

influence upon our people of the itinerating system of the Methodists, and the want of that deliberation and care in settling which the permanent pastorate made advisable on the part of licentiates. The permanent pastorate, he considered, was one of the sources of the great influence of our Church for good in the land. On the whole, he thought, we had been doing very well, and as yet there was no such agreement of opinion as to the change if any required as to justify the attempt to make any. The report and its recommendations were adopted.

THE STATE OF RELIGION.

This is another very important report. The convener of the committee is the Rev. D. M. Ramsay, B.D., and in his absence the report was read by the Rev. Dr. Dickson. The report is very carefully prepared and is marked by discrimination, and it asks for definiteness and discrimination in those who supply the data for it under the head of Sessions. The reports remark as to ministers that it depends very largely upon the minister whether the Session is working systematically and energetically, or is moving on slowly and sleepily; that, in fact, the most successful minister is the man who can bring fully into play the varied capacities for usefulness which can be found in every congregation. Though the character of the eldership is distinctly rising, the idle elder is not yet quite extinct, but there are very few who say that the only duty the elders perform is to assist at the communion services. Perhaps some of these have forgotten how great a boon to a minister is a wise counsellor. There are men, as some reports remind us, who are too diffident to visit the sick, to lead in prayer, or to teach in the Sunday School, but whose counsel, (e.g.) in a case of discipline is invaluable. Yet we rejoice to add that everywhere the elders seem to be increasing in their activities. The Synods of the East find that the town congregations have in many cases been splendidly organized, while in the country districts the elders are carrying on a good work in spite of many difficulties. "There never was a time when there were so many Young People's Societies in connection with the Christian Church, and if from these we are to derive the greatest good with the least possible danger ministers and elders must give their counsel and help in a sympathetic, kindly spirit.

Of the congregation, and the observance of family worship and family religion generally the report has much to say. The following are characteristic sentences: The Synod of Montreal and Ottawa finds the proportion to be rather less than 50 per cent.; and we are of opinion that this Synod may fairly represent the whole Church in this respect. Many of the returns seem to take family worship to be synonymous with family religion. Others, however, distinguish; and these on the whole find instruction to be more general than worship in the home. We are told that "in a rapidly increasing number of cases the Sunday School lesson is being studied in the home under the guidance of a Christian mother; or, "in many homes the children are taught by Christian mothers the great truth of God's Word; and the family life is to a considerable extent

permeated by the Christian spirit," etc. Only once is it said that religious instruction in the home is declining.

From the far East comes the question: "What is the matter with the prayer-meeting in many of our congregations?" And the far West replies: "Considering how difficult it is to make prayer-meetings permanently interesting, it would be well for sessions to study carefully how best to secure to those who attend a large measure of profit." It may not be improper to emphasize this advice. It is to be feared that many ministers make exceedingly little preparation for the prayer-meeting. The address is necessarily short, but it is given to the most intelligent and spiritually-minded of the people, and therefore should be full of "the finest of the wheat."

Turning now to interest in missions, we are told that it is deepening in almost every part of the Church, and instances are given in which congregations have doubled or even trebled their contributions.

Of the societies which help the Church the W. F. M. S. is strongly entrenched in the heart of it, and stimulates every department of her work and similar testimony is borne to the Y. P. S. C. E.

THE CHURCH'S HINDERERS.

These are many and formidable. The love of pleasure receives the greatest prominence. This takes the forms of dancing, card-playing, Sabbath visiting and riding whether with horse or bicycle, novel reading, religious sensationalism, etc. The results are being seen in all departments of life. The most superficial attractions are now found necessary to draw men and women to religious meetings as well as other gatherings that are called for the instruction of the people. Next in bad pre-eminence stand the indifference and inconsistency of the members of the Church. "There is not much difference," says Halifax Presbytery, "between the Church and the decent world, hence the world sees no need to be at all anxious." This point is worthy of emphasis. Various forms of error vex the souls of some. Intemperance, lewdness, profanity, gambling, pride, strife, bad literature, unfortunate marriages, etc., of course exercise their baleful influence. One report alludes to "inadequate preaching," and adds: "There is a tendency to lower the high and holy duties of the ministry into a routine work, and in our absorption in Christian service to get out of touch with Christ." This is a true witness, and yet over again it is to be set the fact that everywhere the plain, practical preaching of the Word of the Cross is still considered the most powerful means of overcoming the doleful list of hindrance. There is no report which does not speak of personal dealing as a most important complement of public services. Some reports, however, seemed to doubt whether the young men are sought after, in the workshop or the field, and dealt with as tenderly and faithfully as their temptations and their slowness to confess Christ as their Lord demand. The circulation of good literature is by some emphasized as an offset to the prevalence and allurements of vile publications.

