

these two Churches legally represent all the Italian Protestant Churches, from each of which money was collected for the purchase of the ground. The unity of the spirit manifest in the various Protestant Churches of Italy in this and other religious movements is to be greatly commended. T. H.

*Torre Pellice, Italy. 30th June, 1883*

#### NOTES ON MANITOBA.—II.

Brandon is a thriving town of about four thousand inhabitants, situated on the south-west of the Assiniboine river. Though the buildings are not so substantial and Ontario-like as those in Portage La Prairie, there seemed to be more business activity. One advantage frame buildings possess over more substantial material is the ease with which they can be moved. The Imperial Bank was on rollers, and was being moved to a corner lot on the Main street. A wag remarked, in reference to this removal of the Bank, that if banks could be so easily moved from their foundations, he would risk no more of his money in them. Brandon, like all the towns and villages of Manitoba and the North-West, has a large share of Presbyterians. I met many men of energy and business talent from all parts of Ontario, who had been prominent members of the Presbyterian Church, and who will be men of strength to the Church wherever they are. The church edifice is a neat frame building, situated in a commanding position overlooking the town and the country north of the river. It is capable of seating about five hundred people. It is of great importance to Presbyterianism, and the congregation itself, that a minister be settled here immediately. The country south to the Brandon hills and to Plum Creek is fertile and yields large crops. Here are many Presbyterian families, who require some service from a minister of their own Church, and if this is not rendered others will occupy the field and do the work, and thus many who prefer, on principle, the Presbyterian Church, will be forced to worship elsewhere. Northward for miles, in the direction of Rapid City, the same is true. There are many young men on homesteads, and many families who are Presbyterians, but are unable to go so far as Brandon on the south, or Rapid City on the north. This part of the field could be supervised to some extent, and occasional service given in the meantime by the pastor of the Brandon congregation. It is, therefore, a matter of importance to Presbyterians outside of that town, that a live, enthusiastic minister be settled there. Besides, every day is making the work more difficult in the town itself. The Methodists have enlarged their church, and every effort is naturally made to enlarge their territory and strengthen their hold. Whether the sanguine expectations of some, in regard to the importance of this town, be realized or not, the point is one of importance from a Christian standpoint, both for its own sake and the extensive country on every side for miles, destitute of Presbyterian service and pastoral visitation.

#### A RIDE TO RAPID CITY.

This small town lies almost north of Brandon, twenty-four miles. The country between these points is well settled, except at intervals where large areas are held by speculators. The Assiniboine river flows sluggishly in its winding channel at Brandon, and the low land on the north and north-east is often under water, but at this season it is excellent pasture land. After crossing the bridge we began, at the distance of one or two miles to ascend quite a steep ridge, that seems at one time to have been the bank of the river. As soon as we reached the high land we had a splendid view of Brandon, beautifully situated on the brow of the hill, sloping gently towards the river. The soil for some distance was light, and here and there traces of alkali were visible. A few miles brought us into an area of good soil. The loam was deep, and resting on clay sub soil. Near Rapid City the farms were broken up by numerous small ponds. They are too small to dignify with the name of lakes, and are not marshes, for in the most of them the water was quite clear. Round the margins of these ponds prairie grass grows in great luxuriance, and besides they are the resort of wild ducks. The farm that has a few such places on it is improved rather than otherwise. The farm houses are of logs, and chiefly one storey and an attic. At a short distance from the house is usually a low log stable, the roof of which is covered with a layer of straw six or eight feet deep. Many of the farms are unfenced, but large fields have been

broken up, and some gave promise of splendid crops of wheat this season. Everywhere signs of industry and determination to win a good home for themselves were visible among the farmers. Rapid City is a name that excites in us expectations not realized. Its situation is very fine, on the gentle declivity on the south side of the river, and the soil is extremely fertile, and a few miles to the east the hills are covered with birch and other trees of considerable size. The foundations of this town were laid in great hopes, for the original survey, during the Reform Government reign at Ottawa, would have brought the C. P. R. here, instead of twenty four miles south. In those early days land was bought up wholesale, and town lots were laid out on both sides of the river, and to the east and west, which, if they had been built on, would have made the town equal in area to Toronto. But those lots, with their square pegs numbered and marking off streets and avenues, which were to be in the future, make one think of graves in a cemetery. They are graves, for in many of them hundreds of dollars have been buried, and there seems no prospect of a golden resurrection. The population at present may be one thousand, more or less. The houses are frame, and some of them built with fine taste. The town boasts of three or four hotels, which seem to flourish. There are two or three industries of various kinds that are doing a small business. However, the country is too rich, and too well settled to remain in the present isolated condition. As the North-Western Railway will go far north, there is only one other line that may tap the town, either a branch of the Souris from Brandon, or a projected line from Chater, a few miles east of Brandon. Either of these will connect Rapid City with the C. P. R., and thus form an outlet for the produce of the country. Besides if it should tap the Oak river region, and Fort Ellice and the North-West country generally, the sanguine spirits are sure of the future of the place. Presbyterianism has a solid foothold here. Many of the most enterprising citizens are members or adherents of our Church. The congregation worship in a neat and commodious frame building, capable of seating between three and four hundred people. The congregation is without a settled pastor. The Rev. James Douglas at present is conducting service there and at Oak River, some miles west, where there is a large settlement of Presbyterians. Mr. Douglas is doing good work there. In view of the probable development of the place, however, it is one of the forts that ought to be held by a settled pastor.

