

## A Day with Epworth Leaguers in New Ontario

BY REV. J. H. HAZELWOOD, D.D.

"WHEN did you come in?" This was the innocent looking question asked me by a sun-burned farmer, at an Epworth League picnic in Uno Park, a small village situated in the far-famed Great Clay Belt of New Ontario. We were out in the bush, and round about us was a merry throng of fun-loving young people, representing the two Epworth Leagues of the New Liskeard district. To understand the question, as well as its counterpart, "When are you going out?" One needs to know something of the "lay of the land." After leaving North Bay, on the T. and N. O. Railway, which, by the way, is a comfortable line on which

large band-wagon, drawn by four good horses, and presented quite an imposing appearance. The springs of the wagon were a little weak, but what they lacked in rigidity the axles possessed in abundance. It was a splendid preparation, that eight mile drive, for the bountiful supper that was spread for us. We had a careful driver, a fairly good turn-piked road and agreeable company, so that the journey was not the least enjoyable part of the day's outing.

Here we are in the woods. "This is the forest primeval." "How beautiful is a day in June." But this was not June. It was August.

Well, never mind, the day was beautiful. That is the point. We are on historic ground. The history may not be very ancient but it is history all the same. In yonder house, the home of the man who owns this farm, the first Methodist sermon in New Ontario, was preached by the Rev. William Blair, but little more than a decade ago. To day, the New Liskeard district is made up of eleven circuits and missions, and has a church membership of nearly five hundred. Earlier in the day willing hands had cleared away the underbrush and fallen timbers. Tables were erected, swings, refreshment booth, etc., all the paraphernalia of an up-to-date picnic. And the people enjoyed themselves too. With that heartiness and sociability that invariably characterizes the settler in a new land, all distinctions were set aside, and each seemed to vie with the other in helping all to have a good time. Games were indulged in by young and old. Everybody was out for a good time. They all laughed and were happy. Supper was announced and all sat down to an appetizing spread of good things. Mistresses of domestic science these women of the north most certainly are.

The programme that followed would have done credit to any similar gathering in any other part of the world. Music by a well-trained orchestra, well rendered solos and recitations, and some short addresses, all presided over by the genial and energetic Chairman of the New Liskeard district, Rev. A. P. Latter, brought a day of most delightful enjoyment to a close.

What a loyal and devoted band these Methodist people are! They love their country and they love their church.

Pioneers they are, and the work of the pioneer they are faithfully doing. I attended a meeting of an official board on one of the missions on a hot afternoon. Some had come long distances on foot, others in lumber wagons, but all were there to plan for aggressive work "for Christ and the Church." Coming generations may forget the names of these noble men, but the work will abide in the enlarging kingdom, whose foundations they are laying in New Ontario. The work that has been, and is being done, is but the promise and prophecy of what is to come. Ere another ten years passes, this great clay belt will be the home of tens of thousands of people cultivating the soil and following various other pursuits. The railway is being pushed rapidly northward, opening up the country, and bringing in new settlers. Just as rapidly must the missionary press forward if the church is to keep pace with the country's progress. The people in this new land need the heavenly power of the old gospel. Nothing can take its place. With such consecrated and earnest men as Latter, Hudson, MacKenzie, McNeill, Pickering, Bury, Haggarty and Halbert, to carry the standard of Methodism, the religious life of New Ontario will not be neglected. And yet, more men are needed. That means more money. Dear Epworth Leaguers, shall we not rally round our great "Forward Movement" with an enthusiasm and devotion that will conquer this country for Christ?

Toronto Junction, Ont.



A NEW ONTARIO PICNIC

Rev. Dr. Hazelwood is sitting on the right, second from the end. Immediately behind him is Rev. A. P. Latter, Chairman of the New Liskeard District.

to travel, the train runs a very few miles before all attempts at farming and all appearances of a "settlement" are left behind. From that on, a few lumbermen's camps, and the beautiful Tamagami station, which is rapidly becoming the starting point of the tourist on one of the most delightful of canoe trips, is all that is seen to remind one of human life, until the train pulls into Latchford, having covered a distance of more than ninety miles from North Bay. This stretch of country forms what might be called the "great divide" between Old and New Ontario, and it is in passing through this territory that one sees that the question "When did you come in?" is no mere figure of speech.

What a country this is! Here we are, three hundred and fifty miles north of Toronto, and farming operations are being carried on successfully by settlers who have come in from the south. The air is clear and bracing, and one feels an exhilaration that is not experienced in more southerly latitudes. The soil, a white clay, the settlers say, is not hard to cultivate and produces good crops. In its natural condition, it is covered with heavy timber, and much hard work is necessary to prepare the ground for cultivation. But these sons of the south have set themselves to work, with a determination that admits of no defeat, and to make this one time "wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose." And they are going to do it too. Occasionally there are those who have only words of discouragement. The great snow fall in winter and the extreme cold have led them to conclude, as one old lady said to me, "This is no country for white people, it's only fit for wolves and Indians." Be that as it may, I found that most of the people who had lived there for several years, were loud in their praises and had great faith in the future of their country.

But what about the picnic? It was a great occasion. Not great simply for New Ontario. That picnic would have been great anywhere. We drove out from New Liskeard in a