

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT.

The circumstance which forbid my attendance at the meetings in Toronto have left no time to make out a report in the usual form, and with the necessary minuteness of detail. No more, therefore, need be expected than a few facts and figures, which may give some idea of what the Superannuated Ministers' Society has done and is still doing, what its present position and resources are, and the necessity of more means to give it the desired and much needed efficiency. These facts may perhaps show the value of the Society, directly to those for whose benefit it has been instituted, and indirectly to the denomination in the portion of the Dominion to which its operations extend. They may also induce the assembled brethren to devise such measures for its increased usefulness as their wisdom may suggest.

Before adverting to these facts, mention should be made of the great loss the Society has sustained by the death of the Hon. Win. McMaster, who, after a long life of Christian hope and usefulness, has been called to the reward Christ bestows on his loved ones in heaven, when the term of their service is completed on earth. He was one of the two largest contributors to the fund which gave the Society an existence, Mr. T. J. Claxton, of Montreal, being the other. He was its first and only president. From its formation to the time of his death, he gave to it the benefit of his wise, judicious counsels; he invested its funds to the best possible advantage consistent with their security: and he looked well after their safety. The benevolence of his heart prompted the munificence of his hand, and called forth his active interest in every measure which recommended itself to his judgment, as adapted to promote its prosperity. The liberal bestowment of a few years ago will keep his memory fresh in the mind of those whose scanty means, in their declining years, make the Society and its work a benefit which can be rightly appreciated only by people in their situation. His work on earth was done and his Lord called him home from the toils, cares, and trials of service on earth, to the joy and reward which awaits God's children in the world beyond. It will be the duty of this meeting to put another in the place he so worthily and efficiently filled.

It may be well at this date, when changes more or less radical are contemplated in the modes of our Christian work, to review briefly the history of this Society and to take a hasty glance at what it has done in the brief period of its existence. Though all needed and desired has not been accomplished, the closing years of many a life have been made much more comfortable than they would have been in the absence of help.

Since 1868, twenty-nine aged ministers, twenty widows, and twenty-two children under fifteen years of age have shared in the benefits of the Society, a total of seventy-one persons.