

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1883.

WE regret exceedingly a delay in publication of this week's PRESBYTERIAN, caused chiefly by postal irregularity. A communication mailed several hours previous to the despatch of Monday morning's mail reached this office only at nine a.m., Wednesday, 20th. Another posted Monday evening was received by the afternoon mail of Wednesday.

TORONTO is becoming an art centre. The recent exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy, attracted a large number of admiring visitors. Several artists are taking up their residence in the Queen City. Mr. J. W. L. Forster whose card appears in our advertising columns, after a period of European travel and study has opened his studio in Toronto. Mr. Forster had several noteworthy pictures at the late exhibition.

IT is very gratifying to see the growing interest manifested in the Foreign Mission work of the Church. The Assembly meeting on Friday evening last is an evidence that the vast importance of this essential work of the Christian Church is in some degree beginning to be realized. The addresses were for the most part admirably fitted to awaken and sustain a spirit of devotion to the grandest undertaking in which the Church can engage. The progress already made by the Presbyterian Church in Canada is very encouraging. It added greatly to the interest of the meeting to have the presence of so many labourers from the Foreign field. The Rev. George Flett's address, rich in pathos, humour, and earnestness will prompt all who heard it to take a deeper interest in the condition and prospects of the Indians in the North West. His earnest appeal for additional missionaries, it is hoped, will meet at no distant date with a satisfactory response. To all acquainted with the history of modern missions the island of Eromanga possesses a peculiar interest. Mr. Robertson gave many facts concerning the lights and shadows of the missionary enterprise on an island where the bones of Christian heroes and martyrs lie interred. The address of Mr. Builder, who is about to leave for India, inspired all who heard it with high hopes for his usefulness in that most promising field for Christian effort. The faith that animates such men as these is a power from on high.

ASSEMBLY NOTES.

THE aroma of Calvinism filled the air in and around London last week. Commissioners were there from all parts of the Dominion except British Columbia. Commissioners from Cape Breton sat down beside their brethren from Manitoba, and all the space between these extreme points was well represented. A very few years ago one solitary disciple of John Calvin represented the whole North-West in the Supreme Court. now there is a large delegation and probably the day is not far distant when the Assembly will meet in Winnipeg. A veteran Commissioner declared the other day that if anyone had told him twenty-five years ago that Commissioners from Halifax would sit in a Church court in London he would have considered him insane. Greater changes may take place in the next twenty-five years.

SPECIAL FEATURES.

This Assembly has some marked features. The attendance is very large. The members are in capital spirits. The funds are in very good shape, the

balance being on the right side in the larger schemes. There are no "burning questions" and few appeals. The Assembly went to work with a rush on Thursday morning, and the huge ecclesiastical machine ran with the minimum of friction. The Commissioners seem unusually hopeful and cheery. There are no huge deficits to provide for. If the Church would only give the Superannuated Ministers' Fund a lift, and endow the colleges so that the mission schemes might receive the entire support of the people still greater things would soon be done. Meantime the liberality of the people is rapidly increasing.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

The Assembly has adopted the American system of holding its most popular meetings in the evening and doing dry and routine business during the day. We have "Home Mission Night," "Foreign Mission Night," "French Evangelization Night," and "College Night" may yet be added. At these meetings a summary of the report is read and popular addresses delivered on the particular scheme under consideration. The attendance at these meetings has been very good, almost equal to that of Kingston. Kingston takes the palm for large and brilliant audiences at such gatherings, as those who were present at the Assembly of 1881 can easily remember.

HOME MISSIONS.

The Home Mission Fund is in a most healthy condition. The Committee reports receipts to the amount of \$43,401.22, with a balance of \$1,406 on the right side. A few years ago a much larger balance than this was on the wrong side. Some timid spirits then recommended a reduction in expenditure, but the Committee appealed to the people and the money was forthcoming. The success of this Fund is mainly owing to the wisdom and faith of the Committee and the indefatigable energy and perseverance of the Convener. At the close of a powerful speech on Home Mission night, he told the assembly that it would soon be time for him to retire and allow a "live" man to take his place. Roars of laughter came from all corners of the House followed by loud applause. The idea of there being any more "live" man in the Church than Dr. Cochrane seemed to convulse everybody. The Dr. predicts that the Home Mission fund will be \$100,000 in a few years.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Prof McLaren has been Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee for a long time and has presented many a good report; but he has never had the good fortune to present such a report as that of Friday evening. Receipts \$40,111.90; balance on the right side, \$17,858.52. The Foreign Mission work has been carried on during the past year with success, and additional missionaries will be sent to the Foreign field almost immediately. The Committee have abiding faith in the liberality of the people. Several able and devoted young men have we understand offered for Foreign service, and new appointments are under consideration. Few Presbyterians in this part of the Dominion need to be told that the success of our Foreign work is largely owing to the zeal, prudence and energy of Dr. William McLaren—Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

