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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1884.

It would be a good thing if all those ministers who exchanged courtesies at the annual ecclesiastical meetings had grace given them to act with professional courtesy during the rest of the year. To vote for resolutions in favour of brotherly love, and cheer the depositions from other churches and then go home and try to steal your neighbour's sheep would be considered very inconsistent conduct in a mere man of the world. Yet such things take place every day. In small communities where everybody knows everybody else and where there are too many churches for the population, there is too frequently a regular raid kept up, on the Presbyterian churches especially, during a time of religious excitement. During the last winter we have heard of several most scandalous attempts at making proselytes of our people. It has more than once occurred to us to publish the names of a few of the offenders and give the authorities of their own churches an opportunity of knowing what some of their brethren are doing in some of the towns and villages of Ontario. Of course our contemporaries are quite welcome to publish the names of any Presbyterian ministers that are found guilty of such offences. The standard of professional morality is not nearly so high among certain classes of ministers and so-called evangelists as among lawyers. A lawyer who would use the means to take business from a rival that are sometimes used to take weak members out of the Presbyterian churches would be disrobed.

It is to be regretted that the overture anent the change in the mode of electing moderators of Assembly was not brought forward in a full house. Had such been the case there might, and no doubt would have been a discussion, and a discussion before making such a change was just the thing needed. A college of moderators for the nomination of a moderator may be a very good institution, but we very much doubt if the Church as a whole desire to take the right of making nominations out of the hands of Presbyteries and put it into the hands of the ex-moderators. A step in that direction is not in accordance with the trend of modern opinion. It may be so much the worse for the opinion, but the fact remains all the same. The principal argument we have heard in favour of the change is that the new moderator "is likely to know before hand of his election and 'come prepared.'" Prepared with what? A long elegant speech perhaps, that at that time, on a hot June evening, nobody wants to hear. With a year to prepare, few members of Assembly could make as suitable and happy an address as that delivered by the present Moderator, and Dr. McLaren is not by any means the most ready man in the Church. It must certainly be admitted that a member who knows of his election, may be in a position to act with more self-possession and dignity than one who has just been elected after the excitement of voting. There are considerations on the other side, and the Church should have had both sides brought out by a good discussion. The college of ex-moderators at present consists of, Drs. Cook, McLeod, Jenkins, Reid, Mr. Rae, MacVicar, Cochrane, King and McLaren.

OUR good neighbour, the *Dominion Churchman*, after referring to some observations in a late article in THE PRESBYTERIAN says:

While here we congratulate our Presbyterian friends on their well and ably conducted Assembly, we followed its deliberations closely and highly admire the talent and the

excellent spirit of wisdom displayed. Would that some of our laymen had the head and heart as well as the church loyalty and cultured expression of Hon. Alex. Morris! We trust the college difficulty will be settled by the founding of a noble Presbyterian University for all Canada. When to that great enterprise this strong, wealthy Church directs its energies, we shall wish it God speed.

Thanks for your good wishes. The college difficulty will no doubt be settled in due time. Patience, forbearance and Presbyterian common-sense can settle any difficulty in a few years. But why should our High Church neighbours covet Mr. Morris? Mr. Morris is a very good member of Assembly, and we have other good laymen in the Assembly who might be as useful as Mr. Morris if they would come forward and take a hand at Church legislation. We have all over this country scores of elders who might make their mark in the Assembly in a few years if they would devote one tenth of the time to church work that they do to business, or politics, or to municipal matters. But surely the *Churchman* does not mean to say that there is not any amount of good material in the Episcopal Church. With such men within her pale as Dr. Wilson, Chief Justice Hagarty, Goldwin Smith, the two Blakes and many others, that Church ought to make more out of its laity. The root of the difficulty is the division between "High" and "Low." If our Episcopal neighbours would bring their differences, and unite in one solid phalanx, cease contending about ecclesiastical questions and rouse their people by the preaching of the Gospel, they might be the most powerful organization in the Dominion.

THE sermon of Dr. Whyte, before the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, is a most practical and timely effort. His principal object was to point out a great defect of the Presbyterian system, and suggest a remedy, or rather, re-introduce a remedy provided by John Knox. Let the Moderator describe the defect in his own words:

Just consider how our slack and oblivious system works. We train a student to an exceptionally high mark of literary and theological scholarship. He is sent out of our halls with the best equipment for the ministry it is possible for our most able and learned men to give him. He is called, say, to a country pastorate. He is settled over one of our congregations, and the Church, as such, from the day of his ordination, entirely loses sight of him, and ceases her care over him. He is ordained to do her work, the work of her Lord, but she never asks whether he is succeeding or failing in the work her Lord has laid on her hand to see done, and a portion of which she has devolved on His young servant. His failures or successes, his helps or hindrances, she knows nothing of. He may have a hard, up-hill, cross-bearing life, but she knows it not. He may be fighting single-handed, as a matter of fact, he often is against many enemies, deadly enemies of his, because of the Church and cause he represents, but he is left to fight it out as best he may. Wealth, rank, territorial, and even higher influences may all be bandied against him. In a thousand ways he may have to suffer persecution of the most harassing kind, and beyond the circle of his family and personal friends no one ever hears of it.

