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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th, 1890.

COMMENTING on Canon Liddon as a preacher the *Churchman* says: "The popular decision is final in the question of preaching." It is, so far as this world is concerned, but the admission is a rather strange one for the *Churchman* to make.

REFERRING no doubt to the McKinley Bill, though no mention is made of that triumph of restrictive legislation, the *Interior* says:—

Our Canadian friends need not stand out there scolding. Dinner is ready, and Uncle Sam's big dining-room door is wide open. Walk right in.

The dining-room door may be open, but when the American protectionists do a little more in the way of passing restrictive tariff laws, there will be nothing on the table but basswood hams and wooden nutmegs. Canadians don't hanker after that kind of a diet.

WHAT can the following editorial paragraph in the *British Weekly* mean:—

Dr. Barnardo, who is just back from Canada, received an enthusiastic welcome on Monday night at the Edinburgh Castle. He gave a glowing account of Canadian prospects. The testimony of so shrewd an observer ought to inspire those who have always despaired of Canada.

Who are those "who have always despaired of Canada?" What is there in the political, moral or financial condition of Canada to make any sensible man despair? On the whole, Canada is perhaps doing as well as a certain island right under the shadow of the British throne that Mr. Balfour has a good deal of trouble with. It is comforting to know that Dr. Barnardo believes in our future.

ONE of the facts brought out by the Ontario Prison Commission should make every Ontario citizen hang his head with shame. It is as clear as expert evidence can make anything that in many counties aged and infirm men are confined in gaol simply because they are homeless and friendless and unable to provide for themselves. Are old age and poverty crimes in this country? The county councils of many counties persistently refuse to erect proper places for these unfortunate people, and they are thrust into prisons along with criminals to keep them from death by cold or starvation. Is that a proper way for a Christian country to treat men tottering on the brink of the grave? We hear a great deal about depression in agriculture. Nations are punished in this life. Can any one say that this depression is not punishment?

THE Rev. D. D. McLeod has given notice of a motion in the Barrie Presbytery which may test the union sentiment in the North. In many places in Muskoka, Parry Sound and throughout the great county of Simcoe two or three churches are struggling for an existence where one could do all the work. In these places there is not sufficient support for one church. If there was a reasonable prospect that such fields would increase in population of course two or three churches might eventually be needed but in some of them a decrease is much more likely than an increase. A "lumber village" is almost certain to decline when the pine within a number of miles of it is sawn. Then the opening of a new railway while it builds up some places is almost certain to well-nigh destroy others. From various causes a considerable number of small villages can never grow much larger and some of them may become smaller. What Mr. McLeod proposes is, that a committee of Presbytery confer with the authorities of the Methodist Church with a view to union where manifestly only one church is needed. Supposing the Presbytery and the Methodist people should agree to unite at certain points would the people agree to do so? There's the rub.

ALMOST everybody calls the whole northern country between Lake Couchiching and North Bay, Muskoka. The same mistake is made on a larger scale about the North-West. The whole country between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains is called Manitoba. As a matter of fact there are three districts in that region vaguely called Muskoka and these are separated by municipal, judicial and parliamentary purposes. It would be just as correct to call the counties of York, Peel and Halton, York, as to call all the region north of Gravenhurst, Muskoka. There will be a boom at Sudbury one of these days that will open the eyes of Ontario people in regard to the great resources of that northern region. The Canadian Pacific Railway is making another front on Ontario and unless all appearances are misleading the Northern front will soon be more lively than many parts of the southern one.

CAN there be any reasonable doubt that the Ontario Election law is being used for partisan purposes by both political parties? About one-fourth of the elections held last June are protested and the battle fought at the polls must be fought over again in the courts. The law is a good one and was intended to put down corrupt practices at elections. Is any person innocent enough to suppose that that is the purpose for which the law is being used so extensively at the present time? It has never been charged that in the elections held in June corrupt practices prevailed to any considerable extent. There was not much money, we believe, spent on either side, and the responsible men on both sides were no doubt anxious to keep the contest clean. A few old-timers may have indulged in some of the bad old time practices but certainly there was nothing like general and serious violations of the law. And yet one-fourth of the elections are protested and thousands of dollars will be spent in litigation, the bulk of the money finding its way into the coffers of two or three Toronto firms. Now we submit to all reasonable, patriotic citizens that the election courts were never intended to be used as a political hunting-ground. To use the law for political purposes, or for the arrangement of "saw-offs" is to abuse it. By all means let the law be used for putting down corrupt practices, but we don't suppose anybody says with a straight face that that is the purpose for which it is being used in many constituencies at the present time.

IN his speech at the Sabbath School Convention last week Dr. Potts is reported to have said:—

He was surprised, when coming down from Owen Sound the other morning, upon opening the *Globe* to see before him an address on Christianity by the Attorney-General of Ontario. He hoped if the time ever came when Mr. Mowat ceased to be Premier of Ontario that the Knox College people would make him a professor in theology. If they did not he was sure that the Methodist Church would make him a local preacher. The Hon. G. W. Ross had addressed this Convention this morning, and he thought that that gentleman in his noble position could not lend his talents to a better cause, but when he read that article on Christianity by the Attorney-General of Ontario he saw in it clearness of thought; he saw in it ability and genius, but behind all this he saw the gleanings of a pure Christian heart. "And, Conservative as I am," said Dr. Potts, "I felt like crying out 'Thank God' at the Hon. Oliver Mowat is Premier of Ontario." What other country under the sun can make such a boast?

