

FARMS AND GARDENS.

The great object of the Government is to turn the Indians of the prairie into farmers. An 'idst many difficulties, it must be said from a survey of these reserves that the work is advancing. Oxen and implements are used by the Indians under the direction of the farm instructors. One Indian, whose farm was visited, had very nearly fifty acres of wheat. It was well put in and presented an excellent appearance. It will probably yield between 800 and 1,200 bushels of grain. If any one doubts the capability of the Indian he has but to see this farm of a man who, ten years ago, lived by the chase, to be convinced. Fields of from ten to twenty acres of grain belonging to an Indian are quite common on these reserves. A special feature of the Indian farms is their freedom from gophers. Many of our readers may know that the gopher or ground squirrel is most abundant in the North-West Territories. At the present time much damage is being done the fields of the white settlers by this pest. On the north side of the Qu'Appelle river, opposite the reserve, was a field of ten acres of wheat, brown and useless through the ravages of the gopher. The explanation of the absence of the gopher from the Indian farms is that the Indian eats the gopher, and thus regales himself with his savoury dish and saves his crops. A hint to the white settler is sufficient! A careful computation shows that on these four reserves there are 600 acres of wheat, barley, oats and peas. One field of peas especially, the writer never saw excelled. There were 800 bushels of potatoes planted on the reserves this year, and there are not less than fifteen acres of turnips. The gardens of the Indians are most interesting. Not only to raise vegetables but to learn their value and use indicates a civilizing process. Beets, carrots, onions, Indian corn, etc., are in excellent condition. The gardens of the agent and several farm instructors are in excellent order. Probably four or five acres of gardens in all are to be seen in the reserves.

EDUCATION AND RELIGION.

The most of these Indians are yet pagans. Every year, in some part of the reserves, the booth for the sun dance is erected, and these dances are attended by men, women and children. This is a religious festival. It is connected with certain cruel rites, and is under the direction of the medicine men, or priestly class. There are a few Roman Catholics on the reserve, a priest and a teacher. The school is a day school, and has but a small attendance. The scattered character of the people, and the determination of the Government to isolate families as much as possible, renders the public schoolhouse here, as elsewhere, an impossibility. A couple of years or more since, the Rev. Hugh McKay, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church, took up his abode on the borders of these reserves. He has already obtained a great influence over the Indians. He had been for some time labouring in Manitoulin Island, and had become somewhat familiar with Indian ways. Of a quiet, decided disposition and a very kindly manner, he seems just the man to lead the poor savages in the way of truth. To Mr. McKay belongs the credit of reaching what seems to be a solution of the school question.

McKAY'S SCHOOL

is already known far beyond the limits of the Crooked Lakes Reserves. Erecting a small mission building, Mr. McKay took a few of the children into his home, and gave them such accommodation as he was able. Being himself a trained normal school teacher, he soon got a good hold of the children, and has in the short time of his residence gained a good knowledge of the Cree. Last year he obtained the assistance of Mr. Benjamin Jones, who has had much experience in the North-West, and whose wife, a sister of the late Methodist missionary to the Far West, Rev. George McDougall, feels bound to carry on the work in which her deceased brother fell. Messrs. McKay and Jones fell to work with their own hands, and made an addition to their building a year ago, which enabled them to accommodate thirty-three pupils last winter. Encouraged by his success, Mr. McKay appealed to the Christian ladies of Ontario, and the result is that \$3,500 have been from different sources put at Mr. McKay's disposal for further addition. The addition will far exceed the original building. In two or three months from now will be completed a

SUBSTANTIAL PILE

of buildings in which fifty pupils can be trained, and the plans seem to promise a most admirable building. It is built on a deep stone foundation, will be heated by hot air, and be a model school in many respects. Mr. McKay began this work largely at his own expense, his salary being paid him by the Church. Christian ladies in the Eastern Provinces have supplied clothing in large quantities. The expense of keeping fifty pupils will be considerable, and it is very pleasing to note that the Dominion Government has been so impressed with the value of this experiment that there has been an allowance of \$30 a head for fifty pupils placed in the estimates for next year. Mr. McKay is determined to persevere until he has an institution large enough to hold all the school children on his reserves, say 120. Extensive stables are being erected to show the young Indians the proper care and management of cattle and horses.

THE OPENING

of the new building will take place in three or four months, and as much interest is taken in the school in the whole surrounding country, it is expected to be an event of importance. The school is situated at the eastern end of Round Lake, one of the lakes of the Qu'Appelle River, and the view from the door of the school up the lake is most beautiful. The good already done by the school is surprising. It is now holidays, but on our visit to several houses, we saw children well-dressed, clean and with hair combed, and on enquiring found they had been pupils last winter at the school. Stopping to ask our way at the house of "Striped-Back," a noted conqueror, a fine lad of thirteen came to our assistance, well-dressed and intelligent. Though his home is the abode of superstition, and on the bushes and trees about it were to be seen strips of cloth of various colours floating as offerings to the spirits, yet it is quite plain that two or three years at "McKay's School" will give him a truer and nobler faith.

THE OFFICIALS.

