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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 1886.

THE arrangements for the meeting of Assembly were made by a local committee composed of representatives from each of the Presbyterian congregations of the city. The arrangements are as near perfection as anything can be. The rooms in connection with the church are exceedingly convenient for committees, and on the whole perhaps the Assembly never was better accommodated. Everything that can be done has been done by the committee to facilitate business, and if business does not run smoothly, certainly the local committee appointed by the Presbyterians of Hamilton are not to blame.

ALMOST the first thing that strikes one about this General Assembly is the number of prominent ministers who are conspicuous by their absence. Dr. Proudfoot, Dr. Cochrane, Dr. Laing, Dr. Wardrope, Dr. Gregg, Mr. Macdonnell, Dr. King, and several others who are present in almost every Assembly, are not commissioners this year. It seems scarcely reasonable that the Conveners of two of the most important committees in the Church should not have seats in the court. They know more about their reports and the work done by their committees than any one else can possibly know, and it seems scarcely fair that a man should be asked to draw up and submit a report, and then stand aside and allow others to discuss it. Certainly it would be nothing more than generous to give the Conveners of the Home and Foreign Mission Committee seats in every Assembly.

THE elders had a field day on Thursday. Mr. Lyle's overture on time-service in the eldership was discussed all afternoon. The elders did all the work, the only minister who took part being Mr. Lyle himself. The discussion was exceedingly good-natured and several very happy hits were made. Several elders were very strongly in favour of sending the matter down to Presbyteries for their consideration. The vote was close, and there can be very little doubt that at an early day the question will be submitted to Presbyteries. What the result would be no one can tell. Some think a majority of Presbyteries would report in favour of time-service, while many are quite satisfied they would do exactly the opposite. It of course ought to be understood that Mr. Lyle and those who think with him desire to leave it optional with congregations to adopt the time-service system.

THE Home Mission arrangements for Manitoba and the North-West must be revised as the country is being settled and Presbyteries formed. The provisional arrangements suitable to a new country are never designed to be permanent. The office of the Superintendent of Missions is not a regular part of the Presbyterian system. The powers of the Superintendent must decrease, and the Presbyteries must soon have all their functions restored. The question is simply one of time. Some of the Presbyteries think that the time has come. The Synod of Manitoba think not. What is needed now is a little forbearance all round. The control of the mission work is now in

the hands of the Synod of Manitoba, the Home Mission Committee, the Superintendent and the Presbyteries. This means too much management, or will do so in a very short time. If our good brethren in the North-West will exercise a little patience in regard to their rights, things will come all right, and the management will be vested in the Home Mission Committee and the Presbytery.

THE HOME MISSION.

THE first evening after the opening of the General Assembly is given to the report of the Home Mission Committee. It never fails to prove interesting, and that presented last week proved no exception. Dr. Cochrane, the Convener of the committee, delivered a vigorous and most interesting address in submitting the report, which gives a very comprehensive view of the mission operations carried on by the Church from the Presbytery of Quebec to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Year by year these operations have been growing in extent and efficiency, and now they have reached a degree of completeness not hitherto attained. No one, however, dreams that Home Mission work in the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion has achieved a position which would justify the notion that finality had been reached, and that subsequent endeavour must only be directed to the retention and cultivation of the ground now overtaken. The stage of thankfulness and rest is not yet reached, but the Church can, from the experience of the past, thank God and take courage.

In the Presbyteries of Quebec and Montreal undiminished efforts have been put forth in the mission fields to strengthen what remains. In not a few districts Protestants are gradually retiring before the advance of French-Canadian Roman Catholic settlers. It is of the utmost importance that congregations weakened by emigration should be aided in their efforts to maintain ordinances in the midst of the spiritual twilight that prevails. The Augmentation Scheme has rendered valuable service in this direction, and but for its aid the light of Gospel truth might in several places have ere now ceased to shine.

In the older Presbyteries of the Church much attention and care have been bestowed upon the destitute fields lying within their bounds. Weak congregations have been strengthened, mission stations have been erected into congregations, and new stations formed. Several Presbyteries have much larger mission fields than others, and it is noted that Presbyteries to whom large mission districts are entrusted quickly develop a strong missionary spirit and a special aptitude for mission work. In this respect the Presbyteries of Ottawa, Lanark and Renfrew, Barrie and others, are conspicuous. Muskoka and the Parry Sound districts have been receiving increased attention, and encouraging progress is reported. The employment of ordained missionaries has been productive of most satisfactory results. In Algoma, also, during the year, excellent work has been accomplished.

