

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING UNUSED PRIVILEGES.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Who is this gentleman who bows smilingly over the baby sleigh and kisses the little cherub while the mother looks proudly on? That gentleman is running for Mayor. The baby's father is an independent elector. Enough said.

And who is this other gentleman who drives rapidly along the back streets, pulls up at every door, hands the reins to the boy and makes a short call? That gentleman is also running for Mayor.

And who is this man who carries a great heavy baby on one arm and two or three bundles on the other as he trudges along behind two ladies. That gentleman wishes to be an alderman, and he carries the baby and bundles home so that he may get the vote of the husband of one of the ladies who walk behind.

This man who stands on the street corner talking to a number of "dry" looking citizens is running for Reeve. He gives the dry citizen a sly nod. They adjourn and in a short time don't feel quite so dry.

They say he will make a good Reeve and mean to vote for him.

Why all this nonsense? Why this intolerable nuisance called canvassing? Didn't Baldwin give municipal institutions to Ontario many years ago and have not these institutions been gradually improved and adapted to the growing wants of the country. Certainly, but neither Baldwin nor any other man can give some people intelligence and common sense. Robert Baldwin was one of Canada's best men and our municipal institutions are among the best things we have. If anybody tried to abolish municipal councils there would be a civil war. Some of the county councils are nearly as large as the Local Parliament—at least three times as large as they need to be—but any attempt to reduce their number would be resisted. The people would fight for privileges which some of them won't use without being canvassed and some are too careless to use even when canvassed.

Why should any capable man who is willing to give time, health, and labour for the public weal be compelled to tramp around on the back streets and back concessions asking people to vote for him? Is it not the duty of men entrusted with the franchise to look out for good municipal rulers rather than wait to be button-holed, and coaxed, and treated, and petted into voting.

There is one kind of man that ought to be disfranchised on sight; that is the man who says at every election—"If my vote is not worth asking it is not worth giving." If we were the Mowat Government we would so amend the municipal law that when a man talks in that way he would cease to be a voter. No doubt he thinks that is a very clever thing to say. He imagines it is witty and smart. If he lost his vote for having such contemptibly mean ideas about the franchise perhaps he would not think himself so clever.

But let it not be supposed for a moment that municipal privileges are the only ones that men are more ready to fight for than use. For the best examples of unused privileges you must go into the churches, especially the Presbyterian church. Presbyterians would fight to the death—at least some of them would—for the privilege of calling their own minister. Let a Presbyterian committee, Synod or any other kind of organization try to place a minister over any Presbyterian congregation and there would be instant war. A proposal to do nothing more serious than limit the length of time for hearing candidates meets with violent resistance. And yet in a congregation of two or three hundred you rarely find fifty at a meeting to moderate in a call. The call has then to be hawked around the people for weeks and in the end all their signatures are not obtained. Men who would shout about "parsonage" and the "Disruption," and "Drumclog" and the "claymores of the Covenanters," if a minister were placed over them won't walk ten rods to help to select one. Surely if a privilege is not worth fighting for it is not worth using.

We hear a good deal these days about an open Bible. In fact we hear more than we see on that question. Go into almost any Methodist church and you find that only a small proportion of the people use Bibles when the Scriptures are being read. There is a sad falling off in this regard in many Presbyterian churches. The old familiar rustle of opening books is rarely heard. No doubt many of the men who never open a Bible in church would like to have a rumpus with somebody about an open Bible. If it is such a good thing, to have an open Bible why in the name of common sense don't you open your Bible in church? Is the Bible given to men to wrangle about? Surely a man who wants to fight somebody about the open Bible ought to open his own—if he has one.

See that man rushing about the street looking for somebody. Who is he? Is he a constable looking for an escaped prisoner? No. Is he an asylum official looking for an escaped patient? No. What is he? He is a returning officer hunting for somebody to second the nomination of a school trustee. He came to the place of nomination at the hour appointed but long after the hour no elector presented himself. At last one elector dropped in and made a nomination but there was no one to second it. The returning officer had to run out and hunt up a seconder. We have the best school system in the world and that is often the way we elect trustees to work it.

"Mind your own business" is substantially what any Presbyterian congregation would say to any court or committee that unnecessarily interfered with its congregational affairs. And yet when the evening comes for attending to congregational business there may not be two dozen people at the congregational meeting.

