

Let this suffice. The condition of Protestantism within the bounds of the Synod, so far as I can gather, may be thus stated :

(a) In the Province of Quebec, a decline generally, with Montreal as a notable exception.

(b) In a section of Ontario, stationary in some localities with a slight decrease in others.

(c) But in the remaining portion of Ontario within the bounds of this Synod, Protestantism is strong, ascendant, and steadily increasing.

II. THE CAUSES OF DECREASE.

A mere enumeration of some of these causes must suffice.

1. The drift of the young people to the cities.
2. The tendency of young men to enter upon professional and commercial life.
3. Aversion to farming.
4. Length and severity of the winter in Quebec Province. Some regard the months as twelve kine; six of them beautiful and well favored, six of them lean and ill-favored, and these eat up the well favored and fat kine. Those who thus view the year naturally desire to get to some favored region where the fat kine are more numerous and the lean ones less so.
5. Poverty of the soil. (True of some parts.)
6. Haste to be rich.
7. The push and enterprise of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon races in leaving the old for newer regions.

8. The difficulty of maintaining Gospel ordinances.

9. The disabilities and disadvantages under which Protestants labor.

Some of these last may be mentioned :

(a) As a rule, it is felt that, where the French gain the ascendancy the wheels of progress clog and the shadow on the dial goes back.

As a very simple illustration of this, I may mention a small matter, yet a matter of much annoyance to the enterprising, viz., that in many municipalities where the French predominate, roads for double teams are not allowed. In many counties in this Province it is impossible to drive a double team in the winter. Should a young man of push and pluck desire to employ himself and double team in the winter months in hauling wood, logs, bark, etc., he will find, if he attempts to drive his horses abreast, first, that he cannot do it because of the condition and gauge of the roads, and, secondly, that he would be fined for attempting to do so.

(b.) Property usually decreases in value and taxes become more and more burdensome. This is a heavy grievance. The Church of Rome and her numerous orders of brotherhood and sisterhood, by purchase, by donations and bequests, are annually enriching themselves by the possession of real estate. The moment it is transferred to them it is free from taxation, and the

increased burden falls at once upon the other owners of real estate.

(c.) The use of the French as the official language in municipalities where the French are in the majority. It is comparatively an easy matter to bring about a change whereby the business of the corporation shall be conducted in the French, as well as keeping the record of the proceedings and the giving of official notices. This is certainly galling, and in cases may be a positive injury to those who do not understand that language, and yet have interests in a municipality.

(d.) The erection of ecclesiastical parishes by Bishops, which parishes become at once the civil municipalities. This is a crying evil, a positive wrong, a flagrant injustice to all, but particularly to Protestants. To them it is often a grievous gerry-mander.

(e.) Another (and resulting at times from the former) is the difficulty of maintaining proper schools. One correspondent writes: "At — Que., the school is closed up altogether. The burden was so heavy on the few families that they had to abandon it." In other cases schools are known to be open for but 3 and four months in the year. Under these circumstances many enterprising Protestants move away from surroundings which are so uncongenial to them, their removal making the lot of the brethren they leave behind more grievous than before.

III. THE FUTURE PROSPECTS.

1. In the portions of Ontario within our Synod the prospects are that the Protestant population is there to stay and to increase, with a probable diminution in few localities. In this portion of our Synod the prospects are bright.

2. The prospects for the Province of Quebec are:—(a.) Continuance in some places. (b.) Growth in some (as Montreal). (c.) Extinction in various places, if present conditions continue. Speaking from my own knowledge I cannot come to another conclusion.

My opinion is confirmed by that of several of my correspondents. One: "There is great fear of extinction under the present state of affairs. It will take time, however, but it is sure to come. Another "Danger of extinction? Most certainly there is. Unless there come a reformation, extinction is the inevitable result. This ceaseless outflow cannot go on always without our reaching the end at last." Another, than whom there is none in the Synod more judicious, nor better qualified to speak, replies to the question, "Is there danger of extinction?" "I believe there is under present conditions."

IV. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR THIS DECADENCE?

It would be easy to theorize; but to find a sufficient remedy and to apply it, is a difficult task. Many to whom the situation has given deep concern see no remedy. Some fear that