

tions are as clay in the potter's hand, and continue to be moulded and fashioned by their religious leaders.

THE FRENCH NATIONAL SPIRIT.

The question of nationality also plays an important part. The French-Canadians have been taught for generations that their nationality and their religion are inseparably bound together. To lose the one is to lose the other. To lose their nationality means to lose their language, traditions, customs, laws. With the French people, English and Protestant are synonymous; and although loyal, they are intensely attached to their nationality. They look with suspicion at anything which will disintegrate their nationality. And they are taught that Protestantism is a disintegrating agent. The priests are not slow to foster this national prejudice. Hence the hold which they have on their people.

IGNORANCE OF THE MASSES.

Another very effectual hindrance to our work is the dense ignorance which prevails among the rural populations. Education has always been controlled by the clergy of the R.C. church. And they have chosen for the people a system of education which does not educate. Children who have attended school four or five years come out with a fair knowledge of the Catechism and the church prayers. But their intellect is intact. It has not been touched by the breath of knowledge. It is quite a feat in after life to be able to sign one's name. A few years ago a bill was introduced in the Provincial Legislature making it compulsory for School Trustees to be able to read. I am not quite sure if writing was also required. At any rate the bill was thrown out on the plea that if it were allowed to pass, some municipalities would be unable to secure school trustees. Peradventure there would not be found three men in the municipality who would come up to the standard.

Because of this illiteracy of the masses our colporteurs do not sell as many copies of the Scriptures as they would otherwise do. They often meet with people who would read the Word, but cannot. And this obstacle stands not only at the initial stage of our contact with the people—it is found further on. It is somewhat difficult to convey spiritual ideas to people who have always dealt

in the concrete. Spiritual worship is well nigh meaningless to those who have been taught by symbols, beads, scapularies, crucifixes. Hence the objection we often hear, that our churches are naked. We have no images, no crosses, no holy water, no incense, no tapers. We have nothing to feed the senses. The common people are slow to understand and to practice a worship which is in spirit and in truth.

Besides these general obstacles to the progress of the work, there are some special ones, such as the boycott to which our converts are subjected, social ostracism, the loss of their neighbors' respect, of their relatives' affection, persecution in various forms. All these are sufficient to make a man think twice before forsaking the multitude to cast his lot with the despised few.

SOME RESULTS OF THE WORK.

Yet, in spite of these difficulties and many others known to those engaged in this work, the progress of our missions has been constant, the results encouraging, and the present outlook is hopeful. Statistics might be given to show that numerical progress of a most encouraging nature has been made. We have to-day 93 mission stations, a Sabbath attendance of 2,415, 928 families, 1,079 church members, 990 pupils in our Sabbath schools. In our Mission schools there is an attendance of 809 pupils.

But these statistics fail to give an idea of actual results. They are far below the mark. They have been gathered from the missionaries of our Board. But there are many families and individuals who are no longer under the care of our missionaries. Thousands of them have removed to the United States. Hundreds of them are scattered throughout the Dominion, in places where we have no missionaries. There are few English-speaking churches in Montreal and in the Province which have not worshipping with them, and in active membership, some French-Canadian converts. They have gone thither, drawn by the attraction of the larger body, by family ties, by inter-marriages, by many causes which operate to the loss of our mission churches, but to the gain of the church at large.

It is a reasonable estimate which places at 25,000 the number of French converts. They are to be found in all the walks of life,