

ON THE CANADA PACIFIC RAILWAY

MR. EDITOR.—Having some time since made a visit from this point along this important line of railway as far as it yet extends, possibly a short sketch of the trip might be useful to your readers generally, by giving them some information about a part of the country not yet very well known to many, and interesting more especially to members of our Church as showing its needs and rapid growth in some parts of Ontario, as well as in Manitoba and the North-West. Although not so cultivated and public as many parts of the Province, the Ottawa Valley and regions around Lake Nipissing can boast of attractions of their own not surpassed by any part of the country and rarely equalled. We have rocks and hills and valleys, forests, rivers broken by many a rapid and chute, and lakes in endless number and diversity in appearance. This part of the country too is improving at a rate second to no other almost within the Dominion. It is little more than seven years since the first railway train entered Pembroke, one hundred miles above Ottawa, and for two or three years after that there was no prospect of railway beyond. Now you can go two hundred and thirty miles by rail above this place, one hundred and forty-five of these in cars not only spacious and comfortable, but even elegant. When your correspondent first visited Mattawa, one hundred miles up the Ottawa, some seven years ago, he went by four different boats, over three portages by waggon, and took thirty-six hours. Now it can be done with care and comfort in little more than four hours. Then there was but one street and a bit of another through among the boulders of the rather primitive looking village aforesaid. It has, I should say, quite doubled in size, is almost entirely renewed, if not a new place, and looks spick and span and quite as ambitious as any modern village is expected to be. Then there was no Protestant church, no Protestant minister, and no manse or parsonage; now looking down from the heights overlooking it you see three Protestant churches, a Presbyterian manse, an English church parsonage, and three sometimes five Protestant ministers are at work there, affording a most striking, perhaps I should say a most painful instance, of apparently wasted resources in men and money caused by our divisions. Between Pembroke and Mattawa two Presbyterian ministers, Rev. Messrs. Turnbull, and McKechnie, give more or less regular supply at points along the line where a few families are clustered together; Chalk River, Point Alexander, Rockcliffe, Deux Rivers, and Klock's Mill. Beyond Mattawa, as far as Sudbury Junction, one hundred and thirty miles further, the supply is much less. There are scattered families all along the road for fully one half of that distance, and three villages in the first stages of growth, North Bay, Sturgeon Falls and Sudbury Junction, and at present a young Methodist student, with occasional visits from others are all the supply of religious ordinances provided, not to speak of about four thousand men employed on the railway, mostly Roman Catholics indeed, but with not a few of them Protestants.

At the time of the visit referred to, the road was not completed to within between two and three miles of the Junction. It was muddy and wet to the last degree; so with pants rolled up and our packs over our shoulders or in hand we plunged through mud and water, over ties and trestle work and reached Sudbury. A log shanty, but commodious, clean and comfortable, was our stopping place. It was kept by a Roman Catholic, but here we had service in the evening, and though it was pitch dark, and mud and water everywhere, fifteen men and one woman were present, not a few of whom I had met elsewhere. One visit from our student missionary in summer, and one from an Anglican clergyman from the Algoma Mills direction, were all which had been made there by Protestant ministers. This is to be a point of some importance, and already there is a Roman Catholic church built there. It is to be hoped that before a year pass there may also be at least one Protestant church there, and at North Bay, at least. The time and circumstances being unfavourable for doing much, next day we left, and next again reached Sturgeon Falls. Here there is a good beginning of a village, and Presbyterianism is well represented in it, and both the other places mentioned. On my first visit in September, I preached here in a kitchen, with a cooking stove on one hand, and a cradle with a baby in it on the other, and the audience of twenty-five or thirty before

me. A few weeks had made a great improvement in the appearance of the village, and on this occasion there was a new school-house to preach in, which I did on the Saturday afternoon. That evening I took the train and reached North Bay. At my previous visit there was no station here, and such scanty accommodation for the night that the traveller was fortunate who got a bed or even the shelter of a house. There is yet much room for improvement in this respect, but in the course of a few weeks a station, a round house, and several frame buildings had sprung up where before there was not even the all-prevailing log shanty. With regard to these primitive abodes, I observed there were three grades, the highest and most pretentious with two windows of six panes each and a stove-pipe through the roof, the second grade with one window of four or six panes, and no stove-pipe, but for chimneys either an old pork-barrel or a square erection of small logs; the third with no window of any kind, and a hole in the top, out of which the smoke might find its way as best it could. Here, at North Bay, a gang of men were diligently at work all the Sabbath, under the direction of the priest, cutting down and clearing away the woods in preparation for a Roman Catholic church. In the afternoon I preached to about forty persons, nearly all men, in a first-class car kindly placed at my disposal, and again in the evening, this time the car being filled to the door, nearly all the audience being men. These meetings in every case, but especially on the Sabbath, were evidently much enjoyed, many expressing warmly the wish that they could just have service every Sabbath.

North Bay has a most charming situation and is expected to be soon a village of some size. It is evident at a glance that it only requires easy access, and suitable accommodation to become a favourite summer resort. On Monday I again reached home, after an absence of eight days, during which I got a tolerably good view of the life of railway men. Prospected the land, saw and felt its need so much that I could not but wish I were young again and able to bear the hardships of pioneer mission work, and give to those the satisfaction and spiritual help which it is in the power of a pioneer missionary to give; satisfied also of the great need of some means to lend help in church-building in Ontario, and that we need still another arm of service in our Church better adapted for continuous, permanent pioneer service than any we yet possess.

