



STEAMER ON THE ATHABASCA RIVER.

of Edmonton. Crossing this river by a good bridge, the road continues along a slightly depressed valley through a very promising section of country, in which the C.P.R. have taken up a good many of their alternate sections. It is well wooded, well watered, with swamps often expanding into small but pleasing lakes.

As we advance northward, the country becomes more hilly, but offering large areas of good cultivatable land, with the advantage of abundance of wood, hay, and water.

About half-way the road passes over a series of sandy ridges covered with tamarac and pine, and abounding, in season, with berries.

At this point the ridge dividing the watersheds of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers is crossed. This passed, the road winds once more along the north side of a valley to the Towatonow River. Somewhere here we enter the diocese of Athabasca.

About fifteen miles south of the Athabasca River, the road ascends until a long, stony ridge is gained, from which there are distant views of the hills, sometimes mountainous in their proportions, among whose valleys flows the first of the three great northern rivers that drain the immense watershed of the Arctic Ocean. Travelling along this ridge, as I have often done, late in the evening of a day in early June, and gazing on the outer edge of that vast trend of country reaching to the shores of the Arctic, over 2,000 miles away, there is something so luminous in the northern sky, it requires no stretch of imagination to realize that one is standing at the very portal of the land of the *unsettling* sun, of which, for a brief period, it may be said, "There is no night there." Would that this sentence were true of the moral and spiritual condition of its inhabitants! On the contrary, the messenger of the Gospel of peace knows too well the deep, urgent need that exists for its faithful proclamation. Leaving the ridge, the road just touches a long valley, and, passing an unfinished settler's house, descends into the valley of the Athabasca River at a point known as the Athabasca Landing. This is the shipping place for all parts of the great Northwest that lies beyond.

From this point an almost unbroken series of

waterways branch throughout a region of vast extent and great capabilities, the main arteries being the three great northern rivers, the Athabasca, Peace, and Mackenzie Rivers. Here the Hudson Bay Co. have a large warehouse, and from this point the steamer "Athabasca" starts with outfits either up the river with goods for Lesser Slave Lake and the Upper Peace River, or down to the Grand Rapids with freight for Chipewyan, for the Lower Peace River, and for their posts on Great Slave Lake, along the vast stretches of the Mackenzie River, and for trade with the Esquimaux of the Arctic shore. A little to the west of the Hudson Bay establishment is the rendezvous of what, by a funny distinction, are termed "free-traders."

Here the Government, by the advice of Dr. Selwyn, have started a trial boring for petroleum. The indications, I understand, up to the time when they had to close down for winter, were good.

The old northern route by Carlton and Green Lake having been abandoned since 1885, it is from here that all missionaries of our Church for the north embark—a suitable word, to express the condition of things; for at this point roads cease, and at present, except for a very poorly defined trail along the northern bank of the Athabasca, and gradually diverging toward Lesser Slave Lake, the only possible travel is by water.

At this point a small band of missionaries of our Church gathered last May with the bishop. It consisted of the Rev. Charles Weaver, awaiting an opportunity to reach the mission opened among the Indians at Wabiskaw. Mr. Weaver, formerly a graduate of Wycliffe College, was appointed last year in charge of Alexander, in the diocese of Rupert's Land, and was ordained deacon by the archbishop, October, 1893. His wish, however, to give himself for work among the Indians was last year accomplished. Mr. W. G. White, from the diocese of Calgary, where he had been teacher at the Indian schools both among the Sarcees and Blackfeet; a Mr. F. H. Killick, accompanying the bishop on his journey, and subsequently accepting school work at the Athabasca Landing for the winter; Miss Margaret Dartnell, from the Deaconess Home, Toronto, sent out by the Toronto Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary in the capacity of matron to the Indian Home at Lesser Slave Lake, under Mrs. Holmes; Miss Thompson, from London, Ont., on her way to undertake school work at Chipewyan; and Miss Herbert, to be married to Rev. A. J. Warwick, of St. Luke's Mission, Vermilion.

Leaving Mr. Weaver to descend the Athabasca on a scow to a point on the left bank, from which, by a series of portages, lakes, and rivers, he could make his way to Wabiskaw, and Miss Thompson to take her passage in the "Athabasca" to the Grand Rapids, en route for