

and out of that number over 600 received aid from the Sustentation Fund to the extent of the sum of £60,000, that is while the United Presbyterian Church helped 239 congregations, out of a total of 600 or 700, to the extent of £15,500, the Free Church assisted nearly three times as many congregations at four times the expense to the Church. True, the Free Church is not satisfied, Dr. Wilson aims at a minimum stipend of £300, but surely Mr. Patterson will admit that the great work accomplished quietly year by year by the Sustentation Fund, places it entirely above comparison with the augmentation schemes of the United Presbyterian Church. I ought to quote here a sentence or two from a paper which appeared in the "United Presbyterian Magazine," a year ago, from the pen of a respected elder of that Church. "We may say," he says, "that the policy of the Free Church is a home policy, which seeks to strengthen her ministry, and which enables her, with great success, to overtake the work of planting churches in destitute and increasing localities. During the last ten years she has planted ninety new churches in Scotland." Again, Mr. Patterson refers to the English Presbyterian Church, quoting from Dr. Wilson the fact that it has reached a higher minimum stipend than the Free Church. If he had only taken the *slightest trouble to inform himself* by reading my articles in the "Record" he would have known that the English Presbyterian Church had only reached that minimum stipend by the adoption of a Sustentation Fund.

Before concluding this letter I would ask your readers to consult the Minutes of last Assembly, at page forty, for the plan proposed for our Church, as Mr. Patterson's statements are somewhat misleading on that subject. Since the meeting of Assembly the Committee have determined to propose the following alterations in the plan:—

1. As to aid-receiving congregations, that an allowance will be made for house rent where no manse is provided, the sum to be fixed by agreement between the Presbytery and Committee.

2. As to the aid-giving congregations, that the receipts of the minister will be accepted instead of the actual remittance of the amount of the minimum stipend.

PATRICK MCF. MCLEOD.

MR. EDITOR,—In my last, in reply to the objection that a supplementing scheme would not evoke the liberality necessary to make it a success, I shewed that the United Presbyterian Church, under that system of operations, had placed her ministers on a higher level as to support than those of the Free Church under a Sustentation Fund, that at the same time the rate of liberality in the body of the congregations of the former, though generally poorer in circumstances, was very considerably higher than in those of the latter, that this had been maintained during the last two years of business depression, while in both the Sustentation Fund had gone back. What better success could be desired? Notwithstanding these facts, Mr. McLeod boldly proclaims that it has not been a success, adding a note of exclamation to excite our attention. His principal argument is, that the 550 congregations of the poorer body do not do as much as the 1000 congregations of the richer. Without remarking on his figures, I at once make him welcome to the fact. But we would not have supposed that any sensible man would have expected that they would. The fact that in proportion to the number of her members and congregations she has succeeded so completely, is all that would be expected by any reasonable man. But says Mr. McLeod, "would it succeed if her fields were as wide as that of the Free Church?" The fact that she has succeeded over her whole field, embracing some of the poorest districts of Scotland, is the best guarantee that if her field were wider she would be equally successful.

But Mr. McLeod alleges that the supplementing scheme of the United Presbyterian Church has depended, first and last, upon the large donations of the few rather than upon the steady systematic giving of the many. Had he said this of the Free Church Sustentation Fund, he would have been nearer the truth. I do not say it is quite true of either. In fact both depend partly on the donations of the rich few, and partly on the systematic giving of the many. But the Free Church, much more than the other, depends on the liberality of the wealthy. At one time, as Mr. McLeod mentions, fifteen congregations were paying

one-fifth of the whole fund. And notwithstanding all that has been done since, by legislation and deputations, and dealing with congregations by committees, it still remains that only 292 congregations are self-sustaining, leaving 700 still aid-receiving. This is enough to shew how much the scheme depends upon the gifts of the few, and to their credit I say that the liberality displayed by some of her wealthy members and congregations, cannot be too highly commended. Thus St. George's, Edinburgh, gave last year to the Sustentation Fund £5,500 sterling, or \$27,000. Such liberality has not, to my knowledge, been equalled anywhere, and though in this respect the United Presbyterian Church has not the same record, yet I commend them that their wealthy congregations did take a leaf out of the Free Church book, and manifest similar liberality, and undoubtedly it is partly through this that her supplementing scheme took its rise. And any scheme, to be successful with us, must elicit something of the same kind among our wealthier members and congregations.

But, on the other hand, the facts already given shew that it is to the steady systematic giving of the many that the United Presbyterian scheme mainly owes its success. This may appear in the rate of giving. There is not a congregation in the United Presbyterian Church that does not give 7s. 6d. per member. In the Free Church there are 235 below that figure, some of them as low as 4s. Then the rates required in order to partake of surplus are, in the Free Church, 7s. 6d. and 10s. per member, in the United Presbyterian Church 10s., 12s. and 14s. The result of this is that there are 700 congregations in the Free Church, or nearly three-fourths of the whole, receiving aid, while the United Presbyterian Church has only 230 which do not give £200, and only 160 which do not give £160. And to this general liberality it has been mainly owing that the latter has been able to raise the support of her ministry to a higher level than that of the Free Church.

