

in these Provinces are suffering severely from the want of more young men ready for work; and the friends of Zion should lay it to heart. May the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into the harvest.

P. G. MCGREGOR.

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Historical Sketch of Gay's River and Milford Congregation.

BY REV. A. B. DICKIE.

The early settlers of Gay's River were of Scotch and Irish extraction and hence were trained and educated in Presbyterian principles. Though deprived of the stated ordinances of religion, in their adopted home which they enjoyed in the fatherland, yet at an early period their spiritual wants received some attention.

About the beginning of the present century what now comprises the Gay's River and Milford congregation numbered about twenty families. Unable to support a minister they were united with Maitland, Noel, Shubenacadie, and Lower Stewiacke, and formed one charge known as the congregation of Douglas.

In the year 1802 Rev. Alexander Dick came out from Scotland and was ordained and inducted over them on the 21st June, 1803. He travelled over a district of country upwards of forty miles in length which embraced what is now four congregations. Residing at Maitland and preaching there one-half of his time the other half was given to Shubenacadie and Gay's River, the latter place usually having a week day service. The comparatively smooth roads of the present day were then unknown hence his mode of conveyance in summer was the boat or canoe on the Shubenacadie River, and in winter the horse and saddle were used.

As a preacher, Mr. Dick was earnest and faithful, a man of deep toned piety, who spared not himself in his Master's service. The hardships and toils which

the pioneers of Presbyterianism had to undergo are to a large extent unknown to the present generation of ministers. He possessed a good share of physical strength yet through ardent zeal and constant exposure he was at length laid aside from active duty.

Suffering from an attack of pleurisy from which he never rallied, he died at Maitland on the 20th May, 1812, in the 41st year of his age and the tenth year of his ministry. He was much beloved by all. Roman Catholics mourned his death and in some instances named their children for him.

The staff of elders in the upper part of the congregation was Messrs. William Dickie, Robert Pollock, James Moore, William Cook, and John McGregor.

After Mr. Dick's death the congregation remained vacant for a period of four years, and as there were no probationers to supply vacancies at that time, sermons were preached at long intervals by Rev. Hugh Graham of Stewiacke, Rev. John Brown of Londonderry, and Dr. McGregor of East River, Pictou.

In the meantime the extensive field over which Mr. Dick labored was formed into two congregations, Maitland, Noel, Kennetcook, etc., making one charge; and Shubenacadie, Gay's River, and Nine Mile River another. Over the former Rev. T. S. Crowe was settled, and the latter received the services of the Rev. Robert Blackwood.

Mr. Blackwood was a native of Kinross Shire, being born in the estate of Coldrain of which his father was proprietor. In the spring of 1816 he left his native land with a view to devote his energies in the Gospel of Christ, to the service of his expatriated countrymen in the state of Ohio, U. S. Landing in Halifax in July, 1816, he was persuaded by the fathers of the Church that there was as much need of ministerial labor in Nova Scotia as in Ohio, and he was induced to remain and cast in his lot here. In October he was inducted and each locality in the congregation enjoyed one-third of his services.