It is gratifying to find that sessions speak more cheerfully this year than last of the success of their efforts. Victoria Presbytery says: "The encouragements are very many and very great. The tone of society has undergone a revolution during the past six or seven years. The tide of sentiment has so risen that what was looked upon with favor, would not now be tolerated;" and the Synod of British Columbia adds that slow as the progress may seem, and advance is manifest. The Synod of Manitoba and the North-West bears testimony that persistent labor for Christ and godly example are having their due effect; while one of its sessions rejoices that of those who were once a hindrance, some are now earnest Christians. Other sources of encouragement are "evident appreciation of the means of grace," "a spirit of harmony in the Church," "increased consecration of God's people," "the pillars of the Church, straight and solid," "those at ease in Zion getting uncomfortable," and in general the tone of the reports is cheery. The spirit of our Church is not that of those who say, "Rest and be thankful," but rather that of those who, grateful for past blessings and conscious of personal unworthiness, set themselves to more earnest effort and more faithful prayer for the time to come.

The report makes the following recommendations:—1. That sessions be again strongly advised to hold meetings for devotional purposes and for conference on the spiritual condition of their congregations.

2. That sessions and Presbyteries be asked in their conferences on the state of religion to con-

sider the best means of pressing the subject of family religion upon their people, and in particular to urge this duty upon the heads of families when they become communicants.

3. That ministers be invited, in view of the special difficulties of young men, to make every effort to bring before them individually the matter of personal religion.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

The report of the Committee on Sabbath Schools, of which the Rev. T. F. Fotheringham is the efficient and indefatigable convener, and who presented it fully and in excellent shape, says: "As appointed by last Assembly, the work of your Committee has been divided between the convener and two vice-conveners. The Rev. J. W. Rae, vice-convener for Statistics, has prepared the statistical tables and the comments upon them. The Rev. W. Farquharson, vice-convener for Higher Religious Instruction, submits the report and appendices connected with that department. The convener deals with the publications of the committee and its finances."

In consequence of this sub-division of labour the report is most full, orderly and complete. The publications of the Church are steadily rising in excellence both in mechanical execution and in the matter of them; and the finances of the committee, which have hampered it in the past, are improving so that in a short time this difficulty will be overcome. One member of the Assembly and only one ventured to make some strictures on both the mechanical and brain work of the Church's Sabbath school periodicals. The report was readily adopted by the Assembly, and on motion, made and carried, the Moderator conveyed the thanks of the Assembly in cordial and appreciative terms to the convener. The examinations in the subjects taught in connection with Sabbath schools and classes for Higher Religious Instruction are being taken advantage of to a greater extent from year to year. The summary of statistics under the heads of attendance and recitations shows a marked increase, and it is only in contributions that for some reason, there is a falling off under some heads, while in others there is a large increase.

TEMPERANCE.

The report on Temperance was presented to the Assembly by the Rev. Stiles Fraser, the able and enthusiastic convener of the Assembly's Committee on this subject. Since discussions arose upon strictures made in the report on the report of the Commission of the Dominion Government, which has been investigating this subject, the sympathy of the Assembly with the committee being unmistakable, we quote only a few sentences of the report which throughout has the true ring of courage and faith in final triumph.

THE OUTLOOK.

The outlook is hopeful, notwithstanding the great difficulties that have to be met. The many agencies at work in the interests of Temperance and Prohibition are more than ever alert, active, and aggressive. The men and women who are making use of these agencies are not only rapidly increasing in numbers, but are also becoming more firmly fixed in their purpose to completely root out the liquor traffic, in condemnation of which the religious tone of the whole country is emphatic.

A general survey of the whole field is well fitted to give much encouragement. Compared with the two preceding years of plebiscite agitation, the last year has been a quiet one, but one that has been fruitful of good results. There has been little agitation, but much solid work. Foundations have been laid in the excellent educational work that has been done in the Church and in the schools. The leaven of Temperance has been steadily leavening the whole lump. Taking the country as a whole, the children of to-day are total abstainers from principle more than were their father or their forefathers. The very great extent to which this statement is true is one of the most encouraging things about the Temperance movement.

