

## S. W. MANITOBA AND S. E. ASSINOBOIA.

MISSION NOTES BY REV. DR. ROBERTSON.

THE construction of the railway from Brandon south-west to Melita, and then to the coal fields at East Steven, has opened up an important section of country. The settlers were struggling for years owing to distance from railways although they had good crops several years. Prospects have brightened wonderfully since they can purchase fuel at a cheap rate, and get a market for their grain.

*Napinka* is the junction of this line with the line that passes through the Pembina Mt. district; and being surrounded by a good farming country, and the end of a railway division, with its shops, etc., it promises to become a good town. Services are conducted in a roomy hall, but a church should be built ere long. The district under the care of the missionary is wide but efficient service is done.

The Sabbath I visited the mission, the thermometer registered 32° below zero, and yet there was a large congregation present. In going to an evening service the horses left the trail in the storm, brought the sleigh in sharp collision with a boulder and smashed the whiffletrees. Mr. Thompson, the missionary, mounted one of the horses and rode some distance for other whiffletrees; but they would not suit. By the use of tie-reins, etc., the broken trees were "fixed" and the journey resumed and the service held. The return journey was made without difficulty.

*Melita* is the next mission and here the Rev. Joseph White, formerly of Ottawa, is missionary, and supplies three stations. Last year the congregation built a church and a manse, and besides did well for the support of ordinances. This town has a desirable location on the Souris river, and the congregation promises growth.

*Pierson* is 17 miles further on, and the mission is under the charge of Rev. J. Gilchrist. The field is difficult to work, but services are maintained with great regularity. A manse is being built at Pierson and a church should follow speedily. Services are now held in the school house.

*Gainsboro* is eight miles farther up the line, and comprises six stations with over 60 families. Queen's College Missionary Society supplied this field from the inception of the work, and it was fitting that the first ordained missionary should be from that institution. The Rev. Mr. Thompson has rendered faithful service altho' suffering from delicate health. The congregation has not yet built a church at the central station, but the subject is discussed.

*Carnduff* lies 16 miles westward, and is in charge of a student of Manitoba College. The field has four stations in a good farming district and the outlook is hopeful. Mr. Kemlo is much esteemed as a painstaking and conscientious missionary.

*Oxbow* is 20 miles west of Carnduff, the Rev. T. R. Scott being the pastor. The mission has so grown under Mr. Scott's charge that he has had to get an assistant.

*Alameda* is associated with Oxbow, and the two will make a strong charge. A church will soon be built at Oxbow while a good hall is available at Alameda. Until last spring the Queen's Society cared for this mission and Mr. Scott hails from the limestone university.

Between Alameda and Estevan is a distance of about 34 miles, but the country is but sparsely settled.

Near Hirsch is a Jewish colony, the members of which are expected to become successful farmers. We have our doubts, judging by what has happened elsewhere. The Jew is more of a parasite than a producer in the west—and elsewhere. Estevan is the coal town, and it is to form the junction between the Souris railway and the Soo line. A good deal of coal is being mined, and although the quality as yet does not rank high, yet it burns well, throws out a good deal of heat and promises to furnish cheap fuel.

Mr. F. H. Russell, a student of Manitoba College, is in charge, and acceptably supplies not only Estevan but a number of other points south and east. Estevan has a promising future although there is little farming land to the west. Coal mining, the C.P.R. shops and the farming land to the east and south will, however, support a good town. Preparations for building are to be made without delay. Here an ordained missionary should be placed as soon as Mr. Russell leaves for college.

Estevan, Oxbow, Carnduff and Gainsboro' belong to the Presbytery of Regina, while Pierson, Melita, Napinka, belong to the Presbytery of Rock Lake. Since the members of the Presbytery of Regina must pass through the Presbyteries of Rock Lake and Brandon to attend meetings of the Presbytery, and since the Presbytery of Rock Lake is over 160 miles from east to west it is clear another Presbytery should be erected in that country; and if suitable missionaries are got for the fields requiring them, this Presbytery would become strong in a very few years.

A trip through such a section will impress a few things strongly on the mind. The settlers are largely young men, they are anxious to have ordinances dispensed among them, and they contribute liberally according to their means for church work. Help must, however, be given them to erect places of worship and to support ordinances for a few years. Is there any better investment of mission money than in establishing missions among such people? Suitable missionaries and a little means for a start and the way is clear. The occupation of four fields we owe to the summer session, and over twenty more at other points are supplied in the same way.