

School Homes

A FRUITFUL INVESTMENT



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PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL HOMES

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FOR nearly eighteen years the Presbyterian Church has been trying to meet the demand for a more enlightened Gospel among the peoples who have come from the central and southern part of Europe. Through direct evangelistic effort, and through the kindly ministry of well equipped hospitals, much has been done to teach the people that there is a better way of life. But the missionary effort that promises to surpass all others in effectiveness and fruitfulness is that undertaken through the medium of the "School Home."

The Story of the Venture

The history of this venture dates back almost to the beginning of mission work among the Ukrainians in Canada. The first undertaking was the opening of Schools directed and controlled by the Church. These Schools were handed over to the care of the State just as soon as the State provided the organization necessary to direct them. At that time a few men advocated very strongly the erecting of residences adjacent to these Schools into which the children might be gathered from the outskirts of the colonies, placed under the care of carefully selected supervisors and given the best kind of religious instruction.

The Synod's Committee of Manitoba and Saskatchewan failed to be persuaded, however, and it remained for Rev. Dr. Arthur, one of the original advocates, who was just then being transferred to Vegreville, to induce the W.H.M.S. of that time to put into execution

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the plan which has proved such a great success. For a number of years a few of these Homes have been in operation and their wide-spread influence has been one of the great factors in stimulating a desire for better things among these peoples of non-British birth.

A Simple Plan

The plan is a very simple one and is directed on behalf of the children, whose care is always the special responsibility of the Church. A "Home" is provided at a good educational centre. Into this "Home" the children from the frontier settlements especially are gathered under the best Christian influences, and are taught by practical demonstration what the Gospel of Jesus Christ has done in developing the Christian virtues which make the home the centre of love and comfort and health and happiness.

The teaching so far as the curriculum of studies is concerned is done in the Public or High School, as the case may be, but the religious instruction and the practical Christian training are given in the "Home" by those carefully selected for this work. The State provides the means of education. The Church provides the religious training and Christian culture. This is as it ought to be. It is the duty of the State to provide the means of instruction for every child. It is the duty of the Church to provide the Christian environment so that every child may grow to the full strength of his powers before being subjected to the temptations which in earlier years so often prove his destruction.

Educating the Away-from-Home Child

So far the Church has only made provision along the line of "School Homes" for children of non-English speaking parents, but all who know the situation are firmly convinced that

the time has surely come when it is the obligation of the Church to provide a "School Home" with all Christian influences and restraints for every child who needs to go from home to complete his education. Some of the saddest stories could be told of children who have gone astray because they were without the interested guidance that all children need at the formative period in their lives. This protection could have been provided in a "School Home" had the Church been able to offer this form of real ministry. But the need and its obligation has grown so evident that the Christian conscience is being aroused and from all sections of the Church immediate action is being urged.

An Irresistible Appeal

The appeal, coming as it does on behalf of the children, should be irresistible. The chief obligation on Church and State must be the care and education and nurture of the child's life. If the appeals for the redemptive work of the Church find such wide and ready response, and all rejoice that they do, how much more enthusiastic should the response on behalf of the preventive work be when, to some degree at least, the neglect that makes the redemptive work necessary is being overcome?

The spread of sectional and Nationalistic movements among large bodies of non-English speaking peoples makes the care of their children still more urgent. The School and the Church are the two great unifying forces of the nation's life. To supplement the patriotic effort in the School by the simple teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the "School Home" is to overcome almost entirely the separating effect of these various Nationalistic movements among those of non-British birth.

The Nationalist Peril

Never was this more necessary than at the present time. Within the past year a secret

gathering was held in the city of Saskatoon with the avowed purpose of off-setting the de-nationalizing influence of Canadian Institutions by the establishment of a "Ukrainian National Church," whose aim shall be to keep separate the people and especially the children from all Canadian ideals. A National School Home has been in operation for over two years and in 1918 was greatly enlarged as a further off-set to this de-nationalizing tendency.

These movements indicate the dangers that beset the national life of Canada, but they also admit the effectiveness of the missionary methods which the Ukrainian leaders think it necessary to combat. The Church must co-operate with the State in training cultured Christian citizens. With a citizenship of this type, the foreign problem disappears and the unity of the nation assured.

