

and office in Birtle. In the office is a clerk, Mr. William Graham, son of the late Indian agent, Mr. James Graham, who was well known to older residents in Winnipeg. The office seemed to present the appearance of good order, and all information sought was cheerfully given. There are eleven bands in the agency. It does not seem easy to keep such close supervision as in the western agencies. The heavy expenditure on Indian affairs no doubt forbids the increase of officials beyond the present staff. But it must nevertheless be said that unless the Indian can be kept on his reserve there is little hope of civilizing or christianizing him. Mr. Markle has a good reputation in the Birtle district, and seems obliging and painstaking.

IS THE INDIAN DYING OFF ?

This agency seems to supply some facts on this question. Of the eleven bands in the agency three have increased very slightly during the past year, the total being 13 of an increase. Six have decreased seriously, making a total of 65. Three bands have been stationary. Now this is on a total of some 1,790 Indians, so that, on the whole, of the eleven bands there is a decrease in population of about 3 per cent in a single year. Even the civilized Sioux of the Bird-tail reserve have decreased $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. As formerly noted there is in these statistics a disturbing element in the fact that changes take place from one reserve to another, yet taking the area of a whole agency the error is probably very slight. The Sioux do not seem to be a robust race, and are like the Assiniboines of Indian Head in their tendency to fail before the white man. But in a number of the bands there is no difficulty in finding out the cause. Immorality lies at the root of the evil. In the bands north and north-west of Birtle the loathsome diseases, too disgraceful to be named, which are prevalent tell why the red man is fading away. Christianity is the only agency that can arrest the evil. The white man has brought his vices among the Indians, he is bound to supply to him the gospel which alone can make noble, free and pure.