

in a state of inactivity and grieving at their loss, but trusting to Providence and doing what they can for themselves to have the regular ordinances of the gospel dispensed among them. The God in whom they trust will provide for them. I performed some ministerial visitations in this congregation, but not as much as I desired, owing to the extremely unfavorable weather which prevailed during my stay there. I received six pounds from Mabou congregation for the Home Mission.

JAMES THOMPSON.

Pictou, 10th Nov., 1856.

*From the Free Church Record.*

NOVEMBER 4th, 1856.

MR. EDITOR,—

Having been for the last three weeks engaged amongst the Railway laborers, in compliance with the request of Synod, I now, at your request, send a few hurried remarks for the information of your readers. I have already spent two weeks on the Windsor line, and one week on the Eastern line, and intend to spend yet another week on the Eastern line before returning home. On each of two of the last three Sabbath we had five different services, including English and Gaelic, at three different places along the line. On the third Sabbath we had four different services, two in English and two in Gaelic, at two different places. And on the two intervening week-nights we had nine meetings after work hours, at five of which, services were conducted both in English and Gaelic. Thus, during the last three weeks, I have been enabled to meet with the laborers in about twenty-eight different services, including those of the Sabbath and week-days, and in both languages. The attendance at all these meetings was much larger than I expected—and it was quite refreshing to witness the eagerness with which the Gaelic-speaking laborers, especially, attended. More than one-half of our weekly meetings were held in the laborers' shanties alongside their works, and their gratitude for these services was fully evinced by the collections which were given at their request. Amongst these laborers I found a few of my own congregation, a great many adherents of our Church from Cape Breton, and several Presbyterians of other denominations, together with a great many of a class which I need not men-

tion, but which show that they lie under a special curse wherever they are found.

In reference to the spiritual destitution which prevails, I need only say that the labourers are in some districts well supplied with Sabbath ordinances within their reach, either in the ordinary ministers of the district, or through the visits of ministers from other places. But in other districts along the line, the destitution of the means of grace is very great. In visiting these districts, several, especially of the Highlanders, told me that I was the first minister who visited them since they came there some six or eight months ago. They had, it is true, frequent opportunities within that period of attending preaching. But some excused their non-attendance by stating that as there was no Gaelic, they could not profit by the services in English; and others, that the intimation of preaching either did not reach them at all or reached them when too late. Many were thus frequently disappointed who would gladly have attended, because of the intimation having been sent by parties who either were so engrossed with business as to forget it, or cared not to deliver it, and so purposely withheld it. Finding that some of the inhabitants would prefer having our meetings at places more convenient to themselves than the Railway laborers, I insisted upon the former attending their own places of worship, and took the trouble of going myself to the pits where the Railway men were working, to arrange with them as to the most convenient places of meeting, and to notify all the laborers thereof. On this account our meetings were better attended than would have been the case had matters been left otherwise.

Of the moral and religious state of the great majority of those engaged in these Railway works, no idea can be formed without becoming eye and ear witnesses thereof. Let your readers follow me along the line to the various pits where the men are working, and listen to their speech while irritated by some mishap which for a few minutes retards their progress. Perhaps a cart has backed off the slip and a few men must come to aid in pulling it out again. The horse becomes discouraged and refuses to pull. Two or three men lay at him with their cudgels, embittered by the venom of oaths and curses which make one shudder at the hearing thereof. Let them follow me to the shanty where men are found