

MISSIONS TO THE INDIANS.

A GROWING MISSION.

The work at the Portage la Prairie Indian Mission is growing both in volume and in interest. The attendance at the school now numbers eighteen, of whom twelve are boarders, the rest day pupils, who go home to the tepees in the outskirts of town after the school day is over. The industrial work in the school is of a very real character. A few days ago, when a member of the committee visited the school, he found that the two biggest girls in the school (aged about 16 or 17) had been excused from class work in the afternoon because they had done the school washing in the morning, a washing of the size of which there was abundant evidence on the clothes-lines in the yard. The building begins to be too small for the increasing attendance, and it has been decided to increase the accommodation by the erection of an extension which on the ground floor will provide kitchen and bath-room, and upstairs a loft to serve as a store-room. Hitherto the same room has had to serve the whole institution as kitchen, dining-room and often as study. The matron shows with evident satisfaction a cistern which had just been put in, and the cost of which has been defrayed by the King's Daughters of Motherwell, Ontario.

The religious services of the mission continue to be attended with deep interest, and a brave, if now and then unequal, struggle is carried on in behalf of the Indians to rescue them from their heathenish superstitions, and, most difficult of all, from the remorseless creatures who for money, or even more unworthy objects, break the law and supply the Indians with liquor. But that the Indians are growing both in Christian perseverance and in manly independence is shown not merely by the religious services which they take a share in conducting, but by the fact that they are trying to buy at the market value a block of 300 acres of land adjoining the Portage. These men are Sioux originally from Minnesota, who have no treaty rights in Canada, and now finding themselves fenced off from nearly all the land about the town, in the vicinity of which they have lived for nearly thirty years, they wish to buy a place they can call their own. There are instances where individual Indians have saved money and bought land, but this is believed to be the first instance, in the North-West at least, where a whole band has shown the public spirit and provident self-interest implied in such a proposal. The committee has been asked to help the Indians to secure possession of the land, and is using its endeavors in that direction.

The transfer of Mr. D. H. McVicar to Mista-wasis leaves Mr and Mrs. Skene alone to prosecute their trying work among the Indians of the File Hills reserves.