Women of Vision

Too much credit cannot be given the Women's Missionary Society for the splendid way in which the missionary undertaking of the School Home has been built up. At various centres, both East and West, most excellent work has been done and is going on to greater success. But a missionary principle so sound and so fundamental in its application to the needs of this young Nation's life has brought demands too great for the effort of the W.M.S. alone.

Convinced of the imperative need, the Board of Home Missions and Social Service has supplemented the work of the W.M.S., and, through the magnanimous gift of Mrs. R. A. Nisbet of Thornhill, Ont., has opened a School Home at Prince Albert, Sask., on a larger and more pretentious scale than any yet attempted. One of the finest residences in Prince Albert was bought and transferred to the Presbyterian

Church in Canada to be used as a "School Home" for Ukrainian and other non-English speaking boys. This building, now designated "The Nisbet Memorial School Home," has accommodation for about 35 boys and with a very small addition the accommodation could easily be increased to 50.

The Board of Home Missions and Social Service has been exceedingly fortunate in securing the services of Rev. J. W. and Mrs. McIntosh to take charge of this large venture. Mr. McIntosh was the devoted and highly esteemed minister of St. Paul's, Prince Albert, but considered this opportunity so great that he resigned his charge to undertake the superintendency of this institution. His wife, no less cultured and gifted, is associated with him as Matron of the Home. No surer proof need be given of the great possibility of this form of missionary enterprise, than the fact that two people of the gifts and character of Mr. and Mrs. McIntosh have given themselves to such service.

The Canora School Home

To another woman of great missionary enthusiasm belongs the honor of providing a School Home for girls. The late Mrs. Hugh Waddell, of Peterboro, who had already given \$25,000 to erect the Hugh Waddell Memorial Hospital at Canora, as well as giving \$1,000 per year towards the salary of an English-speaking missionary among the Ukrainians in Saskatchewan, had decided, shortly before her death, to build a School Home for girls at Canora. Her son has generously undertaken to carry out his mother's intention and the "Home" is now in course of erection. It will accommodate 20 girls and there is every assurance that the W.M.S. will make this one of the best institutions in the Church.

Inspiring Progress

This will make two Homes in Canora. The one for boys, under the direction of the Board of Home Missions and Social Service, had a most successful year. Twenty-two boys were in attendance, some of whom made very remarkable progress. It is worthy of note that the only boy in the schools of Canora passing the Grade VIII. examinations was from the School Home. To show the urgent necessity of these Homes it is only needed to mention that the first boy arriving at this Home was 17 years of age and only had the opportunity of attending school eight months in his life. He came from the outskirts of the colony where the school is a very occasional privilege. He made wonderful progress and even in the one winter has given himself a fair equipment for his life's work.

There are a great host of children in the Western Provinces who have no more opportunity than this boy, who would be given the greatest privileges through the ministry of the "School Home." The Governments of the Western Provinces have worked wonders in giving the advantages of education even to the frontier sections. But, of necessity, this must still be very imperfect, and the aid of all good citizens is required to bring the advantages of the "School Home" to the children who would otherwise have no privilege in the way of an education.

A Larger Policy

Much more might be said of the work done in all the Homes under the care of the Church. The children who have been in these Homes are their best advocates. Many of these, now grown to manhood and womanhood, are real missionaries of the better life in the communities in which they live.

The Church is committing itself to a larger policy in reference to these institutions.

Larger and better equipped buildings, provided in every educational centre to which children need to go to complete their training, ought to be the objective of the Church. In Canadian homes can be found the finest material for citizenship of the highest type. The Nation's greatest asset is the child and the Church's greatest privilege is his care and culture. In closest co-operation, Church and State must unite to provide for every child the opportunity of real Christian citizenship.

School Homes in Western Canada

Under Women's Missionary Society:—Vegreville, Alta.—Four Homes, three for Boys, one for Girls. Teulon, Man.—Two Homes, for Boys and Girls. Ethelbert, Man.—One Home for Boys and Girls. Sifton, Man.—One Home for Boys and Girls. Canora, Sask.—One Home for Girls.

Under Board of Home Missions and Social Service:—Prince Albert, Sask.—One Home for Boys. Canora, Sask.—One Home for Boys.

Home and Mission Schools in Quebec

Under Women's Missionary Society:—Tourville, Quebec City, Namur, Hull (St. Pierre School), Dequen, Valencay.

Under Board of Home Missions and Social Service:—La Croix, Bethanie, Eglise du Sauveur, Point-aux-Trembles, St. Sophie, St. Damase, Montreal (Italian School).

