

[Roll 115, unnumbered document]

Sapporo, Jan. 7, 1888¹

Dear Mr. Knox :

I am sorry not to have been able to reply more promptly to your request for "Items" , but I was busy at the time with preparations for Xmas, and the entertainments at the school followed by those at the church occupied several days. Then came "Shogatsu" with a severe cold &c &c.

The church here is gradually but constantly increasing in earnestness and membership. We had the pleasure yesterday, the first Sabbath of the New Year, of seeing twelve new members added. Many of the officers and other members of the church regret very much that the union of the Ichi and Kumai churches was not decided upon this Autumn, as they feel that the action of the church here must depend upon that decision, which leaves the church in a very unsettled condition. There seems to be no doubt but that the church will join the union if one is formed. Our Girls School, which was started when I came here two years ago, is in a prosperous condition. Thirteen of the older girls have received baptism and give promise of earnest Christian women, while several more only await the consent of their parents. In the Normal school there are five Christians whereas two years ago there was not one. The 26th of Aug. I attended the dedication of the new church at Monbetsu, a place three days journey from Sapporo, as perhaps you know. I went in company with two of our older girls and the pastor of the church. It was a sight to make any Christian heart glad: A fine large house well built and finished and furnished, and a large attentive audience, for about three hundred attended the services during the two days we were there. Five native pastors and seven deacons and elders, representatives of several churches, occupied the pulpit platform. There was no foreign representative excepting myself. When we remember that the first Christian of the place received baptism only two years ago, that the church numbers over a hundred members, that they pay their pastor a good salary, have bought a lot and built and furnished a house in which to worship the true God, it really seems quite wonderful. And please bear in mind that this is work in Yezo "The Hokkaido." In regard to myself, if you care to hear, I am just now enjoying the holiday rest which I feel very much the need of. As you know, I have been left quite alone by the return home of the foreign teachers of the Agricultural College with their families, in Oct.

That it has been a lonely, sad and trying season I cannot deny, for I am not very brave. But we know by whose hand all things are appointed and that all is well. The “New Prof.” who supplies the place of Prof. Brooks arrived three days since. The prayers of the Christians here that a Christian teacher might be sent were answered. Prof. Brigham² and his wife are Christians and seem very nice indeed. They at once expressed themselves as desiring to do anything they could to help in Christian work. I have received Mrs. Knox’ letter and thank her sincerely for it. Hoping this may not be too late for use, should there be anything in for using.

I am very sincerely
S. C. Smith

¹Though the date in the original is clearly 1888, the reference in the second paragraph to “Our Girls School, which was started when I came here two years ago” raises the possibility that this letter was actually written on January 7, 1889, and the author inadvertently recorded the year which had just ended rather than the new one.

²This word is somewhat unclear in the original.