

Our Contributors.

A LIVELY INDUSTRY.

BY KNOXIAN.

The most lively business in Canada at the present time is prophesying. The prophet is abroad in the land. He tells us a great many things that he does not know. If he told us nothing but what he knows our interviews with him might be short. But when he travels in imagination over the next two months and tells us what all the ecclesiastical parliaments will do in June and what the electors will do on the 23rd day of that month, he occupies altogether too much of our time. A busy man might endure a modern prophet if we all had as many chances to make up for lost time as Methuselah had, but the limit of human life now is only three score and ten.

THE POLITICAL PROPHET.

"Sir Charles Tupper will sweep the country," says this prophet. Indeed I who told you so. Do you not know that an election is one of the most uncertain things in the world, and that this election seems more uncertain than any other that has ever been held in the Dominion. There are lines of cleavage in both of the old parties, but no human being can tell how many votes may be affected by these lines. No one knows at this date how many votes Mr. McCarthy can take from the Government nor how many the Patrons can take from both parties. The lines of cleavage may become distinct enough to be traced by an expert about the middle of June, but there is no man in Canada that can trace them now. Perhaps they can never be traced until the ballots are counted.

"Laurier will carry the country by fifty votes," says another prophet. Now don't be too sure about that. Perhaps he cannot carry it at all. The Hierarchy has to be reckoned with. Supposing the Catholic vote goes anything like solid for Remedial Legislation, Laurier may not have as many followers in the next Parliament as he had in the last one. The Roman Catholics may carry their religion to the polls, and some of the people who are not Catholics may leave theirs at home. If the priests have as much influence over their congregations as many Protestants think they have, Laurier may not have the ghost of a chance. A solid Catholic vote united to the straight Government vote, can bury any political leader in the country. But then the Catholics may not vote as a unit, and many anti-coercionists may get new light before polling day, and conclude that the Remedial Bill is after all not such a bad thing. Twenty-five years ago the Ultramontanes downed Sir George Cartier in Montreal, and they may down Laurier or any other man. Nobody can tell how much power Rome has, nor how much of it may be used in any given contest. Altogether this is a dangerous time to indulge in political predictions.

THE MAN WHO SPEAKS FOR THE PEOPLE.

The most amusing kind of a prophet is the man who speaks for the whole body of the people. With an air of omniscience he tells you that the people will do this and the people will do that, and the people will not do a third thing. Now, Mister, who told you what the people will do? The people do some peculiar things at times. For years we have been asked to look upon the people of Manitoba as in danger of suffering from Remedial Legislation. "Hands off Manitoba," has been a popular cry. Last June the Church courts left their usual work and gave a good deal of precious time to the Manitoba school question. The Third Party is based mainly on opposition to the Remedial Bill. A few days ago the Dominion Premier and one of his colleagues—both pledged to the eyes in favour of the Remedial Bill—went to Manitoba and a large number of the people received them, so some say, in much the same manner as a conqueror is received when he comes home "covered with the scars

of a hundred battles and crowned with the laurels of a hundred victories." Manifestly those good people who cheered the Premier and his colleagues are not suffering very acutely from the Remedial Bill. Coercion seems to agree with them. In fact it is a rather serious thing for a man to speak for "the people" because nobody can be very sure of what the people want to have said for them. How would it do to allow the people to speak for themselves? And when they do speak for themselves on the 23rd day of next June let nobody be surprised if the people of Manitoba by a majority decide in favor of Remedial Legislation. Just as funny things as that happened before now

IN THE CHURCH

We intended to have had a short discussion with the prophet who can tell you without any effort what the Church will do or will not do. What the General Assembly will do, what the Synod or Presbytery will do, what the congregation will do. This kind of a prophet is just about as exasperating as the political prophet. His chief characteristic is that he always tries to give a kind of pious fervor to his predictions. Time is up. The Church prophet must be attended to at some other time.

BRITISH COLUMBIA: ITS YOUNGEST MISSION STATION.—I.

BY REV. JOHN EWING WALLACE.

