

inhabitants, will be willing to admit this. A large proportion of the town site had been a mere swamp, not more than six inches, even yet, above high water. The approach from the sea was by a narrow, shallow and tortuous channel. By thorough drainage the town is made remarkably healthy; and by embankments and excavations, docks have been constructed, an island, famous for ship building, Dargan island, has been created out of a mud-bank; and a channel for some of the largest steamers now afloat, built on that island, has been opened. The men, too, for a long time, almost the only manufacture tolerated in Ireland by the narrow-minded jealousy of England, has flourished, so that Irish linens are unrivalled in the markets of the world. Ulster has long been the sheet-anchor, the last reliable support of British connection; and Belfast is the chief strength of Ulster. The public institutions for learning any general education were long ago, for all practical purposes, far superior to those of any other town or city in Ireland. The character of the Scots, who settled in Ulster, seemed to be affected by the genial atmosphere of the country. Much of the jovial light-heartedness of the genuine Hibernians has been imbibed by the Scottish settlers; while the dogged perseverance of their ancestors has been retained. This

HAPPY COMBINATION

of national characteristics was elevated and purified by the possession of a religion, which enjoins the study of the Scriptures and the use of the Shorter Catechism, that admirable compend of divine truth. I say—this religious system, planted in a soil most favourable for its growth, has brought forth an abundant harvest.

2nd. The second cause of the great increase of Presbyterianism in Belfast within the last sixty years, we must ascribe to the character of the clergy. I have already spoken of Morgan, Cooke, the Wilsons, Hamilton, Toye, and last, but not least, John Edgar. It may not be known to some of my readers that Dr. Edgar wrote the first newspaper articles in the Belfast News Letter on the Temperance Reformation. The Rev. Dr. Joseph Penny, a native of Ireland, had returned from the United States, bringing with him an account of the new temperance reformation. Dr. Edgar prepared a letter on the subject; and, soon after, the first temperance society in Europe was formed at New Ross by the Rev. Geo. Whitmore Carr, an Independent minister. Dr. Edgar's ministry and professorship lasted more than forty years; and, during all that time, he was almost incessantly engaged in every kind of Christian enterprise. The asylum for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, the Ulster Female Penitentiary, and the mission to the Roman Catholic West of Ireland were commenced and carried on chiefly by his untiring energy. Drs. Morgan and Cooke had more to do with the establishment of new churches; Dr. Edgar's labours tended more immediately to the relief and moral improvement of society.

3rd. Lastly, let me say, that, of all the causes for the increase of Presbyterianism in Belfast, we must reckon the Town Mission as the most effective. Commenced by Wm. Cochran, a plain un-scholarly man, under the direction of God-fearing laymen, and supported by the earnest sympathy and prayers of a noble band of ministers, it has gone forward triumphantly for sixty years; and it still continues to prosper. A few ministers indeed, with mistaken ideas of their own interests, have held themselves aloof. One such discontented and disappointed man threw himself into politics, and became a member of the British Parliament; but no one now hears of him. He has dug the grave of his much-coveted popularity.

ELDERSHIP TIME-SERVICE.

Mr. Edrroo.—I am glad the eldership question is receiving attention in your columns, the discussion being conducted in so amicable a spirit. With no desire to take part in the debate, I at the same time venture to point out to "Vindex" that the question is not one of fitness or otherwise to retain office for life—the inference to be drawn from the concluding portion of his letter—but the propriety of having a system, where by others, as worthy and competent as those now ordained, may be equally honoured. No one questions the fitness of our elders—the contention is that by a change in the present order of things, new life would be infused into the work of the Church and a much greater interest taken in its affairs. This has been clearly proven by periodically changing the personnel of the boards of management. Why should it fail with sessions?

As to "Vindex" asserting any such change is an "unscriptural nostrum," he may be right, I would not venture to contradict him; but it is altogether unlikely our American brethren would adopt any such remedy for what they have recognized, and what many Canadian Presbyterians believe is a state of affairs preventing stronger life and renewed zeal in the Master's service.

