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OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 1906.

The Lord's Day Bill, as introduced by the Minister of Justice, is quite comprehensive, and appears to fully carry out the views of the Lord's Day Alliance as often expressed in these columns. Mr. Fitzpatrick deserves credit for his promptitude in bringing the bill before parliament.

No more informing account of the aims and methods of the Russian Socialists, and the share they have had in the recent upheavals has been written than that contained in *The Living Age* for February 24, in an article reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*. It is plain that the writer has inside sources of information.

We learn that an overture will come up through the Presbytery of Paris to the Assembly which has in view the opening of negotiations and conferences with all interested bodies in order to bring about a consolidation of the women's missionary societies, home and foreign, into one great organization for the women of the church. We shall publish a copy of the overture in an early issue. The question is an exceedingly important and far-reaching one, and was discussed with great earnestness in the Presbytery, the general feeling being strongly in favor of the object aimed at, if the details of amalgamation can be settled.

The Minister of the Interior will introduce a bill this session for the creation of forest reserves on Dominion lands. In the reserves proposed to be set aside there are about 17,000 square miles, and the principal forest areas are: Moose Mountain, Saskatchewan, 100 square miles; Beaver Hills, Saskatchewan, 26 square miles; Rocky Mountain Park, 4,500 square miles; Turtle Mountain, Manitoba, 110 square miles; Spruce Mountain, Manitoba, 255 square miles; Riding Mountain, Manitoba, 1,685 square miles; Duck Mountain, Manitoba, 1,307 square miles; Long Lake, British Columbia, 118 square miles. It is intended that any order-in-council creating a forest reserve shall have all the permanency of an act of parliament, and cannot be amended or repealed save by order of the house. The proposed measure is a very important one; and action is not being taken any too soon. In carrying through such a measure Mr. Oliver will doubtless have the cordial assistance of both sides of the house.

CLOSE OF CHURCH YEAR.

It is very gratifying to note that the church year closes with all the funds—excepting the Aged and Infirm Ministers'—out of debt. Even the fund which is the exception is in a better position by \$2,000 than it was last year. The deficit now is \$4,000, while a twelvemonths ago it was \$6,000.

This is the best year the church has had yet. The receipts over and above last year are about \$42,000. The deficit in the foreign mission fund, amounting at the beginning of the year to \$20,000, stands to the credit of the fund, in addition to the raising of the \$90,000 needed for the carrying on of the foreign mission work, besides the \$140,000 required for home missions.

The estimates were considerably above those of last year, being \$393,500. The contributions in 1904-05 exceeded those of the previous year by \$40,000.

THE GOSPELS UNSCATHED.

Dr. Sanday's "Life of Christ" (new edition) contains the following—"The turbulence has certainly been heated seven times over, and yet this group of facts, the common matter of the Synoptic Gospels, remains substantially unscathed. Of course, it, too, has been questioned, and it is being questioned still in some quarters, but not by a sane criticism or a criticism really founded upon knowledge. The criticism of which I have been speaking—that of von Soden and Johannes Weiss and Bousset—is sane, and it is founded upon knowledge. It seems to be safe to say that what these men do not question will never be questioned with success. Doubts may be raised, but they will never permanently hold their ground. We have, then, I cannot think, in the criticism of these men an irreducible minimum. And that minimum, I must needs think, is an Archimedean point, grant us so much, and we shall recover what ought to be recovered in time." Now, remarks the Belfast Witness, Dr. Sanday is an expert in scholarly criticism and his conclusion is the more valuable that well-informed criticism leaves the Synoptic Gospels "unscathed."

The United Free Church is well served in weekly and monthly magazines, but in the daily Press full justice is not done to its news. At present, in the Scottish daily Press, one finds a large space given to Episcopalian, and even Roman Catholic, news. The Church of Scotland, too, receives a very fair share of attention in the ecclesiastical column of such papers as "The Scotsman." But the United Free Church is kept, or keeps itself, in the background. This is a matter that ought to be remedied.

