

# Messenger and Visitor

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In the death of Dr. William Caven, Principal Caven, Toronto, which occurred on the evening of December 1, after a brief illness, the Presbyterian church in Canada has lost her most eminent standard-bearer, and that church is by no means poor in men of strong character and large ability. But the death of Dr. Caven is felt as a heavy loss not only within the wide circle of his own church but by large numbers in other communions who knew him and esteemed him for his personal worth and his long and noble service on behalf of Christian truth and the welfare of humanity. His large abilities were constantly and with untiring industry devoted to the noblest ends he was a man who any church might be proud to number among its ministers and any state to number among its citizens. Dr. Caven was a native of Wigtownshire, Scotland. He was born in 1830, and came to Ontario at age of seventeen. Soon after he entered upon his studies for the ministry. His first charge was at St. Mary's, Ont., where he labored from 1852 until 1865. In 1866, Mr. Caven was appointed professor in exegetical theology and biblical criticism in Knox College, and in 1870 he was appointed Principal. The place which Dr. Caven won in his own denomination and in the esteem of his fellow citizens generally was attained not by what are called popular gifts or through any factitious influences or circumstances, but by the most sterling qualities constantly directed to the best ends. Many hearty and spontaneous tributes to Principal Caven's eminent worth have appeared in the press. We clip the following. *The Mail and Empire*, Toronto, says:

'It would be simply truth and not post-mortem flattery to say that in the death of Principal Caven Canadian Presbyterianism has lost its best loved son. John Knox's religion has been graced in this country by many able men, brilliant logicians, skilled debaters, orators and statesmen, but among them all few indeed have inspired in their followers such warm affection as that which has gone out to William Caven. The late Principal Grant, with whom one might compare him, was a very different sort of man. They represented, in fact, different types of manhood, besides different ideals; but one served his church no less earnestly than the other—Grant, the bold controversialist; Caven, the gentle, kindly teacher, beloved by men of all creeds, unworldly to a degree, and combining with deep philosophy something of the child's simplicity. Principal Caven was a man whose death will be a loss not only to Presbyterianism, but to all religions in this country. As the late Prof. Halliday Douglass said:—"To know him is to revere him."

The *Toronto Globe* says:—Principal Caven is dead. The news will go this morning to all parts of Canada and far beyond, and everywhere it will strike with a sense of pain and irreparable loss. This morning the whole country recognizes the gap, which none can fill, in the front rank of great Canadians. Principal Caven was, indeed, a great Canadian. For sheer mentality he stood high above the crowd. By no artifice or make-believe, but by intellectual and moral worth, he impressed himself on the thought and life of Canada to a degree almost unequalled by any other public man. There was that about him which commanded respect even from those whose lives and points of view and modes of thought were farthest from his own. In those who knew him, and in whom there was the power of appreciating his real worth, he inspired not respect alone, but reverence. The man in the street, as well as the man in the church, felt the touch of his personal worth, and in his presence all rudeness and insincerity, both of thought or speech was conscious of rebuke.

Alluding to Dr. Caven's thirty-eight years service in connection with Knox College, the *Montreal Witness* says: During those many years his influence upon succeeding generations of students and young ministers has been enormous, and that influence diffused itself through every grade of society. He has left ineffaceable marks upon his own college, widening greatly its opportunities for achievement. If anything could be of greater value than his college work, then will he be best remembered for what he did for Christian unity. The union of the various Presbyterian bodies throughout Canada, in which accomplishment he took a leading part, worked well for Christian unity everywhere. Of the further union now contemplated he has been an equally warm advocate, though he has not lived to see its fruition. He was also a champion of the Equal Rights movement, and was at that crisis one of the calmest and truest exponents of the true Liberal attitude. Dr. Caven has left behind him not a dead but a living monument in achievements that will go on bearing fruit through the ages.

Political movements in Ontario of late have attracted much attention not only within the limits of that Province but throughout the Dominion. The Ross government for some time past has had a very slender majority in

the Legislature, and although in reference to the conduct of public business, its record will probably compare favorably with those of most other Provincial Governments, its prestige has suffered through a number of election scandals. With these scandals the names of certain members of the Government, were rightly or wrongly connected, and the situation was evidently one in which Premier Ross found the reconstruction of his cabinet a necessity. The reconstruction effected involves the retirement of Hon. J. R. Stratton, Provincial Secretary, and Hon. E. J. Davis, and the resignation of the attorney generalship by Hon. J. M. Gibson, who however remains in the cabinet without portfolio, while the Hon. F. B. Latchford, Commissioner of Public Works, becomes Attorney General. The new ministers with their offices are:—The Hon. W. A. Charlton, Commissioner of Public Works; Hon. George P. Graham, Provincial Secretary; Hon. A. J. McKay, Commissioner of Crown Lands; and the Hon. E. E. A. Evanturel, Minister without portfolio. Following the announcement of the reorganized cabinet there met in Toronto, Nov. 23, a general convention of the Liberal party for the Province. The Convention adopted a platform, indicating the position of the party in reference to a number of subjects of public interest and especially demanding the attention of Ontario legislators. The platform strongly affirmed the importance of purity in elections, and called for prosecution and punishment of all guilty of corrupt practices. A plank in reference to temperance reform was adopted, which while falling far short of satisfying the most advanced temperance sentiment of the Province, may be regarded as an important step in the right direction. It declares the right of the people to have the question of the abolition of the bar or of the shop license, or of putting the traffic under Government control submitted to a vote of the municipal electors on the initiative of a petition signed by 25 per cent of the electors. No new licenses to be granted in New Ontario for all time to come, and no new license to be granted anywhere except on a petition signed by fifty per cent of the residents in the polling subdivision within which it is proposed to locate it. The penalty for a second violation of the conditions of license to forfeit the license. The Conservative party which is led by Mr. J. P. Whitney and offers the Ross Government a very formidable opposition has also recently met in Toronto in a Conference which, like the Liberal Convention, was characterized by much enthusiasm. Mr. Whitney's position on the subject of temperance reform is somewhat less advanced than that Mr. Ross though Mr. Whitney and his friends claim that the latter's record on the question is more consistent than the Liberal leader's. Mr. Whitney stands for the maintenance and strict enforcement of the license system, with commissioners and inspectors removed from the sphere of party influence. It was generally understood that Premier Ross had decided on an appeal to the people before another session of the Legislature, but it is now said that the Government will probably await the result of the dozen or so by elections now pending, and that if these result favorably to the Government there will be no general election until after the meeting of the Legislature.

