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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

Ottawa, Wednesday, Mar. 18 1903.

HOME MISSION WORK.

The great event of the week in Presbyterian circles has been, the meeting of the Home Mission Committee, and its work. What a noble record this committee of our church has, and what a noble work it has wrought for the church and for the country. To look in even upon its meetings and see gathered there its veteran or its newer members, representing the church from Quebec to the farthest outlying presbytery of British Columbia, to note the earnestness and interest written on every face, is itself an inspiration. It is to our weak faith wonderful, and a cause for profound gratitude to Almighty God, and a loud and urgent call to go forward, to see how, year after year by comparatively small sums gathered up from all parts of the church, the means are provided for this greatest work of our church. Every year almost, for some time before the meeting of this committee, there have been more or less fear and trembling lest there might be a deficiency, and the great Home Mission work consequently be arrested or curtailed, and year after year, our fears have been rebuked. "Better than ever," is the report this year along the whole line. This is not the place for "detailed statements of the funds"; this we hope may reach every family and become known to every member of our church, and stimulate to greater effort. The prosperous state of the country has no doubt some share in providing this ample supply of means, but those most competent to judge, and we believe the opinion will be concurred in by all who give attention and thought to the matter, is, that it is still more due to the fact that, the rank and file of our ministers, office bearers and members are rising to a true appreciation of the magnitude and the vital importance to all the greatest interests of the Dominion, of the great work in our Church, in common with the other branches of the Christian church, is charged with in this great Home Missionary enterprise.

ON CORRUPTION IN POLITICS.

We hear loose talk about corruption in politics, and yet we cannot doubt that such a thing exists; seeing that every one is in some sense a politician, that politics touches everything, and that politics cannot rise higher than the people, who are its source. Nor is it worth while trying to estimate, among great parties, which is least perfect, seeing that other men are of like passions with ourselves.

At the same time, it is possible to take a jaundiced view of a whole people in relation to corruption in politics. If one were to judge the state of society in the United States from some of the yellow journals, he would imagine the bulk of the people busied night and day with murders, burglaries, and elopements; and the great mass of the inhabitants of the neighbour country are hard working, fair living, law abiding citizens. The DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN believes the truth to be that the great bulk of the electors in each party are politically upright, and incapable of being knowingly influenced to do what is not right. But there are black sheep in every flock, whose doings, likethose of the criminal classes generally, attract more attention than ten times the same number of the quiet, wholesome, orderly type of *genus homo*. These black sheep in politics, unfortunately, are apt to have a bad effect on the rest of the body politic, and the practical question is how to cut them out and isolate them into a class by themselves.

Mr. Gladstone, on one occasion, said the great aim of statesmen should be to make it as easy as possible for men to do right and as difficult as possible for them to do wrong. One way of making it difficult to do wrong in connection with the working of representative institutions, is the creation of a sound public opinion; this is the legitimate work of the pulpit, and it is a work not needing to be done in any spirit of partizanship.

Admonitions alone, however, are quite insufficient. "O cursed opportunity!" exclaims Shakespeare. Opportunity to do evil in connection with the conducting of elections should as far as possible be removed. In this connection there may be something to be said for obligatory voting, just as jury duty, for example, is made obligatory. Probably a good deal of venality at elections is caused by the belief, whether well or ill founded, that "the other side" intend to indulge in bribery or other wrong-doing; hence, human nature being what it is, grows up the pernicious theory of "fighting the devil with fire." The greater portion of the bribery and other ill-doing in any constituency centres about what is called getting out the vote. Why not lay upon each elector the legal duty of getting out his own vote? Surely that is no great burden to be laid upon any citizen in return for his being allowed to participate by the ballot in the government of his country! The ballot is a privilege, but also it is a duty, and such should it be made by the statutes of the land.

Make voting obligatory, and much of Othello's occupation would be gone; the occupation of those who have to beseech or bribe electors to their plain duty will be gone. The DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN is not foolish

enough to consider obligatory voting the cure-all for those varied evils in politics which grow out of the deceitful human heart; but obligatory voting would at least fall in with Mr. Gladstone's principle of by so much making evil more difficult.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS.

Although correspondence was opened many months ago with the Railway Companies regarding the ensuing meeting of the General Assembly, no definite arrangements have yet been made. The reason assigned for the delay is the fact that so many different lines in the United States, as well as in Canada, have to be consulted. As many commissioners are enquiring regarding the matter, in order to prevent unnecessary correspondence, I take this opportunity of stating that as soon as definite arrangements are completed, I will give information regarding these in the columns of the newspapers, and also by circulars to commissioners of Assembly.

ROBERT H. WARDEN,

Toronto, 16th March, 1903.

THE CENTURY FUND AGENT.

Editor DOM. PRESBYTERIAN:

Dear SIR,—The Century Fund is now practically closed, the final report will be presented to the General Assembly to meet in Vancouver. I write these few lines just by way of appreciation of the Agent, Rev. Dr. Campbell, whose work as such ceased on 28th ult. He is now a minister without charge or office, and surely as a church we owe him a debt of gratitude which it may be difficult to pay. His work was laborious, his health none too good, through sickness and health he kept it, and his work was surely fruitful. What it might have been had such honored and respected men as Rev. Drs. Laing, King, Robertson and Grant not been removed it is difficult to estimate, no doubt the fund suffered by their removal, as all of them had the confidence of the church, respect and esteem of the business men combined with a rare genius for finance and the results so far must be more than gratifying to our finance minister, Rev. Dr. Warden, whose child the Century Fund is and to whose untiring financial direction it is to be attributed its success in large measure, and who as head of our standing committee may be planning some future work for our Century Fund Agent. It has however, occurred to me that as the Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund is behind that Dr. Campbell might be profitably employed in placing the claims of this most worthy scheme before our wealthy people, for same reason as other ministers in charge find a difficulty (delicacy) in placing this fund before their congregations and at present if so worthy a man as Rev. Dr. Campbell were to be retired all that the fund could allow would be a paltry two hundred or two hundred and fifty dollars per annum. Surely not sufficient to offer a minister who has preached the gospel for over forty years. Our church is able and ought to put this fund in a such a position that is worthy of her, and I firmly believe that were the claims placed properly before the people they would generously respond to the same.

W. DRYSDALE.

Montreal, March 16, 1903.