

cases the need was so great that it was felt it would be cruel to deprive the schools, and to a large degree the entire adult population of almost, if not quite, the sole religious reading they received, and grants were continued though in a lessened degree, even in the face of smaller anticipated part payments. Very many expressions of gratitude have been received, and very blessed revivals have visited schools and churches, both in St. John's and in the outports.

My own visit to the Island last summer gave me such a conception of the poverty of the people and the needs of these schools as I had not before. In many places the people see no money the whole year round, their earnings being received in orders on the local stores. In some cases the scholars collected and sold fish in order to pay for their grants. No fund in our Church is more purely missionary in its character than this Sunday-School Aid and Extension Fund, and the general testimony is, that none is doing with so small an amount, so large an amount of good. Besides the money thus expended, through the kindness of schools and friends in sending second-hand books and papers, the secretary has distributed, gratuitously, to poor schools, over 50,000 volumes of books, and many thousands of papers sent him for that purpose.

The papers also increase the regularity of attendance at school, and the holding of the schools the whole year round. The annual report shows that 417 schools were kept open the entire winter, which were closed the winter before.

The missionary givings in our Sunday-schools have been well sustained, some schools having given the entire amount of their weekly collections to the Missionary Fund. The legislation of the General Conference has suggested the additions to the collections to be taken in the schools, one for the Educational Fund, and one for the Superannuation Fund. It is expected that, as the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund collections have grown from very small beginnings to very large proportions, these collections also, in time, will increase, and will create an intelligent sympathy with the various benevolences of our Church.

The growth of the Epworth League in Canada has not been surpassed in proportion to our numbers by its growth in the great Methodist Episcopal Church, and it has not been nearly equalled by the growth of the League in the Methodist Episcopal Church South, with five times our membership. This has been chiefly caused by the hearty co-operation of the brethren upon the circuits, inasmuch as the secretary has not been able, in addition to his increasing editorial labours, to respond to more than comparatively few of the requests to do field work in the interests of either Leagues or Sunday-schools.

The testimony that reaches the secretary is that the growth of the schools and the greater

regularity of attendance has been very greatly promoted by the Sunday-school periodicals. Notwithstanding keen competition from undenominational, broad-gauge American rivals, the circulation of our own papers has been exceedingly gratifying, that of *Onward* during the last year being an increase of over 2,000 copies, and that of the other papers having steadily advanced from year to year. We now issue considerably more than one Sunday-school paper for every scholar in our schools, an average far in excess of the average of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States or any other Church that I know of.

THE NEW SECRETARY.

The secretary, in retiring from the duties of the office, which he has discharged to the best of his ability, but in a manner far below his ideal, wishes to put on record, first, his devout gratitude to God for the great development of our Sunday-schools and Epworth Leagues, and second, his sincere and heart-felt thanks to the members of successive Boards who have given him such hearty co-operation and support, and especially to Warring Kennedy, Esq., the indefatigable treasurer, who amid the many duties of his busy life has ever taken a profound interest in our Sunday-school work, and has preserved an annual record with the greatest minuteness and fidelity of every penny's receipts and expenditure, including the amount in dollars and cents granted to every school throughout the Connexion, and the amount contributed in part payment by such schools. The kind co-operation and sympathy of the ministers and Sunday-school superintendents and officers throughout the Connexion, their many words of kindly sympathy and commendation have been an unpeakable joy amid the often onerous and exacting duties of the office. I bespeak for my successor in the discharge of its obligations, what I am sure he shall have, the same generous sympathy of this joint Board, of its two treasurers and of the faithful ministry and laity of the Methodist Church in Canada and Newfoundland.

By the blessing of God we may look for, under the administration of a special Sunday-school and Epworth League Secretary, a new era of unequalled growth and development. The man to whom this labour is assigned, and who can give his whole time to this important sphere of operation, will occupy a position of unique influence. He can lay his hand upon a lever of more than Archimedian power to lift the world up nearer to the heart of God; he can aid as can no other man in the moulding and development of the Church of to-morrow, which is to-day in our schools and our leagues. With the generous help of the pastorate and laity—for no man can do this work alone, it is too mighty for the mightiest—he can help to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the tabernacle of Methodism in this land. By the promotion of the home department of