In the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories Home Mission work has been prosecuted with undiminished vigour and earnestness with most encouraging results. The expected rush of settlers into that vast country has, for various and obvious reasons, not been so great as was, but recently, so reasonably anticipated. These causes, however, are not permanent, and at no distant date a rapidly-increasing population is confidently looked for. Even now the Church has been unable to comply with a number of requests for services in sparsely-settled districts, and many others were only able to receive partial supply. From the statements of missionaries and others personally conversant with the moral and spiritual condition of things in the North-West, the necessity and importance of regular and constant supply of the means of grace are properly regarded as indispensable.

The returns relating to the North-West, given in the report, though only approximate and under the mark, show that very substantial progress has been made. The number of congregations and mission stations returned is 351; families, 5,119; communicants, 4,764; Sabbath schools, 145; Sabbath school attendance, 5,727; churches, eighty-seven; and mansees, twenty.

Considerable progress has also been made in British Columbia. As will be seen from the report of the Assembly's proceedings, the formation of a Presbytery

there has been resolved upon, and the hope is confidently expressed that all the Presbyterian ministers and congregations in the Province will be able honourably and cordially to unite under one banner. The Church out there has sustained a serious loss in the early death of the Rev. J. S. Mackay, who gave abundant promise of valuable service in the cause of the Gospel.

In the Maritime Provinces also Home Mission work was prosecuted with much earnestness and success. The report presented from that section of the Church was exceedingly interesting, and the detailed account by Rev. George Bruce of the methods pursued in the Presbytery of St. John, showed that faithful, well directed effort meets with an encouraging return.

During the year contributions for this, one of the principal Schemes of the Church, have been large and generous. Liberal donations from the British Churches have once more to be gratefully acknowledged. Let us hope that in the year on which the Church has just entered the contributions will be more generous and larger still, for the work is both great and urgent. Of one thing the Church is assured that its Home Mission is wisely directed, efficiently worked and economically managed.

THE FOREIGN MISSION.

FRIDAY evening last a large congregation assembled in St. Paul's Church, Hamilton, to listen to the Foreign Mission Committee's reports, and the addresses of representatives from far distant fields of labour. If the work accomplished, the funds contributed, the multiplication of organizations in the congregations and among the young are considered, there are clear indications that the Church is rising from her lethargy in relation to the essential features of a living Church, realizing her duty to preach the Gospel to every creature. With his wonted fervour Dr. Wardrope, Convener of the Committee in the Western Section, presented the report, and made an earnest appeal for fuller consecration to foreign missionary endeavour. The report from the Eastern Section was presented by the Rev. Alexander McLean, who succeeds an able and devoted servant of Christ, the Rev. Dr. McGregor, who a few months ago was called from his labours in the Church on earth. Mr. McLean gave a detailed account of the increasing and far-extended operations sustained by the Church in the Maritime Provinces.

The mission to the Indians of the North-West was graphically described by a most devoted and efficient missionary, the Rev. Hugh McKay, a worthy relative of Dr. Mackay of Formosa. The testimony that the Indians under Christian influences in the North-West had declined to join their kindred in the late rebellion was strongly emphasized in the plain and simple statements made by Mr. McKay. He also detailed the difficulties to be encountered in preaching the Gospel to pagan Indians. The white man's vices, and his treatment of those who roam the western wilds, have added to their injuries and awakened their distrust. Instances were given of the Indian's contempt for the white man's veracity. There is a stinging rebuke in the heathen's protest against the faithless promises of the white man. The nomadic habits, induced by custom and the pressure of dire necessity, are unfavourable to missionary and educational work, yet, notwithstanding obstacles, Mr. McKay was able to do good work on the reserve to which he was appointed. His plea for larger effort on behalf of the Indians in the North-West was most effective. It is to be hoped that he does not plead to the Church in vain.

It was stated that the mission work in Formosa, interrupted so completely by the Franco-Chinese war, had been resumed, and is being carried on with greater energy and devotion than ever. It was also intimated that the injuries inflicted and the destruction caused by the French occupation had been compensated for by the Chinese Government, and better churches had replaced those destroyed during the war. The idea of having a Chinese Church is being steadily realized, and numerous natives are now preaching the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen.

In Central India substantial gains and extended work are reported. The obstacles with which the missionaries had so long to contend have been removed. Official restrictions no longer impede the progress of the work, either of preaching the Gospel