

EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

On the subject of the common schools in Australia, Dr. Rentoul in an interview which appears in the Belfast Witness, said:—"We have had the same battle that you are fighting. Let me take Victoria alone, for that is the State whose education system has been most bitterly attacked as 'Godless,' 'Christless,' 'pagan,' and what not. In 1873 the present system of State education, free, compulsory, and secular, was introduced, as a consequence of the complete failure of the denominational schools. Those schools had largely neglected to avail themselves of the complete facilities given for denominational instruction. Observe, it was Anglican laymen who introduced the present system. It has stood the test of more than a generation. The reading-books are largely saturated with theistic and even Christian truth and sentiment. But there is no Bible teaching. Facilities are, however, given outside the hours of the ordinary curriculum, both in the middle of the day and after school hours, for the clergy of the various denominations, or accredited instructors authorised by them, to give to the children religious, Biblical, or dogmatic teaching as they chose. Recently a clerical commission, appointed by the Government, drew up a series of Scripture lessons, which they wished the teachers to teach in the ordinary school curriculum. It is an odd assortment. Though two Anglican bishops were on the Commission it begins by cutting away the Magnificat and all reference to the Virgin Birth of our Lord. The bishops in England, I see, have been agitating against 'a mutilated Bible,' but the bishops in Victoria went in for what was surely infinitely more dangerous—viz., a 'mutilated Jesus Christ.' A referendum of the people was taken at the request of the Churches with the crushing result that by an overwhelming majority the people voted for the maintenance of the present system, 'free, compulsory, and secular.' At the same time, by a majority, they voted that the Commission's scheme of Scripture readings should be used, though they did not specify who should teach them. The curious state of things, I think, demonstrates two things—that the people will not allow their education system to be other than 'secular' in the large sense of that word; and, secondly, that they would willingly welcome some of the nobler passages of Scripture in the reading-books. Dogmatic instruction they will not have in their schools."

THE BIRTH OF A NEW CITY.

Prince Rupert, the new city of North-western British Columbia and the Pacific Coast terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific, has indeed begun and the foundations laid of the coming metropolis of the Western Province of the Dominion. The camps of the surveyors, both those of the Dominion and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, are pitched on and near the future city's boundaries.

Mr. Dodge, superintending the government survey, has his camp stationed near the mouth of Tuck's Inlet, just opposite Venn's Passage, in view of historic Metlakahla. He intends to make a survey of the coast line waters of the inlet, and as this will take him considerable time, he expects to remain in camp until October, and has accordingly fitted up comfortable quarters. He says the Metlakahla carpenters have the honor of building the first house on Kaien Island, and is much pleased with them as workmen.

Farther east, up the inlet where surveys are now in progress at different points, the Grand Trunk Pacific Company's men are busy in the vicinity of their respective camps—one near Seal Harbor, where the new sawmill will be built, and one a mile and a half farther east. Here the wharf and three buildings will at once be erected, as already piles for the wharf are being secured.

SCOTTISH ASSEMBLIES.

The Belfast Witness of 1st of June, writing on this subject, says:

In the proceedings of the two great Assemblies in Edinburgh not much of interest to outside communities emerged. The principal point in the Established Church was the proposal to amend the terms of Subscription to the Confession of Faith. The idea is to relax the formula of subscription in relief of conscience, so that ministers may be able to sign without any mental reservation; a further, doubtless, object, was to avert the legal disaster which has befallen the United Free Church. After full debate, the Assembly agreed to suspend the settlement till next year. Whereupon the "Scoteman" remarks that there will be no great hardship experienced, because, as things are, ministers sign without feeling any compulsion to faith or any great compunction in the matter. But that is a cynical solution which will not satisfy many. And, on the whole, an altered formula such as the Irish Church has provided in one item will be the best every way.

In the United Free Church Assembly an important matter was the proposed amalgamation of the two funds—the Sustentation Fund of the old Free Church and the augmentation Fund of the United Presbyterians. The Sustentation Fund is declining; the U. P. plan prospers because it concedes a little more to human nature. This question also was not definitely settled, but hung up for another year. Church finance is a most delicate and difficult matter, and another year's consideration will do no harm, and may do much good. It is hoped the plan ultimately agreed on may furnish a hint for the quickening and enlargement of our Irish Sustentation Fund, which has been for some years less than satisfactory.

