

The Friends' Colony Swarthmore, Canada

About a year and a half ago, it may be remembered, the clerk of the Canada Yearly Meeting, William I. Moore, paid a visit to the Far West, with a view to choosing a location for the establishment of a Friends colony. With the co-operation of the Government, several "townships" were selected as appropriate sites for the colony. The movement has already met with a response from England, as well as from Canada and the United States and a number of Friends are already settled upon the land, in the district of Battleford, North-West Territories, upwards of five hundred miles west-northwest of Winnipeg.

From the Almeley district in Herefordshire several young Friends have gone out, and bright accounts come to hand of their life and prospects. Four townships were originally reserved by the government from which any Friends applying might select homesteads. After they had made their selection, the remainder was thrown open generally, and there was a decided rush, but there are still a number of homesteads open. The name of the town is to be Swarthmore. It is about forty miles southwest of Battleford, where the nearest hotel is situated.

John Lloyd, late of Almeley, describes the land as gently rolling, without any

bluffs or trees, like one huge flat field stretching as far as the eye can reach. The land is very rich, and will grow practically any cereal that will grow in England. It is especially suitable for mixed farming. All the settlers around are more than pleased with their prospects. We have, he says, a beautiful country, and a beautiful climate, and we quite enjoy the winter a sentiment in which he is supported by his wife, who wrote the latter end of January that it had not seemed much like winter then. This, notwithstanding that the thermometer had registered 40 degrees and 42 degrees below zero! But they had not had any rain since September, and were not expecting it till April or May. Hence the atmosphere is very dry.

The home of J. Lloyd and his wife is at present only what is called a "shack," consisting of one large room, divided into living-room and two bedrooms. It is built of lumber, with a sod wall around. They hope to enlarge in the summer. A sod-built barn serves for horses, cattle, poultry, etc., most of the building the work of the settler. When he arrived last spring, his first work was to dig a well, from which they get all their water.

A Friends' meeting is held in the home of Walter Armitage, a minister, and a

Bible-class is conducted by a Friend from Indiana. All the settlers within reach—Friends and others—attend the meeting, and "good times" are experienced. The colony is hoping to build a meeting house in the spring or summer. A Roman Catholic colony is being formed on the north of the Friends. Most of the settlers are abstainers and non-smokers, and they mean to keep the saloon out if possible.

With the prospect of a railway being pushed through next summer, a little to the north of the colony, the outlook is promising. The progress already made and the prospect of congenial surroundings may perhaps encourage some other strong, healthy young Friends who may be feeling the place where they dwell as "too strait" for them, to turn their eyes hopefully westward. William I. Moore, 60 Bleeker St., Toronto, Canada, will, we are sure, gladly assist with advice and information. The postal address of the colony is Friends' Colony Mail, Battleford, N.W.T., Canada. ☺

— "The London Friend,"
June, 1905

May 2005 Editor's note: On page 5 of this issue, there is a photo of the church that is mentioned in this article, though the photo is dated 1905. The car on the left belonged to Walter Armitage, who is also mentioned here.