

A Month's Ramble in the Territories.

Perhaps it is time, Mr. Editor, that I redeemed my promise to write to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, and having just returned from a month's ramble through the territories, I will attempt to do so.

When one has ridden from Halifax, N. S., to Banff, in the Rocky Mountains, and over the principal branch lines of the C. P. R., he finds that his notion of Canada, in one respect at least, has been very much enlarged. It is a great and goodly heritage that Canadians possess. Unless we shall prove utterly unworthy of such a possession there is undoubtedly a great and prosperous future for the people of this land. That the possibilities of the country are almost without limit could scarcely be denied by one having any adequate notion of its extent and its resources.

It is not my purpose, however, in this letter, to write of our material resources, but rather to say a word about the Baptist churches of the territories, and to make brief mention of some of the men I met in the far west. At Edmonton I was the guest of Pastor A. McDonald, a privilege and pleasure coveted by yourself, Mr. Editor, according to recent editorial utterances. Embrace the first opportunity to go there. Edmonton is a delightful place, and Pastor McDonald is a royal host. He knows all about the west. He came to Winnipeg 25 years ago a young man. He was the first Baptist missionary to settle in the west. He organized the first Baptist church in Winnipeg and was its pastor for the first ten years of its eventful history. Then yielding to the temptation of a call across the line, he was ten years pastor of one church there, but I fancy he must have felt all the while very much as did the Israelites in Babylon. He is now happily settled as pastor of the church in South Edmonton, and his brethren are glad to have him back, for no Baptist pastor in the west is so well known to the churches and none certainly is more beloved.

South Edmonton is a beautiful and growing town, nestling among the trees on the bank of the majestic Saskatchewan River, which is not unlike the beautiful St. John River. Bro. McDonald has a delightful and commodious home, which he and Mrs. McDonald can appreciate to the fullest extent. He works hard; is beloved by his people and is happy and hopeful in what he esteems the most blessed service to which man was ever called. Through the kindness of my host, and the speed of his ponies, I saw as much of the country as was possible in the three days I was there.

When I say that the pastor at North Edmonton is a graduate of Acadia College, a son of the late lamented David Freeman, and that, judging from all that I heard concerning him, the son is worthy of the sire, no more needs to be said to assure the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces that the church in that beautiful town is well and faithfully cared for. I did not see as much of Pastor Freeman as I would like to have seen, but heard on all sides good reports of his worth and his work.

The most of my time in the North was spent at Red Deer, at the home of my sister whom I had not seen for seven years, and of course I had a delightful time there. The leading citizens of this pretty little town are Nova Scotians. The Smith brothers, formerly of Maitland, N. S., and the sons of Revs. Leonard, Joseph and Thomas Gaetz. Most of these young men are prospering in their respective lines of business.

It was a pleasant surprise to me on boarding the train at this point for the return journey to meet the worthy editor of the St. John Daily Sun. I have no reason to doubt that he was glad to meet a bluenose and an old acquaintance so far away from the foggy city of the east. With no hint at patronizing, nor suggestion of condescension, he could make himself very companionable to the plain country parson, and so we had good fellowship until we reached Banff, in the Rockies, and drove to the magnificent hotel of the C. P. R. Co. for breakfast. But unfortunately for the parson, a light purse is just as inconvenient in the west as in the east, and the one that he had charge of had to be removed to a place making smaller demands upon it, and so we were parted, he to complete the journey to the coast and this scribe to take the next train for the east. I am sure your readers will readily excuse any attempt on my part at describing the Rockies. It is too large an undertaking at any time, especially on a hot July day. They must be seen to be appreciated, and the sight is well worth the journey.

