

for two ministers. It is absolutely necessary that this field should be occupied by the Synod without delay, for if matters are left much longer as they are, the people will be alienated from our church and it will be very difficult to bring them back.

All which is respectfully submitted.

### GOLPORTAGE REPORT.

We give the following extracts from the report on Colportage submitted to the Synod by the convener of the committee, the Rev. J. I. Baxter. The report is for the year ending 30th June, 1866 :

*Fathers and Brethren*.—Last year your committee were enabled to report, that by a special effort they had succeeded in paying off the debt of £70 which had been unavoidably contracted, and for some time had retarded their progress : and also that they had procured a loan of £90, for one year without interest, in order to procure a supply of books on the most moderate terms. Thus relieved from the incubus of the debt, and invigorated by a fresh supply, we have been carrying on the business with more energy, as far as we could procure active colporteurs.

Mr. James Baxter was engaged in the usual way for about two months, called upon 369 families, with about the ordinary measure of success ; after which he was employed till the winter set in very severe, as Bible colporteur in the special service of the National Bible Society of Scotland.

Mr. John Maxwell has been one of the most persevering and successful of our colporteurs of late years. Though in busy seasons, as seed time and harvest, he has been otherwise engaged at home ; yet he has spent about 7½ months in our service during the last season. He has called upon 3,410 families—conversed or prayed with 345—sold 1,733 vols., realizing about £162—given gratis 82 vols., valued at £4 6s. 6d., and distributed about 4,600 pages of tracts ; and otherwise endeavoured to promote the interests of religion as opportunity offered in providence.

Mr. James Gordon of Earltown, another old and experienced hand, has still a considerable supply of books, and though we have heard both directly and indirectly of his being engaged in the work, we cannot say to what extent or with what success, as we have received only a very limited statistical report. \* \* \* \* \*

Mr. John Dickson also of Clarmount, Cumberland, the north-west extremity of the province. Though he does not now devote his time and talents to this business, yet keeps a supply of books and especially

of bibles and testaments always on hand, and sells and circulates them, as fast and as far as he can, without interfering with his ordinary business.

Mr. John Lamont, probationer, also has now taken the place of the bible colporteur, and although he is in the special service of the National Bible Society of Scotland, yet he endeavours to make himself generally useful wherever his services may be required, in visiting the sick, attending prayer meetings and sabbath schools, and occasionally preaching the word in destitute localities. He has passed through various Roman Catholic settlements, and has endeavoured to serve his Master there as else where ; with what effect is not known, but may yet be brought to light when and where least expected.

Besides the above we have sold from the depot, in single volumes, small parcels, and Sabbath school libraries, a considerable number, so that our stock of about 3000 vols. of last year is almost exhausted.—These added to the number previously sold since we commenced operations in 1852, make about 65,000 volumes. The prime cost of these has amounted to a little over \$20,000. To this from 30 to 40 per cent. has to be added to cover expenses, such as freight, exchange, salaries, discount on injured books, &c, hence the necessity for aid from the church to make that addition as small as possible. Our aim has been to sell the books at the lowest price we can without positive loss, and we believe that we have succeeded in keeping most of them lower than the current selling prices.

We have now been fourteen years engaged in this business. We have, during that time, been circulating bibles and religious books at the rate of about 4500 yearly, at the prime cost of about \$1400 per annum, and at the yearly expense of about \$600 or \$700, and all the direct assistance that we have obtained from our church during that period has only about covered one year's expense ; yet we now appear before you to give an account of our stewardship, free from debt, having not only paid off the old debt, as already mentioned, but also repaid the loan raised last year to obtain a new supply, besides having stock in the hands of colporteurs amounting to about \$400, and a new supply ordered.

We speak not this by way of boasting, or for the purpose of ostentation, but that you may see clearly the nature and extent of our labours, and the difficulty that we have in carrying on the business *without capital, without profit, and without becoming insolvent*. This course is the more necessary now when we have powerful rivals in the same field of operations, supported by the American Tract Society, and patronized by some of ourselves. Our rivalry, indeed,