

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1921

STATISTICS OF METHODISTS

Reports to Ecumenical Conference Being Held in London—Canada Represented.

London, Sept. 7.—Important world problems, including the reunion of Christendom, marriage and divorce, capital and labor, international co-operation and the causes underlying the change in "moral standards" of the present age, are to be discussed at the fifth Ecumenical Methodist Conference which opened in Central Wesleyan Hall, Westminster, last evening and continues until Friday, September 16. The speakers will be leaders of Methodist thought throughout the world and will include editors, educators and other prominent laymen as well as bishops and ministers.

It is ten years since the last previous similar conference was held in Toronto, Ont. Since then, according to official figures, Methodism has gained 3,835,241 members, probationers and adherents. The number of delegates to the present meeting, including African M. E. Church representatives, is 555 of whom 251 are from the United States, eighty-four from Canada, and 220 from all Wesleyan bodies in Great Britain and its dominions and mission fields. The opening sermon was preached at the historic Wesley's chapel here by Rev. S. P. Rose, D. D., of Montreal.

Rev. Dr. H. K. Carroll, of Plainfield, N. J., will present to the conference an

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estimate showing the Methodist population in the world, including members, probationers and adherents to have totalled 36,622,190 in 1919. In 1910 it was given as 32,728, 547.

Gains in U. S.

Chicago, Sept. 7.—A net gain of 1,255,091 members has been made by all divisions of the Methodist church in the United States in the last ten years, despite great losses suffered by the denominations during the war, according to statistics compiled for presentation to the decennial Ecumenical Methodist Conference in London. The figures were compiled by Rev. Dr. H. K. Carroll of Plainfield, N. J., former director of the United States Census.

Methodist Sunday schools in the United States, however, the report says, show a net loss, for the two years, 1918 and 1919, of 293,963, "an appalling figure," although 1920 returns indicate that the lost ground is being regained. Notwithstanding that Sunday school pupils of the denomination in the United States were 200,000 less in number in 1920 than in 1918, the enrollment throughout the world shows an increase of 1,289,036 Methodist pupils for the ten-year period.

"It is a remarkably good showing that American Methodism has to present to the ecumenical conference," declared Dr. Carroll's statement. Delegates representing nearly 37,000,000 Methodist members and adherents will be in attendance. We can never forget that the last decade includes the worst war in the history and that, though our nation was an actual participant in its battles for only a year and a half, we suffered with our allies its terrible effects.

"The year 1919 was the hardest the churches of America have known, at least since the Civil War. Methodism in most of its branches suffered, with the other evangelical denominations, actual losses. The Methodist Episcopal Church suffered most of all, losing 48,262 in 1918 and 59,987 in 1919. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, lost 16,444 in that year. In 1920 the tide turned for all evangelical churches, heavy gains succeeding the losses.

"Considering the heavy losses in the previous two years, it is remarkable that the total net increase in members and probationers of the Methodist church of the Western Section (United States) has been 1,255,091, exceeding the increase of the previous decade, 1900-1910, by nearly 282,000. The percentage of increase is also greater. For the decade ended in 1910 it was 15; for the last ten years, nearly 17."

Dr. Carroll, in commenting on the fact that the number of itinerant Methodist ministers, 48,765, represented a

loss of 299 as compared with a gain of 6,581 in 1910 for the previous ten years, said: "Certainly, more ministers are needed instead of fewer for a growing Methodism. What is the trouble? Is the Methodist ministry less attractive than it used to be?"

In conclusion, Dr. Carroll says: "The net increase of Sunday school pupils for all Methodist bodies in the world for the ten years is 1,289,036. Of this handsome gain, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the only body of any name, so far as I recall, which has more scholars in Sunday school than members in church, gets the lion's share—\$34,473. It also participates in the total increase of 85,076 of officers and teachers. When it is remembered what a great recruiting agency for church members the Sunday school has become, the significance of the gains in the number, equipment and scholars of this institution is a happy augury."

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WOODEN SHIPPING AGAIN DISCARDED

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Washington, Sept. 7.—The sale at \$2,100 each of the 205 wooden ships built under the direction of the Emergency Fleet Corporation for the United States is not the last thing that will be heard of the country's effort to build a war fleet, but the event may be taken as an official and final admission of certain truths that were told when the wooden ship programme was advanced. Congress started in with an appropriation of considerably more than a billion dollars for shipbuilding and set up the shipping board and the fleet corporation. At the head of the corporation were Chairman Denman and General Goethals, who was made general manager. The west and south had timber out of which to build ships and no steel. As a result a tremendous influence was brought to bear from those regions in favor of building wooden ships, and since the country as a whole was willing to try anything that offered the faintest hope of meeting a compelling emergency, the government undertook a great programme of wooden ship building.

But hard-headed engineers and practical shipping men insisted all along that the country would do better to concentrate on steel ships. They doubted if wooden ships built of green timber would be good for anything even in the emergency; they said that beyond all doubt the wooden ships would be punk as soon as peace was declared, and deplored the diversion of money and energy away from steel ships that would be occasioned by the construction of wooden ships.

At the head of these objectors was General Goethals, while Chairman Denman, who came from the Pacific coast, was the wooden ship advocate. The stock argument upon his side was that wooden ships would be better than nothing and that even in peace time they would be good for something. The disagreement finally became so bitter that both men were named and led to a verdict to time, but the wooden ship party prevailed.

By the end of 1918 the emergency had passed and many contracts for wooden ships were cancelled, but the fleet of several hundred boats was on hand and has been ever since. Every prediction that General Goethals made has been fulfilled and now ships that cost from \$300,000 to \$800,000 are selling at \$2,100.

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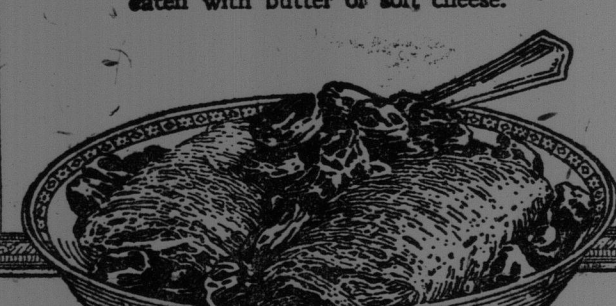
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