

DIOCESE OF MONTREAL.

MEETING OF SYNOD.

(Continued from page 4.)

Which is worse? Atrophy or starvation? In the meantime, I am doing what I can to get over difficult places with the help of the students of the Theological College. Where a missionary has left for another diocese, or age or sickness has for the time being rendered the pastor incapable, I have sent a student to fill the vacant place. They are young and inexperienced, and I use them in this way even more than is good for them, or for us, but they are hopeful and energetic, have few needs, they make themselves useful, and are welcome. And I am very grateful for their assistance, for without it I should be compelled, for the time being, to close many a mission. And then it is right to remember, if only in recognition of the liberality of Church members of the generation now passing away, that we have made great progress within the last twenty-five years. We have now no assistance from the S. P. G., except in the way of pensions to a few of our oldest missionaries, whose time of active usefulness is nearly finished. But it is not enough to have attained to self-support; we must see that the missionary stipend is less meagre and insufficient, and we must provide more liberally for our working men. By liberal things alone can we hope to stand. You will observe that the executive committee have deemed it necessary to recommend reduction of the grants from the mission fund. You are not to understand by this that the clergyman is to receive a smaller stipend, but that the parish benefiting by his ministrations is to increase its subscriptions. I shall watch the consequences of this action with great care and anxiety, and I will, at least, whatever be the needs of the unoccupied places in the mission field, refuse to admit more missionaries to the Diocese unless justice is done to those already serving. I think myself that it should be a recognized rule that some definite increase on the part of the parish, and some equally definite decrease in the grant, should enter into every agreement between the executive committee and the people of a parish receiving assistance from the mission fund. There are, of course, exceptional circumstances, but those could easily receive exceptional treatment.

There was a motion by the Rev. H. W. Nye, touching the Montreal Diocesan College, left over from last Synod. The usefulness of that College in our missionary work you may easily infer from what I have already said. I hope that motion will receive from this Synod the attention it deserves,

and have an early place in your deliberations. I am convinced that the capability of the college for good cannot be overestimated, and I desire nothing better than that you should discuss its merits or faults (if there be any) to the fullest extent. I am quite sure that the more thoroughly the College is understood, the more satisfied you will be to identify it with the Diocese. I frankly say for myself I do not see how I could carry on the work for the Diocese without the aid of the College. But for the College I should be hopeless. The students and graduates, even with the drawbacks of youth and inexperience, are far more serviceable than untrained readers; besides, youth is a fault which time most surely mends, and these students, properly instructed in the doctrine and ritual of the Church, will be in the future the mainstay and strength of the Diocese.

In the exercise of my prerogative, I have thought it right to divide the overgrown Deanery of Bedford. I believe this redistribution of organized work would be agreeable to all our clergy. The systematic periodic rural-decanal meetings have been found to answer well, where the deanery is not too large. I ask for the new rural deans that recognition of their office and duties which their relation to the Bishop and his work demands. In a well organized deanery, where the clergy are united by common interests, episcopal visitation is facilitated, while the binding together of neighboring missions and rectories in a closer bond must tend to the promotion of that strength of the diocese at large which consists in union. I deprecate the fostering of the spirit of congregationalism in the church of England. It is foreign to her history, her doctrines and her ritual; ours is the common worship, the common prayer. The doors of our churches—of any and all of our church buildings—are open to all our members everywhere; the Holy table is spread for all, for parishioner and stranger alike. When this wide charity shall be understood and (wherever the Church of England sets up her standard) practised, her members will increase and prosper. Just now there is too much of a different spirit. A congregation is too jealous of its rights and is afraid to share its privileges with sister congregations. I find, for example, that as soon as a congregation becomes self-supporting it hastens to cut itself off from outlying mission work, and the mission itself, unless it can have the whole services of a clergyman, is apt to withhold a portion of its maintenance. If a better state of things is brought about, it will mainly be through the intervention of rural deans conversant with local details and acquainted with all the members of the church, lay and clerical in the deanery.

One practice seems to be growing in the diocese which I may notice here: Clergymen have entered on negotiation for an exchange of missions without reference to the Bishop. This is wrong. It gives the Bishop no opportunity of controlling the admission to the diocese without placing him in a false position. If a clergyman wishes to leave a charge he should seek his Bishop, and resign into his hands the care of souls which he first

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received from him, leaving the bishop, in conjunction with the parish, to fill the vacancy.

Since we last met, we have lost the services of a valuable member of this body, the late Mr. Thomas Simpson. He was well known to most now present, and I am sure we shall miss his warm, earnest interest in all that appertained to church work, both in this annual meeting of synod and in the Executive committee, of which he was so many years an active and able member.

In response to the expressed wishes of some of our leading clergy and laity, I have arranged to hold a Church Congress in this city on the 20th and two following days of October next. Prominent Church members, clerical and lay, from all parts of the Dominion, as well as from the United States and the mother church, have been invited to assist, and there is every hope that it will be an occasion of profit and blessing. The success of the Congress will, of course, mainly depend upon the welcome given to our visitors and preparation made by ourselves to afford them such opportunities for speaking and hearing as shall justify the expenditure money, time and trouble. I hope of therefore, this Synod will enter into the subject and identify itself not as a body, but as individual members of the church, with the undertaking, and enter into it with warmth and earnestness.

There are many things belonging to Church organization required for progress and stability not included in the business matters, which it is the chief concern of this synod to conduct; yet, of course, it is to you we look in your private capacity to promote all our diocesan work, for who should be more interested in the spiritual welfare and progress of the church than those who have the oversight of her temporal concerns? Churchmanship is a living, active state of being. It is not enough to receive her ordinances and acquiesce in her teaching; there must be the recognition of personal duties and responsibilities. I would, therefore impress on my clerical brethren the necessity for providing interesting, responsible work for the newly confirmed, that they may realize their membership and feel it to be a true good, both to themselves and those around them. There is ample scope for

their energy and many fields of spiritual labor where the harvest is wasting for want of laborers to gather it in. Our Sunday-schools, for example, are by no means in a satisfactory condition. Everywhere I hear the complaint of want of efficient teachers. A Bible class for the newly confirmed should be a part of every church organization—a sort of normal class for the instruction and training of good teachers in distinctive church doctrine, as well as in the principles and precepts of Holy Scripture. I must not detain you with details which belong more properly to clerical meetings and church congresses, but as I shall have no opportunity just now to speak on the matter, and as I foresee that small and scattered congregations will be most anxious, while they are, from their circumstances, the least able to help themselves, I will suggest that much might be done by organized combination and that classes, including the membership of a deanery, might have periodic times of meeting for the interchange of opinions, the exercise of model lessons, and many like advantages which will suggest themselves at once to those accustomed to consider and arrange such things.

In accordance with a resolution of this Synod at its last meeting, efforts are now being made to establish a "Girls' Friendly Society," with its central board in this city. I issued a circular last March addressed to the clergy of the diocese, commending it to their notice. You have in this society a great opportunity for moral and religious usefulness, of which I hope you will heartily avail yourselves.

In the course of the year I have visited 107 parishes, missions and mission stations, and administered the right of confirmation in 81 churches. Of the 875 confirmed, 365 were males and 520 females. I have admitted 7 persons to the office of deacon and promoted 5 to the priesthood. I have besides laid the foundation stones of two new churches, one at Thorne West and one at St. Lamberts, and I have consecrated the new church at West Brome and the new burying ground at Sorel.

I will not detain you further from the work before you. I earnestly pray that God's blessing may rest upon your deliberations, and that His Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth and wisdom.