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MISSIONARY LETTER FROM DEMARARA

Written by Rev. A. D. McKenzie who Left This Province With Mrs. McKenzie for the Mission Field Last Spring.

Georgetown, Nov. 4, 1908.

Dear Mr. James:— According to promise I shall try to write a few words to the friends in P. E. I. It is so long since I wrote them they must be expecting great tidings, but alas the interval included so much time in which there was nothing to report but inactivity. I am glad to say however that this is each day becoming more a memory. As the weeks go by there is a noticeable difference in my powers of endurance.

Let me say something about my particular district. It includes the English-speaking congregation of Better Hope, to which I give service almost every Sunday, in return for a grant of one hundred pounds a year given to our mission by Cyrus Ewing, the owner of the sugar estates in that centre. At present I have the services of a young West Indian who takes some of the Sunday and mid-week work, and relieves the burden of pastoral oversight in the way of visitation &c. The support of this man takes up so much of the allowance, that whatever may have

been the conditions, when first our mission in the Colony was begun, this English work, with its financial accompaniment, is today a doubtful benefit. The demand it makes on the Missionary's time and energy is a serious handicap to the work he came here to do. But for the present things must remain as they are.

At Better Hope an East Indian Catechist is stationed, who visits the people, teaches the Sabbath School, and preaches at several points in the vicinity. We have a day school located here also. The teachers are paid by the Government, but the mission has to provide the building in return for which we have the privilege of giving religious instruction at stated times each day. The Catechist shares this part of the work with the regular teacher, he giving instruction in Hindi, and the teacher, in English. We are not fortunate enough to have day schools at all our Catechist stations, the Government regulations being such as to hamper us seriously in this regard unless we are prepared to support them wholly out of our fund. A few miles east of Better Hope, another Catechist is located, a man who goes by the name of Sadhuji that is holy man. In former days he was a Hindoo Holy Man who went around with his brass bowl, living on the gifts of the people, they in turn giving him food and shelter. He visits the people and holds open air services. I am now procuring material for a little church. I have not yet preached in his field, as his knowledge of English is so defective he cannot interpret, but I hope to be able to do something there before long.

Two miles west of Better Hope, and nearer Georgetown, another Catechist is at work. We have a day school here also, that of Ogle. At present all the services at this centre are held in the open air as our school building is near its last days. At the beginning of the year we hope to have a new building which we trust will give an impetus to our work in the neighbourhood.

West from Ogle about five miles, is Georgetown, where we reside. This although the capital of the Colony, has hitherto lain outside the sphere of the Canadian Mission's operations. It is for this reason I mention it last. Here we have opened work at two points, and have secured temporary buildings. One of them has been very kindly placed at our disposal by Rev. Mr. Ritchie of St. Andrew's Scotch Church, free of charge. The other is a room over a store, by no means ideal, but serving until better can be obtained. At Georgetown we have one of our trial Catechists at work, Robert Kajkumar, who was I believe first lieutenant of Mr. Ross of Zion Church, in his day also to Mr. Sutherland, and later to Mr. Fisher in Essequibo. Mr. Fisher very kindly assisted with him to assist me in the initial stages of my work. He is also my helper in acquiring the language. He has his home nearby and comes in his morning for an hour or more. It may please the Gaelic enthusiasts of my native land to know that my knowledge of the vernacular, if it has done nothing else, gives me at least a greater facility in the pronunciation of sounds in Hindi which in English. This on the authority of my instructor, who in his district also includes that part of Demarara in which Rev. John Gibson, the missionary of the Canadian Church to this Colony labored, and laid down his life. I regret to say that the field which was left vacant at his death has not been occupied since. He died in 1887, and not till 1896 was work resumed, but in a different quarter. Occasionally I meet with those who were converted under his ministry. Still true to the message he taught them. I long to extend our work again to cover the ground that was once occupied by him, and where he sleeps. Though money is scarce I cherish the hope that at an early date we shall reclaim that which has in a way been lost. Scant home congregations often make me think of the contrast there would be among a people who knew not the Gospel Message as the "Old" story. But to the minister who gives up such a congregation to get the larger crowds, that heathenism offers their can be nothing for a time at least, but disappointment. Take for example an experience I had a few Sabbaths ago. A week before I announced, through my Catechist that I would be at the services in one of our Georgetown meeting places. I did not draw any mental picture of the gathering crowds, the fast filling pews, and it was just as well. Sabbath School came first with nine scholars, this was only our third Sabbath in the district. Next the preaching service. But alas instead of the throng, there were just three persons besides the preachers. What was the cause? The rice harvest was at its height, and rice figures large in the woolly mind then the speaker's message. I am glad to say however that our members are daily growing. Each Sabbath there are new S. S. Scholars enrolling, and last day the Catechist tells me he had a splendid meeting, large numbers and greater interest. I had one particularly good meeting last Lord's Day at Ogle. It was held in the open air, Sabbath School scholars mustered well and helped in the singing. I spoke in English from Heb. 1 verses 1 & 2, my Catechist inter-

