

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF HOME MISSION, 1871-72.

John Angell James of England said, a little before his death: "If American Christians see their duty aright, they will, for some years to come, give their main strength to the cause of Home Missions." If that eminent and devoted servant of God read correctly the signs of the times, and saw correctly the great duty of the American Churches, the department of missionary work, under charge of this Board, is not inferior to any other in intrinsic magnitude and importance. It claims the prayers and support of our whole people. It claims the fostering care and watchful superintendence of the Synod.

REVIEW.

The close of another ecclesiastical year calls for a review of our position and progress. At one time, in truth, the Board thought that they must needs report the very opposite of progress, but now, by the good hand of our God upon us, we feel that we can meet the Synod with a statement which will show cause for gratitude to the Head of the church in sending labourers into the field, and for increased faith and activity in prosecuting farther the work of Home Evangelization.

A year ago we had, besides our Gaelic Catechists, to whom reference will subsequently be made, fourteen Home Missionaries, including ordained Ministers, Probationers, and Theological Students, acting as Catechists or unlicensed Evangelists: but this number was soon reduced by the call and settlement of Messrs. Stirling, E. Smith, Carr and A. McKay, and yet again of Messrs. Nelson, Grant, and K. McKay, by which changes Scotsburn, Middle Stewiacke, Alberton, Middle River in Cape Breton, Baillie, Lake Ainslie in Cape Breton, and Richmond, N. B., attained settled Pastors.

Our labourers were still farther reduced in number by the return of the Theological Students to prosecute their studies, and by Mr. J. Allan's return to Edinburgh: and for a time, we were reduced to a minimum of four active Agents, so that, for a short time, no Presbytery, however great the urgency of its demands, could have more than a single agent, and the majority of Presbyteries had none at all.

With feelings of gratitude and joy we record the gradual change from four to not less than eighteen agents, all told. From abroad we received two ministers in the fall of last year—Mr. David Drummond from the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, and Rev. John A. F. Sutherland from New Zealand, known to most members of Synod, as formerly one of our own ministers; and these brethren,

cordially welcomed, entered at once on the work, and have continued giving good service ever since. More lately, Rev. Mr. Allan of the Presbytery of Massachusetts, and Rev. D. W. Cameron of the Presbyterian Church of the United States and formerly of West St. Peters, and Mt. Stewart, have given us aid, but whether to continue long in this field we cannot yet tell.

The Spring season brought us, not only the two brethren last named, but quite a reinforcement of Probationers from various quarters. Mr. John Allan returned from Edinburgh and accepted appointments. Messrs. Thompson, Meek and Leishman, from our own Theological Hall, were licensed and sent to different Presbyteries. Messrs. Simpson, McNeill and Rosborough have returned with License from Princeton and are also at work. Besides these, we have five Theological Students from Princeton and New York Theological Seminaries, engaged in our home field. Two of these, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Richards, are natives of our own Provinces: the other three, Mr. Pollock from Princeton, and Messrs. Hale, and Gerhard from New York, are American Students, who have responded to an invitation from the Board to come down and take part with us in doing the Lord's work in the Lower Provinces. That many members of Synod would prefer Probationers we know, but being unable to obtain them, we felt constrained to send a cordial invitation to these earnest young men, to come as they were to our help; and while we are persuaded that they will prove a valuable accession for the summer, we believe that, having seen our need, and made acquaintance with our ministers and people, some proportion of them will return and cast in their lot with us.

Let us now look at the year's work in its bearing on different portions of the church.

CAPE BRETON.

Last year we were able to report to Synod that two Gaelic Missionaries, Rev. Adam McKay from Ontario and Mr. Alex. Grant from Scotland, were supplying vacant congregations in the Presbytery of Victoria and Richmond. Both of these brethren, as already noticed, accepted calls, and are now Pastors of large congregations with good prospects of usefulness and of support.

Having already referred to the arrival of Mr. Drummond, the gratifying fact remains to be added, that he can preach in the Gaelic language, and he has been engaged ever since his arrival in supplying vacant congregations in both the Presbyteries of the island of Cape Breton. From an early date in September till near the 1st of March, he preached in West Bay, St.