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Notes of the Week.

The Hymnal Committee of our Church recently put in several days of hard, constant, responsible work upon the proposed new Book of Praise for the Church. Sessions began at 9.15 and went on to 1 p. m., from 3 p. m., to 5.30, and from 7 p. m. to 10 p. m. Pretty steady work this, although we understand very agreeable in many respects, varied with now and then an earnest if but brief discussion over the precise wording of some hymn. Few things are of more importance to a church than its hymnology, and few are more difficult to do, so as to be generally acceptable, than to compile a hymn-book. We trust that the labors of this Committee may meet with the largest measure of acceptance that could reasonably be expected.

Of a like nature to the proposal made by Mr. Provand in the British House of Commons, referred to elsewhere in these notes, is the action of the Denver Chamber of Commerce endorsing the Government ownership of railways, a proposal hitherto favoured only by social reformers. Even those who oppose it recognize that this proposal meets with growing favor among the people, and that the political discussion of it cannot be long delayed. Before the recent railroad pooling bill was passed, the United States Strike Commission, in its report on the Chicago strike, declared that such a pooling would be a peril to the national liberties through its massing of railroad power, and that greatly increased control or ownership by the State would be a necessary defense.

Evangelist Meikle, so well known in our Church from the most distant east to Winnipeg, after an absence of eight years is again in that city. It has grown greatly in that time, from 7,985 in 1881 to 25,642 in 1891. A great revival took place during his last visit and another as great it is hoped may accompany this visit. Comparing the east and west he said to a newspaper man who interviewed him "One thing I learned to like in the west, when I was in Winnipeg before, was the masculinity of the audiences—the great proportion of men at the services. In the east the services are very largely attended by women, but here the opposite is the rule. Since I was in Winnipeg I have laid greater stress upon the men's meetings, and in this work I have been very successful." Speaking of revival work generally he remarked: "It is wearing work, anxious work. There is the anxiety for souls. I cannot think that a soul is ever born into the spiritual world, any more than into the natural, without travail."

A judgment was given a few days ago in the courts in Montreal which is of interest not only to Christian Endeavorers, but to others as well, who may have occasion to make arrangements for billeting in any of our cities a large number of visitors and guests on the occasion of any of those great gatherings for many purposes now so frequently held. An action was brought by C. W. Pearson, et al, against Geo. R. Lighthall, holding the defendant personally responsible for \$588, the amount of a contract entered into for the Montreal Christian Endeavor Union, which had no legal existence. The plaintiffs had contracted to lodge a number delegates to the Christian Endeavor convention, but not half of those expected came and they suffered the above loss in consequence. It is evident that the principle involved in this decision is applicable to many similar cases, and those charged with finding homes and becoming responsible for them, will require to be sure that they do not lay themselves open to be charged for delinquent visitors.

A New York State Commission has been investigating the subject of tenement houses in that city, where the evil exists to an extent not surpassed if equalled in any other city in either the old world or the new. Some of the recommendations of the report may give some idea of what life must be in these dread abodes of vice, poverty and dirt: "That the Board of Health be given power to condemn and destroy unsanitary buildings. That all basement ceilings, be at least two feet above ground. That no wall paper be allowed in tenement houses. That all halls in tenements be by law obliged to be properly lighted. That the number of people living in such houses be absolutely limited by law. That prostitution and soliciting in the tenement district be prosecuted with particular severity."

The meeting held in this city to protest against interference by the Dominion Government with the school legislation of Manitoba was large and enthusiastic. The motions made were to the point, unmistakable in their language, and supported by able speeches. The opposite side had a champion who was heard with not a little impatience, but who held his ground until he presented his case with a good degree of fulness. As it was a meeting of those opposed to interference it is needless to say that the motions were carried one after another all but unanimously. The sentiment of the whole meeting was well expressed in the brief words which called forth the warmest approval, "Let Manitoba alone." The reasons given for this course were many and strong, and it was forcibly shown that what was Manitoba's position to-day might be Ontario's to-morrow, and that, in taking a stand for Manitoba, Toronto was really taking a stand for Ontario and for all the Provinces. A few days probably will disclose what it is proposed to do in this difficult case.

