

Assembly is yearly growing greater. And whereas, the billeting of so large a number is becoming increasingly embarrassing. And whereas, the travelling expenses of so many commissioners have necessarily become a heavy charge: And whereas, by a reduction of the number of commissioners the expense would be lessened and a fuller attendance from the more remote Presbyteries doubtless secured. And whereas, a smaller representation would be amply sufficient for the work of the Assembly: Therefore, the venerable the General Assembly is hereby humbly overtured by the Presbytery of Whitby, that in the Act constituting the General Assembly section 1, "§" be substituted for "¶" and that section 2 be amended to read as follows, - "When the number of names on the roll is not divisible by six, the sixth shall be reckoned from the next higher multiple of six." The overture was prepared and introduced by the Rev. J. A. McKeen, B.A., Orono, and was unanimously adopted by the Presbytery and ordered to be transmitted to the General Assembly.

#### AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS.

IT was expected that the conference between the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Committee and the special Committee appointed by the General Assembly for the purposes of said conference, would have taken place on Tuesday of this week when the half yearly meeting of the former Committee was held. The Special Committee, however, had not met nor taken action of any kind and instead of a conference, Dr. McCrae, the convener, alone appeared and made a statement quite informally and unofficially. He outlined to some extent his views as to changes in the rules and as to interesting the church more widely in the Fund, but we understand he had at this stage little to say as to the work of the Committee, beyond what he said at the meeting of the General Assembly and it is doubtful if any thing will issue from the conference proposed which will be an improvement on existing conditions.

The Committee is fully alive to the importance of maintaining the administration of the Fund on a business basis and of applying the rule of the General Assembly impartially and faithfully. At the same time they feel that congregations are really as much or more interested in the Fund than the direct beneficiaries and therefore more liberal contributions ought to be received from congregations. At the same time, it is satisfactory to know that a steady, sure growth of interest in the fund exists and that with patience the fund will get to the position of financial strength necessary for the requirements of the church. It is also satisfactory to know that the funds invested are giving very fair returns and that the investments are in a fairly flourishing condition rumours to the contrary notwithstanding. What seems to be most required is that every minister in the church connect himself with the Fund and advocate its just claims before the people. Were this done the liberality of the people could be depended upon, but ministers seem to put off this duty from time to time for a more convenient season instead of discharging it promptly and heartily.

#### THE KINGSTON PRISONERS.

A good example of Mr. Moody's simple, practical addresses on special occasions is that delivered to the prisoners at Kingston prison last week. He showed to them how their sins were sure to find them out. There were no policemen as detectives around when Cain killed Abel, but the murderer's sin found him out. They could not prosper if they covered sin. God would forgive them and cast their sins behind them. Tears glistened in many eyes when Mr. Burke sang "There is never a heart so dreary." Many of the convicts put up their hands in response to the appeal if

they desired to be prayed for. Mr. Moody promised to send them his book on how to be saved and what to do when they were saved. He gave several of his hymn-books to the prisoners. Several of the men came forward and shook hands with him.

#### A ROMAN MANDATE.

THE Canadian public have become accustomed with what are sometimes called Archbishop Cleary's eccentricities and his latest pastoral has not excited the indignation it would have aroused had it, for instance, issued from the Episcopal palace in Toronto. There are, however, two reasons why the deliverance should not be passed over in silence: first, the Archbishop occupies a position of authority and leading in his Church from which he is able to enforce his views; and second, he gives utterance to the doctrines of his Church as they are accepted generally by that Church. The pastoral sets forth the sacred character of matrimony as a sacrament of the Church and not as a civil or secular contract, and then deploras that any Roman Catholic should assist at a marriage ceremony held outside the pale of Roman Catholic sanction or of the Roman Church. Says his grace:

"It is still more deplorable, and more heinously criminal before God and man, that a Catholic lady should not merely assist as spectator of such a scene, but should dress herself up as one of the actresses in the drama, and parade herself on the platform as one of the principal performers. Let not those who went to that house of unbelief for the purpose of witnessing the spectacle try to excuse themselves from the charge of criminal participation on the ground that they took no part in the act, and desired only to amuse themselves, as they would at a theatre. Their voluntary presence at the scenic entertainment was of itself a participation in the act, and was manifestly an insult to the holy faith they profess. Whosoever goes to a theatre to witness what he knows to be a performance offensive to his national feelings or the credit of his family is chargeable with impropriety, although he is merely a spectator. In fact, our code of criminal law rightly maintains this principle of participation in crime by voluntarily assisting at the performance of the evil deed. We nowise blame non-Catholics in this matter. They act in conformity with their conscience. But we do blame and condemn the weak-minded Catholic who knowingly and willingly belittles 'the great sacrament,' as St. Paul designates matrimony, and by so doing belittles Jesus Christ and His Holy Church."

But not only are Roman Catholics forbidden to witness or take part in the ceremonies at protestant marriages; they are also forbidden to attend funerals where the Protestant "service for the dead" is observed. This extreme would be hardly credible were it not that the terms of the injunction have been given to the world. They are as follows:

"There is another irregularity that sometimes is practised by lukewarm Catholics. They take a fancy to entering non-Catholic churches in order to assist at what is called "a service for the dead," which all non-Catholics, as well as Catholics, in these countries know and proclaim to be of no service to the dead. Here again we attribute no blame to those who through ignorance of the Christian religion disbelieve the revealed doctrines of purgatory and intercessory prayer and the communion of saints. We must, however, reprehend with all authority those Catholics who show so little respect for themselves and their religion as to participate in a performance of this kind, directly at variance with fundamental Christian dogmas. The doctrine of a middle state, wherein holy souls that have passed away from us in God's peace and charity are perfectly purified before admission to the abode of heavenly glory, "into which nothing defiled shall enter"; likewise the doctrine of relief being given to those suffering saints by our pious suffrages, through the holy Mass and supplicatory prayer and fasting and alms-deeds and other good works; moreover, the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed, affirming the "communion of saints"; all these cardinal truths of Christianity, so salutary to our