

think justly, too, are beginning to find fault with the part they are asked and expected to perform in this scheme, charging ministers with selfishness and greediness. My candid opinion is that this scheme of the Church should be supported only by ministers, and by such members and congregations of the Church as should be willing to do so, unsolicited; and that only those widows and orphans of ministers who are really in need of aid should be allowed to draw upon its funds. If the scheme be founded on a business principle, then it ought to be carried on in a business-like way, supported by those only who are entitled to its benefits, but if it be founded on the religious principle, meant to relieve the wants and minister to the comfort of widows and orphans of ministers who have spent their life, strength and means in the service of their Master, I think it comes short of its aim, and abuses the generosity of the Church when it gives its funds to those who need it not.

JUSTICE.

PAY AND TREATMENT OF PROBATIONERS.

MR. EDITOR.—As one who has had no correspondence with Dr. Cochrane, I beg to thank him on behalf of Probationers for his candid and manly declaration, in your issue of the 22nd ult., in regard to Rule 3 on the Probationers' Scheme. This is the more praiseworthy when so many who ought to be equally interested in the matter are discreetly silent or only break silence on the side of the delinquents, and against the already injured party. Allow a quotation for the benefit of all concerned, "It is manifestly unjust that congregations offering stipends of \$1,000 or \$2,000 should pay the probationer the lowest sum allowed in the case of weak and struggling charges. It is a grievous wrong to the preacher, and a plain violation of the spirit and letter of the law." And yet as far as is known, that is just what every vacancy has done and is now doing. Perhaps a few dollars are added to the \$8, making the sum \$10 per day, when the stated salary given is \$2,000 (cases could be cited). So in all the vacancies where the salary was above \$572, i.e., $52 \times 8 + 52 \times 3$ (board) = 572. Now I have no grievance beyond what is common to all, nor do I purpose dilating on the evils of the system, but after consultation have agreed to begin an agitation which will be continued by others until justice is done to all. Small pay is not the only point where the shoe pinches. There is another sore place in the treatment which preachers receive when billeted. On the average this treatment ranges from moderate to good, but in some cases it is quite inferior. An early preacher, before the present system came in vogue, fared on locusts and wild honey; now some get the locusts without the honey. Their bodies and their minds are weakened by roughing it up and down the country, upon inferior nourishment, and meeting harsh criticisms from all sorts of people, good and bad. Probation is a hard road to travel. It takes a man to be strong in body and mind to stand it. Some have gone off it to other professions, etc., and doubtless "there are more to follow." Now as to the remedy. Let some official—say Convener—notify each vacancy as to the amount it is required to pay, rated according to the statistics of the congregation. Let Presbyteries see that delinquents are dealt with, instead of shielding them. Let preachers stand up for their due. I don't propose a "strike" for higher wages or better fare, but let each man quietly ask for the amount each charge ought to pay. I don't mean that he is to dun the treasurer, as a collecting agent might do, but just put in a gentle reminder to awaken the sleeping conscience. Finally, agitate! Give no rest until restitution is made and justice done. Others suffer as well as probationers. When settled pastors desire "a change" they go off to preach occasionally in vacancies. Some spend weeks, even months, in preparing a special sermon, travel a great distance, do their best, and are rewarded perhaps by a slight advance on the pittance of probationers.

Again, students in winter or summer are not paid as they ought to be, if our Church is to hold its own or regain lost ground.

A. P.

April 6th, 1878.

PROBATIONERS IN THE WESTERN SECTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

MR. EDITOR.—On comparing the Distribution of Probationers' Scheme for the quarter ending April 7th,

with the one just published for the quarter beginning April 14th, it is found that eighteen congregations which were vacant three months ago have now settled pastors. But only three of these ministers were taken from the number of probationers whose names appear on the scheme published by the General Assembly's Committee on Distribution. The vacancies on the list three months ago diminished eighteen in number, but the probationers on the list three months ago diminished only three in number. From this fact it appears that there must be somewhere a supply of probationers over whom the Assembly's Committee has no control. It would also seem that these are more successful in obtaining charges for themselves than those whose names are on the scheme. Five congregations obtain their minister from this irregular supply, over which the Committee has no control, to one that obtains its minister from the regular supply.

So much appears from the Scheme of Distribution. Let us see how it corresponds with the experience of the regular probationers. Many of those on the list are kept for several months together doing the part of humble servants for their more highly favored brethren by being sent to congregations whose members are already morally or formally bound to call, or who have already called, one of those men whose names are not on the scheme. It will be asked how does this come about, how is it possible? Generally it is thus. The man on the list must go wherever he is sent by the Convener of the Presbytery's Committee on Distribution. His appointments are generally made three months in advance. The man not on the list can go where he pleases. Accordingly, he watches his opportunities, does a good deal of correspondence, ascertains a suitable occasion to appear before a congregation ready to give a call, obtains a high recommendation from a mutual friend, goes to the congregation just at the right time, preaches with all earnestness, and satisfies a majority of his hearers. He is asked if he will accept a call. He hesitates a little, and replies, that he has so many appointments to fulfil, but that he will consider their call favorably if they wait a while. This they are quite ready to do as it will take several weeks to get the stipend subscribed. But the persons specially interested persevere in their canvas for their "highly recommended" man, and at last are in a position to ask the Presbytery to send one of their number to moderate in a call. Their request is granted, and in due time a settlement is effected. In the meantime the probationers under the control of the Presbytery's Committee are sent to this congregation in their regular turn. But as the people are getting up a call for the Rev. Mr. Wide-awake these must be very cautious to do nothing that might seem like trying to win the hearts of the people to themselves, and so cause disunion in the congregation and prevent the call from being unanimous. One of them may have to read from the pulpit the notice of moderation, another, the notice of ordination or induction. Thus the regular probationers are kept doing service for their brethren. Some are kept at this kind of work for months, and may be for years almost continuously; and their time is considered as "probation," and therefore their names are subject to be struck off the roll of probationers, and themselves cast out on the world as unfit for ministers, unless they get settled within four or five years. Four years of probation are allowed to preachers who demitted their charges, five to those who never had a charge.

