

dilutions have been greatly improved. Expenses have everywhere been reduced, and strict economy is being practiced in domestic life. Congregations exerted themselves to wipe out arrears in salary and to reduce debts on church buildings; and the outlook now is more hopeful.

At the time of writing, it is announced that the Remedial Bill is to be withdrawn. By an overwhelming majority the people of Manitoba at the last provincial election declared their opposition to Separate Schools. This opposition is confined to no political party, nor even to members of Protestant churches. The people are opposed to these schools, because such schools confer privileges on one Church denied to other Churches, and so contravene the doctrine of Equal Rights; because in Separate Schools the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church are taught at the public expense, which is subversive of the principle that there is no state Church in Canada; because Separate Schools mean the education of the rising generation apart from each other, and the accentuation of race and religious lines that prevent that fusion and assimilation so important in every state; because such schools, when in existence, were not efficient, and hence illiteracy; because in a sparsely settled country the maintenance of a double system is so expensive that the efficiency of all schools is apt to suffer; because the people think that the present agitation is largely confined to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and that the laity, with the exception of those living in one or two centres, would prefer National to Separate School. The more the subject is inquired into the clearer it becomes that the people at the time of the union did not ask for Separate Schools; that clause 7 in the Bill of Rights No. 4 was a forgery; that the School legislation of 1871 was smuggled through the House in its dying days, an offer being made to the leader of the Opposition of a place in the Cabinet of the Province if he would not oppose the measure. The bribe was refused, but a majority passed the Bill. The people contend that Privy Council upheld the constitutionality of the Act of 1890, that the "grievance" existing is technical, and that the imposition of Separate Schools on the Province, against the determined opposition of the people, would inflict a more serious grievance still. The Provincial Government offered to allow the use of the school houses for religious purposes at the close of each day, and to close the schools at 3.30 p.m. for the purpose; or to secularize the schools entirely, and leave the teaching of religion to the Home and the Church. The people of Manitoba, moreover, maintain that 20,000 people had no right in 1871 to bind the hands of 200,000 in 1890, when conditions have wholly changed. The dead hand has tied the living too long. Progressive states do not go to the graveyard for their legislation.

Dr. Robertson's report is supplemented by one from Rev. Mr. Gordon, in which the work of the Church is tersely described.

MISSION TO LUMBERMEN.

Mr. M. H. Scott contributes the portion of the report relating to work among the lumbermen, as follows:—This department of the Home Mission work of our Church has been carried on the same lines as former years. The aim of this Society is to supply good literature for the use of the men in the shanties. This is distributed gratuitously. There were not any collections taken up in the shanties this year, as our Missionaries all seem to think the same about this matter, that the many hungry collectors who go from camp to camp are producing very harmful effects upon the men. There has been a faithful and widespread distribution of our literature in all parts of the great lumber districts of Ontario and Quebec. Owing to the fact that we now have our own Ministers and Missionaries in all parts of the field, we are able to do careful and thorough work, such as was impossible a few years ago. We distribute literature in French, English and Gaelic. The Rev. A. McLaren, of River Desert, writes:—"Your literature is of the greatest assistance to me. In fact I might quit work in this field altogether if I did not have it. It has helped this winter to introduce me into about 150 homes, depots, shanties, and far away places." We have had in all some twenty men giving their assistance in the work this last winter. Receipts and expenditure for the year about \$350.

From Ontario and Quebec are detailed reports, generally of a most satisfactory character, but too voluminous for extended reference. The summing up is as follows:—The Committee in closing their report for the year, while grateful for the congregational contributions received, have still to lament that many of the Mission Stations supported by the fund gave little or nothing in return, while at the same time contributing to other schemes; and that the amounts sent by many of the regular congregations are so small towards the support of a scheme which so vitally affects the very life and advancement of Presbyterianism in the Dominion. But for the assistance given by the British churches, and special donations, there would have been this year a large deficit. As these are always more or less uncertain from year to year, the revenue from our congregations and individual members should be such as will enable the Committee to meet all demands made upon it. There are always special cases that can be advantageously helped, and important fields that can be occupied by the help of such special bequests as may come into their hands over and above the regular revenue from the Churches.

EASTERN SECTION.

Two reports for the Eastern Section presented by Messrs. John McMillan and P. M. Morrison is as follows:

Fifty-two catechists, mostly students, were at work during the summer, seven were employed continuously during the winter, and ten others during three weeks of the Christmas holidays. They labored within the bounds of all the Presbyteries except P. E. Island. About one-fifth of them were placed in charge of organized congregations, which, through financial weakness or some other cause, were unable to obtain ministers. There are about forty strictly catechist fields—that is groups of small stations unable to raise the necessary amount to place them on the list of ordained missionary charges or augmented congregations. Some of these are growing very hopefully, and will ere long be in a position to have a minister over them all the time. In the Presbytery of Sydney, Louisburg is rapidly developing. In the Presbytery of Inverness, Baddeck Forks should soon be a congregation.

