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## EASTERN GENERAL AGENT.

MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our Church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1886.

WITH so much political electricity in the air in other places it is pleasant to know that our Local Legislators are quietly making good laws for us down in the old building on Front Street. All is quiet on the Provincial Potomac. There are no burning questions there, for which we should all be deeply thankful. Occasionally the fighting men on both sides indulge in a slight skirmish, but they don't indulge any more than is necessary for harmless diversion and healthful exercise. The work of legislation goes steadily on, and if we may judge from present appearances quite an amount of good work will be done in the next two or three weeks. One of the most important Government measures is the bill amending the Crooks Act. Mr. Hardy strikes at two evils, the illicit traffic and selling on-Sabbath in licensed places. If the new bill does not stamp out these evils, then we frankly confess our opinion is that no law can stamp them out. License fees are also raised considerably and other changes made that cannot fail to be beneficial. We would give a summary of the provisions; but as any number of changes may be made in the bill during its passage a summary is for the present of no use. Suffice it to say that the Government seems to be making an honest attempt to legislate up to the growing temperance sentiment of the country. Temperance men who are mere theorists, and who must ride their hobbies even though drunkenness increase, may not be satisfied with this bill, but we believe all rational men will be thankful for it.

THE congregational reports continually coming in, and those we read in our exchanges, show a fair degree of prosperity. We should not be surprised if the present should prove to have been the most successful ecclesiastical year that we have seen for a long time. It is too soon to say anything about the contributions to the Schemes of the Church, but if they turn out as well as the congregational finances seem to be doing, the result will be satisfactory. Judging from reports submitted in congregations, we expect to see a gratifying increase in membership when all the returns are in. With one or two exceptions there has not, so far as we know, been any very special work in congregations, but there seems to be steady progress along the whole line. We attach a vast amount of importance to these congregational reports. They are infinitely more important than the reports of any Synod or General Assembly. They tell of the real work of the Church. The real work is done in the congregations and mission stations. The real battle is fought not in Synods and Assemblies, but by pastors and office-bearers in their fields of labour. When congregational work goes on well everything goes on well. Should congregational work fail everything must fail along with it. We hope the returns may show next June that this has been a year of marked prosperity. There has been some commercial depression, but not enough to affect seriously a Church in a good spiritual condition. Real church prosperity depends on the power of the Spirit. When that power is felt the Church can easily stand a greater commercial squeeze than has ever come upon Canada.

WITH the Imperial Parliament and the Dominion Parliament and the Ontario Legislature in Session, lovers of political literature must be thoroughly satisfied with their daily bill of fare. Not only is the bill long: part of it will be highly enough spiced to suit anybody. Before the Irish question is settled by the Imperial Parliament and the North-West question is threshed out by ours, there will be enough of highly seasoned political diet to satisfy the most ardent politicians. We have no doubt both will be thoroughly discussed, and sooner or later the right thing will be done in both cases. We have not lost faith in representative institutions. Our faith receives an occasional shock, but it always rallies. If parliamentary government is not the right kind then no other kind need be tried in this age. Meantime let everybody possess his soul in patience. The British Empire is not yet broken up except in speeches and newspapers. There is no war going on across the water but a war of words. The kind of war never kills anybody. There is statesmanship enough in Great Britain to settle the Irish question. We don't anticipate anything in Ottawa more serious than a hot debate. By all means let the debate go on. Truth is like a torch, the more it is shaken the brighter it shines. The only real danger is that bad feeling may arise between the French and British elements. That danger has existed for forty years, and has never amounted to anything very serious. If the French element were a unit we might feel uneasy; but it is a long way from being a unit. If any excitement arises, either in London or Ottawa, our readers should remember that things always look much bigger and more dangerous in the columns of a daily newspaper than anywhere else.

CANADIANS are so accustomed to see party journals paint their opponents in the blackest colours that many of them scarcely ever examine the work of the artist. When an independent journal, however, and one with alleged Conservative leanings, draws a picture of Canadian politics like the following, one cannot help asking: Are these things so? *The Week* says:

Most of us have learned pretty well to acquiesce in the fact that the Dominion Government is a government of corruption. Men, places, Provinces, interests, Churches, organizations of every kind, are bought in different ways, some more coarsely, some more subtly, in order to form the basis of a system which is administered, after its kind, with great ability, and is closely bound up with the personal ambition of its veteran chief. Corruption is not wholesome; it does not become more wholesome as it becomes more inveterate; to say nothing of the debt which it is rolling up, it must deprave the political character of the people, as, in fact, it is visibly doing, and in the end prove fatal to the spirit, if not to the form, of representative institutions. Nor can the architect and manager of a corrupt system be himself a Chastity, though power, not lucre, may be his personal object, and he may be in a certain sense patriotic. That he should have around him a swarm of low political agents is an inevitable and a very noxious incident of his position. But before sentence is passed on a particular man, we must ask whether it is possible that a group of Provinces united by no bond of common interest, scattered across a continent, and divided in two by an alien nationality, should be held together in any other way?

