

AUGMENTATION IN THE WEST.

The attention of the readers of the Maritime Presbyterian has more than once been turned to the Scheme of the General Assembly for aiding weak congregations in the support of their pastors. At different times the crying need for vigorous and sustained exertion has been pointed out, the magnitude of the effort to be made indicated, and the regulations adopted by the Assembly for the administration of the Augmentation Fund stated and explained.

It has been shown that two-thirds of the pastoral charges in the Maritime Provinces at present fall below the Assembly's Minimum, and that in order to reach the point aimed at, the congregations within the bounds of Synod would need to contribute about \$12,000 for supplementing purposes, or in other words about three times as much as they have been accustomed to give for that object.

It is quite possible that some of our people may have assumed that this is an effort altogether beyond the power of our church, and that its very magnitude may have been looked upon by many as a very serious discouragement. It may not be amiss therefore to lay before the readers of the Presbyterian some facts with reference to what has been accomplished by our brethren in the Western section of the church during the past year.

The situation then at the commencement of the past year may be indicated in a few words. In October last there were in the Western Section of the church, two hundred and twenty-three (223) congregations having settled pastors; besides thirty-three (33) vacant charges in all two hundred and fifty-six (256) congregations, giving less than the proposed minimum. It was estimated that \$35,000 per annum would be required to bring up the 223 charges referred to above to the required point. Of this amount \$8000 was expected in the form of increased contributions to stipend from these charges themselves, while the remaining \$29,000 was looked for from self-sustaining congregations and from special contributions by individuals. These expectations have been more than realized. Of the 223 congregations reported last October as giving less than the proposed minimum, nearly 78 are now self-sustaining, at, or very near the rate of \$750.00 and a manse, and the returns of these 73 congregations showed an increase of \$4,915 per annum in the stipend

promised from their own resources alone, or an average of upwards of \$60 from each.

Further, the remaining 145 congregations which have received aid for the past year have increased their contributions to stipend by \$3,565 per annum or an average of \$26, thus aggregating a total increase from the weaker charges themselves of \$8480, or in other words \$2480 more than the Committee had estimated.

Besides this the congregational and individual contributions for augmentation, amounted to \$21,505.64. There was drawn also from the H. M. Committee Receipts, the sum of \$12,652.67, being an amount about \$2000 less than that which was drawn from the same source for supplementing purposes during the preceding year, making a total of \$34,158.31 available from the general contributions of the church.

The expenditure was for half year ending Oct. 1st, 1883 at

Old rates	\$7,020.50
for half year ending March 31st	
1884, at	
New rates	13,857.95
for expenses	1,956.88

\$22,835.33
leaving a working balance of \$11,322.98 which with certain legacies amounting to \$7000 has furnished the committee with a reserve fund of \$17,000 and a balance to the credit of the ordinary fund of \$1,322.98. This is certainly a most cheering result of their effort, and though it is felt that the permanent success of the movement can scarcely be regarded as assured, till a few years experience has tested the willingness of their people to maintain this degree of liberality, there is no question that so far the most sanguine expectations have been more than realized. As matters stand, the attention of the whole church will be very strongly directed, during the current year, to the progress of the same movement in the Eastern Section and if at next general Assembly the Supplementing Committee should be able to report an equal measure of success in the Maritime Provinces the issues in every way would be of the happiest kind. What is needed to enable them to do so, is determined, energetic, and sustained effort all along the line. E. A. M.

The Middle Musquodoboit and Elmsdale congregations are now taking steps toward the erection of Manses.