

good some of our clergy find themselves in presence of these facts, we have only to refer to the report of Mr. Fidler, at p. 42 of the last report of the Church Society, or to the letter of a correspondent of the Society in the same mission at p. 23.

But in estimating the efforts which are required of us, there is another fact which must be considered. I refer to the rapid increase which is annually taking place in the population of the Diocese. The population of the 14 counties enumerated, has increased since the previous census, from 360,688 to 480,782 or nearly 35 per cent. Within the same period the number of clergymen in these counties has only increased from 63 to 73, being only about 37 per cent. or very little in excess of the rate of increase of the population. That is to say, the number of our clergy is now scarcely larger in proportion to the entire population, than it was in 1851; and this notwithstanding all the efforts that have been made on behalf of the Church Society, and notwithstanding that during the former part of that time the church was receiving an annual income from the clergy reserves, which was employed in increasing the number of her missionary clergy. This fact also requires to be dwelt upon in detail. Thus in each of the counties of Peterborough, Ontario, and Victoria, the number of the clergy appears to have been increased by only one, while there has been an increase in the Church of England population, in Peterborough, of 1584 souls, in Ontario, of 1806, and in Victoria, of 1884. In Halton, with an increase of 1180 souls, the number of the clergy appears to have remained stationary. And in Northumberland with the Church of England population increasing, although less rapidly than in other counties, the number of the clergy would appear to have actually decreased.*

Now from these facts, which present themselves to my own mind as truly appalling, and which can hardly be regarded as otherwise by any earnest churchman who is made cognizant of them, what conclusion must we form? Do they not prove that unless those members of the church who enjoy a stated ministry and the full complement of her services, and who value these as privileges, can be aroused to exertions far, very far, beyond any they have hitherto made, we must expect to see the church waning in her influence and decreasing in numbers, relatively at least to other religious organizations. Multitudes of those who from early association entertained a cordial respect for her, and now enrol themselves as her members, and who, were the privileges of the church afforded them in due proportion, would speedily become warmly attached to her discipline and worship, and bound to her for ever, must inevitably become the prey of one or another of the numerous forms of error which prevail around them, and in many instances be alienated from her entirely.

There is another fact, which, however painful, and humiliating to us as churchmen, ought yet to be made known, and should prove a strong incentive to exertion. It is this; that while the aggregate population of the 14 counties which have been named has increased during the last 10 years 35 per cent., the Church of England population has increased only 29 per cent. that is, the Church of England has lost ground relatively to the entire population; so that whereas in 1851, the one of our communion numbered more

than one in four of the population, in 1861 they numbered less than one in four. It is impossible to ascertain precisely to what extent this circumstance is attributable to immigration; but the fact is a significant one, and ought not to be overlooked by churchmen. For the same reason, we must not perhaps insist too strongly on another fact which is not without its lesson of encouragement as well as of warning; that while in Northumberland where the number of our clergy has been less in proportion to the population than in any other county, viz., only 1 to 20,295 of the aggregate population, the former has increased only 9 per cent. while the latter has increased 30 per cent.; and in Peel where there is only one clergyman to 2742 of the Church of England, or 1 to 9080 of the aggregate population, the former has increased only 6 per cent. while the latter has increased 9 per cent. being in both cases a very serious relative diminution in the members of our church; on the other hand, in the County of Lincoln, where the number of the clergy gives 1 to 1023 of the Church of England, or 1 to 4604 of the aggregate population, the former has increased 18 per cent. while the latter has increased only 15 per cent.; and in Welland where the clergy are 1 to 1035 of the Church of England, or 1 to 5000 of the aggregate population, the former has increased 49, while the latter has increased only 24 per cent. being in each case an important and encouraging relative increase in the number of the members of our church, and leading us to the assurance, that if the Church of England but did her duty, she would gradually but surely win the hearts of our people.

