

remit the detailed scheme . . . along with the Sustentation Scheme to the Presbyteries of the Church, with instructions to report as to their preference of the one or the other, and to make suggestions in regard to either, so as to guide the General Assembly in its future action."

The overture of Mr. King, which is above referred to, while adhering to the principle of the present supplemental scheme, suggests the expediency of making changes in the constitution of the Fund, and in the rules for its administration. That such action is now desirable will be generally conceded. The detailed scheme when published will shew how far these proposed changes are to go, and how much such a scheme will differ from that known as "the sustentation scheme," submitted by Mr. McLeod at last Assembly. In my opinion, any difference will be merely in comparatively unimportant details, for both schemes propose that a fund shall be provided by voluntary contributions for congregations which are self-sustaining, and that this fund shall be divided according to certain regulations among congregations which are not self-sustaining. It is true that "the sustentation scheme" speaks of a "minimum stipend" and "a common basis," but what the former will be must depend on the number of aid-receiving congregations and the amount raised each year, and what the latter is the scheme does not shew. Probably the scheme to be prepared will go fully into all these points and will be framed in view of the valuable experience of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, where the supplemental plan has clearly succeeded.

It is not my purpose to criticise either of the schemes at present; but in the discussion which took place in the Assembly it was stated and afterwards assumed that the essential difference between a supplemental fund and a sustentation fund is, that the former looks primarily to the congregation to support its minister, and the Church only comes in to aid, when the congregation cannot fully do this, by supplementing, i.e., giving a sum larger or smaller, as may be judged expedient, from a fund raised for this purpose. The latter looks primarily to the Church to support the minister, providing what is necessary, and leaving each congregation to supplement the stipend as they may be able. I am of those who think that the latter is the better plan, although I am far from claiming for either a *jus divinum* or even greater accordance with the genius of Presbyterianism. Both plans work well, and we have only to ask, which is the more suitable for the Church in Canada? and what detailed regulations will make it most efficient?

I formerly thought that there was no hope of overcoming the difficulties with which the establishment of a sustentation fund must be attended; but the discussion has brought to light a willingness to consider the matter, and even a preference of it in some quarters where I did not expect to find it; and as I am satisfied a general sustentation fund can be wrought, if the great part of our larger congregations both in city and country are willing to go into it, I am encouraged to hope that after a more full discussion and candid consideration of the benefits to be derived from such a scheme, it will commend itself to the Church as the more excellent way of receiving an adequate support for the ministry. I may by-and-by refer to some of the hoped-for advantages, although I think it almost unnecessary to dwell upon them; meanwhile, I will shortly indicate and illustrate the principles on which such a scheme may be framed.

I assume that the whole Church should take order that the whole ministry has an adequate support. Matters should be so far equalized that the weaker should help the weak, and that a faithful minister should be adequately maintained as much as another, and no way his superior, who may be placed in a large and wealthy congregation, but perhaps for other reasons a less important position.

2. I think that for this purpose there should be "a common basis" of contribution and participation.

3. I think that perfect liberty should be left for the exercise of Christian liberality, so that neither congregation nor minister will be discouraged by finding that high rate of giving only makes the supplement less, and that the least liberal are the most aided.

More particularly for these ends I propose:

1. That there be a common fund into which every congregation shall pay in proportion to its members.

2. That there be a common *minimum* rate of con-

tribution—say \$3 per communicant. Congregations may pay at a higher rate if they please, but none may pay at a lower rate.

3. This fund shall then be equally divided among all the congregations paying into the fund.

4. In addition to this equal dividend, each congregation may pay any sum they please to their minister. His stipend will thus consist of the equal dividend and such other additional sum as his individual charge may raise.

