

the whole Church was last year \$4.63, the average in the aid-receiving congregations was \$6.84. And they, like the other congregations, contribute to the various schemes of the Church.

The revenue of the Augmentation Scheme last year was \$22,763. Of this amount about \$12,000 came from the congregations in the cities. The amount needed for this year is \$32,287, viz:—For the year's grants \$28,000, and for liquidation of debt \$4,287. This is \$9,524 more than was received last year. The Church as a whole should therefore give 45 per cent, in excess of last year's contributions. I cannot doubt that this would be given, were it more generally understood that what is effected by the instrumentality of the Augmentation Fund is in reality Home Mission work. That this is not understood seems evident from the fact that, while last year the Home Mission Fund received in donations \$7,436, and from Sabbath Schools, \$3,500, making from these sources \$10,936, the Augmentation Fund received in donations only \$188, and from Sabbath Schools \$304, making \$492. Yet the work contemplated in the maintenance of both funds is virtually the same. Our Bible Classes and Sabbath Schools would do well to bear this in mind.

I ask you to observe that nearly one-fifth of the congregations receiving aid from the Augmentation Fund are in Manitoba and the North-West, a region the development and welfare of which are naturally so interesting to us all. How much under God depends on present earnestness and faithfulness in sending the Gospel to new settlements there, and in helping those who are seeking to advance the cause of Christ in its rising towns and villages! The only help received by such congregations as the following comes from the Augmentation Fund, viz:—Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Prince Albert, Moosejaw, Moosomin, Qu'Appelle, Birtle, Treherne, Oak Lake, Chater, Deloraine, Emerson, Selkirk, Kamloops, &c., &c. The congregations in all these places are making strenuous efforts to maintain Gospel ordinances among themselves. But meanwhile they stand much in need of help from such a fund as that the claims of which I am now bringing before you.

Some congregations decline to contribute

to the fund because they believe themselves to be no more able than other congregations to which aid is given. And some decline because they believe that, in some cases congregations are by means of this fund maintained as separate organizations, which ought either to be united with others in order to become self-sustaining, or dealt with as Mission Stations. That there may be some ground for such objections along both of these lines we need not call in question. But, dear brethren, the Committee in charge of the fund has administered it to the best of its ability. It is composed of men in whose zeal and judgment the Assembly has the utmost confidence, and whose self-denying labours in aid of the fund should be a guarantee that they will not apply any portion of it without earnest consideration as to how it may be used to the best advantage. It should be borne in mind, in connection with this, that it is with Presbyteries that the responsibility really lies. It may be truthfully said that the Committee spares no pains to obtain necessary information, urges Presbyteries to exercise due care, and endeavours to prevent the granting of aid in cases in which it ought to be withheld. And should we allow what we may regard as a mistake or an imperfection here or there to turn away our sympathy altogether from a scheme which, in the East, is keeping Protestantism alive in many needy districts; which, in the North West, is so effectually helping many new communities; which, over the Dominion, is encouraging and invigorating many struggling congregations; the importance of which, in short, to the whole Church, can hardly be overestimated!

Let me add one thought to what has been advanced. In some of the older settlements of our country, congregations are being more or less depleted by the removal of the young to the towns and cities, and frequently by the emigration of whole families to newer regions. Our brethren ministering in these localities, have to meet many discouragements. Viewed from the human side, the keeping up of their congregations to what they were ten or twenty years ago, implies greater labour and anxiety than constantly increasing numbers in the case of those among us whose lot is cast in more favoured localities where the growth or influx of