

This committee would also recommend that while our ministers and elders give every encouragement, which they can consistently with their other duties, to the various temperance organizations at work in our bounds, they would at the same time use their utmost exertions to have congregational temperance societies instituted in all our congregations and mission stations, and that total abstinence be inculcated on the minds of the young in all our Sabbath schools.

Your committee also humbly suggest that Presbyteries be recommended to take this matter up, and by deputation or otherwise, bring the subject of total abstinence and the advantage of forming and fostering total abstinence societies, before every congregation and preaching station throughout their respective bounds, and endeavour to secure the combined operation of all our church members in this good work.

All which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY CRAWFORD, *Con.*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COLPORTAGE FOR THE EASTERN PART OF NOVA SCOTIA.

In presenting this report I will say nothing of the benefits and importance of Colportage, being convinced that this is well known to us all,—and the fact that Colportage ranks among the religious institutions of the present day should be sufficient to commend it to the favourable regards of the Christian church.

My appointment to this agency at the last Synod was simply an experiment. In entering upon this agency it became me to proceed with caution, for I had neither funds nor experience—two things that were indispensibly necessary in this work. I at once entered into correspondence with publishing houses in Britain and America, and while I learned much from this correspondence, there was one thing that I learnt particularly, that nothing could be done without money. I found the terms of the American Board of Publication the most favorable, inasmuch as they gave 40 per cent. discount to colporteurs, while they gave only 25 per cent. discount to ordinary dealers. Accordingly I sent \$100 to the Presbyterian Board of Publication for books, and \$54 to the National Bible Society for Bibles with Psalms, because I found that these latter were indispensable. In fixing the retail prices of these books, I added 25 per cent. to the cost and charges, to meet the expenses of the colporteurs, and 35 per cent. upon the Bibles, because I found that the Bibles could bear a higher

percentage than the books, and still be below booksellers' prices. The Bibles were readily sold, while the sale of the books was somewhat slow. In November I employed two colporteurs, Messrs. John Maxwell and James Lauder,—the former had some experience in the work, having been for some time in the employ of Mr. Baxter. I gave him a salary of 80 cents a day and travelling expenses. The latter being untried in the work, I gave him a commission of 25 per cent. on the sales he might effect. Mr. Maxwell extended his labours to the eastern parts of the Province. After he had been about 10 days at work, he wrote me that if he continued his labours in the rural districts as I had directed, it would be at a great loss to me, inasmuch as the sales would not meet the expenses of the work. So I directed him to choose the places where he could effect the most sales. In a tour of 31½ days he sold 276 volumes, distributed about 500 pages of tracts, and offered prayer 62 times. Mr. Lauder's labours were confined to the settlements round about River John. He laboured 13 days, visited 203 families, sold 120 volumes, distributed 276 pages of tracts, and offered prayer 43 times. Both colporteurs met with a kind reception from the people generally, who showed a disposition to purchase if they had the means. The general depression of the times was very much felt, and the united testimony of the colporteurs was that they never saw the country so poor. Under these circumstances I felt that it would neither be prudent nor safe for me to incur any heavy liabilities in the work, so I did not replenish the balance of books in hand by renewed orders. Herewith I submit a financial statement of the work done.

From these facts it will be seen that our colportage scheme is denuded of its missionary and benevolent features, and that it has become a thoroughly commercial enterprise. The poorer districts are necessarily passed by, while the localities presenting the readiest and best markets are eagerly sought. So long as matters continue in this state, the work of colportage must remain very languid and inefficient, and fail to accomplish the end for which it is intended. It is very evident if it continues to be a scheme of this church, and meet the requirements of our people, we must do something more than receive Synodical reports. Substantial aid must be given in the way of funds in order to make the work what it ought to be. It is very plain that the private efforts of individual agents, however zealous they may be, will never meet the wants of the church. It is plainly the duty of this Synod to take the claims of this important scheme into its most serious consideration, and either