

The Maritime Presbyterian.

VOL. I.

AUGUST 15th, 1881.

No. 5.

Our Supplementing Scheme.

In your last issue we pointed out some reasons for reconsidering the basis of this scheme. Since this question came up in our Synod the Assembly has appointed a large committee to deal with the question. Meanwhile the matter being urgent, it will be in line to point out some elements which should be kept in view in future legislation.

I. Following the overture recently before Synod, the first point of consequence

touches the stipend to be aimed at. Section 3 of that scheme lays down a minimum stipend of \$700 with a manse. Two questions arise here: Is it desirable to aim at a minimum? and, Is the sum named adapted to our present or prospective wants?

(1) As to the desirability of a minimum stipend—three methods of dealing with the question may be noted. (a) Our present method considers each case as it arises. Grants are given according to the funds at the disposal of the committee, the necessities of the field, or other circumstances weighing with the executive. (b) The single platform plan suggested in the overture places all on a level, and provides that the fund be so divided that all congregations on the scheme shall have equal stipends for their pastors. Exceptional cases may be considered, so long as the general principle is preserved. It is urged in favor of this proposal, that it is an act of justice to our ministry, and that community of interest would lead to enthusiasm of action. It is urged against this plan that the same amount of stipend in different localities would be practical in quality

and that it would therefore fail to effect any improvement in our funds. (c) A third proposal is that of a threefold platform—say \$600, \$700 and \$800—and that congregations be placed on this scale according to the amount raised from local resources and the average contribution of each family. It is urged in favor of this plan that it would meet the weakness of new fields and also the necessity of supplemented charges in towns where living is expensive. It is also urged that the lower platform would be a convenient stopping place.

...opping some to the higher, so that none could complain of injustice, each congregation having the remedy in its own hands. These elements deserve serious consideration.

(2) But what of the average sum named \$700. (a) Is it a reasonable provision for those who give their whole strength to the ministry? The actual average salary paid last year in the Maritime Provinces was \$810. Of 153 congregations reporting, 88 give \$700 or upwards, 65 give less than \$700. Twenty years ago when the average stipend was under \$700 the Church named \$600 with a manse as the smallest sum on which a minister should be settled, we cannot afford to name a smaller sum than \$700 to-day. But is it possible to raise such a sum at present? There seems to be a general impression that to adopt a scheme demanding such an outlay would be to court failure, and put the Church to shame. This idea grows out of the false conception that we would be bound to pay the minimum whether the congregations came up to the conditions or not. In the overture before Synod two conditions were involved before reaching the minimum platform. Each congregation must