As the question of establishing free libraries has been up for discussion in many towns, or has been voted upon, it may be interesting and helpful to giving an intelligent decision on this point to learn as we do from the last report of the Toronto Public Library that there is a steady decline in the reading of works of fiction from 56.3 per cent. in 1889 to 46.0 per cent. in 1894. That is, a drop of more than ten per cent., which seems to bear out the assertion of librarians that free libraries do tend to wean people from the lighter to the heavier kind of books. During the same period we find that magazine reading, as might have been expected, has largely increased, being only 3.3 per cent. six years ago and 12 per cent. now. More children too read now, as also might have been expected: the proportion of juvenile to adult reading increasing by 4.7 per cent. in the same period. Otherwise, the percentages of the various classes of books remain on the whole almost stationary. The reading of theology has declined one-fifth of one per cent.; poetry remains stationary at four-fifths of one per cent.; but theology headed poetry last year by more than a thousand volumes.

"At the present writing," says the *Homiletic Review* in its last issue, "there are before the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York seven bills, differing from one another in minor particulars, but all of them favoring the opening of the saloon on Sunday. When it is remembered that these bodies are overwhelmingly Republican and that this party claims for itself the title of the temperance party, the fact stated has something alarming about it. The Church and the State are alike interested in standing firmly for an inviolate Sunday and against a traffic that is iniquitous throughout. The question now before the com-

munity seems to be just this: 'Shall we have the Sabbath, or shall we have the saloon? One or the other must go. Which shall it be? A united Christian Church might settle the question forever. It has the power, if it only had the inclination to do so.' We cannot surely but sympathize most strongly with the friends of temperance and of the Sabbath in the neighboring country in the desperate battle they have to fight against the liquor and anti-Sabbath forces. They usually go together and work into each other's hands. There is in the present state of things in the United States a warning to us in Canada never to slacken our vigilance or determination to wage war against these combined forces of evil until their power is reduced to a minimum if not destroyed altogether.

The following motion made a few days ago in the British House of Commons, the discussion upon it and its passing its first reading without a division, although that may not mean much, yet taken altogether is one of no little significance, it is the shadow cast before of one of those events which will mean a good deal when it comes. Andrew D. Provand, a Liberal, representing a division of Glasgow, brought up in the Commons the subject of the unearned increment. He moved that "No system of taxation can be equitable unless it include the direct assessment of such enhanced value of land as is due to an increase of population, wealth and growth of towns." It was replied by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, president of the local government board, that without doubt there had been a continuous increase in the value of urban land. The landlords had enjoyed the full benefit of the increment without bearing their share of the increase of taxation. He could not commit himself to any particular scheme of reform nor promise a government bill, but he could express his hearty endorsement of Mr. Provand's views. After Sir Edward Clarke, Conservative for Plymouth, had argued against Mr. Provand, the motion was passed without division. The short debate was heard with keen interest by the House as it bore directly upon the vexed question of ground rents in large towns, most notably London.

In the National Council of Women, which met lately in Washington, some eighteen different societies, representing over four millions of women, sent their representatives. The object of this woman's organization is "extremely comprehensive, and includes a discussion of almost every subject which bears upon daily life. It discusses the practical aspects of religion, its relation to daily life, and to the non-church-going element of the community; the relation of religion to politics and public office; the attitude of different denominations toward women, and the attitude which women should assume toward denominations; woman's place in the pulpit and the mission field; social purity, how best to promote it; the double and the single standard of morality; checks against improper literature; true dress reform; equal pay for equal work by men and women; divorce reform, and improvements in the laws respecting wives and mothers; patriotism and its cultivation, peace and the discouragement of the militant tendency; the extension of object lessons and the kindergarten system, reforms in educational methods, foreign missions and their effect in civilizing, independent of Christianizing; industrial pursuits for women and industrial education for girls, first aid to the injured; the best courses of study for married women at home, for post-graduates, for working-women, the extension of the fields of industry for women, the acceleration and cheapening of the administration of justice, so as to give the poor woman an equal chance against a rich man."