

West. Indian missions received a great impetus; our first boarding and industrial schools were established. New missions were established under such men as the Rev. Hugh McKay of Round Lake (who, indeed, commenced his work a little before the rebellion), Rev. W. S. Moore, of Muscowpetung, now of Mistawasis; Rev. John McArthur, of the Bird Tail; Miss L. M. Baker, of Prince Albert, who had been in our work in the old days and re-entered it after the Rebellion; Miss McLaren, of Birtle, and Miss Fraser of Portage la Prairie. And in 1891 the work was extended to British Columbia, when the Rev. John A. McDonald (who, after a few years was obliged, by ill health, to retire) began with much enthusiasm a mission and school on the west side of Vancouver Island.

We have now 23 missions in operation, three of which were opened within the past year, and it is altogether likely that the number will still further increase. Counting the wives of the married missionaries who always bear a heavy share of the mission burdens, and counting native assistants, we have some sixty-two missionaries, a considerable number of whom are engaged in school work; but all these agents, whether engaged in preaching or in school-teaching, or in supervising the boarding departments in schools or in teaching boys to farm and to care for cattle, make it their chief aim to set forth and to commend Christian truth and to build up Christian character.

The Indian is naturally a religious man and even in his heathen condition the objects of his worship are not gross and sensual idols, but such invisible or intangible things as the north wind, the sun, and that which he, in his ignorance, calls the Great Spirit.

But his natural morality comes far short of saving him. He has no great strength of will to fight against evil and he finds himself at his best in hopeless bondage to a host of hateful superstitions and debasing appetites. In addition to this he sometimes finds in the pioneer white men who visit him or who settle beside him, those who are far more ready to teach him the vices of civilization than its virtues.

But good and encouraging work is being done in Church, and home, and school. In nearly all cases the government agents who are in charge of the reserves are men of clean and honest lives and they faithfully commend the ways of Christian civilization to those who are under their charge. The Indians are decreasing rather than increasing in numbers, but with improved personal habits and sanitary precautions the tide will likely turn, and there is ground to hope that in generations to come the West will have communities of healthy and well-doing Christian red men, who in the earnestness and consistency of their faith may be examples to us who are the heirs of all the ages.

Our Indian Schools.

By Mr. Alex. Skene, Industrial School, Regina.

For centuries the children of our western plains lived a free, roving life, acknowledging no restrictions in location or bounds and knowing no law outside the commands of their chiefs. With the advent of the white man came a change, the buffalo giving place to waving fields of golden grain and the smoke of the hunter's camp fire to the permanent cottage of the homesteader. To meet this change of conditions, treaties were made with the Indians, by which provision was made for the establishing of schools amongst the different bands.

The Government recognizing the importance of mission work in the civilizing of the Indian race joined hands with the different denominations, in the matter of education, giving to the latter the general oversight of the schools.

Back in the sixties, a mission school was opened by our Church near where now stands the town of Prince Albert. This school was the forerunner of the present efficient schools of Makoce, Waste and Mistawasis. Schools are spoken of as day, boarding and industrial. To the first class belong those schools where the children are instructed and cared for simply during the day, returning to their homes for the night. Towards the support of the day school the Government pays an annual grant of \$300, which sum, so far as our schools are concerned, is supplemented by the W. F. M. Society by generous grants of money and clothing.

Though in many cases the work in these schools yielded good results, it was felt that the influence of the Reserve home minimized the progress towards that independence and self-reliance aimed at; and the boarding school was opened, our Church being the first to open a school of this class. The expense of putting up and furnishing the required buildings, as well as the salaries of those in charge, is borne by the W. F. M. S., the Government paying an annual per capita grant of \$72 towards the maintenance of the children attending.

To the Indian boy and girl, the boarding school is a home. To it they turn for sympathy and encouragement. Here they receive, along with ordinary school education, instruction in different branches of industrial work. In short, such a training as would be received in a well-conducted Christian home.

At the present time our Church has six of this class of schools, which, with the Industrial School at Regina, had an enrollment last year of about 280 pupils. Boys and girls who have entered one of our schools in their blanket suits and matted locks, ignorant of our language, manners and customs, have after a few years' residence, hired with the neighboring farmers