

Home Missions and Methodist Expansion

A Factor in Nation Building

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IT is a long call from the days of the Saddle-bag Methodist preachers, in the great home mission field of British North America, to Canadian Methodism today, which is a mighty factor in moulding the life of our great Dominion, and in the evangelization of China and Japan.

Down through the years the discovery of Canada has been going on. The Saddle-bag preachers, in the time of our grandfathers, gathered many a congregation of scattered settlers in the kitchen of a farm house, out of such gatherings grew the first churches—real home missions—and they became centres of the

come, and all will influence Canada's future.

From the United States a steady stream of settlers is pouring into Western Canada; these are among the well-to-do class of our new citizens. They come with an abundance of possessions, and settle down on the prairies to increase their wealth. Thousands are coming from Great Britain, both poor and rich—all hoping to grow rich or richer. While Europe sends us tens of thousands of new citizens every year we must not forget that our neighbors across the Pacific are coming also, and that to-day, many industries in British Columbia are falling



ORGANIZED CLASS OF YOUNG LADIES, GRACE CHURCH, WINNIPEG.

social and religious life of the community. Then, Canada was a new country, her resources, unknown, her boundaries undefined, and her mission to the nations undreamed.

Many of the settlers, true loyalists, had left their all in New England to find a home in Upper Canada, where they might still be under the British flag. Down in the older settled districts by the Atlantic and in Newfoundland, British Methodism had established itself. Between this and the home missions in Upper Canada, was French Canada, strong in the faith which priests, nuns and people had transplanted from old France in the days before the northern half of this continent became British.

From Upper Canada to the Rockies, lay the great hunting grounds of the Indians, who brought their furs for bait to the scattered trading posts of the fur companies. Of the land beyond the Rockies little was known by the people east of the Great Lakes. Even the traders from England, who found their way around the Cape to the Northern Pacific, did not dream of its wealth, nor of its future as the Western Gateway of a Great Dominion.

To-day, Canada stands for opportunity. Throughout the world it is known that "Homes for everybody" are possible in this promised land. Wealth, liberty, opportunity, education are magic words to those in the older lands, who are struggling against poverty, oppression and ignorance. The people of South-eastern Europe have heard the call, and out of long oppression they are coming by the many thousands to prove for themselves the stories they have heard of the wonderful country where land is free and where hard work brings its reward to the worker. The stories prove true, and these thousands urge other thousands in the home land to join them. Every year more letters go and more friends

into the hands of the brown men from China, Japan, and India.

CANADA OWES MUCH TO METHODISM.

Its leaders have ever stood for the best things for the people, realizing that to them was committed a share in its nation-building—a sacred trust, but a work so great that much must be left for future leaders. We have entered into the heritage of this "Unfinished task." Down through the years the work has grown until to-day, Methodism is facing a work greater than she has ever known.

We still have the Indians, the French and the white settlers, as in the days gone, only in greater numbers; but in addition we have peoples little known to early Methodism, but who must be educated into Christian citizenship. The immigration of to-day is in search of material wealth or social betterment. Methodism dare not neglect these "Strangers" who are coming to us at the rate of over a thousand a day. The preacher follows the settler; and now, as first home in a farm kitchen or little school-house. Soon a Sunday school is begun, a church is built by the people, or with the aid of the Missionary Society, and a Home Mission is established. This process is repeated again and again so long as the settlers come and there is land "farther back."

In Northern Alberta there are thousands of Ruthenians from South-eastern Europe. Among these we have several missionaries. The Japanese and Chinese missions on the Pacific coast, while under the foreign department of our Missionary Society, are missions in our home land. These people from the Orient must be taken into consideration in all matters concerning the future of British Columbia. The Indian work of our church,

also comes under our foreign department. Geographically it is in our home land. To these oldest settlers we owe much. Our Indian missions, medical, evangelistic, industrial, and educational, are doing what they can to help the Indian through the transition from his old free life and in the adjustment to new conditions with which he is surrounded. The task is not easy.

Our work among the French in Quebec, while not extensive is important. The work of the French Methodist Institute, Montreal, cannot be over-estimated, either from an educational standpoint or taken in relation to the future citizenship of the province. In addition to the Institute we have a few churches in the country and an orphanage and mission work in the City of Montreal. Our Home Mission work includes the problem of the city. City Missions are emphatically Home Missions—and many their problems. It is a trite saying, "As goes the city so goes the country." The city problem is of national importance. Neglect the city, and the interests of our Dominion will suffer; indeed, more than interests will suffer, for the very life of our nation is imperilled. Foreign communities, crowded homes and the housing problem, unsanitary conditions, child labor, the boarding-house population (chiefly the young people), the factory and its employees, the tide of population flowing into the city from the country—are some of the problems the Methodist church has placed under Home Missions.

What are our resources for this great work? We have splendid equipment in colleges, churches, schools, young peoples' societies, hospital and orphanages. Our greatest need is men, consecrated, ready for the hard places, willing to serve anywhere, and keep on serving. We need money—we have enough—Methodism is rich, but sufficient to meet the needs of the work has not been consecrated for service. The call has come to the young people to man our home missions and take a share in our tremendous work of nation-building. Canada's mission to the nation will not be realized until we give both men and money.

In preparing for the October Missionary Meeting this article will be found suggestive. The Missionary Report will furnish statistics on Home Missions and information regarding their location. These may be used as the basis of an interesting five-minute talk.

"Strangers Within Our Gates," and "My Neighbor," by Mr. Woodsworth, are full of valuable information regarding our immigration problems.

Interest is often increased by having the different classes in Home Missions impersonated by members of the League.

Debate or discussion on the Topic would prove helpful, and may easily be arranged for out of the abundance of material available.

SUGGESTED HELPS.

"Stranger Within Our Gates" and "My Neighbor," each 35 cents in paper or 50 cents in cloth.

"Preparing the Way," free.

All Reports of All Peoples' Missions, Montreal and Winnipeg, free.

The Missionary Report (borrow if you do not own one).

Suggested Programme in the Missionary Outlook.

Order literature from F. C. Stephenson, Methodist Mission Rooms, Toronto.

When on his way to evening service the new minister of the village met a rising young man of the place whom he was anxious to interest in the church.

"Good evening, my young friend," he said, solemnly. "Do you ever attend a place of worship?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, every Sunday night," replied the young fellow with a smile. "I'm on my way to see her now."—*Exchange.*