W. D. BALLANTYNE.

Pembroke, 1883.

PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

MR. EDITOR.—Deputations of ministers, acting by order of the Presbytery, visit congregations during the fall and winter, to press the claims of, and to give information about, the Home and Foreign Mission work of our Church. In many instances, very little interest is shown; no enthusiasm; the audiences range from twenty to one hundred—very seldom do they exceed 100. These meetings are rarely mentioned by the local press, seldom by our denominational journals, in rural congregations they are never noticed at all.

On the other hand, the very same congregation gets up a tea-meeting or a social (the speakers may even be the same as at the missionary meeting)—the results are an audience of two or three hundred, a delightful time, splendid speaking, grand music, etc.; the whole a great success financially, particulars reported in all the local papers in glowing and brilliant language, and a communication sent to the denominational journal, in some instances, after being trimmed down and excrescences lopped off.

Now what is the reason of this difference? A few straight-laced old Presbyterians, myself included, believe that when the tea-meeting system flourishes in a congregation, the missionary spirit languishes; and we mean to prove the soundness of our belief by facts and figures, for which purpose we are taking a memorandum of the sums of money raised at these tea-meetings, which will, at the end of the financial year, be compared with the amounts contributed by such congregations for Home and Foreign Missions.

No one can say that this is wrong, and, therefore, I trust that THE PRESBYTERIAN will allow us a corner in which to tell our side of the story, provided always, that we treat those who differ from us with due re-

spect. However small a minority may be, they ought, in fairness, to get a hearing.

In searching for information, I sometimes find it difficult to reach the actual facts. As an example of this, I enclose you two clippings, the one from THE PRESBYTERIAN, the other from the *Guilford Mercury*, which came to hand by the same mail. In THE PRESBYTERIAN, the tea-meeting in connection with Duff's Church, East Puslinch, is said to have realized \$178; in the *Mercury*, the tea-meeting is brought to a close and the proceeds are set down at \$103, with this explanation: that, after the close of the tea-meeting (I presume, after the benediction was pronounced), most of those present waited to vote or to learn the result of the contest for an "Election Cake." Two young ladies being nominated, as both deserving the cake.

The poll was opened, and the wonderful briskness of the voting may be imagined from the fact that 774 votes were received for Miss Bella, and 768 for Miss Lizzie; and for the privilege of voting, the sum of \$74 was raked in—all this was done in the remarkably short time of twenty-five minutes. Now, I call that business, and I congratulate our Puslinch friends that all ended so serenely, proving that Puslinch is a more civilized part of the Dominion than the city of Kingston, where, lately, a voting match amongst our English Church brethren ended in a fight and a faint.

Asking pardon of the two young ladies for not giving their full names to your readers, I conclude by saying that I will take a memorandum of the sum mentioned in THE PRESBYTERIAN, because by sending this notice to a denominational journal, I judge that the committee have appropriated the cake money as well as the other.

Any practical suggestions or information on this subject from friends who, with us, view with alarm the rapid development in our Church of the tea-meeting system of raising money for the services of God's house, will be thankfully received by

H. KNOX.

Ashtown.

MISSION NOTES.

A SHORT time ago, in the Custom House of Madrid, 1,300 copies of the Word of God were publicly burned by order of the Spanish Government. English, German, American, and even Spanish newspapers, have raised a protest against this outrage. It is strange, indeed, to read of Bibles destroyed in Spain at the very time when the leading nations of Europe were publicly owing their gratitude to him who was used of God to give us back our Bibles!

THE Congo missionaries have passed through 350 miles of sparsely populated country, and have formed stations at distances of from sixty to one hundred miles. They are now above the falls, cataracts, and whirlpools, and are at the entrance to a thousand miles of river, whose banks swarm with people living in great towns, which they can easily reach by means of the steamship *Peace*, which is floating on the river. They ask for seven more missionaries.

THE most recent estimate makes the number of adherents to the Christian Church at Madagascar 350,000, including 70,000 Church members, of European missionaries twenty-eight; trained native pastors, sixty-nine; of catechists, more than 300, and of evangelists, upwards of 3,000. There are nearly 50,000 children in 900 schools. The printing-presses connected with the Mission issue about 300,000 volumes and tracts annually. The history of this Martyr Church is one of the brightest pages in the annals of Christian missions. A niece of Ranavalona is now the Queen of Madagascar. We can have no better wish for her than that she may prove a worthy successor of her illustrious predecessor.

A NEW missionary field of a most interesting character is opening up in the Peninsula of Corea. The present movement is due to the conversion of a young Korean nobleman, named Rijutei. He had gone to Japan to study, and there became a Christian. "A poet, an artist, and a man of keen intelligence," writes Dr. Loomis, the Bible society's agent, "he has already, in nine months, mastered so much of the language of Japan as to preach in it with admirable accuracy and power, and the best Japanese newspapers compete for the productions of his pen." His desire, however, is to return to his own country, and meanwhile, he is translating the Bible into the Korean language, in order to make it a means of extending the Gospel there.