

### Report of Missionary Labors in Musquodoboit.

*To the Presbytery of Halifax in connection with the Church of Scotland:*

REVEREND SIRS.—I beg leave to submit the following hurriedly-written Report on the present condition and future prospects of our Church in Musquodoboit.

As my labors there extended over the space of only one month—the month of September last—I found it impossible to obtain *exact* figures, so that my statements, in a few cases, and with regard to a few points, may not be absolutely correct. I think, however, they will be found correct enough to give the Presbytery a pretty good idea of the true state of the congregation.

The first thing noticeable to a stranger, in visiting Musquodoboit, is the great number of “settlements,” or separate little worlds, into which it is divided. Musquodoboit is divided into three great settlements—the Upper, the Middle, and the Lower. Those three, again, are divided into “sub-settlements,” as they may be called—that is, small districts, quite secluded, and apparently shut out from the rest of the world by winding rivers and broad belts of forest-land. In those districts, only one family, or at most a very few families, originally settled; but *now* there is, in all cases, quite a large number. Now those sub-settlements, not to speak of the larger settlements, are, in many cases, so widely separated from each other that the people of one cannot, or, at least, will not, assemble for divine service in another. Hence, it was found absolutely necessary to form a number of preaching stations, and, hitherto, service has been held in four different places quite distant from each other. For the sake of convenience, those stations have been designated as follows: “The Home District,” which is by far the most thickly settled by our people, and in which we have our only Church; “New Antrim;” “Middle Settlement;” and “Upper Settlement.” New Antrim is about seven miles from the Church in Little River: the School-house in the Middle Settlement about six; and the place of preaching in the Upper Settlement about twenty. Dean Settlement, one extremity of the congregation, is over thirty miles distant from New Antrim, the other. Hitherto, service has been held every fourth Sabbath in the Upper Settlement, and the people contributed a fourth of the whole amount paid to the minister, or £20. I held service four times in the Church, twice in New Antrim, twice in the Middle Settlement, and once in Meager’s Grant. I visited the Upper Settlement during the week to find out the state of the Church there.

In order that we may know the condition of any congregation, it is necessary, in the first place, to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the number of adherents and paying mem-

bers. On making inquiry, I found that there are, in all, in Musquodoboit, 124 paying members, and that most of these are heads of families. That number is divided between the different districts, as follows: Home District, 67; New Antrim, 20; Middle Settlement, 17; and Upper Settlement, 20. In addition to these, there are a goodly number of families who never paid anything, but who attend service pretty regularly, and who, I am sure, under a faithful pastor, would eventually join in with the others, and give their mite. During the month I was there, I visited over 60 families, and found them all warmly attached to the Church, and anxious to have a settled minister of their own. They admitted that they must do more in future than they have hitherto done, and that admission they all seemed determined to carry into effect.

I may here state that a Church should immediately be built in New Antrim. The numbers that congregate there are astonishing; but very much has not been done by them hitherto in the way of paying. Were a Church built there, I have no doubt they would all become firm adherents, and willingly contribute according to their ability. An attempt was made some time ago to begin a Church, but it fell through, and has never since been renewed. The advantage of a Church there can scarcely be over-estimated, and I fondly hope that the day is not far distant when there will be one.

Singularly enough, too, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper has never been dispensed at this station, if I was correctly informed. Indeed, that ordinance has not been dispensed anywhere within the bounds of the whole congregation since November 1864. The Presbytery, let me humbly suggest, should see that it is dispensed as soon as possible, as it serves to unite young and old more firmly to the Church, and, above all, to their risen Lord and Saviour.

But this leads me to remark, secondly, that we are to judge of the real vital religion that exists in a congregation from the number of communicants compared with the number of adherents. I am sorry to say that the number in the Musquodoboit congregation, though large, is not so large as it should be, and especially that so few of the young are to be found on the roll. The total number on the roll at present is 83, of whom 41 are males and 44 females. At the last celebration of the ordinance, on the second Sabbath of November, 1864, ten communicated for the first time, of whom six were males and four females.

(Other facts may be obtained from the Report of Mr. Jameson, which I herewith submit.)

Thirdly. To estimate the vitality of a congregation, we must enter the Sabbath School, and observe how it—the nursery of the Church—is attended and carried on. From