The wonderful town of Rossland, now the centre of attraction for the gold hunters in every part of the world, has been in existence less than a year. But as far back as the "sixties," gold was known to exist in the Kootenay District. This, however, was only in placer diggings (i.e., the gold was found in sand). Naturally enough, before long, some one argued that if gold were found in large quantities in the sand, it should also be found, only in still greater quantities, in the "rock strata." A careful examination was instituted and this theory was found to be correct; but the assay showed that the ore, being a sulphide and containing large quantities of silica proved itself so refractory in the furnace that the enormous cost of production prohibited further work. This was in 1889, when the "Le Roi," "War Eagle," "Centre Star," "Nickel Plate," and "Josie" mines, in the present town of Rossland, were first located.

In 1894, however, a new method of assay was discovered by Mr. J. L. Warner, mining engineer, with the result that the hitherto unworked Rossland and Trail Creek Mines woke up, one morning, like Byron, to find themselves famous. The process was this: The large proportion of iron in the Rossland and Trail Creek ores, proved itself of great value as a "flux," when combined in the smelters with the ores of Everett and Tacoma, Washington, and Butte and Helena, Montana. This led to a keen competition among these towns for a supply of Rossland and Trail Creek ores. Men in thousands flocked to Rossland, the gold fever throbbing in their veins; huts and cabins were built, shafts sunk; a town site laid out, and Rossland became an established fact in history.

The great bulk of Rossland and Trail Creek ores yield from \$3.00 or \$4.00 to \$16.00 or \$18.00 worth of gold on the surface. This, of course, is not a paying "proportion" when the ores have to be transported long distances to smelters, but would yield enormous returns if reduced to a "matte" in smelters at Rossland and Trail Creek. A large smelter has just been built at Trail Creek for this purpose and doubtless before long others will be built at Rossland.

What has established the camp on a sound basis is the fact that an immense tonnage has been shipped; that machinery of the best and newest kinds is employed; and that the ore in the lowest workings of the "Le Roi" (at 430 feet) yields as much as \$500.00 worth of gold per ton to-day; the "persistence" of great bodies of ore is

absolutely demonstrated, and its value increases with depth. When I add that a very large majority of "claims" located here give results far beyond the first showing of the "Le Roi" and "War Eagle" mines, it is not easy to disbelieve our American cousins, when they acknowledge that this is the greatest mining camp on the continent.

In the month of July, 1895, Mr. Hugh Robertson, a student in Manitoba College, came to Rossland, and began his work as pioneer missionary in the place. It is no flattery to the Christian spirit and living energy of the Presbyterian Church in the West to say that, they are always first in the field, where fighting and hard work have to be done. The great difficulties he had to overcome, the bitter disappointments he had to bear patiently, and the amount of endurance, physical and mental, he had to exercise are only known to himself. Living in a tent, sleeping in stores, or in any corner where he could find space to spread his blankets; holding services in half finished buildings while the carpenters plied their hammers over head, and a company of drunken miners gambled behind—are only mere trifles compared with the inconveniences he had to undergo, and which will never be known. When he spoke of building a small church and applied for a free lot, one of the "gentlemen" of the town replied, "We don't want no churches here; churches are the curse of this continent."

However, on some debateable ground, outside the town, and on the rocks overhanging it, a rough lumber church was erected. All the church-going people in the camp gave most willingly what they could towards payment of the building expenses. Many gave lumber and shingles; many gave several days work free; and all felt that it was a red letter day, indeed, in the calendar, when the church, destitute of windows and innocent of plaster or paper, was at length opened for public service on Sabbath. It stood on a high ledge of rock, thirty feet above the main road, which leads from the town level up the mountain side to the mines. A flight of twenty steps had to be built from the road up to the summit of the ledge on which the church stood. The building of this veritable "Jacob's Ladder" was accomplished by Mr. Hugh Robertson himself, with the assistance of a friend. And yet, when the work had been finished, the chief difficulty still remained. This was to induce the mass of the people to climb the steep rough mountain road, and ascend the "ladder" to the aerial position of the church. Those who had given of their substance, or who had "mixed their labor" in the undertaking, came willingly and regularly enough, but the majority "cared for none of these things." Meanwhile Mr. Robertson was sharing a rough lumber cabin with a watchmaker, doing the cooking and household work in return for his board—a very near approximation to St. Paul's boast of tent-making for his own support.

