

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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MR. JOHN MALCOLM is our authorized Agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Malcolm in all the congregations he may visit.

ASSEMBLY NUMBER.

Arrangements have been made for the publication of an Assembly number, consisting of a condensed, of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. It will contain a full outline report of the proceedings up to date of publication on the 20th inst.

TO ADVERTISERS.

The special Assembly number of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN will afford an excellent opportunity for advertising, of which shrewd business men will be prompt to avail themselves. It is respectfully requested that all advertisements for the special number be forwarded early.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1883.

LUDICROUS things happen occasionally even in Church courts. We should like to hear of an incident more utterly grotesque than this one. The Presbytery of San Francisco struck from the roll in a summary manner the name of a minister that they wished to get rid of. The Synod restored him in order that he might be disciplined and formally dealt with. While the erring brother was being formally tried the election of Commissioners to the Assembly took place. The erring brother's name made the forty ninth on the roll and gave the Presbytery two additional commissioners. As a matter of fact these commissioners represented the deposed minister in the Assembly. At all events if the deposed minister had not been temporarily restored for purposes of discipline these commissioners would not have been sent. Their expenses amounted to \$600 and the Committee on Mileage protested against paying the account, but it was no use. Nobody had done anything wrong. The deposed minister simply increased the representation by one more minister and elder. Queer things do sometimes happen.

THE basis of Union got a rough handling in the Montreal Conference last week and was only saved by a small majority. The debate lasted two days and was good, many of the speeches being not only logical, but full of life. Mr. Bland argued against union on the ground that "a generous rivalry among Churches could not but be productive of good. The Spartans refused to destroy Athens because it was necessary to have an enemy to whet the valour of their young men." Mr. Hardy met this point by saying that "the Presbyterian Church—the daughter of the Covenanters—would give Methodism all the rivalry it wanted." You are right, brother Hardy. We are a slow people and not much in the rivalry line, but if a rival is all that is needed to consummate the union we will try to fill the place. The Episcopalians need not stand out in the cold for that purpose. We are a little behind in the matter of "special efforts," "love feasts," "camp meetings" and such like, but we will do our best. One thing, however, must be understood. If we are to be the Athens for young Methodist Spartans to whet their valour on, the "Guardian" must not publish any more rumours about imaginary "revolts" in our ranks.

FOR several years there has been a little friction between the Home Mission Board and the Presbyteries in the American Church. Constitutionally, the mission work within the bounds of a Presbytery should be managed by the Presbytery; but the the Presby-

tery has no money, or very little. The American Church entrusts the Home Mission Board, or, as we would say, committee, with half a million per year for Home Mission purposes. The Presbytery says: "We cannot allow outsiders entire control of the work in our mission field." The Board answers: "We cannot pay out this half million entrusted to us by the Church without looking after its expenditure." Both are right. Home Mission work under such circumstances can only be carried on by a compromise. The American Church compromised in this way. The Presbyteries organize mission churches and decide upon the moral character and standing of missionaries; the Board judges of the fitness of missionaries for any given field. Perhaps this arrangement may be as good as any other. One thing is clear, neither in the western States nor in Canada can Home Mission work be carried on, except on the basis of a compromise. Presbyteries cannot have all their own way, neither can the Home Mission Committee. Common sense must draw the line between them somewhere. Our Home Mission Committee and the Presbyteries have so far managed with the minimum of friction.

THE Moderator of the American Assembly, in his opening sermon, attributed the falling off in the number of theological students to the worldly tone of the Church. This may be one cause, but some brethren who spoke after the moderator shewed very clearly that it is not the only one. These three additional causes were pointed out with much force. (1) ministers are often pushed aside to make way for younger men while quite able and willing to work, (2) owing to lack of Presbyterian oversight and control ministers are often at the mercy of "a few unreasoning malcontents"; (3) to get a call a minister must push his way through a crowd of candidates. "The sight of beleaguered pulpits repels every man of ordinary sensibility when he thinks that it is through such a crowd he is to work his way to a position for uttering truths more precious to him than life." These causes are potent, and must soon tell in Canada as well as in the United States, if we do not guard against them. The countries are so near, and are becoming so much alike in many respects that the same causes must operate in both Churches. Any young man of sense knows that he will some day be fifty if he lives, and if he knows that the Church will practically cast him aside at that age he is not very likely to enter the ministry. No young man fit to be a minister wishes to be at the mercy of any two or three godless plotters in his congregation, and if Presbyteries allow such a state of things they cannot expect young men of self-respect to enter the ministry. A soul of "ordinary sensibility" revolts at the idea of candidating, and a young man of fine feelings is very apt to say, if I can't preach Christ without fighting for a pulpit I'll serve him some other way, or in some other Church. That is exactly how the matter stands.

