

Ministers and Churches.

Our Toronto Letter.

At the meeting of the Presbytery on the 27th inst., there was a lengthened discussion upon Sabbath School work. The recommendations appended to the report for the year were presented, and the discussion arose while these were being considered. Gratification was expressed that there was an increased attendance reported, but while this is true on the whole there has been a decrease in the country. In the matter of sessional visitation, that is in an official capacity, there was a difference of opinion, some fearing that members of session would cause more trouble by interference in the working of the school, than the good received from the visit. To the credit of the Presbytery this opinion received little support. The great importance of teacher training was urged, and illustrations of its beneficial effects were cited. In this connection an interesting discussion arose about the relative size of classes. It was urged that there are not many who have aptitude to teach and that it would be better if classes were materially enlarged, so that there would be fewer teachers. It will be remembered that this position was taken very strongly by THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN some weeks ago, in its editorial pages. We believe that here we have the solution of the teacher training problem.

Cooke's Church congregation presented a well-signed call, addressed to the Rev. Alexander Esler, now minister at West Chester, Penn. Six hundred and sixty-one members signed this call, and two hundred and sixty-seven adherents. The stipend offered is two thousand dollars per annum. The call was strongly supported by members of almost every organization in the congregation, and this church is remarkably well organized. During the vacancy the various parts have kept together with wonderful tenacity, and Mr. Esler, should he come, will step into a pulpit where he looks out upon a people eager and ready to take a good share in the multiplied works carried on by the people of Cooke's Church. His answer has not yet been received, and is awaited with no little anxiety.

The Convener of the Committee on Young People's Societies has been thoroughly discouraged by the neglect of the officers of the various societies to send in reports. After repeated efforts to secure reports there was not a sufficient number sent in to allow him to embody them into any fair report, and he declined to forward it as the report of the Presbytery. He was right. There is too much talk, and too little action on the part of our Young People. Even the work of compiling a statistical report is too great a labor. It is really responsible to some one, and this is secretly resented. The belief is too common that the Young People are responsible to nobody but to themselves. Why should a vigorous young society be compelled to report to a fossilized court that is as far behind the times as the said Society is ahead of it? So they reason, and reasoning thus, drop the schedule for their report into the fire.

Mr. P. E. Nichol tendered the resignation of his charge of St. Mark's congregation. He has done good work there. The period of his ministry has been one of trial for the congregation, for they have been compelled to shoulder the burden of standing alone, with the additional burden of a very heavy debt. This they could not have done had it not been for the courage and unselfishness of their minister. Few know the straits through which he and they have passed, but they have happily been safely passed, and now Mr. Nichol feels free to devote himself to a kind of work to which he has long been drawn, the work of an evangelist. The resignation will not be considered till the June meeting of Presbytery.

The Synod convened here on Monday evening, in St. Andrew's Church, King St. It was not intended that there should be billeting this year, but the session of St. Andrew's of its own accord took the matter up, and provision has been made by that and other congregations for the comfort of many of the members of the Synod. There is not a large or important docket, and the business should be finished by Wednesday evening at the latest. As usual the afternoon sederunts will be devoted to conference, and the evening to the reports of the Standing Committees. The morning sederunts will be spent in the consideration of business. The one subject of "The

Care of the Young," will be the only subject discussed, and it will be taken up in its different bearings.

The question of the Sabbath and of its preservation is to be a live one this year in Toronto. The open desecration that has already begun, the hold plans for further desecration of which we hear, the pliant attitude of the authorities, and the impassive public combine to make the question a most serious one. Sabbath desecration will gain such headway, and will make so strong an appeal to the greed of those who do not scruple to use it for gain that it will be all but impossible to check the evil, unless there be prompt and united action.

Western Ontario.

Rev. A. Thomson was the preacher in St. Andrew's, Kippen, last Sunday.

Rev. Dr. Munro, Ridgeway, preached in St. James' church, Thamesville, on Sunday evening.

Rev. Mr. Martin, of Zion church, Brantford, and Rev. Mr. Nixon, of Stanley St., Ayr, exchanged pulpits last Sunday.

St. Giles' Church, Toronto, has presented the pastor, Rev. Robert Atkinson, with an address, accompanied by a purse. Mr. Atkinson is to take a holiday in Nova Scotia.

At the meeting of the Huron Presbytery at Brucefield, last week, the resignation of Rev. Mr. Acheson, of Kippen, was approved of, and Rev. Mr. Sawers was appointed moderator of the Kippen session during the vacancy.

The Rev. John McNeil was inducted into the pastorate of the Presbyterian congregations of Bayfield and Bethany. This charge has been vacant since the resignation of Rev. Mr. Graham, nearly two years ago. There is no vacancy in Huron Presbytery now.

Rev. J. A. F. McBain, D. D., Port Dover, has been visiting in London, and the pastors of St. James' and Knox churches took advantage of his presence to have him preach for them on Sunday, at St. James' in the morning and Knox Church in the evening. This the doctor did with his usual readiness to help his brethren and to the great delight of pastors and people.

Rev. R. E. Knowles has declined the invitation to Central Church, St. Louis, Mo. The Galt Reformer says: Rev. R. E. Knowles' decision to remain in Galt will give great satisfaction to all classes of citizens. The eloquent pastor of Knox church is so closely identified with Galt's social, as well as religious life, that his removal would have occasioned wide spread regret.

The pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, London, made a statement recently concerning the progress of the century fund in that congregation. The sum aimed at had been \$8,000, and there had been paid in \$8,004.32. Of this 75 per cent had been devoted to the common fund of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and 25 per cent to the debt of the First Presbyterian Church, with the exception of three subscriptions, totalling \$207, which the contributors wished divided evenly between the common and debt fund. Mr. Clark expressed the greatest possible satisfaction at the spirit the congregation had shown in undertaking this work; the fact that so large a number of the people had some share in it; that it had been entirely voluntary, and that such generosity had been shown in awarding 10 per cent, more to the common fund for the general work of the church than the maximum of 60 per cent asked for by the General Assembly's committee. Mr. Clark related a curious incident which occurred in connection with the Century Fund work. Soon after he had made an announcement concerning the fund through a local paper, he received by mail a copy of the paper, in which was securely fastened \$77 in bank notes. The name of the contributor is still unknown.

Montreal.

The congregation of Knox Church, Montreal, are making arrangements to celebrate in a becoming way on the first Sunday in June, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the induction of the Rev. Mr. Fleck to the pastorate. His congregation appreciate Mr. Fleck very highly. He is one of the many able and faithful ministers for whom Canada is indebted to the North of Ireland, and his brethren in the ministry, as well as many friends throughout the country, will rejoice with the people of Knox in the coming semi-jubilee celebration of his settlement.

Ottawa.

The induction of Rev. Mr. Burns into the pastorate of Portmore will take place on the 28th inst.

The induction of Rev. A. G. Cameron, into the charge of Bearbrook and L'Annon has been fixed for the 3rd prox.

In future regular meetings of Ottawa Presbytery will be held once every two months, on the second Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Dr. Herridge stated in the course of his sermon Sunday morning, that the congregation of St. Andrew's church had given more to the Presbyterian church's century fund than had any other church in Canada.

Rev. James Bennett, L'Original, wrote thanking Ottawa Presbytery for its resolution of sympathy for him in his recent severe illness. His many friends will be pleased to learn that he is making satisfactory progress towards convalescence.

At the recent meeting of Ottawa Presbytery, Dr. Armstrong presented a report on Home Missions in which he spoke in the highest terms of the excellent work of the Rev. M. McEwen, Rev. James Taylor Aylwin, Rev. D. J. Scott, East Templeton, Rev. H. T. Kalen, Eardly, and Rev. D. J. Craig, Casselman.

The Citizen gives publicity to the following incident: "Two little girls visited a certain Anglican church not a hundred miles from Ottawa, which is noted for its extreme ritualism. After the service had proceeded for some time, one little girl leaned over and asked the other in a stage whisper: "When does he burn the bugs?" "He doesn't burn bugs," was the indignant reply. "Oh," said the other evidently disappointed, "my father said they burned insects in this church."

The Rev. Dr. Armstrong, of St. Paul's church, last Sunday evening, began a series of short talks on living themes. His subject was "Will the Bible retain its authority?" He contended that as the Bible had in the past survived many crises it would do so still. Modern criticism which some dreaded so much would in the end produce good results. It would provoke to increase Bible study, and would give the people a firmer and more intelligent grasp of its contents. Rev. Dr. Armstrong's subject next Sunday evening will be "What was the Bible intended to accomplish?"

The annual general meeting of the Aberdeen Association was held in Government House on Saturday afternoon, Lady Taylor, of Toronto, vice-president of the association, presiding. The principal business done, apart from the election of officers, was the adoption of the original constitution in a slightly amended form. The election of officers resulted as follows: Hon. president, Lady Minto; vice-president, Lady Taylor; chairman of the board, Professor F. Robertson; vice-chairman, Mr. W. Llewellyn; corresponding secretary, Mr. F. W. Whitley; treasurer, Mr. Fred Reid. Upon her election to the office of president, Lady Minto took the chair and presided, while the remaining business of the meeting was transacted. The various reports presented were of an exceedingly satisfactory nature.

Very enjoyable and successful was the concert given in Knox church Sunday school hall last Thursday evening, under the auspices of the choral class, which contributed several numbers in a creditable manner. The program was a varied one, but the feature of the evening was the introduction of illustrated hymns. While these were sung by the choral class, appropriate views were thrown on a canvas by Mr. S. J. Jarvis. Last Kindly Light was one of the hymns introduced in this novel manner. Miss S. Dent sang the Holy City, which was illustrated by means of the lantern and screen. The choral class was assisted by the choir quartet. The closing number was Haydn's Toy Symphony, and it scored a success. The singing part were Miss Connor, Miss B. Jarvis and Mr. Ferguson, violins; Miss Gertrude Cherry, trumpet; Miss H. Davis, rattle; Miss Lois Jarvis, cuckoo; Miss E. Nesbitt, Miss M. Cumbernall and Miss M. Allan, quails; H. Swinburne, H. Wood, drums; Misses V. Bunnett and M. Corning, triangles; Mr. C. Wood, rightingale. Mr. J. Edgar Birch played the accompaniments. Mr. Jarvis, who presided at the concert, on behalf of the members of the Choral society, thanked Mr. Birch for the interest he had shown in their musical work during the year. Mr. Jarvis stated that next season an orchestra may be established in connection with the Sunday school, along with the choral class.