Besides his work in Rossland, Mr. Robertson visited all the camps in the vicinity: Trail Creek, the shipping port of Rossland, on the Columbia River, seven miles down the mountain and two thousand feet below Rossland; Wanoto, a small camp on the boundary line, twenty miles distant, and other smaller camps of prospectors, which have since been vacated. Finally, the watchmaker took unto himself a wife, and Mr. Robertson was compelled to sleep in a large furniture store, taking his meals in the restaurants and making his sermons as he walked to and fro over the mountains. This was in the month of September, and the cold weather was fast approaching. Mr. Robertson had to return to college and I arrived two days after his departure.

The furniture store I found no longer available as the "prophet's chamber," and ignorant of the art of cooking, and of western life generally, I was forced to board in the cheapest boarding house I could find. A Roman Catholic family gave me a small room without a stove, and for room and board, I paid \$30.00 per month. But the

nights and mornings were intensely cold, and the walls of the house so thin, that I could see daylight through the chinks between the boards. With the help of my sexton and an undertaker, I built a small lumber cabin behind my church, on its rocky perch. As soon as it was in the least degree habitable, I furnished it with a camp stove, pots and pans, dishes, a small folding bed, and a couple of chairs. This was my first experience of housekeeping; and my first attempts at cooking my own meals have since furnished the old country newspapers with many an amusing paragraph.

I now went to work to furnish my church for the winter. A floor was laid, cheese cloth and paper tacked on to the bare walls; a flue was built and a large stove put in. About this time a new church organ, coming as a gift from some kind friends in Paris Presbytery, completed our church furnishing, and we felt ready for our winter's work. We were very few in numbers, but we felt very proud of our little church, and although I got a free offer of the town hall, in which to hold my services when the heavy snow should come, and the road up to the church become impassable to women and children, the people could not enter into the idea of leaving the church they had labored so hard to build. So, for better or for worse, in sunshine or storm, in moonlight or darkness, we resolved to keep the church open. We felt that it was our own, and already a feeling of home had begun to cling around it.

During the winter, up to the present month, all has gone well; the church has always been well filled, and though many may have fallen at different times in the dark nights on the icy rocks at the top of the ladder, no one has ever complained. No doubt we have lost many a large congregation on Sunday nights, by not holding our services in the town hall, which is situated in the very centre of the main street of the town, but what we have lost in one way, we have gained in another and better way. The difficulty and danger of climbing up to our church, on its lofty and wind-rocked perch, on a dark night, have helped greatly to foster a deep devotion in the breasts of Presbyterians to what is, as yet, a weak cause.

Spring, now fast approaching, finds us united, enthusiastic, and determined to make our church an influence for good in this new and rather irreligious town. Sunday here among the miners and storekeepers is just the same as any other day. If a man employed in the mines refuses to work on Sunday, he is instantly paid off. The shops and saloons are open, doing business just as on other days; and on the streets, ore teams drive back and forth, lumber is hauled, and building goes on as though Moses were a myth and the Decalogue had never been proclaimed. An effort has been made to enforce the law as to Sunday closing of the "bars," but as yet, only the front doors have been closed. Church influence is beginning to be felt, and by and by we hope to make it the controlling power of the town. There are four churches here now: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist and Presbyterian. So if we do not begin to make our weight tell speedily, it will be a disgrace to all of us.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

BY K.

The ancient capital, Quebec, has assumed its summer garb, and fully as early as usual navigation has opened, and soon the noble river will be covered with ships. It was said that several ships were awaiting the moving of the ice bridge, which event took place two days ago. There was quite an excitement, when, on Friday, the ice was noticed to be moving down and there were some half-dozen of people crossing on foot, among whom were one or two ladies, who had narrow escapes. One man had to be taken into a canoe, and conveyed