

From the foregoing report it will be seen that the contributions made towards the Home and Foreign Mission Schemes, and for missionary services, amount to \$349.51, of which \$30.25 were contributed by Middle River and Baddeck.

Respectfully submitted by

JAMES W. FRASER.

Since I reported last, services were held as follows:—Nov. 14, West Bay; 21, Strait; 28, River Dennis; Dec. 5, River Inhabitants; 12, West Bay; 26, Strait; Jan. 2, River Inhabitants; 9, West Bay; 16, River Dennis; 23, Strait; 20, River Inhabitants; Feb. 6, West Bay; 13, Loch Lomond; 20, Strait.

On Sunday 19th December, owing to a rain storm of unusual violence, and the consequent state of the roads, it was impossible for me to reach the Strait in time for service. As it was the first time that such a circumstance occurred since I came here, it may safely be inferred that the weather was decidedly tempestuous.

On Sundays, Gaelic and English are preached during the day, and an evening meeting held, weather permitting, in some suitable house—generally where there are old people who cannot go out. Meetings for public worship are also frequently held during the week in private houses, or school-houses in localities so remote that the inhabitants cannot attend church on Sunday.

The sick are visited regularly. Every family is also regularly visited, in so far as it is possible.

In districts in which we have churches the attendance is steadily increasing.

It is a matter of regret that we have so few regular Sunday schools. I conduct one regularly myself at River Inhabitants. Now and again a schoolmaster keeps a Sunday school in summer; and when he leaves, it dies simply from want of competent teachers. It is an easy matter to start a school, but, if you have no teacher, it dies at its birth. Sometimes you can get a well-meaning man advanced in years to conduct it; but so far as my experience goes, it soon ceases to exist; for, besides the want of skill on the part of the teachers, there are no tracts, no Child's Papers, and no books to attract children and keep up their interest in the school. Besides, there are many parents who won't take the trouble to send their children—not even to the week-day school. This indifference is owing, among other causes, to the fact that many of themselves cannot read; and if they do laboriously spell through a page, they misunderstand it as often as not; and also to the depressing and doleful influences,—spiritual and moral, of hopeless never-ending poverty. It is easy to ask why don't they do this and that? Why don't they get books and tracts? Because, in the first place, the class of persons I speak of don't want to get books and tracts, and don't care about them; and, in the second place, they could not pay for them if they did want them. The taste for reading has first to be developed by providing books; after that, the demand for them will arise. I would respectfully suggest to our wealthier congregations that should they set apart for this end such books as have been read and re-read, and are no longer looked at by their scholars, they might confer an unspeakable blessing upon many districts hereabouts, where the young heathen are just as interesting, and, I had almost said, just as ignorant, as in more distant regions, with this difference—that they are the children of our own country and speak our own language. Should any one imagine that I have overstated the matter, I would remind him that after having travelled up and down several thousand miles in all sorts of places, in all kinds of weather, and in every variety of road, I have some knowledge of the position of people, and can speak with authority.

We received with thankfulness \$100 from the Home Mission Fund for West Bay Church, and I am glad to see that the Board recommend a grant of another hundred. For years the old church was in a wretched state. I have