

Our Contributors.

SOME STRONG CANDIDATES PRETTY SURE TO RUN.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The air is thick with talk about the comparative strength of candidates. Prominent citizens are being weighed and measured and examined in various other ways to ascertain their fitness for carrying the party colours. The man most likely to win usually gets the nomination. Whether that is the best way to govern a country or not we cannot say. Party government makes it a necessity. If there is anything better than party government let those who know the better way bring out their plan and lay it before the people. It is easy to shout about the evils of the party system. Anything human has drawbacks connected with it. Ecclesiastical procedure is a long way from perfection. If you know something better than party government bring on your plan.

The party lists are not made up yet, but we know several strong candidates who are pretty sure to be in the field. Our list was not obtained from the party managers. We are not in the confidence of the Conservative party to any great extent. Mr. Laurier did not honour us with a call when he came west. We have not heard whether the Equal Rights Association intend putting any candidates in the field or whether they consider that their work was finished in June. The official party organizers have not the honour of our acquaintance and we have therefore received no confidential information about candidates from Messrs. Birmingham and Preston. Our list is made up from our knowledge of human nature, combined with a slight observation of modern electioneering methods.

On the whole we think Mr. *Hardcash* will be about the strongest candidate in the field if he comes out. *Hardcash* is an old candidate. Unfortunately for the country he has had great experience in election contests. He can carry any close constituency. Far be it from us to say that all or anything like all the members of any party in any constituency can be bought with money. That would be a libel on the country. We hope there are scores of men in both parties who would promptly kick Mr. *Hardcash* off their farms or out of their place of business if he offered to bribe them. Buying up a constituency does not necessarily mean buying a large number of voters. All it means in a close constituency is buying the few scalawags who hold the balance of power. Mr. *Hardcash* can always do that and as a consequence he can always carry the constituency. One of the reasons why *Hardcash* is a strong candidate is because he can work quietly in all parts of the constituency at the same time. He works silently on the back streets and back concessions and you never know what he has been doing unless it comes out in an election court. It does not always nor all come out. It is a foul disgrace to this country that Mr. *Hardcash* should be the strongest possible candidate in many constituencies but it is a fact—a disgraceful, damning fact, but all the same a fact. It should make Canadians from Halifax to Vancouver hang their heads with shame that a good, intelligent, able but comparatively poor man has no chance in many constituencies against bloated money bags. We occasionally hear allusions to muskets and other weapons when public affairs are being discussed. Let it be understood all round and once for all that Canada will not be a country fit to live in, much less a country worth fighting for, should the day ever come when a bloated, purse-proud bully can beat a good citizen at the polls just because the bully is rich and the good citizen poor. No decent man would care to be even buried in a country that crouched before vulgar, ill-gotten wealth, and despised respectable brainy poverty.

Mr. *Shakehands* is a strong candidate. He goes around smiling and smirking and shaking hands and asking for the wife and children. Sometimes he asks for the wife when there is no wife and for the children in cases in which so far none have put in an appearance. Mr. *Shakehands* may be a good enough man or he may be a dyed-in-the-wool humbug. Of course it is a good thing to be civil and to have a nice manner and all that but we should never forget that a man "may smile and smile and be a villain." It is humiliating to think that so many electors attach more importance to a smile and a handshake than they do to character and principle. The cynical contempt that some public men have for human nature arises largely from the fact that many people attach much more importance to a little personal attention than they do to the most important principles.

Mr. *Promiser* is a powerful candidate. He goes into a constituency and promises the people everything. A railroad or a canal, or a custom house, or a wharf, or a new post office, or a fat Government berth is nothing to him. Why should it be? If a man is in the promising business it is just as easy to make a promise of a railroad a thousand miles long as to tell an elector that he will be appointed pound-keeper. It takes very little more time or effort to promise a hundred men positions than to promise ten. Promises are easily made. Mr. *Promiser* is not as strong a candidate in Presbyterian communities as he is in some others. We could name the kind of people that take most kindly to Mr. *Promiser* but we won't.

Mr. *Humbug* is a strong candidate and he runs in many constituencies. He is not quite so successful among Presbyterians as among several other kinds of people we know of.

Mr. *Pomposity* does fairly well in cities but runs poorly in the rural districts. He does not take well with the farmers.

