

THE

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OUR HOME MISSIONS;—HOW CAN WE SUSTAIN THEM?

The friends of Canadian Home Missions are under obligation to our worthy Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. Dr. Wilkes, for affording them such definite fore-shadows of the coming crisis in our Missionary operations. The communication (see *Independent* for March, page 260) from the Colonial Missionary Society's Committee, under date of Dec. 4th, indicates the final adoption by that committee, of a principle, which if applied to the schedule of appropriations for the current year, would have broken up the existing pastoral relations of several of our most valued Missionaries, and hopelessly closed their respective fields of labour to our Society. This principle is termed the "*Sliding Scale*;" according to which, all stations that have received aid for five years, must be gradually dropped, at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum of the present grant, thus releasing the Society from them altogether, at the end of five years.

Against this principle, which has already, in former years, been tried and proved abortive, we shall hear a loud and decided protest, at our approaching Union Meeting, when according to present indications the whole question of Canadian Home Missions bids fair to engross our attention.

It is not a safe principle. Two reasons may at present suffice. First,—it encourages the very evil the Colonial Society's Committee are justly anxious to prevent. The pledged Missionary aid would amount to an endowment for a term of years. Churches might then reckon on Missionary assistance for several years longer than they do under the present system. We are not at present, pledged to any church for more than the current year. According to the proposed plan, however, the Churches would have a virtual pledge of *five years' aid*, instead of the current year's grant alone. They, at present, seldom apply, with the idea of renewing their applications for so long a term. The *amount* of aid granted, is not so important an element in the case, as the fact of a five years' grant (be it much or little) virtually pledged from the first. The utmost precaution has been taken, by our own general committee to preclude the idea that, as a matter of course, assistance will be continued. The tendency to lean upon the Missionary grant, as an endowment, would at least be doubled, were the five years' "*sliding scale*" adopted.

This method commends itself chiefly on one consideration, viz., that it fixes from the first, a date, when the beneficiary church will be dropped. But while this "*sliding scale*" provides a convenient way of letting down gently, the Missionary Churches and Pastors, it fails to educate, and help the former up to a self-sustaining status. Is it likely that the individual contributors will devise so liberally towards their Pastor's support, in response to a call for 20-