

Our Contributors.

THE HON. MR. POLONIUS ADDRESSES CANADIANS ON ECONOMY.

BY KNOXIAN.

Men of Canada, a wave of financial depression is passing over our country. It should be followed closely by a wave of economy. Quite likely the depression exists to a great extent in the imagination, but that is as good a place as any for it to exist in. The chances are a million to one that the economy will also exist mainly in the minds of most people, but it is better to have economy in one's mind than have it nowhere. Our people are too well educated to allow primitive ideas about economy to interfere unduly with their stimulants, or their tobacco, or their social parties, or their skating, or curling, or any matters of that kind. The outcome of the wave of economy will consist mainly in an agitation about the expenses of government. It is always easier and much more pleasant to belabor a government or a municipal council for extravagance than to cut down one's own personal expenditure. Ten thousand patriots will be found denouncing the extravagance of the most economical government for one that will be found throwing away his briar root. It is much easier for many people to lecture Sir Oliver Mowat and Sir John Thompson for expending money than to wear an old coat or take less liquor.

If then, men of Canada, retrenchment must begin with the Government, I propose to show where the pruning-knife should be vigorously applied. Down by the sea we have three Provinces with an aggregate population of less than a million. To rule over these Provinces six Houses of Parliament are required. Each Province has two Houses corresponding to the Lords and Commons of England. Now it is as clear as mud that if Great Britain requires an Upper and Lower House, so does New Brunswick, with a population of about 300,000, and Nova Scotia with about 400,000, and Prince Edward Island with a population of fifty thousand less than the population of Toronto. It would be a crime little short of treason to retrench by abolishing the Upper House of each Province and a crime worse than treason to unite the three Provinces for legislative purposes. The only way that economy can be practised is by cutting down the salaries of the pages and messengers, and sessional clerks in each House. Of course it would never do to touch the sessional allowance of the members. Perhaps a little might be saved on printing. So you see, men of Canada, a great deal can be done in the way of retrenchment in the Maritime Provinces by applying the pruning-knife vigorously to the "boys" around each parliamentary centre.

Coming west to Quebec we find there two Houses of Parliament to govern something over another million; perhaps both are needed. The Province is deeply in debt, but lowering the salaries of a few clerks and people of that kind may restore the financial equilibrium. It needs restoring badly enough. Of course, the salaries of the Lieut.-Governor, or the incomes of his ministers, or the sessional allowance of the members must not be touched. Retrenchment must be confined to the men who have small salaries and few friends.

Men of Canada, look at your capital and see how gloriously economy and retrenchment can be enthroned there. The salaries of the pages can be cut down, one or two messengers can be dispensed with, an extra clerk or two can be dismissed; yes, even the usher might be instructed not to bow so many times, or so low, and thus lessen the risk of tearing his clothes. Yes, men of Canada, your capital is a promising field for the exercise of rigid economy. But the work must not be allowed to extend to the upper ten. It must be vigorously confined to the people who have small salaries already. No pruning-knife must be even pointed in the direction of Rideau Hall, nor towards the industry in which they manufacture liberal pensions for able-bodied officials, nor at the Senate, nor at the bills for cab-hire, nor anything above the salary of a page or the allowance of an extra clerk. The faithful Com-

mons must be allowed to spend as much time and money in speaking against time, moving buncombe resolutions, making party capital and other high-class parliamentary work as the members deem proper. The Senate must labor expensively at meeting and adjourning. Retrenchment must be vigorously confined to the lower strata, and thus you see how the good work will go on.

Men of Canada, there is ample precedent for this kind of retrenchment. You know how great railway magnates rush through the country in almost royal state, cutting down the wages of baggage-men, switchmen, section-men and all other men who have about a dollar a day. That is the kind of retrenchment this country needs and must have.

(The remainder of the speech is held over.)

CONCERNING CAST-OFF MINISTERS.

My opinion (as a layman credited with some knowledge of church affairs) has been asked upon a very difficult and delicate subject, namely—as to why "many ministers," "good and worthy men, are being cast off and "virtually prevented from rendering service "in the pastorate at a period of life when "they are not only still able for years of service, but might even do in many respects "their best work; and what remedy would "lessen or do away with the evil complained "of.