Mr. *Brass* is a strong candidate anywhere. The power of a brassy cheek in elections is simply marvellous. Wonderful the number of people who will take a brazen puppy at his own estimate, especially if he comes from a large city.

Mr. *Blatherskite* is not as strong as he once was, still he runs well in ignorant communities.

If these and several other candidates are strong the people themselves are to blame. There is no sort of sense in hammering away at the party system, or at the form of government, or at popular institutions. The people are the fountain of power and if they honour unworthy men the fault is their own. Any number of good men are willing to serve in Parliament. If the people have not sense or principle enough to send them there the people must just suffer. That is all there is of it. There is a sufficient number of able, patriotic men in both parties to form half a dozen Parliaments. Only two hundred and eleven are wanted. Five times that number of good able men could be found. If the people are too indolent or too stupid to find them and send them to Ottawa the people must just take the consequences.

UNITY IN HOME MISSION WORK.

The following remarks were made in the Barrie Presbytery by Rev. D. D. McLeod in support of his motion to unite Christian Churches in home mission operations. This is the motion:—

That the Presbytery appoint a committee consisting of Messrs. Finlay, Moodie, Grant and the mover to confer with the chairmen of the districts of the Methodist Church embraced in the bounds of this Presbytery and any brethren these may associate with them for such conference. In regard to those mission fields or other fields in which it is not desirable or necessary that two congregations should be maintained, and to suggest such a course for the adoption of ten members of the respective Churches as may conduce to the better maintenance of divine ordinances among them, and also to suggest a mode of procedure whereby either Church in entering upon a new field within these bounds may work in harmony with the other so that one strong congregation may be established in such fields under the authority of one or other of the Churches. The motion was carried.

This motion bears on a specific point in our Home Mission operations, namely, those cases in which the population is sparse, and in which it is not in the interests of religion to have weak congregations struggling for existence in a spirit of sectarian rivalry or in any other spirit. It only touches on this particular case, and in the discussion of it this should be borne in mind. That there are such cases in which money is being unnecessarily expended in the effort to keep up two Churches where one would suffice, no one will deny. This motion simply raises the question, whether evangelical Christians might not in such fields unite in securing Gospel ordinances from our own or the Methodist Church, rather than seek to sustain two Churches among them. The motion I have no doubt will meet with strong opposition. It has already been objected to as unconstitutional. But this objection must be offered in forgetfulness of the action which our Church has already taken on this subject. Such co-operation as this motion suggests was brought before the Assembly in the year 1886, and was sent down to Presbyteries for their judgment. In 1887 the Presbyteries reported—and in view of the returns from the Presbyteries—"It was moved by Professor Scrimger, duly seconded and agreed to, that the report on ecclesiastical co-operation be received, that in view of the returns from Presbyteries the Assembly approve of the effort to attain the object aimed at in the returns for ecclesiastical co-operation, but refers the matter to the several Presbyteries and Synods to take such action as they may deem best." The motion, therefore, is constitutional, as indeed I regard it even though no such action had been taken by the Assembly on the subject.

But there will be no doubt some opposition offered to it apart from this. There are certain quarters from which opposition to any liberal measure, or any measure which is a departure from use and wont, may be expected. Opposition may always be expected from the official spirit in the Church to such a measure. That has always been one chief barrier to progress in the Church of Christ. And such is an important barrier now to that progress in our home mission work which should be maintained. Then there is the sectarian spirit which often clothes itself in the garment of zeal for orthodoxy and the Gospel, from which opposition may be expected. There will no doubt also be some who, on the merits of the case, do not approve of such a movement. Also from the people themselves of the Churches concerned there may arise opposition to any such effort as the motion contemplates. But notwithstanding all this the principle of the motion has already commended itself to the best men of both churches, has received the seal of the Assembly's approval, and is in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel we preach. It is a measure of practical wisdom suited to the emergency contemplated and sacrificing no interest. Some of our most intelligent members have repeatedly advocated such a measure, and would regard it as tending to advance the interests of religion, in the localities referred to. Therefore I respectfully submit it to the judgment of the Presbytery, believing that the discussion of it will be useful even though it should not be adopted.

