

As others see us.

REPORT TO THE COLONIAL COMMITTEE BY THE
REV. GEORGE W. SPROTT, B.A., DEPUTY
OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TO THE
CHURCH IN CANADA, 1879.

MR. SPROTT, as many of our readers will remember, came to Canada in the month of June last for the purpose of visiting the churches, to see how we look from an old country point of view; to obtain information on the spot as to the practical results of the recent Union, to ascertain whether any further assistance is needed in the new circumstances, and in what way such assistance might be most profitably given.

On his return to Edinburgh, after spending nearly two months in Canada, Mr. Sprott submitted to the Colonial Committee a very interesting Report, embodying the results of his observation extending over a vast extent of territory—from Newfoundland to Manitoba. A printed copy of this Report is now before us from which we make a few extracts, premising that we take it to be on the whole a very fair and impartial document; and it certainly contains a great deal of information that cannot fail to be useful to the Colonial Committee in determining their future relations to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Speaking of our General Assembly at Ottawa, Mr. Sprott says,—

“After addressing the House in accordance with my instructions, the thanks of the Assembly were tendered to me by the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Reid, who took occasion to express their high respect for the Church of Scotland, their gratitude for the aid received from the Colonial Committee, and for the prospect of this being continued in some of the more necessitous fields. For several days I was in close attendance on the Assembly, and in my representative capacity received every attention by which regard for the Church of Scotland could be manifested.

The Assembly had among its members many eminent ministers and laymen from all parts of Canada—the homes of some of them being at least 3000 miles apart. The attendance of the most distinguished clergymen is always secured, as Presbyteries send only part of their representatives by rotation, electing the rest by ballot. The old lines of distinction seemed to be

in a great measure effaced, and the ability shown in debate, the liberality of sentiment displayed, and the excellence of the business arrangements, would all have done credit to any ecclesiastical assembly in the world.”

Our six Theological Colleges are thus referred to :

“These Institutions, all of which were in existence at the time of the Union, besides training a native ministry, serve a most important purpose as centres of evangelistic effort. The Church could not have enjoyed anything like its present prosperity had it not been for the labours of professors and students in the Home Mission fields during the summer months. For many years the students have been pioneers in the new districts, and have volunteered for posts along the frontier which the Home Mission would otherwise have been wholly unable to occupy. The fruit of their labours is now to be seen in many flourishing congregations, where the ordained minister very often carries on the same work which as a student he had begun. The Montreal Theological College trains both French and English speaking students, and has a very close connection with this Mission, which employe at the present time 39 agents, 17 of them ordained ministers, several of whom are ex-priests of the Church of Rome. This is probably the most successful Mission to Roman Catholics in the world, and the reason of its success may be due to the fact that the French Canadians are a remarkably sober, industrious, moral, and, in their own way, religious people.”

A passing notice of our widely spread Foreign Missions is followed by a very appreciative and full account of our vast Home Mission fields, in which mention is made of the work carried on in the Madoc, Muskoka, and Parry Sound districts, special prominence being given to Manitoba and the North West Territories :—

“The Manitoba Mission is a very heavy burden on the resources of the Church; but it is most anxious to follow the tide of immigration, as the Free Church did with marvellous success in Western Ontario, and it is exerting itself almost beyond its strength to do so, in the belief that many of the stations which can now do little for themselves will, in a few years, be flourishing congregations, able to help their more necessitous brethren. Presbyterianism starts in Manitoba without any divisions, and full of heart and hope. The clergymen I met with were of opinion that the white population within the bounds of the Presbytery will, in ten years, amount to 200,000, and to maintain and extend their operations, they look eagerly for help from home. They desired me to represent to the Colonial Committee that it