

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

MUSKOKA AND PARRY SOUND DISTRICTS.

REPORT OF MISSIONARY LABORS FOR THE YEAR ENDING WITH SEPTEMBER, 1878.

On the whole this year has been marked as one of prosperity, calling for devout thankfulness to the great Head of the Church. Notwithstanding the great financial depression which was most severely felt in this new country, we have been enabled during the past season not only to occupy as before the fields already taken up, but also at some points to enter upon new territory.

MISSIONARY MEETINGS.

During the past winter missionary meetings were held in twenty-six of the stations, the attendance at which upon the whole was very good. The interest in church matters in the various sections visited appears to be very deep, as was evidenced by the hearty reception accorded to the deputations, the deep attention paid to the addresses, and, in many instances, the very liberal contributions which were given in aid of the Home Mission Fund, amounting in all to some \$57.

MISSIONARIES EMPLOYED.

In addition to your ordained missionary, who has continued as heretofore in charge of Bracebridge and associated stations, the services of Mr. Jos. Andrew were retained in the Huntsville group during the entire year. Mr. Andrew has proved himself a most zealous and faithful laborer in this field. He has had charge during the whole year of the stations at Allensville, Huntsville, Chaffey and Grassmere, (a new station yet in its infancy,) and in addition, during the winter, of the station at Port Sydney. Mr. J. P. Grant of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, consented to remain on the field during the winter, and had assigned him the following stations, viz.: Raymond, Deebank, Cooke's Church, McIntosh's, Port Carling, Rosseau and Turtle Lake. Mr. C. B. Hemming, catechist, during the winter had in charge the station in Stisted. Thirteen stations were thus supplied. This is the first attempt perhaps to give anything like continuous supply during the winter to these stations, and that the effort has been appreciated on the part of the people is evidenced by the fact that now that the summer supply is about to be withdrawn, many of them are anxiously enquiring what supply they are likely to get for the winter. We earnestly hope that such arrangements will be made that all these stations will get partial supply at least. During the past summer the supply in the different fields has been as follows: Huntsville, etc., Rev. Jos. Andrew; Stisted, etc., J. P. Grant; Port Carling, etc., C. H. Cook; Baysville, etc., C. B. Hemming; Rosseau, etc., A. Dobson; Maganetawan, etc., J. Mutch; Doe Lake, etc., J. Brydon; Nipissing, etc., E. A. MacDonald. The four last mentioned labored under the auspices of the Students' Missionary Society of Knox College. The pulpit in Bracebridge, etc., has been supplied during my absence this summer by the Rev. James Herald of Dundas. We also understand that Mr. A. Leslie has been laboring during the summer at Parry Sound, and Mr. D. Bain at McKellar—making in all eleven missionaries employed during the past season in these districts. Gravenhurst, etc., having ranked since April last as a vacancy has been supplied from the probationer's list.

CHANGES IN THE FIELD.

Gravenhurst was separated from Draper in April and united with Severn and Washago. These stations we are happy to say have now become a settled charge under Mr. A. Dawson. Draper was united with York's Church, Draper, also in April. As we have now two stations in Draper I would suggest that they be known respectively as Uffington and York's. Deebank formerly associated with Raymond was disjoined therefrom and associated with Port Carling. McIntosh's, formerly connected with Port Carling, was associated with Raymond. These changes were made merely for the sake of convenience in giving supply. Doe Lake and Beggsboro were separated from the Maganetawan group and formed into a separate group, having Katrine and Emsdale added. As it is understood that the Students' Missionary Society withdraw at the close of this season from Rosseau and Turtle Lake, these stations will henceforth be under the care of the Presbytery.

ORGANIZATIONS.

The work of organization has been carried on this year as in the past, and as must continue for some years to come. Because of the continued extension of the settlements and the consequent opening up of new stations, this department of work must necessarily form a portion of each year's report. Seven stations have been organized during the past year, viz.: Emsdale, in the Township of Perry, on the 23rd day of February; Knox Church, in the Township of Chaffey, on the 21st day of July; Hoodstown, in the Township of Stisted, on the 10th day of August; Katrine, in the Township of Armour, on the 18th day of August; Stanleydale, in the Township of Stisted, on the 27th day of August; Croft, in the Township of Croft, on the 29th day of August, and Commanda, in the Township of Gurd, on the 7th of September.

ORDINANCES DISPENSED.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was dispensed at the undermentioned stations on the following dates: At Bracebridge on October 21st, March 24th, and September 15th; Monck, February 17th; Emsdale, February 24th and August 18th; Raymond and McIntosh, May 26th; Rosseau and Turtle Lake, June 2nd; Baysville, June 9th; South Falls, June 16th; Port Sydney, June 23rd; York's Church, June 30th; Gravenhurst and Washago, July 7th; Port Carling, July 14th; Knox Church, Chaffey, July 21st; Uffington, Draper, July 28th; Huntsville, August 4th; Stisted and Hoodstown, August 11th; Katrine, August 18th; Doe Lake and Beggsboro, August 25th; Stanleydale, August 27th; Maganetawan, Spence and Croft, September 1st; Commanda, September 8th. As the day appointed for communion service at Cooke's Church proved so wet that very few persons were able to be present, I omitted the service on that day—the 23rd of June—Mr. Herald kindly attending to the duty for me on the 21st of July.

