

followed by larger numbers next season from Alsace and Lorraine. Italy and Hungary have sent their sons to seek a home in this new land. The Chinaman is gradually pushing his way east, and his shoe and queue no longer excite attention. There is no need of referring to the Indian population—Blackfoot and Cree, Sioux and Swampy—as another report deals with them. But the question arises whether the great work of State and Church is not to grind up, assimilate, and Christianize this heterogeneous mass. Schools and colleges powerfully help this process; but no power is superior to the Gospel of Christ in this great work, and to give the Gospel to these people is, it must be repeated, the first duty of the Canadian Church to-day.

#### RELIGIONS OF THE PEOPLE.

The census taken by the Dominion Government in 1886 furnishes the following figures regarding the religious belief of the people:

Population of Manitoba in 1886.....	108,640	Increase per cent. in 5 years,	74.5
Presbyterians.....	28,406	" " "	104.4
Anglicans.....	23,206	" " "	69.2
Methodists.....	18,648	" " "	98.7
Roman Catholics.....	14,651	" " "	25.4
Baptists.....	3,296	" " "	102.3
Congregationalists.....	997	" " "	293.1
Mennonites.....	9,112		
Lutherans.....	3,131		

In the North-West Territory 32 per cent. of the white population is Presbyterian. These figures show our strength, progress and responsibilities. Whether as a Church we maintain our present vantage ground, depends largely on our action during the next few years. Not since 1882 did so many people enter the Province as this spring. Our Church organization must keep pace with settlement.

#### DIFFICULTIES.

The prosecution of mission work is beset with obstacles. The country is wide (Synod 1800 miles from east to west and 350 miles from north to south) and the population sparse. Large quantities of land have been reserved, settlers have been scattered, and co-operation in Christian work made difficult. In addition, many of the people have been disappointed in getting railways near them; they are hence not able to dispose of their produce, and are restless. Changes for the better, however, have taken place recently. Unless cared for, it is found that people here readily lapse. Exposure to the sun and wind of the prairie is apt to fade the colour out of the religion of many who come from the east, and hence they must have the sheltering shadow of the Church. And when religious restraint is thrown off by the western man, he is not quiescent. The missionary meets with no more difficult task than that of approaching and reclaiming the man who has thrown away his morals and flung his religion after them. And one is surprised at some who fall. If ever doubts about the perseverance of the saints get a lodgment in the brain, it is when an eastern saint is found in the Rockies with every semblance of "saintness" washed out of him, and his morals as soiled as his shirt. Some men seem to be so evenly balanced that environment is the determining factor as to whether the life shall be foul or fair, religious or sceptical. In such a case it is needless to point out the duty of the Church.

#### ENCOURAGEMENTS.

But the picture has a brighter side, and on it we look longer, if only out of gratitude to Him who has gone before us and blessed us. Slowly the difficulties are disappearing, and never were our hopes higher than this year. The tide of immigration is not spreading itself, as in former years, over new areas, but rather settling in the older districts. This will increase and strengthen existing congregations. In Manitoba, railway building promises to bring a market near settlements which require only an outlet to be flourishing. There is every prospect of the railway from Regina to Prince Albert being built as far north as Saskatoon this season. The company in possession of the charter of the road from Lethbridge to Edmonton, promises to make a start too. The Red Deer, Blind Man, Battleford, and other settlements will soon be connected with the outside world, and they will cease to draw so heavily on the funds of the Church. The past year, too, witnessed gratifying accessions to the communion rolls, but the joy was modified by the fact that so many people were all winter like sheep without a shepherd. Never since we began work here was the supply of missionaries relatively so inadequate as last winter, and unless the young men of the Church are willing to make this work their care, we must suffer loss. Stations unsupplied in winter, are in spring weak, almost lifeless. Continuous effort secures the best returns for money expended. Prosperity is also evidenced by the fact that eight additional congregations became self-sustaining, and that there has been a general improvement in financial affairs. Interest in religious matters is also shown by attendance on ordinances, generous contributions for the erection of churches and mansees, and by the desire to advance Sabbath School work. According to the reports presented to the last Assembly, the average giving for the whole Church was \$11.23 per communicant, while the average for our Synod was \$17.60, although many of our fields were without any winter supply.

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