Every honest man will answer if the Provinces cannot be held together in any other way the sooner the Confederation tumbles to pieces the better. If the existence of the Dominion depends on buying "men, places, Provinces, interests, Churches, organizations of every kind," it will soon tumble to pieces anyway. Indeed it may well be doubted if the Provinces could have been kept together by such means for the past nineteen years. Exactly the same charges were made when the Liberals were in power. Precisely the same charges have been made against every Government for the last fifty years. And still the country prospers. The exact truth very likely is that no Government is as black as it is painted. Would *The Week* come down to particulars and say what churches have been bought up lately? We are not aware that any of the Protestant bodies have been bought either subtly or coarsely. Certainly nothing has come in the direction of Presbyterianism.

## TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION.

AMONGST Temperance reformers there is not entire unanimity as to the legislative action which ought to be taken. Many people are convinced that the only effectual cure for the evils of intemperance is the radical one of the entire suppression of the manufacture, sale and use of all intoxicating liquors. Some believe that legislation in this direction ought to be

vigorously and constantly pressed. Others, while believing that this may be steadily aimed at, consider it unwise to place laws on the statute book that will not be enforced. The Scott Act has been adopted in a majority of counties in Ontario, with what results it is difficult to form an impartial and unbiased opinion. The friends of the Act claim that it has visibly diminished drunkenness and, as a consequence, lessened the amount of crime directly traceable to intemperate habits. Opponents of the Act are equally pronounced in their averments that it is being constantly violated and that drinking habits of a still more degrading and demoralizing kind are being fostered. One thing seems to be admitted by all, that the provisions of the Canada Temperance Act are largely and, in some case, defiantly evaded. This is to be regretted for many reasons.

It is sometimes claimed that the Scott Act is not in harmony with public sentiment; but this is difficult to reconcile with the fact that so long ago as 1878 it was passed by the Dominion Parliament in response to urgent, numerous and repeated popular appeals. When the alterations in the Act adopted by the Dominion Senate were under discussion, numerous signed petitions from all parts of the land were presented in the House of Commons, and the many successes of the Act at the polls were unmistakable indications that the public sentiment had not changed. At all events it had undergone no change as to the desirableness of permitting each county to determine for itself whether it should permit the sale of liquor within its own territory.

The general complaint is that where the Act has been adopted its provisions are not enforced with that degree of strictness which respect for law demands. To permit the law to remain virtually a dead letter is a manifest absurdity. If the law is incapable of enforcement why was it enacted? If it can and is not, then something in the way of administering the law is grievously wrong.

In the city of Toronto it was deemed advisable by the friends of Temperance to defer the immediate submission of the Scott Act to a vote of the people; but in view of the fact, admitted on all sides, that an indefinite number of unlicensed dens of the worst description was allowed to exist unmolested, it was most desirable that the present laws should be strictly enforced, the number of licenses diminished, and the fees increased. As to the existence of this desire there could be no mistake. It found expression in many ways. The new city council undertook to deal with the subject, and a by-law to reduce the number of licenses was introduced; but by a system of tactics familiar to those acquainted with municipal procedure the scheme has been blocked and the wish of a large majority of the citizens frustrated.

In the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a Bill amending the Liquor License Act has been introduced. It is chiefly designed to secure a better enforcement of the provisions of the Crooks Act in cities and towns. Increased penalties are to be imposed for violations of the law; the suppression of unlicensed dens and a better and more efficient system of inspection are aimed at. There is a strong probability that these much-needed amendments to the Act will be adopted and put into force. Temperance legislation should keep pace with the advance of public opinion, and the laws passed in accordance with the people's demand should be faithfully and fairly enforced.

P. G. MACGREGOR, D.D.

THE following just tribute to the memory of Dr. MacGregor appears in the editorial columns of the *Presbyterian Witness*:

Last week we sorrowfully announced the departure from this life of our revered and beloved friend, Dr. MacGregor. The news was not unexpected. No week for the last three months passed without our being called upon to answer inquiries from far and near as to Dr. MacGregor's health; and the answer had to be such as could not encourage hope of prolonged life. Though his death was expected, it was evident on all sides that when the sad event took place the community was moved with a sorrow far deeper than usual. All knew him; all loved him; all mourned him. His funeral, which took place on Monday afternoon, was a demonstration of public respect and sympathy, such as is rarely witnessed. Ministers and other friends came from Truro, New Glasgow, Windsor and other sections of the country; and all ranks and classes of citizens combined to offer the last tribute of respect by following the remains to the grave. From the house Dr. MacGregor's remains were removed to Park Street Church, where a brief and solemn service was held, opening with the hymn, "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep." Appropriate portions of Scripture