

thusiasm died out. The scheme was too colourless. It was too naked a presentation of duty. It came to be seen too plainly as a simple payment of money by some congregations to support ordinances in others. "Let them provide for themselves," was the cry, first faintly uttered, gradually increasing in loudness, "as we do for ourselves. We shan't pay anything more to this scheme." And so, with the exception, we believe, of some two congregations or so, everywhere else it has actually ceased to exist, and the congregations requiring aid in the Presbytery of Pictou are now drawing three-fifths at least of their supplement from Scotland.

To be minister of a supplemented congregation is to occupy an unenviable position. For lack of that efficient machinery and organization which would exist among our people, were they alive to their duty, and had they any proper church feeling, it is through the minister that applications for aid must come before the Presbytery, and so before the Home Mission Board. It is the minister that must sue *in forma pauperis* among his brethren, and bear the brunt of the blows that are lavishly dealt out to paupers by some of the more vigorous members of that formidable Board. The fact of supplements being required, and the mode in which supplements are granted, are among the causes which, more perhaps than any others, absolutely alienate the hearts of our ministers from a lengthened residence in this country. The people are quite insensible to these considerations. It is the ministers who suffer, because they are compelled to be the beggars on their own behalf, and the people know only that a supplement is granted, and is, somehow, received. The Lay Association was a scheme devised with the intent that it should be managed, controlled, upheld, entirely by the people. The ministers were to have no voice in its administration, and no trouble in connection with its maintenance. Their self-sacrifice was to have relieved them. But in process of time it came to pass that they were driven to take this burden also upon their shoulders. Conceive the case of a mine in which the ventilating shaft should also be the shaft, and the only shaft, through which the

coals are raised. It is the work of ministers to ventilate the atmosphere of the Church mine. It is for the people to raise the mineral. This division of labour principle was lost sight of in the course of time as regards the Lay Association; and, like a mine worked as above supposed, it has been well-nigh choked out of existence.

Now, the effort at present being inaugurated in the Presbytery of Pictou contemplates, (1) The revival, on a larger scale, and perhaps under a different and more definite title, of what was attempted by the Lay Association; and, (2) The doing away with the invidiousness implied in the distinction between supplemented and unsupplemented ministers, by having all alike and equally supplemented. In carrying out this object, it is not intended that the stipends of all ministers shall be reduced (or raised) to an equality. The aim is, (1) That ministers now receiving supplements from or through the Home Mission Board shall be paid an equal amount instead from the funds of the proposed Association; and (2) That from the stipends of ministers not now receiving supplements, their people shall deduct a similar amount, and pay it, along with what further sum their liberality shall dictate, with the funds of said Association, from whose managers it shall be drawn by their ministers. Thus, suppose that the Rev. A. B. has at present a stipend of \$600, of which his people pay \$400, and \$200 are drawn from the Home Mission Board. The latter sum will, henceforth, be payable by the Association. The Rev. C. D. receives, at present, \$800, all paid by his people. They may, henceforth, pay him only \$600, and he will receive the remaining \$200 out of the funds, which they, along with other congregations, will be expected to pay into the coffers of the new Association. In short, it is proposed to adopt the equal dividend principle acted upon from the outset by the Free Church in Scotland, and followed in their history by results not surpassed in the annals of the Churches.

It is expected, as consequences, (1) That the "Ecclesiastical conscience" spoken of previously, will be created among our people. On the one hand, all will be interested in all; for the