

## HOME MISSION FUND.

## STATEMENT BY THE CONVENER OF THE COMMITTEE.

As the time draws near when congregations hold their annual missionary meetings, and money collected during the year are apportioned to the different schemes of the Church, it is deemed fitting to present the special claims of the Home Mission Fund before the members and adherents of our Church.

In many points of view, save the small increase in the contributions of last year, the returns made by the different Presbyteries and far off fields of missionary operations to last Assembly, were most encouraging. From the report then presented the following statistics are taken: Mission stations under the care of the committee, 101, or, including those in Manitoba, 115; supplemented congregations, 67; probationers employed under the direction of the committee, 47; missionaries, students and catechists, 116. Amount contributed to the fund by congregations, \$19,737.12; by Sabbath schools, \$844.15; making a total of \$20,581.27, or an increase of \$1,558.64 over the year 1872-73. After all the last year's claims had been met, there remained a balance *against the fund* of \$149.52!

Since the meeting of Assembly this indebtedness has been very largely increased. The salaries of our missionaries in British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Lake Superior district, and special grants made to the missionaries in the Ottawa and Muskoka regions, have to be made by the committee *at once*. If to these are added the half-yearly payments due mission stations and supplemented congregations on the 1st October, the amount will reach *at least* \$10,000, a large proportion of which must be borrowed, before any returns are made by the congregations of the Church!

It should be borne in mind that the field of Home Mission operation is no longer restricted to the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. British Columbia now forms part of our territory; and it is very evident that if as a Church we are to take permanent hold of that distant Province, our staff of labourers must be very materially strengthened, and that at no distant date. The Presbytery of Manitoba has made application for three new missionaries to overtake the new settlements of Presbyterians that have formed during the year in that Province. Since last meeting of Assembly Messrs. McKellar and Currie have joined the brethren there, and are labouring in distant sections of the country. The stations on Lake Superior, for the first time in our history as a Church, have been supplied with permanent missionaries, Messrs. McKerracher, Kay and Caswell having accepted appointments and entered vigorously upon the work. A very large proportion of the stipends promised these missionaries for the present year must be borne by the Home Mission Fund. The same remark applies to Manitoba. The grasshopper plague has fallen most heavily upon the western part of the Province, where some of our most promising stations are planted, and congregations that promised considerable amounts to secure settled pastors are now unable to do anything for the support of gospel ordinances. In view of such facts, the claims of the Home Mission Fund upon the liberality of our people are peculiarly strong.

While the committee have no desire to press the claims of this scheme unduly, they feel warranted in asking the members of the Church to give to this (as well as to all the other schemes), *in proportion to the necessities of the case*. Not less than \$30,000 should be raised this year to meet all liabilities. Surely this amount is not too much to expect from a Church numbering 49,000 members. Without including the contributions of