No scheme of the Church has made more rapid progress during the last few years than "French Evangelization." When Mr. Warden took charge of it six years ago, the gross income was about \$16,000. The receipts for the last year were \$32,807.14, balance \$3,613. During these years about \$25,000 have been expended in the erection of new buildings or in paying debt of old ones. The interest in our French work continually increases, and no doubt the funds will also increase in proportion. Mr. Warden is a first class financier; and his management of the trust confided to him six years ago has been all that the most sanguine could desire.

TOO SECULAR.

Some good readers may be ready to say that these "notes" are rather too secular. Well, we don't intend them for Sabbath reading. Our intention is to give a bird's-eye view of the financial condition of the above mentioned scheme. Next week we may have something to say on less secular topics. Money is not everything but very little Church work can be done without it. It is a matter of profound gratitude that the Church is waking up to something like her duty in the matter of giving.

A STEP IN ADVANCE.

SOLIDITY and weight are generally considered, and not mistakenly, as characteristic of Presbyterianism. Fickleness and caprice find little favour with those who espouse the doctrinal system taught in Scripture, and maintained by Augustine and John Knox, and who follow the Church polity founded on the New Testament, practised in the early Church, and restored by the Reformers in Geneva and Scotland. Presbyterianism is not liable to be bewitched with specious novelty. It is not, however, stagnant. It moves forward, not by spasms, but with the stately march of a solid phalanx. Proposals for advancement have occasionally to wait their time. They are subjected to the keenest criticism. After thorough examination they are adopted, if found worthy; if they fail in the approval of judgment and conscience they are rejected.

A good illustration of this is found in the action taken on the proposal to devise a plan for the better support of the Gospel ministry. Efforts in this direction have been made long since; but, up to the present, a definite practical scheme has failed of adoption. The prolonged consideration of the question has, however, produced important results. The people are becoming convinced of the necessity for doing something to remedy an evil that has too long been permitted to continue. The growing improvement in the conditions of Canadian life lead many to think that those who devote their efforts to advance the moral and spiritual well being of the people should be relieved from the crushing anxieties that not only impair the comfort of their homes but distract heart and mind in the performance of the sacred duties to which their lives have been consecrated.

Every year there are gratifying evidences that the Presbyterian is a United Church, not only in name but in reality. This is as it ought to be. There are, however, old recollections and associations which are not forgotten. Perhaps it is not desirable that they should be erased from memory, if they could. They are happily diminishing in intensity as the years go by. Their presence, however, was observable in the lengthy but interesting debate on the question of Ministers' Support. The rival schemes of supplement or sustentation had each its zealous advocates. Much can be advanced in favour of both. With all the strenuous efforts to secure the adoption of each method by its respective supporters, there was a manifest willingness to concede something in order to arrive at a harmonious course of action. The general desire was evident that a practical plan—one adapted to the condition of things in the Church and the Dominion—should be evolved from the conflicting opinions entertained on the question. It is on these lines obviously that the Church will advance. The decision arrived at is not final. It is as yet tentative. A year's experience of its working will go far to solve the problem and contribute to the adoption of a method that will achieve the end contemplated. Many members of Assembly in the course of the discussion expressed their conviction that, when the people thoroughly understood the urgency of improving the material condition of poorly paid Ministers who are faithfully and self-denyingly labouring in difficult fields, the means to achieve this will be forthcoming. There is no doubt of it. The action taken by the Presbyterians of Montreal and Quebec, on which almost radical differences of opinion exist, proves that not merely a sectional but a general movement all over the Church will soon result in making the hardships and sufferings of a wretchedly supported ministry a thing of the past.

The Moderator in a peculiarly happy vein in his most appropriate inaugural address helped to prepare the way for the excellent discussion that followed. That discussion as a whole was most satisfactory. It was conducted throughout with great ability, and with much varied talent. The ready, racy, rhetorical power of Mr. Mackay of Montreal, and the calm, logical and subtle reasoning of Principal Cayen, not to speak of many other able debaters, may without invidiousness be alluded to. The spirit manifested throughout was all that could be desired. One thing only is to be regretted in connection with it, two few of the elders took part in the debate. In the other courts of the Church, however, they will have ample opportunity, of which it is hoped they will avail themselves. The General Assembly has come to a decision on the subject, which, though not all that is desired, and therefore not a finality will lead to beneficial results. On the successful carrying out of the plan adopted, the Presbyterian Church in Canada will be congratulated on having taken a step in advance.