

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

PRINCE ALBERT AND CARROT RIVER.

MR. EDITOR.—The Prince Albert Mission dates from the year 1866, when the late Rev. James Nesbit and those associated with him began Christian work among the Cree Indians. Its beauty of situation, proximity to timber, fertility of soil and its delicious water would have attracted settlers in any case. When a mission was established no wonder if the people from the Red River, whites, and half-breeds, should in selecting a home settle down where themselves and children could have the religious and educational advantages the mission afforded. The Indian population was soon displaced and the work partook more of the character of Home Mission. Not that Indians were neglected or their children untaught. The very presence of the white man caused the Indian to go farther back, at Prince Albert as everywhere else, that he might live. Good work was done and this is seen in the disposition of the Indians among whom the Rev. John McKay and others are labouring to-day.

The settlement has now a population of about 6,000 souls scattered over eight townships of six miles square each. The first settlers took up claims along the river front, as in the Red River Settlement. Along the North Branch there is a continuous settlement, below and above Prince Albert, for thirty miles. At a later date land was occupied along the South Branch on both sides in the same way. The two Branches are here only twelve or fifteen miles apart. The land between these rivers is fertile and admirably adapted for agriculture. In places it is much broken up by ponds, but there are wide unbroken stretches, especially in the Red Deer Hill district. The prairie is rolling, not flat. The banks of the river at Prince Albert are not high but well defined. As you recede from the river the land on the south side rises in three successive terraces, the first and second being respectively about one-quarter and one-half mile wide. All the choice farming locations near the town are taken up, but much good land yet remains to be occupied some distance out of the town. The North Saskatchewan constitutes the boundary at Prince Albert between the prairie and the forest.

The town of Prince Albert is situated on the North Saskatchewan, about 500 miles north-west of Winnipeg, and 250 north of the international boundary line. Until about eighteen months since it was a row of houses strung along the Saskatchewan trail for four or five miles. The Hudson Bay Company had its own town, Goschen, about a mile east of the mission property. Mr. C. Mair and others had theirs two miles west of the mission property; and the Bishop of Saskatchewan had his town a mile further west still. As to desirability the mission site was the best, but the Hudson Bay Company's site was good. Business was carried on all along the front. Lawyers and doctors thought one place as good as another. This could not continue, and all saw it, and put forth strenuous efforts to gain the lead. The Hudson Bay Company gave the Methodist Church land and they built at Goschen. The Episcopal church and college were built on their own lands. C. Mair & Co. had a saw and grist mill on their property. The Hudson Bay Company had their mill. Four miles down the river was Captain Moore's grist and saw mill. Our missionary was not the man to wait in idleness; even in the estimation of those who lost by his action, he is said to have contributed largely to the present result. The town is no longer length without breadth, but something with a body the centre of which is on the property of the Foreign Mission Committee.

Prince Albert has a population of about 1,500. It has two grist and saw mills, a sash and door factory, planing mills, several good stores, a bank, Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches, a college, a Roman Catholic convent, a Public School, and a large number of private residences. Business is now confined within narrow limits and professional men have abandoned the upper and lower towns. The buildings are all of a substantial character, and last year \$90,000 worth are said to have been erected. Good brick is being made there, and in the future this material is more likely to be used than wood. The *Prince Albert Times* is a weekly paper conducted with a good deal of ability. There is a weekly stage and mail from Qu'Appelle and since the time of my

visit the telegraph has been extended to the town. A prohibitory liquor law being in force there are no hotels, but the friendly, hospitable spirit of the people suffers no one to be unprovided for. The people are intelligent, enterprising and sociable, and life is much more enjoyable there than the distance from larger centres would suggest. The volume of business transacted is large, owing to the town being the trade centre for all outlying settlements and for much of the Indian supplies.

Our congregation at Prince Albert is in a flourishing state. A year ago last summer a neat brick church with a seating capacity of about 180 was built. Owing to the increase in the population of the town this is now too small. The congregation propose to build a larger church next season. A commodious brick manse was finished last autumn and the finances of the congregation is on a sound basis. The timely aid given by the Foreign Mission Committee of our Church in the liberal donation of lots was of great value. All spoke in complimentary terms of the service rendered by Mr. Steveright to town and congregation, and Mr. McWilliam received a cordial welcome. By letters received since I learn that our cause is prospering in his hands.

Since the establishment of the mission, the school has been a potent factor for good. The most of the young people, whites, half-breeds and Indians at Prince Albert received their education there. Miss Baker, the present teacher, has rendered the Church and settlement signal service. Her unselfish devotion to Christian work in discouraging circumstances stamps her as a woman of true missionary spirit. Efficient as she has been as a teacher, her duties in the school constituted but a small share of her labours. Her instruction was not wholly or chiefly of a secular character. She never forgot that she was sent to do Christian work and the intellect was not cultivated to the neglect of the heart. Could her school be now merged into some higher institution for the education of young women it would be a boon to the settlement. Just now all such instruction is imparted at the Roman Catholic School. I need scarcely wait to point out that this is undesirable. The people of Prince Albert are anxious to have established among them an institution for higher education. They promise aid to start and support such an institution and they desire that the Foreign Mission Committee may devote part of their property at Prince Albert to the purposes of higher education. In a country where the State makes no provision for higher education a request of this nature wears a different aspect from what it would do in Ontario. Many of the arguments employed in the establishment of Manitoba College in its original intention would apply in the case of Prince Albert; but the subject can not be discussed here.