preting. The people were almost all Heathen but gave splendid attention. Of course all the time others kept passing beside me on the way home from the fields with bags of rice on their backs. At this point there are several very promising men who are seeking baptism, and after the service that day a woman made a similar request. As a first step to receiving her I hope to have her married to the man with whom she lives, as soon as the necessary preliminaries can be put through. Next Sabbath we expect to baptize the Mother of the Catechist at this station. She has held back for some reason or another but has at last decided to take her place among those who publicly acknowledge Jesus as their Lord. For the last few weeks I have been conducting a class one day in the week, for my Catechist. I enjoy this part of my work greatly and feel that in no way can I multiply the influence of my message more than this. At every station the Catechist pleads for cards to give the children. I know there must be some of our boys and girls at home who can gather these and send them along, if they will. Let them remember that in so doing they are rendering good missionary service. I remember a number of ladies having spoken to me about their societies doing some work for us. I do not remember their names, but perhaps they do mind. I hope they will have their minds set thus on helping our work along. This is truly a land of nakedness. Many of the people are very poor and we often lose scholars because we have no clothes to give to make them presentable for school. If we had only the confidence that comes from instant success in the work, our confidence would indeed be small. This is only the seed time and one cannot but feel that much of it falls by the way-side and on stony places. It is only the thought that the cause is the Lord's and vision from him of its glorious consummation that can give endurance. On the other hand there is the solid indifference of those who make no pretence of listening to the message, or the disappointing trials of those who say "Lord! Lord!" and do not do his will," but on the other hand there is the thought "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

Yours Sincerely
A. D. MacKENZIE.

THE SUCCESSFUL PRIZE WINNERS

AMHERST, Dec. 6.—Among the successful prize winners at the Amherst Winter Fair was Ambrose Selley of East Royalty, P. E. I., who secured first for grade sow; fourth for pure bred York; second for grade sow; sixth for mutton, grade class; twelfth prize for dressed carcass, 1, Life wheat A. McBeath. Wheat, any other variety—1, Donald Stewart; 2, Horace Wright; 3, Eli Arsenault. Oats, Banner—3, Isaac Doughart. Oats, White, any other variety—2, Alex. Gibson; 3rd, Isaac Doughart. Oats, Black—2, Eli Arsenault; 3, Peter Brodie. Barley, six rowed—1, Peter Brodie; 2, Leonard Court. Barley, two rowed—1, Benj. Mallett; 2, R. Creed. Hullless Barley—1, Peter Brodie; 3, James Casford; 4, Richard Creed. Buckwheat—2, Alex. Gibson; 3, Benj. Mallett; 4, Horace Wright. Field Peas—3, Richard Creed. Timothy Seed—3, Richard Creed. White Beans—1, Eli Arsenault; 2, Orman Poole; 4, J. E. Poole. Colored Beans—1, L. U. Fowler; 2, Eli Arsenault. Potatoes, White—4, P. Brodie. Potatoes, Rose Type, Peter Brodie. In the collection of grain among the Seed Growers' Association's, Richard Creed, Thomas Waugh and James Marchbanks win several prizes.

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RESOLVED

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R. F. Outcault

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Notice to city tax-payers—a list of unpaid taxes is being made out, and names will be advertised if not attended to at once.
18-311f

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