

Western Methodist Recorder.

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* Editorial. *

THE NEW WESTMINSTER CONFERENCE.

No one who was privileged to be present at the recent Annual Conference in New Westminster will deny that we were right in our forecast last month that it would prove one of the most important that we have ever held. This was so not only from the large attendance and the happy and thoroughly business-like spirit which characterized the entire proceedings, but chiefly from the important nature of some of the questions considered, and also because of certain new departures which, after due consideration, were sanctioned. Among the latter was somewhat the new order of ordination—the ordaining of Native Agents for a ministry among their own people only—which was ordered by the Ministerial Session in the case of George Edgar, of China Hat. This action was the result of years of consideration on the part of the most experienced and best informed on our Indian Mission work, and not without the counsel of the General Secretary of Missions, who was present; and, although the action was practically unanimous, the departure is regarded by many as a serious, though hopeful, experiment. Another change is the new arrangement for supervision of our Indian and Chinese work. This arrangement is virtually the appointment of a Superintendent of Missions, although that title is not used. The Indian work is all placed in one District, called the Indian District; and the Chairman, who is to reside in Vancouver, is left without pastoral charge that he may superintend the whole work from the Fraser River to Vancouver Island and the far North. Under his charge also is placed all our Chinese work, without the appointment of local superintendents, as was previously the case. Whether the

change in either of these cases will prove to be an improvement on the old system cannot, of course, at present be determined. It was adopted by the Annual Conference as the recommendation of the General Missionary Board, Dr. Sutherland himself stating that as far, at least, as the Chinese work was concerned the change might be looked upon as a tentative adjustment for one year. One thing is certain, that the Chairman of the Indian District, as it is newly constituted, having the Chinese work in addition, is well weighted with responsibility, and no better man could have been selected for the position than our beloved and scholarly President. It has occurred to us, however, that in such appointments the General Board might wisely submit to the Conference two or more names upon which they ask by the ballot the expression of its judgment. Such generosity would have made no difference in the vote this time. Mr. Whittington would undoubtedly have been chosen, for he enjoys the fullest possible confidence of his brethren, and is eminently fitted for such administrative authority, but it would have impressed us more deeply that the desire to consult our opinion, who live here on the spot, is a very real element in the policy of the Board.

There were other very important matters dealt with as was expected, such as the Twentieth Century Fund and the Twentieth Century Revival Movement. As to the former, it was announced that about three-quarters of the million had been promised, British Columbia keeping pace fairly well apparently with the other Conferences in her share of the responsibility. It should be borne in mind, however, that the last quarter million will be the most difficult to raise, and as the 31st of October will soon be here every nerve should be on duty, and redoubled efforts should be made to bring up the full amount within the time.

To some of these matters, especially the Twentieth Century Revival Movement, or as it is sometimes called the Forward Evangelistic Movement, we shall find occasion to refer at greater length in future issues than is possible or necessary at present. There are other interesting subjects also contained in the Conference proceedings, as our readers will gather from the fairly extended report we give elsewhere.

We are very glad that the Conference has accepted the invitation presented by Rev. John Robson, B.A., to meet next year in the city of Nelson. The general surprise manifested at the suggestion and the smile of incredulity as to whether Mr. Robson really meant it, show only too clearly that those who have not for several years visited the "up country" districts have no adequate conception of the wonderful developments which have taken place. The five minutes spent in

consideration of the proposal did wonders in enlightening some of us; fully one-third of our ministers are stationed in Kamloops and Kootenay districts, and new circuits or missions are opening up every year; we are fully convinced that it is in the interests of our work generally that prevailing misconceptions should be corrected by the Conference meeting, for once at least in one of the Kootenay towns.

The resolution introduced by Mr. T. Bryant, of Nanaimo, looking to the preservation of our connexionalism was both timely and important, and should receive the earnest consideration of our leaders during the year. There can be no denying of the fact that there has of late years been an unhealthy tendency in Methodism towards what Rev. H. Price Hughes calls "a bastard form of Congregationalism," resulting in a selfish indifference on the part of larger churches, to the claims of struggling causes outside their own doorstep, while on the other hand there are small isolated Quarterly Official Boards who, with the utmost effort, can pay only a pauper's salary, that feel driven to the necessity of having a minister to themselves in order to hold their own at all along side of the larger churches.

Only a moment's reflection will show how unequal and expensive this makes our work, and at the same time how much our aggressiveness is retarded by neglecting to draw upon the vast reserves of lay talent which John Wesley and his early followers always utilized with such great advantage. By our next issue the select committee appointed to receive and arrange information on this subject and to prepare a report for next Conference will probably have met and formulated their plans, and fuller treatment of the important matter may then be given.

As will be gathered from our account of Conference, the report of the Collego Board this year was of the most encouraging nature, and great credit is due Principal Sipprell and his assistants for the skill and energy with which they have directed the affairs of the institution during the year. It really looks now as if the Collego is nearly "out of the woods," and about to enter upon a happier era of existence. As everyone knows this has come about by the heroic self-sacrifice of many of the ministerial and lay brethren, and more has of course yet to be done, but all concerned will feel amply compensated if, as now appears certain, their efforts are at least crowned with success. The appointment of Rev. Ebenezer Robson as Burser, thus relieving Mr. Sipprell of much of the financial responsibility, will appeal to the best judgment of all as a piece of the wisest economy. Mr. Sipprell has been worked far too hard, and it would be very wise and sound foolish policy to expect him to do it longer. The Board is to be congratulated on their courageous spirit, and also on being able to lay their hands at once upon so suitable a man as Mr. Robson to fill the new position.

Much of the success of the evening public meetings of the Conference must be ascribed to Mr. T. R. Pearson and his excellent choir. The large audiences which assembled night after night certainly heard some good speaking of which they repeatedly signified their appreciation, but their pleasure was greatly