

Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund.

THE subscription list to this fund has been gradually but steadily increasing. Taking into account the small capital to commence with, the subscribed capital now amounts to \$147,560.00, this includes a bequest recently received from the late Mr. Wright, of Colborne, of \$9,000, and one from the Rev. Lachlan Cameron of \$300. Of this there is in paid-up capital \$117,990.

This is very encouraging considering the commercial depression, but the requirements of the fund demand a very much larger amount if the Presbyterian Church is going to make its aged ministers comfortable.

An incident connected with the visit of the Rev. William Burns, secretary, to Belleville, is worthy of notice here, as showing the growing interest in this fund among the young. The appended letter is from the mission band of St. Andrew's church, Belleville.

Belleville, January 14, 1895.

REV. WM. BURNS, Toronto Ont.

DEAR SIR,—The mission band of St. Andrew's church would like to give \$5.00 or more, every year to the ordinary fund, and sincerely hope that it will cheer some aged minister who has done good work.

Believe me, yours sincerely,

JENNIE GALWAY, Secretary.

Home Mission Work.

THE annual missionary meeting of Knox church, Woodstock, was held recently. After the opening exercises by Rev. Dr. McMullen, the amounts raised by the different societies of the church were read as follows: Ladies' Missionary Society, \$497.61; Women's Foreign Missionary Society, \$357.06; Morning Star Mission Band, \$77; Young Ladies' Mission Band, \$123; Sabbath school, \$122; Christian Endeavor, \$63.06. The reports of the different societies were then read, showing that great interest was taken in the cause of missions, as the amount raised last year was ahead of any previous one. The chairman then introduced the speaker of the evening, Rev. Dr. Cochrane, of Zion church, Brantford. The speaker, in his usual eloquent and forceful style, presented the claims of the Home Mission work of the Presbyterian Church. He described in graphic terms its early history, relating incidents illustrative of how it was carried on thirty years ago, and the extent to which it had grown since that time. Then \$4,000 was raised. This has now been increased to over \$100,000. While all the Schemes of the Church were important and necessary he felt that the Home Mission field was the most important of all. It was the backbone of their work. It was an enormous field of which they had charge, embracing Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, the North West Territories and British Columbia. His committee had under its charge no less than 301 missionaries, in 340 fields. Their preaching stations numbered 981, of which 581 were in Manitoba and the North-West. They had 13,543 communicants from 11,029 families, and the Sabbath attendance at these stations was over 34,000. The speaker described in vivid language the trials and sacrifices made by the missionaries, as well as the great work which they were doing for their own Church and for the country. The strong claim of the Home Mission field was that the work was among our own people. He could appeal to them on the ground of patriotism as well as of denominationalism, and broad Christianity. The dull times, the bad harvest and other trials of the farmers in the North-West and the floods of British Columbia had increased the difficulties during the past years and they were in urgent need of help. The address was full of information and a most vigorous and convincing plea for the most important branch of the mission work of the Presbyterian Church. The pastor, Dr. McMullen, then gave a brief statement of the work in foreign fields, which, he said, had been presented to his people by other speakers during the year, after which the following disposition of the funds collected were made: Home Missions, \$310.90; Foreign Missions, \$538.95; Knox College, \$70; Augmentation Fund, \$20; General Assembly, \$10; Aged and Infirm Ministers, \$25. The officers of last year were all re-elected, and after the usual vote of thanks the meeting was closed.

Remit on Students Graduating.

EDITOR PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW:

SIR,—The employment of students in the mission field for a year after graduation will help other interests. At present, these students are candidates in every desirable vacancy within reach of colleges; and although not yet licensed, they are anxious about calls, settlements, and the rest, when their whole time should be given to study. This is unseemly, interferes with the rights of probationers, postpones settlements, and is a bar to the progress of the Church. Stop it. The Assembly may disapprove of present practices, but while professors and Presbyteries wink at it, and vacant charges are clamorous for students, the evil continues; and it is getting worse. If no student can be licensed till he has served a year in the mission field the evil will be at least abated.

The removal of this competitive element will improve the chances of the sixty or eighty ministers without charge, in Ontario, who are now seeking settlement. In many cases known to the writer, these gentlemen are good scholars, sound theologians, good preachers, faithful pastors, with fifteen to twenty years of good work in them yet, and it is not creditable to the Church that they are without congregations. But when a minister begins to get a "bit auld," whatever his ability, he has no chance with the graduating student. What sense in urging pastors and parents to keep college hoppers full, when the product issuing from the rolls is going to waste? Young men attending our arts colleges note the treatment meted out to ministers in the prime of their powers, and hesitate to study for the ministry of our Church. Remove the stumbling-block.