And now, I would ask your readers, of the 26,000 members of the Church of England who have been added to the rural population of our Diocese within the last ten years, the greater part of them probably by immigration; of the 71,000 in the rural parts of the Diocese who now profess themselves members of our church, but for whose religious instruction no provision is made, how many probably will, ten or twenty years hence, be found adhering to her faith and worship, unless their spiritual yearnings are met by the provision for them of religious ordinances in connection with their own church? Sad experience of the past supplies the ready but mournful answer. God forbid, however, that we should suppose the church's mission to be confined to these. Of the 366,000 who form the remainder of the population, how many tens of thousands are there, who if closely questioned, would avow no religious belief whatever, would profess, to adopt their own phraseology, that they "belong to no church"! Have we no duty to fulfil towards these? Are there not among them, "Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, His children who are in the midst of this naughty world," and whom His church is bound to "seek out that they may be saved through Christ for ever"? Are there not among them multitudes of good as well as of bad fish that might be caught in the church's net? Shall we make no provision for their conversion and evangelization? If not, what deem we of our Lord's command to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"? Yet if such provision is to be made, whether for these or those, it must, as we all know, be by means of candidates for the ministry, taken by the hand, and assisted in their preparation for holy orders; by means of clergymen sent forth, and for a while maintained in their spheres of labour; by means of churches, towards the building of which assistance must be given; by means of books and prayer books and other religious works distributed freely by our missionaries as they travel from settlement to settlement, or

visit from house to house. But if then, as we are informed, the Mission Board of the Church Society, in place of being able to employ additional missionaries, is now, from the want of proper support, unable to sustain its present staff of missionaries; when our number of candidates for holy orders was never so small as at present; where, as appears from the Report of the Society lately published, the whole amount which the Society had it in its power to contribute last year, towards the erection of churches was only \$400, while the amount contributed for books was only \$671 when such is the case, can it be thought that Canadian churchmen are doing their duty, or that the efforts they are making are at all commensurate with the necessities of the Diocese? I would appeal to the hearts and consciences of your readers, to their sense of duty and responsibility, to their professed acknowledgment of the Gospel of Christ. I would ask them, can they hear of multitudes of their fellow countrymen, in danger of perishing for lack of knowledge, and not stretch forth a hand to rescue and keep them? Can they hear of the service of God neglected, because there are no churches in which to bend the knee, no ministers to read the worship; of the Sabbath desecrated, because there is nothing to remind men of its weekly return; of children unbaptised and uninstructed, because there are none to administer the holy rite, and none to catechize them; of the sick and dying unvisited and unconsolated, because they are now far away from the homes of their youth and their manhood, and there are no pastors within their reach; can they enjoy these privileges themselves and not also do their utmost to afford them to those who cannot have them without their aid? I do trust, sir, that the statement of facts which I have given above, may have the effect of convincing all who read it, that the Church Society of our Diocese has the strongest possible claim upon them for a much larger measure of support than they have hitherto accorded to it; and that under the influence of such a conviction, they will at once come forward and deal out that support with a liberal hand, remembering that "he that soweth little shall reap little, and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously."

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

HENRY HOLLAND.

Fort Erie, 10th Feb., 1862.

WEST GWILLIMBURY BRANCH OF THE CHURCH SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the West Gwillimbury and Bradford branch of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, was held on Friday, 17th ult., in Trinity Church, in this village. The Rev. John Fletcher, A.M., occupied the chair, and was very ably assisted by the Rev. Thomas S. Kennedy, Secretary of the parent society in Toronto; the Rev. S. B. Ardagh, A.M., rector of Barrie, and the Rev. T. B. Read, D.D., incumbent of Orillia.

The following report of the proceedings of the parochial branch was read by the chairman:

REPORT.

In submitting the annual report of the state of the West Gwillimbury and Bradford branch of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, the committee desire to record their heartfelt gratitude to God for the degree of success that has attended the labours of the society through the

* These facts in so far as the number of the clergy is concerned have been obtained by a comparison of the Reports of the Church Society, for 1851 and 1861. Since the publication of the last report there has been a small accession to the number of the clergy by a recent ordination, which has not been taken into account in the above statement.