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THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA.

ERIDAY EVENING, SEPT. 20.

The evening session began at 7.30 p. m. The minutes of the previous session were read and confirmed, after which there was reference to the drafting of an address to the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal cided to refer the drafting of this address to a special committee who should frame it and send it to the President of the Conference and the Executive Committee for their approval.

Rev. Mr. Rogers, who could not vote for the original report of the Committee, and who stated that the discipline was exceedingly strict as to attendance at the class-meeting. Non-attendance at the class-meeting meant, according to the discipline, an exclusion from the membership in the most open manner. Some ministers have attempted to carry out the spirit, but not the letter of the law on this point. Other have been more lax, and have retained as members of the church those who have been baptized and attend the Lord's supper. This was not a satisfactory state of affairs, as some are thus returned as church members, in direct opposition to the law of the church. He would not have felt disposed to speak on this subject had he not met with the difficulty bimself. From his predecessor on a certain circuit he had received class-lists, with foot-notes to the effect that although some named did not attend class, they were among the best members. He reasoned with those who were thus described, and finally persuaded some of them to unite with the class. However, some ministers were in the habit of erasing the names

did also Mr. Whitfield. The essential idea of cherish the class-meeting, and try and induce their religious training. the idea of total abthe church is a meeting, and without meeting as many as possible to come into them; not stinence from all intoxicating drinks. We they desire it they may be considered as local there is no church, and those who do not meet are considered to have abandoned **R**. The remark had been made that the Scriptures did not name class-meetings, and it could ly. be said that Scriptures do not mention family prayer or matters of church organizatian; these are left to the church itself. The quesread and confirmed, after which there was some discussion as to what should be done in is made up prescribed in the Bible? In class there is singing, prayer and the exhortation days of this test were numbered in Canada. of the leader, all of which have their warrant When Dr. Punshon was in this country he Church South, their address through some from the Scriptures. We have been told that had said to his frienda that Dr. Ryerson on cause not having been received. It was de- it is inconsistent not to keep a rule which we this question was only a few years ahead of have, but the inconsistency is in the not keep- his time, and Dr. Punshon himself had writing of it and not in the rule itself. Let us ten the most eloquent praise of class-meetings keep the rule. When the Church of England in the English language. The discussion in fell away from the rule of the prayer-book this Conference showed that the funeral knell they did not reject the prayer-book, but it of this test had sounded in Canada, and whatwas an instrument toward leading them back ever might be the decision of this Conference awful curse of intemperance from our fair to its principles. The class-meeting will in he was satisfied that those who lived five years

like manner be a means of bringing us back. longer would see this test numbered among

Don't abolish anything because it is neglected. ed. (Applause.) It is urged we must keep ahead with the spirit of the age. What is the spirit of the age? The spirit of the age is a cripit of offorminger a spirit which page is a spirit of effeminacy; a spirit which pays subject, but the peculiarities of the embarcount to the outside world, which conforms rassments of the position he held forbade him with what is outside-a spirit of relaxation, to take sides on this great issue. During the last ten years, from every part of this con-tinent he had been seeking light on this quesone which impels us to be like other people. If there was a powerful revival of religion it would fully reinstate the class-meeting. In tion. From leading ministers in the Irish one city with 220 class membe.s one-half did Conference, and from the guiding intellects not attend class, but by speaking with them of the British Conference, as well as from individually they were all brought back and eminent men of other denominations, he had the membership was afterward greatly in-creased. We might modify the form of the at the present moment was this—caution, cauclass. Speaking in class-meeting is not comtion. Some years ago he had had a long conpulsory; it is not required. All speaking versation with the Rev. Ebenezer Jenkins, of the Mission House in England, on this class-meeting question. He admitted the perplexshould be voluntary. The principal idea is the meeting. All required is that they meet with us-that they do not refuse fellowship ities surrounding this problem of our Methodist polity, and stating that the English Conwith us. Dr. Jeffers' remarks were frequentference would not move until there were ly interrupted by sounds of applause.

