

## **The Monthly Record.**

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### **CHOOSING MINISTERS.**

In Scotland until a few years ago, when the law of patronage was abolished, the minister was appointed to the charge of a vacant parish by the patron who was, generally speaking, the proprietor of the land within the bounds of the parish. The country seemed satisfied for generations with this mode of procedure, although some times it led perhaps to the appointment of an unsuitable or incapable party. To protect their own interests however the people could always object to the life literature and doctrine of the presentee as he was called and in case their objections were well founded the Presbytery could prevent his settlement and require that another be appointed. Once settled however, nothing could remove him, so long as he behaved as a good christian should, except death or his own free will. Even the patron who appointed him could in no wise meddle with him to his detriment; whether he liked his preaching and practice or not, he had to make the best of it. The stipend of the minister was paid, not by the people, but by the proprietor or proprietors within the parish, who were usually on the most friendly terms with the minister.

By the abolition of the patronage Act, this fine old gentlemanly mode of appointing the minister is done away with, and he is now elected by the votes of the communicants male and female; from the youngest child on the roll of communicants upwards, each one has a vote in the election of a minister, and no one else has any voice in the matter. Should there be, as sometimes happens, a score or two of candidates, those who

are so unfortunate as to inspire little enthusiasm are quietly dropped, and a poll is demanded for the two or three favourites. The election is held in the church. A minister from the neighbourhood presides. The voting is carried on openly, we presume by show of hands, or otherwise, at the option of the "returning officer," (if we may without levity apply that designation to the reverend official presiding.) Doubtless in due time when the spirit of democracy sufficiently prevails amongst the multitude, instead of open voting the advanced school of politicians will demand the ballot and secret voting.

The votes having been taken and counted, the candidate who has received the greatest number is declared elected. Should the election have been conducted in all respects according to the law of the church, the Presbytery may proceed in due time with the induction: and should there be no objection to the life literature and doctrine of the newly chosen preacher or minister, he is then settled as minister of the parish.

We understand the congregation may elect a minister of any denomination, but he cannot be inducted until he is formally admitted a minister of the Church of Scotland. Cases have occurred in which a Free Church minister was chosen, and duly settled, having after his election been formally received into the Established Church.

Our own church was lately honoured by the election of the Rev. Mr. Herdman of Pictou, to the parish of Rattray. Only one other candidate was brought forward at the election, although it is said there were about forty applicants for the charge.

Should the parishioners fail in any case to choose a minister within a certain fixed period of time, the right of making the appointment falls into the hands of the Presbytery. In this way the Rev. Dr. Snodgrass, late Principal of Queens' College Kingston, was ap-