

REPORT.

The Committee of the Congregational Union of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, in presenting their first Report to the friends and supporters of this Society, feel themselves fully justified in expressing such sentiments of congratulation as usually introduce documents of this nature. A brief reference to the condition of Congregationalism, prior to the formation of this Union, and a sketch of the operations of the Society during the first year of its existence, will furnish to the friends of our principles, ample reason for thanksgiving and courage.

Congregationalism is no new system of religious faith and practice in these Lower Provinces. It began with the first immigration into these countries from the shores of New England—an immigration which preceded the landing of the Loyalists by several years. The French settlers brought with them the religion of the Romish Church; but the first settlers of British origin in these regions, were men who deeply sympathised with the evangelical faith, the ecclesiastical polity, and the religious freedom of their Puritan ancestors. The Churches at Yarmouth, Liverpool, Cornwallis, Falmouth, and Halifax, in Nova-Scotia, and at Mauderville, or Sheffield, and Keswick Ridge, in New-Brunswick, were of this early origin. Several of the Churches that were originally planted by Congregationalists in these regions have merged into other religious communions; a fact which your Committee are disposed to trace in a great measure to the extreme difficulty which those Churches experienced in securing an educated Ministry. This difficulty must have been great indeed, at a period when no Institution existed in their midst for the education of young men for the Christian Ministry; when the Congregational Churches in England had formed no Colonial Society; and when the Revolution, with its consequences, almost excluded the inhabitants of these Provinces from all intercourse with the Churches and the Institutions of the States. Hence Denominations who enjoyed the fostering care of their Brethren in the Old Country; and others who were less scrupulous in waiting for regularly trained teachers of the Gospel, came in, and took the ground, which was once occupied by the adherents of Congregationalism.

Thus matters continued, till the year 1842, by which time the impression was general that no Congregational Churches existed in the Provinces. In that year, the Rev. H. Wilkes, of

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At this Meeting church order, agreed to; and The Rev. S. M. and having so ed to accept th was promised t