In the Presbytery of Pictou, Country and Isaac's Harbors, and Barney's River, are aiming to be placed under the charge of ordained missionaries, and Ferrona has called a minister. In the Presbytery of Halifax, the North-West Arm and Rockingham have obtained an ordained missionary. In St. John Presbytery, there is a number of places that are ready for the transition. Fairville and Grand Bay have taken the step. Of Waterford, and connected stations, the catechist says: "The people of Waterford are erecting a new church, and the people of all parts of the field are looking forward to having a congregation organized and a pastor settled." Thus by carefully nurturing the weak stations, they gradually rise to the strength and dignity of self-reliant charges, and become important factors in the Church's aggressive work.

There has been no scarcity of laborers, but on the contrary, mere

ministers and catechists have been seeking work that could be employed by the Committee.

Much work has been done, and doubtless much good accomplished, through the efforts of the agents employed. Twenty-nine ordained ministers have been on the roll for the supply of vacancies. Seventeen of these were called and settled during the year, four removed from our bounds, two are under call and will soon be settled, and the remaining six are with us yet.

Thirteen ordained ministers were located the whole of the year as missionaries, and four about half of the year. Two of the latter accepted calls from their fields, and were settled as regular

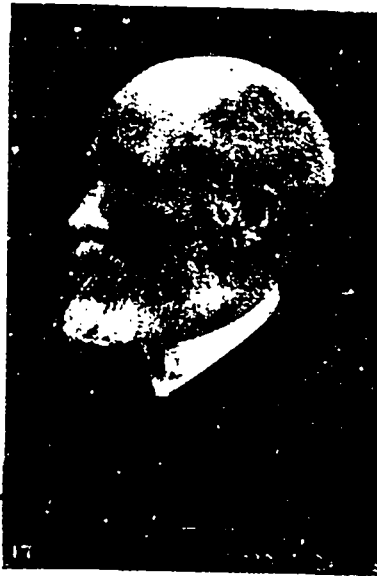
pastors—the other two went on the roll for the supply of vacancies. Vacant congregations are supposed to receive, and for the most part do receive, a large part of their supply from the Presbyteries, who secure men for this work monthly from the Home Mission Committee. This is an important part of our Home work, and is the means of bringing together in an orderly way the fields needing pastors and the ministers desiring congregations. Every year a number of happy settlements are in this way effected. It is most desirable that this order of procedure should be as little interfered with as possible. It would be for the interests of all concerned, if ministers giving up their charges would go on the roll for supply, and if all the Presbyteries would require their vacant charges to take at least one-half of their supply from the men furnished to them monthly by the H. M. Committee.

The old difficulty under our system of supply by catechists, namely, a long winter's silence, has not been fully overcome. But to some extent it is met by the fidelity of Presbyteries. They arrange in the fall for a systematic supply, perhaps only monthly or bi-monthly, but at least regular, of nearly all their fields. The Home Mission Committee, at the autumn meeting, receive a report from the Presbyteries of the arrangements they have made, and use all their influence to have the Gospel preached occasionally to all our mission stations.

The Synod, at its last meeting, had before it the plan proposed by the Committee for a Church Building Fund applicable to all parts of the Church not benefited by the Hunter Fund; and sent the matter to Presbyteries, to be reported on to next Synod, when it is hoped the scheme can be set on foot, and aid be given to weak fields in supplying themselves with places of worship.

The Superintendent, in the Presbytery of St. John, continues to give the highest satisfaction to the Presbytery and the Committee. On the representation of the Presbytery, the Committee have assumed the whole of his salary, namely, \$1,000, and the funds raised by the Woman's Home Mission Society will be given to the fund, specially for the purpose of paying supplements as far as it will go, within the Presbytery. The Presbytery believe that the Society will raise at least \$600. The Committee while heartily thanking them for the liberal collections they have heretofore raised, take this opportunity of urging them to increase the number of their auxiliaries, and multiply the amount of their giving, so as to meet, in some adequate degree, the large drafts on the Home Mission Fund for the support of the mission fields within the Presbytery.

The Home Mission Fund closed the year with a debt of \$3,690.77. The debt at the beginning of the year was \$2,677.74; so that we have gone behind during the year one thousand dollars. The receipts for the use of our Eastern work are \$10,837.71, three dollars below those of the previous year. One thousand dollars of this amount came from bequests and donations. Among the donors are the Free Church of Scotland, who in her love for her children in these provinces, sent £160 stg. to help to provide the Word of Life for the needy, and an Edinburgh Nova Scotian, to whom Foreign Missions and Aged Ministers' Fund, as well as the Home Mission Fund, are indebted for £25 stg. each. These gifts from abroad are most cheering, and ought to stimulate our people at home to much greater liberality than has been yet shown. Unless larger collections are given by our people the work must be curtailed. Presbyteries are constantly urging the Committee to furnish ordained men and catechists, in sufficient numbers to overtake the vast work needing to be done, and the Committee, realizing that our progress as a Church depends on



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