

aid where the congregation is admitted on the list being definite up to \$600 and a manse, and beyond this being regulated, not by the judgment of a Committee liable to err, even when most anxious to do right, but by the rate of giving in the congregation.

It is farther stated that "a Scheme which has been rejected on the most intimate knowledge of it" (this can only apply to the Scheme in its general principles, not certainly to its details, which are different from those of any Church known to the writer) by the English Presbyterian Church, and the Irish Church, and the Presbyterian Churches of Australia, ought not to be hastily accepted by us." I admit at once that the preference shewn by these Churches for the Sustentation Fund is a good reason why the Canadian Church should not hastily adopt a Supplementing one; or rather, why it should not hastily adhere to it, for it is no longer a question of its original adoption. But the fact stated furnishes no sufficient reason for our following these Churches in their action in the matter of ministerial support. Their circumstances are not ours. Those of the Irish Church at the time of its adoption of the Sustentation Fund were entirely different from ours. It found itself, after the abolition and commutation of the Parliamentary grant, and through the generosity of its ministers, in possession of a large Common Fund, the capital of which was to be preserved intact and the proceeds to be devoted to ministerial support. In such circumstances it is difficult to see what it could do but adopt some modification of the Sustentation Scheme. As for the English Church, not only is the number of its congregations much smaller than that of ours, but the area over which they are scattered is also much more circumscribed, making the administration of a Sustentation Fund a much simpler matter than it could possibly be with us, even with our present dimensions. The circumstances of the Australian Churches approach more nearly those of Canada, though even in their case, in the absence of confederation, the existence of separate Churches, and in the social condition of the people, there are important differences. After all, I have yet to learn that in any colony or in any country outside of Scotland, Presbyterianism has made more rapid progress than in Canada, where the Supplementing Fund, in an admittedly imperfect form, has been in operation for many years. I admit that the course of action of these Churches in the matter of ministerial support affords a good reason for our acting in any change we make with the utmost deliberation. It may be said even to justify the Canadian Church in considering anew the applicability of the Sustentation Scheme to its wants, as for these two years it has been doing. It cannot, however, do anything towards determining the wise course of procedure for our Church in the matter of ministerial support, differently circumstanced as we are.

There are other points touched in Mr. McLeod's letter which invite attention. But this letter is already too long. I am at one with Mr. McLeod in thinking the matter is "far too important to be in a hurry about." Any amount of time necessary to allow a full examination of the Schemes before the Church, or to make such modification of the one or the other as may make it more acceptable and more efficient, should be given. On the other hand, just because it is so important, because the temporal comfort of the families of many deserving ministers of the Church is involved in its wise settlement, and because the present prosperous season seems a peculiarly opportune time for launching a Scheme involving considerably increased expenditure, any unnecessary delay is to be deprecated. A Church which is able to raise over \$170,000 for missionary, collegiate and other general objects, which has 305 ministers receiving less than \$750 and a manse, and which is devoting less than \$15,000 to the assistance of weak congregations in sustaining their ministers, ought not to be able to acquiesce in such a state of things very long.

On the whole, the prospects of improvement in this important matter are very encouraging. What is to be desired is, that before the meeting of the Assembly both Schemes should be carefully examined in their principles and bearings, and such suggestions made in regard to the one preferred as may lead to an early and wise settlement. It will, no doubt, be the duty of all of us to do what we can to give full effect to the Scheme in favour of which the Church, through its Presbyteries and through the General Assembly, expresses its preference.

Toronto, January 21st, 1882. JOHN M. KING.

MISSIONARY WORK IN THE FAR NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—I am happy to be able to report at last that I have reached my destination in safety. I left home on the 22nd of August, and on my arrival in Winnipeg placed myself under the care of Prof. Hart, who with Mrs. Hart spared no pains to make my stay in the city an enjoyable one. The morning after my arrival I found, with Prof. Hart's help, a man who was about to set out for Edmonton in a week, and it was arranged at once that I should accompany him. The intervening days were spent in preparing my travelling and camping outfit, but when the appointed day came, my companion was not ready to start; another day was appointed, and again he failed. Becoming at last ashamed of meeting people on the streets to whom I had said *good-bye* a couple of times I decided to go on to Portage la Prairie to spend a few days in visiting an old friend, and waiting for my dilatory fellow-traveller. These days sped rapidly, and at last, on the afternoon when he was to have reached the Portage, I received a note from him saying that "circumstances over which he had no control" made it impossible for him to leave for a few days yet. In spite of manifold warnings from friends in Winnipeg and elsewhere, I decided to start off alone. Accordingly the next morning (Tuesday) I bade good-bye to the Portage, and bowling along at the rate of between forty and fifty miles a day, with a clear sky overhead and good roads underfoot, I reached Fort Ellice on Saturday evening, besides spending a day at Minnedosa with Mr. Robertson, Superintendent of Missions, and Mr. Wellwood, our minister there. While in Winnipeg I had preached in Knox and St. Andrew's churches; at the Portage I had conducted Mr. Bell's service; and now at Fort Ellice by an arrangement with Mr. Hodnett, of Birtle, I preached morning and evening to a little congregation which gathered in a house beside the Fort. So it was throughout the journey; scarcely a Sabbath passed but I had an opportunity of gathering a few people together to hear the Word of Life. A surveyor's tent, a settler's shanty, and a school-house in turns became churches for me.

