

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

OUR WORK IN THE WEST.

By Rev. James Hastie.

In a previous article I touched on the question of inadequate supply of preachers in the West, and pointed out one way to meet the emergency, viz., to employ the scores of ministers in the older Provinces who are out of congregations at present; and though past middle life are yet good for several years of efficient service.

On the present occasion I shall confine myself to the matter of finance. This is not the highest subject pertaining to the missionary problem, but it is an integral part, and therefore is important.

Two points are involved in the finance question: The amount of remuneration promised; and the dates of payment.

The Convener of Augmentation Committee is reported as saying at last Assembly that the minimum salary of a minister in the West should be one thousand dollars. That to some may sound large, yet it is little better, if any, than the Ontario minimum of seven hundred and fifty, because of the much higher cost of living there.

It would occupy more space than is available to give proof in detail of this statement; but the present writer speaks from a personal experience of several years in Alberta. When the "mistress of the manse" pays two dollars and fifty cents for a small box of crab apples containing less than a bushel, and from \$5.50 to \$6 per barrel for other apples; and finds that the many, many little articles of food for the kitchen are at least double what she paid in the East, she is convinced that Dr. Lyle was right about that minimum—though at present the \$1,000 salary is not practicable.

In view, then, of the costly living and the necessarily small stipends, the other point bulks large in importance, viz., punctuality and frequency of payment.

Up to April of this year grants to missionaries from the H. M. Board were paid only half-yearly—beginning of April, and beginning of October. Should a man commence work at either of these dates he must work for six months without a cent from Toronto; while in new and weak fields the portion from the people usually came in dribblets and at no certain date. Imagine what that meant to a man who had only a few dollars in his pocket on arrival, and must forthwith purchase a horse, perhaps, a span; also harness, or saddle, or both, and buggy and sleigh; feed also for horse, and pay board for himself, if he has no home, or house rent if married; to say nothing about railway fares, postage, stationery, books and papers. To buy on credit, as he must do, meant to pay far more than cash prices, and often get an inferior article; to all of which is to be added the humiliation of having to ask credit from strangers.

Again and again request was made the H. M. committee to pay quarterly instead of half-yearly. This change was made 1st of April last. We are happy to say, and now the missionary will be paid every three months.

Let one instance suffice out of hundreds of what this long date payment meant in many cases.

A very superior man came from another land to the West. For ten years he had done splendid work across the sea, but on account of impaired health had to make a change. Think of him as an A-1 man all round. The superintendent secured him for a new and difficult field in the West. When a missionary to the heathen far away he was paid MONTHLY. When a missionary in our Canadian West to professing Christians he was paid HALF-YEARLY! Commencing 1st May, as he did, it was five months

before the Board would pay his share. He got \$50 all told from the field in eight months. He had not much money on hand when he began there. His expenses were considerable. What was the result? That splendid man was brought to such straits for lack of money, (though he had earned it), that he told the writer there was a time when he had not enough to buy a postage stamp! Did he complain publicly? No. Did he abandon his work, or slacken his hand, or look reproachfully at the people? Not a bit of it.

He looked and labored on as blithely and briskly as if he were a Cox or a Strathcona.

Did not the H. M. Board do right in resolving last April to pay their men quarterly henceforth? To enable the Board to pay quarterly, should not congregations send their missionary money to Toronto quarterly or oftener?

Nor should the H. M. Board stop at quarterly payments, I submit; but should arrange for monthly payments. Railroad employees are paid monthly. So are school teachers in many places. Factories pay fortnightly. Clerks and bookkeepers are paid monthly, and many of them weekly. Are our pioneer men on the firing line out West not entitled to as much consideration?

I can afford to press this point all the more strongly seeing I did not suffer from the half-yearly payment system, and from the irregular givings of the people as many others did, because I had an income from another source which enabled me to pay cash for everything I wanted, and could wait six months for the grant without inconvenience.

