before, as they are sure to do, dark days again come. The membership, not in every case reported, is in some quite large, from 500 to over 900. How any one man is to find time for reading, study, the preparation of sermons, address, and in some cases to teach a Bible class composed of enquiring young men and women, do pastoral work faithfully, take his share in the Church's work at large, and in the city's charitable, philanthropic and educational enterprises, meet social and family demands, is a mystery, and plainly an impossibility, and retain health, strength and vigor for many years. It is wrong to expect it, and surely the day is coming, when, in every congregation of such a membership as we have mentioned, something will be done, in addition to the eldership, to relieve pastors to some extent, of an amount of labour which it is simply an impossibility to undertake and do as it ought to be done.

The Conference of the Student's Volunteer Missionary Movement to be held towards the end of next month, is expected to bring together some 2,500 delegates, and a strong and representative Committee of laymen and others from all the Protestant religious bodies has been appointed with Hon. S. H. Blake as chairman, to make the arrangements necessary on the part of Christians in the city to secure its success. Much spiritual quickening, especially among young men and women, may be looked for as one result of this gathering.

Western Ontario.

Rev. Dr. McCrae, of Westminster, preached in New St. James' church, London, last Sunday evening.

Rev. J. A. Macdonald, of Toronto, conducted the services in the First Church, London, on Sunday last.

Rev. Robt. E. Knowles, of Galt, will lecture in the Elmvale church, on the occasion of the anniversary, the first Monday in February.

Rev. A. B. Simpson preached in Knox church, Hamilton, on Sunday morning last and Rev. James Anthony, of Watertown, in the evening.

The anniversary services of Burns church, Milverton, were held on Jan. 19, when Rev. Mr. Johnson, of Penetanguishene, preached, morning and evening. The annual tea meeting was on Monday evening.

The Monkman church held anniversary services on Sunday Jan. 19th, when the Rev. A. G. Jansen, of Hamilton, preached. On Monday at 4.30 p. m., a lecture was given by Rev. Mr. Jansen entitled "Holland and the Hollanders."

A meeting of the churches of the English Settlement and Iderton was held in English Settlement church, Vaneck, to decide on the call to a minister. The majority of the meeting were in favor of Rev. Mr. Craw, and it was decided to call him without further delay.

The sixth annual convention of the Young People's Societies of the Presbytery of Guelph was held in the Presbyterian church, Preston, on Monday, the 20th instant. The membership of this society consists of all members of the various young people's societies within the Presbytery, under the oversight of Sessions.

The Rev. Armstrong Black, of Toronto, will lecture in Knox church, Galt, on Feb. 7th, his subject being, "Ballads of the Border." As these Ballads are associated with the Border Counties, such as Roxborough and Dumfries,

from which the majority of the early settlers came to Galt, the lecture will undoubtedly be of great interest.

The annual meeting of the congregation of St. Andrew's church, Galt, was held Wednesday evening of last week. There was a good attendance of the members of the church. Reports were presented by the Session, Board of Managers, Sunday School, and the other organizations of the church, all showing a good measure of success during the year 1901. St. Andrew's church is now in a most prosperous condition, and the meeting was perhaps the most successful in the history of the church.

The annual meeting of the Egmondville church was held on the 8th instant. All the reports showed the congregation to be in a prosperous state, and that good and faithful work had been done during the past year. The treasurer's report showed a substantial balance on the right side. The missionary reports showed increased liberality on the part of the people. The anniversary services will be held on Sabbath, January 26th. Rev. A. McAuley is expected to preach that day.

The annual meeting of the Lindsay Presbyterian of the W. F. M. S. was held on Tuesday the 14th in St. Andrew's church, Beaverton. A large number of delegates from every part of the Presbytery were present. In the afternoon the ladies were addressed by Mrs. Mackenzie, of Hanan, China, on mission work among the Chinese. In the evening an open meeting was held in the body of the church which was addressed by Rev. R. P. McKay, of Toronto, and in behalf of the Presbytery by Rev. P. E. Sinclair, of Sonya, both of whom gave very interesting and instructive addresses.

The annual meeting of the congregation of Erskine church, Hamilton, was well attended. The report of the Board of Management showed that the ordinary collections had increased \$81.51 over last year, while the envelope collections decreased \$27. There were no outstanding debts at the close of the year and only \$260.77 owing to the debt fund. During the year \$1,100 and a contribution of \$170 from the Ladies' Aid Society were received for the debt fund, which now stands at \$1,318.09. It was found that the proposed remodelling of the galleries and renovating of the church would cost \$2,000, a much larger sum than anticipated.

The annual congregational meeting of Burn's church, Hullett, was held on January 8th, the pastor in the chair, and Mr. James Hamilton secretary of the meeting. During the year 1901, to were added to the membership 8 removed. The total number on the roll is now 110. The amount raised last year for all purposes was \$883.86, of this amount the congregation gave \$198, the Sunday school \$25.32, and the Auxiliary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society \$29.78 to the schemes of the church. The Bible Society collection amounted to \$14.

Rev. J. L. Small, B. A., occupied the pulpit of St. Andrew's church, Guelph, on Sunday last. In the morning he preached a very practical sermon from the "Miraculous Draught of Fish," recorded in Luke. The preacher showed it to be a real miracle, and went on to say that whenever Divinity acts man must stand in wonder. A recognition of Divine presence will always call forth from a sincere man a confession of unworthiness. He showed how Peter developed into a successful fisher of men, also Paul the Apostle, Augustus, Luther and others. In this connection he made a brief but touching reference to the great work done by the late Rev. Dr. Robertson for the Western missions of the Presbyterian church.

The new church at Dornoch was opened on Sabbath, January 5th, and was the occasion of one of the largest crowds ever seen in the village. The morning service commenced at 10.30 a. m., and was conducted by Rev. Mr. Mackay of Knox church, Toronto. His discourse consisted of lessons useful in practical life. The afternoon service at 3 o'clock was conducted by the former pastor, Rev. Mr. Little, of Chatsworth. Mr. Little always gets a crowded building in Dornoch and this was no exception to the rule. The commodious building was filled to overflowing on each occasion and everyone expressed their admiration of it in all its details. It is heated by hot air, lighted by acetylene gas, has a large well finished basement and is capable of seating over 500 people. The Dornoch Presbyterians deserve much credit and praise for their enterprise in bringing such an extensive undertaking to such a successful termination.