

Christian waste of men and means.

4. That it involved our ministers in a loss of self-respect by forcing them into unseemly relations with Christian brethren.

5. That these straitened conditions, so physically, intellectually and spiritually starved our ministers, that they were not properly able to feed themselves, nor those to whom they ministered.

6. That there was need of settling our work on a more dignified basis, in order to secure men, and better equipped men, to man our field.

7. That the union of our divided forces was necessary for increasing the facilities of education, the support of hospitals, asylums for orphans, waifs, etc., and for general amelioration.

8. That the union of our forces was necessary to deal successfully with the enormous problem of a world-wide immigration.

9. That the prevention of waste at home was necessary to a more effective reaching out into the foreign field, in loyalty to the Master's will.

10. Above all it was necessary to the increase of spiritual power, which ever flows from a closer fraternal bond between the followers of Christ.

Where the "irreparable loss?" Where the "hardship to the country pastor," Mr. Dobson speaks of? The only loss I can see, which he alludes to as making one "wince," is that of a traditional, and often unreasoning prejudice. The very intent of the union movement, so far as it effects the country pastor is to give him a less restricted field for the exercise of his gifts, if he does not exclude himself from it by a narrow crabbed spirit. And I myself believe, that there are not, and will not be, more resolute champions of union than the great body of our country ministers, who cannot fail to see that their interests have been constantly in the mind of the Union Committee.

We have no objection to the fullest examination of the subject. We only ask that men come to it sufficiently informed as not to waste time by clouding the issues with ignorance, nor yet with the smoke of ill-concealed prejudice. Men are great in the degree that they can yield themselves to the behests of right reason, and good, in the degree that they can make sacrifice for the amelioration of their fellow men. Very respectfully,

FREDERIC B. DU VAL.
Winnipeg, November 9th, 1910.

LOCAL OPTION CONTESTS.

Voting will take place in the following municipalities on January 2nd, 1911. Places marked (*) are incorporated towns and villages. The figures after each place indicate the number of licenses effected.

Albemarle, 1; Aldborough, 1; *Alexandria Tn., 3; *Amherstburg Tn., 6; *Barrie Tn., 12; Bastard, 2; *Beaver-ton, 2; Bertie, 7; Bexley, 2; *Brace-bridge Tn., 5; *Brampton Tn., 4; *Bridgeburg, 4; *Bothwell Tn., 3; *Burk's Falls, 3; Camden E., 7; Chap-man, 1; *Chowley Tn., 3; Crowland, 1; Cumberland, 4; *Drayton, 3; Elizabethtown, 1; *Erin, 2; Flamboro E., 2; Flamboro W., 2; Flos, 4; Georgina, 2; *Gananoque Tn., 5; Gloucester, 6; *Grand Valley, 3; *Guelph, City, 18; Guelph, 1; Gwillimbury N., 2; Hinchin-brook, 2; Humberstone, 3; *Huntsville, 4; Kenyon, 4; Littley, 0; Lancaster, 2; *Lancaster, 2; Lochiel, 2; Lough-borough, 2; Lavant, 1; Mara, 2; *Max-ville, 2; *Merrickville, 2; Napanee Tn., 8; *Newburgh, 1; *Newcastle, 1; Pal-merston, 2; *Paisley, 3; *Perth Tn., 9; Plympton, 1; *Port Colborne, 5; *Port Hope, 2; Rochester, 5; Elgin, 4; Roxborough, 4; Russell, 6; Scarborough, 2; Sherborne, 2; *Smith's Falls, Tn., 8; Stanford, 3; *Sutton, 3; Tay, 2; *Thessalon Tn., 3; *Thorold, 4; Thorold, 4; Toronto, 5; Toronto Gore, 1; Tyendinaga, 5; *Vankleek Hill, 5; *Welland Tn., 8; *Watford, 3; Wardsville, 1; *West Lorne, 3; Wil-loughby, 3; Wolford, 1.

CHURCH UNION: II. THE POLITY.

(By Rev. John McNair, D.D.)

In our last letter we pointed out the futility of imposing upon the united church a statement of faith that was not drawn up by, nor is the real expression of the faith of her people. Were any of the three churches, seeking to unite, to ask their people to accept the statement of doctrine presented in the basis they would refuse to do so. There is grave danger that the indifference to doctrine so common in the church may lead the people to accept, merely from good-will, a statement which they have never seen or read. Until they have never seen or read a statement of faith which will be the expression of our own faith we ought not to attempt to unite.

When we come to deal with the proposed polity of the basis we find that a serious attempt has been made to draw up a government of their church from consideration of their present politics. Whether they have succeeded remains to be seen. It ought to be kept in mind that the polity of a church ought to be the true expression of the faith of a mighty church. It was through a mighty struggle our fathers won their liberties as ethical Christians against sacerdotalism, and against the tyranny of the state; we ought to be very careful to maintain these liberties. What we have to say is by way of criticism from the standpoint of the Presbyterian Church.