Now in all the manoeuvring by which some preachers not on the list obtain calls there is a considerable amount of wire-pulling which has been well named by one of our ministers as "underground patronage." It cannot easily be reached or checked either by the Assembly's Distributing Committee or by the Presbyteries, and yet it is becoming so prevalent in the Church as to amount to an abuse by which many worthy ministers and their families suffer. The distress it brings to them is only fully known to the Searcher of hearts. How can those "highly recommended" brethren answer the question that is put to them on the day of their induction: "Have you directly or indirectly used any undue means to procure this call?" May it not be fairly called "undue means" for any one to avoid the regular way of obtaining a hearing in congregations, and "procure" a hearing by means of recommendations from irresponsible parties, and by eluding the regularly constituted authorities of the Church. If the getting of "calls" has come to be a competitive race, let it be a straightforward honest one. Give us fair play gentlemen. Put your names on the list. If you

are worthy of being "highly recommended," open, artless dealing will not diminish your lustre.

ONE OF THE THIRTY-ONE.

REMUNERATION OF PROBATIONERS.

MR. EDITOR.—In your issue of the 19th inst. there is a letter from the Rev. Mr. Battisby, in which I am charged with having misrepresented, in a former letter to you what "the St. Andrew's congregation, Chatham, was in the habit of paying for supply." Will Mr. Battisby point out the sentence or clause in the letter referred to in which I do so. In that letter I confined myself to the facts regarding myself, and studiously avoided any reference to what they gave to others; and I challenge Mr. Battisby to show otherwise. With what the congregation "paid the man of their own selection" I have nothing to do; but I am called upon to defend myself when accused of misrepresenting facts. But Mr. Battisby is not satisfied with this illogical conclusion—he must defend his congregation, and the action of his Presbytery in rejecting my claim upon his congregation for more pay. I shall leave "Equity," who is of age, to answer for himself, but I can scarcely avoid referring to him, as we are both referred to in the following sentence: "Both the above writers declare that St. Andrew's congregation violated the law of the Church both in the spirit and letter, when they only paid eight dollars per Sabbath." Then Mr. Battisby triumphantly adds, as if the asking of such a question ought to settle the matter, and silence all further complaints—"What law do these mean?" It is the law of 1876, Mr. Editor—the year to which Mr. Battisby appeals, but not the law as quoted by Mr. Battisby, who is either culpably ignorant of what he writes about on this point, or carefully conceals the rule applicable to congregations who are able to pay in full for their pulpit supply. I enclose, for your personal satisfaction, a copy of the "List" of vacancies and appointments (with which every Probationer is supplied) for the quarter beginning Oct. 15, 1876, and ending Jan. 7, 1877, and refer you to sec. 3, at the foot of the page, which permit me to transcribe for the enlightenment of Mr. Battisby and others similarly interested:—"All Probationers are to be paid at the minimum rate of eight dollars per Sabbath, with board, but it is amount must be increased so as to be in proportion to the ability of the congregation, or the stipend paid their pastor, if they had one." Let me ask, then, was this law in force (which Mr. Battisby denies) before I supplied St. Andrew's congregation on 10th and 17th June, 1877? Has not that congregation violated both "the spirit and the letter" of that law when "they only paid me eight dollars per Sabbath?" And has not the Chatham Presbytery, by sustaining their action, laid themselves open to the same charge? Had the law stood then as Mr. Battisby gives it, he would be right in saying that "its provisions were not violated," either by the congregation or the Presbytery. Hence the logical conclusion from what he says is, Had the law stood in 1876 as I have stated it, St. Andrew's congregation would have paid me (for their own credit, I presume, according to "the spirit and the letter" of that law. Now that they know better, I have no doubt they will acknowledge their mistake in a practical way. Any other conclusion would be an insult to the sense of justice of this intelligent congregation. Who, then, to use Mr. Battisby's dignified language, has "misrepresented the matter"? It will not do for Mr. Battisby to take shelter behind what was paid to his predecessor. That may be according to "the spirit and the letter" of a part of the law; but what about "the ability" of a congregation? I leave the decision as regards my statement of the law, to each and all the conveners of Home Mission committees; and its application to the common-sense of any disinterested person. Now, sir, I would leave the matter alone here were it not that Mr. Battisby is not contented with trying to defend his personal interests upon legal grounds solely, but tries to do so by bringing a very grave charge against all Probationers, with few exceptions, in the following chaste and tasteful language: "It does seem to me unreasonable that they (the Probationers) should be paid at the same rate as the regular pastor, who has all the business and work of the congregation to attend to. He must visit the sick in season and out of season; attend his weekly meetings; officiate at funerals; and work incessantly for the spiritual welfare of all around him; while, on the other hand, the Probationer, as a rule, does nothing except the Sabbath day work." "A Daniel come to judgment!" It is truly refreshing to find a young man of so many months' standing as "a regular pastor" so fully alive to a sense and the practice of his profession, and I hope my fellow-Probationers will charitably construe the foregoing sentiments, so far as applicable to us as a whole, by connecting them with their proper motives. But let me say, sir, in our own defence, that it is only when, as was the case with St. Andrew's when I was there, there are no sick to visit, no Bible class, no Sabbath School, no weekly meetings, no funerals to attend to, that they are not attended to, "in season and out of season," by Probationers "as a rule;" and sir, with all humility, by yours, etc.,

ALEXANDER BURR.

Komoka, April, 22nd, 1878.