

## AUGMENTATION.

*To the Presbyteries, Sessions, and Congregations of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces:*

The object of the Augmentation Fund is to assist weak congregations, especially those which are willing to help themselves. Where congregations qualify, that is, give \$400 and a manse, and at the rate of \$4.50 per communicant, we endeavor to secure to their ministers the minimum salary of \$750 and a manse. The grants to supplemented congregations are made annually, and are for the year extending from April 1st to the end of the following March. If a congregation is settled only a part of this time, the grant is paid for that part only and does not extend from the date of settlement to the end of the pastoral year. In no case is the sum promised intended to be permanent. Supplemented congregations are supposed to increase their local support from year to year, until they become self-sustaining, and thus effect a corresponding reduction in the amount which they draw from the Fund. Several of our strongest congregations not only owe their existence, but the proud position which they occupy to-day, to the fact that they were fostered during their weaker days by the Augmentation Scheme.

At the close of April, 1886, the number of congregations on the Fund was 42, and the amount paid out that year was \$8,855.00. The figures for the following four years are as follows:—1886—87, 43 congregations, \$8185 76; 1887—88, 43 congregations, \$7737 70; 1888—89, 50 congregations, \$8143 45; 1889—90, 53 congregations, \$9650.00. This year the augmented congregations number 66, and at the very least \$10,000 is required to meet our demands. It is gratifying to know that whilst the number of congregations is larger, and a greater proportion of them have settled pastors than during any previous year, that the difference between the amount needed this year to cover the probable expenditure and the sum paid in 1886 is so small.

What supplemented congregations paid last year for the support of ordinances, according to Presbyteries and per family, varied from \$5.60 to \$11.84, the general average being \$8 38, which is higher than the general average of all congregations within the bounds of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces—a fact which is deserving of notice. If, however, all the supplemented charges were to give at the rate of the general average, there would be an increase from local sources of over \$3,000. It is, however, too much to expect such a rise in one year. But it is surely not too much to expect such an increase as will produce \$1,000, and thus along with the \$9,000 allotted to Presbyteries to be raised, make the \$10,000 that are necessary to keep the salaries of supplemented charges from suffering shrinkage, and the fund from sinking deeper into debt. The Synod at its recent meeting, agreed to ask our people for \$9,000, to be allocated as shown by the following table. The table will explain itself.

<i>Presbyteries</i>	<i>Amount Allocated</i>	<i>Per Family.</i>
Sydney.....	\$ 478	20cts.
Victoria and Richmond ..	300	20 "
Wallace.....	416	33 "
Pictou.....	1240	44 "
Truro.....	844	47 "
Halifax.....	1950	65 "
Lunenburg and Shelburne...	365	47 "
St John.....	1350	45 "
Miramichi.....	647	31 "
Prince Edward Island.....	1166	33 "
Newfoundland.....	250	\$1 03 "

The attention of Presbyteries is directed to the following resolutions which were passed by the Synod at its last meeting.

The Synod, in view of the present position of the Fund, urges upon Presbyteries the imperative necessity of visiting every supplemented charge before the close of the current year, in order to inform them fully of the present situation of affairs, to enquire carefully into their financial methods, and to endeavor by the improvement of them or otherwise, to get a considerable increase of local support—the Committee to prepare a statement setting forth the present state of matters and the urgent necessities of the situation for use in this visitation.

The Synod urges congregations of 100 families and upwards, to endeavour at once to become self-sustaining, and also instructs Presbyteries to make special efforts to induce them to cease from making applications for grants.

This year will test the strength of the scheme, but our faith in God and in our people is abiding. Promptness of action and faithfulness on the part of Presbyteries in dealing with augmented congregations, as well as a most hearty and liberal response from all our people who have at heart the welfare of our beloved Zion, will ensure the success of the scheme for another year, if not place it upon a firm footing for all time to come. "We then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

E. SMITH, *Convener.*