

## The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Nov. 12, 1896.

### Abstract and Appeal.

This is a booklet of twenty four pages to which it gives us pleasure to direct the attention of our readers. The complaint is frequently made, and not without cause, that the Annual Reports of our Committees are so voluminous as to be read by few and so complicated as to be understood by fewer still, how many in the church have a distinct understanding of the work done in our mission fields? The Secretary of Foreign Missions, has overcome that difficulty by presenting a clear and most readable abstract of the whole foreign mission work including fields administered by both Eastern and Western sections of the Foreign Mission Committee. The classifications of departments removes all obscurity, and places the facts within easy reach of all who desire to know them. By the busy minister who hesitated to attack the Blue Book, for facts, this booklet will be welcomed. We understand the intention is to distribute it freely, and a copy should be placed in every family in the church.

Attention needs to be particularly directed to the financial statement on the closing pages. The Committee it seems have cut down the estimates 25 per cent. on account of the deficit. This means that schools have been closed, which had been opened with great difficulty and may not be recovered in years. Native helpers have been dismissed and the work generally demoralized by a sudden retrenchment to the extent of 25 per cent. The Secretary states that unless congregations contribute at least 50 per cent. more than last year, yet greater reductions must be made. Much as we respect the Foreign Mission Committee, we doubt the wisdom of the course pursued. Surely a deficit of \$8,784, is not so alarming as to justify such serious disturbance of the work, until at least the church was brought face to face with the situation. When whole Presbyteries are found contributing not more than \$300 to \$400, was not the first duty of the Committee to make urgent appeals for more generous gifts; if that had been done we do not believe such disasters would have been allowed. Be that as it may, the appeal is now made. We confidently expect that such a response will be given as will undo the harm already done. Let the contributions be doubled this year and let it never be said that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has played a retreat.

### The Hymnal Contract.

It is difficult to understand, on ordinary grounds, how it is that certain working printers, and now the typographical union, should agitate so persistently against the hymnal contract. The burden of the grievance (?) is "that the Presbyterian Assembly should have thought fit to go outside their own company to have this work done." Typographical Union No 91, which makes the complaint is the Trades Union to which Toronto working printers belong. They act in this matter as in all others transacted at their union, as trade-unionists, but there are certain features of

their Anti-Presbyterianism, which are in marked and unfavourable contrast with the principles on which trade-unionism is conducted and on account of which it has won for itself a strong place in the confidence of the public. To specify. It is unusual for trade-unionists to interfere with their firms in the matter of tenders. They do interest themselves rightly and commendably in the matter of hours and rates of labour, but we do not hear of the machinists, or other tradesmen employed by firms such as say the Massey-Harris, the Gurney Company, or the T. Eaton Company meeting in union and condemning these firms for accepting tenders from the United States or Great Britain. We do not hear complaints because our dry-goods merchants import and sell to Canadians, English and Scotch, German and French goods. On these matters the trade-unionists are silent wisely recognizing the situation. That the typos have broken the silence for once and under exceptional circumstances is not to be explained we repeat, on ordinary grounds. Everything points to a personal animus, and were the whole truth told we believe it would prove that the typographical union has been extremely ill-advised in their unusual course; that, in short, they have been tools in the hands of certain disappointed people. At this stage we shall not be more definite on this point but shall await the next resolution from the Union.

The extraordinary resolution contains the clause "that this union is decidedly of opinion that the execution of the printing and binding of these hymn books could be accomplished equally as cheap in Canada as in the old country." We say at once that this clause is characterized by us as extraordinary not because it deals with the quality of the workmanship and the price of the books; these are points on which a trades union ought to be peculiarly fitted to give an opinion and points which are woefully in need of their immediate and serious consideration. It would be difficult to overrate their importance to the printers of Toronto for on these two points depend the acceptance or rejection of tenders, and to a great extent the question of employment. But the clause is extraordinary for two reasons.

First, that Typographical Union No. 91 is not aware (seemingly) that the quality of work required could not be done in Toronto. We regret to have to make such a statement for it either reflects on the efficiency as workmen of members of the Union, or on the conditions under which they consent to work; but the Union having left no other course open we are compelled to speak thus plainly. The proof lies in the past experience of the Church and in its present experience with Toronto tenderers. The past has shown that such work had to be given to Old Country firms by the Toronto contractor, who therefore became a commission agent in the matter, not an employer of Toronto labor, but we are not aware that Typographical Union No. 91 has at any time censured him for so doing. The present shows that much the same course would have been pursued, had a Toronto tenderer succeeded, only that New York and Philadelphia would have shared with Britain in the deal, but Typographical Union No. 91 does not rail against those Toronto publishers who urged in behalf of their tenders that the work would be first class as it would be performed at New York or Philadelphia or as in one case at least, at the Oxford Press works. No., the Union thinks it better taste to rail at the Presbyterian Church, because as an agent for her members she adopted the usual business methods in a business transaction.

Second. So much for the quality, now for the price. It is evident from the statement on this point that the Union is utterly ignorant of the contents of the tenders. Toronto publishers had every opportunity of tendering