If this is true of a compact little country like Scotland, where nearly everybody is a Presbyterian, it is true in a thousand times greater degree of a country like Canada, with a large territory, sparse population, and a hundred creeds. Dr. Whyte suggests this as a remedy.

Now, were our General Assembly to appoint annually, as she once did, select deputations of her very best men, her best preachers, and most stirring evangelists, her most devoted, intelligent, and liberal elders to visit and take counsel with all Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions, instructing them to spend a week or more in each district, seeing the most influential men in private during the day, and holding congregational or evangelistic meetings at night, and preaching on Sabbath—were these things done, not tentatively and apologetically, and once in half a generation as now, but with authority and responsibility, and every year or two, the evils that would thus be obviated and prevented, and the good that would thus be produced would be incalculable. The visitors would become more intimately acquainted with and interested in their districts, our solitary ministers would have a large and influential circle of stimulating and supporting acquaintances and friends. The remotest and smallest congregations would feel that they were a recognized and remembered part of a great, living, historical, and national Church.

A movement of this kind wisely and enthusiastically carried out would do more to stimulate struggling congregations, strengthen weary and hard-worked ministers, and give a greater impulse to Presbyterianism and vital religion than any movement that has ever taken place in Canada. The utter isolation of many of our ministers and congregations unnerves both. Many of them never see a representative man of the Church unless he comes for money. Who will prepare himself on this matter for the next Assembly?

FACTS AND FIGURES.

EACH year the report presented by the Committee on Statistics is becoming more complete, and therefore, more valuable. In the way of completeness, however, there is still much to be desired. Whoever may have to bear blame for this, it certainly is not the estimable and thoroughly competent Convener, who has so long and so worthily discharged the onerous and laborious duties entrusted to him. A report containing seventy-seven pages, seventy of them tabulated, implies an amount of close application and patient work that many would not care to assume. It has also to be borne in mind that the returns are received at uncertain intervals up to the latest possible moment, and many of these are provokingly incomplete. In the case of the present report returns were received till within a few days of the meeting of Assembly. It is not a truly that delay in sending in returns makes the Convener's labours more irksome, but renders their result far less satisfactory. Under the careful and conscientious supervision of the Rev. Mr. Torrance it may reasonably be hoped that no long time may elapse before the complaint will disappear that late returns and returns with tantalizing blanks interfere with what, in many respects, is one of the most interesting and valuable reports submitted to the General Assembly.

Various causes account for reports being late and incomplete. Some are disposed to place too low a value on Church statistics, holding that at best they can only give an inadequate idea of true spiritual vitality. The Committee on Statistics do not claim that they do or can indicate the power of godliness within the Church. The report speaks modestly and becomingly on these points. It is, however, of the utmost importance that an accurate register of the Church's condition numerically and financially should be kept. That degree of accuracy, now happily within sight, has never yet been obtained, but its attainment is perfectly possible. With cordial co-operation and reasonable diligence it might easily be reached. Pastors and congregations that cannot make the statistical showing they desire, shrink from recording the items that to them seem unfavourable. When their work is judged by the bare figures, without a knowledge of all the circumstances, being so liable to be misunderstood it requires a high degree of moral fortitude to fill in numbers that seem so small. It should never be forgotten that, though figures tell much, they do not and cannot tell everything. One minister can marshal a fine array of figures; another, his equal in intellectual ability, moral worth and spiritual earnestness, can only present a lean and meagre showing, and it would be a harsh and illogical inference to conclude on the bald evidence of the figures alone that the one was, in the parlance of the day, a success, and the other a failure. The one with the fine financial showing may have a goodly heritage, a congregation where a fine Christian spirit prevails, where elders and office-bearers cordially co-operate with the pastor. His congregation is favourably situated in the heart of a Presbyterian district. In such circumstances it is easy and pleasant to fill in the returns completely and in good time. The other may be in a settlement where industry languishes, and the Presbyterian element is sparsely settled. In such a case increase is impossible; diminution in numbers and financial strength is certain. In upholding a drooping cause, that minister is doing noble service, and it would be a manifestly inadequate judgment that pronounces such a man's work a failure.

The main cause of incomplete returns must be charged to carelessness and procrastination. The blanks are always issued in good time. The interval allowed for the filling up seems long: they can easily be attended to, but the time slips away and important items have to be waited for, and the proper time is past. The cure for all this is sufficiently simple. It is comprised in two words: Be punctual.

Following the order of the report presented to the Assembly by Mr. Torrance, gratifying progress in most cases is recorded. The number of pastoral charges is this year returned at 753, an increase of seven over those of last year. In vacant charges there is a decrease of six, the number given being 113. There is an increase of eight mission stations recorded, numbering 117. The number of stations reported this year is 1,436, showing an increase of fifty since last report. The increase in the number of families reported is 134, with an increase in the number of