

## EDITORIAL

### Effective Supervision

Organization is never an end in itself. It is but a means to an end. Nature with her countless orders of organized life teaches us this important lesson. Mechanics with its diversified and complicated structural forms illustrates it. It is operative everywhere. Honored and obeyed, the principle and process of organization confer unlimited benefit on the workers; ignored or broken its law works loss. What prevails in other spheres of intelligent operation applies with equal force to Church activities. Especially appropriate is the principle to the Young People's Department. The constitutions of the Sunday School and the Epworth League make abundant provision for the organization of the membership in different ways and under varying conditions. But in every case organization is intended to be but an aid to greater efficiency. The purpose has not been accomplished when Bible Class or Epworth League has been organized. It has only begun. Better no organization than a merely formal assembly of parts that are never put in operation for the accomplishment of the purpose originally in the mind of the designer.

For the thorough and systematic action of any organized body the superintendent, overseer, or "head" is mainly responsible. In the Epworth League this officer is the president. To him is committed the duty of making his machinery effective. It matters not whether it be a Local, District, or Conference League; the president is the chief executive officer to whom the Church must look for results. There is no lack of parts in Epworth League machinery. If ever a society were designed to give every young person an opportunity to fit in where most congenial in the work of God, surely the Epworth League is that society. Yet much of its organization is inefficient, many of its channels of service are unused, many of its prime ends unfulfilled. Why? Largely, we believe, because of ineffective supervision.

Two causes seem to contribute to this: there is not enough discriminating care exercised in the choice of presidents, and many presidents when elected do not take their work with sufficient seriousness. We could cite many cases in point as relating to the District League. Let one suffice. Here is an extract from a letter recently received: "As District President I have done little or nothing. I was appointed president at the District Convention which I did not attend, and did not know that I was appointed for about two months. My circuit work is extremely heavy, having six churches under my care, and being nine miles from the railroad and in the corner of the District." Need we wonder if under such conditions the District League fails to be thoroughly efficient? And this is not an isolated case. Others, even more regrettable, are well known to us. The fact is that if our District organization is to accomplish the ends for which it was designed it must have more effective supervision. The new provision of General Conference, that a written formal report shall be presented annually by the President to the Chairman of District for the Annual District Meeting, should materially help bring about a larger measure of efficiency; but even this will fail if the Chairman of District does not insist on the matter being attended to. The General Secretary has done all he can to ensure a larger and more complete supervision of the District League in this particular.

Similar statements might be made regarding the Conference League. Too often the Annual Conferences know nothing officially or directly of what is being done or left undone by the Conference League Executive. But in

future this should not continue to be the case. To the Annual Conference Committee, the President of the Conference League is expected to make written report, and the Conference should pass on all matters therein affecting the work of the League throughout its bounds. Finally, all these concerns should come before the General Board. In our judgment more time must be spent by the Board in getting into the details of the young people's work. This has been to a large degree impossible during the past quadrennium. Matters of procedure have so engrossed the time and attention of the Board that other vital concerns that go to the very heart of our Epworth League work have been crowded out or referred to the Executive which has had neither time nor opportunity to deal with them.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that we cannot expect the largest measure of success unless there be alertness, activity, unity, system, thoroughness, and co-operation all along the line of action. General Board, Annual Conferences, Conference Leagues, District Leagues, local societies, all and sundry with their various presiding officers and working forces, must be continually and consistently industrious or failure will result. And there is no reason for failing. "Failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough." Let the new year upon which so many of us are now entering be made the most illustrious in our history by the faithful discharge of every obligation by all in positions of trust or responsibility that we may prove the worth of what through all our forces we should most highly value—*effective supervision.*

### Systematic Study in the League

Whatever the Annual League reports ordered by the last General Conference may not accomplish, they are making very clear one thing at least,—that many of our Epworth Leagues are sadly lacking in systematic topic study. It appears that a large number have no definite objective in view but that the weekly meetings are arranged according to the convenience of the leader, and not after any definite or well ordered plan. This is fatal to best results. It should not be tolerated by the President or permitted by the Executive. We do not claim that the official topics are the best for all Leagues; but they are at least suggestive of definite lines of study that every well conducted League will follow. Of what use are the several departments unless each one leads the young people into intelligent and systematic investigation of the principles and problems for which that department especially stands? The Vice-president who does not so arrange the meetings of his section that each succeeding month shall add to the sum total of knowledge possessed by the members regarding the particular issues represented by his department, may have "nice" meetings, but at best they will be shallow, and the effects both superficial and temporary. Examine our official topic card carefully, if only as a suggestion of what your League should seek to attain along the four avenues of study and service. Can the First Vice-president do better for the leaguers than conduct them through twelve consecutive studies of such problems as the Christian life as our list outlines? What better value in missionary subjects can a Second Vice-president give the members than that embodied in an intelligent view of the mission fields of the world to-day? Is anything more desirable than that our young Canadian Methodists shall know the history of their own Church, and have some acquaintance with the noble men by whom it has been built up in this land? The Third Vice-president will do most excellent service if the biographical studies of the Literary and Social Department are well presented to the leaguers. And how about the work of nation building as analyzed in the topics of the Fourth Department? Ought our young folk to be careless of the process whereby the future of their own country is to be either made or marred? The Citizenship Vice-president has an exceptional opportunity this year for presenting the highest ideals to every youth