

the United States are writing glowing accounts of it. Nothing need be said to your readers regarding Victoria and New Westminster, but of other portions of the province it may not be out of place to speak.

Burrard's Inlet or Vancouver City, where the Rev. T. G. Thomson is about to be located, is the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The soil in the vicinity is described as being rich, and already there are many farms under cultivation. That it is a suitable point for an ocean terminus for the Railway will be at once admitted, when it is stated that over 1,000 ships have loaded at the saw mills inside the inlet, with scarcely an accident going in or coming out. Coal Harbour, about two miles distant, which has been chosen by the C. P. R. as their terminal harbour, is described as magnificent—well sheltered, and leaving nothing to be desired in the requirements of a sea-board terminus for a trans-continental line—navigation, sea room, anchorage, mooring, dockage, wharfage, and large suitable land area adjoining. Port Moody, which is about four miles distant, and which at one time was chosen as the terminus of the railroad, has now been abandoned as the chief commercial and railway centre, although it will always be an important point. It is a snug clear harbour, about three miles long and one and a half miles wide, and will be useful as an adjunct to Burrard's Inlet harbour proper. It is not, in itself, naturally suitable for a terminal harbour, having to be reached through two narrows, and is deficient in commodiousness and extent of suitable adjoining land area, although it possesses certain advantages that may make it a useful adjunct in the near future. That the Home Mission Committee have acted wisely in providing able supply at once for Vancouver City, your readers will I am sure endorse. As regards the actual field for farming, a competent authority says:—

On evidence which I cannot doubt, the following exceptional yields seem to be authentic—three tons of timothy per acre in the twelfth consecutive crop, eighty bushels of wheat, also sixty-two bushels of fall wheat per measured acre. As the average on several well-tilled farms, the following may be noted: wheat, forty bushels per acre; oats, sixty to sixty-five; barley, forty; timothy, three to three and a half tons; turnips, forty to fifty tons. The roots are enormous, potatoes and vegetables, with squashes, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, and tomatoes, also varieties of corn, do very well. Hops are a good crop. The ordinary fruits of a temperate climate grow large and fine in all parts of the district. I saw a two pound pear, a one and a half pound apple, and an eight ounce plum.

The *New Westminster District* is not merely an arable or dairying district, but is filled with salmon-canning factories and with lumbermen. Silver lodes exist in many localities, and minerals of all kinds abound in the province. It will thus be seen that there is a great future before such a district possessed of such a soil and climate, and so well supplied with communications by railway and seaboard. While, as a farming country, it may never reach what Manitoba is, it offers great inducements to men of some means and has in it all the elements of solid and permanent progress.

Of the *Yale District*, the Kamloops Valley, and the Kootenay district I have not space to speak. But, from all accounts, these localities offer inducements not behind the more populous centres of Victoria and New Westminster, and call for speedy action on the part of our Church. What we have long desired in British Columbia—one strong Presbytery, able to take the oversight of the entire Province—is likely soon to be realized. The Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, with ourselves, are earnestly desirous for a union of their ministers with ours, and recognize that we are in a better position than they are to supervise the field. Whether this most desirable consummation shall be reached during the present year or not is uncertain, but in any case the Presbyterian Church in Canada is now regarded as the one to whom Presbyterians in new fields must look for supply of Gospel ordinances.

While entering with new vigour upon British Columbia, we dare not neglect *Manitoba* and the *North-West*. What we have gained there must be held. That in so short a time we should have three good Presbyteries, in that recently "unknown land," is surely worthy of grateful mention. In a review of our Church work, published in Winnipeg on the 1st of January, we find the following record:—

	1871.	1884.
Congregations and mission stations	9	273
Ministers and missionaries	4	92
Families	198	6,000
Contributions for all religious purposes	\$2,195	\$89,085

This rapid growth has been largely during the last three years. In that time the church has more than doubled her membership and families, quintupled her Sabbath schools, more than trebled her churches, and increased her manse fourfold. Although immigration received a decided check last summer, eight new fields were occupied. Missionaries were sent to Fort MacLeod, Fort Saskatchewan, Medicine Hat, Yorkton, Cathcart, Touchwood, Elkhorn, and the Shell River country. In connection with these fields there are twenty-three mission stations. During the summer of 1883 fourteen new fields with seventy-one stations were opened up.

In the *Prince Albert District*, we find from recent letters sent by Mr. McWilliam, our able minister at that point, that the people there, however willing, will not be able this year to meet the demands made upon them to support religious ordinances.

The crops throughout the district are almost a total failure so much so that their only hope is that the Dominion Government will provide seed wheat and oats to enable the farmers to put in a crop next spring. Without this help there is a certainty of a famine in one district in the winter of 1885-86. The bulk of farming population are in impoverished circumstances, they owe money which they cannot pay, and many of them are forced to kill their cattle to provide food and necessities for their families to carry them over the winter.

In spite of this we are glad to see that the High School at Prince Albert is now an accomplished fact. Messrs. McWilliam and Sinclair have taken hold of the new enterprise, and are meeting with considerable favour. The local papers speak of the proposed school and the kindly aid promised by our Church in most flattering terms.

I have, Mr. Editor, extended these remarks beyond what I intended. In closing let me express the hope that the wealthier members of our Church will avail themselves of the privilege now offered of giving liberally to the funds of the Home Mission Committee, that the many calls made upon us, not only by the newer provinces, but by Ontario and Quebec, may be promptly met. Commerce is in many places far from prosperous, but our Church has the means to meet all our requirements if only there is the heart to give. Contributions for Augmentation and Home Missions should be in the hands of Dr. Reid by the 15th of March.

