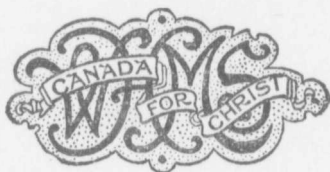


History of Teulon Hospital.

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HISTORY OF TEULON HOSPITAL.

It was in the fall of 1902 that the writer, who had offered himself for work among the foreigners in the Canadian West, was sent to the Teulon district. Here was a large and growing colony of Ruthenians closely adjoining an old established Canadian settlement, and it was thought at first that possibly some of the new comers might be attracted to an English service among their Canadian neighbors. This plan did not prove very successful. Some of the Ruthenians were strongly Catholic in sentiment, and, therefore, unfriendly to a Protestant Mission. Some were atheistic socialists and equally hostile from another standpoint. A few, influenced by movements among the Ruthenians in the United States, were tending towards independence and the Protestant point of view, but then between them and the Missionary there was the barrier of language, and an English service was of little use to them. It soon became apparent that the easiest line of approach was through medical assistance in case of sickness, and for the next year the Missionary boarded

close to the Ruthenian settlement and practised medicine among the people, gradually becoming acquainted with quite a number of the new settlers and picking up amongst them a smattering of their language.

The suggestion of building a hospital was made by Dr. Bryce, and permission of Presbytery being granted, the work was started in the fall of 1903, and the building was ready for occupation about the beginning of the new year and for some time served both as hospital and as residence for the Missionary's family, consisting of his mother and cousin, and of the hospital staff.

The first nurse was Miss Picken, who was with us for two months and did good service in getting the work started. Then we had Miss Hall for two months more, and after that came Miss Bell, the present lady superintendent, to whose capable management the success of the institution is so largely due. A few months later Miss Davidson came as second nurse and she rendered the hospital five years' service.

Patients began to come in almost before the building was finished, and I hardly think there has been a day in

the seven years' of the hospital's existence in which there have not been sick people within its walls. The average number of indoor patients of late years has varied from six to eight, and the daily out-patients seen either in the office or at their homes would be nearly as many. It was not long before the original building was found too small, and, after a year and a half, it was decided to enlarge.

The first building cost about \$2,500, and was erected largely on faith and the bank credit of Dr. Bryce and the Missionary, with the aid of a grant from the Church and Manse Building Fund, The people of the district also subscribed \$800. It was a great relief to us when the newly-formed W.H.M.S. took over the hospital and became responsible for the debt. Additions afterwards made brought up the total cost of the building to something over \$6,000, and the Missionary erected his own house close by so that there is now accommodation in the hospital for about fifteen patients, besides the nurse and a few Ruthenian children who are receiving their training at the Mission.

The number of indoor patients treated has increased from 55 the first year to 169 last year. The cost of maintenance is a little over \$3,000 a year, local sources, Government grants, etc., making up a little less than half of this sum.

The population of the Teulon district is quite varied. North of us is a solid Ruthenian settlement for nearly forty miles. Northwest is largely Scandinavian, with a mixture of others. South and east is an old Canadian settlement whose founders came in a generation ago. One could not ask a better point from which to watch the gradual but sure amalgamation of the races.

At present the nearest medical men to us are Stonewall, 20 miles south, and Selkirk 30 miles southwest. A doctor has recently settled at Gimli, 30 miles to the northeast. This latter place with the curious name is an Icelandic fishing village on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. North and west there are as yet no doctors, although the country is rapidly settling for 70 miles or more.

The land in this district is variable in quantity, in some parts very good, while elsewhere it is stony and rocky. Most

of the country is found by the settler either to be wet and marshy or else covered with thick scrub or woods. The swamps need draining and the bush needs clearing, and for poor people with no capital this is very slow process. Most of the settlers will take ten years or more before they can get their farms into shape to afford them a living without going out to work for others.

Now a word as to results. From the missionary standpoint, the first use of a hospital is to break down prejudice and affords a means of getting in touch with the people. This purpose our institution has abundantly fulfilled. I do not think there is anything better than a Mission Hospital for producing a kindly feeling among all classes in a new and mixed community.

The opportunities of the medical workers for evangelistic work are somewhat limited, because their time is pretty fully occupied by their professional duties and little provision has as yet been made for instructing them in the language of the foreign settlers. Prayers are held regularly in the hospital and a number of children in the Mission are receiving instructions. It is

of course part of the duty of the Missionary to keep in touch with the ministers of the Independent Greek Church, which is in alliance with ours and is working with good success among the Ruthenians.

The work which seems to me now to be of the greatest importance is educational. The conditions in this respect among the Ruthenian settlers are exceedingly unsatisfactory. There is a demand for bi-lingual teachers to give instruction in both languages, but the present class of teachers are for the most part very imperfectly educated Ruthenians, who are most of their instruction in their own language, frequently using Austrian text-books.

The Provincial Government has just established at Teulon a rural model school, intended to train teachers specially for work in the country schools of this district. What is required now is a residence where the most promising children of the district can receive good Canadian home training while attending this model school. In this way we can do for the Ruthenians at comparatively little expense what is being done

for the Indians by the Industrial and Boarding Schools.

It seems to me that in the future we must consider educational work as of more importance than medical work if we wish to influence most effectively the new immigrants who have come to us. Many of the young people are shaking off their old customs, including their old religion and morals as well, and, unfortunately, they are not always getting ours. The grasping materialism of our Western civilization treats with ruthless contempt their old religious customs and prejudices, the difference of language prevents them from catching the finer tones of our Canadian ideals and aspirations, and too often the ambition of the young people is turning simply to the getting of an easy living without work. We must endeavor to train young Ruthenians to be true leaders and teachers and missionaries among their own people.