I regret that the term "cast off" has been so freely used in this discussion. It does not sound in accordance with the genius of Presbyterianism; it is not strictly in accordance with facts, and the using of it is, especially to those outside of the Presbyterian Church, misleading. In all my experience of over fifty years I have never known, nor heard of a single case in which it could be truthfully said that a Presbyterian congregation in Canada cast off a good and worthy pastor.

The relation between a minister and his congregation has always been regarded by Presbyterianism as a permanent one. Induction to a pastoral charge is understood to be *ad vitam aut ulpam*; it is of the nature of a mutual contract that cannot be annulled without the consent of both parties, and then only with the approval of the Presbytery. Technically, then, a congregation cannot cast off its minister, even if he be not a good and faithful pastor.

Probably the expression is intended to be used in a qualified sense, as in the case of a minister who voluntarily resigns his charge, the people offering no objections to his leaving them, and the Presbytery saying, "loose him and let him go." Whenever a minister's usefulness and acceptability are seriously impaired it is in the interests of all parties that the connection should be dissolved. The cause of failure may be with himself, or with his congregation, or with both. The minister may have been doing his duty faithfully—the subject under consideration as above stated implies this—but, for one thing, he may have got into a rut and has failed to keep abreast of the age, theologically and otherwise. No minister need expect to hold the attention and respect of an intelligent and wide-awake congregation who is unobservant of the signs of the times and unwilling to bring himself and his preaching into touch with modern thought and erudition. I am no advocate of what goes by the name of "Higher Criticism," but is in reality a destructive criticism; but altogether aside from that, there has been within the last thirty years, say, a flood of light thrown upon the Bible, and its teachings, of which no better proof can be adduced than the recent revision of the Bible itself. The old woman, out west, who is reported to have said that if the Authorized Version was good enough for St. Paul, it was good enough for her, must take a back seat. Have we not the highest authority for expecting that our teachers shall bring forth out of their treasures "things new and old?" But apart from his teaching, which may be all that could be desired, there may be reasons connected with the administration of affairs that militate against a minister's usefulness and render a dissolution of partnership advisable. Suppose the case of a good and faithful pastor, an able preacher, and as sound as a ball. The young people of his

congregation have caught the Christian Endeavor fever and want to organize a society. He has no liking for it. It seems an unwarrantable innovation—an attempt to establish an *imperium in imperio*, which he cannot conscientiously countenance; or a majority of his congregation, contrary to his inclination, approve of singing hymns and of instrumental music, and so forth. A wise and prudent minister would in such cases endeavor to guide and control the stream rather than to resist it, failing to do that his resignation is inevitable. His people, who at heart like him and are sorry to part with him, offer no objections when it comes before the Presbytery. They do not cast him off.

Other reasons often influence ministers to resign without any want of harmony being necessarily implied. A city minister, for example, after many years of arduous and wearing service may covet a suburban rural parish in which to spend the evening of his life—a change desirable in many respects, but far more frequently made in the old country than here. On the other hand, a country parson may think himself better adapted for a city congregation; or he may be desirous of educational advantages for his family, which he cannot obtain in the country; or he is beginning to feel the weight of his years and argues that the material which he has accumulated during a lengthened pastorate might be available elsewhere, lessen the tax on his brain, and prolong his usefulness to the church. If, for any such reasons, a minister "still able for years of active service" chooses to resign, and the Presbytery consents, good and well; but don't say that he has been "cast off."

But I suspect this is where the shoe pinches. If the minister who has demitted his charge is advanced in life—say that he is sixty—congregations are shy of extending him a call, for two reasons: 1st. congregations, as a rule, believing in long pastorates, get the idea, rightly or wrongly, that the minister in question could not have been popular—was not getting on as well as he should—in his former charge, else he would not have resigned it unless to accept a call somewhere else, 2nd. They see that in the course of nature his cannot now be a very long pastorate and visions of another perplexing vacancy disturb their equanimity, while some of the shrewder sort augur that the congregation will be burdened before long with a retiring allowance to an aged and infirm minister.

