

Communications.

THE SASKATCHEWAN MISSION.

(The following letter, a copy of which has been addressed to the editor of the *Western Advertiser*, has been sent to us by the convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, with a request that it be published):—

DEAR SIR,—In No. 419 of the *Western Advertiser*, issued February 2nd of the present year, there are, in the letter of your Manitoba correspondent, certain statements, which seriously affect the character of the persons employed at the Prince Albert Presbyterian mission to the Indians on the Saskatchewan. I have recently returned from the Saskatchewan, and having made a careful investigation into the facts of the case, I ask permission to lay them before your readers.

I. The Rev. J. Nesbit is charged with favoritism and extravagance. Your correspondent says: "The Rev. Mr. Nesbit, who has charge of the mission, has several of his wife's relations engaged at a good round salary as assistants." In another place, "They draw nice salaries." The charge here insinuated is easily met. Two of the gentlemen employed at the mission are brothers-in-law of the Rev. J. Nesbit, but they were neither selected, recommended, nor engaged by him. They were engaged in the first instance by the Foreign Mission Committee on the recommendation of gentlemen of known prudence and respectability in the Province of Manitoba. They have been continued from year to year, because they have been found to possess the ability and qualifications requisite for the work.

The salaries paid to these gentlemen are the same as those paid by the Hon. Hudson Bay Co. to persons holding similar positions in their service.

II. "These gentlemen, instead of devoting their time to the mission, employ it in trading with the Indians for their own personal profit, in fact (that) the mission is really a trading post."

To this statement I give an unqualified contradiction.

The missionaries require meat for family use. They also require shoes and mittens. The fresh and dried Buffalo meat and the leather necessary for the provision and use of the mission, the missionaries have bought sometimes from the Indians, sometimes from traders, chiefly from the former. The supply of meat laid in each year, besides meeting the actual requirements of the families at the mission, has been sufficient to allow small quantities to be given to destitute Indians. The meat and leather have been paid for with goods supplied by the Foreign Mission committee expressly for that purpose. Payment is made in goods rather than cash, simply because money is not yet a circulating medium in that region. None of the provisions or leather so purchased has ever been resold except on one occasion. During the winter of 1869 and 1870 the Indians were starving. The missionaries had to serve out provisions to keep them alive. The Indians had plenty of leather with which to pay for what they needed. Our missionaries had either to give the meat away for nothing, or to take the leather offered in exchange for it by the Indians. They took the leather, sent it into Red River settlement in the month of June, 1870, and sold it for the sum of £25 sterling, which amount was duly handed over to the treasurer of our Church.