

**THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,**  
— PUBLISHED BY THE —  
**Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company**  
(C. BLACKETT ROBISON),  
AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

TERMS: \$2 per annum, in advance

ADVERTISING TERMS:—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, 1.50 per line; 1 year \$3.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken

**EASTERN GENERAL AGENT.**

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1886.

THE General Conference adjourned last week after sitting three weeks. It was what everybody who knows Canadian Methodism expected it would be, only a little more so. The *Guardian* thought the meeting would last two weeks, it lasted three. Everybody expected the proceedings would be lively, they were at times hilarious. Everybody expected a vigorous debate on the University question, the debate was said by some to be the greatest intellectual struggle that ever took place in this country. We know Methodism is prospering, the figures show unusual prosperity. We all expected the Conference would lay out some ambitious plans for the future; they appointed a Mission Superintendent for the North-West, and asked Dr. Potts to raise \$450,000 for their University. In fact, almost everything about the Conference surpassed the expectations even of those who expected a great deal. In another respect the meeting was not disappointing. The constitution is but three years old, and ecclesiastics of all kinds fully expected that a large number of suggestions would be made for constitutional changes. There was no disappointment on that score. Had all the changes been made, the machine would now be new. Some few changes were made; but our Methodist friends are altogether too sensible to frame a new constitution every three or four years. On the whole the meeting was exceedingly pleasant, and proved very conclusively that Methodism is as lively as ever, and likely to continue so for many years to come. So may it be.

A CONSIDERABLE amount of interest has been created in journalistic and, we presume, whiskey circles, by the conversion of the *Mail* to Prohibition. We say conversion because, though our contemporary is a young convert, we have no right to suspect the genuineness of the profession so frankly, if so suddenly, made. It is the duty of prohibitionists to receive the young convert in all charity and hopefulness, and to believe that the conversion is genuine until the contrary is shown. It would be interesting if the *Mail* would give its readers a short account of the circumstances that led up to and culminated in its conversion. We have read with much interest and not a little curiosity its first articles on Prohibition. We find nothing there that we have not met a thousand times. The arguments advanced in favour of Prohibition, and our contemporary's method of meeting objections, are as old as Prohibition. Perhaps the *Mail* would have no objection to state the arguments that influenced its mind most when about to make the turn. Its experience might be very useful to others. The arguments that wrought conviction on our neighbours might convince any number of anti-prohibitionists. Then our contemporary might state how these arguments came to have so much weight just at this particular time. In fact, it would be a good thing all round if the *Mail* would rise up and tell its experience. Meantime we welcome our contemporary to the temperance ranks, and hope it will do good service and manifest that modesty which is so becoming in a young convert.

EVERYTHING indicates that a fairly good trade will be done this fall. Business across the lines is

becoming brisk, and good times there help to make prosperity here. In fact, this Western part of Canada is fairly prosperous at the present moment, and the indications are that the prosperity will increase. It would be easy to name a number of places that are almost having a "boom." A "boom" is a calamity, but brisk business and good times are something to be thankful for. How shall we show our gratitude? We should certainly show it by increased liberality to the Schemes of the Church. It has often been said that Christian liberality is not increased by increased worldly prosperity. In prosperous times people are more self-indulgent, more extravagant and spend more upon themselves. They are very apt to be more worldly and thoughtless, and not in a mood to weigh well the claims of God upon them. Hence it has been contended that worldly prosperity does not promote liberality. We saw a mass of figures once which were intended to prove that some of the Churches on the other side of the lines were more liberal during commercial depression than at other times. This should not be the case if it were the case. At all events, we hope it will never be true of Canada. People can do much more for the Lord's cause in prosperous times if they will. It is easier for a business man to give his dollar when business is good than one in a time of severe depression. This should be a good year for our Church Schemes, and will be if our people give as the Lord has prospered them.

As Presbyteries are no doubt considering measures for making the Augmentation Fund a success this year, it may be well to refer to congregations in an Eastern Presbytery, the aiding of which in 1885 caused some comment. One of these congregations had a membership of 225 and the other 255, and each received a small grant from the Fund. It was contended, we understand, in some Presbyteries that no congregations having such a large membership as even the smaller of the two should receive aid. The facts, we believe, are that both cases were special, and were put upon the Fund as special cases in accordance with the regulation which permits that to be done. It is not necessary to explain the nature of the special circumstances of each case. We have heard the explanation made in regard to both cases, and are satisfied that the authorities pursued the proper course. In fact one of the grants was made by the General Assembly, and no doubt made for a good reason. One of the congregations has since become self-sustaining. It should also be stated that the Presbytery within whose bounds these congregations are contributed most liberally to the Augmentation Fund, giving in 1885 nearly \$900, and last year over \$1,200. If all Presbyteries contributed as liberally, the Augmentation Fund would be in a better condition. If, instead of bringing each case up in Presbyteries where there may be no one who can explain them on the spur of the moment, those who desire an explanation should write to Mr. Macdonnell or Mr. Warden, a satisfactory explanation would soon be forthcoming.