Conservatism is good, but it is possible to have too much of a good thing. FIDES.

Ottawa, June, 1884.

THE TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

SEVENTH DAY—Continued.

THE COLLEGES.

Tuesday, June 10.—At the afternoon soderunt Rev. R. H. Warden, in presenting the report of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, stated that in some investments there have been loss, in others there is gain. Some were bought at par and could be sold at forty per cent. over par. He referred to the noble act of the McKays, of Montreal, endowing the McKay chair in honour of Edward McKay, their uncle. He also referred to the phase of things that appears in the gathering of students to colleges from the localities in which the colleges are situated.

Rev. J. R. McLeod, Kingston, presented the report of Morris College, and apologized for its not being printed, which was not a mistake of his, as in the first instance the report was put in other hands. The Assembly is thanked for what was done in giving the contributions of the congregation of the Presbytery of Quebec. The amount got from this source was spent in bursaries. There were three theological students during the year, one of whom completed his course and was licensed. The report is signed by Dr. Weir. The amount received was \$861, which was spent as above. Mr. McLeod moved that the report be received and express gratification at the progress made and the success that has attended the institution. Mr. Carmichael (Norwood), seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Principal McKnight presented the report of the Presbyterian College, Halifax. There were fourteen theological students last year. It was but the day of small things. Dr. Patterson had given a course of lectures last year on Missions. We have not cultivated the department of lectureships for several reasons; first, we had no money and did not ask for any, and secondly, we have laid out work enough (four hours a day) for the students without that. There is a deficit, but the difficulty in that connection is that we down there have three professors to support in Dalhousie, as well as our theological professors. We will be relieved of these after some years. He moved the adoption of the report and that the Board be instructed to make an effort to equalize the expenditure and income. Mr. Sedgwick seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Gordon, who was absent when the report of Manitoba College was presented, now asked leave to move a more extended motion, chiefly with reference to Dr. King's efforts which have been so successful and by way of encouragement as well as acknowledgment. This was seconded by Dr. Laing and agreed to.

Dr. Caven now moved that the last Sabbath but one of January next be observed by this Church as a day of prayer for colleges. He added that the Methodists go farther and have sermons preached on that day. He did not ask this to be done, but thought it appropriate if they would. Dr. MacVicar seconded the motion. Mr. Parsons spoke in support of the motion, and would have emphasized prayer for the conversion of the young men in process of education. The motion was then heartily agreed to by the Assembly.

Mr. Warden presented the report of the College Funds. The diminution in this fund is unsatisfactory and discouraging. He was at a loss to understand the position of the ministers and office-bearers when 160 congregations and mission stations failed to send anything.

Mr. James McLennan moved the reception of the report also that a committee be appointed to re-adjust the relations of the colleges to this fund. The first part of the motion was passed. Dr. Caven opposed the appointment of a committee to re-adjust and proceeded to give a history of the common fund. He said that the common fund was a measure of peace. He gave figures to show that Knox College had lost by it to the extent of some \$2,000 a year, and if Knox College wanted re-adjustment in her favour, it would be fair enough. He stated his opinion that if a re-adjustment is to be forced on us he would far rather see the congregations left to send money where they pleased.

Dr. MacVicar spoke briefly. Mr. Morris advocated the appointment of a committee. Dr. Gregg did not give thanks for a common fund, but was willing to continue it as they had it. If the inquiry is to be made, all circumstances are to be taken into account. When special contributions are made to any one college, those sending one do as they please. If a congregation wishes to send to one rather than another, it should be at liberty to do so.

Dr. Reid regretted that this question had been raised. It is discouraging that the fund has not been more successful. He claimed that Toronto had been loyal to the common fund, and showed that congregations in Toronto were more liberal than others in comparison.

The hour of adjournment having arrived the soderunt was closed with the benediction.

The Assembly being constituted, Rev. D. D. McLeod, Barrie, in the absence of Dr. James, submitted the report of the Committee on the

STATE OF RELIGION.