Why be surprised, Doctor? No one need be surprised at the ability displayed in the lecture because Mr. Mowat has displayed as much or even more ability in other directions a score of times. The scrupulously candid fair balancing of arguments is just the way Mr. Mowat used to weigh and balance arguments on the Bench. The terse, clear, clean-cut sentences are just the kind of sentences with which the Premier has rallied the electors of Ontario for eighteen years. We think we know why the eloquent Doctor was surprised. Abuse of public men has been so shamefully common in Canada for many years that even shrewd Christians like Dr. Potts are surprised when a public man shows any "gleanings of a pure Christian heart." Dr. Potts may never have indulged in that kind of dirt-throwing but some of his brethren are adepts at the business.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

LAST week the Annual Convention of the Ontario Sabbath School Association completed its labours at Brantford. The meetings were very successful throughout. The attendance of delegates was large, the subjects discussed were of practical importance, and there was an evident desire on the part of all to make the Convention

profitable and helpful to the Sabbath school cause. This Association brings together earnest Sabbath school workers belonging to the different branches of the Evangelical Church, forming a union that is productive of much good. The cultivation of a spirit of brotherly kindness among those who differ on minor matters removes prejudices and extends mutual respect, while it may not weaken denominational attachments. Cordial co-operation in practical Christian work is a more pleasing sight than controversial discussions, however brilliant. While it is cheerfully noted that members of other communions took an active and prominent part in the proceedings, it is no less gratifying to notice that Presbyterian brethren gave evidence of the deep interest they take in the religious training of the young. The veteran Sabbath school worker, Rev. John McEwen, was there, and the younger men in the ministry were also well represented. Mr. W. N. Hossie, who has for many years been closely identified with the work of Sabbath schools, had his labours and worth fittingly recognized by being elected president of the Association for 1891. The Hon. Senator Vidal took an active part in the proceedings, the Hon. G. W. Ross delivered the opening address, and Mr. J. A. Paterson rendered good service.

Several delegates to the Pittsburg Convention gave interesting accounts of the impressions they received, and others spoke of the progress made in extending the Sabbath school cause in their respective districts. At the meeting of the Convention last year it was stated that the youth in the newer northern regions of Ontario were much neglected. The officers of the Association have not neglected the complaints then made. During the summer the general secretary, accompanied by the Rev. R. H. Abraham, of Burlington, made a tour of the Muskoka region for the purpose of enquiring into the truth of the statements made. By holding meetings in a number of places they were instrumental in rousing interest in the work among the settlers, and helping in promoting organization. This is represented as highly necessary, since in the districts where the Roman Catholic Church has numerous adherents there is complete organization, while the forces of evangelical Protestantism are scattered and lacking in unity of effort. It is recommended that there should be a Sabbath school missionary appointed, at least temporarily, in the Muskoka region, under whose fostering care the Sabbath school work might be consolidated and extended. It is in contemplation to hold a Sabbath School Convention at Magnetawan in August next, for the Parry Sound district. In these efforts to meet the urgent claims of a region hitherto comparatively neglected, the Association ought to be able to count on the cordial support of its members.

The work under the care of the Association has during the past year made gratifying progress. The statistical returns presented showed that there were 4,336 Sabbath schools, an increase during the past three years of 437; 41,718 officers and teachers, an increase of 6,893, and 357,821 scholars, an increase of 65,430. About one-fifth of the whole population is found in the Sabbath schools, and a Sabbath school exists for every 500 inhabitants. The school population of Ontario, between five and twenty-one, according to the returns of 1888, is 615,353, of whom 100,000 are estimated as Roman Catholics, leaving in round numbers 158,000 Protestant youths to account for.

Delegates from the United States were present at the Convention. Mr. Dransfield, of Rochester, and Mrs. Kennedy, of Philadelphia, by their addresses contributed much to the interest and profit of the meetings. The last-named lady gave very interesting illustrations of how the attention of the younger scholars might be secured by providing for certain kinds of object lessons. The subjects of Temperance and Missions were earnestly discussed, and the most effective methods of enlisting the services of the young in these essential departments of Christian work were strongly urged. The closing address at the Convention was delivered by the Hon. S. H. Blake, whose remarks were earnest, forcible and telling, and well fitted to inspire Sabbath school teachers and all interested in the moral and spiritual training of the young. From the Convention the delegates will carry with them into their respective fields of labour much of the instruction and some of the enthusiasm which the meeting at Brantford was well fitted to impart.

MR. MOWAT ON THE EVIDENCES.

IN response to an invitation by the Society of Christian Endeavour in Woodstock, the Hon. Oliver Mowat delivered lately in Knox Church of