

Our Contributors.

SOME SUGGESTIONS ANENT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

BY KNOXIAN.

Eighteen General Assemblies have come and gone since the union of 1875. It goes unsaid, that they were not all alike. They would not have been alike had they been composed of the same men, for the best of men vary in humour. They were not composed of the same men, they did not meet under the same conditions, each had a new docket of business, and, naturally, each Assembly while resembling the others in its main features, had some characteristics of its own.

Several Assemblies transacted business with a fair degree of despatch, several wasted time in the earlier days of the meeting, and put things through with a rush towards the end, and at least one distinguished itself by laying business over until next year. The tone and temper of the Supreme Court varies almost as much as its business capacity. The temper of some Assemblies has been genial as the sunlight, all the way through; some showed a little temper in spots, and one rasped more or less from beginning to end.

What are the factors that, for the most part, make the tone and temper of an Assembly meeting? Largely they are physical. Heat, impure air, overwork, loss of sleep, want of exercise, unstrung nerves, and impaired digestion, will spoil the best meeting ever held in the Church below.

Bad acoustics, and bad elocution do much to make deliberative bodies irritable. It is not in human nature, even, when partially sanctified, to sit patiently for long, and look at a man mumble who has not interest enough in his own speech, nor respect enough for his audience, to speak so that he can be heard. Why should four hundred bearded ecclesiasties, sit quietly while some man stands with his back to them, and mumbles to the Moderator. Their first duty is to put an end to the pantomime.

The kind of business under discussion has, of course, something to do with the temper of a meeting, but, as a rule, the business produces an effect exactly the opposite of what many people suppose. The popular theory is, that great questions cause great strain, and that under the strain the seamy side of human nature is very likely to become visible. As a matter of fact, our Assembly is distinctly at its best on an important question, and painfully at its poorest on trifling issues. Confusion is far more likely to arise about striking a standing committee, than about founding a college or appointing a theological professor. Adding a hundred dollars to the salary of an underpaid official would perhaps bring out more of the old Adam than a heresy trial would bring. Discussing the way in which something is to be done, often takes more time than the doing of it. A man who spent a week in an excited discussion as to the mode in which he would travel from Toronto to Hamilton, and then went up by train in an hour and ten minutes, could scarcely expect to be called a modern Solomon.

The fact is, the Court is too big to deal quickly with little items of business. Quite often such items come up unexpectedly, and have to be dealt with on the spot. Nobody in particular has thought about them, and half a dozen members give extempore opinions, which are just as likely to be wrong as right. To its honour be it said, the Canadian Assembly has rarely, if ever, failed to deal with an important issue in a calm, dignified, and fair manner, and, for the most part, its decisions on important questions have satisfied the reason and conscience of the Church. The waste of time and the fun come in when the big Court wrestles with small items of business or questions of order.

Undoubtedly the time and temper of an Assembly are effected, to a considerable degree by the spirit and business ability

of its presiding officer. If a strong man, he unconsciously influences the Court. The quality of the impression he makes will, of course, depend on the quality of the man.

The tone of the men who bring business before the Court has also a good deal to do with the tone of the Court. If a number of conveners and movers and seconders bring in their business with a snarl, the chances are greatly in favour of a snarl all round before long.

Time is up, however, and we must leave our mild suggestions about improving Assembly business until next week.

STILL WORSE.

Mr. Editor: In an editorial in The Presbyterian of May 31st, mention is made of two facts, in connection with which I would say a word. One is that of ladies knitting and crocheting during debates in the Scotch General Assemblies. The other is that of Donald Fraser, and some other students, reading the Edinburgh Witness, while the Clerk was reading the minutes.

At one of the meetings of the last Presbyterian Council, I saw a delegate reading a newspaper while a psalm was being sung. Whether he was so engaged during the prayer which immediately followed, I cannot say. But while the next psalm was being sung, there he was again, sitting and devouring his newspaper. He might just as well have been so employed during prayer, for praise is as much an act of worship as prayer is. Others took notice of him as well as I.

Woodbridge, Ont. T. FENWICK.