In speaking before the Canadian Club of Ottawa upon what Sir William Macdonald's endowments have done for the rural education in Canada, Professor Robertson, alluded to the project for the establishment of a college of higher technical and rural education at Ste. Anne's du Bellevue, Montreal. Sir Wm. Macdonald expressed a desire to carry his educational efforts to a higher field, and, with Prof. Robertson, he visited Guelph Agricultural College. There Sir William asked if Prof. Robertson could create a better agricultural college at Ste. Anne's. Prof. Robertson said he could with the money, and Sir William told him to go ahead and do it. In all the schemes the amount of cost had been little discussed by Sir William. The press placed the cost of the Ste. Anne's College at five millions. Prof. Robertson said he did not know whether this estimate was accurate or not. But he had told Sir William that, in addition to the teaching departments, he should establish a great research branch, where a knowledge of the possibilities of the soil should be studied. Then there must be a department of farms where the things taught could be put to the proof of profit-yielding. There will be a large farm and a large system of apprentices. On the large farm there will be a

large number of five-acre farms to be run by these apprentices. The college will involve the erection of a large number of good fire-proof buildings.

## North-West

### Autonomy.

It is understood that, in accordance with ante election promises of Premier Laurier, representatives of the North-west Government will be invited to Ottawa before the opening of the Dominion Parliament to agree upon the basis upon which full provincial autonomy is to be extended to that part of Canada. The chief question to be determined, it is said, is that of the financial terms, and in respect to this the Territorial Government is expected to ask for conditions which the Federal Parliament will not be likely to approve. Premier Haultain demands for the provincial Government, it is reported, not only the unsold portion of the public domain in the west, but compensation also for the millions of dollars worth of property that has been sold to settlers and given away to railway corporations as subsidies for railway construction. To such conditions the Ottawa Government is not at all likely to agree. If the new Province should gain possession of all its unsold lands, who, it is asked, will look after homesteading new settlers? This service costs the Dominion half a million a year without any direct return to the treasury of the country. The Federal authorities can hardly be expected to maintain this staff if the lands all belong to the Province and the new Province would probably not be willing to make the necessary provision. Then there is the subject of education. The Territories to-day have separate schools, the teachers in which are required to show the same qualifications as are possessed by the teachers in the public schools. It is for Dominion authorities to say whether these separate schools shall continue, and if they are continued whether the provincial Legislature shall have discretion to close them in the interests of a uniform system of primary education.

## The War.

The most notable event of the past week in connection with the war has been the capture by the Japanese of a position known as 203 Metre Hill in the vicinity of Port Arthur. The capture of the hill was effected only after very severe fighting. It is reported that the Japanese casualties in twenty-four hours numbered 15,000. If the besiegers are able to mount heavy guns on the hill, it is said, they will dominate the harbor where the Russian war vessels are lying and either destroy them or force them out to sea. A Chefoo correspondent reports that General Nogi has planned to continue his attacks until Dec. 10, when it is hoped the capture of the fortress will be completed. On Dec. 2nd there was an armistice of six hours at Port Arthur to permit the belligerents to bury their dead. . . . To the south of Mukden there have been some hot skirmishes during the week, and a movement of some importance apparently of a Russian force under the command of General Rennenkampf. The Japanese retreated before this force from a point near Da Cass and, it is reported, have been pursued for some distance by the Russians. This action on the part of the Japanese was not expected, and the Russians suspect that the retreat may be for strategic reasons.

There is talk that the Black Sea fleet may be sent to join the Baltic fleet in the East. The *Naboe Vremyay* a St. Petersburg paper, advocates this, and thinks the difficulties in the way of the undertaking are not insurmountable.

## The Fertile Prairies.

Sir Richard Cartwright has recently made a visit to the North West, and was greatly impressed, as every intelligent and observant visitor is, with the immense fertility of the soil in the vast wheat producing prairies. That fertility constitutes a national asset of immense proportions, but, in the opinion of Sir Richard, the fertility is not altogether unlimited, and he is convinced that it is time for the Government to guard against such exhaustion of this fertility as has taken place in the Western States through constant wheat cropping. It is said that Sir Richard will advise his colleagues that an active campaign should be begun to insure proper rotations in the Northwest. To this end experimental stations and demonstration bureaus should be established throughout the wheat growing region and a persistent campaign undertaken, though the cost may amount to several millions.