

of his life should be published. Dr. Neesima is married but has no children. He ranks, officially, as a "corresponding member" of the American Board and is the President of the educational institution we have been describing. Amherst College gave him the degree of LL.D. last year. His health is not good, yet he is able to do much in connection with his new scheme for the University in which many of his countrymen are taking a deep interest, and which is certain to exercise a very powerful and beneficial influence on the present and future generations of the 'Sunrise Kingdom.'

Presbyterianism on the Prairie.

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE.

THIS rising town is situated on the main line of the C.P. railway, 56 miles west of Winnipeg, on a plain of large extent and phenomenal fertility. The district known as the "Portage Plains" is acknowledged to be one of the best wheat growing districts in the country, and is perhaps unexcelled anywhere in the world. The four large grain elevators, which, together with the "Assineboine Mills," form so conspicuous a feature in the landscape, bear emphatic testimony to the wonderful capacity of the soil, and the extent to which it has already been brought under cultivation.

The first white settler, other than missionaries, came here in 1860. The growth was slow for several years, and when incorporated as a town, in 1879, there were perhaps not more than one hundred inhabitants. On the approach of the railway it experienced a time of unhealthy inflation, still spoken of as the "boom," followed in due time by the inevitable reaction. It has again by a steady, healthy growth, reached a population of fully 3,000, which would undoubtedly be greater but for the lack of house accommodation. It is fast becoming an important railway centre. Already three independent companies operate their roads, and the prospects are good for one or two additional lines within the present year. *The Public School* is a large and handsome brick building accommodating easily 500 pupils. A most efficient principal and staff of teachers are doing a noble work. *Lansdowne College* affords excellent facilities for

the study of the higher branches of education. The *Home for Incurables* is nearing completion. There are four Banking institutions, a Lands Title office, three weekly newspapers and hotel accommodation, more than ample. The Protestant denominations are nearly all represented, and the few Roman Catholic families in the town and neighborhood are ministered to by occasional supplies from Winnipeg.

In 1851, a Church of England Mission was founded for half-breeds and Indians, by Archdeacon Cochrane. Rev. Mr. Robertson broke ground on behalf of the Methodist body about 1870; the Baptists began in 1880; the Deciples in 1883, and the Congregationalists in 1888. The Presbyterian cause was started here in the fall of 1868, when the Rev. Mr. Fletcher came to the settlement as a missionary of the *Canada Presbyterian Church*. Service was held in the house of Mr. Kenneth McBain, on the River Road, until a log church was built in the summer of 1872. For a few years Rev. Alex. Fraser ministered to the united charge of Portage la Prairie and Burnside. In July, 1875, Rev. Allan Bell was ordained to the work of the ministry and was placed over the united charge. The congregation had then a membership of fifteen, but under Mr. Bell's fostering care it grew to be a large and influential body of people. In 1881 Mr. Bell's whole services were confined to the Portage, when a handsome edifice was built by the congregation. In 1885 the church was destroyed by fire, and was replaced during the following year by the present building, which occupies a more central position. In September, 1888, Mr. Bell accepted a call from a congregation in the State of Wisconsin. The vacancy thus caused continued until last July, when the writer, formerly of Stratford, accepted a call and was duly inducted. The church has since been enlarged by the addition of 230 sittings, and now affords ample accommodation for 650 people. The membership is rapidly increasing and is just a little short of 300. The Sabbath-school and Bible-class have an average attendance of 300, with a roll of about 350.

It is characteristic of this country that our young people take a deeper interest in church work than those in the older portions of our Dominion do, and are more easily retained in our Sunday-schools and Bible-classes. May this feature be as abiding as it is hopeful and cheering. For if the noble class of young people can be won for Christ, their influence will tell with grand effect in moulding the moral and spiritual future of this great land. Thus will our church have a heroism equal to her strength, a consecration commensurate with her resources, and a zeal to match her mighty opportunities.

PETER WRIGHT.