

the Dominion, each branch having power to send one additional delegate for every ten members over ten members.

6. Any five persons can form a branch association, and such branch association shall become affiliated with the General Free-thought Association of Canada by adopting a constitution which shall not conflict with the constitution of the General Free-thought Association of Canada.

7. That each branch association shall contribute one-quarter of its receipts to the Executive Committee of the General Free-thought Association of Canada, which shall be applied as shall hereafter be determined by the Convention.

8. The President of each branch association shall be a Vice-President of the General Association.

9. The first business of the Annual Convention shall be the election of the officers of the General Association for the ensuing year.

10. Your Committee recommend that all delegates to this convention be empowered to establish branch associations in their several districts, with power to add new names and new districts.

11. The officers of the General Free-thought Association shall be elected annually at the Annual Convention of the said Association.

12. There being no effective means of obtaining and distributing our particular literature, we recommend that the General Free-thought Association establish a depot for Free-thought literature, to be sold, circulated, and distributed by said Association.

13. That the central, executive, and office of the General Free-thought Association of Canada be held in Toronto.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The following officers were elected unanimously:

Mr. J. Ick Evans, President.

Mr. J. T. Hawke, Secretary.

Mr. W. J. R. Hargrave, Corresponding Secretary.

Mr. R. B. Butland, Treasurer.

Executive Committee—W. Sisson, Port Hope; W. B. Cooke, R. Riley, Eyre Evans, C. A. Scadding, J. D. Keiloy, Toronto.

PROPAGANDISM.

The following report of the Committee on Propagandism was read by the Chairman (J. T. Hawke) and unanimously adopted.

Be it resolved, That in order to spread Free-thought and liberal ideas in the Dominion of Canada the special Committee appointed for that purpose recommend as follows:

1. We suggest that, in the event of a national organization being established, that a fund be raised for propagandist purposes, and that it be used as equally as practicable throughout the Dominion—Toronto and other organized cities to have no claim on the use of the fund.

2. That voluntary subscriptions be solicited for this purpose, it to insure necessary permanence in breaking new ground annual subscriptions be asked from those who desire to further this object.

3. When our public or professional lecturers are invited to Canada on their own terms they be requested to open up new ground, provided their travelling and hotel expenses are guaranteed, and whenever time and opportunity are favorable.

4. We deem it desirable to encourage men of ability, other than professional lecturers, to use their talent for propagandist purposes either in their own or outside their own locality.

5. That before unprofessional lecturers be acknowledged as Free-thought advocates they shall be endorsed and recommended by the propagandist executive.

6. In any locality to which lecturers are sent reports will be expected from the managers or promoters of lectures regarding talent and fitness of lecturer sent.

7. When lecturers are sent from any organization or the executive their travelling expenses and remuneration for time shall be guaranteed.

8. That the propagandist fund be under the control of the Executive, and that the Executive be empowered to vote any such sum from the general propagandist fund as they may deem fit.

The following general resolutions were also passed:

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Alliance has presented to the world, as the platform of a possible co-operative unity among elements characterized by diversity, the following epitome of thought. In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty, in all things, charity, therefore,

RESOLVED, That we adopt and promulgate as the true scientific basis of organization the following motto or epitomized statement. In things demonstrated and certain, unity, in whatsoever can be doubted, free diversity; in all things, charity.

RESOLVED, That the Bible, being regarded as a book of sacred character and of religious authority by only a part of the people, is to all intents and purposes a sectarian book, and we protest against the permission of its use in the public schools on the pretence of its being a non-sectarian book, as a manifest evasion of the truth, and a wilful disregard of the equal religious rights of the people.

RESOLVED, That we would most scrupulously respect the right of church-goers to enjoy their Sunday worship unmolested and undisturbed; and we ask them to respect the equal rights of those who do not choose to join them to enjoy their own Sundays in equal freedom.

RESOLVED, That this Association, while it recognizes the great importance and the absolute necessity of guarding, by proper legislation, against obscene and indecent publications, whatever sect, party, order or class, such publications claim to favor, it disapproves and protests against all laws which, by reason of indefiniteness or ambiguity, shall permit the prosecution and punishment of honest and conscientious men and women, for presenting to the public what they deem essential to the public welfare, when the vows thus presented do not violate in thought or language, the acknowledged rule of decency; and that we demand that all laws against obscenity and indecency shall be so clear and explicit that none but actual offenders against the recognized principles of purity shall be liable to suffer therefrom.

RESOLVED, That this Convention of Freethinkers of Canada express its hearty sympathy with the movement in this Dominion of Canada, to tax ecclesiastical and all other property in whatever form it may consist.

RESOLVED, That universal education is the only safeguard of universal liberty; that no child in the Dominion should be permitted to grow up without at least a common school education, that the public school system cannot be sustained in equal justice to all, except by confining it strictly to secular instruction; that all religious exercises should be prohibited in the public schools; that the permission of such exercises in them is a perversion of public funds raised for educational purposes to the purposes of religious propaganda; and that to allow in these schools the present practice of Bible-reading, prayer, and singing of religious hymns, or the use of text books which are so written as to inculcate religious dogmas of any kind, is a great wrong to large classes of citizens.

RESOLVED, That we hereby appeal to the country for funds to carry on the really important work for which we have been organized; that we believe there is abundant wealth and enthusiasm ready to aid us just as soon as our objects are thoroughly understood and widely known; and, that we rely confidently on the generosity of the patriotic public not to permit this great cause to languish for want of the all-essential means.

RESOLVED, that the members of this Convention pledge themselves to press upon the Provincial Legislature of the Dominion—House of Commons and the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, the desirability of removing from Freethinkers all disabilities which at present they labour under.

RESOLVED, That the members of this Association reverse the orthodox obligation which insists on trying and praying for power to believe, that we pledge ourselves to discourage belief, and encourage doubt; insist on the duty of doubt as necessary in the investigation of truth.

After the usual votes of thanks to conspicuous visitors, officers, and members, the convention adjourned till December 2nd, 1877.

J. T. HAWKE, Secretary.

We wish to put on record the opinion that never did a convention assemble that performed more real work in so business-like manner and in such a short space of time as the first Free-thought Convention of the Dominion of Canada, each officer, delegate and visitor doing their best to further the object all seemed to have so heartily in view, and never were the principles of our motto more thoroughly acted up to than on this great occasion, every person present seeming to feel that there should be in "things demonstrated and certain, unity; in whatsoever may be doubted, free diversity; in all things, charity." And thus ended the first convention of the first Free-thought Association in the first dependency of Great Britain April 16, 1877.—*Ed. Journal.*