

of new and weak congregations, by assistance from older, more numerous, and wealthy ones.

In adopting such a principle and acting on it, I think that our Ministers have evinced a most noble and unparalleled liberality, which should go far to remove from our minds that general want of confidence with which we used to regard the priestly and grasping character of the former Synod.

In former times, the Ministers of the older and abler congregations made no move to assist their weaker brethren, although in their government allowance (which the Ministers more recently arrived in the Colony had not,) they had the means at hand.

But how totally different the spirit infused into our Clergy by the Free Church delegates.

The new Synod is found not only to refuse the proposal of the Sustentation Board, (at its meeting in Toronto on the 29th Aug.) to raise a supplementary £50 a-year for each Minister, *be his congregation strong or weak*; but our Clergy have, in their Sustentation Scheme, actually adopted the principle of *giving all the assistance in the power of the Synod to the weak congregations*, which, by and by, when the payments begin to come in from the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves, will be far from insignificant, independent of the yearly voluntary offerings to our Canadian Free Church, of adherents in this Province and at home.

For my part, I have no hesitation in declaring myself a convert, not only to the principle, but to the main features of the details, of the Scheme.

I feel satisfied that they contain sufficient intrinsic excellence to ensure their universal adoption ultimately.

But, in the meantime, by the mere adoption of the principle, each congregation, and each man in each congregation, is made to feel an interest in, and yearly to express, by his contribution, his approbation of Free Church principles, by sustaining the embodiment of these in this Province, viz., *the Church as a whole*; and the whole Church is made directly interested in not only seeing that every congregation, be it strong or weak, (and every man in every congregation, were that possible,) be properly suited in a Minister, but also in taking continual care that after a pastor is placed, he does not, by the neglect of his particular flock, alienate, or prevent the increase of, the supporters of the Church.

Infine, I now feel convinced, (after having bestowed a good deal of attention on the subject,) that the details of the Synod's plan are as perfect, and, in fact,  *nearer what this country wants*, than could have been reasonably expected to be produced at first; by any body of men, (lay or clerical,) and that they are such, as when corrected by the experience of a few years, will be found admirably fitted to accomplish the great object of the scheme, viz. the encouragement and support of weak congregations at a distance, and especially those in the woods.

I am, dear Sir,  
Your most ob't servant.

ISAAC BUCHANAN,  
President of the Sustentation Board.

## THE DETAILS OF THE SUSTENTATION SCHEME.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR SIR.—In the foregoing letter of yesterday's date to the Editor of the *Banner*, I had as my object to show that the principles of the public Sustentation Scheme may be successfully worked in the meantime, even though the circumstances or prejudices of the different congregations prevent their adoption, all at once, of the details of the Synod's plan, or of any other uniform mode of raising the necessary funds.

I now wish to be permitted through the medium of your columns, to make a few remarks on the

details of the Synod's Sustentation Scheme:—

And I may premise that when these were first promulgated, I myself had the strongest prejudice against any measure emanating from the Clergy; and this was increased by the unfortunately equivocal wording of the 6th clause of the Synod's Directions FOR THE ELECTION AND ORIENTATION OF DEACONS, AND THE FORMATION OF DEACONS' COURTS IN CONGREGATIONS, WITH A VIEW TO THE RIGHT MANAGEMENT OF THE SUSTENTATION SCHEME.

It is therein stated that the duties of the Deacons' Court shall be to manage the property and all the temporal affairs of the Congregation.

It is now apparent to me that the property pointed at in the foregoing, is the property of the Sustentation Fund alone, but it certainly is a pity that more care had not been taken clearly to explain this originally. The Synod certainly never could mean that Deacons, as such, should interfere with or hold the real estate of a congregation, or should necessarily be employed in duties, for which they are very likely to be the most unfit parties possible; such as acting as the members of a building committee, or in the conduct of the many legal disputes, which congregations are as liable to as individuals, in the defence of their property and civil rights.

In these, and all other cases it is manifest, that the payers of the money will manage their property as they choose, and that any individual admitted as a subscriber to any particular undertaking, or generally to the external frame-work of a congregation, ought to have his due share in the management of these, whether he be a member in full communion with the Church or not.