Principal Gordon, of Queen's University, is strongly in favor of church union. In a sermon preached in a Methodist church in Kingston he said that the Methodist movement in its time brought into prominence truths that had been in abeyance. But these very principles, to voice which these religious movements had their origin, have become the common property of all the Protestant churches. The Presbyterian and Congregational churches were at one in doctrine, and in polity nearly so, and as to Methodism there was a similarity between it and the other churches in doctrine, administration and church government. The old views on the sovereignty of God and freedom of man, characteristic of the Presbyterians and early Congregationalists and Methodists, are no longer devious, because all three recognize that both views have a basis in Scripture.

Application will be made at the present session of Parliament by Queen's University for an amendment to its royal charter and subsequent acts of Parliament to provide for the election of five members of the Board of Trustees by the University council, in addition to the five members now elected by the council.

A very significant question is often discussed, namely, why fewer men than women attend church or take part in religious work of various kinds. The answers are various. Into these it is not necessary at this moment to enter. It is not alone a Canadian problem, but is being wrestled with vigorously in the United States. It may be profitable and fully worth the space to give some particulars of a recent remarkable conference at Pittsburg, Pa., where some eight hundred members of the United Presbyterian Church—mostly laymen—were assembled. It was a sort of Presbyterian business men's convention. A missionary convention held by the United Presbyterians in December, 1904, had resulted in a plan for forming a "Men's Missionary League" in every congregation—the idea being to duplicate among the men the local missionary auxiliaries so common among the women. But not more than forty such societies have been formed in the intervening year, and it became evident that a broader base of operations was needed. So this business men's convention was called, and the unexpectedly large attendance, all of a purely voluntary and non-official character, seemed to indicate that the sentiment in the church was well prepared for the idea of a larger lay participation in active church work. A spirited programme lasting through two and a half days, treated at large the practical problems of lay usefulness. Not only was there a remarkable series of "hard-headed" speeches from leading United Presbyterian elders, but from the Presbyterian Church Dr. S. C. Dickey, of Indianapolis, and Dr. Maitland Alexander, of Pittsburg, and from the Baptist Church Dr. O. P. Gifford, of Buffalo, were heard in stirring addresses. When the time came for the adoption of the constitution, all in attendance felt that a tremendous latent force was to be given shape by the plans formulated. It was resolved to call the organization the "United Presbyterian Men's Movement," and an executive council of fifteen was appointed to direct it. Of this council, Major A. P. Burchfield, of Pittsburg, was chosen chairman, and Mr. J. Campbell White, who as agent of the ways and means committee of the General Assembly, was the chief spirit in calling together the business men's conference, was employed as the general secretary of the movement. A constitution was also adopted for the local organizations, which are to be officially called leagues, but may be locally known as clubs, associations or brotherhoods, if preferred. The article on membership reads: "Every male member of the church shall be asked to take some active personal part in the work of the church, and all so doing shall be reported as members of the Men's League." It is provided that a local board of supervision shall assign each member to some one of the departments of service which the league shall undertake to work. Each member of the board shall be the representative of one such department; there shall be as many supervisors as actively operated departments. Where the full scheme is realized, there will be departments at work to promote the following interests: The distribution of religious intelligence, regular weekly offerings for both congregational and missionary support, according to scriptural standards, friendliness towards strangers, habits of personal and family prayer and Bible study, individual Christian work with outsiders and new converts, neighborhood work among foreigners and others, general and regular attendance at church service, civic reform, help for sick and poor, and work among boys. Each department is to have its own officers. The executive committee took enthusiastic measures to spread the organization throughout the church.

The *Living Age* for March 3rd reprints from Blackwood's a gossip and entertaining article "In and about a German Town" by the same writer whose recent description of a rest-cure pension in Germany was greatly enjoyed.