

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 1883.

A MISPRINT in the report of Assembly's proceedings last week materially alters the meaning of Rev. D. D. McLeod's remarks while speaking on the subject of ministerial support. Instead of "he denied that," it should have read, "he stated that \$1,000 raised by each of the Presbyteries would be sufficient to provide a fund to give \$750 a year to ministers having a less salary than that."

THE discussion on the organ question in the Irish Presbyterian Assembly at Belfast resulted in a motion in the direction of liberty, being carried by a majority of eleven. In the Irish Church the subject has been under discussion for several years. Feeling has been keen, parties pretty evenly balanced, and this year side issues were more or less mixed up with the main question. The irritating agitation may now be permitted to subside and the time and energy of the Church devoted to work of a higher and more useful character. Strange that the organ should cause such discord.

ATTENTION has been turned to the question of more adequate support for the Christian ministry. The press generally has discussed the matter from various points of view, and for the most part in an excellent and appreciative spirit. This indicates that the real nature of the case is beginning to be understood. All that is necessary for the improvement of the condition of the ministry is that the people be put in possession of the actual facts. Several speakers in the General Assembly expressed the opinion that whenever the question was comprehended by the people they would at once set themselves to provide a remedy. One thing is certain that an inadequately sustained ministry can never be an efficient one. In another column of this issue will be found a communication that appeared in the "Mail." "Juno"—an inexplicable *nom de plume*—discusses one aspect of the subject which needs to be thoroughly understood. There are other phases not less important, but he who states such facts as are contained in "Juno's" letter is doing the Church a service. The state of things described is capable of verification—the more's the pity.

## ASSEMBLY NOTES.

THERE should be no misunderstanding about the balance of \$16,000 at present in the Foreign Mission treasury. A considerable portion of this amount came in during the past two or three months and will have to be paid out in a short time. Let no one suppose that this balance will lie in the treasury. Money has to be paid out all the year round whether it comes in or not, and it just happens that the balance is on the right side at the close of the ecclesiastical year. Let us hope that next year the contributions will be larger, the work greater and the balance still on the right side.

That the best men, acting from the best possible motives, may sometimes blunder was painfully seen by the way in which the Presbytery of Manitoba brought their college business before the Assembly. We hope that neither Manitoba nor any other Presbytery nor College Board will take the liberty of bringing ministers' names before the Assembly and country in connection with any vacant position whatever. Let it be understood once for all that these appointments are to

be made in and by the Assembly, or else let them be made by the college authorities without any reference to the Assembly. Mr. McMullen undoubtedly expressed the mind of the Church when he said that such appointments should be sent down to Presbyteries. Our Manitoba friends ought to have a college, and every other good thing the Church can give them; but the good things will be all the better for being done in a good way. The best way to establish a sixth theological hall is not at the end of Assembly, when only about one-fifth of the members are present.

The General Assembly showed its wisdom in refusing to commit itself to any particular Temperance Act. What the Assembly wishes the people to know is that a large majority of the Court are in favour of the principle of prohibition, but the members decline to commit themselves to all the details of any Act. In this the Supreme Court is undoubtedly wise. Many of the enactments on any prohibitory statute may be for a while—some of them may be of such a nature that no Church court would care to endorse them. Then the politicians—yes—there's the rub. Every law is passed by some party, and the party is sure to use the deliverance of the court for party purposes. Our Assembly does not see its way clear at present to identify itself with any party even on the temperance question. Any person who tries to use the Supreme Court for party purposes is certain to get hurt.

The fraternal intercourse between the Assembly and the Anglican Synod of Huron was the new feature of the London meeting. Bishop Hellmuth came over and paid the Assembly his compliments in the most handsome style. Then the secretary came over with a very kind minute of Synod expressing good-will and brotherly love and all that sort of thing. Then several of our bishops went to the Synod and returned the salutations. They were very well received. Now all this was very pleasant; but perhaps it would be well not to make too much fuss about it. Let us not proclaim to the "Philistines" that we consider it a very great triumph of Christianity for two religious bodies mainly composed of ministers to salute each other when met in the same city. It was a nice thing to do, but the average "man of the world" won't see in it any great amount of self-sacrifice or moral heroism.

The retirement of Prof. McLaren from the Conventionship of the Foreign Mission Committee marks an era in the history of Foreign Missions in this Church. When he became Convener sixteen years ago the Foreign Missions interest of the branch of the Church to which he belonged were in their infancy, and the infant was very delicate. So far as the Western Section is concerned, the retiring Convener has seen our Foreign Missions grow from almost nothing to what they are now. The future historian of the Church will not fail to say how much our Foreign Mission work owes to the judgment, wisdom, zeal, and unwearied diligence of Dr. William McLaren. He retires while the work is in very successful operation, and with a balance of \$16,000 in the bank. The good judgment which characterized the Professor's long administration didn't desert him in his choice of a time to retire.

