

of suitable books for sabbath school libraries, and secure a depot for sabbath literature if practicable." In reference to this matter we have to say that some members of committee resident in Halifax have done good service by aiding Sabbath schools in the country in selecting and purchasing libraries. We have also been preparing a list of suitable books from the catalogues of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, the American Tract Society, the London Tract Society and others. But it cannot be expected that we are able to furnish a complete list, we would therefore ask for the co-operation of the brethren in this matter.

Your committee would propose that the Agent of the Colportage Scheme should become a medium through which sabbath school books might be obtained, for as he deals in the book market, he would be able to purchase on easier terms than a private individual. That all orders from Sabbath Schools be filled by him at prime cost subject to the additional charge of freight and postage.

The lessons for 1869 should be prepared as heretofore sufficiently early to reach the most distant parts of the church before the first of January.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

H. B. MACKAY, *Convener.*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COLPORTAGE.

To the Reverend the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces.

Last year we announced that we were free from the debt, which had been hanging over us for some time, and also that we had a sufficient supply, including Bibles, Testaments and psalm books from the N. B. Society of Scotland, to enable us to carry on the business for some time. But we then announced also that the scheme was not self-supporting, either here or anywhere as far as we knew; and, therefore, unless the liberality of the church was in some measure continued, it must languish, as the old stock will gradually disappear, and the means of renewing it be diminished by the current expenses. This difficulty has been felt more than usual during the

past year, in consequence of the severity of the winter, which caused a great scarcity of money and provisions, and hence the sales were more limited. This view taken in connection with the fact, that the liberality of the church has not been continued during the past year, will show that our operations could not be extended, or even continued as they were; consequently our importations were chiefly Bibles and Testaments, with a few minor books amounting to about 2500 volumes; and though many of these and what we had previously on hand have been sold, yet too many remain, and the sale is yet too dull, to induce us to order many more under present circumstances.

As evidence of the propriety of this course from all the premises, we offer the following detail of the returns, wages, and other expenses of two of our colporteurs, for seven months jointly, or three and a half months each, spent in this service. Thus, gave out to said colporteurs during said time, books and bibles, &c., amounting to the sum of £174 9s. 4d. In settling for these, they were allowed £31 19s. 7½d. for wages; and £18 18s. 3d. for travelling and other expenses; and £9 17s. 6d. for books given away, or missing, or on which they had allowed a discount. The books left on hand amounted to £37 17s. 11½d., and the cash return was only £75 16s.

From this synopsis it appears that only about one-half of the proceeds of sale appears in the form of cash returns, and that the other half disappears in the form of wages, expenses, discount, &c.; and as to this must be added the expenses of procuring and distributing the whole, it must be evident to every observer that without external assistance, the scheme cannot be carried on. Hence the American Tract Society, after trying it for a year or so, could not carry it on even for another year, unless \$1000 were pledged for its assistance; and hence, also, when a new local organization is formed, it requires \$5000 to begin with, and either two or three thousand dollars annually to carry it on efficiently. We have now been carrying it on for sixteen years,—efficiently, while we had the credit