

The disbursements of this Fund have, as a matter of course, kept pace with its growth. The grants of aid to poor schools have advanced from 84 in the two years preceding the current quadrennium to over 400 in the last two years.

This rapid growth of the operations of the Board has, of course, involved a very extensive correspondence—more than a thousand letters having been received or written in connection with this department of the work.\*

GRANTS TO POOR SCHOOLS.

The grants have been distributed through every province of the Dominion and Island of Newfoundland, especially in the newer regions of the Upper Ottawa and the Muskoka and Algoma territory, in Manitoba and the North-West, and in the mining settlements of British Columbia. Many grateful testimonies have shown the warm appreciation with which they have been received.

In making grants to schools, they are expected to contribute, if possible, something toward these grants. In this way, \$480 have been received from schools asking grants, and nearly as much more has been promised. With each school receiving aid a separate account is kept, which is rendered at regular intervals till the account is paid, except in cases where the Sunday-school Board decides that the grant shall be absolutely free.

The Fund also pays for printing and mailing Sunday-school Schedules, Circulars, Reports, Sunday-school Constitution, etc., and for express charges and postage on donations of Sunday-school Libraries.

About 4,000 volumes of second-hand Library books, donated by schools, have been gratuitously distributed during the last two years. For these there are always several applications, and schools can do much good by sending to the undersigned their old libraries.

Within a very small fraction of the entire income of the Board is disbursed directly for the benefit of poor schools, there being no expenses of management beyond a small amount for postage and petty sundries of the kind. It is gratifying to observe that the schools throughout the Connexion are responding much more uniformly and much more liberally to the appeals made for this Fund. In so doing they are but fulfilling the exhortation of Scripture: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" they that are strong bearing the infirmities of the weak.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.

The number of schools reported to the Hamilton General Conference was 1,948, with 16,626 teachers and officers and 131,875 scholars. The latest statistics I can get of the schools of the United Church, are as follows:—

\* Correspondents would materially lighten the labours of the Secretary, if they would give distinctly their Post Office, Conference and Province. Many letters omit all these particulars.

Number of Sunday-schools in the four branches of the Church is 2,707, with 22,434 teachers, and 185,062 scholars.\*

The most gratifying feature of all in connection with our schools is that the truths taught therein prove in thousands of instances the power of God unto salvation. In the three western Conferences of the old Methodist Church of Canada alone, the number of conversions of scholars reported during the past year is 6,006. To God be all the praise!

TEMPERANCE.

Much attention is also given to the cause of temperance, and during the past year in the same Conferences 16,998 are reported as having signed the temperance and anti-tobacco pledge printed in the class-books. This number will, doubtless, be largely increased in the future, as the Sunday-school papers are most pronounced in their inculcation of temperance principles.

MISSIONS.

Few things are more encouraging than the growing interest of our Sunday-schools in the missionary cause. In a considerable number of schools what is known as the Blake System—a method of regular collection by the scholars throughout the year—has been adopted with the happiest results, and in many places Juvenile Missionary Societies have been organized. Much attention has also been given to missionary topics in the Sunday-school papers and much missionary information has been imparted. In this the Editor has been greatly aided by letters from a number of missionaries of our Church in Japan, British Columbia, the North-West, Newfoundland, and other "high places of the field." As a result of these combined efforts, and of the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the Sunday-school officers, the juvenile missionary offerings have increased from \$15,823 in 1879-80 to 23,235 in 1882-3, an increase of \$7,412.

PERIODICALS.

It is very gratifying to be able to report the very great increase in the circulation of our Sunday-school periodicals. That circulation, as returned to the General Conference two years ago, was in round numbers 132,000, the present circulation is in round numbers 200,000, an increase of 58,000 copies. The aggregate issue of these papers is nearly 30,000,000 pages per year, 100,000 pages during every working day, and 10,000 every hour. The moral influence of that amount of directly religious teaching pouring forth in a ceaseless stream from the press, and being diligently taught to the rising generation, is simply incalculable.

\* The Sunday-school statistics for the whole of Canada, Newfoundland, and Labrador, as reported by Mr. Porter to the International Convention is as follows: Schools, 5,213; Teachers, 45,571; Scholars, 388,966. It will be seen that the Methodist Church has more than half of all the schools and scholars, and nearly half of all the teachers in the Dominion, Newfoundland, and Labrador.

*2671, 27209 total*  
*755,562*  
*SM 197,538*  
*54149*  
*4496*  
*39012*  
*Surplus + 109 schools + 1,156 scholars - lwp - 708*