The Assembly and the whole Church are to be congratulated on the appointment of Dr. Wardrope as successor to Prof. McLaren in the Conventionship of the Foreign Mission Committee. The position is one that often brings very difficult and delicate duties to its occupant, and Dr. Wardrope brings to the discharge of these duties a combination of natural and acquired qualities possessed by very few men. If it were allowable to boast of any man when he is putting his harness on, we should be inclined to boast a little of Dr. Wardrope even at this early stage. May he have the maximum of prosperity with the minimum of friction.

The scheme for the Distribution of Probationers remains unchanged. The committee are of the opinion that the present plan is the best possible if honestly worked. Mr. Torrance, the Convener, stated to the Assembly that, in his opinion, the alternative lies between the present plan and no plan at all. How would it do to try no plan at all for a time—allowing all vacancies to find their own supply, and all probationers their own appointments? Perhaps absolute freedom for a time would reconcile all parties to reasonable restrictions. As a matter of fact, most vacancies have absolute freedom now so far as the Distribution Committee is concerned. It might be a good thing to allow both vacancies and probationers to do just as they please for a time.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1883.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, London, last week a centre of activity and of far-reaching interest, has resumed its normal condition. The delegates from all parts of the Dominion have dispersed, carrying with them for the most part pleasant recollections of a very profitable and enjoyable time. Friends separated by great distances exchanged heartfelt greetings, noted the impress made by the passing years, held converse together, bade each other adieu, and have departed for the places where their work is assigned them.

No stirring question, no sharp and acrimonious debate, no decision of momentous interest signalizes the Assembly that finished its work last week as a remarkable one. It will be remembered chiefly on account of its exceptionally pleasant associations, and the great amount of real practical Christian work accomplished.

The interest of the Assembly was mainly centred on the most important schemes of the Church. Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and French Evangelization, as they ought, occupied the most favourable opportunities that could be secured for them. In each of these great departments of Christian endeavour the results attained were very satisfactory and encouraging. To each of them the contributions during the past year have been liberal. Faithful labour had been bestowed, and large blessing on the work experienced. Be it remembered that mere self-satisfied congratulation on the results achieved would be both unsatisfactory and unworthy. The prosperous condition in these departments of Christian activity ought to prompt to greater diligence, enlightened zeal and still larger-hearted liberality. The retiring Moderator struck the key-note in his opening sermon: "And there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

The Church has grown to such magnitude, and the various organizations connected with it have attained such dimensions, that the time at the disposal of the Assembly is all too limited for the full and adequate consideration of many subjects of vital interest of necessity coming before it. There was not much time taken up in the hearing of appeal cases. Those up for consideration received as they ought a proper degree of careful attention. Their emergence is sometimes viewed with regret. Yet their consideration is an essential part of the Assembly's work. It ought to be felt by the humblest member of the Church that in the court of last resort he is not only entitled, but may confidently expect a fair and impartial hearing by a body of men sufficiently removed from the warping influence of local feeling and prejudice, and who will decide conscientiously on the merits of each case submitted to their judgment.

Another noticeable feature of the late Assembly was the absence of speech-making for speech-making's sake. There was little if any superfluous oratory. Its day is past, time is too precious to waste on flights of rhetoric. There was no disposition on the part of anyone to bore the Assembly with unnecessary "motions." The only thing that seemed overdone was in raising points of order. It is just possible that even better order might be maintained with fewer "points."

It is to be regretted that questions of great interest and importance had to be somewhat summarily dismissed for lack of time. The deceased wife's sister marriage question was one on which a lively discussion, on account of recent legislation on the subject, was expected. So far as the Church's action is concerned it remains where it was.

The state of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund is by no means satisfactory, yet it had of necessity to be crowded out without adequate consideration. It has not yet received the attention its importance demands. The same thing may also be said of other valuable departments of Church work: such as the State of Religion, Sabbath Schools, and Sabbath Observance; this last, from insidious encroachments on the day of rest, calling for earnest consideration and united action. The decision arrived at is on the whole satisfactory, though the time for consideration was far too brief. Temperance in some respects fared better, but in a certain sense this was accidental. A suspicion of politics set the members on the *qui vive*. One thing, if the Assembly sought to avoid political partisanship, it stands committed to the principle of prohibition. It has now assumed an attitude that cannot be mistaken on this practical moral question.

Another noteworthy event of the late Assembly was