

SARNIA METHODISM

three other chiefs met with them and the missionary company stated the object of their mission, viz. "to bring the gospel to the people of the tribe."

The four chiefs listened with close attention, and promised to bring it before their head chief, who resided on Walpole Island.

Withdrawing to the forest, the missionary company held a class meeting, to which as onlookers, Chief Wawanosh and others came, to see how the whites worshiped the Great Spirit.

At five o'clock a regular service was conducted, Chief Wawanosh and his people, together with a number of French squatters, the first white people on the ground, attending.

Peter Jones, the leader of the missionary band conducted the service. He preached first to the Indians in their native tongue and then to the French. The Chief was much pleased and said—"If the others will become Christians, I will." Thus was Methodism and Protestantism introduced into this locality, for the missionary company were Methodists, sent by the Church to "spy out the land."

The members of this pioneer missionary company were—Peter Jones (in charge), Wm. Herkimer, Thos. Magee, Thos. Smith, Sr., Alex. Chief, John Thomas, one whose name is not given, and two ladies, Miss Barnes and Miss Edwards.

At intervals other Methodist missionaries visited these parts, and preached to the Indians, and the advance scouts of incoming settlers, as yet few and far between, but no definite appointment by the conference was made, and no regular church organization attempted until 1832.

THE FIRST APPOINTMENT

"The World is my Parish."—J. Wesley.

The Indians gathered together on the St. Clair Reserve in 1829, had as their first government agent, Wm. Jones, whose records begin June 1st, 1831, and are a priceless compendium of our early history. The office was then fixed at Baldoon.

His first entry recommends "a man by name of Harris at Caradoc, as a fit person to be a teacher to the Indians. He is a Methodist, and in the habit of preaching occasionally."

"St. Clair, Aug. 13, 1831. As the school house will in course be required to perform Divine Service in, I think if the end door should be made a little larger than common and fold in the centre, in the form of a Church door, it would improve the looks of the building."

"Mr. Harris and family arrived on March 3, 1832."