

The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Feb. 4, 1897.

SCHEMES OF THE CHURCH.

THE following statement of the monies received for the Schemes of the Church, by Rev. Dr. Warden, up to the beginning of the present month has just been issued:

	1896.	1897.
Home Missions.....	\$3,069.97	\$31,283.64
Augmentation.....	7,457.43	6,986.16
Foreign Missions.....	26,870.41	25,661.27
Widows and Orphans Fund....	1,966.97	2,128.55
Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fd..	2,690.37	2,313.28
Assembly Fund.....	1,273.92	1,418.71
Knox College.....	2,960.78	2,960.97
Manitoba College.....	853.79	1,150.18
French Evangelization.....	9,305.70	10,316.10
Pointe aux Trembles.....	5,211.22	3,851.84

The publication of these figures provide food for earnest thought. The deficits ought to be faced by a strenuous effort and wiped off speedily.

THE ALUMNI MEETINGS.

This week and next the Alumni of Queen's and Knox Colleges will hold their conferences for the study of subjects intimately associated with the ministry. As in past years these meetings will doubtless be largely attended and much benefit will be derived from them. They supply to some extent a stimulus to clergymen, in active pastoral work, to continue the study of special subjects begun in the colleges, but too often laid aside on account of the pressure of congregational demands.

At Queen's the conference will open next week; at Knox it opened on Monday and is being continued as we go to press. So far the papers read and the discussions have been admirable. A high level is reached in the papers, and a freedom and candor in the discussion, which must prove most useful. One fact which has been made patent is the large number of really strong men the Church has at her command to-day, many of whom are not known generally as such for want of more frequent opportunity, than they have of bringing their nature thought and scholarship to public attention. The number of first rate papers read at the meetings is certainly most gratifying and those privileged to attend are fortunate.

The names on the programme for the Queen's conference next week, and of the subjects with which they will deal, are an evidence that what is experienced this week at Toronto will be true next week at Kingston, indeed quite a galaxy of able Alumni and others are announced.

On some of the points brought out most prominently at the conferences we shall remark later, meantime all who can avail themselves of the opportunity of attending the meetings should do so and hear for themselves. Although the papers are of a technical character they are as a rule written in a popular style, and well suited to the lay student of social and theological problems. As in the past, many of the writers have kept in view

the fact that in their audiences were likely to be a good sprinkling of intelligent church members, consequently the matter dealt with will be found within the reach of the public.

TAKE COURAGE.

The wail of hard times is not unusual, nor untrue. Neither is the plaint of the pessimist. Were men and women disposed to look at the gloomy side of things, there would be little joy in life, for sorrow and sin do exist and exist for all men. But because difficulties and discouragements are facts, is no reason why they should dominate the mind and freeze out all hopeful enthusiasm. We have no sympathy with the querulous cry heard but too often these days, that the affairs of the Church are in a bad way, because of deficits and a leeway which it is difficult to make up. Principal McVicar brings forward a gospel revival as a cure for the disease, and it would be difficult to suggest a better. But has there not been a revival going on these months past, of a character to be thankful for, fruit-bearing and blessed? When has there been a year in which more interest has been shown in the funds and work of the Church. A deep-seated interest indeed. The critics have come out with their suggestions some of which have been eminently good, others tolerable, and of course many of them simply impracticable. But let us have criticism, it is a sign of life, of interest, and usually results in some definite advantage. There has been a widely expressed desire for information as to the condition of certain funds and schemes, on the part of laymen and ministers. Another good sign. When has there been a year of more systematic effort to raise funds by the committees? There has been something like a holy rivalry in the great work of the Church, conveners and secretaries and committees, busy as bees. Why, it is cheerful to look back on the earnest efforts of 1896 and on the substantial results of these efforts. Deficits! Of course there are deficits and there will always be deficits, and there ought to be deficits. We do not pray for the day when the Presbyterian Church shall have more money than she can use. We are perfectly satisfied that all her legitimate engagements will be met honorably, and that money will be forthcoming for every wisely-undertaken work. It is well for the Church to have to work hard to make ends meet. It may not be a comfortable experience, but it proves a blessed experience.

What is wanted is not gloom, but courage, not fear but hope, not disappointment, but a spirit of thankfulness, not disapproval of the evergreen appeal for more funds, but a realization that it is a blessed privilege to appeal and to respond to the appeal. To ask for and to receive of the people's money for the work of the Lord is a sacred thing, a high privilege, and so it is to be allowed to place the offering on the Lord's altar. Away then with the whine. Faith in God, in the Gospel, in His people; confidence in the ministry, in the committees of His Church would remove mountains. Depend upon it God made the mountains, and you cannot climb over them but by the way He has pointed out. At this season of annual meetings and annual conferences it is truly meet that the workers in the vineyard should thank God and take courage.

EVANGELICAL WORK IN VENEZUELA.

Dr. Balcom Shaw, of New York, states in the *Evangelist* that Don Manuel Ferrando, a converted monk, who has been for the past two years in the United States and who during that time has shown