coming up intimations from every part of the Mr. E. K. Griffin said that he had observed membership of the Conference that a change of non-attendants at class from the roll of that every minister who had spoken on this church membership. This is the reason of the memorial of the Halifax Conference ask-ing for a definite test of church membership. The subject seemed to have come fully prepared pected the matter would come up. Some the gravity of the question led him to say pected the matter would come up. Some ing for a definite test of church membership. There are some who say the class-meeting speakers deprecated any change in the laws There are some who say the class-meeting speakers dep

could administer them conscientiously.

that some congregations had to bear with dry

preachers. (Hear, hear.) During the forty

years of his Methodist experience he had

heard much more complaint of dry sermons

than of dry class-leaders. He had spent a

very happy three weeks at this Conference,

but the only thing which made him sad

was to learn that there were so many ministers

They had also persons meeting with

compel them under the scorpian penalty of commend the more general introduction of preachers, and shall be subject to the regulaexclusion from the church, but persuade them | temperance literature into our Sabbath-school for the purpose of building them up spiritual- literature. We suggest the importance of ers .- Carried. Twenty years ago, when he took the devoting some portion of the time to this position that this rule was unjust and ought subject in our district Sabbath school Conto be abolished, he was sneered at by the ventions. 6. We regard it as of the first importance 'Christian Advocate" of New York, and that our ministers should unite with our official members in banishing from the Lord's table those obnoxious mixtures too often used there, and procure for that blessed purpose only the pure juice of the grape. 7. We gratefully acknowledge the encour-

aging fact that temperance truth and practical devotion to the cause are advancing. We still feel the importance of continued and more character, for the complete removal of the and goodly land.

dereslepan,

N. R. WILLOUGHBY, M. A., Chairman, JOHN HUNT, Secretary.

Dr. Fowler remarked that in the first section of the report the phrase "tens of thousands" might be changed to hundreds of thousands, or even to millions, which would be nearer the truth.

Dr. Aylsworth moved, seconded by Rev. Wm. Scott, the following resolution : Resolved, that the following explanatory note be attached to the rule on drunkenness, namely,-The words "spirituous liquors" shall be held to include all alcoholic or intoxicating liquors.

been seeking light. What he wanted to say Dr. Rice said that would be a change of the general rule.

Dr. Rose said it was unnecessary as the original clause was already clear enough. The President ruled that as there was no doubt about that clause of the discipline, the explanatory clause was unnecessary and the motion was out of order. .

The report was then adopted. Dr. Rice, from the Committee appointed to consider the relations of the superannuation Fund to the Missionary Fund, reported a motion that it was perfectly right to recognize as just claims of the Superannuation Fund upon the Missionary Fund in those depart-

uted to their meeting together in societies as meet his friends in the class-meeting. Let us thus give to our children, as an essential in nual conferences, shall not exercise the functions of the Discipline relating to local preach-

Recommending that there shall be within the bounds of each conference a local Missionary Board, constituted as the annual conference may determine; said Board to consist of ministers and laymen, in equal numbers .--

Carried. Recommending that a new section be added, entitled "Doctrines and Standards," as follows :---- The Doctrines of the Methodist Church of Canada are declared to be those contained in the twenty-five Articles of Religion," and those taught by Mr. Wesley in his "Notes on the New Testament, and the earnest efforts, especially of an individual fifty-two sermons of the first series of Discourses published in his lifetime."-Carried. Mr. Warring Kennedy was elected Treasurer of the General Conference, along with

Dr. Rose for the next four years. Rev. Dr. Ryerson read the draught of an address to the Marquis of Lorne, to be presented on his arrival in Canada. The Conference adopted the address and adopted a deputation to present it as soon as convenient after His Excellency's arrival at Ottawa; the deputation to consist of Revs. Drs. Ryerson, Douglas, Rice, Rev. Mr. Sutherland, the Hon. Mr. Ferrier, and the Methodist ministers

of Ottawa. The Conference adjourned at 5.40, to meet again on Monday morning.

MONDAY FORENOON-SEPT 23.

The Conference opened this morning at 9 o'clock. After reading and prayer by Rev. Amos Russ, M. A., of British Columbia, the Rev. G. R. Sanderson introduced a resolution respecting the reception of candidates for the ministry. The resolution was then put from the chair and declared lost.

The Rev. Wm. Hansford then read the 4th and final report of the committee on Missions.

REPORT.

