

Dr. Robertson visited Menitton lately, and gave an address on Home Missions. On Monday morning he called at the office of Robert Ironsides Esq., M.P.P., who handed him a cheque of \$500 for the building fund. Mr. Ironsides is the Cattle King of Manitoba engaged in exporting cattle to the English market. He travels extensively through the country, knows what this Fund is doing and in this way expresses his appreciation of its value.

On Christmas Day a festival was held in a room at the I.O.O.F. Hall corner of Yonge and College streets Toronto. The occasion was to interest the public in the Foreigners Home Mission where youths of French, Italian or German birth may be taught the English language and literature. The promoters of the Mission have established an Evening school in the above buildings five evenings a week and a Sabbath-school at 3 p.m. on the class roll they find thirty-six of all ages who are anxious to learn reading and writing in which they find themselves very deficient. On such an occasion the festival was quite a surprise to these strangers from Europe and Asia for among them are three Syrians from the neighbourhood of Beirut. A number of visitors attended and were pleased to see some useful prizes awarded for proficiency. The programme commenced by reading the Scriptures in English after which the pupils sang various hymns which they had practiced beforehand. Thereafter Rev. T. Fenwick spoke in English and exhibited flags of various nations. Addresses followed given by the teachers of the school. An interesting address was given in Italian by Signor Mambretto who is a valuable worker for the cause of evangelical religion. Recitations were also given by some of the pupils. It may be stated that the school is carried on on purely undenominational lines. Kind friends have done much to support our efforts. We need more funds to supply urgent wants. Contributions for this interesting work may be sent to D. Sutherland, bookseller, Yonge street, Toronto.—*Con.*

The 4th Annual meeting of the Saugceen Presbyterial of the W.F.M.S., was held in Knox Church Clifford Tuesday Dec. 12th. The Auxiliaries and Mission Bands, in the Presbyterial were nearly all represented. The Clifford ladies did everything that could be desired for the comfort of all present. It was one of the most successful meetings financially and otherwise, in the history of the Society. The total amount contributed was \$623.00 being \$94.65 in advance of last year, with about \$58 yet to be paid to the Presbyterial Treasurer from two Auxiliaries. In addition to this 1053 lbs. of good warm clothing valued at \$564.95 was sent to the North West Indians. This is more than double the amount of clothing sent last year. Three new Auxiliaries and one Mission Band did remarkably well the past year. Mrs. McCrae, of Guelph, addressed the afternoon meeting and her earnest words will long be remembered by all who had the pleasure of listening to her. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year.—Mrs. Munro, Harrison, President; Mrs. Auld, Palmerston, 1st. Vice-President; Mrs. Young, Clifford 2nd. Vice-President; Mrs. Morrison, Cedarville, 3rd. Vice-President; Treasurer, Mrs. Armstrong, Gorrie. Mrs. Jamieson, Mount Forest, Recording and Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Barrington, Mount Forest, Secretary of supplies. The next Annual Meeting of the Society will be held in Palmerston.—F. M. JAMISON, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY.

Overlapping in Home Mission Work.

Something was said in the Home Mission Report to the General Assembly about overlapping in Home Mission work, and Principal Grant spoke strongly against the evil. From papers read and addresses delivered by the Principal, from time to time, in the past, his position was well known. Dr. Grant, of Orillia, made an effective reply to the respected Principal, but while one meets the Principal's contentions in many quarters in Ontario the reply has failed to put in an appearance. This overlapping is like many other things worse in appearance than

