

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

THE CLIMATE OF MANITOBA.

BY REV. JOHN SCOTT, WEST LYNN, MAN.

Many esteemed brethren in the east have but a faint conception of our inheritance in Manitoba and the North-West Territory. Many years ago a writer in the New York "Independent" stated that lying on to Dakota and the State of Minnesota was a British territory as "vast as the empire of Russia, and as capable of settlement." Another writer in the New York "Observer" of last year, in an article headed "Manitoba," states that "Over this interminable expanse the wind sweeps with the fury of a hurricane, and for five months the snow lies piled up like a blanket of impenetrable thickness—no shrub, no tree, no undulation—nothing but one mass of glistening white dazzling the eyes." The writer speaks of our winters "as dreary with snowdrifts mountains high—icy shackles which for seven or eight months in the year convert its fertile slopes into fields of iron, its rivers into solid blocks of impenetrable ice." Now, as brethren like to tell their "experience," let me tell my own since 1875 to our eloquent cousin of the "Observer," who visited us from the "Land of Spread Eagles." I have lived for six winters where he speaks of the thermometer going down to fifty or sixty degrees below zero, and I am happy to inform your readers that the infants, little children, young people, old men and women have lived through it all. Most of them are alive yet, and looking well, none the worse for frosty weather. Once an ox was roasted on the ice of the Thames, near London Bridge, and once or oftener the thermometer went down to fifty degrees below zero in Winnipeg, but we are not to infer that these things occur every winter. Lately, at the close of 1881 or the beginning of this year, I had a mission journey of about 400 miles with a young friend in a cutter, and in that long distance was not once stopped by a snowdrift. In deep ravines there were drifts, but we did not drive into them. It was cold; but we kept our caps, mitts and coats on. On another occasion we drove sixty-five miles in one of the wild storms spoken of, and were not delayed ten minutes by snowdrifts. Monsters of the imagination, terrible in the distance, are often very ordinary and harmless things when you get up to them. Let me ask our dear cousin how it is that in the land where he says mercury freezes and winter occupies seven or eight months of the year, he admits that "on these plains grows the finest wheat in the world. In size, and hardness, and the qualities of nutrition, there is nothing like it north or south, or east or west. *It is the wheat garden of the world.*" This is a true saying, but the mystery to me is about the short summer. In Canada there are twelve months in the year. Eight from twelve leaves four—four months to plough, sow, harrow, reap and thresh the "finest grain in the world!" Things here must grow rapidly when melons, cucumbers, egg plants, tomatoes, Indian corn, pumpkins, etc., ripen in Manitoba as they have done for five years in the Presbyterian manse garden near Dufferin.

Winter here sets in about the middle of November, and ends in March. As to the ice here, it is penetrated very much as in the State of New York. At Badger Creek and Turtle Mountain streams flow, and are seldom ever frozen over in places for the whole winter, so that cattle can go and drink at any time. Under the ice of the Red River the water flows continually. My own well near its bank, and not very deep, has never yet been frozen over that I know of. Our ordinary snowfall is from six inches to one foot on the level for the winter. The snow and ice terror need keep no one away. If you want to see snowdrifts, go to the northern part of the State of New York, where the very fences are hidden by the depth of the snow.

The New York "Observer" is read in all parts of the world where the English language is spoken. A more reliable newspaper hardly exists, and I do not charge the writer of the letter of December 1st, 1881, with any wilful misrepresentation. It is quite true that the wind blows here over vast plains of snow, just as it does in Minnesota, Iowa and Dakota. That the thermometer has gone down in past years as low as fifty degrees I admit also, just as I admit that the ox was roasted on the ice of the Thames, although 4,000,000 of Londoners never saw the strange sight,

and never got a taste of the beef. In all lands there are things ordinary and extraordinary, and the Arctic stories heard on a flying visit to the North West were, no doubt, by him firmly believed. If I write again I may take up the subject of "How Settlers Keep Warm" in the north-western part of the British Empire.

SUSTENTATION VS. SUPPLEMENT.

