

REPORT ON SABBATH SCHOOLS.

PRESENTED TO THE MARITIME SYNOD

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CONVENER.

The S. S. Committee of the Maritime Synod beg leave to report as follows, for 1886. Returns have been received from ten Presbyteries, and from one school in the Presbytery of Nfld., viz., St. Andrews, St. Johns. These returns give decided evidences of improvement and progress in S. S. work, throughout the bounds of our Synod. In every matter upon which information has been asked your Committee are happy to be able to report a marked advance upon the previous year. The returns are fuller and more satisfactory than in any previous year, affording ground for hope that some future Convener may be able to report that every S. School within the bounds has been heard from.

The first point to which the Committee call the attention of the Synod, is the attendance. The total estimated

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

within the bounds of our Synod is 523. There are 218 congregations and mission stations, which gives an average of 2.4 schools to each congregation. Reports have been received from 423 schools, leaving 100 unreported. In many instances these non-reporting schools are in vacancies and mission stations; but two or three large congregations, situated in flourishing towns, have helped to swell the number. When we compare these statistics with those of the previous year, we obtain some rather astonishing results. The total estimated number of schools last year was 463, so that 60 schools have either been discovered or newly organized during the past year. To this increase the Presbytery of P. E. I. alone contributes 38; the Presbytery of St. John 18.

THE TOTAL ENROLMENT

in the schools reporting is 24,523, with an average attendance of 17,683. Adding 2500 for the 100 schools that have sent in no reports, we have a grand total of about 27,000 under instruction in our schools. These figures speak volumes as to the magnitude and importance of our S. S. work. This little army of S. S. scholars are the hope of our church. From them the ranks of the ministry and the eldership

are to be recruited. By them the church's work and warfare is to be carried on in the near future. Let those who are charged with the training of this youthful host, seek for the aid and guidance of the Divine Spirit, that they may enlist them in greater numbers under the banners of the Great Captain of our salvation.

We are convinced that the ranks of our S. S. army would be largely increased if all were enlisted in them who ought to be. The number of families reported to last Assembly as under the jurisdiction of the Maritime Synod was 21,439. An average of two S. S. scholars for each family is certainly not beyond the mark. This average yields nearly 43,000 as the number that should be found in our S. schools. Where are the 16,000 missing ones during S. S. hours? Are they being instructed and trained in any other place, or by any other method? We fear they are not. Here, then, is a loud call to ministers, elders and all S. S. workers, to redouble their diligence and seek earnestly to gather in these careless ones.

The total reported

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE

is 17,683, or about 72 per cent. of the total enrolment. Truro Presbytery reports the highest average attendance, viz., 87 per cent.; Victoria and Richmond next with 79 per cent.; P. E. I. next with 74 per cent.

The total number of

OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

reported is 2,915, as against 2,371 last year. Making allowance for Superintendents, Librarians, Treasurers, &c., we have an average of about 1 teacher to 10 scholars. According to the last statistical report there are 31,604 communicants in the Maritime Synod; so that there is about one tenth of our church membership engaged in S. S. work. As a large number of the officers and teachers are elders of the church, we think it is safe to say there is a good deal of unemployed talent among our church members that might be utilized in enlarging and building up our S. S. work.

The S. S. teacher's vocation is a most honorable and responsible one. It is a matter of profound satisfaction to know that those who are engaged in this work, throughout our bounds, are in general so worthy of their high calling. Greater efficiency and more consecration should