

came from the same place, and are of the same stamp with those alluded to already in the Maitland section; and, like them, bear the evident marks of having grown up from infancy in the grossest ignorance, as well as in the utter neglect of every means of grace and Christian duty. This is no reason, however, why they should be despised, or cast off. If they care not for themselves, they are on that account but the greater objects of compassion, and ought to be the more cared for by those who know the value of the blessings which they despise. The arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save. Something may yet be done for them; or even should all efforts fail in the case of the more advanced in life, yet something may at least be done to save the young and rising generation from the same dreadful condition. If the Spirit of the Lord would only breathe upon these dry bones—and who knows but he may—what a glorious transformation would immediately follow!

The next in order is the Sydenham Congregation which meets that of the Lake Shore, about three miles to the north-east of the village, at what is called the 10th line, and includes what lies to the south of the Township of Sydenham, on the east side of the Owen Sound Road, and the whole of the Township of Derby on the west. This congregation is in a very promising condition, and bids fair to become, in a few years, one of the most flourishing congregations of our church. If they are without the stated means of grace, they are not without a strong desire to obtain them; and I feel assured that a minister would here find much to strengthen his hands, and cheer and help him in his labours. This is no trifling consideration, and on this as well as other accounts, I feel no hesitation in saying, that this is a most inviting field of labour. Of some congregations it might be said, that the only inducement in their case presented to a minister to settle among them, is their extreme need of the preaching of the word. In all other respects they are in a most unfit condition for becoming pastoral charges. It is not so, however, at Sydenham. There the materials are ready at hand; the essential requisites are on the spot; and all that is needed in their case to render them a healthy and well-conditioned congregation, is merely a suitable pastor. With regard to their strength in point of numbers, it must be considerable—I should suppose, at the lowest calculation, not less than one hundred heads of families and householders. The Highlanders constitute about half the congregation, and are, with few exceptions, located in that part of Sydenham called the 10th line. They are chiefly from the parishes of Reny and Halkirk, in Caithness, and, I am happy to say, have not forgotten what they have seen and heard in the land of their fathers. They assemble together on the Sabbath for the worship of God, and on these occasions one of the elders, Mr. George McKay, presides, and assisted by some others, conducts their religious exercises. The English-speaking portion of the congregation also assemble on the Lord's day for a similar purpose, as also for the instruction of the youth—both of which objects are attended to at the same meeting.

The Lord was pleased to give some comfortable and pleasant days in this place, which, together with other associations served to endear it to me more than most other places on this side the Atlantic. My feelings were a good deal agitated at the thought of leaving it, and when ascending the mountain, at the foot of which lies this lonely village of the wilderness, I once and again turned round, and gazed with deep emotion on its scattered dwellings, which now lay in full view before me. A few minutes more, and this interesting place, where I had been endeavouring to speak of the Saviour to his own and to others, would disappear from my view, and the thought occurred that I might never see it again. My errand was told, the term appointed for my stay in it was expired, and I was now returning by the way I came. The people were as sheep without a shepherd, and

to some of them at least, this was no ordinary trial. They felt sad and dispirited, because they thought their prospects were less encouraging now than before. With these thoughts passing in review before my mind, I endeavored for a moment to realize their situation, and enter into their feelings, and thus look up to the Lord of the harvest that he might send them help out of Zion.