I. NAME-This Society shall be known as the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada.

II. OBJECT-The

has had its day, and must die out, but he did of the church, but we were already living unnot believe such was the case. However, if der that change and had been for years, for the attendance cn class-meetings is to be a everywhere the membership test was ignored. test of church membership, they should have So general had the practice of ignoring this an improvement in their classes, and in every rule become that we only asked this Confer-case suitable leaders, as some leaders invest ence to railly by statute what had already bemeeting is a failure is, because we have been was often cruel. What he wanted was that accustomed to regard attendance as a duty rather than a privileged means to advance its attendants in grace. We ought to be sure that the class-meeting is attractive and thus allure our people into it. Excision from the church only ought to be the result of some direct violation of the law of God. There was no reason to fear that spiritual life will die out if we do not enforce attendance in class-meeting, which will be seen by reference to the Episcopal Church in the United States. Some of the most effective workers in his (the speaker's) church did not attend class-meeting. He contended in conclusion that the observance of the rules of the Society was the real test of membership.

in the denomination who were not loyal to Rev. Howard Sprague said he was in favor the polity of the Methodist Church. (Order, of preserving the class-meeting, and was for hear, hear.) He wished to place this matter changing the test of membership, a statement in its true light before this Conference. He made by him frankly and unreservedly. The had been trying to ascertain where this great difficulties existing should not be ignored, but storm on the class-meeting question had come met in a frank and manly manner. He con-tended that the New Testament did not imfrom that had taken place to-day in Dorchespose attendance at class, and that it was not ter Street Church. From the three thousand churches in the land, only two small sections esteemed a test of membership by Wesley. had come up asking for a change. Was this He considered that attendance at the Lord's a sufficient indication of Methodist sentiment Supper and the performance of other church duties should be the rule by which church to justify this Conference in legislating on the class-meeting question? He was astonmembership should be decided. If the classished to see so many eminent ministers askmeeting was less formal and more social and ing for the abolition of the class-meeting test. familiar, its influence would be advanced. He did not know there was any law requiring There was no church outside the Methodist him to go to each member of the class and Church which had class-meetings, yet could ask after his spiritual condition. Neither it be said that no other church but their's had were they required to speak if they did not Christian fellowship? That those who attendwant to. If they wished to keep silent they ed the communion of the Lord's Supper, the were allowed to do so. There was one man meetings of praise and prayer, did not partiin his class who had sat twelve months withcipate in church fellowship? When it is said out opening his mouth, but at last his tongue the class-meeting shall not be the test of was unloosed. They read the Bible in their church membership, it is not to be inferred class, but they did not preach a dry sermon that the doors of the church shall be thrown open to all comers, neither that the classon it. them who were not Methodists, and who never became so. One of them was a Unitarian, meeting shall be set aside.

who said he found something there he did Rev. Leroy Hooker supported the original not find anywhere else. The idea had got motion because he thought it was the safest. abroad that persons coming to the class must God forbid it should ever be omitted from the means of grace of the Methodist Church as he tell their experience. That was a pretty hard thing to do, for a good many persons who did for one was converted through the classmeeting. Some people get the idea that not have any experience to tell. Rev. Dr. Ryerson said that in his early life there is bondage and tyranny connected with it, but he believed the feeling of dissatisfache had resigned his office of minister because tion has been largely inspired from without. he could not administer this law, for he considered it dishonest in a Methodist minister to But if they gave way to outside influences they would never be done changing, in the end exemplifying the fable of the old man tiously administer. Two young men who and his ass. The conditions of membership should continue to be the recognized laws of the church, and attendance at class was one were Mr. Thomas Hodgins, now Superintenof these.

dent of Education for Ontario, and his broth-Dr. Evans deprecated a change in this mater, Mr. John Hodgins, late Member of Parter.

lian ent. They were of most exemplary life, Rev. W. Williams thought that the names but because they could not conform to this of all should appear as favoring one side or law on class-meetings they were both turned another. He favored the original report of out of the church. It was then that he had tendered his resignation. The wound thus the Committee.

The President said that Dr. Ryerson and caused to his heart at seeing two of his own Dr. Jeffers had put much thought into this spiritual children rejected by the church was subject, and suggested that they, with two of very deep, and it remained unhealed to-day. the laymen, should speak, and conclude the But for the unjust administration of this rule these two distinguished men would be to-day debate.

