

Work Amongst Boys and Girls

A solemn hush pervades the auditorium of the town Presbyterian Church, this Sunday afternoon. One hundred and twenty-five boys with bowed heads are silently communing with God and their own souls about what they should do. These boys range from 15 to 17 years of age. They are the very pick of the older boys from one of our best Canadian towns and its surrounding district.

Since Friday night they have been together, hearing and planning about, and actually working at boys' work. The three day Conference is drawing to an end. This is the "business meeting." It is the time for decision. Forward steps are being taken. There, in the presence of fathers and older brothers and strangers, these boys dedicate themselves to God. Their vows and wishes are registered on cards which have been distributed to them.

Over one hundred of these cards are collected, giving the boy's name, address, church, and his prayer or resolution. These boys are not afraid of their stand. They mean business. It is a sight one will remember.

A large number of such Conferences have been held throughout Canada for girls as well as boys. Nothing in recent years seems to have laid hold upon the imagination and service of workers with Canadian girls and boys like this work which heads up in these conferences. Lasting impressions are left. "I have a splendid class of girls, and I attribute the present large size and fine spirit of the class to a Girls' Conference which was held a short time ago in our town." These words of a Sunday School teacher—the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Ontario—speak for many classes both of girls and boys to-day in Canada.

The main aim of these Conferences is to train leaders. A careful selection of promising older boys and girls from a district is made. These are sent as delegates to a conference in a convenient place. There the work of organized boys and girls' classes,—or in other words, of Trail Rangers, Tuxis Boys, and Canadian Girls in Training,—is explained.

At the conference these delegates are given actual experience in the formation and conduct of such classes. They go back to the home Sunday School and church with a new vision of the Christian life as it applies to boys and girls, with a definite decision for Christ and his cause, and with actual experience in the best ways and means to promote Christ's cause amongst boys and girls.

There is no form of Sunday School work in Canada to-day which is arousing as much general and keen interest as these new Canadian movements amongst Canadian boys and girls.

The Home Teacher

Two years ago the State Legislature of California, with a view to reaching and educating the masses of illiterate foreign born in that State, passed the Home Teacher Act, "which provides for the appointment of teachers connected with a definite school and responsible to its principal. The home teacher actually penetrates into the foreign home in the congested districts, establishing friendly relations with the mother and other adult members of the family, and through this friendly connection with the individual home builds up groups for the study of English and civics, and most especially brings American standards of living into the foreign home and links the school and the home."

The plan has worked out excellently in practice, for instance, in Los Angeles, whose foreign-born population comprises thirty-three nationalities. It is likely also to be tried out in New York city.

Our own Canadian cities might well look into the plan, and rural districts in the far West, which are peopled almost entirely by foreign-born.

Has not the plan an even wider suggestion? Every experienced Sunday School worker recognizes the immense importance of bringing the Sunday School and the home together. Is there not a hint in this California Home Teacher plan as to one way by which this bringing together might be accomplished?