

*Scotch Churches and North-West Missions.*

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The keen interest which the delegates to the General Assembly at St. John, N.B., manifested in the account given by the Rev. C. W. Gordon of his work (on behalf of North-West Missions) in Ireland and Scotland is some indication of the great importance and far reaching consequences of the magnificent response of the Scotch and Irish churches to the appeal of the Home Mission Committee for assistance in running the mission fields of the North-West Territories and British Columbia.

The sympathetic interest in the work shown by the Assemblies of both the Established and Free Churches, which recently met in Edinburgh are equally gratifying. To a Canadian the keenness of the interest and the intensity of the sympathy were truly wonderful. The Historic Procession of the Queen's Commissioner from Holyrood to St. Giles to open the Established Church Assembly is an extremely interesting spectacle. The presence of the accredited representatives of the Crown, of the Lords, the Judges, Magistrates and Civic Officials on the one hand and of the Church Dignitaries on the other is most suggestive of the connection between Church and State.

The immense throngs by which this national ceremony is witnessed though largely accounted for by the pomp and circumstance of the occasion also evidence the veneration and esteem with which a considerable proportion at least of the Scotch people regard the Establishment.

The opening sermon is preached in Old St. Giles Church where more than 300 years ago the then fervid eloquence of John Knox electrified the Scottish nation.

The Colonial Day in the Established Assembly in the absence of the Moderator, Prof. Storey, whom the readers of the Review will recollect as formerly of Montreal, the distinguished Ex-Moderator, Dr. Marshall Lang, introduced Mr. Gordon to the Assembly. Although many devoted missionaries spoke ably and earnestly of different mission fields and of struggling churches, it was abundantly evident that the speech of Canada's worthy representative on the North-West commanded the greatest attention and evoked the warmest sympathy.

At the conclusion of Mr. Gordon's excellent address, which was a model of conciseness and directness, Prof. Storey, who had meantime resumed the chair, cordially thanked him for his admirable speech and especially emphasized the invaluable service rendered by Mr. Gordon in extending the knowledge of the North-West and in awakening the sympathy of the Church in the cause of Christ there.

The address delivered by Mr. Gordon to the Free Church Assembly some days later was successful in an equally eminent degree and demonstrated that the sagacious and energetic Superintendent of North-West Missions had not erred in the choice of a representative of the Canadian Church in Scotland. On the same evening the venerable Dr. Paton, the Missionary Hero of the New Hebrides, spoke on behalf of Australia.

Colonial night is said to be usually a dull one, but this year was a splendid exception. The enthusiasm of the meeting and the intelligent interest in the colonies manifested by the members of the Assembly give fair promise that this exception will in future become the rule.

The Moderator, Principal Douglas of Glasgow, referring to the incalculable and permanent value of Mr. Gordon's work said that the Churches both in Scotland and Canada were greatly indebted to him and on behalf of the Assembly assured him that the progress of Presbyterianism in the North-West would be followed by the Church at home with prayerful interest and sympathy.

Not one particular section only but all the three Scotch Presbyterian Churches have taken and will continue to take a substantial and abiding share in Mission work in the Canadian North-West.

The first to respond was the Broughton Place Congregational which has engaged to support a missionary at some mission station in the North-West for three years. Both Dr. Andrew Thompson and Dr. John Smith have been since the inception of the Forward Movement active promoters of the enterprise.

Dr. James Macgregor was also from the first an enthusiastic and powerful friend and St. Cuthbert's will maintain a missionary for a like period.

It is a significant fact that all the brightest minds, all the leaders in the Scotch churches have almost instinctively perceived the importance, the urgent imperativeness of the claims of British America.

The hearty and unhesitating endorsement of the appeal of the Canadian Church by Principal Rainey, whose commanding personality, far-sighted statesmanship, and consummate tact under his supremacy in the Free Church Assembly so noticeable, had undoubtedly a marked effect in inspiring confidence and in securing a favorable consideration of the claims of Scotch Presbyterians who have made their homes in the western half of the Dominion of Canada.

The friends of the North-West appear to be so numerous that it is difficult to select particular names, but the Canadian Church should gratefully remember Dr. Alexander Whyte, the author of Bunyan characters and of a notable book on William Law, the Eighteenth Century Mystic.

Like pastor like people and Free St. George's, his congregation, notwithstanding so many other calls from all quarters of the globe, has undertaken to supply five missionaries in the North-West for five years—truly a princely contribution.

One of these will be supported by the Hon. George Brown's family, who, though they reside in Edinburgh are all still true and devotedly loyal Canadians. On the pages of Canadian history there is no nobler or more honored name than that of the late Hon. George Brown whose profound statesmanship, lofty devotion to principle, and fearless and skilful advocacy of self government and civil and religious liberality and equality have done so much to mould the form and strengthen the foundations of the Canadian Constitution and nationality. Many years ago with the practical sagacity and shrewdness of his race he first foresaw the future importance of what is now the Canadian North-West, and while it was a howling wilderness in the undisputed possession of the Buffalo, the Indian and the Hudson Bay Company persistently advocated and urged its acquisition by Canada, and to his foresight and enthusiastic faith in the future of Canada were largely due the wise provisions of the Confederation Act, for the incorporation into the Dominion of that vast territory, and for the carving out of provinces there.

To the students of Canadian Progress and Expansion it will, therefore, not seem strange that the family of one of the Fathers of Confederation should evince such an intense and practical interest in the moral and spiritual welfare of the settlers in Western Canada, or that his son, Mr. George Mackenzie Brown, of Edinburgh, should engage in this work with earnest enthusiasm and untiring energy, and give the cause the benefit of the services which his business capacity, his executive and administrative ability, his keen insight, and his extensive knowledge of the country and its needs enable him to render.

One of the most striking facts mentioned was the case of one of the congregations at Paisley (where the late Prof. George Paxton Young had his first charge) who will support a missionary for 5 years, the great bulk of the subscriptions being cheerfully given by workmen who eagerly claimed an interest in the welfare of their fellow-Scotchmen in the far West.

Not only have the congregations of all the Scotch Churches and in several instances individual members agreed to support in all over 30 missionaries in the North-West for a period of years, but concerted action is being arranged for in the matter of the care of Presbyterian emigrants from Scotland to Canada. This emigration scheme was referred by the Scotch Assemblies to their respective Colonial Committees.

A meeting was called for the purpose of considering the matter and taking action, at which Dr. Macadam Muir, Convener of the Colonial Committee of the Established Church; Dr. Duff of the Free Church; and Dr. James Buchanan of the United Presbyterian Church, and many other members of the Colonial Committees of the three Churches were present. A joint committee was formed which will act in co-operation with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and Mr. G. M. Brown appointed Convener. Already practical assistance in the matter has been promised by the Canadian Government, several of the Ocean Transportation Companies and the C.P.R.

These results of the indefatigable exertions and self-sacrificing devotion of the agent of the Canadian Church are important and significant, not only from a Presbyterian, but also from a national standpoint.

They betoken a profound appreciation of the tremendous possibilities of the great North-West.

Now in a deeper and higher sense than in the days of Wordsworth can be addressed to that mighty Empire the words

"Earth's best hopes rest all with thee."