Now, let us try to apply these regulations. The Statistical Report of last Assembly will be near enough to the true state of the case to enable us to form a general estimate of the feasibility of the scheme. The number of communicants reported is almost 113,000. At \$3 each we would have a fund of 339,000. The number of charges, exclusive of Manitoba, is 730. The equal dividend would thus be  $\$339,000 \div 730$ , almost \$465. In this way every minister would receive \$450 annually from the Common Fund, and his congregation might add thereto until the stipend reached \$3,000, or \$4,000 if they should see fit. Now, \$3,000 per annum is not quite one cent per day, or say six cents per week. Surely our membership in the very poorest places can pay at that average rate. Only two Presbyteries in the Church come below that amount now, while some rise to \$6.07, \$7 and \$10.69. There may be congregations in which a small proportion of the communicants could not pay even that small sum, but a far larger proportion would pay at twice that rate. Then adherents would pay also, so that the average rate would be most certainly reached.

But again, most congregations at present pay at a higher rate. The vast majority reach \$4; very many \$5, a goodly number \$7, and some \$11, and even more. Now, if an average of \$5 was contributed in all the congregations, \$3 going to the Sustentation Fund, and equal dividend, and \$2 to supplementing the stipend, very few ministers would have smaller stipends than at present, and none would be under \$650. If \$7 were reached in about the same proportion as at present there would be reached a minimum of over \$700, and no salary would be less than at present. This, I think, can be attained if all will co-operate. I am not, however, blind to the difficulties which the promoters of such a scheme would encounter in trying to introduce it. The following table, prepared in reference to the Presbytery of Hamilton, will make the plan proposed more clear. The figures are from last report:

Congregations.	Number of communicants.	Amount to be paid to Sust. Fund at \$3 per communicant.		Equal dividend.		Additional amt for salary at \$2, being total rate of \$5.		Present salary.		Salary, consisting of equal dividend and additional amt.		Present rate.		Salary, consisting of equal dividend and additional amt at present rate.		Amount required above present rate to make present stipend.	
		\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.
1 Hamilton, Central Ch.	732	2196	450	1464	3000	1914	4 00	1182	1818								
2 " Knox Ch.	507	1521	450	1071	3000	1464	6 00	1971	1129								
3 " McSt. Ch.	448	1344	450	896	2400	1346	5 03	1380	1020								
4 " St. P. Ch.	360	1080	450	720	2500	1170	7 00	1980	520								
5 St. Catharines, F. Ch.	266	798	450	532	1200	982	4 05	849	351								
6 Caledonia, Argyle St.	261	783	450	522	850	972	3 25	515	335								
7 Dundas.	260	780	450	520	1200	972	4 06	866	334								
8 Oneida, etc.	260	780	450	520	875	970	3 36	543	332								
9 St. Catharines Knox	250	750	450	500	1400	950	5 06	1100	300								
10 Flamborough.	225	675	450	450	800	900	3 05	572	328								
11 Beverly.	218	654	450	436	905	886	4 01	689	266								
12 Grimsby, etc.	194	582	450	388	575	838	3 00	450	125								
13 Jarvis and Walpole.	180	540	450	360	700	810	4 06	730	70								
14 Port Dover.	175	525	450	350	700	800	4 06	730	70								
15 Thorold, etc.	168	504	450	336	1000	786	6 02	974	46								
16 Burlington, etc.	165	495	450	330	700	756	4 05	680	20								
17 Ancaster, etc.	153	459	450	306	700	756	4 05	680	20								
18 Beamsville, etc.	152	456	450	304	700	754	4 05	678	22								
19 St. Ann's, etc.	151	453	450	302	600	752	4 00	601	"								
20 Binbrook.	134	402	450	258	700	718	5 02	744	"								
21 Drummondville.	131	393	450	262	700	712	5 03	750	"								
22 Hamilton, St. John's.	130	390	450	260	1500	710	11 15	1509	"								
23 Watertown.	127	381	450	254	700	704	5 05	767	"								
24 Strabane.	110	330	450	220	700	670	6 03	813	"								
25 Lynedoch, etc.	96	288	450	192	600	642	6 02	750	"								
26 Dundas.	94	282	450	188	400	638	4 03	572	"								
27 Niagara Falls.	86	258	450	170	700	620	8 00	890	"								
28 Caledonia, Suth. St.	80	240	450	160	500	610	7 06	818	"								
29 Niagara.	80	240	450	160	900	610	4 00	1090	"								
30 Welland, etc.	65	195	450	130	400	580	6 00	645	"								
31 Hamilton, Erskine Ch.	63	189	450	126	600	576	9 05	859	"								
32 Victoria.	57	171	450	114	400	564	7 00	678	"								
33 Port Dalhousie.	48	144	450	96	400	546	8 03	704	"								
34 Port Colborne.	48	144	450	96	500	546	10 04	763	"								

\* Surplus.

