

THE PRESENT WEST.

Some of the points in connection with the work in the North West, as presented to Assembly, were the following:

State of Religion.

It is somewhat difficult to indicate the spiritual condition of the Mission districts with accuracy, and yet there are signs of a gratifying nature. The Sabbath is well kept in Manitoba and the North West Territories, the busiest time in harvest not tempting men to profane the day. In the mining districts things are not as satisfactory, although an improvement is noticeable, especially in the older towns. The Canadian element everywhere works for a quiet Sabbath, even in mining districts, and the proportion of communicants as compared with the families is gradually rising.

Family worship, it is feared, is not common; nor is family discipline maintained as in the past. There is still a good deal of drinking, but the evil is abating. There is everywhere a great deal of respect for law and order, even among foreigners, and crimes committed against the person and property are rare. The record of the Presbyterians in this regard is the cleanest of any denomination. The people are generous in the support of Church work, and interested in the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. Only in one Presbytery did the average contribution for all purposes, per communicant, fall below \$10 in 1896; and in one it rose as high as \$29.02; while in Eastern Canada three-fifths fell below \$10, and one as low as \$6.10.

Growth.

The growth of the Church in Western Canada can be seen at a glance at the table subjoined:—

	1881.	1898.
Synods.....	0	2
Presbyteries	1	14
Self-sustaining congregations	1	70
Augmented congregations ..	0	34
Missions	28	179
Families	971	13,605
Preaching Stations	116	937
Single Persons	303	9,143
Communicants	1,153	19,505
Contributions	\$15,100	\$301,753

Considering the newness of the West, and that missions are included with congregations in the calculation, the liberality of the people is hopeful.

Missionaries.

Testimony should also be borne as to the faithfulness and efficiency of Missionaries, generally speaking. That in so large a staff one not up to the standard should be occas-

ionally found was to have been expected; the general average, however, is high in scholarship and pulpit power. The field demands nevertheless a larger proportion of men of maturity and experience men who know men, and who will command their respect by their unblemished life and prudent speech.

Said a man not a Christian, of one of our Missionaries: "I never go to Church, but Mr. — preaches me a good sermon every day in the week by the way he lives." Of very many the same testimony could be borne. It was a rare sight to find a Roman Catholic railway contractor attending a meeting of Presbytery this spring, and urging that our Missionary should be left in the field all summer because of his valuable work among the men.

New Presbyteries.

The Yukon district is outside the boundaries of Presbyteries in British Columbia, although Glenora and Teslin are south of the 60th parallel—the northern boundary of the Province of British Columbia. The General Assembly should be asked to consider the advisability of erecting a Presbytery in the Yukon so that the business of the Church might be conducted in accordance with established usages. A Presbytery should be of great assistance, if able to meet only once a year.

The growth of the Presbytery of Kamloops has led to an agitation in favor of division. The Crow's Nest Pass and Kettle River Railways completed, it is expected that the population of the Shocan—Kootenay country will increase rapidly, and that with a few years the present population will be five, if not ten times the present figure. From east to west, along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Presbytery extends 420 miles, and from north to south settlements are found at points 500 miles apart. There are at present 19 ordained ministers and missionaries in the Presbytery, and a division along the present and prospective railways would give ten ministers to the Southern Presbytery and nine to the Northern. In the Northern would be four congregations and eleven missions, and in the Southern four congregations and thirteen missions.

Yukon Missionaries.

Our pioneer missionary—the Rev. R. M. Hickey—the pioneer missionary of any Canadian Church—went to Skaguay in October, and with great energy succeeded in erecting a church there. Until this spring he was the only missionary in the place.

The Rev. A. S. Grant followed in January; he called at Skaguay, and passed on to Lake Bennett, the first point on the Canadian side of the International boundary. Here he built a church and erected a structure to be used for a manse. He then tramped 200 miles