MR. EDITOR,—This subject of the Schemes now under discussion is far more important than many brethren seem to think. I have no wish for mere controversy; did not intend to go into it when I wrote the first brief note you kindly inserted. All I am anxious about, with all the brethren, is the prosperity, both in temporal and spiritual things, of the Church. But it does appear strange that at this time of day, any one free from prejudice, after the demonstrated success of the Sustentation Fund in several important Presbyterian Churches, should hesitate in deciding between it and this Scheme of Mr. King. For even he acknowledges that the "idea" embodied in the Sustentation Fund is a "noble one." He has not yet given any new reason for rejecting it. He cannot say it is not a success. It also, as much as his Scheme, gives every prominence to the principle, "Let him that is taught communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." To be sure, as we all know, it originated in the Free Church of Scotland. It has been a tower of strength to that Church. After forty years' experience, it has vindicated the sagacity and genius of its illustrious founder. I do not believe anyone will regard it less worthy of our acceptance on account of its origin. And Mr. King has given interesting evidence of the fact that it is discussed in no sectional spirit in the Metropolitan Presbytery. What is there against it, then? No one has, so far as I have seen, pointed out an objection, except the stale and common objection made to every good enterprise, that it is impracticable. Such an objection is only a groundless assertion. It has not proved impracticable in other colonies. It is not so impracticable as the work the Church so lately sent off Dr. McKay to do. But while not impracticable on its merits, there are objections that will be fatal, I fear, though I hope not, and that render an attempt to carry it perhaps impracticable. And one of these is, that it does not enjoy the approval and support of Mr. King. The other Scheme is emphatically Mr. King's; and that is more in its favour than having half-a-dozen churches on its side is in favour of the Sustentation Fund. The history of a movement is always interesting and useful in a discussion; and it is the facts of history which lead me to the above conclusion. At the critical moment when the Presbyteries had almost decided in favour of the Sustentation Fund, Mr. King brought his overture before the Toronto Presbytery. The Presbytery transmitted it; on Mr. King's motion the Assembly received it. On his second motion it was adopted, and the Sustentation Committee's report delayed. Then Mr. King got leave to change his motion, brought forward a more ingenious motion, which was triumphantly carried, and sent down as a remit, from the alternatives of which remit many would gladly escape if they could see how. Mr. King had a most docile Assembly to deal with. Nothing that he asked was denied. The other Committee, after all its toil, after a majority of Presbyteries had sustained it, was put out of existence. The Church was set to do its work over again, in the hope, now justifiable, that it would reach a result Mr. King could adopt. In view of all this, no wonder Mr. King can repose with undisturbed mind on his prophecy of what will happen at next Assembly. When one can arrest a Church and turn it round in this way, there is no good work he may not accomplish, and no evil design he may not frustrate. It is in the light of history I feel that brethren can say, not of the Fund on its merits, but of the possibility of carrying it with some degree of reason, that it is impracticable. In all this Mr. King, of course, did what he had the most perfect right to do, and I do not complain, but only explain. The other objection of a friend, as to the power of a Central Committee, lies as much against the Supplemental Scheme. Better, it appears to many, a thousand times, to continue as we are for a time till we find the better way, than to put our necks under the yoke of the Grant in Aid Committee. Those who do so will find it no more tolerable than others have. The United Presbyterian

brethren in England, who pined under small stipends eked out by a grant, now rejoice in the liberty and generous salary a Sustentation Fund bestows. Mr. King said his Scheme, as to its principle, was found, among others, in the American Church.

I questioned this in my former letter, and so far correctly. But accepting Mr. King's statement, does he not know that the American Church has been long anxious to find some better mode of ministerial support? Do we not all know what prevails in that Church, partly as the fruit of this system? Is not the ministry unsettled? Has the Church any control over her congregations? Are not Session and pastor often completely ignored? In short, is there not in many cases, even in so prominent a city as Chicago, utter misrule and disorder so far as Church government is concerned? The example of that Church alone is enough forever to condemn the grant in aid system, though no other unhappy instance of its working were found. Better surely pause before we enter further on this downward course. But if the Church prefers to make the American condition of things her model, rather than the order and system of those Churches in which the Sustentation Fund is found, we can only record our dissent. I trust the Church will yet be heard. We have only heard ministers and courts as yet. Let us consult the people a little further. Such discussion will have an educational effect; and a decision arrived at by an enlightened Church will be better than a decision arrived at by the personal influence of any individual however eminent, or the mere fiat of a court however independent.

I have taken up all the space I can ask for in these letters, and thank you for giving me the opportunity of stating my views on these important subjects. There is just one further remark that suggests itself.

Mr. King complains of a "want of accuracy" in my statements. I can quite understand that when I differ from or contradict him, my statements should seem inaccurate. I fear this present letter will seem very inaccurate. I will not discuss the accuracy of his statements. To me they seem in some instances entirely to misrepresent the subject under discussion, and to be directly contrary to the facts of the case as I understand them; but space forbids contending over every statement. I quite agree with Mr. King that accuracy in such a discussion is essential, but probably we would differ as to which statements were accurate.

The course which it appears to me the Church might wisely adopt at present is to let the rival Scheme remain in abeyance meantime, and appoint an impartial Committee to correspond with those Churches that have adopted the Sustentation Fund, and any that prefer the Supplemental, and lay their testimony before the Church, so that everyone could become acquainted with the question, and then we would be in a position to legislate with intelligence. I maintain it is to trample on the rights of the people, to push any Scheme on the Church till the Church, in her sessions, managers' boards and congregations, has been consulted.

D. D. MCLEOD.

MR. EDITOR,—Permit me to state a few things that have forcibly struck me in the Sustentation Scheme presented for the Church's consideration. But first I would express my regret at the persistent endeavour being made by its advocates to create a prejudice against the rival Scheme by fastening upon it the character of a "charity," by speaking of what it gives as a "dole," and those aided by it as "hirelings," "unhappy poor," and such like. It proposes to give aid in the same way as our Home Mission Committee does now; and is it a mere dispenser of charity, and all aided by it "paupers," "unhappy poor," and "hirelings?" If the Scheme is really a good one, it should not need to be supported by such a dubious kind of argument; it should be possible to defend it upon its own merits. Much also has been made of broad, general principles in support of Sustentation, and details have been spoken of slightly. But it may very possibly be, and this case would appear to be one of them, when details are all-important; and I am not favourably impressed by such a want of details as appears in a Scheme which is to affect the working in most important respects, and tell upon the life of every congregation in the body. So far as details are given, one cannot fail to be struck with the enormous power with which it proposes to invest a Committee