

THE COLONIAL COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THIS COMMITTEE has now been forty-four years in existence. It was organized on its present basis in 1837, with Principal Macfarlane as its first convener. Its original object was to co-operate with "The Glasgow Society," which had been instituted in 1826 for the purpose of promoting the interests of Scottish settlers in British North America. That society merged in the Colonial committee in 1838. The successive conveners were, Dr. Fowler of Ratho, appointed in 1856; Dr. Stevenson of South Leith, in 1861, and the Rev. Robert H. Muir of Dalmeny, who was the convener from 1866 to May, 1880, when the present convener, the Rev. Dr. Gray of Liberton, was appointed. True to its name, the committee began its career by devoting its attention exclusively to the colonies of the Empire, and for many years the Colonial Mission was one of the most popular schemes of the Church. Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, the Cape of Good Hope, the West Indies, South America, British North America, Ceylon, and India, each received such encouragement and assistance as it was in their power to offer. In course of time the Colonial Committee came to exert a widespread influence, and was largely instrumental in advancing the interests of Presbyterianism throughout the world, (1) by sending ministers to the colonies before they had the means of educating a native ministry; (2) by grants of money to aid weak congregations in the erection of churches and in supporting their ministers; (3) by liberal advances for the equipment and maintenance of theological institutions; and, (4) by deputations sent out from time to time to inspect and report upon the state of the churches in the colonies. A great deal of money was spent in these ways. During the first year of its existence the whole income of the committee was only £1350. But it increased steadily until 1875, when it reached £8628—about \$43,000. The income for 1880 was still larger—\$57,000, but that included a legacy of over £7000. The amount received during the past ten years was \$309,035, being an average of nearly \$31,000 a year. The whole amount expended in Canada during these ten years was \$129,840. Within the last few years the Colonial Committee has had several other schemes attached to it, hence it is beginning to lose somewhat of its distinctive character, and on that account it is perhaps losing, to some extent, its hold upon the people to whom it looks for support. It is not so popular as it was in its early days; but while this may be a matter of regret, and perhaps also embarrassing to its executive, it is in the nature of

things that it should be so. In fact the colonies do not now require the assistance they formerly did. In Australia and Canada the churches have virtually declared their independence and assumed the responsibilities of self-support—a condition of things which ought to give rise to mutual congratulations. Surely it was with this end in view that the parent church has so long and anxiously interested herself in the welfare of her Canadian children, and she may well be proud of the position they now occupy in the roll of Presbyterianism. Whatever may be our relations in the future, we are sure that the Presbyterian Church in Canada will never forget what it owes to the Church of Scotland, and we may add here, to the Free Church of Scotland, too, though we are speaking particularly of the other. The last report presented to the General Assembly announces that the grants to all the elder Provinces in Canada are now to terminate. At the same time it is gratifying to notice that the committee are still disposed to recognize the claims of Manitoba and the North-West to a share of their sympathies and co-operation, as appears from their concluding remarks:

"In British America, there is increasing work in which the Church of Scotland ought to be engaged. The North-West Territories form more than half of the whole Dominion of Canada. 39,000 emigrants settled last year in the Dominion. Many of these went to Manitoba, and very many of them are Presbyterians. If no effort is made in their behalf, the whole of this immense territory will be lost to Presbyterianism, and many will be lost to religion altogether. The Presbyterian Churches in Canada are already almost overpowered with their own home fields, and confess themselves quite unable to meet these new and ever-increasing demands on them for men and money. This field, therefore, and the college at Winnipeg, seem especially to claim your committee's care."

In saying that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has assumed the responsibilities of self-support, the remark is chiefly applicable to the old provinces. It would not be fair to our Home Mission Committee to place the North-West Provinces and British Columbia in the same category with Ontario and Quebec. They embrace a territory as large as all the old Provinces put together, and the number of emigrants from the old country who are pouring into them is unprecedented in the history of Canada. The Canadian Church is doing its utmost to keep pace with the influx of population in the North-West, but there is as much room, and as good reason for assistance from the parent churches there at the present time as there was in Ontario and Quebec and the Maritime Provinces fifty years ago.