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Toronto, March 28, 1895.

Aged and Infirm Ministers.

THE claims of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund have been receiving business like attention at the hands of some Presbyteries. It is surely one of the Funds sanctioned by the Church which should attract generous minds and liberal hearts to its aid. The statement published last week by its able agent, Rev. Wm. Burns, shows that the need for strenuous effort has not passed away, and it is therefore gratifying to read the reports from some of the Presbyteries which are moving in the right direction. The position taken up is that ministers as soon as they are ordained ought to join the Fund and pay the dues levied according to its rules. Ministers who expect assistance when aged and infirm, it is pointed out, ought to begin to contribute, while still young and in the hey day of their strength. This attitude is by no means a new one, it has been suggested and urged forcibly and often, but its re-iteration seems to be necessary even although it is most reasonable, and according to well recognized business principles. If the ministers were to urge this view incessantly it would prevail and the Fund would be immensely benefitted. Few funds of the Church have had abler advocacy or more skilful management than this one; and it is indeed worthy of all the labor, and all the love, which has been expended upon it in faith and hope; but it is high time the ministry as a unit recognized the duty of taking a greater interest in the speedy realization of the aims of the Committee and discussions and resolutions on the lines already adopted by several Presbyteries will be productive of much good.

Ordaining Catechists.

An important overture it was which Rev. James Fraser presented to the Presbytery of Montreal for transmission to the General Assembly and the burden of which was that the latter body sanction the principle of the ordination of catechists to the discharge of certain pastoral duties such as the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. There are serious objections to such an overture, and there are strong arguments urged in its favor. The question is a practical one. There are circumstances in which it is extremely difficult for the church to supply the services of duly ordained ministers for the special purposes alluded to, and it has been felt, by not a few in the ministry, that a certain status should be given to catechists, who act as unordained missionaries, by which they could perform some of the duties falling now exclusively to the regularly ordained minister.

It is pointed out that, the catechist is in charge of the station and is entrusted, under Presbyterian supervision, with the greater portion of the pastoral work, that he ministers to the sick, conducts the funeral service, preaches, etc., and it is believed that to these functions might, under special conditions be added the dispensing of the Sacraments. Yet the fact must not be lost sight of that the proper status of the ordained minister is a matter of very great importance. It has a value too often lost sight of. The chief element to be considered is not how the prestige of a minister affects the minister, although that, too, is of consequence, but how it affects his work. The qualifications for the ordained ministry are also involved, and they ought to be safeguarded against any encroachment. There is also the objection suggested by Rev. Principal MacVicar, as to the effect on the relation of ministers to acts of civil status. These objections are formidable, yet not necessarily unsurmountable, and the rejection of the overture by the Presbytery may not have put an end to a matter so well-thought of by quite a number of earnest workers in the mission districts.

Presbyterianism in Toronto.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Presbyterian organization in Toronto and the fiftieth anniversary of the Union with it of Knox Church, will be celebrated by special services—which doubtless will prove of an exceedingly interesting character—on the 7th, and 14th, of the next month. The event is exciting considerable interest among the city churches and the special committee having charge of the arrangements are sanguine that the gatherings will be very large and successful. The proceedings will include historical sketches of the church, the pastors and the growth of the Presbyterian cause in the community, a task in itself as formidable as it will prove interesting.

Church Attendance.

A problem which, like the poor, is always with the Church, is that noted in the above caption. The earnest pastor does not confine his sympathies or his labors to those already within the pale of his congregation and who consider themselves entitled to his first thought and his best efforts. He must needs look beyond on the mass of living men and women who seldom or never darken a church door, and their sad case lies heavy on his heart. The words of the Master come with pressing significance to him: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Where life pulsates most vigorously, there the desire to reach the unsaved, the lapsed ones, is strongest. By this fact can be understood the reflex influence of mission work on the life of the Church.

Among the lapsed or non-church-going people young men have always received most attention. It is believed that if the young could be persuaded to attend divine service the problem would be practically solved, or it would be very much simplified. Yet there is another class whose case is equally critical, viz., the men and women who have been regular attendants in youth, but with family cares, business responsibilities, and perplexities have grown weary of well-doing and have given up the good habit of their younger days. These form a large proportion of the non-church-goers