

Considerable difficulty has been felt by the Committee in dealing with some of these cases, partly in consequence of inadequate information respecting the circumstances of the congregation applying—partly from not knowing whether the stipend promised at the settlement of the pastor had been paid, and if not, whether the Presbytery had taken steps to bring the congregation to the performance of their promise, and partly from non-compliance with the law of Synod requiring the pastor of every supplemented congregation to perform missionary labour within the bounds of the Presbytery, in proportion to the amount of aid received. It would materially contribute to lighten and render more pleasant the business of your Committee, if Presbyteries, through which applications pass, were careful to insist upon observance of the laws of the church before such applications are transmitted. It might be advisable to authorize the Committee, when they get fresh copies of blank forms printed, and at present there are none in hand, to prefix to them the laws of the Synod bearing on such cases, or perhaps the Synod will approve of a new form which they have prepared to submit.—Some of the congregations we have named are represented in the recommendations with which their applications were accompanied as strictly missionary in their character, and the Committee have no reason to call in question the accuracy of such representations: in such instances supplement has been granted without hesitation. In dealing with others your Committee have had to travel over their transactions for the last seven years in order to arrive at a full and clear understanding of the matter; in one case the Committee had to remind the applicants that they had been making no advance on the stipend paid their Pastor, and to state that there would be no further aid granted, unless missionary labour were performed as enjoined by Synod.

Thirteen names appear on the books of the Committee as applicants for remuneration for probationary services, and the amount they have drawn is £376 12s. 4½d., or close upon £29 to each, and the total number of Sabbaths embraced in their "General Statement," is 505. Of these Probationers, only one had any claim upon the Fund through engagements with the Board in Scotland, and that was for a comparatively small amount. One case was of a peculiar nature. The health of the party admitted of his fulfilling appointments for only five months, but the Committee thought they would be justified by the circumstances, and borne out by the Synod, in allowing full pay for the half year. So far as known to them the Committee have not supplemented a Probationer for a congregation situated within six miles of another enjoying a settled pastorate, or, if they have done so they have charged the Presbytery with the deficiency, and required them to pay it into the hands of the Synod Treasurer.

Comparatively few reports by Preachers have been received by the Committee during the past year. This they regret. Had a greater number been forwarded—had those Presbyteries which retained these reports transmitted them, your Committee would have had better means of judging of the energy and zeal of Probationers to whom they have been called to vote sums of money; would have