Calgary was intended to be a large city and was laid out accordingly, but has materialized only in part. It is beautifully situated on a gently sloping plain between the Bow and the Elbow Rivers, which come together at the eastern end of the town. It has the finest buildings of any town west of Winnipeg. Many of its public buildings and business blocks being of stone. Our cause here is weaker than it was five years ago, owing to the fact of some of our strong men having moved from the town during the depression in business, which has been

felt very severely the past two or three years. But the outlook is brightening and the people are hopeful. The great activity in gold mining in the province just west of them, is having a good effect on this town. Pastor Creswell, who settled here a few months ago, is a graduate of McMaster University; a good preacher; an earnest and devoted worker and a man well qualified for the place and the work. He has already had encouraging success, having recently baptized ten persons and added others to the membership by letter, and the church after a long time of discouragement is now more hopeful and more active.

One hundred and eighty miles east of this is the beautiful and rapidly growing town of Medicine Hat. The population is about one thousand but will soon be much larger. It is the railway town of the west and is full of push and energy. It is to be the junction of the Crow's Nest road, which will add much to its importance and growth. The Baptist church here has suffered much through not having a pastor continuously. It has often been months at a time pastorless, being supplied by students in the summer months. It was my privilege to spend a Sabbath there and to preach the Word at both services. The young man who is spending the vacation with them is highly esteemed and is doing good work. The people would like to retain him but he will return to College in October and the Board at Winnipeg have their eye on a good man to take up the work at that time. This will, no doubt, be one of the important towns of the west in a very few years, and the Board will be wise enough to put a strong man there.

Two hundred and sixty miles east of this again is Moose Jaw, a town of about the same size. I had only forty-five minutes at this point and made diligent search in that time for Pastor Sweet, but without success. All that I could learn in regard to the state of the cause here was encouraging. Pastor Sweet has been settled only for a few months and is spoken of as a man of ability and devotion. Most of the Baptist churches here have suffered greatly from frequent changes in the pastorate, but in most of them there is a prospect now of greater permanence. Forty miles still eastward and we come to Regina, the capital city of the territories, with a population of about 2,000. The Baptist church here is a neat little brick building. The church is weak, but courageous and hopeful. A number have recently been added to the membership and the young man who has supplied for a few months has left for the far west and Rev. C. I. McLane, of Albert County, N. B., who did good work on the Barrington, N. S., field, a brother beloved, who came here in the spring for his health, and supplied at Brandon for a month and won the hearts of my people while acting as pastor in my absence, this devoted brother left here yesterday for Regina, where he will supply for a time at least. Under his faithful ministry the good work begun at Regina will be continued and we all pray that Bro. McLane's health—which has greatly improved since he came west—will soon warrant his permanent settlement as pastor. The Baptist cause in the territories is weak, but will not always be so. If all the Baptists of the east could visit this part of our great Dominion and see for themselves how bright is the future of the west, they would be more liberal I am sure, in their contribution to the work. The cause here needs help now, but the time is not far away when strong churches here will be reaching out the helping hand to the work in the far east. The churches of Manitoba and the territories have now undertaken to support one missionary family in India. Let the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces not overlook the fact that in building up the cause here they are thereby pressing forward the work of world-wide missions.

I am not writing of the churches in Manitoba but must mention the fact that I had the pleasure of spending 24 hours at Portage la Prairie. I need not tell Eastern Baptists who is the pastor in this town, for they have all heard Pastor H. H. Hall. He has done, and is doing, a grand work. The church home built through Bro. Hall's efforts is, with the exception of that of the First church in Winnipeg, the most beautiful and commodious Baptist church building west of Ontario. It is capable of seating 800 people and is in every way adapted for the work. The prayer meeting the evening I was there was largely attended and full of interest and power. Portage la Prairie, in common with most western towns, has recently lost many of its citizens as a result of the mad rush to the gold fields of the farther west. But the most of them will soon come back or, if not, others will come in to fill their places, for a town located as this is in the midst of great natural beauty, and in the centre of one of the best, if not the best, wheat growing sections of the province is bound to grow.

By Bro. Hall's generosity I had the privilege of a long drive through these great plains, covered with a most luxuriant growth of wheat. It is not possible to convey in writing any proper conception of the extent and

abundance of these fields of waving grain. We drove around a block six by twelve miles, and on either side as far as the eye could reach, one could see nothing but an almost unbroken wheat field, and one might go forty miles in any direction and drive the whole distance through the same pleasing scenery.