Surely privileges worth fighting for are worth using.

CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY.

By H. S. McCOLLUM, ST. CATHARINES.

NIAGARA PRESBYTERY OF UPPER CANADA.—Concluded.

The last preceding paper in this series closed with a statement that seven ministers were present at the ordination at Wainfleet, "and probably there were others who did not attend." Further investigation has led to the belief that the Presbytery, after that ordination, had just seven members—a number which was sustained to the end, except when pulpits were temporarily vacant. At Barton there had been two such vacancies, "Bishop" Rose having given place after serving as stated supply and pastor from September 12, 1841, to July 11, 1843, and Rev. James Harvey Rice having officiated as supply from November 5, 1843, to September 4, 1844. Rev. J. F. A. S. Fayette followed Mr. Rice, after a short vacancy.

LATER MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

The next meeting of Presbytery following that at Wainfleet (February 20, 1844) was held at Clinton, October 1 of that year, but no information as to the business transacted has been obtained. After that date no action of Presbytery was reported until January 18, 1849, when Rev. David Barr, a native of the Niagara Peninsula, was installed as pastor of the Church at St. Catharines, a stipend of \$400 a year being promised him. Rev. Dr. Blanchard officiated as Moderator and Rev. Mr. Fayette preached the installation sermon. Mr. Barr's pastorate terminated abruptly with the acceptance of his resignation on the 6th of October following. Afterwards he took orders in the Episcopal Church.

The last meeting of Presbytery (June 5, 1849), of which information has been preserved, like the first meeting of the revived body, was held at Barton, but only the Churches at Pelham, St. Catharines and Barton were represented. The communion was celebrated and Rev. Mr. Barr preached. Elder Josiah Holmes, who followed Mr. Barr into the Episcopal Church, was present from St. Catharines.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR UNION.

At the first meeting of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (Free Church), held at Toronto, in July, 1844, Rev. Dr. Blanchard and Rev. Mr. Close appeared as a deputation from the Niagara Presbytery of Upper Canada to confer on the subject of a union between the two bodies. The Synod appointed a committee of conference, which committee reported as follows:

"The Committee beg leave to report that, after much friendly communing and inquiry as to the principles and procedure of the Presbytery, they are enabled to state that that body consists of seven ministers, having the charge of fifteen congregations; that they hold, in common with ourselves, the Westminster Confession of Faith as their standard; and as a Presbytery, maintain and uphold its doctrines in what is usually termed the Calvinistic sense, holding fast by the great cardinal doctrines of the divine sovereignty, the decrees of election, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as distinguished from the views which, on account of their extreme character, are usually styled Antinomian and Arminian; in all matters connected with the admission of members, the administration of discipline and the ordination of ministers, their practice is substantially the same with our own, and that of the Free Church of Scotland. They do not question the obligation of civil government as such, to honour Christ as the King of kings, and the Governor amongst the nations; although on the propriety of the Church's accepting endowments from the State, in the present divided state of the Church and its relationship to the world, they have great difficulties, and in submitting this information the committee earnestly recommend to the Synod that measures should be adopted for immediate co-operation with the Presbytery in all matters of common interest relative to the conversion of souls; that copies of the protest and resolutions on which the protest was founded should immediately be forwarded to the Presbytery, and *quoad ultra* that a committee be appointed to attend their next meeting, with power to arrange such terms of union as may be agreeable to that Presbytery, to be submitted to the Synod at the next meeting for their approval."

The "protest" referred to in the report was the protest of the "Free Church of Canada" party when leaving the Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland; and the "resolutions" were resolutions which created warm discussion in the old Synod before the Free Church withdrawal. Copies were ordered to be sent to the Niagara Presbytery for a better understanding by that body of the position and acts of the new Synod.

Dr. Blanchard and Mr. Close were introduced, and "severally addressed the Synod at considerable length," and, after discussion, "it was unanimously agreed that the report be sustained and adopted, and that the Synod record their sense of gratitude to the great Head of the Church for the visit from this deputation, and their purpose to carry out the recommendations of the committee." In October following,

the Synod appointed the Moderator, Mr. Gale, Mr. Cheyne and Mr. McIntosh to meet with the Niagara Presbytery and carry out the recommendations in the report herein before referred to. The committee reported at a meeting held at Cobourg, June, 1845, "The Synod approve of the report, and with a view to removing the hindrances that are at present in the way of a union, recommend that a brotherly intercourse should be kept up with the ministers thereof by the ministers of this Church; and that the Presbytery of Hamilton, especially correspond with this Presbytery as occasion offered." The "hindrances" referred to were "diversities of practice as to the modes of worship," including the use of hymns and instrumental music; and they were sufficient to keep apart two bodies of earnest Christian workers, who were one in doctrine and one in devotion to the work of planting the Gospel banner over the hills and valleys of their adopted province. No further action on the subject was taken by either party.

