

## Augmentation Reports.

On Monday evening, the reports on Augmentation were taken up.  
EASTERN SECTION.

The Committee reports that the receipts are fully up to those of preceding years. Five of the Presbyteries made a small advance on the contributions of the preceding year, and the other five fell back a little. The total received from congregations last year was \$8,105.42, an increase of \$22.56 over the preceding year. There were small sums from interest, bequests and donations, amounting to \$165.60, as against \$183.39 the previous year, so that the income from all sources is only the trifle of \$7.67 above that of the preceding year. It is gratifying, however, that there has been no falling off. But while this is the case it is discouraging to find that forty-six congregations that gave something, still failed to come up to the reasonable amount asked from them, and that twenty-nine really made no effort to help this invaluable scheme. Presbyteries must deal very diligently and vigorously with these delinquents, or we fear the fund will fail in one at least of its great purposes, that is, of showing the unity of the Church by the practical sympathy of each part for every other and the whole. Not only must the strong help the weak, but the weak must do what they can to help others that are weak, and so make common cause, as one body, with strong and weak together.

Fifty-eight congregations received aid from the Fund. Had they been paid in full, the amount required to do so would have been nearly \$9,000. But the committee found to their great regret that this amount could not be paid, without reducing the balance to a point considerably below safety. The balance to be reserved as necessary for the semi-annual payments was fixed at \$3,500. When the Fund was started there was given by our people a working balance of \$4,000, and it was felt that so long as the Fund is continued it cannot be safely reduced below the sum now fixed. The balance on hand a year ago was \$463 above this amount. This balance, along with the receipts for the past year, made \$8,734 for distribution, which, after a small deduction for expenses, gave ninety-two per cent. of the full grants promised to our augmented charges. The committee feel keenly the necessity thus laid on them to deprive a large number of their brethren of a portion of their hard-earned salaries. They have brought the matter before the Presbyteries, urging them to take immediate measures to have the brethren reconquered, and to avoid a recurrence of the hardship.

It is, from one point of view, gratifying that the demand on the Fund was larger last year than previously. It arose, not from increased grants to individual congregations, but to a larger number than ever before being settled, and so drawing the grant regularly. Of the fifty-eight congregations that received aid, the most of them had pastors the greater part of the year. It is to be hoped that this state of matters will continue, and that the Fund can be administered so as to secure to each the minimum salary, without disheartening discounts at the end of the year. To this end, self-help must be developed rapidly in the aid-receiving congregations. Many congregations must assume much more of the salary than now, and thus set free a portion of their grants for new places requiring aid. The applications for help during the current year show something of this tendency, there being an increase of \$577 in stipend over the previous year, and five congregations, viz.: St. James, (strengthened by union with neighboring stations), and Chipman, in the Presbytery of St. John, Canard, in the Presbytery of Halifax, Trenton, in the Presbytery of Pictou, and Brookfield (by union with Middle Stowiacke), in the Presbytery of Truro, cease to require aid from the Fund. Thus, the thirteen reported last year as having been nurtured to self-support by the Fund, become now the respectable number of eighteen. The Committee, in concert with the H. M. Committee, recommended to Synod the rearrangement, as far as possible, of all aid-receiving fields with a view to their being better able to support their pastors. The Synod affirmed the desirableness of the proposal, and Presbyteries have been thereby stimulated to strengthen weak charges and develop self-help within them. Further good results in the same direction are confidently looked for. The Committee are persuaded that a vigorous effort, on the part of Presbyteries, to show congregations the absolute necessity of increased self-help, would enable them to reduce the applications at least ten per cent. Were this accomplished, and the full sum of \$9,000 paid into the Fund, there would be no need of a cutting down of the grant at the close of the year.

