

they have proved themselves in the vineyard as able and devoted and disinterested workers. The question arises, "can the church afford to encourage a systematic, persistent, and unfair depreciation of one of its committees, the personnel of which stands at least on a good average level with the best in the church?" We believe the church cannot afford to do so, and we deplore the tendency manifested in quarters whence better things were to be expected, to give way to ceaseless cavil and morbid discontent.

The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund is one of the great schemes of the church; the object it seeks to accomplish is worthy beyond all praise, and is one that ought to appeal to the sympathies of the ministers and of the members of the church very strongly. Much time has been devoted to its interests, yet great efforts have been found necessary to make ends meet. Why? chiefly, because ministers themselves, for whose benefit the fund is designed have stood in the way. The reasons for so doing have been various. The purely business side has been too much canvassed. There has been something like a strike for better terms. Certain individuals have striven hard to discredit the whole scheme, because in their cases the church had had to apply a rule applicable to all, and found necessary in order to make limited means meet certain demands. The Fund, one time, the committee another, has been mercilessly and unfairly criticised by men who have been prejudiced by self-interest, or who, taking a disinterested stand, ought to have known better. We say this fearless of successful contradiction. We do not by this mean to say that there is no room for improvement, or that the regulations of the Fund are perfect. But what we do say is that, not the Committee, who in season and out of season, is doing its best to manage the Fund honestly and successfully, but the General Assembly is the centre of responsibility. The affairs of the Committee are dealt with in General Assembly; on the floor of that body should be heard the complaints and not during the interval between meetings. We said as much once before, and were answered that the General Assembly will not listen to the petitions sent up by old ministers who wield no more influence. But if the Assembly be unjust to complainants, that is no reason why complainants should be unjust to the committee which is the humble servant of the church.

To put the Fund in a position adequately to fulfil its whole duty as it would like to do and longs to do, more money is necessary. Give the committee funds and you critics will see how liberal and generous it has the heart to be, provided the General Assembly permits it. But how has its most urgent appeals been answered, even by some of the cavillers? Pulpits refused, collections refused, cruel letters written, and a general hostility which would be inexplicable to any one ignorant of the influential place filled by old human nature in the Christian church. Year by year ministers are growing old, nearing the period when only the Aged and Infirm Fund remains for them, and yet in the hey-day of vigour, too many, alas, throw every obstacle possible in the way of reaching an adequate Fund which it would be the pride of the church to administer for their comfort and support when the necessity arose. The most thoughtless and cruel to their class, to-day, in this respect, in the wide church, are the ministers themselves, and as they sow, so shall they reap.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROHIBITION PLEBISCITE.

The Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, who is himself a life-long Prohibitionist, made a ringing speech at the Prohibition Convention in Montreal last week, which ought to put life into the preparations for the coming contest. He gave the positive assurance

that the bill authorizing the Plebiscite was under consideration by the Government and would be presented at the earliest opportunity. It was being prepared by Sir Oliver Mowat who had stamped upon the laws of Ontario and particularly upon its license laws his own strong views. He also stated distinctly that if the temperance people won in this campaign a prohibitory law would follow and the liquor traffic would be killed in this country.

In view of these statements the friends of prohibition ought to feel that the contest which is now approaching is the most important that has ever been proposed on this question and that if they are successful it will be no empty victory as the various provincial Plebiscites have proved to be.

For this very reason, however, as Mr. Fisher warned his hearers, the opposition of those interested in the traffic will be all the keener. They fully understand that they will be fighting for their very life. If in previous campaigns, which only meant principle and not law, they did not hesitate to draw upon the hundreds of thousands of dollars—perhaps the millions which had been made in this business to defeat the temperance people, it may be well believed that in the present case money will be forthcoming in unlimited abundance. The temperance people of the country must not suppose they are going to have a walk over. On the contrary it will be the hardest battle of their life—more intense than any political campaign. Success will not be obtained without organization in every province and in every part of the country. And organization will not be effective without money. We are glad to see that the Prohibitory Alliance has taken measures for organizing the English speaking portions of Quebec and has issued a call for \$10,000. We hope they will get every dollar of the amount before the campaign opens. We trust they may also be successful in securing the hearty co-operation of the Roman Catholic authorities. This is a question on which good strong mandaments would be in order. We trust soon to see every province in the Dominion taking steps to bring out the full vote in favor of prohibition. We believe it will prove to be a clear majority—if that can be done. Happily the vote will be free from other political questions and the ordinary lines of cleavage will not obtain. It is well that both parties should have a share in the glory of the victory that may be won.

Armenian Fund. THE REVIEW has received from Mr. Grant, missionary at Fincher Creek, Albt., the sum of \$2.50 for the Armenian Fund made up as follows: Mr. R. Duthie \$1.00, Mrs. Wm. Burgess \$1.00, Mr. Wood 50 cents.

The Schemes of the Church. The Rev. Dr. Warden sends us the following comparative statement of money, for the Schemes of the Church, to the 28th February, 1896 and 1897:—

| SCHEMES. | 1896. | 1897. |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Home Missions | \$71,346.37 | \$45,160.55 |
| Angerantation | 13,719.91 | 12,820.38 |
| Foreign Missions..... | 35,760.48 | 38,662.22 |
| Widows' and Orphans' Fund..... | 3,098.47 | 3,475.14 |
| Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund.... | 4,590.99 | 4,208.53 |
| Assembly Fund..... | 2,008.50 | 2,259.23 |
| Knox College..... | 4,162.41 | 4,751.93 |
| Manitoba College..... | 1,613.59 | 2,588.49 |
| French Evangelization..... | 12,472.03 | 13,769.15 |
| Point aux Trembles..... | 5,800.41 | 5,876.26 |

The noblest gift to foreign missions in our century is recorded in the presentation of twelve thousand pounds to the Victorian General Assembly by Dr. John G. Paton, as the proceeds of his celebrated book, *Life in the Hebrides*,