CANADA'S NATIONAL PARK, BANFF ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Everyone who travels over the Canadian Pacific Railway should stop off at Banff, one day at least if he cannot afford more time, longer if circumstances will permit. The Canadian National Park is well worth a visit, and no one who goes there should come away disappointed.

Eight or ten years ago an Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada, setting apart a rectangular area, 26 miles by 10, and containing 166,400 acres, as a park reserve. It was the intention originally to reserve only one square mile, to include the hot sulphur springs, which make the place famous. The reserve was made with the idea, doubtless, that it would ultimately become a health resort. Mr. Stewart, the present superintendent of the park, was sent out to make survey, but perceiving that it was too limited, recommended its increase to his chief, Hon. Thos. White, Minister of the Interior. Mr. White saw at once the future possibilities of the place, and ordered an extension of the reserve to its present dimensions. The lands included were withdrawn from sale, any sales which had been made were cancelled, and parties who had pre-empted the springs were induced to relinquish their claim for a consideration.

The park contains within its boundaries, a variety of mountain scenery unsurpassed in the world. As it lies well within the chain of the Rockies, it includes a number of important peaks, which tower so high as to be clad with everlasting snow. The principal mountains within the park are Cascade, Mount Rundle with its twin peaks, 5,000 feet above the valley, the Devil's Head with its singular rock top, the great Sulphur Mount from which issue the hot springs, Saddle Mount, the Saw Back, Vermillion and Bourgeau ranges, Stony, Squaw and Tunnel Mount. The latter, though only about 1,000 feet above the valley, occupies a commanding position, and from its summit, which can be reached by either a bridle or foot path, a magnificent view is obtained in all directions. A carriage road around it affords the finest drive in the park. In a valley hemmed in by Mount Rundle on one side and by the Bow River on the other, is another beautiful drive, and to Lake Minnewanka, some six miles from the station, is still another, no less picturesque.

Of course, grand as is the mountain scenery, without water it would be incomplete. The Vermillion Lakes, the home of the wild fowl; Lake Minnewanka or

Devil's Lake, 12 miles long, by 2 wide; fifteen miles of the Bow River, nine of which are navigable by small steamer or canoe; six miles of the Spray, a tributary of the Bow; the Ghost and Cascade rivers, and Forty Mile Creek, are within the park boundaries, besides other small streams and ponds. All of these abound with trout, and it is the desire of the superintendent that he should be given control of a number of small lakes without the park, from which those streams flow, that he may be able to preserve the fishing from being destroyed by poachers.

Among the points of interest in the park, besides those already mentioned, are the Corkscrew, a clever piece of engineering on the road around Tunnel Mountain, the coal mines at Anthracite, and the Hoo-Doos, great statues of hard, cream-coloured conglomerate, nearly 100 feet high, which stand like spectre watchmen on the bank of the Bow. The Spray Falls, where the Bow tumbles about 70 feet over rocks curiously tilted on edge, are extremely picturesque. But the most curious and interesting feature, is the hot springs. They are eight in number and form three groups. The two largest issue from the centre of Sulphur Mountain, 80 feet above the Bow. The principal one has a discharge of one and a half million gallons daily. Over one of the springs is a dome-shaped roof, nature's handiwork, and, approached by an underground passage, a bath in its waters is both novel and invigorating. Bathing houses, with obliging attendants, have been provided, so that one may take a dip either in the cavern, which is lighted by a small hole in the roof, through which the stream escapes, or in an open pond close by. The temperature of the water ranges from 95 degs. to 120 degs. In the cave cold water drips from above, so that a hot plunge bath and a cold shower bath may be enjoyed at the same time.

A small pool of the hot sulphurous waters, where it issues from the mountain side at one place, swarms with small fish, whose existence in such a place, as well as the species to which they belong, is a puzzle to the naturalists. When removed to fresh water or when that in which they are found cools, they die, though experiments made in overflow ponds further down the hillside, demonstrate that they can be acclimatized to colder water, and that in it they attain a larger size. Their existence in such surroundings, is one of those freaks which Dame Nature sometimes plays to the discomfort of the laws which she has already established.

