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Toronto, November 28, 1895.

The Basis of Representation in the Assembly.

THE only remit which is sent down this year for the consideration of Presbyteries is one regarding the basis of their representation in the Assembly. In 1877 the proportion was fixed at one fourth and this has continued to be the rule without change until the present time. In view of the fact that the Church had just been formed by the union of four Churches which, though all Presbyterian, had many minor differences of procedure, and in view of the consequent necessity for a good deal of new legislation to assimilate these differences as well as to give shape to the forward movement in all kinds of aggressive work which naturally grew out of the union, this large representation was felt on all hands to be desirable. No doubt much of the smoothness which has characterized the working of the union has been due to the fact that the Assembly so fully represented the Church as to prevent any suspicion of its being controlled by any faction or manipulated by any clique. Twenty years after the union it may be assumed that this period of necessary adjustment is now about over. Hardly any question that can arise now is likely to be regarded from the standpoint of prae-union practice or decided under the influence of prae-union feeling. A smaller body might therefore be safely trusted to deal in a perfectly fair way with all new matters that emerge.

But altogether apart from that the increase in the number of members due to the rapid growth of the Church has of late years made the Assembly somewhat unwieldy and caused many to feel that it was too large for effective deliberative work. A year ago the membership reached the 500 mark and the actual attendance for several years has been over 300. To speak of nothing else, the entertainment of that number for a meeting lasting nine or ten days, puts a severe strain on the hospitable resources of all but the largest cities, and even the largest are disposed to ask sometimes whether a smaller number might not do the work quite as well. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the Presbytery of St. John immediately after the meeting there in 1894 should have decided to overture for a reduction in the representation. Their proposal to make it one-eighth instead of a fourth apparently seemed a little too violent to be entertained, but it is not nearly so drastic as it looks. Even that proportion, under the rule of the next higher multitude, would make the membership at the present time a little over 300, and the ratio of attendance would probably be a good deal higher than at present. A representation of one sixth proposed by the remit will reduce the membership at present from 533 to 378. But at the present rate of increase, as estimated in the preamble to the remit, the higher number will be reached again in five years, and after that brief interval a further reduction will be as imperative as this is now.

Perhaps if all these facts had been laid clearly before the Assembly it might have been willing to adopt the proportion suggested by the Presbytery of St. John at once. The present remit, however, is a move in the right direction and ought to be approved without hesitation by the Presbyteries. It is more than doubtful whether the reduction is sufficient to make possible the establishment of a mileage fund for the payment of commissioners' expenses. But that may come by and by.

It should be borne in mind that this remit is sent down under the Barrier Act. It must, therefore, be positively approved by a majority of Presbyteries without modification. Any Presbytery failing to make a return or proposing any amendment of its terms is counted as disapproving whether it actually disapproves or not.

Missionaries in Danger.

At the time of writing the news from troubled Armenia is far from re-assuring. It is reported that the missionaries from Canada and the United States are in danger and that they may become the victims of violence at any moment. The Sutan seems powerless or unwilling to protect the Christians and the European powers do not seem anxious to force him to a last resort. Consequently outrages, and massacres are reported daily and the situation is really alarming. It seems almost inexplicable that the Powers, who can by acting in concert speedily put a stop to the uprisings do not move a little finger to check the misrule that prevails. When cruel persecution is raging and life-blood flows like water, the time for the niceties of diplomacy has surely passed, and prompt and decisive methods are absolutely necessary. The cause of humanity is the cause of God. Great Britain never rises to her duty more nobly than when she puts forth her caveat on behalf of the oppressed.

We Think So.

It is wonderful how many persons think they can "run" a newspaper, says the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, and how free they are in their advice about how this and that department should be conducted. The ideas of those who have had no experience, either in newspaper management or editorship, are as variant and conflicting as inexperience can make them. One suggests an alteration in one direction that would lose him a hundred subscribers; a second calls for the introduction of a feature which would bring a protest from scores of readers by the next mail; a third proposes an addition which would increase expenses without material advantage; a fourth urges a new department that would give him room to air certain opinions without bringing in any remuneration in proportion to the money outlay; a fifth desires an additional page or column devoted to some hobby which, while dear to him, would not interest the average reader; and a sixth wants space to treat at length a particular subject, which the editor, in deference to the wishes and demands of his constituency, generally seeks to condense, so as to give as much variety of thought and matter as space will permit. It may, and should be, taken for granted that the conductor of a newspaper will do his best to make it attractive, readable, varied and useful. He is ready to take suggestions kindly tendered, and acts upon them as far as is possible, but he usually has a larger knowledge of existing conditions than the majority of those outside of the office. If those who write to him from a distance about so called improvements or special changes were on hand to take in the entire situation, they would think and write differently from what they did away from the