

OPENING OF KNOX COLLEGE.

The present session of Knox College was opened on Wednesday last. The Principal, Professors Gregg and McLaren, and the Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education, Drs. Reid, and Laing, and Mr. W. Mortimer Clark, Chairman of College Board, occupied seats on the platform. The Rev. Principal Caven delivered the opening address, as follows:

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COLLEGE.

The history of this College shows much of the goodness of God. It is inseparably bound up with the history of our Church. The College has been honoured to contribute not a little to the advancement of the Church. There is no disposition, I trust, to indulge in boasting, but we should prove our ingratitude to God should we refrain from acknowledging what He has done for us. "Only the Head of the Church can give ministers," (Eph. iv.) but if a theological school helps to develop the gifts of candidates for the ministry, its importance should at once be recognized. No intelligent Presbyterian looks with indifference upon the place where our "pastors and teachers" are prepared for their life work.

The early history of our Church testifies to remarkable effort on behalf of theological education. I do not know that in proportion to means any Church has surpassed what has been done in Canada. We have striven to walk in the footsteps of our forefathers, who, in other lands, laid the foundation of our great institutions for the promotion of religion and true learning, and we are still being tested as to our worthiness to represent the cause they loved so well.

There is certainly much remaining to be done for theological education. If I shall speak almost entirely, here, about Knox College, you will not imagine this to arise from deficient interest in the other seminaries of our Church which are honoured to bear their part in preparing men for the ministry. I desire specially to present the wants of this college, and, if possible, stimulate the interest felt in its more complete equipment. And if I speak plainly regarding the importance of strengthening it, let no one imagine that I depreciate the college, or forget its achievements in the past.

I. Our teaching staff is inadequate. We have three professors fully engaged, and a fourth engaged for half of the session. The great subjects of Apologetics and Church History are committed to one chair, all Biblical studies to another, while Homiletics has but three months of alternate sessions. Now in comparing these arrangements with the great theological schools of the Old World, and the New we see how imperfect they are. And when we reflect on the extent of the preparation necessary to the most effective teachings of departments in Theology it is obvious that

AN INCREASE OF OUR STAFF IS DEMANDED.

A professor should not only have time to cover his department adequately in his prelections, but should be thoroughly acquainted with its literature, and by meditation and study should be so possessed by his subject as to have the concentration and enthusiasm of a specialist.

The entire field of theological instruction is so extensive that no man, unless a prodigy, can have the familiarity with it which it is desirable that a professor should have with his own subject. All who have given any attention to theological studies are aware that the literature, in every department, is very extensive and constantly increasing, and that limitation of time and talent ordinarily forbids a wide and accurate acquaintance with the whole. The teacher of New Testament literature, e.g., requires to have a fair knowledge of the Greek language; an accurate knowledge of the peculiarities of the New Testament Greek, as these are now well ascertained, and set forth in grammars and lexicons, and in various special treatises; and he must know thoroughly what pertains to Introduction, whether general or special. When we call to mind the mass of literature which has gathered around single books of the New Testament, as the Gospel of John, or the Epistle to the Romans, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, it will be readily admitted that the teaching of the New Testament subjects is quite enough for a single chair. But if you add everything which belongs to Old Testament literature, with its numerous and difficult problems, and the large scholarship which it demands, the burden is too heavy to be borne. I have made reference to my own departments, but it is evident that a chair which unites Church History and Apologetics has too much committed to it. On both subjects the scope and the literature are exceedingly extensive, and whether we think of the duties of the class-room or of the private study involved in adequate preparation for them, we may say that no plea but that of poverty can justify an arrangement under which these great subjects are entrusted to one chair.