THE CONGREGATION.

At the present time the congregation enjoys a goodly measure of autonomy. The government of the congregation by the Session and the higher courts is neither narrow nor arbitrary. But under the new basis the congregation would enter another atmosphere. The charge would enjoy liberty compatible with the oversight of Session, the efficient co-operation of the representatives of the various departments of the work of the charge by means of a meeting to be held at least quarterly; the hearty co-operation of the several churches of the united church, which means their contribution as fixed by the General Conference to the work of the church, and the exercise by the higher governing bodies or courts of their powers and functions, hereinafter set forth. It is the duty of all congregations to inquire into the meaning of these terms. At the present time we have two boards in the congregation, the Session and the Board of Management. Most of the congregations have also missionary associations as well. It is now proposed to create a third board composed of the Session and Board of Management and representatives from the other organizations whose duties it shall be, to secure contributions for missionary purposes, to select representatives to the Presbytery, to submit reports on the life and work of the charge, to transmit yearly reports on the pastoral relation to the Settlement Committee of the Synod, and to attend to matters not assigned to either of the other boards. It is to be seen at once that the functions of the Session are here assumed by the central board, and it may be questioned whether such a radical change would be for the good of the church. Whatever view we may have of the inefficiency of the Session the change proposed would put the government of the church in the hands of those far lower in knowledge and with less experience in the governing. Both the Session and the congregation ought to scan closely the introduction of such a radical change.

THE SESSION.

The constitution of the Session remains as it was but it is shorn of its peculiar position in the church. No church can show such a body of sane and intelligent men as the Presbyterian church, and this is largely due to the high ideal of office held and to the long centuries of training in the church. To rob it of its duties, or to break into its perpetuity would be no-

thing short of suicide. Heretofore the elder was responsible for the oversight and government of the congregation and the church at large, but he is now to share these responsibilities with irresponsibles. Such a change would lower the ideals of the church all along the line. The government of the church would be placed in the hands of men without the same spiritual ideals, without equal knowledge of government, and without the same sanity of mind. Before the Presbyterian church makes the change she ought to read her own history.

THE PRESBYTERY.

Presbytery meetings are not always inspiring. They are often dull and uninteresting. But if we wish to see a court that is altogether lifeless and dead, that has no interest because she has been robbed of all authority, and power, that is deserted because she has become an autocracy and a court of statistics, we ought to fall in with the change proposed by the new basis. Its ministers are there, but the elders are gone. In their places sit representatives chosen from the Central Board. If the power of money be strong it may be a representative from the Board of Management; if the spiritual life of the congregation be weak it may be an adventurous or adventurous from some other department. "They are to be chosen in accordance with regulations to be made hereafter by the General Conference."

Many are the duties of routine laid upon the Presbytery, but it loses its ancient power over doctrine, education, discipline, and legislation in the church. If many are growing grave over the centralizing tendency in the church at the present time what would they do under the new regime?

THE SYNOD.

If the face of the Presbytery is changed through the introduction of other than elders into the court what about the foreigners that gather to the Synod? It is the duty of the Presbytery to select non-ministerial representatives to the Synod, of whom at least a majority shall be from the laymen of the Presbytery. One can appreciate the efforts of the committee to galvanize the Synod into new life, but it surely is done in a wrong way. Powers formerly belonging to the Presbytery are handed over to the Synod. The power of examination for ordination is taken from the Presbytery, and thus the only power the church has to restrain the introduction of strange doctrines is taken from the people's court. The Synod with all its multitude of duties, and its small representation of laymen is not so good a court for such examination as the Presbytery. The settlement of pastors, which now belongs to the Presbytery, is to be taken up by the Synod, and especially by the Stationing Committee of the Synod. It may be acknowledged that there are defects in the working of the Presbyterian system of settling their ministers, but anyone who dreams that they can make so radical a change as is here proposed and get Presbyterians to submit to it is living in delusion. The one thing that Presbyterian congregations will not give up is their autonomy in the choice of their pastors. This was won after a long and bitter struggle and woe to the man or committee that seeks to take it away. Let no one say that there are no difficulties in other systems. Not far from where I write a Methodist minister was settled this summer, but when he went the first Sabbath to preach found the door of the church locked and not a soul present to hear him, and all in protest against the action of the Conference in sending him. The Presbyterian people have all the machinery within the Presbytery for early and amicable settlements of their vacancies, and should never think of handing over the matter to a Committee of Synod. The Presbytery and its Moderator and committee of the charge is a better stationing committee than a synodical committee could ever be. They are on the ground, familiar with the

Continued on page 14