

THE NEW SUPPLEMENTING SCHEME.

(For the Maritime Presbyterian.)

For some years the subject of the better support of the ministry has been engaging the attention of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. At successive General Assemblies the matter has been carefully considered. There has been no difference of opinion in respect to the imperative need of improvement in every part of the Church, though all have not been able to see eye to eye with respect to the best means to be employed to secure the desired object. Many have contended earnestly for the adoption of the principle of sustentation, while others have urged that the supplementing principle is better suited to the condition of the Church, and more in harmony with the methods of her activity in the past. At the last meeting of Assembly the following deliverance was given upon the subject.

"The General Assembly is impressed with the duty of putting forth the most strenuous efforts for the better support of the ministry, so that if possible a minimum stipend of not less than seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750.00), with a manse shall be secured.

The Assembly deems it inexpedient to pronounce in favour of a supplementary, rather than a sustentation scheme, yet considering that our past working has been in the line of Supplement, the General Assembly instructs the H. M. Committee for the Western Section of the Church, and the Committee on Supplements in the Eastern Section, to use their best endeavours to put into operation the Scheme of Augmentation presented to the Assembly last year.

The Assembly thus hopes to 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 said Scheme of augmentation, or of preparing the way for the harmonious introduction of another Scheme, towards which our experience may be found to point.

Further, the Eastern and Western Committees are instructed to take measures to bring the whole subject of the support of the ministry before the several Presbyteries, and congregations of the Church in order to awaken such an interest in the matter as shall result in a large increase of the Funds available for carrying out the object of the Scheme."

In accordance with these instructions the Committees East and West are making vigorous efforts to secure such action as will at least in some measure meet the necessities of the case. They have examined carefully into the facts furnished by the statistics of the Church; they have arranged for the visitation of Presbyteries by deputies; they are in correspondence with all the Pastors; and they have taken measures with a view to have the matter laid before the Church generally, through the press as well as by the action of the Presbyteries.

But the question suggests itself, "Is there need for all the effort which the Church is inaugurating?" Let us see.

Confining attention just now exclusively to the Eastern Section, what are the facts with which the Church has to deal. There are within the bounds of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces about 180 organized congregations. Of these there are only about 60 which pay there pastor a salary of \$750. and a manse and upwards. In other words only about one-third of the congregations in the Synod are now at or above the minimum to be aimed at for all. This itself is a most significant fact.

Further, without attempting to classify the 16 congregations which have not furnished statistics for the last few years, there are 95 congregations which contribute less than \$750.00 and a manse of which 39 are under \$600.00 and a manse, besides six which strictly speaking are Home Mission congregations with settled Pastors. The average salary of these 95 congregations is about \$540. an amount regarded on all hands as altogether inadequate.

Now what is the proposal of the Assembly. It is to endeavour to raise the salary of each settled pastor to \$750.00 and a manse. By what means? Partly by increased contributions from each congregation directly to the support of its own pastor, and partly by assistance drawn from the Supplementary and Surplus Funds. But upon what terms and to what extent is it proposed that this aid should be given? There are two conditions which must be fulfilled by every congregation before it can receive any assistance whatever from the general fund. In the first place it must provide from its own resources for its pastor's support, at least \$400. per annum and a manse besides contributing to the Schemes of the Church. In the second place its contributions towards salary must average \$4.50 per communicant, or \$4.50 per family in those congregations