But the fact that Deacons are elected only by members in full communion, shows clearly that they are the office bearers of the Church proper, and that their interference can only be in the management of those temporal things which each congregation voluntarily bestows on the whole Church, from time to time.

The new system, however, must certainly be a very bad one if it is not preferable to our present horrid system of management, which is a sort of bastard Congregationalism: having all the evils and none of the peculiar advantages of the system of the Congregational Church.

Each congregation is at present governed by its own constitution and laws, each having a different one from every other; and every man, be he Heathen or Christian, who chooses to expend a few shillings a-year in seat rent, has as much power over the Church as any member of it.

These things are surely foreign to the genius and spirit of the Presbyterian Church Government, which we admire; and in their nature as well as in their degrading effects, it would be difficult to show wherein they differ greatly from the Erastianism against which the Free Church has lately protested in Scotland.

In both cases the moneyed patron pushes his interference beyond the limits of secular affairs, and rules within a Church of which he is not even a member.

I cannot shut my eyes to the necessity of some radical change in our congregational management, whatever that may be, (although I have always felt, and shall always feel, as jealous as any man of the encroachments of the Clergy on the individual rights and opinions of their people,) and I do not, therefore, wonder that the ecclesiastical experience of Messrs. McNaughtan and King, the Delegates from the Free Church of Scotland, led these gentlemen to urge on the Synod a public Sustentation scheme, the adoption of whose details by the Congregations (this, however, is quite a voluntary matter,) will revolutionize our present miserable congregational systems.

My attention has been drawn to this subject

from the Synod having appointed me President of the Sustentation Board, but more from my admiration of our Church's return to the great principle of Ministers of the Church holding their temporal advantages in common with one another, as far as compatible with the state of Society in which we live.

In my letter to the Editor of the *Banner*, (on the principle of the public Sustentation Scheme,) I alluded to one excellent and beneficial effect which would be sure immediately to flow from every congregation's supporting, and interesting itself for the whole Church, viz., that the whole Church, and every Minister and adherent of it, would then have a direct and lively interest in watching for the prosperity of each congregation. But even if the immediate advantages of the new plan over the old one, may not be so very evident to every mind as they now are to mine, I should think that no one, with the enthusiasm of a Freechurchman at all events, will be unwilling to admit that the Ministers have, at least, (in proposing to the people so great an object as the general support of the Gospel in the Province,) paid their people's discrimination and christian principle, a far higher compliment than if they had left it to be considered as hitherto, that if a man paid his seat rent he was performing all the duty required of him by God, (however much he could well afford to give,) and thus might confidently look for the blessing of Almighty God.

I am, dear Sir,  
Your most obedient servant.  
ISAAC BUCHANAN.

## MEETING OF THE SUSTENTATION BOARD

Of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

I hereby request that the members of the Sustentation Board of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, will meet at the store of John McMurrich, Esq., Treasurer of the Board, on Wednesday, the 26th inst., at 12 o'clock noon.

ISAAC BUCHANAN, President.

N. B. With reference to the above meeting of the Sustentation Board, and the minute of Commission 18th ultimo, it is earnestly to be desired that each congregation should communicate without delay one or other of the following decisions to Mr. Westland or Mr. James Shaw, the secretaries at Toronto; viz:

That having adopted both the principle and the details of the Sustentation Scheme, they expect to contribute so much to the sustentation fund during the current year. Or,

That having merely adopted the principle, and retaining their own congregational arrangements as to the management of temporalities, they have resolved to cast all that they raise for the support of the ministry into the fund, stating the ascertained or probable amount. Or,

That being for the present restrained by circumstances—such as the being yet without a settled minister, or having come under special engagements to a minister from which they have not been relieved—from placing themselves on the fund, they are prepared (in lieu of the surplus revenue anticipated in their case by the Scheme) to contribute to the fund during the current year, a specified amount towards the support of weak congregations.

I have fixed on the 26th February because the Commission of the Synod meets on that day, at Toronto—thus securing the Board the advantage of a conference with that body, especially with the view of its making a public explanation of the difference between the inherent and delegated powers of the deacons, such as will make congregations feel more satisfied in adopting the Sustentation Scheme's details.

The necessity of a public and permanent sus-