

# The Dominion Presbyterian

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## A Home Mission Secretary.

Recent years have seen great advances in Home Missionary operations. Dr. Robertson's policy of expansion has made its way, and a Church, which somewhat grumblingly received his impassioned appeals for more liberal prosecution of Northwest missions, honors him to-day for his foresight. The result of this policy is seen in the Northwest in the establishment of a Presbyterian congregation wherever there is a considerable settlement. The genius of our Church, which is essentially democratic, has secured for itself adequate self-government, both in the Province of Manitoba, and throughout the Territories. Manitoba undertook the care of her own missions some years ago, and the Superintendent was released from that responsibility, that he might give his undivided attention to the newer Northwest and to the Rocky Mountain district. And now, so rapid has been their development, these latter districts are capable of local oversight of their respective mission fields, and the opportunity is given to take another important step forward.

It is proposed to make Mr. Robertson a General Secretary-Superintendent of Home Missions. We hasten to say that this formidable title is not official—we coin it to assist in the description of his prospective duties. We could hone that when a man has served the Church with such vigor and faithfulness as Dr. Robertson has done, it were possible to lessen his burden somewhat. It is said, however, that a change of occupation is the truest rest to an actively disposed man. It is just possible, therefore, that the Superintendent may find greater relief in the new Secretaryship than in honorable retirement.

## The Summer Session.

The Summer Session in Manitoba College opens on Tuesday, the 18th of April. It speaks well for the vigor with which that institution is managed that it is able to announce so excellent a staff for the present year. Such a loss as it has suffered in the death of Principal King might well daze the administration of its affairs so as to throw even previous arrangements into disorder. The fact that a stronger staff than ever is announced for the coming Session will give new confidence, and will help the Assembly to deal with the further problem of future administration.

It has been often stated, during the past year, that the Home Mission Committee spent \$5,000 in carrying men to and from their fields. Would it not be possible to cut this sum in half by a judicious use of the Summer Session in Manitoba College? Why should not the men who go out this spring, especially the men of the class of 1902, spend one continuous year in the mission field, then return as far as Winnipeg and take the Summer Session there, and returning afterwards to Ontario, complete their theological course in one of the eastern colleges? The saving of travelling expenses would be a considerable item, but it would be one of the least to the credit balance. The gain in the fields, in which there was continuous supply for one year by one man, would be beyond computation. And it is just possible that the man who thus takes one year in an experimental school will be a stronger man than if he had pursued the ordinary course.

## The Work of the Home Mission Committee.

The Home Mission Committee had a busy two days last week. It was fitting that its first item of business should be the adoption of a minute, expressing its sense of the loss sustained in the death of Dr. Cochrane, and its warm appreciation of the work of the man, who for twenty-eight successive years filled the responsible position of convener of the committee.

In addition to the usual routine work, some important items of an administrative character claimed the attention of the committee. The policy of establishing Synodical Home Mission Committees throughout Ontario and Quebec, as they are now operative in Manitoba, was discussed. Strangely enough, this did not carry the judgment of the committee. It is, however, a move in the right direction, and we believe will yet be adopted.

The General Committee cannot go or giving attention to mere local details, while the broader questions of administration on behalf of the Church demand attention. Perhaps when Synods are invested with greater power their committees may demand greater confidence.

Dr. Warden's retirement from the

Secretaryship resulted in the initiation of a change of policy in the prosecution of Home Mission work. Instead of appointing a successor, the committee unanimously approved of the retiring Secretary's proposition that a General Secretary be appointed. The title is somewhat of a misnomer. Clerical work, we apprehend, will be one of the least onerous of his duties. He will be the practical head of the Department of Home Missions, the convener of the committee, though nominally its head, becoming merely the chairman at its meetings. All matters of detail in administration and initiation of advance movement, will, we judge, be in the hands of the Secretary.

The wisdom of the change of policy will probably commend itself to a large section of the Church, and it is thought that a few years' experience of its operation will commend it to all.

The appeal for \$11,000 in ten days and the prosecution of plans based on the expectation of receiving this amount, looks risky, but the men who advise it know the pulse of the Church pretty well, and we may expect to hear that their confidence has not been misplaced.

## Should the Pulpit be Literary?

The Rev. Dr. Vandyke, of New York, having been asked to write an article for The Observer on "How Far Should the Pulpit be Literary?" sent the following letter:—

"I do not believe that the pulpit should be literary at all. It should be evangelistic. But it is possible that a man who knows something about literature may be able to do some decent work in an evangelical pulpit.

"One of the first things that a preacher should try to do is to deliver his message in clear and simple English. An acquaintance with the world's best literature, which is always clear and simple, will certainly help him to gain the power of lucid and direct speech.

"Another point in which a knowledge of good literature may be of help to the preacher is in guarding him against flippancy and irreverence. The man who reads nothing but the daily newspapers is very likely to fall into a frivolous and vulgar habit of speech. The sermons of such a man often present in their style a strange and disquieting contrast with the dignity and elevation of the language of texts taken from that Book which is a well of English undefiled.

"Another point where a preacher may receive assistance from literature is in establishing a certain kind of sympathy and harmony with his hearers. The familiar treasure of good books written in English offers material for a standard coinage of illustrations and allusions which will pass current on a gold basis among all people of thought and intelligence. To know the works of Shakespeare and Milton, and Dante and Wordsworth, and Tennyson, and John-