

full year's revenue was got the expenditure was only for eleven months. The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund has a deficit of a little over \$3,000. It is earnestly hoped that during the month of April special contributions may be made on behalf of this worthy scheme so as to entirely remove this adverse balance.

#### SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

FOR several years past a persistent attack has been made in Ontario on the Sabbath quiet and rest. Occasionally the attack has been bitter and in the open; sometimes it has been overt and on the plea of necessity. Time and again the Christian forces have been marshalled occasionally winning, sometimes losing. The nett result has been a substantial encroachment on the Day of Rest. Yet the Lord's Day Alliance has never given up hope, never wearied in its sacred work, never shirked the call of duty. The preservation of the Sabbath is one of the most vital duties laid upon the nation, and the people must be informed and instructed as to that duty. It is to be feared that some Christians take too much for granted in this respect and therefore do relax in the deep interest which should always be manifested in the due observance of the Lord's Day. If this were not so the Lord's Day Alliance would have been more loyally supported of late by the people as a whole. It is now high time this should be realized, and steps taken to help the Alliance by money and by expressed sympathy and by prayers. We say money, for no campaign can be maintained in either propaganda or defence work without money any more than a Church or Association can, and people in all parts of the province who are interested in the upholding of the Sabbath ought to show their interest in these two practical ways, viz: contributing to the funds, however small the amounts may be; and in giving expression publicly to their convictions on this great question. The latter duty is as necessary as the former, for the friends of the Sabbath have yet to meet the Legislature and the Government must be given reasonable assurance of the popular demand for adequate legislation before they can be expected to advance.

A third duty lies upon the ministers especially. They ought to keep Sabbath Observance prominently before the people, and this ought to be done often and systematically. An example is furnished by the Merritton Carbide Case. Public opinion there is clearly against Sabbath labor at the works. The Magistrate having decided against such Sabbath labor and the decision having given satisfaction to the community it might have been supposed the Alliance had fulfilled its duty to the people there. But such a view, happily, did not prevail. The legal fight had aroused a peculiar interest in the question of Sabbath Observance and Dr. Caven wisely consented to preach on that subject at St. Catharines. His sermon will do much to strengthen the resolve of the people against the desecration of the Sabbath, and should the example set by the rev. Principal be extensively followed much good is bound to result.

Dr. Caven's subject attracted a large audience, composed of representative and influential people. As was to be expected he delivered a thoughtful and able address. The main points of his discourse will be found summarized in another column and are so admirably worked out that we regret space could not have been afforded for a full report. But the line of argument will be observed and we commend the deliverance as well suited to meet the needs of the

time. As already remarked the example have set ought to be followed throughout the province, for no more important work lies to the hand of the ministry at present.

#### THE LICENSING OF STUDENTS.

THE graduates of the different theological faculties are now looking forward to their official licensure to preach the Gospel. Within a few weeks most of them will have attained the status of ministers approved by the church courts so as to be eligible for a call to the pastorate.

In one way the licensure to preach is now become almost a meaningless form; for they have all been preaching more or less for years and the license adds little to their liberty in that respect. In most cases they have rendered valuable service as missionaries and have had experience of pastoral work. But until the close of their college course all this has been to some extent probationary, and as the result of the probation not a few have been weeded out, who discovered by experience that they had no real call to the ministry at all. No better probationary test can be devised for the future minister than the actual discharge of the duties of the office for a longer or shorter period. The formal licensure is the church's seal of approval on the results of that probation as well as its expression of satisfaction with the intellectual attainments of the candidate. He who after such an experience seeks it, thereby consecrates himself to the work of the ministry for life so far as he can do so by his own act. He cannot afterwards withdraw without distinct loss of prestige in the community and the consciousness of failure in his own heart. Looked at in that way the licensure is still important enough, and it is fitting that it should be formally granted with all due deliberation and solemnity.

The right to license has in most of the Presbyterian Churches of the world been exercised by the Presbyteries rather than by the higher courts, for the reason that they are usually in a much better position to inform themselves fully as to the qualifications of the candidate. But it has been found desirable to limit the exercise of the right in one way or another to guard the interests of the church as a whole from undue haste or leniency on the part of any particular presbytery. In our own Church leave must first be obtained from the Synod if the case is regular, and from the General Assembly if there is anything unusual.

In some quarters there is a disposition to limit the right still further by requiring all candidates to pass an examination before some central board or committee which shall represent the whole Church. Overtures looking in that direction have come from certain presbyteries in the past, and are likely to come up again. We cannot see that very much in the way of good is likely to be accomplished by such a method, and we have no sympathy with schemes for centralizing the functions of the Church when it can be at all avoided. From the nature of the case the scholarship test is the only one that could be applied by any central committee, and a good many other things besides scholarship have to be taken into account in judging of a man's fitness for the ministry. But it is evident that the presbyteries will have to show more care if they are to be allowed to retain in peace their right to license as in the past. A good deal may also be done by the colleges to aid presbyteries in this matter. We understand that the