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PER CAPITA.

THE General Assembly has unanimously adopted a recommendation of its committee appointed to consider the question of systematic benevolence, to the effect that a table be carefully prepared which will show precisely the amount that every member of the Church is required to give to each scheme so as to meet the present expenditures. It is not of course the intention to establish a law—like that of the Medes and Persians—from which there will be no deviation. There will always be instances of persons, and these not necessarily the poor, who will not come up to the standard which may be named. Taking into account the prolonged commercial depression from which the Dominion is suffering, there will be many who will find it utterly impossible to increase their subscriptions. On the other hand, there are not a few congregations that are distinguished for liberality and whose members as a rule will contribute far more than their proportion. If possible, such are encouraged to increase their subscriptions to the funds of our various Boards. And we are certain, from past experience, that an appeal like this will not be made in vain.

But there is evidently much to be gained by presenting the benevolence of the Church in a systematic form. At the present moment, it is left very much to chance what each member will give. When, however, it is put down in black and white what every one is expected to contribute, no one can any longer shelter himself under the excuse that he did not know how much he should set apart for the work of the Lord. The fact of the average contribution will stare him in the face, and he sees in a moment whether he is above or below the standard. On the other hand, the *per capita* plan will furnish the church session with the leverage that is required to move the congregation into a higher plane of giving. A very brief statement is all that is necessary to show the people in one moment whether they are lagging behind, or pushing ahead, in the matter of benevolence. Frequently it will be found that a simple reference will work like a charm in stimulating a congregation to increased liberality. The remedy for the evil of insufficient giving is a simple one, and we cannot but anticipate great practical results arising from it.

The state of the Home Mission funds is doubtless the cause of this new and important departure. It is a serious matter when the Church has to adopt such extended measures as that of reducing the salaries of missionaries, or of encouraging ministers to make up deficiencies from their too slender salaries. While the exigencies of the times may

explain the falling off in the revenue of Home Mission, it is evident at a glance that the whole amount required to sustain this work in a manner worthy of the Church would prove a very small affair if distributed over the entire membership. It is our earnest hope that the new plan will be found to work effectively, and we are confident that before another Assembly the wisdom of adopting this course will be fully justified.

THE HYMN BOOK.

WHILE we ventured but lately to submit a proposal by which the hymn book might have been issued during the current year, we cannot say we are disappointed with the course which the Assembly has pursued. From correspondence in these columns, and the reported meetings of Presbyteries and Synods, it is evident that a considerable diversity of opinion prevails throughout the Church regarding this subject. While it is gratifying to find that the view which we put forth was supported by many able speakers on the floor of the Assembly, perhaps, on the whole, there will not be much lost by one year's delay. Certain congregations we know will be put to much inconvenience because of this postponement. These have decided to await the appearance of the new book, and yet their stock—as in the case of the first edition of the United Presbyterian Hymnal—is much run down, and cannot be made good by fresh supplies from Scotland. If these were to order the new edition, and if other congregations which are using, say the Scottish Hymnal or the English Presbyterian Hymn Book, were to go on purchasing these in sufficient number to keep up the demand, it would probably be a long time before they would make any change. Delay in publishing the new book will only increase the difficulty, and lead to much loss in its sale at the outset.

Still we have no doubt something will be gained by taking another year for the preparation of the work. There was too little time for the Committee upon the book to consider and calmly weigh all the suggestions transmitted to them from Presbyteries and Synods. Some of these might have been overlooked, and dissatisfaction to a greater or less extent must have been the result. If possible, the taste of every person interested should find expression in the book, and the delay will give the opportunity of duly weighing every opinion and every felt want. The mere postponement for a year will be a small affair, if by this greater unanimity will be secured.

In our opinion there is every reason to expect that a very excellent hymn book will ultimately be obtained. Much could be said in favour of the draft copy which was submitted to Presbyteries. With the subtractions, additions, emendations and alterations which have been suggested, the result cannot be other than satisfactory. The amendment, which was carried in the Assembly, authorizing the Committee to submit a new draft copy to Presbyteries, gives every person interested an opportunity of expressing his mind

upon the merits of the proposed new book. The result will be all the more satisfactory if the work of the Committee be unanimously approved of by the next General Assembly. The Presbyterian Church in Canada will then possess a hymn book which will be second to none of the publications of other Churches both in America and Great Britain.

A GROUNDLESS AGITATION.

IF all tales are true, oppression has not ceased and persecution is still rampant. Even in this Dominion, under what we do not hesitate to say is the most liberal and the most popular form of government in the world, it would appear that we have an oppressed Church. The "The Church of Scotland" in Canada is sorely oppressed by the civil government; its rights have been trampled upon and its patrimony given to the stranger and the sojourner. But what is this pretended Church of Scotland? It is composed of about half-a-dozen ministers, with perhaps about half the usual proportion of elders, members and adherents, who—some of them at the last moment—refused to accompany their brethren of the "Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland" into the union which formed the present strong and consolidated body, the Presbyterian Church in Canada. These few mal-contented had the effrontery to apply to the civil courts in order to obtain possession of the Church property, funds, etc., which had formerly belonged to the body in question, but which have been vested in the united Church by Act of Parliament. Failing in this, they resort to the most unreasonable and clamorous agitation with the view of enlisting public sympathy in their behalf. They do not seem to have any scruples. Mis-statements of facts, misrepresentations of views, defective logic, and silly attempts to make black white and the worse appear the better cause, are the characteristics of their platform utterances and of their published manifestoes. By the way, we had almost forgotten what it was that called our attention to this subject at present. It was this. The latest manifesto in behalf of the lost cause is a pamphlet by one of its redoubtable champions, Mr. Douglas Brymner. We have not seen it, but one of our city dailies has made us acquainted with it in a favourable notice. The fact that the notice is favourable only proves that the writer of it is utterly unacquainted with the history of Presbyterianism in Canada during the last ten years, not to go any farther back. Without wasting many words on the matter we will just call attention to the fact that the statements, "The Church of Scotland declares itself to be a Free Church in a Free State," "The Free Church declares itself to be a Free Church above the State," "The United Presbyterian Church declares itself to be a Free Church ignoring the State," are not authoritative declarations put forward by these Churches—they are merely Mr. Brymner's distorted views of the position which they respectively occupy. Why does he not tell us what the Presbyterian Church in Canada "declares itself to be?" for that is the only body that he has to deal with in the