This plan having been decided upon, Dr. members of our church. They had, however, Jeffers said that four-fifths of other members united themselves with the Church of Engof the church in Canada attend class. Those land, and were now ornaments of that who do not attend class admit the propriety church. He felt very deeply on this subject, of the rule; they profess to believe in the and had never attended a class-meeting since. duty, but simply neglect to do it. Scarcely But as soon as the power of excluding memany object to class-meeting on principle. bers from the church by ministers for this Those on the other side are incomparably cause was taken away he should authorize more numerous. The growth of Methodism is the most extraordinary phenomenon in the history of the Christian era, this he attrib-

ments of mission work that made no retu question, and if we legislate in a manner to the Superannuated Fund .-- Carried. displease them it was in their power to checkmate the action of this Conference. He would suggest that we let the organic polity of the

Church on this subject go on the another quadren mal: The Conference then proceeded to vote come the common law o" the church by usfuneral, so to speak. One reason why class- age. To insist upon the class-meeting test upon the amendments of Rev. Mr. Parker and siderable majorities. Notices of motion that the Methodist Church should be broad enough to receive Christians from other de- had been given by Rev. Messrs. Sutherland, nomations. As a church, we should put our Jeffrey, Hooker, Sanderson, and Hunt were converted into amendments, and successively laws upon our statutes, so that ministers submitted to the Conference, all being lost by great majorities. The original proposition of Mr. E. Coatsworth, Toronto, said it had the Committee was adopted, and the classbeen remarked that sometimes classes had meeting test was left unchanged. to bear with dry leaders .. It was also true

The Conference adjourned at eleven 'clock.

SATURDAY, SEP. 31-FORENOON.

The Conference met at nine o'clock. Rev Prof. Burwash conducting the devotional exercises. After the reading of the minutes, Rev. Mr. Hunt presented the report of the ommittee on Temperance as follows :---

After much thought and prayerful consideration on the subject of Temperance, by which we understand total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, the Committee feel bound to state their solemn convictions and recomnendations as follows :---

1. That the subject coming under review is of the greatest and most vital importance to the interests of our Church. The great and destructive evils of intemperance have often been affirmed and illustrated by reference to statistics, and many facts are recorded which cause us to stand in awe. While we do not, at present, deem it a proper occasion to enter upon any circumstantial statement of these, we have, nevertheless, a firm belief in their truth. There is no more certain road to perdition than that by which tens of thousands of our fellow men are being led by the use of strong drink. Its deceptive and maddening influences, thus stated, Pro. 20: 1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise," present it to us as among the most insidious and worst foes, both to the bodies and souls of men. With these views of its character, we cannot but regard the subject as second to no other as an evil of inconceivable magnitude. 2. We gratefully acknowledge the utility the various Temperance organizations in as-

sisting to stay the tide of this branch of immorality; and we trust that, as far as practicable, our ministers and people will unite with others in their several localities to help on this good work.

We call attention to the recent legislation at Ottawa on this subject, which is the nearest approach to entire prohibition that is found hold office whose laws he could not conscienon the statute books of any Canadian legislature. We hope that efforts will at once be had been brought to the Lord through his inmade in all parts of the Dominion to introstrumentality desired to become members of the Methodist Church. Those young men duce and practically carry out this timely and well considered law.

4- Convinced as we are that all mere legal and moral means are insufficient without the p wer of grace to save the drunkard, we earnestly recommend that special prominence be given to the religious element in the temper. ance enterprise. The Gospel Temperance movement places this cause on the only proper basis. We trust the ministers of our church will frequently call attention to this, and also in their public devotions lead their congregations in prayer for God's blessing to attend every legitimate effort. Let all take the ground that our Church, according to our general rules, is a total abstinence society, and thus keep in the strongest bond of union that which in reality never can be divorcedthe inseparable connection of temperance and true religion.

5. We earnestly commend for universal adoption that which already exists in many of our Sabbath schools-the organizations of draw from any of the annual conferences, and nounce that Dr. Ryerson would be happy to juvenile temperance associations. We shall ministers who are located by any of the an-

Principal Nelles, from the Œcumenical Council Committee, reported in favour of

bolding such a council, and that a Committee pondence with other conferences in reference thereto .- Adopted.

