

years. The south-eastern part of the Province, lying along the frontier of the States of New York, Vermont and New Hampshire, was not settled at the time of the conquest. When it was organized under British rule, it was surveyed into counties and townships. The land had never been under seigniorial tenure, and settlers became holders in free and common socage, according to the terms of English law. For a time these settlers believed that French civil law, preserved by the Act of 1774, did not apply to these counties, but in that they were wrong. This section of the Province was known as the Eastern Townships, and it is so known to-day, although the French have invaded it, and are to-day a majority in many parts, buying out the English farmers, filling up the little villages, and often crossing the frontier and settling in Vermont.

THE TOWNSHIPS LOSING.

For ten years the Eastern Townships have been steadily losing their English population; but, more than that, the township system is gradually but surely being wiped out. All this has been made easy by means of provincial legislation. For example, the Roman Catholic ratepayers of a certain section of a township wish to have a church and a priest of their own, all of which is perfectly proper. They petition their Bishop. By means of a commission he enquires into the ability of the community to support such an establishment. The report being favorable, the ecclesiastical parish is erected and named, of course, after some saint known, perhaps, only to the "most faithful." So far no one has ground for complaint, for the arrangement concerns no one but the Roman Catholic population. But it is the entering of the thin edge of the wedge. Once erected into an ecclesiastical parish, a proclamation from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, issued, of course, on the recommendation of the ministry of the day, makes the ecclesiastical parish a civil one. The territory is at once detached from the rest of the township, receives the pious name taken by the parish church, and a new municipal government is set up, applying, of course, to all who reside within the limits of the detached territory. It may be pointed out that a civil parish, like a township or village, has its own municipal government, its Mayor and Council, elected by the ratepayers, and possessing the power of local taxation. The effect of this cutting up of townships into parishes is evident, and it is certainly a grievance borne by the Protestant rural population of Quebec. And so the Eastern Townships are disappearing from the map of the Province.

SCHOOL SYSTEM.

In educational matters the position of the Church is even stronger. So far as her own people are concerned the Church is practically the school system, for the majority of their larger schools are in the hands of the clergy, and a rural parish school, if conducted by a layman, is always under the eye and the control of the priest. At the head of the provincial educational system is a Council of Public Instruction, and a section of this, known as the Protestant Committee, administer the schools of the minority. The Roman Catholic section of the Council is composed of Bishops and appointees of the Provincial Government. In school matters this council is practically supreme, and, dominated as it is by churchmen, the interests of the Church are well safeguarded.

TAXES.

Besides provincial grants, each school system is supported by taxes collected from their own supporters, but

when it comes to the division of the school tax of a corporation a difficulty arises. The division is made according to the ratio between Roman Catholic and Protestant population in the municipality. Protestants complain of the injustice of this arrangement, for, take a financial corporation in Montreal, three-fourths of the stock may be owned by Protestants, and yet their schools will receive but one-third of that corporation's tax, because only one-third of the city's population is of that faith.

Programme for April.

A. French Canadian Missions.

1. The French Canadian people.
2. The work of Canadian Methodism.
 - (a) Mission Schools.
 - (b) French Methodist Institute.
 - (c) Colportage.

B. South America.

1. (a) Its extent, resources, etc.
 - (b) Its early political history.
 - (c) Population and its distribution.
2. *Her Great Spiritual Need.*
 - (a) Dense spiritual darkness due to condition of Roman Catholicism.
 - (b) The neglected continent—few to reach the millions.
3. *Protestant Missions in South America.*
 - (a) Story of Captain Allen Gardiner.
 - (b) Difficulties, especially opposition of priests.
 - (c) Present status of Protestantism.

For information on A, see articles on French-Canadian missions in the present issue of this paper; on B, see article on South America.

For further information on A, see W.M.S. *Monthly Letters*, the *Outlook* and Nos. IX. and X. of *Our Work* series; on B, see *Missionary Review*, March, August, October, November, 1894; August and November, 1895; September, November, December, 1896; *Gospel in all Lands*, December, 1896, and February, 1897; *Missionary Campaigner's* "South America, the Neglected Continent," gives all needful facts, and would be a valuable accession to your League library.

CHAS. W. SERVICE,
Trinity Medical College.

This Number Contains.

Suggested programme on French-Canadian Missions.
An account of the French-Canadian Institute, Montreal.
Catholicism in the Lower Province.
South America.

The May Number Will Contain.

Suggested programme on "China and the Chinese," this being the subject of the month studied by the W. M. S. suggested in the Cycle of Prayer.

Also articles on Africa, and "The Influence of Missionary Literature."

The Prospectus for the coming summer of the Missionary Campaign for the Young Peoples' Forward Movement for Missions; Names of Campaigners, the districts on which they will work; and a list of the districts which have requested a visit from a Campaigner.