But Mr. McLeod seems to think that the large number of aided congregations in the Free Church is an argument for a Sustentation Fund. He says that the Free Church had 600 congregations aided, and the United Presbyterian only 120. To be accurate, the former had over 700, the latter 230. But I may here state, what I intended to say farther on, that so far from this state of things being regarded as a reason for recommending a Sustentation Fund to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, former committees considered it the reverse. The natural tendency of ministers being paid out of a central fund, is to encourage congregations to rely upon it. This characteristic of human nature will work, and cause difficulties, under any scheme of aid-giving, but it has greater opportunity under the system of a central fund. The Free Church has largely overcome these difficulties. But still the result of the working of the two schemes appear in the different rates of giving in aid-receiving congregations, and in the much greater proportion of such under their scheme.

Mr. McLeod thinks that a Sustentation Fund will evoke greater liberality. The above facts shew the reverse as to the weaker congregations. But the same will be more apparent if we compare the giving of individual congregations. In the United Presbyterian Church there is not a congregation of 400 members which does not pay the full stipend of £200; there are in the Free Church congregations of four, five, and six hundred members which do not give £160, and draw aid from the Sustentation Fund, these not in the Highlands and Islands, of whose poverty we frequently hear, but in small towns, where the two bodies work side by side and are composed of much the same class of persons, the members of the United Presbyterian Church being generally in humbler circumstances. Such a state of things as this last would not be tolerated in the United Presbyterian Church, or any of the other dissenting bodies in Scotland. Now this was one reason why the former committees did not see it advisable to recommend a Sustentation Fund to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. We have not such a number of wealthy congregations from whom we can expect such liberality, and if we had we think it would be better to adopt that system by which the body of the congregations will be encouraged to rely upon their own efforts, rather than on the liberality of others.

I have thus discussed the main question as to the success of the two systems as thus worked out by these two Churches, and must now proceed to notice

Mr. McLeod's objections to a supplementary scheme. He says:—

"First, such a scheme destroys the principle of Presbyterian parity, makes an invidious distinction between the ministers of supplemented charges and those who are settled over the richer congregations. The supplemented minister is at the mercy of a committee of his brethren who often may abuse their power through failing to understand the minister's position, and may suddenly take away his supplement without just cause."

In what respect a supplementing fund destroys the parity of the Presbyterian ministry, Mr. McLeod has not chosen to inform us, and I am unable even to conjecture, where he can find anything in its working that has even the appearance of such an issue. A supplementing fund has simply to do with their pecuniary support, and instead of producing inequality, its whole operations are directed to the removing of inequalities, and bringing them as far as possible to a parity, by making the abundance of the richer portions of the Church a supply for the wants of the poorer. Will any man look at the position of the ministers of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches under their respective systems and shew where, in a single point, there is an inequality under the one scheme that is not under the other.

I confess to some surprise at Mr. McLeod's making the excessive power of a committee under a supplementing scheme, an argument for a Sustentation Fund, for if there is one Church scheme of modern times which more than another requires the constant and rigid exercise of power on the part of committees, it is a sustentation scheme. Take the Free Church system for example. From the twelve or more closely printed pages of "Moncrieff's Practice of the Free Church," referring to the Sustentation Fund and relative matters, we cull the following regulations: (1) While a Presbytery may commence a preaching station, it cannot erect a congregation, having a right to call a pastor, without the case passing under the consideration of the Sustentation Fund Committee. I venture to say, that no Presbytery in the United Presbyterian Church would be willing to submit to this, and I question if many in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, would like it. Then (2) even if the erection is approved, it by no means follows that the congregation should come on the Sustentation Fund. This would affect the interest of every minister upon the Fund. For this, therefore a complicated course is necessary, the case passing through the Sustentation Committee, the commission, and finally the General Assembly itself. Indeed, by these regulations only a very small number of new congregations can be received on the Fund in one year, so that some of them may have to wait years before attaining that position. And in poor Shetland, only three of the twelve charges can come upon the Fund at one time, and the ministers of the others must wait till one of these becomes vacant, when the senior minister attains the coveted position. (3) Every Presbytery is strictly prohibited from moderating a call in any congregation of the whole 1,000 in the body, until it has given satisfactory answers to queries addressed to them by the Sustentation Fund Committee, particularly as to the amount which they are to pay to the Sustentation Fund. I question if all Mr. McLeod's eloquence would persuade the members of Central Church, Toronto, that such an arrangement would be for their good. Then (4), if after the settlement of a minister, the congregation fails in paying the sum promised to the Sustentation Fund, the Committee again come in and deduct the deficiency from the payment to the minister. What worse than this could be done by a supplementing committee. Again (5), if after settlement, a congregation like Crescent street, should be found paying more than it ought to its minister, or what the Committee consider more than they ought to give, in proportion to what they are giving to the Sustentation Fund, it is the duty of the Committee to step in and if they obstinately persist in their course, bring them before the General Assembly, with what results I cannot even imagine. (6) Should the congregation desire a colleague, they cannot, even with the concurrence and approval of the Presbytery, take such a step without their proposed arrangements being submitted to the Sustentation Fund Committee, and obtaining its sanction. (7) In the case of a congregation becoming vacant the Sustentation Fund Committee must be at once informed of the fact, when it decides whether