

MAY, 1877.

The General Assembly.

THE Annual Meeting of the third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is appointed to convene in the city of Halifax, and within St. Matthew's Church there, on Wednesday the thirteenth of June next, at half-past seven o'clock, p.m.

This Assembly will differ from its predecessors in that it will be a representative body, consisting of one-fourth of the whole number of ministers on the Rolls of the several Presbyteries, with an equal number of Elders. It follows that about three hundred and fifty Ministers and Elders, representing more than half a million of the people of this Dominion, may be expected to be in attendance. This is a large constituency for so young an Assembly—being not much less than that of the venerable General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland. But it represents a territory vastly greater, one whose habitable area is stated to be larger than that of the United States, and within a fraction of the surface of the Continent of Europe.

Halifax may well be proud of the distinction that awaits her, and will, doubtless, throw open her doors to receive the strangers who shall come within her gates at that time, and will make them doubly welcome—for their work's sake, and their own. Some of these commissioners, in going and returning, will travel a distance of five thousand five hundred miles. The average mileage for each member will not be far short of fifteen hundred miles. Do we recognize as we should the logical inference

from these statements? Is it not just possible that there may come into our assembly brethren who will be more concerned about exhibiting their powers of debate, their knowledge of Church law, or their aptness for discussing the niceties of points of order, than in promoting the despatch of business? Is there not a tendency in all ecclesiastical courts to fritter away too much precious time in arguing technicalities? It will not pay to go so far and do nothing, or, what is worse, to indulge in much speaking, for mere speaking's-sake.

We do not need to specify what business lies before the Assembly. In connection with our Home and Foreign missions, our French Evangelization work, our Colleges, and our Widows' Fund—not to speak of the Rules and Forms of Church Polity that have to be adjusted and harmonized—there is more than enough to occupy the time at the Assembly's disposal. Our earnest hope is that nothing will prevent these subjects from receiving the consideration which their vast importance demands. In former times, in some of the Churches now united, if not in all of them, it was considered fitting to request the prayers of God's people for the Divine blessing on the deliberations of the Supreme Courts. It cannot be wrong now to suggest to all the congregations of the Church the propriety of united prayer to God that such a spirit shall pervade the coming Assembly as shall make it manifest that it is indeed an Assembly of ardent and hopeful Christian men, doing Christ's work, each esteeming other better than himself. Of this we are assured, that Christ Himself is present in all the assemblies of His people. Let us not doubt that He will be in the midst of our Assembly. This of itself is sufficient to make our meeting a glorious one.