THE NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE General Assembly began its meetings in London this evening. Representatives from all parts of the Dominion are expected to be present at the sittings of the Supreme Court of the Church. So far as yet appears, no "burning" questions threaten to emerge. In the history of every Church these do arise, and require careful, judicious, and thorough discussion. We have had such questions in the past; we may expect to have them again. There is no use in deprecating their occurrence. They are inevitable. There need be no timidity in approaching their consideration when, in the course of the Church's history, they arise. Their absence at present, however, is a matter for congratulation and thankfulness. The quiet prosperity enjoyed by the Presbyterian Church in Canada is, if wisely improved, fraught with blessing. While no exciting questions are likely to absorb the interest of the members there will be all the more opportunity for earnest attention to the proper work of the Church. Much of that work is dismissed by those not immediately occupied in its consideration as "routine" which may be safely left to the few who are willing to shoulder any amount of work and responsibility. It is not implied that such work is actually done negligently, far less improperly; but there is no denying that, if Assembly representatives, generally, took a deeper interest in the ordinary business of the Supreme Court, Presbyterians throughout the Dominion would take a much more intelligent

and active part in the work of the Church than is the case at present. The rhetorical maxim, if you would make others feel you must yourself be moved, applies here as elsewhere. The present Assembly affords an excellent opportunity for a careful and patient consideration of details relating to the ordinary work of the Church which seldom occurs, and which may not be expected to occur frequently. Hence the importance of improving the present opportunity.

There are returns on only two remits to be reported to the present Assembly. One of these remits relates to the method of appointing Standing Committees, and the other to a more uniform system of examining theological students than exists at present. During the interval between the last meeting and the meeting of the present Assembly these questions have not evoked very much discussion. The various Presbyteries that considered these remits did so, at least so far as their official reports indicate, only in a languid way. Though the columns of THE PRESBYTERIAN are heartily at the disposal of correspondents for the expression of their views on subjects of this nature when they arise, writers have only too sparingly availed themselves of this privilege. These two questions will probably be disposed of without difficulty at the present Assembly.

Another question of pressing practical interest will come up at this Assembly. The scheme for the distribution of preachers is falling to pieces. It has been maintained with the best intentions and with commendable endeavours to work it impartially, but its usefulness is gone. It is high time to devote special attention to this part of the Church's machinery, when correspondents, clerical and lay, are calling for short term pastorates on the itinerant principles of our Methodist brethren. From the feeling existing among ministers and congregations the consideration of this subject is likely to prove interesting, and we trust satisfactory.

There will also be ample time at the disposal of the Assembly for careful attention to the Home and Foreign Mission work of the Church—departments of Christian activity growing in importance every year. Then there are the vital interests of the Sabbath School, the State of Religion, Evangelistic Work, the Observance of the Lord's Day, Temperance, French Evangelization, the State of our Colleges, the special claims of Manitoba and the North West. These will afford profitable themes for the consideration of every member of Assembly. There are other schemes whose consideration is always liable to be curtailed when business presses that well deserve patient and considerate treatment, such as the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, and the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. While the court can command the time these subordinate but very necessary schemes ought to receive the attention they merit.

The Assembly commencing its meetings this evening may be less exciting than others that have preceded it, yet, by the blessing and presence of the Great Head of the Church, it may become more profitable than any yet held. May it prove cheering and helpful to those who take a steady interest in the work of the Church. Pleasant recollections of brotherly communion, and the inspiring influence of concentrated attention to the interests of Zion will be carried back to some of the remotest manses in the Dominion, and several downcast brethren will, when the Ninth Assembly adjourns, return to their spheres of labour with renewed determination to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

THE METHODIST UNION.

METHODIST union seemed at one time likely to be consummated without much opposition. Mature consideration of the proposal, however, has given rise to grave discussion. To the great credit of the Methodist brethren, it must be conceded that these discussions have been conducted in an admirable spirit. There have been no displays of bitterness, no ebullitions of rancorous feeling. This is certainly as becoming as it is praiseworthy. Pretty strong things have been said by some of the Methodist Episcopalians, and pretty strong things have found expression by Canada Methodists; but when men feel deeply there is nothing unusual in the vigorous expression of their feelings. This is not incompatible either with brotherly love or Christian principle. Freedom of expression is far more conducive to a thorough understanding of each other's position than