The other congregations in the Prince Albert settlement are the Ridge, thirteen miles south-west of Prince Albert, Willoughby, ten miles south of the Ridge, and the Flats or the Colleston church, ten miles east of Prince Albert. There are about thirty families connected with these congregations, the Flats being the strongest and the Ridge the weakest. Churches were erected at these three points, and each received a grant of \$100 from the Church and Manse Building Fund. The Rev. Mr. Steveright interested himself in the erection of the two former, and the last is due to the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Sinclair. They are free from all debt. The members of our Church settled on South Branch now receive services also.

When the Rev. R. G. Sinclair went to the North-West he was appointed to labour at Carrot River. The want of a house at Carrot River compelled him to live at Prince Albert, fifty-five miles from his field. He attempted to give the people fortnightly supply. The intervening country is low and marshy, without settlers, and hence travelling in winter was dangerous and in early summer most difficult. He hoped that the growth of the settlement would warrant him in moving his family there altogether. Lack of survey and distance from the market hindered growth and hence he hesitated and continued to give fortnightly supply, devoting the rest of his time to work at and around Prince Albert. To add to the difficulties of supply the South Branch had to be crossed, and when the ice was forming or breaking up this was impossible. There are about thirty families in the settlement and a number of young men. Mr. Sinclair is the only minister visiting Carrot River. The arrangements for supply this winter are as follows. Mr. Sin-

clair preaches monthly at Carrot River, the Flats and South Saskatchewan; fortnightly at the Ridge and Willoughby. Mr. McWilliam preaches twice every Sabbath at Prince Albert and monthly in the afternoon at the Flats. The contributions of Prince Albert (\$800 per annum) go toward the support of Mr. McWilliam, and the contributions of all the other stations towards the support of Mr. Sinclair. This mode of supply is temporary. Carrot River requires the presence of a missionary all the time. The prospect of a railway within two years, with the influx of population it is sure to bring, makes this point important even now.

The Carrot River that gives its name to the settlement issues out of Water Hen Lake, flows north-east for 200 miles almost parallel with the Saskatchewan, into which it falls at the Pas. The settlement is on both sides of the river, east and north of the lake and comprises nearly three townships. The land is somewhat level (not low) and very fertile. Several families from the neighbourhood of Paris, Finlayson, Tennants and others are settled here and doing well. The district abounds in game. Water-fowl cover the streams, ponds and lakes. Moose, deer and bear are plentiful in the Birch Hills. Partridges, prairie-chickens, and even ptarmigans shock one with their tameness. Fish of fine flavour and large size are found in great abundance in the River and Lake. Like many another district in the North-West, time will do much for its development. Let us sow the good seed in the virgin soil of the Saskatchewan Valley and a rich harvest will by God's blessing be reaped by and by. Mention should be made of the arduous labours of Mr. Sinclair in that field. With fidelity he has served the Church amidst many discouragements and disappointments. More than once his life was in great peril—in fact his escape in some instances were most remarkable. The hardships and privations of these pioneer missionaries and their families entitle them to more sympathy and generous support than is generally accorded them, but the unseen are often forgotten except by God. R.

LETTERS FROM TRINIDAD.

It affords us pleasure to be able to place before our readers the following letters from Trinidad. The first is from the Rev. John Knox Wright, formerly of London East, and the second, by Mrs. Morton, is addressed to the members of Woman's Missionary Associations throughout the Church:

MR. EDITOR.—The flight of time reminds me that there are friends in Canada watching for news of us and our work.

We reached Trinidad on Dec. 12th. At the pier we were met by the Rev. Mr. Falconer, of the U. P. Church, Port of Spain. This gentleman and his good lady showed us much kindness. We spent two days at their house in peaceful rest. Then we came on to Couva in company with Mr. Falconer. Here we found one, Rev. K. J. Grant, of San Fernando, who had made necessary arrangements for our comfort. The Lord bless him for his helpful kindness.

Our health has been very good thus far. I had a touch of the fever one day, but it was very slight. I brought it on by exposing myself to the sun's rays in superintending a piece of work in the mission yard.

Our work is full of interest. I believe that we have gained the confidence and heart of the Coolies. Every where we go we are greeted by everybody with the "salaam salutation." I sincerely trust that we may gain hearts for Christ, our Master. There are under my charge six schools. In Couva village, Abraham Lincoln is the teacher. This man was converted in India, the same year that Abraham Lincoln was chosen President of the United States. Abraham acts as interpreter in the public services. He is very well fitted for this work. In California, the teacher is Mr. Sullivan (a Creole). This school is the largest in the district. Its average is fifty to sixty. At Esperanza there is another Creole, a Mr. Fox, who is a capital teacher. At Milton, Gahadar is teacher; at Calcutta, Madahosdeen; and at Waterloo, Gilber.

There is a very fine young man at Milton, named Abdul, just free from indenture. The manager of the estate speaks well of him. The missionaries are all satisfied as to his fitness for the work of Catechist. A catechist is urgently needed at Milton. Our funds will not meet the outlay necessary. If some wealthy friend or congregation in Ontario would place \$150 per annum at my disposal for this purpose, the thing