

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1884.

WILL the Hamilton subscriber who sent us \$2 for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN on the 14th February, kindly favour us with his name in order that he may receive proper credit.

"A CONSTANT READER" asks whether according to the rules of the Church, adherents are permitted to vote on the organ question. The rules do not absolutely forbid the voting of adherents. In matters of congregational interest the vote is taken according to the use and wont of the congregation. In some cases the vote on the propriety of using an organ is confined to those in full communion, in others, members and adherents are permitted to vote.

AN incident occurred the other evening in Toronto which shows that if ministers are to take part in public discussions it is an immense advantage to them to pay taxes like other citizens. At a meeting held to discuss the question of separating the liquor from the grocery trade, the agent of the liquor interest insinuated that the Rev. Mr. McLeod paid no taxes and had no vote. Mr. McLeod promptly answered, "I pay \$67 taxes a year: how much do you pay?" The agent had to admit that he paid only an income tax. It was worth \$67 to get in that crusher just there. The fact is if ministers are going to mingle in the temperance fray and do good work, they must be able to answer as Mr. McLeod did. The best speech ever made is liable to be ruined if somebody can get up at the close and say "This man who speaks so much about the increase of taxation caused by the liquor traffic pays no taxes himself."

ECCLESIASTICAL statistics are not the only figures that tell strange stories. The report of the Educational Department of Ontario just published, suggests some problems not easily answered. For example, the total number of children in Ontario of school age, five to sixteen, in '84, was 511,603, while in 1882 it was only 483,817, or 27,786 less! Why should there be a falling off in eight years of nearly 28,000 children? Is the population of Ontario decreasing, or, as the old country element dies out, are families becoming smaller? If the report indicated the parts of Ontario where the principal falling off has taken place, this last question might be answered. Comparing 1882 with a point further back, we find that the number of children of school age at present in Ontario is actually 5,801 less than the number in 1871. That is to say, there are nearly 6,000 fewer school children in Ontario now than there was twelve years ago! These figures are doubtless correct, and because correct, very puzzling. Those who take a special interest in such questions may find some interesting problems in these figures.

VERY young men who frequent law courts are often heard flippantly declaring that "people will swear anything." Youths who work in offices where affidavits are often made, make the same remark. Older and more experienced men are not unfrequently heard saying that perjury is "alarmingly common." Good men fear that the oath has lost its solemnity in the estimation of many. Now what are the facts? The

other day Mr. Blake stated in his place in the House of Commons that in his experience deliberate perjury is an exceedingly rare thing in this country. Who has had more experience with witnesses than Mr. Blake? Mr. Weldon, the leader of the St. John bar said that his experience was similar to Mr. Blake's. A few years ago the then Chief Justice of Ontario sharply reproved a member of the bar for flippantly remarking that perjury is a common crime; and added that a long career at the bar and service for quarter of a century on the bench had convinced him that there is very little perjury in Canada. Sweeping general statements are often made by silly, gabby people about other crimes and sins as well as about perjury. The charge that the majority of the people can be bought at elections is just as great a slander as that "people will swear anything." The persons who make these false accusations usually draw on their own consciousness when so doing. They know how it is with themselves.

SUPPOSING the Apostle of Sweetness and Light had made it quite clear last week that majorities are nearly always hopelessly wrong, the question would naturally come up: "Well, what are you going to do about it?" How would things go if the minority ruled? Probably Mr. Arnold is too much of a philosopher to consider such small matters as the application of his doctrine to every day life, but ordinary mortals must ask such homely questions as "How could we get on under minority rule?" Supposing one candidate at an election had six hundred votes and the other had the vote of the only philosopher in the constituency, how would it do to say the candidate who had the one vote was elected? No doubt he would like the arrangement but the six hundred might object and make trouble. There was a good deal of trouble caused in Scotland once by settling ministers over congregations when the majority did not want them. Supposing there should be a vote of ten to one against the whiskey-selling grocers next week would it "make for righteousness" to say the minority must have their own way. Supposing Mr. Arnold should carry an English constituency by a majority of a hundred to one would he apply his own theory. An application of the doctrine to any question shows its utter absurdity. Still the doctrine, absurd as it is, may bring comfort at times. When a man is thoroughly beaten in any appeal to the people he can always fall back on the comforting fact that he belongs to the "saving remnant." We hope the whiskey-selling grocers may find themselves among the "saving remnant" next week, and the tavern-keepers of Oxford county in the same place a few weeks farther on.

