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EDITORIAL

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THAN examination of the Statistical Report of our Sunday School Department for the Conference year recently closed, gives much food for careful thought and questioning. We rejoice in the measure of success that has been attained, but without being pessimistic in the slightest degree, are of the honest opinion that as a Church we are not doing what may be reasonably expected of us in this most important of all departments of our work. Let us look at our present standing.

We have 5348 preaching appointments and 3590 Sunday Schools. That means that there are 1758 preaching places in Canadian Methodism without a Sunday School. A number of Union Schools of course reduces these figures somewhat; but we have far too many preaching appointments where no organized effort is made to lead the community in the study of the Word of God. Then, too, the number of preaching places increased last year by 175, while the number of Schools increased only 34. This is not as it should be, and must not be continued. The attention of every Chairman of District and of every District S. S. Secretary is called to this condition of affairs, and we know of no more important question that can engage the prayerful attention of every District Meeting than this:—*Is there a Sunday School at every possible place throughout the District?* If not, get one established, as quickly as possible. The list by Conferences is as follows:—(We give the number of preaching places where no S. S. exists.)

Toronto	86
London	17
Hamilton	11
Bay of Quinte	55
Montreal	115
Nova Scotia	185
N. B. and P. E. I.	174
Newfoundland	137
Manitoba	165
Saskatchewan	355
Alberta	357
British Columbia	62
West China Mission	39

It will be seen that the Central Conferences have comparatively few places without a School; but in the Maritime and Western Conferences much work remains to be done. The present need is a campaign of organization that shall engage the attention of every responsible officer until a Sunday School is established in every possible place.

And there ought to be many places where Sunday School operations precede even regular preaching. Many a good, strong church has grown out of a Sunday School in the past, and we must not weaken our efforts.—The Word of God studied by the people must be our aim always and everywhere.

In the face of the above figures, Brethren, your General Secretary is not satisfied. Are you? Let us make this year a record breaker in Sunday School organization.

There are many phases of the School life that call for our prayerful consideration. We have nearly 36,000 officers and teachers, but of these 4,000 are not Church members. We are glad to see the willing service of anyone who will co-operate in this great work; but it should not be necessary to have over 4,000 persons in some official capacity in our Schools, who are not members of the Church. Until there are enough volunteers from among professing Christians and actual Church members to do the whole work of the Sunday School, we cannot expect the greatest measure of spiritual fruitage. Converted people are necessary for the full discharge of the momentous responsibilities of true Sunday School workers.

The total number of members on the Cradle Roll is 18,267, an increase of 3,146 over last year. This increase is commendable; but the total membership is very small. If we believe, as we state in our Standards, that our infants are under the special care of the church for instruction, surely we should have thousands more enrolled in this First Grade of our Sunday School family. There are thousands of Methodist infants unbaptized, and there are thousands more who have been baptized, and *that is all*. Why should one of the Lord's little ones be neglected? He will surely call us to account

if, as a Church, we do not pay greater attention to the Christian nurture of the babes and little children. A *Cradle Roll* in every School should be our purpose. Let us claim every precious babe for the Lord who redeemed it, and teach every little child to love the Heavenly Father from the very dawn of conscious affection. We want a generation of Christians who have never known anything else than Sunday School association, loyal Christian service, and organized church work. And the only way to secure such is to grow the boys and girls from the cradle (in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.) It is impossible to begin too early. So we appeal for a Cradle Roll in every School.

Our Primary Scholars have increased 738, and our Intermediate Grade 252 during the year. These figures are better than a decrease; but they are not satisfactory. The fact is that the Sunday School life of many is all too short, and we rejoice in the evident purpose of the School to hold our growing youth much more tenaciously than ever. We cannot afford to have our children drop out of the School in their early teens as too many have done. The Intermediate Section is the most important of all, for if our boys and girls are not then led into open and avowed discipleship, the probability is that they will wander away never to be restored to the School or Church. We thank God for the 11,743 who have united with the Church during the year; but remember that that number only represents an average of less than four from each School. Is it not humbling after all, that the work of nearly 36,000 teachers and officers in addition to the whole ministerial staff of our Church, has resulted in adding only an approximate 12,000 to our Church membership from our Sunday Schools. Do you feel easy about it? Then just remember that we have a full quarter of a million souls in our Sunday Schools who are not in church membership. How great our responsibilities are! How glorious our privilege is in leading these hosts to Jesus Christ and bringing them into confessed discipleship. Let us have every teacher an Evangelist and a wonderful ingathering of souls will result.

In this connection it may be well to note that only 720 of our Schools held a Decision Day last year. True, this is an increase over a year ago; but what about the other 2,570. Compare these figures, and ask if we are doing all we can to bring our children and youth to Christ. However you do it—see well to it that an honest effort is made to secure every one of our scholars for Christ and the Church. And do not wait. Do it quickly.

In the Senior Classes our Statistical Reports count all who have passed out of the Intermediate grade. We are gratified to notice that we have 6,841 more adults in our Schools than ever before. This is a good thing and gives ground for congratulation; but the work of the organized Adult Bible Classes is only begun. Our Schools hold the first place in Canada for enrolment of such classes; but that is small ground for self-satisfied applause. Think of the thousands who have gone out from us. Men and women almost innumerable have drifted away. These should be brought back again as far as we can persuade them to come. The most encouraging fact in present day Sunday School circles is the enlarged conception that has come of Sunday School possibilities and duties, and the whole Congregation united in the regular and systematic study of the Bible must be our standard. We need the Cradle Roll, but unless we make provision for the whole life from cradle to crown, we shall fail to accomplish the true mission of the Sunday School. Men! Go after your fellows! Women! Seek out your sisters! Unite, organize, enroll, study, pray, work, and you will surely receive and impart a rich blessing.

We have 17,136 in the Home Department. This shows an increase of 1,278 during the year. We are glad to mark this for this Department may be made a very fruitful one. It is practicable anywhere. All it requires is a wide-awake and systematic Superintendent and a few faithful painstaking visitors. The people need the Bible, they know they need it, and in many cases all that is required is to arouse their attention. From the youngest infant to the oldest patriarch there is a place for everybody in the Sunday School, and if you would have your School do the work that highest ideals and modern methods call for, you must make provision for everyone in the School who can attend, and for everybody by the