Again, is it satisfactory to have systematic teaching on Homiletics extend over three months only of a theological course? This is the present arrangement, for Homiletics alternate with Church Government and Pastoral Theology, and these subjects are not entered on till the second year. Homiletical instruction given in the criticism of discourse is doubtless a valuable addition to that imparted by lecture,

but even thus too slender provision is made for a subject so intimately connected with the work of the ministry. It is, of course, quite possible with the same individual in a certain way to teach all branches of theology and a great many things besides; but I speak of the teaching which is obviously required in our own circumstances.

For let it not be imagined that because the professor is merely introducing his students to the studies committed to him a mere smattering of knowledge in these subjects will suffice for him. To impart successfully even primary instruction he must have the whole field intelligently before him. Thus only can he feel secure of his ground, and carry forward the studies of his class from beginning to end of their course with unity of place and mastery of his subject. Thus only, I may add, is a high measure of enthusiasm in communicating instruction ordinarily attained.

Amongst those who have reflected on these matters there is but one opinion as to the importance of having our teaching staff increased. It is simply a question of ways and means. The General Assembly (I am sure this is its mind) would not delay appointment did the financial position of the College warrant it in taking this step. Hence the necessity of strengthening our financial basis—of increasing our revenue. I cannot think that a brief exposition of this matter is here out of place, or should be regarded with disfavour by any true friend of the College, and of theological education. Indeed, we are frequently told that the College does not sufficiently

MAKE ITS WANTS KNOWN,

and is too modest in its appeals to the Church.

I have already made reference to the honourable exertions on behalf of this College made by our Church in the earlier period. Annual collections, in many cases very liberal, were given by the congregations for its support. These collections were almost the only source of revenue. After the establishment of the sister institution in Montreal, a constituency, the limits of which were varied from time to time, was connected with Knox College, and charged with its maintenance. For several years after the union of 1875, Queen's College and Knox College had a common constituency, and shared in its contributions according to a ratio agreed on. For the last three years the three colleges in Montreal, Kingston and Toronto have had connection with a common fund, receiving according to proportions determined by the Assembly.

In addition to the revenue from collections, Knox College had, when the recent endowment canvass began, about \$52,000 funded for its support. The greater part of this came from the bequest of Mr. Hall, of Peterboro', and the interest accruing from this was the only supplement for revenue purposes to the yearly collections. The debt on ordinary revenue, which amounted to more than \$11,000, was absorbing in interest too much of our limited income. The debt on the Building Fund, which cannot longer be treated as a separate account, is about \$26,000. Thus matters stood when the effort for endowment began in the end of 1882. The aim of the College Board was to raise the sum of \$200,000, and thus provide, from this source, say \$12,000 annually. Inasmuch as our yearly disbursements had remained between \$12,000 and \$13,000 for some time, it was obvious that should this effort be successful, a very slight supplement from collections would with our present expenditure enable us to clear our way. I record with thankfulness the good measure of success achieved in endowment. The Church was convinced of the necessity of the step, and the response made has been encouraging. At the present time over \$163,000 has been subscribed, and if the parts of the Church yet to be canvassed shall simply keep up the standard of giving, the College Board will approach the sum which it ventured to name. It is, however, unnecessary to say that payment of subscriptions will not be completed for some years, and that we have a part only of the interest of the sum subscribed at present disposal. The report of the Board of Management for last year states that "the interest-producing fund applicable to the support of the College is in round numbers \$100,000." The amount received last year from the common fund was \$6,615. Should the present year furnish an equal amount, this, with what accrues from endowment, would as nearly as possible correspond to our present expenditure. If, therefore, increase of staff is to take place, there must, from some quarter, be increase of revenue.

The question then is, Can such increase be expected? Can it be counted on? In an address on an occasion such as this it would be out of place to go into details of calculation, showing precisely what revenue would justify the Assembly in appointing an additional professor, and estimating what increase of revenue may be looked for from either of the sources indicated. The endowment fund may be expected to grow more or less from year to year till the present effort is completed, and

EVERY FRIEND OF THE COLLEGE

should assist in making that effort quite successful. Let this fund be built up and strengthened, for it is evident that in the not distant future the support of the College must depend almost exclusively upon it. In the meantime the

Church, I am sure, will not withhold the supplement from collections necessary to efficiency in our work. In regard to the requirements of the curriculum it has been shown how desirable it is to have our staff strengthened, and my only reason for touching upon the matter of finances is its bearing upon the action which we hope to see the Church speedily take.