in fact, at least as far as the Presbyterian Church is concerned. In the Synod of Manitoba and North-West Territories, for example, are seventeen cities, towns and villages where the population was sufficiently numerous to lead the Dominion Government to make a separate enumeration in 1891. In ten of them, the Presbyterian Church outnumbered any other denomination, and stood second in the other seven. The returns further showed that in that Synod, in round numbers, the Presbyterians, Anglicans and Methodists, respectively, were 50,000, 48,000, and 34,000. The Presbyterians must consequently be strong in most of the country. Since admittedly, in the great majority of places they were the first on the ground, and the first also to build, and, since they never leave a place where they once had driven a stake, while work is to be done, they can make a stout defence against the sin of overlapping. It is true they have gone to possess districts where other churches preceded them, but they were asked by their own people, who in many cases formed a large part of the population, to do so. That the Presbyterian people of the West contribute so liberally for the support of outposts, and supply so large an amount of the funds for building churches and missions, is good evidence that the policy pursued meets with their approval; and being on the spot they ought to be good judges. But if the Church occupies new ground, and builds, and is sooner or later followed by another denomination, is the Presbyterian congregation to be disbanded, and are we to leave the field? One might get tired repeating the process, for he would have to reckon with Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Plymouth Brethren and others. But what about building two churches or three in small villages, where there are not enough people to make one congregation? If there are three churches they are likely Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist. The Anglicans are exclusive, and will not give their churches to denominations. Union churches have been built at a few points, but experience has shown that these come to be controlled and possessed so that the Presbyterian people find it advisable in the interest of peace and the maintenance of self-respect, to erect a building of their own. But such villages as are referred to are only the head-quarters of the missions, the missionary supplying the people of his own Church for twelve or fifteen miles on each side of the railway. Two missionaries at least would be needed in any case in such places, and if they belong to different churches, the local support is more generous. In over thirty of the towns and villages on the railways east of the Rockies, the Presbyterian congregations are self-supporting, and in a few years the number will be largely increased. The conditions that obtain in a new country differ greatly from those in an old. The small village of to-day will become a town five years hence mayhap, and early neglect will leave its unprint for the future. While the relation of the denominations is such as now exists, the Church that looks after its own people is that which will secure the respect of its people and most speedily gather strength. The Church might ask its people to unite with other churches temporarily, but they might refuse, and their friends in the East, because attached to the Church of their Fathers, might refuse to contribute to the Home Mission Fund. Such things have already happened. Is the present state of things then quite satisfactory? No, but it would scarcely be improved by any of the methods that have so far been suggested. The Presbyterian Church is holding services to-day at over one hundred and seventy points where no other Protestant Church conducts services, and other Churches hold services where we have not deemed it advisable, although asked, to begin work. When Presbyteries and Synod's Home Mission Committees control their work and know the ground, and where missionaries who are interested in saving the Home Mission Fund form so large a proportion of these courts, the Church may rest assured that there is no needless contention or overlapping. And any lurking doubt would be driven out by considering the extent of the field and the modest measure of support given the Fund.—J. R.

The Home Mission Fund.

Will you allow me a few words about the necessity of supporting adequately the Home Mission Fund this year. The crop of 1893, in Western Canada, fell much below the estimate, and the price was the lowest ever recorded. The average yield per acre in Manitoba, was below sixteen bushels and in the Territories less still, while number one hard sold for forty or even thirty-five cents per bushel for a time. Deduct the cost of threshing, binding, twine, marketing etc., and the farmer's margin is either wiped out or scarcely viable. And to aggravate the situation, owing to the scheduling of our cattle in Britain, prices fall with a thud. Almost the sole industry of the West is farming, and when this member of the community suffers, all the members suffer with it. The small cash value of the crop has caused severe stringency, and when the implement men, merchant and the rest are trying to collect debts, the farmer must satisfy the creditor who is backed by the sheriff. However willing to implement promises made to Presbyteries and missionaries in spring, very many of our people consequently will find themselves unable to do so, and we look for a considerable shrinkage in the part of the salary promised by the people for 1893. Recent visits to different parts of the field clearly show this. Where drought or hail destroys the crop, the people can do nothing to speak of, and the Home Mission Committee will be called on to help its missionaries in such a crisis. If the state of the Fund permits, well, but if not, irreparable mischief will be done.

To-day a letter was received from a missionary who has seven children, and he informed me that he would have to depend almost altogether on the grant of the Home Mission Committee, and asked whether the Committee could not advance him, now, what would be coming to him till the end of 1894. This of course is impossible. Another wrote saying, that he was in good health himself, but that his wife was ill, that the people could do nothing for him this year, and that he and his family were badly in need of clothing, but unable to purchase any. Another wrote within two weeks, asking whether he could not be changed to some other field, as his people, though much attached to him, were unable to make ends meet for themselves, and could not do much to carry his family through the winter. These are but samples. Where men are unmarried they say nothing, they are quite prepared to suffer with their people if need be, but where families are depending on them it is quite different. All these men are hopeful and think next year will right many things, but they must be helped in the present distress. But if, when the Home Mission Committee meet in March, a large deficit is staring them in the face, however willing the committee may be and however urgent the case brought before them, they must steel their hearts against all appeals for relief. I fear that the hardships of the frontier missionary are but imperfectly understood, and hence the inadequate support received by the Home Mission Fund. Does any one ask, why are married missionaries sent to such places? Often because others will not go or stay if they are sent. When the married missionary reaches his field by the help of the Committee, he realizes that he cannot get away, his family picks him there. He then goes resolutely to work and frequently does rare service. Does anyone suggest retiring from some of the fields now occupied? It cannot and must not be done. In Home Mission work, the Presbyterian Church should know no such word as retreat. Last spring twenty-one new fields were occupied, and hence the appropriations for 1893, must be considerably in advance of those of 1892, to meet ordinary demands. When the facts are known the Church will not fail to respond, and hence this statement is now made. The statement might be made longer and stronger, but I forbear.

J. ROBERTSON,

544 Church Street, Toronto,

Dec. 27th, 1893,