With a caveat I close. That caveat is: Let no one infer from the somewhat sombre tone of this article that Presbyterian missions in the West are not prospering; or that missionaries are only half-hearted or left handed in their work because of some untoward circumstances. No, no. The Presbyterian church is forging ahead in the West. In this regard past days are not better than present days. Yet, should not "Excelsior" be the motto of our beloved church in financial matters as well as in spiritual?

GOOD THINGS IN THE CHURCH.

The choir that sings from the heart.

The folks that are sunny and sweet.

The "shut-in" saint who prays at home.

The minute-men who will fill awkward gaps.

The sexton who watches the thermometer.

The brother who crucifies self-importance.

The usher who makes politeness a fine art.

The parent who believes in the conversion of his children.

The young people who gladly help in house-to-house visitation.

The young man who pleads with his impatient chums.

The treasurer who keeps plenty of meal in the parsonage flour barrel.

The brother who is willing to do small jobs out of the view of the crowd.

The Sabbath-school superintendent who longs for the salvation of his pupils.

Many, many years ago salt was so hard to obtain, but so necessary to have, that Roman soldiers were paid part of their wages in salt. Now the Latin word for salt is "sal," and from that came the word "salarium," meaning salt money. Finally, the soldiers were paid only in money, but the term "salarium" was still used to designate these wages. From this old Latin word comes our English word "salary." This is why we say of a worthless fellow that "he is not worth his salt."

THE LATE REV. DR. SNODGRASS.

By Rev. Dr. Robert Campbell, Perth.

Last week's cables announced the passing in his 79th year of the Rev. Wm. Snodgrass, D.D., parish minister of Canobie, Scotland, and who for a quarter of a century rendered distinguished service in our own Church. His death will be very sincerely mourned by his old-time friends and colleagues in Church and College circles and by many who knew him in their student days.

His service in Canada dates back to 1852 when, immediately after completing his studies with great credit in Glasgow University, he took ordination and was appointed by the Colonial Committee to labor in Prince Edward Island, where the laborers were few and the open doors many and inviting. There he ministered and organized with such zeal and with such large results as soon caused him to be spoken of as a "rising man." The fame of his masterly doings went west also, with the result that in 1856 he was inducted into the charge of St. Paul's Church, Montreal, in which larger sphere his varied gifts had fullest scope. The congregation flourished exceedingly and willingly followed his leadership, became a strong factor in the benevolent efforts of the city and in the missionary enterprises of the Church. Making frequent excursions through both Provinces and coming into personal contact with ministers and people whom he counselled and encouraged, he straightway gained the esteem and confidence of all and gathered such knowledge of the Church's needs as fitted him to be a leader in many helpful and progressive movements in the Synod, of which he was soon appointed clerk. It seemed then that he had found the place where he might accomplish his life-work with satisfaction to himself and his charge.

But in 1863 he was called to a more exacting task. The Principalship of Queen's College was then vacant. Strife and disorganization were rampant. A stout heart, an acute mind, abounding common sense, and a masterful hand were requisites for the man who should successfully hold the helm. The Trustees agreed in the belief that Dr. Snodgrass was thus qualified and, at their urgent request, he entered upon his new duties. He restored order and brighter days dawned for Queen's. Soon the clouds again lowered. Financial disaster, through a Bank failure, followed quickly by the withdrawal of the Provincial grant of \$5,000 per annum, seemed to most to necessitate the closing of the doors. But the planning and the determination of Dr. Snodgrass, aided by the enthusiasm of Prof. McKerras, persuaded the Synod to make an effort, and, together, those two friends went out and collected \$100,000 which relatively, is perhaps, the greatest gathering that has yet been made for Queen's.

Prosperous years followed and the Principal had time for other work. He threw himself heartily into the Union movement, had a large share in bringing the negotiations to a successful issue and, as Moderator of his Synod, had the honour of joining officially in its consummation in 1875.

The Union brought Queen's into a broader relationship and made it necessary to consider provision for larger work. Professor McKerras was dying. The Principal's health had been shaken. He shrank from the toil of a second canvass. There came to him an offer of an important parish in his native land. He laid the matter before the Trustees, showed them what was needed, counselled them to get Grant and went home—21 years later than he had promised to himself at the outset.

A front rank place amongst the leaders