

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1879.

## CLOSE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

ONLY a few more days remain before the termination of the present Church year, when the books of the Treasurers of the several schemes close, and the work of preparing the Annual Reports and Financial Statements for the Assembly begins.

Before the end of next week, all contributions should be forwarded. It sometimes happens that the Treasurer of a congregation, engrossed with his own business, omits to send money lying in his hands for the schemes till after the close of the year, and when the Assembly accounts are published, surprise is expressed at such moneys not being acknowledged.

It might be well for Ministers, by enquiring of their Treasurers, to ascertain if all contributions have been sent, and, if not, see that they are forwarded before the 30th inst.

Owing to the limited time for the making up of accounts, and the printing of these for presentation to the Assembly, it is impossible for the Treasurers to allow many days of grace for delinquents. It is therefore necessary that all moneys should be in their hands before the end of next week, if they are to appear in the published accounts for the year.

## HOME MISSION DEBT.

WE trust that the appeal made by the Assembly's Home Mission Committee to the ministers of the Church on behalf of the Home Mission deficit is being responded to in all the Presbyteries of the Church. Circulars have been issued by the sub-committee, and the success of the appeal largely depends on the efforts put forth by the Conveners of the several Presbyteries' Home Mission Committees. These gentlemen pledged themselves to canvass the ministers in their respective Presbyteries; and we doubt not that they have fulfilled their pledge. We remind all ministers who have not yet responded that contributions should be at once forwarded so as to be embraced in the

accounts for the year which closes this month.

We are glad to know that the suggestion we made a fortnight ago as to the elders of the Church following the example of the ministers in this matter, is being adopted by some of them. We learn that the Presbytery of Montreal has appointed a committee to raise the twenty-five per cent. struck off the grants of the ministers and missionaries in that Presbytery. That Committee called a meeting of the elders for Monday evening last, and though we have not heard the result of the meeting, we are quite confident that the elders of that Presbytery will see to it that the full amount is made good. We earnestly hope that in other Presbyteries similar action is being taken. It only requires some one in each Presbytery to take the initiative, and the thing can be accomplished. In addition to making good the twenty-five per cent. struck from the grants of the past six months, and the amount asked from the ministers there still require to be raised about \$9,000 to free the fund from debt. Notwithstanding the cry of "hard times" there are surely men in our Church both able and willing to grapple with this debt and wipe it out before the Assembly meets. We regret to observe in some quarters an inclination to wait and see what action the Assembly may take in the matter. It seems like trifling with the question to act thus. Let every minister frankly state the case to his people and ask for contributions. Let every Session appoint one or more of its number to canvass for special subscriptions. Let every member interested in the prosperity of our Church and its future progress forward, either through his minister or direct to Dr. Reid, Toronto, whatever amount he feels able to give, without waiting for any one personally to solicit his contribution, and long before the Assembly meets the entire indebtedness will be removed.

Instead of waiting till the Assembly takes action it were far better to have the whole work accomplished before it meets so that the only action necessary would be a resolution of gratitude for the removal of a debt that seemed likely to paralyse the Church in its efforts to maintain gospel ordinances in our newer and more destitute settlements. We will very gladly throw our columns open for the acknowledgments of moneys contributed or of efforts put forth towards the removal of this debt. We again urge the importance of action being at once taken. To begin the ensuing ecclesiastical year with a heavy debt means disaster to our Home Mission work. To put forth a special effort after the meeting of Assembly simply means injury to next year's contributions for other schemes, and to none more than to the Home Mission Scheme, for a considerable portion of moneys obtained by a special effort then, will, beyond question, be deducted from the year's contributions towards the Home Mission Fund.

We may have something to say before the Assembly meets as to the future conduct of Home Mission work so as to prevent if possible such deficits in future. Meanwhile we

earnestly urge on all who have the welfare of the Church at heart to do what in them lies to wipe off this present incumbrance without delay, so that the Home Mission Committee may be able to report the fund free from debt when the Assembly meets at Ottawa in June.

## SYNODICAL POWERS.

THE Synod of Hamilton and London has at its recent meetings, well illustrated the peculiar province and powers of the Synod as a Court of the Presbyterian Church. It is held by many that there is no longer any necessity for such in view of the general experience of the transfer of business from the Presbytery to the General Assembly. The Synod was without doubt of great advantage in other times when places were far removed from one another. It had weight with the Presbyteries composing it, as the business going up by appeal would in most cases be finally disposed of. It exercised Archbishopial jurisdiction over the territory occupied by its Presbyteries. It would mould the public opinion of the district which it covered. But with the press, telegraph, and railway, which so thoroughly unify society, there is not the same need for the Synod. The Assembly, being the Court of final appeal, necessarily influences the whole country, in the same way as the Synod, in former times, would affect its own district. With the means at our disposal for spreading everything of public interest before the entire country, any matter is sufficiently well ventilated to be taken, without appeal to intermediate Courts, to the General Assembly.

But the Synod has done good service by its discussion of various matters of vital importance and sending forth to the world its authoritative decisions upon them. It is thus seen, that the Synod has only to assert itself, and it will be heard and felt. For example, our readers cannot but admire the manner in which this Court dealt with the subject of Sabbath observance. The report of its committee was able and exhaustive. To have postponed judgment upon such a question until the General Assembly could have received and adopted this report and any similar reports, would have amounted to dereliction of duty. Long before the Assembly can meet, a thousand different kinds of Sabbath desecration may have been prevented by the Synod's intervention. Every Presbytery, as well, should remember that it has precisely the same authority, and that it is responsible to make its voice heard upon such matters of public interest.

Again, the Synod of Hamilton and London dealt with the important subject of Temperance, and we were glad to find an authoritative declaration upon it by such an influential body of ministers and elders. When the Church thus adopts this cause as its own, a great step shall have been taken towards genuine reform. This subject has been far too much left in the hands of irresponsible persons and societies, and hence much has been said and done, which the Church cannot approve. The Synod's instruction to Sessions to use every proper