

Rev. E.F. Wilson's Trip to The North West.

I Started Friday evening, July 24th, taking with me three Indian boys, Abram, Joe, and White. We had to go 300 miles by steamboat to Port Arthur, 430 miles on by C.P.R. to Winnipeg, 356 miles thence, still by rail, to Regina in the Assiniboia district, and from that place it was my intention to branch away from the railroad and visit as many of the Indians as possible, travelling with a pony and buckboard and camping on the prairie at night. My object in making this trip was with a view to extending (D.V.) our work at the Shingwauk Home. I thought, if God so willed, I might perhaps induce some of the children of those wild Indians of the North-West to return with me to our Institution, and I had some idea of eventually establishing, if the way so opened, a branch home in those distant regions. With these objects in view I sought first of all an interview with Bishop Anson whose headquarters are at present at Regina, and was very glad to find that he was entirely in sympathy with me and most anxious that something should be done towards the evangelization and christian training of these wild Indians of whom there are many thousands in his diocese, and on whose behalf but little has at present been attempted. The Bishop also entirely approved of my plan, which was to try and induce some half dozen or so of these wild boys to go back with me to the Shingwauk, to keep them for three years, and at the end of that time to bring them back and let them form the nucleus of a branch institution some where in his diocese. I thought it advisable to take three of our Shingwauk boys with me not only that they might help me in camping but chiefly that by so doing the Indians whom I visited might have ocular demonstration of what it was we proposed to do with any of their children whom they might consent to give over to my care.

We arrived at Regina in the middle of the night, that is at 3 a.m. Tuesday morning July 28th. We got our tent up on the prairie on the north side of the rail (the town being on the south) and went to bed for three or four hours, then the sun beating on the sides of the tent and making it uncomfortably warm roused us up and we sallied forth to have a look at our surroundings. All around us as far as eye could reach North, South, East, and West was prairie, looking like the great green ocean, the distant farm houses and teepees of the Indians appearing like vessels and sailing boats in the distance. When we camp in Algoma we always take care to have wood and water close at hand, but here there were neither. How were we to bake our bread and boil our water for tea? There was a cottage not far off, so we went and enquired. Wood we were told could be bought in the town for \$7.00 a cord, poplar wood such as we could get for one third of the price in Algoma, and water could be had from a pump also in the town. Well, would these good people give us a little hot water to make our tea with this morning? Oh yes, they were quite willing, and on condition that my boys brought water

for them as required from the pump they would keep us supplied with hot water and also do our cooking for us as long as we remained; they were Roman Catholics, and it was very kind of them. The town of Regina appears to be ambitious, but it is at present very straggling, there are several good buildings, a brick court house, ditto post office (not yet completed) and two or three hotels, but you have to go across the prairie to get from one to the other. About a quarter of a mile to the west are the Government offices, a mile further the Lieut. Governor's residence, and on beyond that the mounted police barracks, where the noted Riel is at present confined as prisoner together with some 80 others, Indians and half breeds. We were fortunate in arriving just in time for Louis Riel's trial, and day by day during that first week I sat in the court-room listening to the evidence and making pencil sketches of the prisoner, counsel, and witnesses, and on Saturday afternoon I heard the sentence against the traitor pronounced.

But my object in this journey to the North West was mainly in the interest of the Indians and on the Monday after our arrival we started off. I hired a buckboard and pony from the livery stable in Regina, and about 10 o'clock in the morning we were already on the trail leading to Pie-a-pots' reserve, 30 miles to the north. For the first 14 or 15 miles we had nothing but prairie before us, the farms being very few and far between. At 1.30 o'clock we stopped for dinner, but as there was no water to be got you may be sure we felt rather dry, and wished for a cooling draught such as Algoma so plentifully affords. In the afternoon of Aug. 3rd at 4.30 p.m. we sighted the teepees on Pie-a-pots reserve, and shortly after drew up at Mr. McKinnon's. Mr. McKinnon is Farm Instructor there. He very kindly invited us to stop at his house during my stay, and informed us there were on the reserve, 550 Crees and these all pagans. They get from Government each month per head 12 lbs flour 12 lbs potatoes, and 5 lbs of beef. They are all very much opposed to the priests and refuse to send any of their children to Qu'appelle, school, they say the Government is trying to break them up as a people by getting their children away from them. The reserve is eight and a half miles square (72 square miles). In the evening I took a sketch of the place and had quite a pow-wow [big talk] with them. I had to speak slowly as I speak Ojibeway and theirs is the Cree language but they are both somewhat similar. I told them about our Institution and about my taking chief Buhkwujjenene of Garden River to England. I made Abram take off his boot and show what an Indian boy could do in the way of bootmaking. It was handed round and examined closely. All the people wore regular Indian costume, none of the men wore trousers but had ornamented leggings, a blanket round the body and the hair plaited and ornamented with strips of fur. After our pow-wow I asked if Pie-a-pot had returned, he had been working some distance away. They said "yes, he was in his tepee," we accordingly repaired thither, a tall Indian leading and two others on horseback bringing up the rear. The chief has the reputation of being a