WILLIAM COCHRANE, *Convener*.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

MR. EDITOR,—Till I very recently discovered my partial mistake, I thought that the practice of Presbyteries in sending Commissioners to the General Assembly was uniform, and that one half was chosen in rotation from the Roll and that the other half was chosen by ballot. This, I believe, is the sound principle; as it sufficiently recognizes the ecclesiastical equality of pastors, and at the same time gives Presbyteries the power of electing men who fairly represent their views, and who by ability, experience, and long service in the Church are qualified and entitled to take part in the deliberations of its highest judicatory. In favour of this arrangement the following things may be stated:

1. It tends to preserve the continuity and character of the General Assembly. Were all commissioners elected by rotation from the Roll, the General Assembly would never acquire a distinctive character at all, and one Assembly might undo the work of its predecessor, and in turn have its actings set aside by its successor. Administrative experience and skill would be lost, if ever acquired. Besides, in many cases, the standing committees of the Church might not be adequately represented, which would be a very great loss.

2. It maintains, to a certain extent, the right of Presbyteries to select their own representatives. Were Presbyteries to send all their members by rotation, they would entirely surrender this right, and they might find their views altogether misrepresented, or so far as efficient advocacy is concerned, not represented at all. Presbyteries proceeding on this principle would be placed at a decided disadvantage, as the great majority of Presbyteries endeavour to send as many as possible of their ablest men. Were Presbyteries to consult their own influence and standing in the church, they would choose all their Commissioners by ballot; and were this choice wisely made the General Assembly would more fully represent the collective wisdom and experience of the Church than it has ever hitherto done. In view of these obvious facts, the appointment of one-half of the commis-

sioners from the Roll is the greatest concession to ecclesiastical parity that Presbyteries can afford to make consistently with their own interests.

3. The choice of one half of the commissioners by ballot enables the Church, so far probably as is expedient, to secure and utilize the best gifts that her ministry possesses. I admit most cheerfully the ecclesiastical equality of our ministers; but I deny emphatically that this equality extends to learning, prudence, experience, and capacity of work and administration. It is a misfortune when the plea of equality is pressed beyond its legitimate sphere. In a large church there is a great variety of work to be done, and there is a great variety of gifts. It is only when the gifts which the Church possesses are fully utilized that she can attain the full measure of efficiency. When petty jealousies interfere with the placing of men in spheres to which they are adapted and entitled, the Church must suffer grievous loss. This is a matter that is much to be deplored in the Presbyterian Church, Methodist and Prelatic Churches succeed in utilizing the gifts they possess far more fully than we can do.

It is true that more of our younger and less experienced men may seem to be partially and temporarily overlooked; but their time will certainly come, when they shall have acquired the necessary qualifications, and when those of riper years and experience shall have rested from their ecclesiastical labours. Let us not envy, but value, one another's gifts and acquirements; let us feel that we have a common interest in the welfare of the Church; and let us strive to utilize fully all the talents, experience, and energy which the great Head of the Church has intrusted to us. VIATOR.

Toronto, February 12, 1885.

BELFAST TOWN MISSION.

MR. EDITOR,—A few months ago, you kindly inserted for me a historical sketch of the Belfast Presbyterian Town Mission. In a recent number of the *Belfast Northern Whig*, I find the annual report for 1884, from which I have extracted a few items in the hope that similar organizations may soon be set up in Toronto and other Canadian cities. Your readers may remember that Dr. Cooke and Dr. Morgan co-operated with influential laymen in establishing the Town Mission. Other ministers joined heartily in the blessed enterprise till, in 1867, there were thirteen town missionaries besides twenty settled pastors. Nearly the same proportion of ministers and missionaries is still maintained. There are at present six agents of the Town Mission; and the number of pastors is over thirty.

The management of the mission is in the hands of a joint committee of Presbyterian ministers and laymen. A tea meeting is held once a month, at which the missionaries report the work they have done to the directors. At the late annual meeting the chair was taken by Sir David Taylor, Mayor of Belfast. Interesting addresses were delivered by members of Parliament and other distinguished laymen, as well as by resident and other clergymen. The statistics are as follow:

Number of agents sixteen. Number of visits paid in "house to house" visitation, 46,000; number of meetings held, 4,000; families added to the Church by the agency of the Home Mission, 174; children in the mission Sabbath school, 3,400; Expenditure, £1,524=\$7,000; Salary of each agent, about \$500. Four fifths of the income are derived from congregational collections—the remaining fifth is obtained from bequests to the mission. At the close of the proceedings, Mr. John S. Browne, J. P., offered £100 for every Free Church that may be erected.

Is it not possible, Mr. Editor, that a similar work might be done in Toronto? There are both men and means available. May the Lord hasten it in his own way!

W. HAMILTON.

THE anniversary services of Bridgen Church were held on the 1st ult., when able and impressive sermons were preached morning and evening by Rev. J. Thompson, of Sarnia, in large and appreciative congregations. The annual tea meeting was held on Monday evening following, the Rev. J. A. McDonald, pastor of the congregation, presided. Rev. J. Thompson, Rev. M. Fraser, Rev. C. Tibb, and Rev. G. Kew (Methodist) delivered interesting addresses. Excellent music was furnished by the choir of the congregation, and Burns Church Glee Club. The most enjoyable tea-meeting ever held in Bridgen was brought to a close by pronouncing the Benediction. Proceeds of anniversary, \$120. A New Year's entertainment in connection with the Sabbath school of the above church was held on the evening of January 7. A good programme was furnished. Receipts of the evening, \$45.