

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.

OFFICE: NO. 8 JEROME ST. TORONTO.

ADVERTISING TERMS—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, 25 cents per line; 6 months, 40 cents per line; 1 year, \$1.00. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.



Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1881.

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, MISSOURI.

WE call special attention to the motion which was proposed by the Rev. Principal Caven and unanimously adopted by the Assembly in reference to Mr. Hall, of Missouri. As very many are aware, Mr. Hall has suffered for a very considerable time from a formidable disease, the progress of which all the efforts of the most skilled physicians and surgeons in New York have failed to arrest, and which has now secured such a firm hold upon his system as to be likely to issue in only one way. Far be it from us to say one word in favour of the permission kindly granted by the Assembly which would even seem to bring the movement indicated down to the level of mere common charity. No one in the Presbyterian Church in Canada has been more noticeable than Mr. Hall for a spirit of sturdy masculine independence and a resolute determination under God to bear his own burden whatever it might be. But when he is smitten down in comparatively mid-life by a severe and fatal disease, the treatment of which has necessarily involved large and not easily afforded outlay—his case is not to be either spoken or thought of as one calling for anything like merely charitable contributions, but for the keenest brotherly sympathy, and the heartiest, most spontaneous and effective, practical help. That this will be given, and with all promptitude, we fully believe. The case took possession so thoroughly of the sympathies of the members of Assembly that more than \$300 were contributed almost immediately after Principal Caven had made his short and touching statement of the simple facts.

Contributions will be received by either Principal Caven or Principal Grant, while if any prefer to send directly to the Treasurer of the fund, the Rev. Robert Hamilton, Motherwell P.O., Ontario, it will come all to the same thing, and all the contributions will be duly acknowledged either through our columns or in any other way that may be thought more satisfactory.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COLLEGES.

Of all the decisions reached by the General Assembly at its late meeting, perhaps none will meet with more general acceptance, or tend more to the cordial working out of union than that regarding the colleges. There has been considerable friction and a good deal of sectional feeling during the past six years in regard to the method of supporting the several theological institutions of the Church, which has tended somewhat to keep up the old party lines. Happily, this seems now to have been overcome, and the solution of the difficulty will, we have no doubt, be gladly welcomed by the whole Church. At one of the earlier sittings of the Assembly, a large committee was appointed to consider the question of the best method of supporting the colleges. The committee held several meetings and discussed the matter at great length. After a full expression of opinion the committee unanimously resolved to recommend the Assembly to establish a common fund for the support of Knox, Queen's, and Montreal Colleges, and to appoint the Rev. R. H. Warden, of Montreal, as secretary and agent to take charge of the work. Mr. Warden consented, in addition to his other duties, to undertake the work for one year, and to give his services gratuitously, provided the Assembly approved of the scheme heartily. Without a dissenting voice, the Assembly adopted the recommendation of the committee. The representatives of the several colleges expressed their cordial approval of the scheme, and the gratitude of the Assembly at the happy solution of the

matter found expression in an earnest prayer of thanksgiving, led by the Rev. Dr. Jenkins.

We sincerely congratulate the Church on the decision reached, believing that it will practically remove what many have regarded the great barrier in the successful and harmonious working out of the union consummated in 1875. We bespeak for the scheme the hearty sympathy of all the ministers and office-bearers and members of the Church. Mr. Warden, believing that many will avail themselves of the opportunity, solicits thank-offerings towards the common fund from the friends of the several colleges. We have pleasure in commending his suggestion to our readers, and trust that, in addition to largely increased contributions from all the congregations of the Church, many friends will personally forward a thank offering in gratitude to God for this happy solution of the college difficulty. We hope to hear of numerous and liberal responses to this appeal within the next few weeks.

STATISTICS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

THE report of the Committee on Statistics, which was presented to the Assembly at its late meeting in Kingston, gives proof of an amount of accurate and painstaking labour, which is worthy of all commendation. It embraces an amount and a variety of details which could only be very imperfectly indicated in a very lengthened article, but with which the members of the Church, and especially the office-bearers, ought to make themselves familiar by patient and continuous study. We are quite aware that statistics are not by any means everything, nay, that—as has been sometimes said—they may even be made to lie very effectively. But while all this is quite true, it is at the same time beyond every reasonable doubt that statistics, compiled as these have been, with an honest desire to secure and set forth the truth about the outward condition and work of each of the congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, serve a very important purpose, both for present quickening and direction as well as for future reference in the way of marking the onward progress or the comparative decay in the experiences of coming years. To stand still, even in appearance, is in many cases to go back, and the "way marks" left in these returns will in some measure indicate to the future inquirer the rate and the character of the progress, or the course and rapidity of the downward trend.

