

## THE NEW SUPPLEMENTING SCHEME.

In a communication in your last issue, the attention of your readers was briefly turned to the new Supplementing Scheme of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was then shown that the aim of the Assembly was to increase the amount of support given to ministers who receive the smaller salaries, in every case to \$600. per annum and a manse, and further to make a vigorous effort to secure if possible \$750.00 and a manse. The need of such an effort was urged by a reference to the facts that within the bounds of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, nearly two-thirds of the settled pastors receive a less amount than the minimum aimed at for all, and that these pastors receive on an average only about \$540.00 per annum. The terms upon which the Assembly proposes to give assistance, and the magnitude of the effort to be made in order to accomplish the desired object were also indicated.

In the letter I wish to emphasize still further the pressing need of the proposed effort, as well as to advert to the principles which underlie the Churches action, and to discuss briefly the character of the regulations which have been proposed for the administration of the projected funds.

The best evidence of the pressing need for the proposed effort is to be found in the naked facts of the case. These have already been presented in one form. They will however, bear to be repeated in another shape. Probably there are very few if any intelligent persons connected with our Church who will not readily admit that an income of \$630.00 per annum and a manse is the very lowest sum on which a minister under even the most favourable circumstances could be expected to live with comfort and to carry on his work with efficiency. At the present moment however there are about 60 congregations in our Synod which fall below this very modest sum. There are twenty-eight which exceed \$500.00 and a manse and do not go beyond \$600.00 and a manse, which exceed \$400.00 and a manse, and do not contribute more than \$500.00 and a manse, and twenty which give from their own resources only \$400.00 and a manse or under that amount. Surely these facts demonstrate the need, the imperative need for immediate vigorous, universal and sustained effort.

With reference to the principles which underlie the Assembly's call to the projected effort, there is happily little room

for controversy. Those which lie at the very foundation of the movement are the unity of the Church and the consequent obligation of the strong to help the weak. As Presbyterians, we look upon all our members and congregations as belonging to the same body and thus united to each other by the tenderest and strongest bonds. Were we congregationalists, did we believe the true theory of the Church to be that every congregation is an independent organization, we might with some appearance of consistency if not propriety, leave each congregation to shift for itself. But holding to the unity of the Church, contending that the weaker congregations are as much a part of the Church as the stronger, we cannot ignore the fact that they have claims of peculiar strength upon the Church as a whole.

But if the Church is one, why should she not pour all her contributions for the support of her ministers into a common Fund, as she does for the maintenance of her missionaries, and thus show more plainly her unity, as well as secure a greater measure of equality, if not of equity, in their distribution?

Various answers might perhaps be given to this question, but it will suffice in this connection to direct attention to the fact, that practically the past working of the Church in the Maritime Provinces has been in the line of Supplements rather than of Sustentation. Before the union of 1875 both branches of the Church assisted weak congregations by supplements, and the same method has ever since been pursued all over the Church.

But the question may be raised: are the proposed regulations for the administration of the Funds which may be contributed by the Church just and equitable? Before attempting a direct answer to this inquiry, it may be well to direct attention to the fact, that these regulations are, in the meantime, only provisional, that they are proposed by the Assembly with the expressed hope that the Church may "be able next year to bring a valuable increase of experience to bear upon this great interest of the Church with the view of improving the said Scheme of Augmentation, or of preparing the way for a new Scheme toward which our experience may be found to point." In general terms it may be said, however, that so far as the conditions on which assistance is proposed to be given are concerned, they are not altogether new or tentative, but rather the outgrowth of the experience of the past, as well as of an attentive consideration of the situation