It is still a question in the east whether wheat growing in Manitoba is a profitable business. Let me cite one example of what has actually been done on this Portage plain: Thirteen years ago, a man with little or no means, took a homestead twelve miles from the town. He has now retired from business, built a beautiful residence in town and is living on the interest of his money, having handed the farm—now consisting of 640 acres—over to his sons. We took dinner at this beautiful farm house. Standing in the door way we looked out over a field of wheat consisting of 150 acres. This is by no means an isolated case, though of course there are many who do not succeed so well. It is not surprising that Bro. Hall, living in such a town and amid such surroundings, should seem to some good people in the east to be intemperately enthusiastic in his glowing description of the west.

But I fear, Mr. Editor, that your usually placid brow will be inclined to frown when you behold the length of this letter. At some future time, should I remain here, I will have something to say about the churches of Manitoba, in which the plucky little church I have the honor to serve, will be included.

I am often asked questions in regard to the climate. Well, most of the people who have been here for a time, think it about perfect, and it is, no doubt; to those to whom it is perfectly suited. For myself, it has not treated me very kindly. It has been playing all sorts of tricks upon the vocal apparatus and seems to enjoy the fun. It gets itself into the bronchial tubes and makes desperate efforts to create disorder, and has occasionally inflicted a mild form of asthma, and threatened I know not how many other evils. But I am constantly assured by those who are supposed to know that when once it becomes reconciled to the new comer it will smile upon him most benignly and apologize most humbly for having so rudely treated him at the first.

I hope these predictions will be fulfilled before a great while or I shall be disposed to betake myself again to where the briny breezes blow and the song of the sea bird is heard through the kindly fog. I see now a scornful smile upon the faces of the pastors along the Bay of Fundy coast at such an adjective as "kindly" being applied to the fog. But if these good brethren had to drive twenty or thirty miles over a treeless prairie, under a blazing July sun, they would begin to think of the cool fog of the Bay as one of the most delightful things in nature. But the west is in many ways a most inviting field of labor. There is much to encourage and inspire the worker in the vineyard; a field of large opportunity and one in which faithful service for Christ cannot fail to be fruitful in the most desirable results.

Boissevian, Man., July 20.

E. J. GRANT.

Baptist Convention of Manitoba and the Northwest.

Nearly two hundred delegates from the churches of Manitoba and the Northwest met in Convention at Brandon, June 15 to 17. The portions of their work, which will most interest Maritime Baptists are the report on "Future Policy" and the "Resolutions" passed. The former will show the work the Western Baptists propose to do, and the latter will reveal their attitude toward the great questions of today.

The Western Baptists are as yet a feeble folk, but like the cones they are building their house on solid rock. They are not making the mistake of building for the present because it is cheaper. They are rearing a structure that will be useful to coming generations of Baptists. As their stakes strengthen they enlarge their borders and lengthen their cords. Formerly, they undertook in foreign work the support of a lady missionary only; but this year the following clause of the future policy report was unanimously adopted:

9. That we ask the Sisters to undertake as an auxiliary of the Foreign Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec the support of Mr. and Mrs. Davis as our missionaries to India on the understanding that Miss Priest's salary be assumed by the Foreign Mission Board.

This is an advance which entails the raising of seven hundred extra dollars. Perhaps I ought to explain that here in the West the women act as the Foreign Mission Board. All foreign work is committed to them and they carry out the wishes of Convention. The churches understand that all appeals for this work come through the Women's Convention. This saves the salary of a financial agent and gives unity to the foreign work. Clause eleven of the report opens all the churches to them. It reads as below:

11. That at least one collection be taken yearly by the churches to aid the ladies in their Foreign Mission undertaking—the date of such collection or collections being fixed by them.

The women also carry on Scandinavian, Indian and Church Edifice work. In fact, to borrow a phrase from Mr. Diarmid, "the women are simply in it" out here. It will strike Maritime Baptists as a little odd when they learn that in the conducting of the religious paper, the women are the financial managers, and the men are

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