

LETTERS

First Letter

Rev. R. G. MacBeth writes from the North

The following is the first of a series of letters from Rev. R. G. MacBeth, who is on a trip through Northern Ontario:

In the letters on the West which I had the pleasure of writing for the *Expositor* last year, I was dealing with a country which was new in comparison with even the older parts of Canada: much more was it new as compared with what we call the Old Lands. The West, however, is a centenarian. Winnipeg has been celebrating, in the Selkirk Centennial, the coming of the first actual settlers to the country west of the Great Lakes. This indicates that in the eyes of historians the real history of a country begins with the settler, the actual occupant and tiller of the soil, and not with the coming of the casual hunter or trader. Viewed in this light, Northern Ontario is new, as compared with even the West. The actual settler has only been in Northern Ontario for less than a score of years, in most cases half of that, and as yet he is only here in small numerical quantity. But he is pathfinder for the great host that will surely come when the possibilities of the country begin to dawn upon the minds of the world's home-seekers. The Province of Ontario has here a new world to conquer and add to her already immense resources. In the presence of the new North, Ontario can await all the developments of time, confident in the fact that she will hold her place as the pioneer province of Confederation. One would like to see a regular occasional home-seekers' excursion run up into the great region of the clay belt, for in its wake would surely come a stream of immigrants to people this fertile domain.

As one leaves North Bay, and thus enters on the new North, he admires the courage and the foresight of the men who thrust into the somewhat untried wilderness, the government-owned and operated Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway. They, too, had to endure the criticism and almost the ridicule that has befallen Columbus-like path-finders ever since men essayed the untried. But if some one does not essay the untried it will never become the tried and the known, and one recalls that our first transcontinental railway, now almost embarrassed by its wealth, was at the outset impaled upon the spear point of the criticism that it would not pay for the axle grease. This Ontario road is well equipped, is managed by courteous crews, has fine stations, and is a bonanza for the Province. In fact,