

Ministers and Churches.

OUR TORONTO LETTER.

An important meeting of the executive committee of the Lord's Day Alliance was held in the city last week. Members were present from Kingston, London, Hamilton and other centres, east and west. A six hours' session was held, and the present situation of the question of Sabbath preservation seems to have been pretty thoroughly discussed. From what can be learned of the discussion, the Alliance is very far from "napping," as a religious paper recently suggested, but is very wide awake. What is more, it is succeeding in awakening the "Rip Van Winkle" Christians throughout the province to the real importance of this Sabbath question. It is a pity that so much energy has to be spent upon this work of arousing Christians, but it must be done, and it is evidently being well and thoroughly done by Rev. J. G. Shearer and his organization committee.

Rev. Robt. Atkinson is now minister of Oak Street Church, Toronto. We were early at the church on Friday evening last, and not more than a hundred were present when we entered. A steady column kept filing in, however, and when at 8.05 the members of the Presbytery took their places, there were upwards of 600 present. The opening services were conducted by the Rev. James Murray, of Erskine Church, assisted by the Rev. Robt. E. Knowles, B.D., of Galt, Mr. Knowles and the Rev. John McNair, B.D., of Waterloo, were present to represent the Presbytery of Guelph, Mr. Atkinson's former Presbytery. It was a graceful tribute to the esteem in which Mr. Atkinson is held by his former co-presbyters.

Mr. Murray chose for his subject, "Regeneration, as the condition of entrance into the Kingdom of Christ." He dwelt specially upon the necessity of the new birth and the utter failure of any of the substitutes which human nature instinctively turns to to meet the requirement. Mr. Murray held the close attention of his audience, and, though evidently suffering from a severe cold, succeeded in pressing home his points with vigor and effect.

The address to the minister was given by Rev. Louis H. Jordan, of St. James Square. It was good, carefully prepared, as everything that Mr. Jordan does is, but it was too long. Many that would gladly have listened could not do so. It was quite 9.30 p.m. before the address began, and that fact alone made its proper delivery impossible.

In homely phrase Rev. John Kay, of Deer Park, addressed the people, asking them above all things not to trouble their minister with petty details, but to manfully shoulder their share of the burden, and leave Mr. Atkinson free to take up his own share of the work. He urged them to become fellow-workers with their minister, that, together, they might realize the expectations of Christ in their congregation.

Would it not be possible to improve the service of induction? At present it is wearisome. It should not be, for it is of the utmost importance that the entrance of a minister upon his charge should be full of brightness and hopefulness. An outsider, who may be thought to have little knowledge of the fitness of things, hesitates to suggest changes to grave and reverend members of a Presbytery, yet it did seem to your correspondent as if some different order would be more helpful. Why should not the Moderator of the Presbytery, as representing that court, deliver a brief address, which would take the place of the sermon. At its close the formal induction would fittingly take place, to be to the minister, and the address to the people. No one of those addresses should be more than fifteen minutes in length, the whole service would be a unit, and would not occupy more than an hour and a half.

Knox Church congregation will decide on Monday evening next whether the offer of the Robert Simpson Company shall be accepted, and what site shall be chosen for the new church building. The next day the trustees will report to the Presbytery the result of the congregational meeting, and the next month the Presbytery will in all probability deal with the application.

Many will be sorry to see the historic church disappear from its present site. It has associations that are very dear to the hearts of the Presbyterians who first settled in Toronto, several of whom are still connected with the congregation. Others will regret the move that has been decided

upon because it has been hoped that Knox Church, with its large endowment, would take up the cause of the downtown congregation. Were those who now compose the strength of the congregation to give up at least half of the Sabbath to work in the downtown district, and put a portion of what will be spent upon the new church building into making over the present building so that it shall become suitable for the work, it should do in its present locality, were they to secure an assistant for the present pastor, who would undertake the arduous work of reaching those in the district immediately north of Queen street. There would be abundant work for the congregation, and work that it is in a better position to do, because of its endowment, than any other congregation in the city. Of course, it would not be Knox Church. The old associations would be as completely swept away as the church building were removed to Spadina avenue or College street.

No definite answer has been received from Dr. Black in response to the cablegram advice of his prospective call to St. Andrew's. It could hardly be expected that he would commit himself without fuller knowledge and careful consideration. The strong hope is expressed that he will come, and in that hope we cordially join.

We understand that the congregation at East Toronto are about to present a call to Rev. Thos. H. Rogers, B.A., who has been preaching there for the past three or four months. We congratulate the congregation upon its choice, but knew the call was a foregone conclusion when we heard that Mr. Rogers was to be there for a length of time. We hope he may accept it, and, if he allows it to go on, he will. He is not one of those who play with congregations.

MONTREAL

Dr. Scrimger arrived in Winnipeg last week.

Professor Iverach preached in Crescent Street Church on Sunday evening. He was on his way to Winnipeg.

Dr. MacVicar was well received in the South. He left on Tuesday for Winnipeg, where he will be warmly welcomed by many friends.

In a private note to Mr. Wm. Drysdale, of St. James street, the Rev. D. W. Morrison, of Ormstown, writes, under date 11th April: To-day the grandeur of the snow-covered Alps has been around us. We hope to be in Rome by the end of the month." Mr. and Mrs. Morrison are well, and enjoying their trip immensely.

