

parishes or congregations. The duty of this synod was to exercise a general surveillance over the interests of the Church, appoint the theological professors, nominate committees for examining students, consecrating young pastors, etc. It was the duty of the synod also to exercise all ecclesiastical discipline, censuring, suspending and deposing pastors; appeal in the last two cases being allowed to the Council of State, or Executive Government of the canton. In 1873 the Government introduced a bill which deprived this synod of all its peculiar attributes, and virtually made the Church a department of the civil government. It suppressed the *colloques*, identified the political and ecclesiastical electorate, nominated the theological professors as well as the parish ministers, and, in fact, abolished the Church as a separate and independent institution, with rights and duties peculiar to itself, and apart altogether from those of the State. All lawful means were taken to prevent the adoption of such a law, but in spite of protests and petitions the Grand Council carried it by forty-four votes against forty. One-third of the pastors, in consequence, left the National Church, giving up all State emoluments and casting themselves upon their congregations for support. A theological college was at once opened, at the head of which is Dr. Godet and other able men, who have a class of students three or four times more numerous than that of the national or cantonal college. Happily, all the pastors of Neuchâtel are men of high intellectual character, and evangelical in their doctrinal views, so that harmony prevails amongst them. The Church buildings, being the property of the municipality, can be used by the different congregations at will, and, as a matter of fact, all the pastors do often meet together and conduct services in common. It might be far otherwise, however, for the new law destroyed the very idea of a Church as an association of persons holding like beliefs and uniting for mutual edification and common worship. It created an institution without a name, in which may be preached the most contradictory doctrines, and such as are entirely opposed to those of the Gospel of Christ. Legally, there is no distinction between

THE NATIONAL CHURCH

and the world, the Church being composed, according to the new law, of all citizens born Protestants, whether believers or unbelievers. It specially states that the "conscience" of the pastor is "inviolable" during the six years he is settled in a parish, and that his liberty of teaching is not to be restrained, either by his "vows, engagements, formulas, or credos," thereby rendering both synod and people powerless, and the pastor, whatever his character or teaching may be, omnipotent. But I need say no more on this subject. Such a monstrous law can hardly remain long amongst a people so intelligent and so well educated as the Neuchâtelois. It is more probable that the next change will make a complete separation of Church and State.

T. H.

Neuchâtel, 19th June, 1882.

MISSIONARY WORK ON THE C. P. RAILWAY.

Many readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN will doubtless be pleased to learn something concerning our missionary work among the men on the Canada Pacific Railway. It will require too much space to give anything like an adequate description of my entire work, and consequently I will confine myself to a few of the more interesting items. After remaining in Winnipeg a few days awaiting the arrival of my baggage, and viewing the famous city of the North-West, I proceeded to the celebrated town of

BRANDON.

The train, as usual, was late, and the unfortunate passengers were obliged to seek shelter wherever they could find it. Messrs. McKay, Hardie, Malcolm, and myself were in a short time prostrated on a shake-down on the upper floor of a so-called boarding-house. It is needless to say that we were rather uncomfortable. In Brandon we met Rev. J. Ferris, who gave us much valuable information concerning our different fields of labour, and how to reach them. After a brief delay here, Mr. Hardie and myself proceeded thirty miles farther west, to

FLAT CREEK.

We held service here on the following Sabbath, in the station-house. About fifty men assembled together, and, from the way in which they joined in

singing the 100th Psalm, indicated a Presbyterian training. The Sabbath is very much desecrated in this place. The railway officials, and labouring men too, are at work all day. Trains run to and fro as on other days; merchants buy and sell; many go out hunting for amusement; others busy putting up tents, and travelling on west. Missionary work, we soon saw, was much needed, and now Mr. Hardie has service here weekly. My work commenced at Flat Creek, but is now some seventy miles farther west. I shall never forget my first visit to

THE END OF THE RAILWAY TRACK.

The men were all at work, and appeared quite surprised at the sight of a missionary. Many and peculiar remarks were passed, which were supposed to be unheard by me. I had a letter of introduction to Mr. D. W. Grant (contractor) from the Rev. J. Robertson, of Winnipeg. After reading it Mr. Grant received me very kindly, and said he would do all in his power to assist me in carrying on my work among his men, believing it to be much needed. Contractors are not prepared to accommodate strangers (and many of them don't wish to be), and so I was obliged to purchase a house of my own in the form of a tent. In this I lived for a few nights, but found it too burdensome to move every day, and consequently disposed of it. On the 14th of May I held my first service. Some fifty men gathered together and lay down in the open prairie. I asked them to lie so that the wind would favour me while speaking. One man, more boisterous than the rest, exclaimed, "All right, sir; fire ahead!" With one or two slight interruptions we had a very good service. The men received tracts, and expressed their desire to have me come and preach to them again. Towards evening some five or six young men came into my tent and conversed about the service, and religion generally. I felt very grateful to God for His goodness, and hoped many would be soon asking for eternal life. One young man was particularly anxious to know if all churches should not be united. I soon discovered him to be a Roman Catholic, and afterwards learned why he came to be in my tent. He and some more of his companions resolved to stone my tent, and drive me from the road altogether. The plan was as follows: This young man was to come in and interest me while his companions made the necessary preparations for stoning. However, their plan was rendered null by some others who interposed, and threatened to punish them severely if a single stone was thrown, or myself molested in any way. I was not at all alarmed, but felt quite safe "in the arms of Jesus." His promises are all true, and upon them did I rely. He has said, "Lo I am with you always," and "In His presence there is fulness of joy." Ever since that Sabbath we have had no more trouble, but good order and attention has characterized nearly every meeting.