FINANCIAL AID WITHDRAWN.

On the first day of January, 1845, the American Home Missionary Society withdrew from Canada, and the Churches in connection with the Niagara Presbytery were left to struggle under very serious pecuniary embarrassment, resulting in the withdrawal of ministers and the consequent weakening or breaking up of Churches never financially strong. This was evidently the chief cause of the decline and final disbanding of the Presbytery, though the "taint of Americanism" had not been wholly removed, and other Presbyterian organizations were successfully occupying parts of the field which it had cultivated with but little competition. The effects of the withdrawal will be appreciated in reading later portions of this paper.

TRANSFER OF CHURCHES.

On the 5th of the next November (1849) the "Presbyterian Church and Society" of St. Catharines, at a meeting duly called, after prayerful conference, chiefly in reference to the financial condition and prospects, unanimously adopted the following resolution, viz.:

Resolved, That any connection which may heretofore have existed between this Church and the Niagara Presbytery be, and the same is, hereby dissolved, the Church withdrawing from the same.

Resolved, that this Church and Society, duly considering the peculiar circumstances in which they are now placed, believe that it would be to their interest to unite with . . . the Buffalo Presbytery, and that application in due form for the admittance of this Church into that body be now made.

The application was granted and the transfer accomplished at a meeting of the Buffalo Presbytery, held at Springville, N. Y., December 26, 1849, and Elder Josiah Holmes took his seat as a member of that body. In conference with the deputation from St. Catharines, a committee of the Presbytery agreed to recommend a memorial to the Home Missionary Society for aid, and to assist the Church in obtaining a suitable pastor as soon as possible.

On the 29th day of September, 1851, the Church at Pelham unanimously "voted to apply to the Buffalo Presbytery for a missionary minister." The application, if made, was not successful, and the Church was inactive, or without stated preaching, for about three years. On Thursday, October 19, 1854, a conference was held between the Church at Pelham and the Church at Gainborough, which resulted in the adoption, at separate meetings, by these two Churches, of the following resolution, viz.:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is expedient and necessary, to ensure a supply of preaching for our pulpit, that this Church be united with the Niagara Presbytery in the State of New York.

According to the spirit of this resolution, formal application was made, and, in due time, the transfer was effected as desired.

On the 20th of October, 1850, Rev. J. F. A. S. Fayette preached from the text found in John iv. 24, it being the last Sabbath of his sixth year of ministerial labour with the Church at Barton. As the Session records close with a note of this anniversary service, it is presumed that this Church was inactive or intermittent from that date forward for several years until it became connected with the Presbytery of Hamilton in 1868.

Four of its best Churches having thus ceased connection with the "Niagara Presbytery of Upper Canada," that body, after years of valuable service, was virtually dead, without the ceremony of formal dissolution. No efforts to revive it were ever made, and in due time, all the Churches which remained Presbyterian, with any lingering vitality, found their way into the Presbytery of Hamilton, and are now regularly related to the "Presbyterian Church of Canada."

SOME OF THE MINISTERS.

Of the ministers connected with the Presbytery for longer or shorter terms during its second period, the most active and prominent were Rev. Abijah Blanchard, D.D., Rev. R. H. Close, Rev. J. W. Haynes and Rev. J. F. A. S. Fayette. Dr. Blanchard came into the field early in 1843; in due time, made application "to the Honourable, the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada," for the enactment of a law which, by naturalization, would make him a Canadian citizen. He was a kind of bishop for the Presbytery, superintending presbyterial work and planning and executing with skill and wisdom. He was acting pastor of the Church at Pelham about six years, the Church at Louth being also under his supervision most of the time.

Of Mr. Close it seems but just to add to what has already been said of him and his work, the fact that he had the wisdom and good judgment to take to wife a native-born Ca-