

## QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE.

The Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church at Montreal is now history. It has been a strong, progressive, creditable conference. Among its important doings the following deserve special mention: Reorganization of mission department, executive staff being more than doubled, extension of Sunday school and Epworth League work by appointment of two associate secretaries; doubling executive of temperance and moral reform movement and of education department by the addition of another secretary in each case; recognition officially of young men's clubs; forward movement in city mission work and in young people's work for missions; decision to establish new paper for the West.

On the question of Church Union, there was not much open discussion, nor was there any gush; but rather a self-respecting attitude of willingness to proceed with the negotiations in good faith. Following the example of the late General Assembly at London, the conference invited Anglicans and Baptists to take part in the Union negotiations along with Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. We have already expressed the opinion that it would have been wiser to go on with the original negotiations, leaving the proposal for a still wider union until a subsequent period. However, the other view has prevailed, and the only thing to do now is to bring the five denomination negotiations to a head as quickly as possible; then, if the Anglicans and Baptists practically drop out, go on with the original negotiations between Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists.

## THE WAY IT WORKS.

Regarding the working of Local Option in other places, just that afternoon the Pioneer had talked with Rev. Dr. Somerville, of Owen Sound. The doctor is known throughout Canada as one of the strong, level-headed thinkers and leaders in the Presbyterian Church, and certainly a man who does not form hasty conclusions, but carefully weighs all matters that come before him. He has lately been appointed Clerk of the General Assembly, one of the highest and most responsible positions in the gift of the church. Dr. Somerville was most pronounced in his opinion as to the unqualified success of Local Option in Owen Sound. He said that 90 of the leading business men of that town, taken promiscuously, had been asked for their opinion as to the effect of Local Option upon their business. Eight thought it had a prejudicial effect; 10 had not noticed any difference, and 31 declared that their business had been materially increased.

Dr. Somerville further said that the Chief of Police of Owen Sound had made the remarkable statement that in his opinion there was not one case of drunkenness since the first of May to 100 before that time. He further said that before Local Option came into force from six to one dozen cases per week were reported to him of trouble and abuse in the home through drunkenness, but from the 1st of May to the 31st of August he had had only one such complaint.

## A FATAL MOTIVE POWER.

By Knoxonian.

In his essay on the Earl of Chatham Macaulay tells us that the execution of Admiral Byng for an error in judgment was "altogether unjust and absurd." It was not only unjust and absurd, it was highly dangerous to the Empire because the fear of being shot might paralyze any admiral or commander and cause him to lose his head at the supreme moment in battle when his head was most needed. "We cannot conceive anything more likely to deprive an officer of self-possession at the time when he most needs it than the knowledge that, if the judgment of his superiors should not agree with his, he will be executed with every circumstance of shame." The principle here laid down by Macaulay is sound. Fear as a motive is worse than useless. Fear paralyzes most men. Many a good speech has been hashed in the delivery just because the speaker was afraid he might fail. Hundreds of good sermons are made feckless every Sabbath because the preacher has not a sufficient amount of self-possession. Sir John Macdonald defined a good speaker to be a man who can think on his legs. Few men, either on the platform or on the battle field, can think quickly, clearly and effectively if they are afraid of being punished.

One of the Yale lecturers on preaching seems to think that fear of being turned out of his parish should have a rather salutary effect on a pastor. In effect he says many times, Do this and you may remain in your place as long as you please. Do this second thing and you will have a long pastorate. Endure this trouble and you will not be turned out on the road. Well, perhaps New England and Canadian voluntarism have brought many ministers into such a condition that the fear of being turned out on the road is ever present with them. Possibly they are haunted day and night by the dread of homelessness and semi-starvation. Far be it from us to deny that this is true with regard to a good many ministers. Quite likely this dread paralyzes the efforts of many a good pastor both in his pulpit and in his study. Just try and imagine how a pastor continually dreading Admiral Byng's fate in a pious and ecclesiastical sense will go about his daily work. He sits down at his desk at, say, nine o'clock in the forenoon and as he begins to work on his sermon he says to himself, "Now, if I do not make a good sermon on this text I may be turned out on the road." Sermons ought to be prepared for the purpose of awakening the unsaved and comforting, quickening and strengthening God's people. But this man must prepare his message with the object mainly of keeping his place! In the afternoon he goes out on his pastoral rounds. The dread of the road and the probationers' list still haunt him. His object ought to be the spiritual welfare of the families he visits. To promote this object he should read the Scriptures and pray with the family, and if he finds them careless with regard to their higher interests, give them a word of admonition. But with what heart can he do all this if he knows that

taffy and a fixed up professional smile, compliments and a half hour's gossip will do more to keep him in his place than any religious exercises he can conduct.

We might follow this unfortunate man on his whole round of duty; and see that the fear of losing his place unites him for the proper discharge of any duty. The subject is painful and we do not care to say how it must effect a man when he leads his people in prayer. Are there many ministers so sanctified that they can dispense the Sacrament of the Supper in a proper spirit to people who are just waiting to turn them and their families out on the turnpike? If voluntarism in New England or any other place has made fear the main motive in a pastor's work then voluntarism has a good deal to account for. An Anglican from England or a Kirk man from Scotland might give voluntarism a deadly thrust at that point.

Happy, thrice happy is the pastor who can go about his daily work without any fear of the turnpike or the probationers' list. And we might add, happy, thrice happy, is the congregation that can do some better work for the Lord than turning his servant out on the road.

After all there is not much reason why a Canadian minister of reasonable resources should allow this horrible dread of the road to destroy his usefulness. There is always room and work for fairly good ministers in Canada. Somebody told Gladstone once that the English Liberals had not a single question to go to the country on at the next election. The old man replied, "Ireland is always there." Manitoba and the North West are always here. There is plenty of room and plenty of work in the great lone land and no doubt three meals of some kind every day. A minister and his family never starve. They may come very near the starvation line, but they never cross.

The real pinch comes with ministers who are too old to go on the prairies. There is no remedy in their case except more religion in the church. Whether any more may come or not is a question not easily answered.

In the September fortnightly (Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York,) Mrs. Hugh Fraser has a charming little article on Admiral Togo. Boswell's Love Story, as told by Augustin Filon, is most interesting; the colossal conceit of the man was never more clearly shown than in his long letter to Belle de Zuylen, when he tries his best to induce her to declare her love for him, which he takes quite for granted, while all the time he is telling her very plainly that he does not love her and would not think of marrying her. The story is told in Professor Philippe Godet's new book on "Madame de Charriere et ses amis," Madame de Charriere being the married name of the charming Belle de Zuylen. Other attractive subjects discussed are: "Three American Poets of Today;" "The Triumph of Russian Autocracy;" "France, England, and Mr. Bodley;" and "The Future of Cricket."