THE WORK AND ITS DIFFICULTIES.

I now proceed to the work itself in its extent, and the difficulties connected with it. My present field is 100 miles in length. There are about 100 camps (i.e. tents where the men eat and sleep) scattered over this distance. Each camp contains several small and large tents, where horses and men are housed and fed. There are between 3,000 and 4,000 men employed of all nationalities. The majority are Swedes and Western Americans. Not a few are from the Black Hills in Montana. The majority of the Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes cannot understand English, and, of course, remain away from service. In fact, most of the men on the road are quite careless, and would rather go off on a shooting expedition than come to service. It is very difficult to get a hearing in most camps. I am sorry to state that the contractors are quite careless too—I mean the greater number of them—and often prevent their men by compelling them to work on Sabbath. Only last Sabbath (June 25th) several men were dismissed because they refused to labour on the Lord's day. This is too bad, and more especially in our own land. I generally preach three times each Sabbath, and walk from six to twenty miles.

Often it is necessary for my own comfort to carry my blankets as well. I occasionally have service through the week. Many of the men do piece-work, and, of course, continue until late in the evening, making it almost impossible to hold service on the week nights. The weeks are always long and wearisome. I have no place to study or read only lying in the open prairie, and the mosquitoes claim nearly every

spot, so that my reading, alas! is too limited. In brief, it is a very difficult matter to carry on this work at all, and to do so no small amount of pluck and courage are absolutely necessary. The privations connected with the work are numerous and varied. I have no one place to which I can go and say, "I am at home." This does very well through the day, but when night comes all naturally look for some spot where they may lie down and rest. It may surprise you to read of my peculiar night abodes, but the following is the truth: At the end of the track I sleep on oat-sacks in an old freight car (I mean full sacks). The men all sleep in cars here, but mine is the meanest of the lot. The last night I lay there sleep departed, and I fought mosquitoes until morning. I will not state all here, for fear you may think I am exaggerating, but simply mention a few things. Often I lie in the empty cars, and more frequently on the cold ground. Our nights are very cold here. Nearly every night, so far, I have had two and three pairs of blankets over me. Sometimes my bed is on boxes, and once, after walking twenty miles, I slept on flour sacks in a freight car. My clothes are scarcely ever taken off at night. This is neither comfortable nor healthy. Often have I been completely discouraged, and resolved upon returning to Ontario, but after a moment's consideration would decide to try it again. It is all for Jesus' sake. He had not where to lay His head. The wild beasts served Him as companions to relieve the monotony of loneliness while in the wilderness. He suffered and died for us, and said to His followers, "Let a man deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." We must endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, counting all things loss for Him. I have reason to believe that the Lord is with me here, and will surely bless my weak efforts to scatter the good seed.

PROGRESS.

There is now a marked difference in Flat Creek, and many of the railway men are not nearly so profane and careless as heretofore. What greater evidence can we have of good being done than outward reformation in persons formerly wicked and immoral. I am trying to do my best here, and trust the Lord will help me to be faithful. I hope in two months more to return to Ontario and prepare for another session at Knox. I take this opportunity of asking all who have the cause of God and the good of souls at heart, to pray for an outpouring of His Spirit on our work here. My fellow-students here are all well, and busily engaged in the work of our Lord and Master. I frequently meet Mr. Hardie, and together we talk and devise plans to successfully carry on our work. May the Lord of Hosts pour upon us all His Spirit, that our work may be blessed and souls saved!

THOMAS NIXON,

Student of Knox College, Toronto.

CORRECTION.

MR. EDITOR,—In the Fifth Annual Report of the W. F. M. Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, a mistake occurs with regard to the number of members in the Port Hope Auxiliary. The number is twenty-two—not seventy-two, as stated. As it makes the amount raised by this branch seem entirely out of proportion, will you kindly allow us to correct the error through the medium of your columns?

A. M. TOPP.

Home Sec. W. F. M. Society.

Toronto, July 4th, 1882.

DR. J. MARSHALL LANG has reported to the Glasgow School Board that of the 36,000 children attending their schools last year only 229 were withdrawn from both Bible and Catechism lessons, and only 420 receiving Bible lessons were withdrawn from the Catechism.

By a law which passed on November 1st, 1881, and became operative on May 1st of the present year, it is forbidden throughout Holland to retail spirituous liquors of any kind to any person holding any public appointment, or to any other person not holding a license under the provisions of the statute. During the first four months of the present year, before the law went into operation, the revenue from spirituous liquors showed a decrease of one per cent., though during the preceding ten years it had shown an average increase of three per cent. per annum. This anticipatory effect of the law is considered surprising.