

The returns as received show the following:

	1891.	1892.	1893.	1896.
Parishes,	111	114	112	127
LAY READERS.				
Licensed,	88	47	52	69
Unlicensed,	65	70	87	91
Totals,	103	117	139	160
S. S. Sup'ts,	144	158	140	169
Bible Class Teach's,	80	101	98	104
Male S. S. Teach's,	347		287	306
Total S. S. Officers	571		585	579

PAROCHIAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Chapters of B. of				
St. Andrew,	13	15	19	23
W.A.M.A.				80
Membership, (approximating)				1700
Junior W.A.M.A.				43
Y.P.S. Christian Endeavour				23
King's Daughters and Sons				20
(Including one Junior)				
Daughters of the King				5
(Including one Junior)				
Church Guilds				29
Women's				18
Young People's Guilds				18
Guilds (or Chapters) for specific purposes				26
Young People's Societies (other than C.E.)				10
Ladies' Aid Societies				29
District Visitors				2
Mite Societies				4
Church Workers' Associations				6
Mission Bands				11
Gleaners' Union				2
Willing Workers				3
Mothers' Societies				2
Boys' Brigade				3
Order of Good Shepherd				1
Dorcas Society				1
Communicants' Union				1
Band of Hope				1
Band of Faith				1
Woman's Prayer and Bible Union				1
Pound Social Society				1
Literary Society				1
Parishes not reporting any organization				20

Before alluding to the subject of organization generally, it will be proper to notice one or two of the branches of lay work, the progress or otherwise in which is indicated in the foregoing table.

LAY READERS.

The committee observe with thankfulness that since the association was formed in 1891, the licensed lay readers have increased from 88 to 69, and the unlicensed from 65 to 91; the totals being 103 in 1891 and 160 in 1896. The first returns, it is true, were from 111 parishes, and those for 1896 are for 127 parishes; but this, it is believed, need not materially affect our conclusions, as non-returning parishes are not likely to be those in which lay help has attained any appreciable development. Clear it is from these figures, modest as is the number of such helpers yet, that the idea of the adult male members of the congregation being at the call of the clergyman for duty, in connection with the aggressive work of the Church, or as assistants to him in her services, is steadily growing, and that both clergy and laity are awakening to the advantages, not only to the cause served, but to the pastor and his helper jointly and individually, which efforts in common for a noble and godly purpose cannot fail to bring with them. It is also most encouraging to observe that the work in which we are engaged is strictly upon the lines on which the Church of England is travelling everywhere. In a recent issue of a very influential Church paper published in London, England, is an article advocating a certain form of organized lay work, with the character of which we have nothing to do at this moment, but the remarks of the very conservative organ of Church thought and opinion are very striking. The Editor says: "There can be no two opinions about the necessity of extending the work of lay evangelists, if the Church is to hold her own. The statistics of ordination show that fewer men are ordained than ten years ago, and this in face of an increasing population. And although the higher standard demanded by the bishops and their chaplains may in some measure account for this, yet the fact is one that has to be faced in all seriousness. The clergy are already overburdened with work; if they cannot enlist the efficient aid of the laity, the progress of the Church will be checked. Some years ago, in any discussion of the question, it was almost necessary to prove at the outset that there existed a place for lay help in the economy of the Church. Bishops viewed it with suspicion. Even the other day, the Bishop of Lichfield, when presenting the report of his committee to Convention, was constrained to lead that the dignified character of our

Church, which we all appreciate, need offer "no obstacle" to the growth of such an order as is at present at work in his diocese. The apologetic phrase reminds us of the fact there once existed a superstition that evangelizing work was never to be attempted by any but such as were in holy orders. *The superstition is dead.* What we have to obtain next is the organization and adequate direction of that lay work." The Diocese of Rochester (England), although rural in many of its characteristics, includes a large portion of the great metropolis lying south of the Thames. It contains a trifle over 2,000,000 of population, approximately as many souls as the whole Province of Ontario. At a meeting of the Diocesan Society, which has for its main object the supplying of the spiritual needs of the urban population, among the speakers was Mr. George Russell, late under-secretary of state for India, and a representative of the official and aristocratic portion of the community. After remarking that "every Churchman whose conscience was in good order must be uneasy unless he knew he was doing something for the promotion of the work of the Church in which he professed to believe," Mr. Russell went on to say: "To come out of the region of theory into fact, what was it that lay agency could accomplish? Strictly speaking there were only two functions that a layman could not perform—he could not consecrate the Eucharist, and he could not absolve the penitent. Short of these two functions, there was not a single office ordinarily discharged by the Christian priesthood which could not be lawfully discharged by the Christian layman in certain special circumstances. The degree of prominence that could safely be entrusted to a layman was entirely a matter of discipline, order and convenience. The idea in his mind was that there should be an order of Lay Preachers, an order that might be developed in a great many useful directions. There were many laymen who had an intimate knowledge of religious and ecclesiastical matters, who surely might be able to give one Sunday evening in a month to the assistance of the over-worked and preached-out clergy." Turning to the colonial field we find in the Diocese of Melbourne the idea of lay help in very full development. The 179 clergy of the Diocese of Melbourne are assisted by 53 lay-readers (who are licensed to officiate under the superintendence of the archdeacons or parochial clergy by whom they were respectfully nominated), and by 296 honorary readers who are authorized by the bishop to read Morning and Evening Prayers (except the absolution) and the Litany, and to read sermons approved by him, when requested to do so by the clergyman responsible for the services of the Church in which the honorary reader is asked to officiate. The application of the term "honorary" to the last-named class of readers suggests that the 53 first mentioned are stipendiaries, and regularly engaged in the work, men perhaps who are training for the ministerial office. In the Diocese of Exeter, (England), paid lay evangelists are, we believe, thus employed. But whatever the nature of the local arrangements, it is evident that, in the colonial Diocese of Melbourne, lay agency is an important factor. In the discussions of the hour, therefore, the question no longer is, shall the Church employ lay workers, but how can she procure enough of them, and how can they be made most effective? As suggested in an extract already quoted, it is the organization and direction of lay work that must engage attention. At the late Church Congress at Toronto, the chairman of your committee had the privilege of contributing a paper on "Laymen's Leagues," a form of organization working effectively in the United States. It is, however, best adapted for large and populous Church centres. Attention was at the same time called to the active and useful association with a similar object established in our own Sea city. From a few notes supplied to the committee, at request, by the worthy president, Mr. F. T. Harrison, we find that the London Association maintains services in nearly all the public institutions in that city, including the Jail, the Home for Incurables, City Hospital, Aged People's Home, and others. At the Hospital, with its ever changing population, the work has been most encouraging, and the services have been acknowledged by many to have been fraught with spiritual benefit. The "Aged People" appreciate the visits greatly, and no one is absent from the service who has strength to attend. The increasing value attached to the services of those members who are lay readers is shown by the ever-increasing demand for their help. The calls in fact are more numerous than can be supplied. On a recent Sunday as many as nine engagements were filled by members of the association. This branch of work has chiefly laid in country districts, but in some of the city churches help has been rendered with much acceptance. Meetings of the association are held monthly for mutual intercourse and help. Not unfrequently a paper is prepared and read by one of the members. His lordship the bishop of the diocese attended one of these meetings, and gave an address which will be long remembered by those who