## WESTERN SECTION.

After referring to the lamented death of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, the late convener, the committee says: It seems peculiarly appropriate that at this juncture we should recall and emphasize the work accomplished from the inception of the Scheme in October,

1883, to the present time. In May, 1883, there were on the list of the Home Mission Fund 108 congregations supplemented up to \$600. Most of these were transferred to the Augmentation Fund, giving immediately immense relief and impetus to the purely Home Mission work. Besides these, about 160 congregations, where stipends were less than \$750, were placed on the list, making in all 256. Within the year eighty-seven congregations became self-sustaining, and almost all the others made decided advance in contributions. Since then 194 congregations, principally Home Mission Fields, have been placed on the list, whilst 174 congregations have become self-sustaining, and fifty-four have either been returned to the Home Mission list or removed from other causes. Probably no movement to which our Church has set its hand has equalled this, in stimulating and fostering its weaker fields, and in giving heart to the workers in them. Certainly, it is not too much to say that the present position of our Church and her prospects for the future had been altogether less satisfactory had it not been for the movement so ably guided by our late Convener.

The goodly rotation of Home Mission Field, augmented congregation and self-sustaining charge is going on, and may well be rejoiced in as being the very strength and honor of our Church.

It is pleasant, in view of all the circumstances, to be able to report that after paying grants in full there remains a small balance, \$1,090, at credit. The receipts total \$24,333.61; but as there was a refund of \$440.91, the contributions from all sources should be set at \$23,892.70, as compared with \$25,436.05 last year, a decrease of \$1,543.35. It is so far satisfactory, however, that in a year of great depression and without special appeals, such as were made in the previous year, this result has been reached. The Committee recognize also the warning given them, that they must continue to exercise that strict and cautious policy which has been slowly, yet, we believe, surely gaining the confidence of the Church. That there is a balance at credit is due to the careful and thorough revision of grants made during the last two years, the earnest desire of the Committee being to effect such judicious reductions as should prevent the recurrence of the deficits which had from time to time hampered the work. The Committee thankfully acknowledge that their task has been made easier through the increased interest and carefulness of Presbyteries.

What of the future? It seems difficult to judge, but we remember almost the last message of our late Convener: "If we get through this year without a deficit confidence will be restored and we shall do well." We have escaped the deficit, and it rests with the Church to fulfil the message of his message. May we not go on with confidence, believing that there shall be even a forward movement?

This year we again ask that \$28,000 be placed at our disposal, but we are convinced that if it could be made \$30,000, or \$32,000, there could be no better investment made in the interests of the Church. For then we could at once relieve the Home Mission Fund of some forty or more congregations, whose interests would be best promoted through a settled pastorate. We invite such sympathetic consideration and action on the part of Presbyteries, Ministers and Sessions throughout the coming year as may place us at its end in so favorable a financial position that we shall be able to report that such a helpful forward movement has been well begun and is likely to be carried on to a successful issue.

The report was presented by Rev. Dr. R. Campbell, Renfrew, acting Convener.

## The Young People.

Rev. R. D. Fraser presented the report of the Committee on Young People's Societies. He was supported by Revs. Wm. Patterson, and Messrs. Macbeth and McMillan. Each of the gentlemen delivered strong addresses relative to the work. Following are the figures relative to membership: The total number of societies reporting is 796. Of these 629 are Y. P. S. O. E.'s, and fifty-six Junior O. E.'s. The remaining seventy-seven are of various sorts:—Y. P. Home Missionary Society, twelve; Children's Auxiliary to H. M. S., three; Boys' Brigade, ten; Boys' Mission Band, Young Ladies' Association, King's Daughters, and some thirty other societies of various names, but with the common object of developing the religious, intellectual, and social activities of their members. It will be noticed that the C. E. societies far outnumber those of other kinds. In seven out of ten Presbyteries of the Maritime Provinces Christian Endeavor possesses the whole field, and in eleven of the Presbyteries further west. A total of 377 separate congregations and 219 mission stations have not reported any society. In many of these such organizations exist, and the likelihood is that the whole number of Young People's Societies throughout the Church is upwards of 1,000. The membership is reported as 31,615, or an average of close upon forty for each society. There are 9,333 young men, and 16,612 young women. "There seems to be a general impression abroad," says the Convener of the Guelph Presbytery's Committee, "that the men are dropping out of Church work, and out of all connection with Christian activity. I believe there are more men in Church work to-day than ever there were." In the junior societies the proportion of the sexes is more equal, namely, 1,405 boys and 1,623 girls. Few details are given as to the junior methods, although the proper conducting of this department is vital. Of the total membership of the societies 16,507, or only a little more than one-half, are in full communion with the Church. This affords ground for concern on the part of pastors and session. Adopted.