Proceeding southward and passing the Town-line of Sydenham and Derby, we enter on the northern boundary of the congregation of Saugine. It embraces the Townships of Holland and Glenelg on the east, and those of Sullivan and Bentinck on the west side of the road, and might not improperly be termed the Highlands of the Owen Sound country. The number of Presbyterian heads of families and householders is considerably over two hundred, and the probability is that in a few years this number will be more than doubled. As yet there is but a small portion of the land occupied—only three lots in depth on each side of the road. All that lies beyond this is still one unbroken wilderness; and thus a favourable opportunity is presented to families and individuals, wishing to settle among their own people, where they might have the prospect of enjoying the means of grace in connection with their own Church. In this extensive congregation there are three preaching stations, which will, most likely, soon become three separate charges, each occupying about eight miles of the road. In the northern station the people are chiefly from the Lowlands of Scotland and the Synod of Ulster. They usually meet at Mr. Buchanan's, about fourteen miles from Sydenham, and the number attending on such occasions is considerable, and evidently on the increase. Recently, indeed, the congregations have been so large as to render it repeatedly necessary to meet in the open air. This was particularly the case during the visits of Messrs. Currie and Ball, whose labours were highly appreciated here as well as in the other parts of the settlement. The new line of road leading from Mono Mills to Owen Sound, and now in the course of being opened up by the Government, passes through the Township of Holland, and meets the Owen Sound road a little above the preaching place. This circumstance will, no doubt, add greatly to the strength of this station, as the land on this new route, if not so already, will soon be taken up by actual settlers. The middle station is perhaps the strongest of the three; it extends as far south as the Rocky Saugine, and numbers about eighty families, who, with few exceptions, are Highlanders, chiefly from the Western Isles of Scotland. At a public meeting they resolved to proceed this same season with the building of a church. I am sorry to say, however, that they have since fallen back from their resolution, as far at least as the present season is concerned. This is much to be regretted on various accounts, but particularly as betraying too plainly a want of energy and life where it should be most of all exhibited—in the furtherance of the cause of Christ, as also a want of trust in God, whose is the silver and the gold, and who never forgets to reward works of faith and labours of love. It would be wrong, however, not to make some allowances in their case. They are still labouring under all, or most of the hardships and disadvantages incident to first settlers in the backwoods, and are only beginning to draw breath after a protracted and most severe struggle with privations and difficulties, of which few can form any adequate idea, except such as have either witnessed or endured them. The third, or Southern station has its central point at the larger branch of the Saugine, where two of the new lines, recently surveyed by the Government, meet the Owen Sound Road. Here also there is a Town Reserve, and it is expected that ere long it will become a place of some importance. The Presbyterians in this quarter are very numerous. Including those who during the present season have taken up lots on the two lines just referred to, their number cannot be less than eighty heads of families and householders. A grant of ten acres of

land, pleasantly situated on the bank of the river, and at the junction of the roads, has been obtained lately from the Government, and here it is intended to build a church. Here also, as in the Middle Station, the great majority of the people are Highlanders.

After leaving the Saugine congregation, we next come to that of the Maitland, which embraces the Townships of Egremont, Normanby, and Arthur, and is not much less than twenty-five miles in length. The number of Presbyterian families is estimated at two hundred. Here also, as in the neighboring congregation, there are three preaching stations at equal distances from each other, and although in some respects the aspect of matters is not so cheering as in the other congregations, still I see no reason why the hope should not be cherished, that each of these stations may yet become a separate pastoral charge. At the northern station there is a frame church already built, but not yet finished inside. It was got up chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Cochrane, whose unremitting zeal and labours for the furtherance of the cause of Christ in this quarter, deserve special notice. The middle station extends from the Maitland to Mr. Gunn's—a distance of eight miles. The people here are, with few exceptions, from Isla, and many of them understand but little of the English language. At the time of my leaving the settlement they were making preparations for building a place of worship, about the centre of the station, and it was expected it would be finished next summer; it was also contemplated that when this one were completed, another would be commenced in the third or lower station which extends to the village of Arthur. Within the bounds of this station there are about forty families, who are, with very few exceptions, from the Synod of Ulster. Besides these, as I was informed, there are several families in the adjoining Township of Maryborough, who would probably join with them.

When I first began to write this report, I had no intention it should be so long. I hope the Committee will pardon me for trespassing so far upon their time. The sketch thus presented, though long, is still imperfect: but some idea may be collected from it of the great importance of the Owen Sound country, as a missionary field. A wide door is here opened up to our Church, and in Providence she is called upon to avail herself of the offer, and enter in and take possession. No Church but herself can, in the meantime, do it; and if we could even but partially occupy it at present, it would henceforth become our own exclusively. If entered upon now with spirit, and properly cultivated, it would soon become strictly speaking, a Presbyterian country; for if, to the natural attractions it possesses, were only added the privileges of gospel means and ordinances, Presbyterians from all parts of Canada and the Old Country would soon pour in and occupy the soil, and thus, in a few years, we would have a line of Churches reaching from Arthur to the Georgian Bay, and all of these, except in two instances, at equal distances of eight miles from each other. In the event of such things taking place, we might expect to hear of the *Presbytery of Owen Sound* sending forth her missionaries to plant, in her turn, new Churches and new Presbyteries.

During my stay I endeavoured to press upon the people the indispensable duty of contributing to the Home Mission Fund. I brought its claims before them repeatedly, and explained to them how matters stood. I found, however, that very little could be realized in the way of collection; and that besides, it would prevent them from contributing in any other way, and consequently, there was none made. I endeavoured to get them to adopt a uniform plan of raising funds by subscription.

Hoping that the Lord may provide all necessary means, and crown the labours of your Committee with the most abundant success, I remain, &c.

LACHLAN McPHERSON.