THE SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY.

The editor of the Central Presbyterian, probably the most conservative of Southern Presbyterian papers, thus writes of their last General Assembly:

"To a thoughtful observer it was clearly evident that there were two distinct parties in the Assembly, that appeared again and again as particular subjects presented themselves for consideration. They were lined up with but slight variations on a number of issues. They might be named the liberals and conservatives, corresponding in general to this classification in other religious bodies. On the question of Federation, on the Callwell Case, on Republishing the Distinctive Principles of the Church, on Sending Delegates to the Council of the American Federation of Churches, the same men were seen in line on either side with the same leaders, if leaders were needed, with few exceptions, only on the last named issue, which was not in form to be a test. Our Church may as well recognize that she has a 'liberal' element of a milder type within her own fold, whether for her advancement or her embarrassment, and adjust herself to the new conditions.

"Modern methods of managing and conducting the business of courts were much in evidence at the Assembly. It was long thought that the dignity and solemnity of ecclesiastical councils forbade alert and tactful manipulation of questions that could not be trusted to stand on their merits, after fair and adequate argument. This time-honored concession is now invaded by experts of a modern school. Calling for the question after one has had his say, prompting the Moderator at critical moments, conspiracies to occupy time and cut off debate, campaigning between sessions, tumult and confusion as a last resort are of extremely doubtful propriety in a court that seeks for Divine guidance in all that it does."

THE WHITBY CONFERENCE.

Applications are coming in for the Whitby Conference, but still there is room.

This is the first conference to be held in Canada, after the fashion of the now somewhat famous Silver Bay Conference on Lake George. Its popularity has so rapidly grown that applications are now received a year ahead, and they cannot begin to accommodate all who wish to attend. The presence of Mr. Harry Wade Hicks and Mr. J. Earl Taylor who are leaders in the Silver Bay Conference, is a guarantee that the Whitby Conference will be conducted on the same lines, with the advantage of being much less expensive.

There is no doubt that the next great advance in Mission interest is to be amongst the young people of the church, and these conferences are squaring up to that problem.

Many Young Peoples' Societies are eager to do more, but they do not know how to go about it. Ten days' study of methods ought to be helpful in that direction.

All Presbyterians wishing to attend should make application at once to the undersigned.

R. P. MACKAY,

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EASTERN ONTARIO.

Rev. R. McNabb, B.A., of Powassan, preached recently at Sandridge.

Rev. G. McGregor, B.D., Queen's University, Kingston, preached in St. Paul's church, Bowmanville, Sunday.

The death is announced of Mr. Peter Kennedy, J.P., of Dominionville, in the 81st year of his age, greatly respected. He was for many years an elder in Kenyon Church, and was for a long time a county councillor.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew, at Carleton Place, a call from St. Andrew's church, Guelph, was presented to Rev. W. G. Wilson, of Smith's Falls. Rev. Mr. Wilson accepted the call and will be inducted to his new charge on June 21st. St. Andrew's church, Guelph, was represented by Lt.-Col. McCrae, of Guelph.

By personal canvass, the elders of Chalmers' Church, Kingston, have secured the views of the congregation and members upon the question of the individual communion cup. The members were almost unanimous in favor of a change from the present system of common cup usage, in view of the modern attitude on the transmission of disease. Accordingly the Session of Chalmers' has decided to inaugurate the usage of individual cups at the September communion service. This church is the first Presbyterian church in Kingston to make the change.

The Cornwall Standard says: During the absence from town of the Rev. N. H. McGillivray, union services on Sunday and the mid-week prayer meetings will be held between the congregations of St. John's and Knox churches. As next Sunday is anniversary day in Knox Church, the regular services will be held in St. John's, where the Rev. Dr. Harkness will preach. On each succeeding Sunday the morning service will be held in St. John's Church and the evening service in Knox Church. This is a very suitable arrangement, and one that might be profitably followed in many towns and cities in the summer months, when the pastors take their holidays. Indeed, we know of several cases where Presbyterians have joined in union services with their Methodist or Congregational brethren with mutual profit.

At St. Lambert, P.Q., at the residence of the parents of the bride, by Rev. H. J. McDiarmid, on 29th May, 1906, Mr. F. S. Bassett, of Wetaskiwin, Alberta, to Miss Rose Stevens, daughter of Mr. C. A. Stevens.