Parliament has voted about \$150,000 in all for park purposes. Of this sum about \$10,000 was spent on surveys, and most of the remainder on roads. Much remains to be done, though Mr. Stewart, the superintendent, deserves great credit for what he has already accomplished. The plans for the future comprise a number of dams to convert marshes into lakes, thereby promoting the healthfulness of the park, the establishment of Aquaria and a museum, besides further improvements in roadmaking and the removal of dead timber and underbrush. As a health resort it is sure to attract attention more and more every year, both for the curative effects of the waters and the pure mountain air. Dr. Brett, one of the pioneer settlers and a member of the North-West Legislature has established a private hospital and sanitarium with a hotel in connection, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's hotel, in a commanding site between Mount Rundle and Sulphur Mount, open in summer only, affords excellent accommodation.

Though no one is allowed to reside permanently in the park without permission from the Government, quite a little village has sprung up. Building sites are leased to those who desire to make it their home. A detachment of the mounted police preserve law and order, an easy task, for no intoxicating liquor is allowed to be sold, except to guests at the hotels, and this law is very strictly enforced.

With the Baroness Macdonald, Banff has become a favourite resort, and she has a cottage there where she spends a por-

tion of her time every year. Others will, in course of time, follow her example. Canadians have every reason to be proud of their National Park, and, as it becomes better known, the advantages of having such a health and pleasure resort for the people, will be more fully appreciated.

Let me add, as being no more than what is deserved, that those who travel over the Canadian Pacific Railway to reach Banff will find it in all respects a well equipped and carefully managed road.

J. JONES BELL.

THE PASTOR OF COOKES CHURCH.

The current issue of The Golden Rule contains the following, along with an excellent portrait:

The subject of this sketch, Rev. William Patterson, is pastor of Cooke's Presbyterian Church, Toronto. He is an earnest worker in the Christian Endeavor cause, has spoken twice at our International Conventions—at Minneapolis and New York—and is trustee of the united society of Christian Endeavor, representing the Canadian Presbyterians. He is a native of Ireland, and was born in Maghera, County Derry, in 1858. Having come to Canada he entered Knox College, and after devoting six years to the study of arts and theology, received his diploma in 1886. During his college course he engaged zealously in mission work, and a month after he was graduated he was licensed by the Toronto Presbytery, and a week later received a unanimous call from Cooke's Church, to become their pastor. Mr. Patterson began his work there with a membership of about one hundred. At the close of his first year's ministry the old church was remodelled, and a new lecture room, with other improvements, added at a cost of nineteen thousand dollars. This building which was capable of seating over a thousand, soon became too small for the immense crowds that flocked to hear. Hundreds were turned away, and it became necessary to erect a new church, with a seating capacity of over two thousand five hundred. It was opened in June, 1892, by Dr. John Hall. It was there that that distinguished body, the Pan-Presbyterian Council, met last September. Mr. Patterson has now for seven years been pastor of Cooke's Church, and during that time the increase in attendance and spiritual results have been almost unprecedented. There have been added to the membership roll 1,427 names, and last year the revenue from all sources amounted to over sixteen thousand dollars. His preaching is intensely earnest and spiritual, and scarcely a sermon is preached without known results. He preaches to win souls. God gives him the desire of his heart. So many anxious inquirers press around him on Sabbath evenings for spiritual direction that seldom is he free before ten o'clock. "What is the secret of his success?" has often been asked by critical observers. He does not announce popular subjects. He does not entertain by anecdotes and the like. People are not attracted by star singers of the opera. Mr. Patterson is distinguished by great originality both in the composition and delivery of his sermons. These are interspersed with illustrations from every-day life, studded with Bible gems, delivered extempore, and uttered with all the warmth and energy of a man who feels the power of the truth. His figures are always beautiful, chaste, and becoming. He has all the wit characteristic of his countrymen. He has a marvelous memory, capacious, retentive, and accurate. Whole-souled earnestness is another characteristic of the man. He is a man of eminent piety and deep humility. He lives in touch with God, and draws deeply out of the hidden reservoirs of His grace. And then, he preaches Christ crucified, and believes that His gospel is the power of God unto salvation. All our readers will join with this great congregation of Christian people in praying for their honored pastor, that God may still more abundantly use him for His glory.

Thousands admire Christ who never become Christians.—Drummond.