It stated that there was abundant reason for thankfulness to the great Head of the Church for work done and progress made during the past year; also for grace and strength supplied so largely to ministers, missionaries, elders, and office-bearers, who had maintained the cause with increasing fidelity. Attendance on public worship was reported satisfactory. Pastors and sessions were contending against Sabbath profanation and intemperance. Many young men were displaying commendable interest in Church work. The report recommended a united and systematic effort to impress on the mind of the young their duty to the Church and to enlist them in Christian effort. Men might be appointed to be office-bearers at a younger age than was the practice. The character of the youth of the Church was reported to be highly promising. Referring to hindrances, the committee mentioned that one hindrance complained of this year in the report was the multiplication of societies, secret, benevolent, and others. These absorb the time, interest, and money of the members of the Church to such an extent as to hinder their usefulness in the Church. Reference was also made in the reports to the prevailing use of a literature, easily obtained which engenders in the youthful mind a dislike to the study of the Bible. The Committee also spoke of Sabbath desecration and the prominence given by some newspapers to the details of crimes. The committee in conclusion, made the following recommendations: 1. That the Presbyteries seek to secure returns from every session. 2. That the religious condition of the congregations be carefully watched over, and be made the subject of investigation by Presbyteries as circumstances may seem to them to require. 3. That instead of sending out printed queries as heretofore, each Presbytery appoint its own committee on the State of Religion, whose duty shall be to collect information on this subject within its own bounds, and report as formerly to the Convener of the Synodical Committee, and they in turn to the Convener of the General Assembly. That in all times in the service of the Church, as well as the homes of the people, earnest prayer be offered for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the members of the Church. Mr. McLeod moved the reception of the report, which was carried.

At this stage Rev. Dr. Nelles and Rev. Dr. Cochran, of the Canada Methodist Church, were invited to seats on the platform, which invitation they accepted amid applause.

Rev. Mr. Meikle moved in amendment, That we deem it more prudent under the present circumstances that as usual the queries be prepared by the Committee appointed by the General Assembly.

Rev. Mr. McKay, Summerside, moved in amendment to the amendment, That the questions be issued as usual, and that Presbyteries be invited to add additional questions.

The main motion, adopting the third recommendation, was carried by a large majority.

On motion of Rev. J. Thompson, the report as a whole was adopted, and the thanks of the Assembly were given to the convener and Rev. Mr. McLeod.

REPORT ON TEMPERANCE.

Rev. W. A. McKay, of Woodstock, presented the report of the Committee on Temperance. The report is of the most encouraging character, giving a summary of the answers received from the churches to questions asked on the subject of Temperance. The answers show that many of the members practise total abstinence. Coffee houses have been established in several of the cities, and temperance hotels are increasing in number in the country. In most of the congregations the subject of Temperance was brought forward as recommended by the Assembly, and sermons were preached on the subject. Few of the sessions or congregations, as such, engaged in special temperance work, but many of the members were prominent and active in temperance organizations. As to temperance text-books in schools, representation had been made to the Minister of Education on the subject. The report of the Synod of Ottawa and Montreal showed that in four places in the Province of Quebec Dr. Richardson's Temperance Text-book had been introduced, Montreal, Three Rivers, Aylmer, and Huntingdon. By the liberality of Messrs. W. J. Paterson and Henry Morton a copy of this book had been put in the hands of every Protestant school teacher in Quebec. Nothing had been done in Ontario except in Ottawa, where an effort was being made to have these books introduced. Nothing had been done in Manitoba. The Education Boards of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had issued instructions to have Dr. Richardson's book introduced. In reply to the question: "Has the time come for prohibitory laws, and if so what should be done?" such answers were sent in as proved that prohibition sentiment grew apace. The committee recommended that the Presbyteries be instructed to hold annual conferences on the subject of Temperance. They recommend that the following be the deliverance of the Assembly on the subject: 1. That we regard the traffic in strong drink as one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2. That in view of the evils wrought by this scourge of our race, this Assembly would hail with gladness