It does not touch except very slightly the question now and often discussed, of the better supply of our weaker mission stations with Gospel ordinances. But on this question I would like to say a few words. My conviction is, from what I have seen of our home mission work, that so long as the present methods are continued of treating these stations, the money of the Church is being wasted, the people are inadequately supplied with ordinances, and members are being lost to our Church. And I believe further that there is no need for this state of things. What is required in these fields is not merely the casual service of students and catechists, but a supply of Gospel ordinances including the administration of the sacraments by an ordained preacher. And this which is required could be secured, if it was demonstrated to the Church that it was necessary. To look for help by "compelling the students to volunteer" a year of mission work before license, appears to me a measure fitted to produce irritation, and quite inadequate to accomplish the intended result.

Let us see what has to be done. According to the statements recently made by authority, there are 150 stations under the Presbytery care—according to Blue Book 1890—these comprise 1,863 communicants, 1,281 families, and average Sabbath attendance of 4,785. To supply these with ordinances the Home Mission Committee grants \$4,192, and the amount paid to stations for supply for year to March, 1890, was \$6,041; total \$10,235. So that for the 1,863 communicants, the 1,281 families—the attendants 4,785—the sum of \$10,235 was paid out last year. And the problem is, how best to expend that amount in securing regular supply for these people throughout the year. We should then ascertain which of these stations might be discontinued, which of them might wisely be allowed to amalgamate with Christians of another Church, and then consider how to deal with the remainder. Probably we will be told there can be no diminution of this one hundred and fifty allowed. Suppose it to be so. The question remains, are these stations being developed as they might be by our present methods, by half-yearly supply, student and catechist supply? No one will say that they are. No one can say they ever will be, or ever could be expected to be developed as they should be by any such methods. Hence the fact remains, that the yearly expenditure goes on and in many instances no progress is made, nor ever will be made as it might and ought to be in not a few cases. It is my conviction that the Church's money is not wisely expended in these fields, and that the cheese-paring policy often applied to them by those in authority is a wasteful policy. Further, it is an entirely erroneous view which holds that the Home Mission Committee confers a boon on Barrie or any other Presbytery, because in the Providence of God there being a large mission field in these Presbyteries they receive an exceptionally large grant compared with other Presbyteries. I also deny the justice of that procedure which encourages the Presbytery to do mission work, and then leaves it to pay unforeseen arrears and expenses out of its own purse, to the unfortunate missionaries whom the people of the stations have been unable to pay. Such a course of action is neither wise nor just nor is it necessary. And I totally dissent from the views of our Presbytery's Convener on this point. But I return to the method of dealing with these stations, and the method I would suggest with all respect, knowing well the futility of doing so, is this: I would instruct our superintendent, aided by the Presbytery's Home Mission Committee, to report on the number of groups into which these 150 stations might be divided after making the deduction above referred to. And would proceed with all possible despatch to place over these groups of four or five or six or more as the case might be, an ordained missionary at a salary on which he could live and keep a horse (and here I cannot refrain from saying, that the physical toil required of some of our home missionaries and catechists is an unnecessary and useless sacrifice, and is a discredit to the intelligence of our Church). Then let these missionaries if necessary in larger fields have assistance from a catechist. Such a policy has already been to a small extent adopted, and in every case known to me with large success. The whole process of such a method of dealing with these stations in this manner cannot here be entered into. But it is a method which is reasonable and possible and which would give honourable work to many ministers and Gospel ordinances to all our stations, and I offer this motion simply as one small step in the direction of solving this difficult problem. A step which may practically be of little effect, yet one which wisdom would dictate and which compromises no principle, but rather would have a beneficial effect on our own and the other Church interested.

I am aware as already stated that any plan proposed in this case not emanating from the official circle will be at once condemned, or ignored, and that it will be very easy to raise many objections to any departure from use and wont or to a proposal to apply more rigorously and generally a plan which is not new, and which does not profess to be. But, however rigorously it may be objected to, the facts remain unalterable witnesses to the inefficiency of present methods. The remedies suggested testify to the conviction on the part of even some of the Home Mission Committee that better methods are required. This much, therefore, cannot be disputed. And the remedies of summer sessions, and a year's employment of licensed students even if adopted, would still leave the main requirement untouched, namely, the need in these fields of ordained men by whose labour only can the ends of the Church be accomplished. One