According to the reports presented to the last Assembly, at least 50 students were in the graduating classes, 73 in the middle classes, and 103 in the junior, while twelve ministers were received from other Churches. The number of theological students is likely to increase in the future. With the number of congregations stationary, or nearly so, where are we to get places for our graduates, unless the mission field is better cared for? And if students are graduated far in excess of the wants of the Church, and men must go to the States or remain idle, it will be difficult to maintain our colleges, not to speak of providing for more complete equipment. Why not send them to China or India? Who is to provide the funds?

Were the Home fields better cultivated, more congregations would be organized, continuous service would keep our own people from scattering, attract many of the unattached to us, and make it easier to maintain ordinances at home, and give larger help to foreign work. The cure for many of the evils under which we are now suffering, is the proper management of our new missions by more competent men.

Nor are the students as a body opposed. They recognize the losses of past years, the waste of good money, the slow progress, and are willing to help improve the record. Why, then, not go into the mission field? For two reasons. First, they do not propose to sacrifice themselves that others may capture soft seats and fat salaries; and, second, they know that the fact of their being in the Home Mission field will militate against them, if they wish a settlement. Deny it as we may, lament it as we please, there is a prejudice against home missionaries, and hence young men hesitate to cloud their future. Can we wonder at them? "Make a general law," they say, "put us all on a level; deliver us from the effects of this unreasonable prejudice on the part of congregations, and we are willing to serve you." A few who have made engagements, incurred pecuniary obligations, etc., may not subscribe to this view, but their views should scarcely shape the policy of the Church.

And the young men will be gainers. Men leave college now with crude theories, and they are burning to test them; send them where their mistakes will do themselves and the Church least harm. When one reads that from fifty to eighty settled ministers are applicants for a hearing in some vacant congregation, he is apt to ask how much of

the restlessness indicated thereby is due to settlement fresh from college. In every other profession experience is a necessary qualification for occupying responsible positions. The Anglican, Methodist and other Churches, act on this principle? Is our Church an exception to all churches, societies, professions and colleges?

But if students go into the mission field for a year, they are apt to be lost sight of by congregations, and their prospects of settlement will not be so good. If a year in the mission field will dim their lustre, it lacks solid merit. Stop candidating the last session and congregations will know nothing of graduating students. Going into the mission field will not diminish the number of congregations or increase the number of candidates, and hence the young men will be on an equal footing before the congregations at the close of the mission year, and surely the college sheen will not all have faded then. Moreover, it is not the business of the Church to see to it that every facility is offered to young men for getting desirable and speedy settlements, but to man her fields and congregations. Why should she care more for students than for probationers? And yet at present she seems to do so. Other men laboured in the mission field, gathered and consolidated these desirable congregations, and surely our young men do not think that the Church should provide special facilities for placing them in charge of these.

But congregations wish to call these young men. Vacant congregations do not seem to lack men from whom to call. If from the crowds treading on each other's heels for a hearing they cannot select suitable pastors and must choose men fresh from college, they and the Church are to be pitied. Nor are vacant congregations, controlled in many cases by Christian Endeavour Societies, the safest guides in shaping the policy of the Church in the matter of settlements. What do such congregations or societies know of the wants of the mission field?

It is asserted that such legislation would drive a number of our young men to the States. To say so, looks like a libel on them. Policy would teach them better, for few, very few Canadian ministers have increased their comfort or their usefulness by going to the States. But look at the situation seriously. Medical students pay \$400 or \$500 fees, and students in other professions are salted with fees in the same generous manner, theological students pay no fees. Expensive buildings are erected, professors appointed, library bought, scholarships, prizes and bursaries provided (these in two colleges last year amounted to \$2,529), all free of cost to the students. The Church sends them into the mission field during vacations, when other students are compelled to be idle, and while serving an apprenticeship, gaining experience and developing their powers, she pays them seven dollars per week and board—a sum equal to the salary of the unmarried minister of the Methodist Church or the deacon of the Anglican Church. At the close of the college course she asks them in her sore need—in order that she may maintain her ground and extend her work—to go into the mission field for a year, and promises that she will provide them a salary varying from \$700 to \$1,000; and yet we are told that they will not listen to the proposal, and that unless all her pulpits are thrown open to them at once they will hie them off to the States. Surely the men who would do this are not bred in the colleges of the Presbyterian Church! But if a few go, let them, for their departure would be a questionable loss. Men of that spirit are not the men who made the Church or the men who will maintain its prestige.

But these men have done a good deal of mission work during their college course. True, and they are the gainers. Let anyone hear the storms that blow when students do not get appointments from the Home Mission Committee in spring, and how these storms do not subside till after the Assembly, and he will understand that it is not pure love of mission work that sends the student to the mission field. They go in many cases to get funds to prosecute their course, and the favor conferred is by the Church and not the student. Let us drop sentiment and talk facts.

It is said that all young men are not qual-