

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1876.

THE TORONTO SYNOD.

Among the gratifying results of the Synod, to which we referred last week, we would mention the postponement of the consideration of the proposal for a Society to facilitate the effecting of loans for church building. We should regard such an institution as one of the most mischievous schemes that could be devised for trammeling the action of the church; and we trust that no premature steps will be taken for the adoption of anything of the kind. As we have already remarked, it is a fact pretty well known that it is always much easier (difficult as that may be) to raise money for the purpose of finishing a church, than it is to pay off a church debt. And again, a building for which a loan had been effected could not be brought under the regulations of the Synod, until the debt was paid, at least. The Synod might hold its annual or biennial meetings, might make its laws; but all its legislation would be ineffectual with regard to those churches, thus bound up in the toils of a Loan Society. Congregations would be encouraged to contract ruinous debts; and in the numerous cases in which the building would have to be sold to pay those debts, the moneys already subscribed would be lost to the Church for—ever.

The recognition of the claims of Algonia by the Toronto Synod is another subject in reference to which we have cause for satisfaction, and we are glad that the proposal for that recognition met with so prompt a response from the members of the Synod. As part of the original Diocese of Toronto, its claims for a share of the available funds, are as great morally, if not legally, as those of the Diocese of Niagara, or of that of Ontario. Nor can we imagine any reason why the legal aspect of the case should be less strong than the moral one.

But the most satisfactory proceeding of the Synod is the action taken in reference to the vestries, in laying down the principle, in the words of Archdeacon Whitaker, that "the Holy Communion should be a basis upon which to give the privileges of the Church." Mr. Cartwright's amendment, which was carried, was "that each vestryman should have been a communicant at least three times in the year." We would rather the word "three," should have read "twelve" or some higher number, but the principle is sufficiently established by the present decision. And we hope the time is not far distant when it will be extended to all vestries, so as to abolish entirely the old property qualification, in the renting of a pew. Nor are we sure that the money qualification proposed by some, is much better. It is doubtless true enough that it is "a positive sin for a man of means to at-

tend a church and not pay towards its expenses, in return for the privileges he enjoys." It is, of course, perfectly true that "every man whether attending a free church, or a pew church, is expected to contribute according to his ability," and also that it is his bounden duty so to do. But we contend that other influences than these ought to be brought to bear upon him, in order to secure the performance of this duty. And if it were to be enacted that a man could not be a member of a vestry unless he had contributed towards the expenses of the church according to his ability, how could the church determine when this provision was complied with? and, indeed, which of us could claim membership on the ground that he had complied with it? Such a regulation would make confusion worse confounded.

THE HURON SYNOD.

The most noteworthy part of the proceedings of the recent Synod of the Diocese of Huron was to be found in the address of the Bishop; in the course of which his Lordship stated that "the canon on Patronage is practically of little or no value, owing to the unfortunate state of feeling that prevails in most localities, that each congregation should have the choice of their clergyman, whether they are personally acquainted with him or not." And he adds that:—"Not unfrequently an individual connected neither with the vacant parish, nor even with the Diocese, is being consulted as to whom they ought to have for their minister. A clergyman is at once recommended by that individual to some male or female member of the vacant parish, as being far superior to any clergyman whom the Bishop has at his disposal. This is readily believed and received as correct, and a canvass is, without delay, set on foot to secure such an appointment, without regard to the just claims of as good and able a man, who has long, faithfully, and successfully laboured for the good of souls. And although the proposed clergyman may not be personally or otherwise known to a single member of the vacant parish, yet the clergyman, thus proposed by an 'outsider,' must be appointed at all hazards, if but to demonstrate the independence of the congregation."

"There are often, also most immoderate demands made by some congregations, in respect to the high standard and qualifications of the clergyman who is to preside over their spiritual interest. I have received letters from vestries, and deputations have waited upon me, asking for clergymen of the highest talents and qualifications, for the smallest compensation conceivable. Oratorical powers and ministerial ability—nothing short of that which would secure the possessor of such talents the

most lucrative charge and the widest sphere of Christian usefulness—being alone deemed sufficient to meet the spiritual and intellectual requirements of the Parish. Congregations which are able to pay the least are often those who are the most captious as to the talents and acquirements which must adorn the minister whom the Bishop is to send."

"Others again demand the appointment of a clergyman *on trial*, and threaten to pay nothing towards his support unless he comes up to *their* expectations and high standard. I have, not unfrequently to deplore, the absence of good sense that is manifested in making such unreasonable demands—asking for great talents, and offering very little for the support of so able and talented a clergyman."

The state of things the Bishop deplores is certainly to be lamented; and it is not too much to say that having chosen their Bishop, and having also professedly placed the appointments of the clergy in his hands, the people should at least allow him to exercise, in an unfettered manner, the privilege they have professed to give him. The Bishop is better acquainted with his clergy than others; and we have known a number of instances in which a Bishop is more intimately acquainted with the important events that take place in a parish, and their bearing upon the interests of the Church, than nine-tenths of the people that live there. Of course a Bishop can make mistakes; but it has been known that other people can make mistakes as well as the chief pastors of the Church; and so far as our own observation has extended, we have seen that, in the end, people are quite as often dissatisfied with clergymen selected by themselves, as with those appointed without a direct reference to their wishes. In fact some very remarkable instances have occurred, with which many of our readers are familiar, where our position will be found to receive ample illustration.

An important principle was asserted when Mr. Raikie's motion, seconded by Canon Caulfield, was carried, to remit to a Committee to report to the Synod that: "A communicant, removing from one parish to another, shall procure from the incumbent of the parish of his last residence, a certificate, stating that he or she is a communicant in good standing; and the incumbent of the parish or congregation to which he or she removes shall not be required to receive him or her as a communicant until such letter be received." And the value of this arrangement will consist, not so much in preventing improper characters from being received into the Church, as in cultivating a feeling of our brotherhood in Christ, of our being one body in Him, and of our right to Christian fellowship, wherever the Church of our fathers exists, in virtue of our membership therein.