In company with Mr. Douglas, I rode in a north-westerly direction towards Shoal Lake, a distance of about thirty miles. We made an early start, and rode over one of the finest agricultural tracts of country I had seen in Manitoba. For miles the soil was a loam from two to four feet deep. The surface was not a dead level like many parts along the C.P.R., but gently undulating, and can easily be drained. Some of the settlers in this region in the neighbourhood of New Dale and Morney have been there two and three years, and have had immense crops of wheat and oats, but cannot get them to market. But as the North Western, in the course of a year, will open up this whole region, the farmers are extremely hopeful of the future, and in a short time this will unquestionably be one of the fairest wheat growing regions in Manitoba. We paid a brief visit to New Dale, and found Mr. McPherson, a student of Toronto University. He conducts service at the Huron Settlement, New Dale, and Morney, and is laying a solid foundation for future growth in these and other places. In this extended journey through this part of the country there are many families—I feel confident the majority of them—who are Presbyterian. They are permanent settlers. They went out to make their future home there, and are thoroughly satisfied with the country. It is only a matter of a few years when a net-work of railways will spread over the whole country, to the north-west of the C.P.R. for thousands upon thousands of bushels of grain that could feed a vast population must find a market. Their privations now are the want of schools and churches, for many of those now in the country are intelligent, thrifty, and moral. As a Church we cannot do too much for those people who are the pioneers to-day, but in less than ten years will be in comfortable circumstances, if not wealthy. I have the most thorough belief in the rapid and permanent progress of the country. When the soil is so fertile, where coal exists in abundance and suitable for household and heating purposes, and where lumber in

future will be cheaper than now, for facilities of carriage will be better, the country must prosper and grow.

In Ontario the brave settlers on bush farms had to clear the land before the crop could be grown. Fifteen or twenty years' toil had to be expended before they were in a position to help themselves or others in the maintenance of a minister. The markets were few and far distant, and prices low. Manitoba, however, has Ontario at her back, ready to receive her grain. The farmer in the second year can raise more grain than could be done in Ontario by the first settlers after a quarter of a century. Branch railways are projected north of the C.P.R. that will bring markets close to the millions that yet will occupy the land. The Province is unique; the condition of things is different from that of any other Province in the Dominion. What we do for the spiritual wants of the people should be done at once, and commensurate with the wants of the people and the wealth of the Presbyterian Church.

In the last issue of THE PRESBYTERIAN the growth of the Church in size and finance is tabulated. It is a glorious record. In twelve years—from 1871–1883—the number of preaching stations increased from nine to 225. In the former year there were only four ministers and missionaries. Now there are sixty-seven. No such progress ever was possible in Ontario. Under God, this record is due to the brave and pious men who years ago occupied a few posts in that great land for Christ, and to our present faithful and self-sacrificing men in all parts of the field, and to our energetic and devoted Superintendent of Missions, Robertson. No one can have a true idea of the vastness of the field under his charge, nor appreciate the difficulties and cares of his office until they have been over a part of the territory at least. He has done glorious work already in the North-West and he is laying foundations upon which strong and healthy congregations will be seen in a few years. Wherever Mr. Robertson's name was mentioned it was with affection and gratitude.

One serious injury to our work is the withdrawal of students during the winter. All admit the evil. The question is, what is the remedy? Whatever is done should be done immediately. Other evangelical Churches are alive and putting forth every effort to send men and means into the great spiritual fields of the country. The Baptists are to change the basis of their college work and do it in Winnipeg. While I was in Manitoba Episcopalian visitors from England were west on the end of the C.P.R. to see the country and report to the churches in England. Our Church has done nobly. Our foothold is solid. But we need to make it a base of operation to go forward to greater achievements in the future.

As regards the supply of men, let Manitoba College hold its session during the summer. It can be done better in Manitoba than Ontario, for this, among other reasons, that the average temperature is higher there than here in summer. It will not be overly oppressive for Professors or students. If it can be done equally well in Ontario let it be done and the difficulty is so far solved. In this way the students of Manitoba College would be available when the Ontario students return to their studies.

It will be impossible, it seems to me, to draft a squad of twenty or fifty ministers from their churches for such work in winter. Their pulpits could be supplied by students or probationers. If it were by the former it would be an injury to them in their college standing to preach frequently during the session. If the pulpits of this squad drafted for the North-West were supplied by probationers, why not the Probationers go out themselves? For it would be argued by such congregations: if they are able to supply us for six months they are in every way as well able to go to the North West as our pastor.

As for money we may look abroad and ask for help, but our one main resource is our own Church. In justice the wealthy Presbyterians and others of Scotland and England should gladly aid us in this great work of laying the foundation of a nation and a Christian Church. But if all classes in our loyal and wealthy Church can only be brought to see the necessity of immediate and generous aid, I have faith that her patriotism and piety will by God's grace, move her wealth and devote it to the happiness of coming generations and for God's glory. GEO. BURNFIELD.

*Brockville.*