Thus far my journey had been an easy matter. Houses had been at least frequent enough to furnish a sleeping-place at night and a resting-place in the middle of the day. But from Fort Ellice westward it is different. From the Assiniboine crossing to the Qu'Appelle crossing, a distance of about 100 miles, there is not a house, and as one proceeds westward the stretches gradually grow greater, until the climax is capped by a "melancholy void" of nearly 300 miles between Battleford and Fort Saskatchewan.

I do not intend, however, to describe in detail my journey across the plains; not that there is little to describe—I had enough adventures to fill a book—but the newspaper readers of Ontario must surely by this time know all about the North-West, its soil, its scenery, its prospects, and its buckboards. My buckboard, by the way, broke down between Ellice and Qu'Appelle, and I had to leave my load and go sixty-five miles to a blacksmith shop to get it mended, and then return for the load. My faithful Shaganappi narrowly escaped drowning on two occasions in swimming deep, swift, muddy-bottomed rivers, over which on a small raft I had to convey bit by bit my buckboard and goods; but the poor beast escaped these perils, only to perish more ignobly from over-feeding one Sunday that I gave her a rest. Fortunately, the place where this occurred was not far from Fort Carlton, to which place I retraced my steps, but the only substitute I could get was a little Indian pony—a cayoose—which toiled along but slowly with the load that Shaganappi had furthered forty miles a day with scarce a sign of fatigue. I found that we made much better progress when I walked or trotted alongside, and accordingly the rest of the journey some 400 miles, was performed on foot.

Perhaps the only feature in which my journey differed materially from that of most other travellers on the plains was that I performed it alone; with two exceptions—one in the second week and one in the last—this loneliness was absolute. No one can understand how absolute it was but those who have seen a prairie, who know what solemn feelings its far-reaching, monotonous waves inspire, and who know with what a melancholy "sough" the wind sighs among its long dry grass at night. It was too late in the season for me to meet or to overtake much of the ordinary

summer travel, and sometimes I journeyed for days without seeing a human being.

At last, however, I reached Edmonton. I was seven weeks out from Winnipeg, but had spent only thirty-one days in actual travel. The rest of the time had been spent in a week's delay in Battleford on account of cold and snow, a week spent in Sunday rests, and a few days by such accidents as the breaking of my buckboard and the death of my horse.

The good people of Edmonton gave me an enthusiastic welcome; a congregation was at once organized; lots for a church and manse were secured on a very good site overlooking the Saskatchewan; the use of the Methodist church was obtained until we could fit up a hall for ourselves, to be used until our church is built next summer. This hall has been inaugurated with a welcome social, and now we have settled down to our regular work of morning and evening services, with an occasional afternoon preaching in a school-house some distance out in the country. A very decided majority of the population is Presbyterian, and a number of them have entered into the work of the congregation with a heartiness which promises well for its future success.

Edmonton, the most important post of the Hudson Bay Company in the North-West, is prettily situated on the north bank of—to use the Governor General's expression—"that mightiest of Canadian rivers, the Saskatchewan," which is here about 300 yards wide. The banks of the river valley are from 200 to 250 feet high, and in most places densely wooded. These banks usually present a steep unbroken face, but just at the Fort the ascent is gradual, and consists of three steps, or "benches" as they are called here. On the first bench, 100 feet perhaps above the river, is situated the Fort, with its lofty stockade and square corner bastions, its loopholes, cannon, and all that used to be necessary for a fort that stood in the debatable land between the Crees and Blackfeet. This enclosure surrounds the offices, stores and warehouses of the Company, with the telegraph office, and the dwellings of most of their servants, who with their families number perhaps fifty.

On the second bench stands the chief factor's house, where, by the kindness of its present occupant, Mr. Hardisty, I have been invited to be a guest for the winter, and where, in a roomy, old-fashioned study, with a big wood fire in an open fire-place, I find the days slipping by very rapidly. Up above us on the top of the hill, and somewhat to the east, lies the village. It includes two steam saw and grist mills, six stores, three blacksmiths' shops, besides carpenters, shoemakers, etc.; two public boarding-houses (no hotels, in the ordinary sense of the term), with twenty-five or thirty dwelling-houses, and usually as many more Indian *tepees*, or wigwams. There is also a very newsy little newspaper, and we have a school—to be opened at the New Year—and two churches. The English church lies about a mile to the west of the village, and has for its incumbent the Rev. Canon Newton, D.D., an old English gentleman of high education and polished manners, who has been here for some years. The Methodist church is in the village, but it is without a minister, and has been so for some time; very likely, however, in view of the steady influx of immigration to Edmonton, the Conference will feel justified in sending a man next summer.

Our telegraph line brings us news of the outer world only during the winter. On account of the marshy nature of the ground about the Narrows of Lake Manitoba, the telegraph poles can only be kept up when the ground is frozen, and accordingly for the rest of the year we get telegraphic news only from Fort Pelly and places westward. The mail comes only once in three weeks, so we are obliged to dwell very much upon home sources of entertainment. My disappointment about a travelling companion at Winnipeg involved also a disappointment about my books. At the last moment I had to give up the previously made arrangement, and the only remaining plan was to have them brought by a cart train. The books accordingly will likely spend the winter at Battleford, and there is but little chance of my seeing them before next June. When my trunks were packed I had no thought that the box of books would be separated from the rest of my belongings, so I did not take care to keep out any of the books that would be most frequently needed; accordingly I find myself here with scarcely more than half a dozen volumes.