The Sunday afternoon entertainment in Her Majesty's Theatre has entered upon a new phase—that of the sacred concert. It began with a series of lectures on Biblical subjects by a former Toronto minister. In the course of time considerable music, which was not all sacred, was introduced. Now the lectures are discontinued, and the musical element is in entire possession of the programme. Some will naturally entertain the expectation of further developments. It is to be hoped that such expectations will be disappointed.

The sacred concert is an institution which can very well be dispensed with on Sunday. About the most that can be said for it is that it is entertaining. It cannot do much for the cause of religion. It tends to encourage the already prevalent disposition to lose sight of the sacred character of the day and to observe it in a loose manner. Too much music of a stirring character on Sunday makes the church service "stale, flat and unprofitable" by contrast. It makes pure religion a weariness of the flesh. Moreover, if it is so hard to keep music within bounds even in the church, what may we not reasonably expect in the way of progressiveness, when it is conducted within the walls of a theatre?

Church-goers who attend Sunday concerts should pause and ask themselves whether they are thereby better enabled to give God His due in the public worship of His house, and in such other religious occupations as are recognized as fitting the day, and whether they find the entertainment conducive to their being "in the spirit on the Lord's day."

The ministers' dinner is now a matter of church history in Montreal, and it is likely to remain so. An event so unprecedented, so unique, so successful, and so pregnant with possible results, is not likely to be allowed to drop away into forgetfulness. It will be remembered for what it was, and possibly even more for what it was the beginning of. It may come to pass that last

Thursday evening may yet be looked back upon as, if not the commencement of a new era in church affairs in Canada, yet as the first step in an important movement. The Rev. Dr. John Campbell, in his speech, which was very imperfectly reported, bore testimony to the enormous advance which had been made in Christian fellowship since he came to Montreal. The Dean of Montreal advocated organic union pure and simple. Dr. Williams, of St. James Methodist Church, doubted the desirability of organic union. He favored a parliament, which would decide matters which affected all the denominations, and legislate with reference to the occupation of mission fields and similar matters. More important than organic union, and, at all events, the first step towards it, was the cultivation of a true spirit of unity. This could not but recall to some minds what Dr. MacVicar once said to Dean Carmichael, when the Dean was waxing eloquent upon his favorite theme, "Let me preach in your pulpit, Dean, or exchange pulpits some Sunday morning with the minister of St. Paul's, and that will be the first step in the desired direction." A Church of England minister in Montreal stated after the dinner that more than once recently a Presbyterian minister had preached in his pulpit. So the first step has been taken if not by the Dean yet in another quarter. Officially, however, the Church of England still denies our unity of spirit.

It is hardly likely that the Presbyterians, being a humble people, will ever wish to be lifted up, and they are more likely to go in for organic union, of which none are more in favor, when it is proposed upon a level. We are not "the Church," but we are as real a part of it as any other denomination. It is to be regretted that Dr. MacVicar, Dr. Scrimger, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Hill, and Dr. Mackay were absent upon such an important occasion. These bishops were missed. Mr. Mowatt was present, but did not speak. Neither did Mr. Fleck, Mr. Holme, and a score, which was received with great enthusiasm. Rev. Messrs. Dewey, George, Reid, Cruikshanks, MacVicar (of Victoria Church), Pratt, and Mackenzie, and Rev. Professors Cossirat and Ross were also among the eighty-four evangelical ministers who formed the festive company. If the most eloquent speech was the Dean's as all admitted, the most suggestive and practical was that by Dr. George, the principal of the Congregational College. He propounded a scheme for the corporate action of the theological colleges in conducting a preparatory course and in conferring degrees in Divinity.

Appeal From Maganetawan.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of North Bay, held at the town of North Bay on the 7th March, 1899, the following motion was carried:—

"Moved by Mr. S. Childerose, seconded by Mr. W. G. Smith, that the application of the congregation of Maganetawan for permission to appeal to the Presbyterian Church for subscriptions in aid of the debt on their church building at Maganetawan be granted. Carried.

"(Signed), A. MACVICAR,
"Clerk of Presbytery."

In accordance with the above resolution, the managers of the congregation at Maganetawan appeal to the liberality of the members and adherents of the Presbyterian Church. We have a debt of \$650, which was incurred through the purchase of a manse and necessary repairs on the church building.

The cause of Christ is prospering in our midst, and members are being added to the church. The debt is felt to be a burden, and a hindrance to the work, and any aid given will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Remittances may be sent to Mr. D. B. Best, Maganetawan, who is authorized to receive same. (Signed), Jas. C. Grinton, S. G. Best, John Jackson, Jas. Strachan, Geo. McKnight, L. B. McKnight, Mrs. B. Nickle, managers.

D. B. BEST, Sec.-Treas.

In connection with the foregoing, I would state that this is a very deserving case. The congregation has suffered severely by removals and other causes beyond human control, and is doing its utmost for the support of ordinances and reduction of the debt. Contributions in answer to this appeal will be of service in building up the kingdom of God on the earth. (Signed), J. BECKET,

Minister of Maganetawan, etc.