

**HOME MISSIONS, WEST.**

By Rev. Dr. Robertson.

**Hindrances.**

1. The Extent of the Field.—Five thousand miles between extremities—Quebec and Dawson City.

2. Sparse Settlement.—In Manitoba, the best settled province in the west, only three persons to the square mile, and one person to two square miles in British Columbia.

3. Poverty.—Settlers beginning life without means. The well-to-do rarely care to go to a new country, why should they?

4. Diversity of Tongues.—The children in the schools speak twenty-one different languages—the laws of Assiniboia must be translated into thirteen languages “to be understood of the people.”

5. Diversity of Beliefs, or No Belief at All.—Immigrants from the continent of Europe are mostly Lutherans, Roman or Greek Catholics, or members of the Reformed Church. The Doukhobors and Mennonites are exceptions, holding a faith akin to the Quakers.

6. Mormons are establishing themselves and extending. They are as difficult to treat as refractory ores.

7. The indifference and hostility of miners; the drinking, gambling, lewdness, Sabbath desecration that generally characterize their camps and towns are formidable obstacles at the outset.

8. Worldliness.—The prospect of acquiring wealth rapidly looms up before men reared in poverty, and they are fascinated by it. Men, once elders of the Church, without a blush tell you that they are in the West, not for their health, nor for the good of their souls, but to make money, and they want to have nothing to do with the Church or her work:

9. The Lack of a Sufficient Number of Men Suitable for the Frontier.—The students graduating from our Eastern colleges are heard during the last session in all the eligible vacancies within reach. They are bespoken, and, once licensed, they are apt to be settled in the East. New districts, because of the roving, restless, enterprising men found there, and because of less restraint and larger freedom, require picked men—men of spirituality, of preaching power, of tact, of energy, perseverance and

knowledge of men. Unlike the church at Antioch the East keeps the Pauls and Apollos to do garrison duty, and the frontier is welcome to the others. We bless God for young and strong men who supply many of our missions, but their number is too few.

10. The lack of Adequate Winter Supply.—In Central Ontario, Muskoka, Algoma, Western Canada, severe losses have been inflicted on the Church. Where to-day there might have been promising congregations, we have feeble missions, with no hope, and all because men were not available for winter service. A little more loyalty to the Church on the part of our young men, would speedily remove the hindrance. Algoma: “One of the greatest discouragements is the insufficiency of supply for winter months. The staff last summer consisted of six ordained missionaries, four catechists and sixteen students. The ordained men and catechists remained, but only two students, leaving fourteen fields to be provided for. Only one winter in the history of the Presbytery were our missions supplied in winter.” This policy is losing us not merely families, but whole stations.

**Encouragements.**

1. Growth.—In 1875 in the Western Section there were twenty-two Presbyteries; now forty-two. There were then 132 missions; during the twenty-four years since 590 were added, making 722. Of these 201 have become self-sustaining charges, 92 augmented congregations, and 384 are still on the list. The balance have been added to other charges or have ceased to exist. At least 300 missions have, in these twenty-four years, become congregations, all giving liberal help to the missionary and benevolent schemes of the Church.

2. Tens of thousands have been converted to God, and God's people edified; homes kept pure, sober and sweet, families reared in godliness. Said an American to the writer recently, “I have brought my family over here. At first I voted you Canadians slow, and could not stand to lose Sunday from business. I now find the rest does me good; I make about as much money as before and I have better health. My children go to your Sunday school; they ask me questions about the lessons, and, for fear I should have to confess ignorance