had the privilege of hearing it. Very friendly relations exist between the association and Huron College. By judicious arrangements any interference with the work of the students is avoided. It is proposed to identify this and any similar association of lay workers having episcopal sanction more closely with the Diocesan Association, by giving them a representation on the Committee of Management of the latter, and an amendment to the constitution to that effect will be submitted for your approval.

S. S. OFFICIALS.

The lack of male assistance in connection with Sunday school and Bible class work does not appear to have materially lessened during the past four years. In fact the total number of such helpers seems rather to have diminished than increased. We have returns, as already stated, from 127 parishes. This will represent at least 260 congregations, in nearly all of which will be found Sunday schools. The absence of lay superintendents and Bible class teachers, in some cases to be attributed no doubt to the clergyman preferring to take those duties upon himself. But the want of male teachers, from whose ranks the superintendents of the future must be found, is painfully significant. One hundred and eleven parishes in 1891 gave a return of 347 male teachers; in 1896, 127 parishes give 306. The total male S. S. workers in 1891, were 571; in 1896, with sixteen more parishes, there were but 579. The question is continually asked, what becomes, or what is to become of our young men? If it were not a fact that a large proportion of our Sunday school male teachers are men well advanced in life, and if we credited all our male Sunday school teachers to the young men's account, we should still have to admit that no really considerable number, comparatively speaking, are engaged in this work. The committee have a word for old men, or the older of our men of the Church in this connection. If the young men are not zealous or self-sacrificing in the cause of the Church, it is to a large extent because too many of the older men are luke-warm. The young men are presumably the sons of older men. What sort of example in an interest in the Church in its work or in its affairs, do too large a proportion of our male laity set to young men? Is it seen in their regular attendance as often as the doors are open for divine worship at the Lord's House? Is it in their frequent participation in the commemoration of their Lord's atoning sacrifice and love? Is it in their anxiety to increase their pastor's comforts and emoluments, and to take less and less from the Mission Funds? Is it in their eagerness to represent the Church in its Synods and to acquire an intelligent knowledge of its affairs? Is it by each one erecting an altar in his own household with himself as the priest, offering the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise? Let us be thankful there are many who could answer every one of these questions in the affirmative with a good conscience. But, alas, how many could not! If a father cares for these things little more than a heathen Gaius for the controversies of Christians and Jews, how can he, how can we, expect his sons to care for them? Nay, if a well-minded parent even who goes to church honours the sacraments, pays his dues cheerfully, and, in fact, seems in his ordinary Church relationships an exemplary sort of person, does not show a real active, vigorous participation in the life and work of the Church, if he does nothing to lighten the burdens of his clergyman, or aught outside of the mere reception, by himself, of the Church's privileges, how can he expect those about him to grow up less selfish than himself? In early life it is the maternal influence that tells most on the habits and character, and let no one disparage its beneficent effect at any time; but it is the paternal example and guidance for good or ill that young men will usually follow. That a great opportunity for good in the Master's name is being lost by the indifference of older men to their responsibilities in that regard, who will question? That the joy and reward, as the years steal on them, of those who make the self-surrender and so can call on their young men to follow where they lead, will be great, who can deny?

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW.

Bearing closely on the topic just disposed of is the great work of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, which has more than once been brought prominently before our Conventions. It is mainly to young men, aided in some instances by men who can hardly claim to be any longer considered young, to whom the Church is indebted for the maintenance of this important movement. No method has yet probably been devised more effectually to reach young men than that pursued by the St. Andrew's Brotherhood. None, if it be sustained in the right way and the right spirit, is more likely to produce a crop of Church workers. The experience of some of us will confirm this. But in Huron at the present time the Brotherhood does not seem to be making very marked progress. Our returns, it is true, show a fair and steady increase in the number of chapters. Thirteen