One chief object of these visits is to see the officials about whom there has been so much talk. On Reserve No. 1 the instructor is Mr. J. Nichol, formerly instructor at File Hills. He is from Wentworth County, Ontario, was brought up a farmer, and is a young, active and suitable man. He had the misfortune to lose his wife last year. Mr. J. Coburn on Reserve No. 2 was the one not seen by us. He is a young married man, and has an excellent reputation. Mr. J. Sutherland is instructor at No. 3. He was for some years in the Mounted Police. His wife is an excellent tailoress, and can be of service to the Indians. Mr. Sutherland himself is not only instructor but can do blacksmithing, carpentering, and is acquainted with the veterinary art. The broken ploughs and other implements brought in to be mended might have alarmed Vulcan, the god of smiths, himself. The instructor in No. 4 is Mr. E. McNeil, a young Canadian farmer from the Ottawa. He has no wife, but like the few remaining instructors unmarried has received his notice from the Government. He is a capable instructor, and has the largest band. He will, no doubt, qualify before his time expires.

THE AGENCY.

It would be "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out were we to close without reference to the veteran Indian agent, Colonel Alan Macdonald who has been a most valuable and popular officer in originating the present Indian system. Colonel Macdonald is a son of Mr. Archibald Macdonald, of Glencoe, whom all acquainted with the Selkirk Colony will remember was one of Lord Selkirk's most trusted agents, and wrote a pamphlet with an account of one of the expeditions. After forty years' service in the Hudson's Bay Company, he settled at St. Andrews, on the Ottawa, in Lower Canada. Though we found Colonel Macdonald's good wife away on a visit to the East, the colonel lives at the agency in good old Hudson's Bay Company style. He understands the Indians thoroughly, is very anxious for the improvement of the Indians in all respects, is a good friend to the missionary and the teacher, and possesses the confidence of old and young on the reserve. It was a pleasure to go on our long rounds through the reserve, accompanied by the agent and his clever son, Archie, a lad of twelve, who jabbars Cree with any native, and acted as an interpreter. The official

interpreter is an Indian from Oxford House, named Geddes, who gave us much information. The agent's assistant is a most interesting young man named McNeil, from Prince Edward Island. His books, papers and official documents were in capital order, and we gave them a thorough overhauling. Our return was made to Broadview in a hurry to catch the west bound train, and if we dream to-night of Indians and instructors, it will not be surprising.

A DELEGATE'S REFLECTIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—The late meeting of the General Assembly at Winnipeg, it will be conceded by all, was an event of absorbing interest. It has formed an epoch in the history of our Church. Ten years ago, the idea that such an event could take place would have been looked upon as preposterous—the wild dream of a disordered brain. Yet it has actually taken place, and the results which have flowed from it have, we think, fully justified the selection of that city as the place of meeting. Among these benefits we specify the following: It has enlarged our knowledge of Manitoba and the North-West. Few of us from the East had any just idea of the extent, beauty and resources of the great North-West. It rose up before our mind's eye as a sparsely-settled region, uninviting to the eye and presenting few inducements for settlement. But our recent visit to that far land dispels our ignorance. It has enlightened our minds. The country through which the C. P. R. runs between Toronto and Winnipeg is, it is true, barren and rocky enough, but rich, we are told, in mineral wealth, awaiting only the capitalist to develop its great resources. Fish of various kinds swarm in the northern waters, while the poet and painter may revel to their hearts' content in scenes of surpassing beauty and solemnity, which ever and anon burst forth upon the eye as one is whirled along. It is not, however, until after you pass Winnipeg that you realize the vast extent and great resources of the Far West. To gaze out upon the prairie, "boundless, endless and sublime," extending like a vast sea before you, clad in the fresh verdure of summer and fragrant with the breath of flowers, is a sight inspiring to behold. It is a land of great possibilities. No doubt there are drawbacks as there are in all new countries. These drawbacks are due more to the settler than to the soil. Men have gone there to speculate, not to farm. The result is that the soil has not been properly cultivated, and the right class of settlers have been kept out. But this is being remedied. It will bring its own cure. The land is for the people, and the people shall yet possess it. A great future, we feel assured, is in store for these Western provinces. Indications of the coming glory may even now be seen. The right class of settlers are coming in: men of brain and muscle, who know how to till the soil; schools and churches are already dotting the broad prairie; railroads are being built in various directions, bringing markets near and facilitating social intercourse. Coal of a superior kind has been discovered, promising abundance of fuel. Towns and villages are rising where a few years ago the wild buffalo roamed, or only the wigwam of the Indian met the eye. In all of which we discern the promise of future greatness.

The meeting of the Assembly at Winnipeg again has had the effect of giving an impetus to missionary operations in Manitoba and the North-West. For several years back our missionary work there has been pushed forward with great vigour. As a result rapid strides have been made and signal success achieved. Some of us did not fully realize the extent of the work. Our recent visit has had the effect of opening our eyes to the extent of our missionary operations in that land. And while it has opened our eyes it has cheered our hearts. Many of the delegates embraced the opportunity of visiting the various mission fields where our missionaries are labouring so earnestly, and seeing for themselves their extent and condition. The various Indian reserves also were visited, and many interesting facts elicited showing the progress and prospects of the Indian population under the care of our Church. This had the effect not only of deepening our own interest, but of putting us in possession of such information as is calculated to awaken interest in the minds of our congregations regarding this great work. It has intensified in our mind the conviction that only in Christianity lies our hope for the elevation and salvation