From this table a few things are manifest:

1. At an average contribution of \$5, viz., \$3 for Sustentation Fund and \$2 for additional amount, twenty-three congregations would have a stipend of over

\$700, and twelve would be under. The highest salary would be \$1,914, and the lowest \$546.

2. At an average of \$6, viz., \$3 for sustentation and \$3 for additional amount, twenty-seven congregations would have a stipend of over \$700, and eight would be under. The highest salary would be \$2,646, and the lowest \$594.

3. At an average of \$6.50 all the congregations, but four, whose number of communicants is less than 63, would have a stipend of \$700, and the highest stipend would be over \$3,000.

6. At an average of \$8 any congregation having a roll of 50 communicants would reach the minimum stipend of \$700, and every congregation having over 100 members would have a stipend of \$950. Larger congregations at this rate would be able to give proportionately larger salaries.

In this way the scheme might aim at the following rules:

1. All congregations having 50 communicants or more shall participate in the fund.

2. The rate of contribution to the fund shall not be less than \$3 per communicant.

3. The minimum dividend will not be less than \$450.

4. The minimum stipend will be \$700.

It is to be observed that these calculations are based solely on the communion roll of the Church. The additional contributions of adherents will go towards working expenses and increasing the local fund for stipend.

Let us now look at the objections:

1. *City congregations are not to be expected to support congregations in the country which are not doing their part.* Answer—According to this scheme every congregation must do its part so far as the equal dividend is concerned; and a city congregation is not asked for any more in proportion to number than the newest and smallest in the backwoods. The burden of sustentation is *equalized*—rich and poor, city and country, old and new, fare alike, so far as regards contribution. 2. *City congregations have other heavy expenses to bear, which are not known in the country, and have to pay larger stipends.* Answer—This is admitted. But it can be shewn that by a liberality far short of what some of the weak congregations shew at present—by an average of \$8 or \$10, a large city congregation can raise all that is thus required. Surely this is attainable. 4. It is obvious from a glance at the table that the congregations which would be most affected by such a scheme are (1) city congregations paying a large salary, or having a large membership and a low rate of contribution, such as numbers 1, 2, 3-5; and (2) large country congregations, whose rate is shamefully low, such as numbers 6, 8, 10, 12. Surely it would be on the whole beneficial to bring up such congregations to a higher average, and to make large salaries depend upon the greater liberality of the people rather than on the greater number. If these congregations were dealt with in a proper manner, they would in most cases consent to a re-arrangement which is to benefit the Church as a whole, although it may affect them for a time even seriously.

The advantages of such a scheme are: 1. Such a degree of equalization of stipend as will enable good men to take important charges, though numerically weak, and remain there without being oppressed by poverty. 2. The necessity for change would be very much lessened; and the desire for it would gradually abate. There would be over fifty applications for a hearing, chiefly from settled ministers, for every vacancy paying \$700 stipend. 3. Wherever local causes made a large stipend necessary, the congregation would be encouraged to make such increase, knowing that their liberality would not lessen the equal dividend. With a *supplemental* fund it is always a delicate matter to deal with such cases. 4. The whole Church would be equally interested in the sustentation of the ministry, and every minister and deacons' court or board of managers would see it to be their interest to have every member and adherent doing what he or she could.

Having thus stated the principles of a common or general Sustentation Fund, illustrated its workings, and said a few things by way of meeting objections and advocating the scheme, I would like the ministers and laity to consider the proposal deliberately. It would help matters much if criticisms on the subject generally from every point of view were given to the Church. No more important matter can be brought before our people; and as all desire the best way for providing adequate support for the ministry a courteous discussion would be of great service.

Dundas, September, 1881.