

ROVING INDIANS.

One of the crying evils connected with the Indian question is the tendency of the Indians to desert their reserves for the purpose of hanging about towns, where they contract drinking and other bad habits, and are not only demoralized themselves but become an occasion of demoralization to others. A case in point is that of the Rolling River Indians, who are scarcely ever to be found upon their reserve, but loiter about the suburbs of such towns as Minnedosa and Rapid City, and live such dissipated lives that it is impossible to carry on any effective mission work among them. Some weeks ago the Presbytery of Minnedosa called the attention of the Synod's Foreign Mission committee to this case, and asked that the Government be asked to assist in keeping these people on their reserve, and be asked also to provide them with a farm instructor, so that they may be encouraged to devote more attention to the cultivation of their lands. The committee wrote to the Government presenting and endorsing these requests. The Indian commissioner replied as follows:—

"I beg * * * to inform you that a change was recently made in the Indian Act for the purpose of giving Agents power to deal with Indians loafing about towns, in the manner those of the Rolling River band are said to be doing. I have written to the Agent to exert himself to put a stop to the practice, which certainly must have a very baneful influence upon those addicted to it, but it is sometimes very difficult to prevent, especially when encouragement is given by the settlers. I regret that I am unable to see my way to recommending the appointment of a farming instructor for the Band in question, but am instructing the Agent to have stricter supervision of it, which I think will have at least as good, and possibly better effect."

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE.

A visitor to the Portage la Prairie Indian school reports: After service last Sunday evening I went down to the Indian school in Portage la Prairie. The two ladies, Misses Walker and Fraser, had driven down two miles in the afternoon with a pony and carriage placed at their disposal by Mrs. McKay (and this is a regular thing), and had held a service in the little log church in the woods with some 40 Sioux. The children in the school were nine in number, some having gone home to their friends for a day. All had been at church that day, and as the visitor entered they presented as interesting a picture as could have been seen in any Christian home. They sang a hymn in English (Louisa, one of themselves, accompanying on the harmonium), and then another in Sioux. The new school house adjoining the mission building is approaching completion, and will accommodate 25 pupils. After reading the 23rd Psalm and leading in a short prayer the visitor left, cheered and delighted with what he had seen. Two or three years of this school has completely changed the attitude of these Indian refugees.