Fifty-seven children and three adults have been received into the membership of the Church by the ordinance of baptism.

Two hundred and thirty-eight names have been added to the communion roll in the various stations, while on account of deaths, removals, etc., the names of thirty-seven have been erased, making a total increase for the year of two hundred and one. The membership was reported last year as 467, to which add the net increase of this year 201, and we find the total membership in the districts to be 668. We have of course many members scattered throughout the newer portions of the territory who are not yet gathered into congregations. The above figures refer to those who have been gathered into the organized stations.

ELDERS ORDAINED.

Elders have been elected and ordained in the following stations, viz.: At Port Sydney Messrs. Jas. Kay and Henry Roberts having been duly elected, were ordained to the office of the eldership on the 3rd day of February, by the Rev. James Carmichael of King. At Doe Lake, on the 23rd of August, Messrs. Geo. Todd, William Barr, and Andrew Millar having been duly elected; and at Beggsboro, on the 24th of August, Mr. Geo. Copeland having been also regularly elected to this office, these brethren were ordained thereto on Sabbath, the 24th of August. At Maganetawan Mr. S. G. Best, and at Spence Mr. R. Keppie, after having been duly elected, were also ordained to this office on the 1st September.

CHURCH BUILDING.

We have to report steady progress in this department of Church work among the stations. In addition to those mentioned in my last report, I may state that the church erected in Gravenhurst is fully completed, and was opened for public worship in February last by the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. The building with its various appointments presents a very neat appearance, reflecting great credit on the committee and friends who had the matter in charge. We hope soon to hear that the debt—not very large—has been wiped off. The church at Port Carling is also advanced sufficiently to admit of its being used for public worship during the summer months. At Huntsville the church which has been under way during the last eighteen months is now completed, and was opened for worship in August last by Dr. Cochrane. At Chaffey, Emsdale, and Maganetawan churches have also been erected this season but are not yet completed; while at Beggsboro the friends are very seriously contemplating the erection of a place of worship early

next season. Considerable aid in the erection of these buildings has been contributed by friends outside the district, and we can assure them that in every case so far as we have been able to discover the money has been carefully and economically expended. We trust that our friends in the more favored parts of the country will not in this department of Christian liberality "soon grow weary in well-doing." At many points it is absolutely necessary that churches be erected for the accommodation of our people, even though they should be only the rude log building, and at many of these it is equally necessary that some assistance be derived from outside sources, as from their circumstances the people are unable to meet the necessary outlay of money required. To repeat a sentence from my report of last year I may say, that "Next to the direct support of the Assembly's Home Mission Fund, I know of no way whereby the cause of Christ may be so surely advanced in these comparatively weak and struggling fields, as by assisting those who are striving, oftentimes under great difficulties and frequently many discouragements, to secure for themselves a place of worship." We have now at different points throughout this extensive field twelve churches, either completed or drawing near completion, where three years ago we had but three.

In reviewing the state of matters in this field there is much reason to thank God and take courage. Financially, the stations as a whole will, I think, be found in a much better condition than in past years. The missionaries of the Students' Society report larger subscriptions for the support of their cause than in previous years; while in so far as I have heard from the fields more immediately under the care of the Presbytery, less difficulty will be felt than in former years in straightening accounts between them and those who have been giving supply.

The action of the Assembly in placing Parry Sound more directly in connection with the Muskoka portion of the field will be found, I think, to add very much to our prosperity, as thereby a community of interest will spring up throughout the whole field, and at the same time a change in the grouping of the stations may be effected at certain points, which will add very much to the convenience in giving supply.

I cannot close without acknowledging the very great kindness shown during the year by brethren, who not only in their visits for health and recreation to our beautiful lakes, have shown a kindly interest in the work as well as spoken kindly words of encouragement, but more particularly by those who have made us a visit specially to see for themselves what is being attempted in those regions beyond. Among these I might mention Messrs. Macdonnell of Toronto and Carmichael of King, who spent a week each during the past winter in visiting the stations so far as time would permit, taking part in missionary meetings, etc., thereby cheering both missionary and people. Our worthy Convener, Dr. Cochrane, also spent a few days during the past summer—just long enough to get a slight taste of missionary work and missionary journeyings—traces of his visit will be found among us many days hence. And last though not least I must acknowledge the brotherly kindness of my friend and former co-presbyter, the Rev. R. Hamilton of Motherwell, who spent four weeks with me in the northern regions of Parry Sound in visiting the various stations in that district, and rendering most valuable assistance in the discharge of duty. Mr. Hamilton may now be considered an authority on the meaning of the term "roughing it," while the kindly word spoken to those struggling to sustain ordinances among themselves will, I doubt not, do much to cheer them amidst the difficulties of their surroundings.

I have also to acknowledge on behalf of the congregation of Bracebridge, etc., the kindness of the Home Mission Committee in providing supply for these stations—in the person of the Rev. J. Herald of Dundas—during my absence on duty in other parts of the field. Mr. Herald's services during these four months have been highly appreciated by the people; and I can only express the hope, in this connection, that returning health may soon warrant Mr. Herald in engaging more fully in the work of the ministry. The kindness of the Home Mission Committee in making a grant to meet travelling expenses is also gratefully acknowledged. I feel myself now in a much better position to engage in the work than before, and such as leaves me no longer dependant on the kindness of friends. Nor can I close without a word in acknowledgement of the aid this field has received in the past