

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

Rev. E. A. McCurdy submitted the Report, which was as follows:—

In submitting their Seventh Annual Report the Committee on Systematic Beneficence think that in view of the approaching Union, it may not be amiss for them briefly to review the progress of the cause which the Synod eight years ago entrusted to their oversight and care. It is with gratitude to God, the author of the grace of Abundant Mercy as well as of all other graces, that they again record the fact that this progress has been most cheering. Indeed, it has been so marked that the attention of the whole Church has been arrested, and astonishment has often been expressed at the unexpected results which so short an agitation has achieved. Not that your Committee mean to assume that all systematic giving in our Church has been a thing of recent origin. No doubt there always have been quite a number of the members of our Church who were in the habit of making their contributions to the Lord's cause gratefully, joyfully, and systematically. The measure of success with which the efforts of the Church both at home and abroad have been crowned, amply confirms this statement. Still the Synod was not satisfied with the degree of liberality which had been attained, and accordingly under a deep sense of the importance of the subject, a recommendation was issued to all who were under its authority to adopt the practice of weekly storing, and Sabbath offering; and your Committee were instructed to employ active measures to induce the Church as generally and as readily as possible to accept and carry out this recommendation. They obeyed their instructions. By several series of articles in the *Record* and other papers, by circulars addressed to the congregations and sessions, they strove to explain and enforce the practice. "Upon the first day of the week let one of you lay by him in store as hath prospered him."

FRUITS.

The response from many of our congregations has been most gratifying. The methods employed for securing funds have had a large number of cases been revolutionized with the happiest results. Seven years ago there were only two or three of the congregations which were dependent on their weekly offering for either constitutional or general church funds. At the present time there are nearly forty which occupy that position.

STATISTICS.

What have been the results upon the beneficence of the Church? Premising

that the Committee do not assume that the whole advance is traceable to this cause, the facts which our statistical tables furnish are quite suggestive. In an interesting statement given to the public a few months ago by one of the members of your Committee, it was affirmed that since the appointment of the Committee, "the average contributions of the Church have risen from \$8.49 per family to \$11.81 per family, or 39 per cent.; while the average salary has risen from \$480 to \$720, or 50 per cent. In comparing the statistical tables of 1869 with those of 1874, we find that in Halifax city where all our congregations have adopted the system, contributions have risen from \$27.11 to \$56.35 per family, or more than 100 per cent.

Turning to the abstract of the tables for the respective years, we find that in the Presbyteries of Halifax, Lunenburg, Pictou and Truro—the four that have most generally adopted the system—there has been an advance from \$10.26 to \$15.41 per family, or 50 per cent.

If in those four Presbyteries we take the whole number of congregations marked on the Tables as carrying out the practice of "bringing," and compare their contributions with those of the congregations still adhering to the old system we find \$20.15 by weekly offerings against \$11.14 per family by voluntary subscriptions.

MORE FACTS.

But your Committee would put the matter in another form. Since 1868 the contributions of the Church for Foreign Missions have doubled, there has been an advance of 25 per cent. for Home Missions, more than 100 per cent. for the Synod Fund, while our Supplementing Fund which was instituted the year before, has grown to its present goodly dimensions. It is worthy of note too, that while some churches are complaining sadly of a decrease in their income during the past year, our Treasurer in the face of the remarkable stringency which has existed in financial circles has reported an increase of upwards of \$3700.

Again, the Synod will observe that only four of the congregations which report themselves as dependent upon the Weekly Offerings are in arrears to their pastors (and the whole amount due is very small), while no fewer than seven of them have increased the salaries of their ministers. Seventy-five per cent. of the congregations which practice Weekly Offerings have contributed to all the Schemes of the Church, and the rest of them have contributed to all but one.

Owing to the change which the Synod adopted last year by which the Committee were made dependent upon Presbyteries for