

Shall We Increase Salaries?

How Can We Refuse?

Mrs. Thomas Trotter.

"You don't mean to tell me that women like our missionaries have been working all these years at a salary of five hundred dollars!" Such was the astonished exclamation made not long ago by a gentleman who heard for the first time what salary our women missionaries received. Five hundred dollars a year, to cover expenses of a home, of clothing and incidentals, of the necessary vacations in the hills, to make provision for sickness and old age, and for the large contributions to the work made by our missionaries out of their private income! Yet they have never complained, nor asked for increased stipends, although five hundred dollars means much less than it did when our mission work in India began.

A few months ago, however, in connection with the re-adjustments accompanying the unification of Canadian Baptist Foreign Missions, our Women's Board was asked to give an increase of one hundred dollars a year to all our missionaries who had been on the field two years or longer. This request was accompanied by the statement, that the missionaries of the Women's Baptist Missionary Union of the Maritime Provinces would receive this increase for the present year. The members of our Board felt at once that it was most reasonable and desirable that we should comply with this request. Our missionaries had heard of the proposed change and so would be anticipating the increase. They ought to have it. We wanted to give it to them, but we found ourselves facing a very difficult problem. It has been a principle of our Women's Board,

in making the estimates of expenditures for the coming year, that these estimates shall not exceed the actual regular income for the past year. In this way the Circles by their gifts decided each year what shall be spent the next, and our Board carries no deficits. To accede to the requests of the General Board would mean a large additional expenditure. It would be impossible to add this amount to the estimates and keep within the bounds prescribed by last year's income.

What ought we to do? Dare we violate our principle of estimates? Could we reduce expenditures somewhere else? Should we make a special appeal for increased giving to meet this exigency? These questions were carefully and prayerfully discussed at the large Convention Board Meeting in the College Street Church. It was finally decided, with deep regret and sorrow, that we could not make this financial leap quite so suddenly. To deliberately promise to pay out so much more than we had any prospect of receiving could be neither wise nor right for a body of women with limited financial resources.

To give our missionaries a little more money for themselves and at the same time to hamper them in their work by taking away their Bible-women, or reducing the facilities for carrying on their schools, would be a sad robbing of Peter to pay Paul. A special appeal for money would not meet the case, for this need is not for one year only, but for all the future. This decision was reached with the hope that it is only a temporary de-