THE proposal to found a third party found no favour in the Conference. The veteran president would not even permit the matter to be discussed. He said he had been a temperance man before, some of the advocates of a third party were born, but he would not permit the Conference to sit and organize political parties. If they wished to do any such work, Conference must adjourn, and then they could go on with the formation of a third party. We do not believe the Conference would do anything so foolish, even if the president had not ruled the business out of order. Any serious attempt to organize a third party would throw the Prohibition movement back perhaps a quarter of a century. Maine has had a prohibitory law for more than thirty years, and at the last election the third party, organized and supported by Neal Dow, could muster only about 4,000 votes in the whole State. The attempt would not be any more successful in Canada. Indeed it is doubtful if the attempt to make Prohibition the sole issue at municipal and school elections was a wise step. A dozen issues come up in almost any municipality where candidates are being proposed, and no convention can keep free men from considering these issues. Unless in very exceptional cases, it would be impossible to make a municipal contest turn solely on Prohibition. A successful third party is out of the question. Even if one

were organized how long would it be in existence until schemers began to use the temperance vote for their own selfish purposes? Has the experience of temperance men with political prohibitionists been so satisfactory as to justify the formation of a third party?

**THE POWER BEHIND THE PAPACY,**

THE Church of Rome has a mortal antipathy to secret societies. From time to time popes and lesser dignitaries issue vigorous fulminations against all organizations whose members are bound together by secret oaths. At the same time there is a number of societies that receive, if not the sanction, at least the toleration, of the Church. To all intents and purposes what are those ostensibly benevolent societies, embracing so many different nationalities, on this continent but secret societies that Rome considers helpful, or, at all events, harmless to her interests? Perhaps the most powerful secret society at present in existence is one within the pale of the Church of Rome itself. In the strictest sense of the term the Society of Jesus is an oath-bound association, in which, after a lengthened probation, the accepted member, in addition to the vows customary in most of the religious orders, solemnly swears absolute and unquestioning obedience to the commands of the General of the Order. It would doubtless be difficult to find a parallel in any of the societies so steadily condemned by the Church of Rome to the complete surrender of personality to the will of a fellow-man as is found in the requirements of the Society of Jesus.

The Jesuits, wherever they have gone, have been successful in stirring up against their order feelings of bitter hostility. Why it should be so it is difficult to understand if they are the harmless and innocent persons they claim to be. One thing that above all others has rendered them obnoxious in all Christian countries is that they seek to gain their ends by subtlety and craft. What they desire to attain is obvious enough, the supreme control of education and, if possible, the shaping of governmental policy for, as they put it, "the greater glory of God." Man kind, whether cultured or illiterate, instinctively dislike double dealing. It is difficult for either reason or conscience to approve the maxim that the end justifies the means. Now it is perfectly obvious that were the Jesuits openly to avow that their object is to obtain supreme control of education and the State even in countries where Catholicism predominates they would not be listened to for a moment; hence the stealthy, insidious and serpentine doublings characteristic of the order wherever it has got a foothold.

Only for a brief period in Italy, Spain and Portugal after its foundation by Ignatius Loyola under the sanction of Pope Paul III., did the Society of Jesus obtain a friendly recognition even in Catholic countries. It never found a congenial home in France, from which it has been again and again expelled. It has been accused of favouring the assassination of obnoxious rulers, therein differing in nothing from the dogmas of extreme Nihilistic and Anarchic teaching. Indeed the society has been accused of having more than a philosophic interest in the removal of obnoxious rulers. In the seventeenth century an attempt on the life of Joseph I. of Portugal, and the assassination of Henry III. and Henry IV. of France were popularly ascribed to Jesuitic influence. It is certain that several distinguished writers belonging to the order defended tyrannicide. The fifth decree of the Council of Constance anathematized only such assassins as had not procured an ecclesiastical mandate for their deed. Jesuit authors went a step farther, and deduced from this deliverance that assassination was laudable when perpetrated at the instigation of an ecclesiastical tribunal. A work by Francisco Suarez, "A Defence of the Faith Against the Errors of the English Sect," was burned in Paris by the public executioner, by order of the Parlement, because it claimed for the Pope a coercive power over kings, and because it defended the rightness of assassination under certain conditions.

It is asserted that in addition to the recognized and avowed constitution of the Society of Jesus there is another and an inner code, known only to the initiated, called *Motta Secreta*, reserved for the guidance of the more advanced members of the Order. It was to be kept secret from all others, and should at any time its existence be suspected or discovered,