The General Assembly, I am quite aware, has its eye upon every part of the field and work under its inspection; nevertheless it is surely proper that those who are closely connected with departments of that work, and who necessarily have their thoughts much occupied with them, should give expression to the opinions which they have been led to entertain. Thus the Church is aided in forming her convictions on practical matters, and the way prepared for wise action, in due time, by our Supreme Court. I am very certain that my colleagues in the teaching faculty, the members of the Senate and Boards of the College, and all who have given special attention to the position and working of the College, are at one with me in the opinion that our professorial staff requires to be strengthened, and that there should be no delay in doing so beyond what the state of our finances imposes. Farther; it will be unanimously agreed that every effort should be made so to establish our financial basis as to remove all doubt regarding the expediency of the action desired.

Those whose duty it has been to seek funds for carrying on our collegiate institutions are not seldom told that we should content ourselves with doing the work of our own generation, and leave to posterity the task of further development. This advice might be useful—might at least be received with equanimity—had we a single theological school in our Church which approached completeness of equipment in comparison with the standard which we must keep before us. Our aim, the Church may be assured, is not to relieve coming generations of the share which they ought to take in promoting theological education, and thus deprive them of the great advantage of close connection with an important branch of the Church's operation. Neither is our aim the purely ambitious one of having theological schools possessed of wealth equal to that of the great seminaries across the lines. No one desires to see the Church waste her means upon machinery having no intimate or real connection with the service of her Lord. The very imperfect statement which I have made of the work to be done in our theological schools, and the manner of doing it shows that we are merely contemplating such a condition of these schools as the practical interests of the Church demand. For we quite concur in the opinion that the main object of our theological college is a practical one—the preparation of young men for the work of the ministry; and that the promotion of theological science and learning, however important in its way, is not what is mainly intended in maintaining them. It is not, therefore, the purpose of the Church that the theological professor, should be a specialist in a narrow department, with abundance of learned leisure to prosecute investigations but remotely connected with the practical work of the Church, though interesting to professional theologians. But surely in Canada we run no present risk of too great theological specialism; and our object, I repeat, is merely to secure such subdivision of labour as experience has demonstrated to be necessary to high efficiency in conducting the work of our theological schools. But I may add that a Church with the history and traditions of ours

WILL NEVER ACQUIRE

in the selfish, degrading and wholly unchristian view that we should devise and execute nothing large and generous lest coming generations should reap benefit from our labours. It had been worse for us had the Knoxes, Melvilles, and Hendersons of an earlier age thus thought!

I may not here discuss the question of consolidation of theological schools in our Church. It has been brought before the General Assembly, and a committee is appointed on it. May He who has promised wisdom to those who ask it of Him, so guide the committee and the Church that a right conclusion shall be reached. But whilst I may not venture an opinion as to what the solution of this question should be, or whether any solution can be found, I may express the earnest hope that in accordance with the importance of this great interest, nothing shall hinder our Church, whatever arrangements shall prevail, from doing the very best for the theological education which the extent of her resources warrants and demands.

In presenting this subject nothing has, I trust, been said depreciatory of any of the theological schools of our Church even with their present incomplete outfit; nothing which would impair the confidence of students or of the Church in the teaching imparted in them; nothing which should not lead every lover of our Church more to strive for the increasing usefulness and honour. Why our Colleges have not the resources and equipment of the great theological schools, needs no explanation, and no loyal member of the Church will the less love and cherish them because they are still below the stature of full manhood. We may surely ask—not their alumni only, but—all the ministers and members of our Church, to seek their good, to bear them on their hearts