

salary of supplemented congregation \$600, at the same time the Committee told the Synod that the funds accruing would not warrant them in promising a *minimum* of \$500; the Synod, however, saw fit not in connection with the operations of this committee, but independently to instruct Presbyteries to endeavour to raise all the stipends of our ministers to a *minimum* of \$600 with a manse. The consequence has been that several Presbyteries have found it all but necessary in order to secure the settlement of some of our probationers to make salary of supplemented congregations exceed \$500 and even come up to \$600, and have asked the Committee to aid them in so doing. In one or two instances this was done, and immediately, as might have been foreseen, dissatisfaction arose among ministers and congregations, whose stipend is less than the amounts secured to these newly ordained men in supplemented charges, which at the same time contribute to the supplement. Unless a stop be put at once to this course of procedure, the Committee will find it impossible to consent to the application of Presbyteries, for unless the income of the Fund be more than doubled, we cannot raise the salary of all our ministers to a *minimum* of \$600. It is unpleasant when the Committee appears to call in question the wisdom, and to disregard the express wishes of a Presbytery, and therefore there is the greater reason for Presbyteries considering well what may be the consequences of unduly raising the stipend in one place, even if it is desirable to secure the services of a superior man. In view of this difficulty it has been suggested that the supplemented congregations should be separated from the Home Mission scheme proper, and that a separate fund be raised and separately administered for their benefit leaving only mission stations with the Home Mission Committee.

In order to work our Mission fields it has been found necessary to make the grants in some new settlements comparatively large. It is, however, believed that a liberal outlay at first will prove to be true economy, as thereby congregations will be more quickly established.

V. VACANCIES AND PROBATIONERS.

Another matter entrusted to the Committee by last Synod, was the distribution of the probationers of the Church among the Presbyteries, so that they might visit the several vacancies with a view to settlement. The Committee submit with much satisfaction the result of their labours in this department. In appendix III. will be found a list of all the vacancies reported to the Committee since July last, in all 58, also of all the probationers who were in the list during the year, in all 30, from the same paper it will be seen that fifteen vacancies have been settled, and twelve probationers. That the number of the former exceeds the latter is owing to three vacancies having called ministers whose names were not on the roll of probation. The large number of settlements—and the fact that only five out of twenty whose names were on the roll—in October last are now unsettled, afford the best evidence possible of the practical utility of the present mode of distribution. Although there may have been cases of individual hardship or inconvenience, which no plan could prevent, the Committee have reason to believe that parties concerned are generally well satisfied, and that a solution has been found of a difficult practical question in the working of the Church. The distribution of probationers has been made quarterly and the Committee are happy to be able to report that with the exception of two cases of sickness and one of wilful disregard, which, however, the Presbytery concerned resolved not to prosecute, the appointments given to the probationers have been fulfilled. In some Presbyteries probationers were employed part of the winter half year in the mission field, this the Committee regard as in perfect harmony with the wish of the Synod, as expressed in 1866.

VI. WORK DONE.

The Committee are sorry to have to say that no reports of special interest have come in during the year. Presbyteries have been satisfied with giving such information as the printed forms contain.