As to the prevailing unrest, coupled with the statement attributed to the respected Moderator of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, that "the day for long pastorates is evidently over," much might be said. After giving the whole question the best consideration that my humble judgment is capable of, I am sorry to say it, but it is my conviction that the ministers themselves are largely to blame for it. Young men, nowadays, enter upon the work of the ministry with very different views from what they did in my early years, and under very different circumstances. Then, no one was allowed to preach until he had completed his theological curriculum and received license from a Presbytery so to do; and, when licensed, he was content to accept an appointment as assistant for two or three years to some elderly minister from whose experience he had every reason to expect that he would derive lasting benefit; but that is far too slow a process for this progressive age and country. Before our theologian has left college he has been for years exercising most of the functions of an ordained minister. In all probability he has already been engaged to be married, and as soon as he is licensed by the Presbytery it becomes almost a matter of necessity that he should be ordained and inducted into a charge, it may matter little what or where the charge is, it answers a present purpose and will be helpful as a stepping-stone to advancement in the near future. While far from undervaluing the services of our theological students in the Home Mission field (indeed I don't see what we could have done without them), I think that the church has exacted too much from them, without sufficiently taking into account the cost that she must incur in the long run. This restlessness is a part of it. It is not to be wondered at if a few years of a stated

ministry takes out of some of these young men all they can give, makes a change of pastorate desirable, and induces them to commence a career of "candidating," whereby congregations are sometimes grievously perplexed and ministers sadly humbled.

In saying that the days of long pastorates are over, the Moderator had evidently the younger men of the church in view, for there are a good number of ministers, still in the prime of life, who have been in their present charges since the Union in 1875, and some much longer, who have no thought of change in them, and who will probably expend their last round of ammunition in holding the fort where they now are, without any fear of being cast off by their congregations.

Whatever may be the remedy for the state of things complained of, it is not to be found in the Methodist system of itinerancy. That is a feature of church government specially adapted to the early stages of a church's history, when the standard of theological education was lower than it now is, and which could not advantageously be engrafted on Presbyterianism. Some of the Methodists themselves are, I have good reasons for saying, getting tired of that system, and the question of extending the duration of the pastorate beyond the present three years' regulation has been seriously discussed in their General Conference; and it will not be surprising if a change of sentiment shall come about before long whereby our Methodist brethren—already much nearer to us, theologically, than they once were—will be brought still closer to us by adopting the Presbyterian theory of a permanent pastorate. Nor is the remedy likely to be found in any legislative enactments. It is for those who are entrusted with the training of candidates for the ministry to impress upon them before they accept a call that the pastoral relation is intended to be a permanent one, "which time and years shall "only serve to strengthen and to hallow, and "which may suitably represent in outward "form the stable tendencies of an orthodox "faith. Our people must be encouraged to "call pastors with a view of keeping them, "and our ministers must enter the pastorate "to abide."*

JAMES CROIL.

Montreal, January 17th, 1894.

A POLYGLOT FESTIVAL.

In the Odd Fellows' building, corner of College and Yonge Sts., a week-evening school is kept for the instruction of foreigners in English and other useful secular branches. On Sabbath afternoons, there is a school for their religious instruction. Mr. R. Reynolds is the superintendent, the Rev. W. D. Stark, chairman, and Mr. Sutherland, music dealer, treasurer. Signor Membretti, a convert from Romanism, takes an active part in these schools. There are, at present, in attendance 32 Italian young people, 7 Syrians, and 1 Frenchman.

On Christmas evening there was a festival in connection with the schools above mentioned. The walls were decorated with the flags of several nations, and pictures, while scholars and visitors filled the room. Mr. Reynolds occupied the chair. The Lord's Prayer was repeated by the Italian young people. Well-known hymns were sung both in Italian and English. The Rev. Mr. Fenwick, of Woodbridge, read in Italian Luke's account of the birth of Christ, and made a few remarks on it in the same language. Several of the young Italians recited poems and passages of Scripture in English. One of the Syrians gave the Lord's Prayer in Arabic. Three of them sang a Christmas hymn in that language. Mr. Fenwick, for the sake of a little more variety, gave the Lord's Prayer in German and French. Rewards in books and other articles were given to all attending the schools. A little while was pleasantly spent in disposing of coffee, cakes, oranges and apples. Signor Membretti, in very fair English, gave an account of his leaving the Romish church. Among other things, he spoke of a cousin of his who was on a steamboat, crossing a lake near Milan, on his wedding-tour. This was when the revolution broke out in Italy, in 1848. A gentleman engaged in conversation

*Hodge. *What is Presbyterian Law?* p. 363.