Two things remain to be done: (1) Continue the work of education in the principles and practice of Temperance with unabated zeal; labor earnestly and prayerfully for the upbringing of a generation of total-abstainers. (2) Use every possible means to restrict, and finally prohibit, the liquor traffic, so that the temptations to drink may be removed from the way of the weak and the unwary.

RESOLUTIONS.

Be it Resolved: 1. That this Assembly gives thanks to God for the continued growth of Temperance sentiment and practice throughout the bounds of the Church, for the good work done by a large majority of congregations on behalf of the young—either according to the Assembly's "Plan of Work," or along similar lines—and urges ministers and other office-bearers, members and adherents, to continue the diligent use of all proper means to deepen that sentiment and increase that practice; and further recommends the "Plan of Work," as well fitted to help congregations in doing effective work among their children and youth.

2. That a more prominent place be given to Temperance in prayer meetings, and that our people be asked to make it a subject of prayer to God that Temperance principles may be strengthened and advanced, and that intemperance may be removed by the entire suppression of the liquor traffic.

3. That Presbyteries be enjoined to watch over the interests of Temperance within their respective bounds, note the course of events bearing upon the movement, hold conferences upon the subject, and report directly to the Assembly's

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Committee on Temperance, as well as the Committees of Synods.

EIGHTH DAY.

Many matters of greater or less importance came before the Assembly to-day and were rushed through with great haste. Some of these are referred to elsewhere, and will from time to time during the year be noticed in our columns. For the present we merely notice the following:

The Rev. Dr. Sedgwick brought up, as he had promised, the matter of the Presbytery of Whitby having elected as its Moderator a ruling elder. It was referred to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston to deal with according to the law of the Church.

CHURCH AND MANSE BUILDING FUND.

The important report of the Church and Manse Fund of Manitoba and the Northwest was read by the Rev. Peter Wright, of Portage la Prairie. The Board assisted to erect five manse and twenty six churches, and made four loans and one grant for buildings previously erected, making a total of thirty-six congregations aided during 1894-95. The manse are frame and valued at \$5,300. Of the churches, one is brick, four log, and twenty-four frame, and valued at \$23,750. The total grants thus would be \$2,785, the loans \$6,100, or \$8,885 in all. Of the congregations helped, nine are in the Province of Manitoba, seven in Assiniboia, one in Saskatchewan, eleven in Alberta and eight in British Columbia. The committee appealed for more liberal support from individuals and congregations.

The very important subject of reducing the representation of the Church in the General Assembly was taken up, in a very thin house, by overture from Presbyteries in the distant east and west. A committee subsequently brought in a report on the subject, through the Rev. R. D. Fraser, suggesting a reduction by half, from one-fourth to one-eighth. This was held to be too sweeping, and it was made one-sixth and passed, to be sent down to Presbyteries.

Church union was brought up on a report by Rev. Dr. Caven on this subject. He spoke strongly, seconded by Rev. Dr. Grant, on the importance of having such a body to discuss subjects of this general character. In connection with this, the proposed scheme for a federal court drawn up by the Methodist Church was submitted and referred to the Committee on Church Union, which was reappointed.

REV. DR. GREGG HONORED.

Principal Grant moved a resolution recognizing the eminent services rendered to the Presbyterian Church by Professor Gregg in the course of his long career, and the resolution was passed unanimously.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

A brief but animated discussion arose on this subject on the presentation of a report upon it by Principal Grant. The controverted point was the question of the restriction of Chinese immigrants. In case it were necessary, Dr. Grant contended it should be by treaty with China, and not in its present arbitrary manner. Several members spoke for and against. Dr. Grant, closing the debate, said the recommendation of the committee was careful and cautious, and in strong terms he denounced the injustice done to the Chinese. Rev. Dr. McLaren supported his view and, the vote being taken, the report was sustained. A committee was appointed on the subject, the Rev. Principal Grant, Convener.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

The Rev. Dr. Morrison read the report on this subject. It related gratefully to the fact of the Church being able, in a year of deep financial depression, through the voluntary contributions of its members, to discharge its financial obligations, as speaking well for the consciences of our people, and the effective methods in operation in all our congregations. It concluded by pointing out that the present rate of giving is \$2.90 per family, and \$1.60 per communicant, which, in the face of the needs of the work, it did not regard as an adequate proportion.

Attention was given to a number of items in the closing minutes of the Assembly. The Moderator then addressed in fitting terms the few still remaining, making passing reference to some of the salient features of the Assembly. Professor McLaren led in prayer; a Psalm was sung, and the Assembly was dissolved, with the benediction, pronounced by Rev. Dr. Reid.

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