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Toronto, Aug. 20, 1896.

The Home Mission Report of 1896.

THE publication of the minutes of the General Assembly with accompanying reports leads one to examine afresh the work of the year. The Home Mission Report (Western Section) holds the place of honor, and the work sketched there seems to be on the whole in a healthy and progressive condition. It is true that complaints of frost and drought, of the shifting of population, the shutting down of sawmills, Plymouthism, deadness, etc., are made, but this was to have been expected over so wide a field as the Committee occupies. In form the report is somewhat faulty, and a stranger would find it difficult to get in clear, intelligible shape what he needs. One is afraid that the reports of Presbyteries are in some cases defective; and they institute no comparison in many cases with the condition of the work last year. One would like to know for certain, e.g., how many churches and manses were built in the whole field last year, and where, how many missions became self-supporting or became augmented congregations, how many new missions were organized, how many persons joined the Church on profession of faith, and how many by certificate. As far as possible the report should show the result of the stock-taking for the year, with gains and losses, on a balance-sheet. The Committee would do its work more intelligently, and they would, by such a statement, furnish the pastor, and the speaker at a missionary meeting, with stronger arguments in favor of Home Missions. This suggestion is made because of the interest taken in the work and because of its importance for the whole Church. People demand full and accurate information if they are to contribute, but it is difficult to get this from the large and somewhat undigested mass presented in these reports.

From our reading, we would gather that one mission became a self-sustaining congregation last year and that nine were transferred to the Augmented list. This was a gratifying advance. Quite a number of missions advanced also from the stage of student to that of ordained supply. We may expect these, ere long, to call pastors. Over twenty new missions have been organized about two-thirds of which are in the West. A net gain of 1050 communicants is claimed for the West, and the gains in other parts of the field would be at least as many. Two thousand is a substantial advance. The small number of communicants in some fields, no longer new, as compared with families would suggest the need of more aggressive work. About twenty-six churches and five manses were built and preparations were in progress to build several more.

One is prepared to learn of growth in the West, but when Presbyteries like Kingston, Algoma and Barrie show decided gains one is particularly gratified. During the past ten years families increased in the Kingston mission field 75 per cent., communicants more than 100 per cent., and contributions more than 400 per cent.

The lack of winter supply is felt everywhere. The complaint is loudest in the West, but there is grumbling all through the reports. Is it not time to face the supply question and change all this? The last Assembly was asked to check the inrush of students and others into the ministry of the Church for fear of an inundation. Could not this super-abundance of men be guided to the furnishing fields of the North and West? It would seem that there are more than enough men to occupy continuously every mission field in the Church, why should not the General Assembly see to it that every field has a man, and as far as practicable every man a field? Vacant fields in Algoma and the West, and idle men crowding each other for a hearing in vacant charges in Ontario! Something wrong.

The means at the disposal of the Committee are not adequate. There is a surplus but this is gained by cutting down salaries; and the Assembly had to instruct the Committee to increase salaries, because the missionaries could not live on the figures paid. Were all the communicants in the Western Section to give fifty cents each there would be abundance. But for the large contribution received from British Churches the Committee and the missionaries would be in severe straits. But British contributions may cease to flow at any time—hence we should depend on the membership of our own Church for the support of this work, rather than look abroad, much as we appreciate the generosity of these British Churches.

The Pope and Anglican Orders.

For some time back it has been known that the Roman Curia was studying the question of its relation to the orders of such other Episcopal bodies as the Anglican, and in some quarters it was fondly hoped that by some kind of recognition of their validity on the part of the Pope the way might be paved for a reunion. In view of this all possible influence has been brought to bear by the extreme High Church party to secure a pronouncement that might afford some hope. Even Mr Gladstone was induced to write a letter to the Pope strongly urging him to take that course. All hope of success, however, has now been crushed by the Pope's latest encyclical which has just been given to the public, in which he asserts with all the distinctness of his predecessors, the exclusive claims of Rome for supremacy and the impossibility of recognizing in any way those who are separated from it either in jurisdiction or doctrine. *There is but one way of reunion, and that is by complete submission.* We cannot say that we are surprised at this attitude. The surprising thing would have been if any other attitude had been taken. Nor can we say that we much regret it. It is better on the whole that we should know exactly where Rome stands, and any possible reunion that might have been brought about by a confusion of the issues between Romanism and Protestantism would in the long run have been fatal to true religion. We shall not rival Rome's arrogance by saying that the reunion of Christendom is possible only by all submitting themselves to Protestant authority, but we do say that it is possible only by all submitting to the unqualified authority of the New Testament. When Rome reforms herself by discarding her unscriptural dogmas and her superstitious practices then it will be time to discuss the question of union and not before. Meantime it must be rather galling for our High Church friends to have all their advances spurned and their boasted orders denounced as schismatic. There is not much worthy satisfaction to be found in the spectacle by us poor outside Presbyterians, but it is at least amusing to see the wry faces they make over the medicine they have been dealing out so plentifully to others when they are called upon to swallow it themselves. The best thing we can wish for them is that the dose may