

own limited means for the diffusion of the Gospel amongst their own people.

The state of the funds is given in the following sentence:—"The missionaries sent home estimates last spring for the requirements of their work, and the Committee cut them down \$20,000. Notwithstanding that, the Committee has had to borrow up to this date (1st Dec.) \$50,000, because many congregations do not send in contributions until the end of the year. We have received to date \$28,371, and still require \$92,000 by the 1st of April in order to close the year free from debt. These figures include the W.F.M.S. work, of which \$16,300 have been already paid, and are included in above receipts.

If the church does not feel disposed to provide the funds then—the more's the pity—but there is no alternative. It seems the estimates sent from the fields last spring were cut down to the tune of \$20,000. In all conscience that is close enough. Yet the Assembly has ordered further reduction at the end of this month if the outlook does not brighten and the Committee is determined to carry out the Assembly's instructions—has the Church nothing to say to this? Now as congregations are about to apportion their funds let them place an injunction on the Committee and prohibit this pitiful prospect of snatching bread from the hungry just after it has been raised to the lips. The thought is intolerable.

THE LONDON DISASTER.

NEW Year is not unfrequently ushered in by some catastrophe which casts a shadow over the joys of the festive season. Unfortunately Canada has given 1898 the tragic example. The disaster at London, Ontario, has sent a thrill of horror through the whole country. The liveliest sympathy has been excited, and from sea to sea but one feeling animates Canadians. That such a calamity could have been possible in a public building, supposed to be under public inspection is a puzzle to many. It is easy to be wise after the event, yet now is the time when the public mind is startled to urge on all municipalities to institute strict inspection of all public places where people congregate and where any danger to life or limb may lurk.

TAX EXEMPTION.

ON Monday the Citizens of Toronto were asked to vote on the question of tax exemptions, and it is important that attention should be directed anew to the result of the vote. Several classes of property are at present exempt from taxation such as property belonging to the municipality, government property, schools, hospitals, etc., also certain monies, as income up to \$700. The vote having been favorable to the abolition of all exemptions, it follows that all these classes are involved. The church is interested as the proposed tax would fall heavily on property already burdened by mortgages and debts, and on congregations whose limit of ability has in many cases been already overstepped by contracted obligations. The church people themselves could have settled this question by voting against it. That some changes in the law may be desirable we do not deny, but church property used for church purposes should, for good and sufficient reasons often stated of late in these pages, be exempt from public burdens and we are disappointed with the adverse vote.

The question is of wider interest than to the Toronto citizen, for a change at Toronto would mean a change in the Province of Ontario, the statute being a Provincial one, and the conference of municipal representative from which the demand has sprang, being Provincial. Therefore the action of Toronto may have more than a local bearing and it will be well for friends everywhere in Ontario to keep an eye on petitions to the Legislature in this matter.

Reverting to the Toronto vote. It is not to be taken without question as the voice of the people. First, the total vote cast on the question was so much smaller than the total vote cast on the other ballots—such as the mayoralty, that if the difference were added to the exemption vote the pros. and cons. would have been practically even. But further. It must be taken into account that there was a duplicating of votes, the same persons having been permitted to vote in every ward on the roll of which his or her name happened to be, the same as if voting for Alderman, thus one voter might possibly represent five votes in the majority and as the active abolitionists are, as a rule, the property-holders it is very likely the vote in favor of abolition was materially increased in this manner. Secondly A great deal of confusion existed in the public mind as to the import of the question. Some regarded it as against church exemptions only, and were influenced by the large areas of real estate said to be owned by Roman Catholic churches in the city; others, as against the exemption of stocks, mortgages, etc; and what was quite strange, considering the publicity given to the subject in the press, many professed to have heard of the vote for the first time when presented with the ballot at the polling booth. A significant fact is the statement that many of the voters did not understand the question, shewing that the abolitionists have much educational work yet to do in order to form an intelligent public opinion.

One press criticism has been most unjust to clergymen as a class, claiming as it does that the strongest opposition to the abolition of exemptions come from the clergy. We hope the clergy are against abolition, so far as the churches are concerned. Clergymen are expected to stand by the interests of their congregations. It is not the clergyman who would suffer by a tax, but the people, many of them poor, who would have to make up the additional amount required and which to many struggling congregations would mean death, or reduction to the status of Mission Stations. Yet in face of this danger clergymen can be found, so wedded to theoretical visions, as to throw in their lot with the abolitionists.

KLONDYKE MISSION.

REV A. S. Grant's departure for the Klondyke to assist Rev. R. M. Dickey in his arduous labours and difficult field, was made the occasion of a pleasant gathering in St. James Square church. Rousing speeches, which will re-echo in the minds and consciences of many who heard them were made by Revs. Principal Grant, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Cochrane and Dr. Warden, but the feature was the address by Sir Oliver Mowat, K.C.M.G., who felt pleased that his first unofficial act since becoming Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario should have been in connection with Mr. Grant's projected work and that too in the church of which he has been a member for more than 40 years. The best wishes of all go with Mr. Grant to this distant field of labour.

THEIR EXCELLENCIES' VISIT.

LORD and Lady Aberdeen's visit to Toronto, brought to a close last week, will long be a pleasant memory to the citizens. It may be safely said that no Governor General, in the past, has taken such pains to know and understand the people, or to have succeeded in advancing so many real interests in this country. Ably seconded by her Excellency, Lady Aberdeen, his Lordship has made an impression on the public mind which will be lasting having been produced by good works, springing from a high sense of the responsibilities and opportunities of his exalted position.