It is very evident that with all possible care on the part of the Committee perfect accuracy in every particular is scarcely to be expected. There is one of these inaccuracies which meets us on the very threshold. The number of pastoral charges, not including those in Manitoba, was last year, it is said, 721, while this year it is returned as 730, an increase of nine. With Manitoba last year's numbers are given as 746, this as 767, an increase, it is said, of twenty-seven. We cannot make it more than twenty-one. We attach no importance to this, however, but take it merely as an oversight. The number of ministers, including those in Manitoba, is 685, or twenty-six more than last year. To be perfectly accurate, however, it is to be understood that these include all professors and retired ministers, whose names are on the Presbytery rolls, and in the case of Manitoba, ordained ministers and catechists as well.

Reports have been received from 916 congregations and mission stations. It seems to us marvellous that there should be any who have so little interest in having a full view given of the extent and resources of the Church that they prefer to see their own congregations blank to having the honest truth told about either what they are or what they have been doing.

Three Presbyteries only out of eleven in the Synod of the Maritime Provinces made full returns. One out of six, viz., Lunenburg and Renfrew, in the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, two, viz., Peterborough and Whitby, out of nine in the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, and two, viz., Huron and Maidland, out of eight Presbyteries in the Synod of London and Hamilton. When the cases of individual Presbyteries are looked at we find too many illustrations of the "beggarly array of empty boxes." In Montreal, five pastoral charges do not report, in Toronto, six; and in London, sixteen. We merely quote from the remarks of the Committee, but when we glance over

the printed returns on our own behalf we can find any number of the same kind almost everywhere.

The entire number of congregations or stations constituting pastoral charges is 1,506, an increase of 100 on the returns of last year. This shows an average of about three to each minister in the Maritime Provinces, in the Synod of Montreal about two to each, as also in the Synod of Toronto and Kingston. In the Synod of Hamilton and London the average does not reach two.

According to these returns there are 65,103 families in the Presbyterian Church, representing about an aggregate of 330,000, or taking in the number of single persons not connected with families, 337,000. It is not said whether the Committee has allowed in these numbers for the congregations not reporting. If it has not then the absolute number will be considerably above what is given.

The number of sittings reported is 346,044. The total membership on the rolls of congregations reporting was 112,970. Last year it was 107,871. This ought to give an increase of 5,099, while the actual increase according to reports was only 3,609. To reconcile such discrepancies would be very difficult, and we do not wonder that the Committee has recoiled from the attempt. The returns from individual congregations compared for a series of years show very marvellous vitality on the part of the members, or very noticeable slovenliness on the part of the roll-keepers. We have had the curiosity to dip into some of these, and, to say the least of it, they are curious.

The total number of elders returned is 4,340. As a whole, there is, taking the entire Church, not an elder to each fifteen families, or to each twenty-six communicants. The number of other office-bearers is given at 6,540; the number attending prayer meetings at 36,708, an increase of 1,393; and under instruction in Sabbath schools and Bible classes, 85,856. The number engaged in the work of Sabbath school instruction is given at 10,306 and the number of volumes in Sabbath school and congregational libraries, 162,164.

We must stop here for the present, as we don't wish to give our readers a surfeit of what some very improperly call "dry, uninteresting statistics." If any of those who read these lines are conscious that the congregations with which they are connected did not in any way help to swell these numbers, or if they have a vague remembrance that the returns sent were as inaccurate, slipshod, and unsatisfactory as they well could be, let them repent of their foolish, business-like remissness, and determine that if they are spared, next year's returns will tell a very different and a much more satisfactory story.

There is one thing we cannot help adding, though it seems ungracious even to appear to find fault with the doings of such a painstaking Committee—and that is, that if the totals were given of each pastoral charge, whether in the matter of numbers, funds, or stipends, the means of comparison would be much easier and more satisfactory. As it is, the reader has a good deal of adding to do before he gets at the "bottom facts."

THE LATE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WE this week give as fully as our space will allow the rest of the report of the Assembly's proceedings at Kingston. That meeting of our highest ecclesiastical Court was in every respect a pleasant and profitable one. The good people of Kingston did everything possible to make their guests feel comfortable and at home, and their efforts were crowned with abundant success for nothing was heard but unqualified commendation of the manner in which the members of Assembly were entertained. From what was said it might have appeared that every one had had the "best" place sought out for him, and the house, hostess and table were alike in each case beyond all praise. The weather also was, as a whole, propitious—fair and fine—while in general the temperature was sufficiently warm without ever being to be called oppressive. The Limestone City looked its best. At least if it ever looks better it must be a very pleasant place of residence indeed. Queen's College supplied a most convenient place for the business meetings of the Assembly, affording as it did plenty of private rooms for committee matters, and in the Convocation Hall giving the Assembly a place admirably suited in every way for its public proceedings, being at once roomy, airy, well lighted, conveniently seated, and with excellent acoustic properties.