

THE WORK ON SANTO, NEW HEBRIDES.

By REV. JOSEPH ANNAND.

To the Mission Synod at Aneityum in June last.

WHAT have we been doing during the past year; and what are the results of our labors? In answering these questions, I must, to be brief, summarize largely.

Our manual labors for the improvement of the station have been comparatively small. Perhaps the most note-worthy fact is, that we did not erect a building of any description on Tangoa during the year, nor did we even renew a roof. There being no fresh water on the islet beyond the rain supply, we dug a well some twenty feet in depth in the ravine, and thereby secured a large and permanent supply of good water. I mention this, as possibly some day said well may become historic, if not famous.

Of labors more directly connected with the evangelization of the people, I may give those of the printing room a prominent place. By these, the Gospel according to Matthew, and another small book, were placed in the hands of our readers. The second book is composed of a translation of "Intas ahodaig Uhu" (Aneityum catechism); the creed of the Island church; the Ten Commandments and eighteen hymns, making thirty-six pages in all.

The mechanical-work of "Mathiu" would have been somewhat better had my supply of type been larger. Both English and pica were required to complete four pages, and "k" came from four different fonts. I tried to enlarge my stock of type, but none of the kinds required could be obtained nearer than Britain, and my order is not yet filled.

Our school work has not been entirely satisfactory. The usual morning class has been conducted almost without intermission throughout the year, but only nine pupils availed themselves of this opportunity to learn to read. Lately three young boys have joined the class, and Mrs. Annand has two women under instruction. Thus we have fourteen in all learning to read. Seven of these can now read the Gospel without assistance. During the greater part of the year we had also an evening class for singing and prayer.

On Sundays regular service has been conducted twice daily at Tangoa, and once daily each at Naone and Abunau, with a total average attendance of fifty-two; thirty-nine at Tangoa and thirteen at the other two combined. Two meetings for singing and prayer are also conducted by the teachers every Sabbath immediately after the church service is dismissed. The highest number at church any one day was 85 and the lowest 27.

In June last, I organized a class of candidates for school membership of nine Tangoans, and we also started a Wednesday afternoon prayer meet-

ing at which three Tangoa lads took a public part. However, after a few months the tempter proved too strong for them. Two fell, through listening to Balaamite advice given to them by enemies of the truth at the village. Finally the excitement and warlike spirit arising from the murder of Mr. Sawers and his servant and subsequent events, led to the dismissal of the candidates' class and the closing of the prayer meeting. Then towards the end of the year, the six lads who were residing with us having completed their term of service returned to the village, and thus came more under the influence of the heathen party. However, five out of the six refused lately to take any part in a sing-sing at the village.

In justice to the Tangoans, I may here state that they all remained true to us through all the exciting times following the murder of Mr. Sawers. By their aid we recovered the body of our friend, and saved all the goods from plunder. Also from information gained by them and given to me, a plot to murder the Powell's and Barlow's, planters who have come to Santo, and to plunder their goods, was defeated. At no time were any of them "up in arms against the Missionary," as published in Sydney.

The action of the naval authorities also helped to unsettle the people. No less than six times have we been visited by men of war since the murder, yet nothing was done beyond talk. White men also excited the people by telling them that the men of war were coming to make war against the whole south side of Santo. In addition to this, threats were brought over from Malekula that two hundred men were coming from Rans to take vengeance on the murderers of Sam, or upon whomever they could find on Santo, so for weeks they were daily expected. Up to the present no avenger, neither white or black, has arrived.

As in former years, our operations have been limited greatly from want of teachers. At present we have two with us, both from Erakor. Simon is now in his third year, and being dissatisfied, he leaves us at the end of his term in August. Matur lost his wife shortly after our return from Synod last year. In October he returned to Erakor with his motherless babe. However, in December he came back alone to resume his work. Owing to circumstances, I have not been able to settle either of these men at out-stations.

I should like very much to get about five more teachers this year if possible to occupy out-villages. Last year failing to get teachers from our own group I wrote to Fiji, making enquiries there as to the prospects of getting a few from that field. None can be spared thence for our group.

Thus brethren you can understand some of the reasons for the slow progress of the Gospel on South Santo during the past year.