## EDUCATION IN ONTARIO.

BLUE books are not usually ranked in the class of light literature. As a rule they are supposed to be dull reading. There are however exceptions. The Report of the Minister of Education contains a mass of most useful information, recording as it does from year to year the work accomplished by an important body of men and women who are hard worked and but indifferently paid for the important services they render to the community.

Owing to the keenness of political party strife the educational affairs of the country have more or less been injured by unseemly wrangling over what should be a subject exempt from mere partizan contention. In various quarters the cry is raised that the Department of Education should be independent of the rise and fall of political parties. So it should; but no scheme yet propounded has succeeded in showing how this could be effected. Dr. Ryerson, who did so much to perfect the educational system of Ontario, agitated until he succeeded in the establishment of a ministry of education, the head of the educational interests of the Province having a cabinet portfolio. Considering the serious disadvantages connected with the department recently the change effected in management cannot fairly be said to have failed. More than that, it can be shown that substantial progress has been made in many directions under the present system. To abandon the plan of having a minister of education, would be a needless vacillation. A more serious objection, however, is found in the fact that as long as the State is bound to provide education, it is bound to control the system of education. It is decidedly preferable to have the head of the Department directly

responsible to the Legislature and the people than an official appointed in any other way could be. The indirectness of control over a chief and a body of councillors would give opportunity for abuses impossible under present arrangements. There is no evidence, however, that the people of Ontario, generally, desire a change in the direction proposed by those who have supposed political ends to serve.

These general thoughts have been suggested by the appearance of the Report of the Minister of Education for 1883. The sad affliction occasioning the withdrawal of the late minister is fresh in the recollection of most readers. A gentleman of much practical experience and great ability has been called upon to discharge the duties of the education office. From his clear, practical good sense, business ability and personal acquaintance with the educational interests of the country, there is every reason to expect that efficient and satisfactory work will result from the recent appointment.

The total amount expended in connection with the public schools of Ontario during the year 1882 was \$3,026,974, being an increase of \$182,702 over that of the previous year. The sum here mentioned includes the salaries of teachers, school furnishings, sites and building, rent and repairs of school-houses.

The total receipts for the same year, including the legislative and municipal grants, surplus distribution, etc., was \$3,469,990, showing an increase of \$210,751 over the total receipts of 1881.

The school population, between the ages of five and sixteen, was 483,817, decrease 497; the number actually in attendance was 457,178, a decrease of 2,648; the total attendance including those under and above the specified ages was 471,512, a decrease of 4,756.

These figures in comparison with those of the previous year, show an increase of income and expenditure, and a marked decrease in the school population and attendance. This last may readily be accounted for by the large migration to the North-West in 1882, and the depression felt by certain industries necessitating parents to place their children where they can earn something. This would seem to be borne out by the fact that the number of boys attending school in 1882 was decreased by 4,695, while the decrease in the number of girls was only 61. The diminution in the number of children attending public schools is only temporary. A large increase may be confidently expected.

Another interesting item respecting the attendance at school is the percentage of average attendance as compared with the total number attending school, which is for rural districts forty-three per cent.; cities, fifty-eight per cent.; towns, fifty-three per cent.; Province, forty-five per cent. There are many topics of interest in the report before us, to which reference will be made at another time.

## WORKING-MEN AND THE CHURCH.

AN evening contemporary has called attention to the fact, which has for some time been engaging attention, that a number of working-men in Toronto have ceased to attend places of worship. These are not vicious nor do they sympathize with anti-Christian theories ostentatiously avowed by some. They are well affected towards Christian truth and church-going habits. What is true of Toronto is also true of other cities and larger towns. In present circumstances unhappily this acknowledged evil has a tendency to increase.

A "Working-man" who, speaking for himself and for his class, says:—

As a working-man, and knowing the position of many of the class to which I belong, I have no hesitation in saying that many a man with a large family cannot afford to go to church, especially in these hard times, for after paying his household expenses and fixing up his children for church and Sabbath school, it leaves him on Sunday with an empty pocket.

When a man struggling with adversity and with little hope of better circumstances, becomes cynical and says bitter things, it is neither wise nor kind to return railing for railing, but when we find facts stated in a form and spirit so exceptionally good as that displayed by the correspondent who wrote the above, his views are entitled to the courteous and thoughtful consideration of every candid mind.

Omnipresent fashion makes itself felt in every sphere of human activity in the Christian Church. It was in the apostles' days. It was conspicuous in the