Rev. Dr. Sargent, delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church South, said the scheme of an (Ecumenical Council originated with Dr. Somers, one of the leading men in that church, and who had pronounced the Canadian brethren to be "a noble breed of Methodists." In 1876 the Southern Conference had authorized a committe to correspond and ar-

range for such s council. The Conference then adjourned.

Immediately after adjournment, Prof. Burwash, on behalf of the delegates, presented four volumes of Smith's Bible Dictionary to Rev. Mr. Allen, and a set of theological works to Rev. Mr. Shaw, both of which gentlemen have rendered great business service to the Conference since its opening, Mr. Allen having acted as the Conference postmaster.

AFTERNOON.

The Conference met at half-past two o'clock. The Rev. Mr. Ross conducted devotional exercises, and the minutes were read. The Committee on Church extension pre-

sented its report, finding against the establishment of a Church Fund.-Adopted.

The Committee on Discipline made its sixth eport. It recommended that the annual conerence shall have power to provide for the ordination of candidates which shall be performed either by the President of the annual conference or by the chairmen of the district, assisted by one or more ministers.

Dr, Rice moved that the name of the chairnan of the district be not inserted, but that the ceremony be performed by anyone whom and the committee's recommendation was

adopted. Rev. Mr. Huestis moved that the ex-Presilent of an annual conference, with two other enior ministers may be deputed by the conerence to ordain in certain cases.--Lost. Recommending the establishment of a new Conference to be called the Manitoba Confer-

ence.-Postponed. Recommending that there be a Special Standing Committee to exist from one Con- for insertion in the annual report, together ference to another, to be composed of six ministers and six laymen. It shall be a Court of Appeal, and have jurisdiction on questions of

decisions shall be final. Rev. Mr. Milligan thought that appeal should also be permitted on the part of an annual Conference from a decision of this

court to the General Conference. Rev. Mr. Graham said appeal ought also to

General Conference.

Recommending that this special committee shall meet at the call of the President, or of the Vice-President of the General Conference, and when called together seven members shall form a quorum, a majority of whom shall be competent to render judgment in any case.carried.

Recommending that appeal may be made to the Special Committee against any decision on points of law by an annual conference, and if the appeal is sustained the action of the conference against which appeal is made, shall not be enforced .-- Carried.

Recommending that notices of appeals shall be sent to the President of the General Conference, and all Presidents of annual confer ences against whom appeal is laid, shall furnish, as far as can be, all the documentary and other evidence that the special committee may require.-Carried.

Recommending that ministers who with-

is the support and enlargement of the French, Foreign and other missions, which are carried on under the direction of the Conference of the Methodist Canada.

11. Meaning.-Every person paying annually the sum of four dollars and upwards, and every person collecting annually ton dollars and upwards for this Society shall be deemed a member, and entitled to a copy of the Annual Conference Report, and every person paying annually \$25 or collecting \$40 or upwards shall also be entitled to a copy of the General Report.

IV. AUXILIARY AND BRANCH SOCITIES .-The Methodist Missionary Societies within the bounds of any annual conference shall collectively be entitled the Auxiliary Missionary Society for the Conference, and severally shall be entitled branch societies of such Auxiliary Missionary Societies formed in our Sunday schools shall be entitled Juvenile Branches of the Conference Auxiliary.

V. TREASURERS .- 1st, Each annual con ference may appoint a Treasurer, through whom all remittances to or from the head office shall be sent. In case any annual conference does not made such an appointment then all remittances to and from the head office shall be made through the chairmen of districts in such conference. 2nd. The superintendent of a circuit or mission shall be treasurer of the branch societies on his circuit or mission.

VI. REMITTANCES .- The money raised on any circuit or mission shall be transmitted as soon as collected to the Conference Treasurer (or to the chairman of the district if there be no Conference Treasurer,) deducting only what has been disbursed for incidental and local expenses, and the Conference Treasurer or chairman shall in turn remit promptly to

the general treasurer all moneys received, the annual conference may designate. -Lost deducting only the necessary incidental expenses. VII. CIRCUIT LISTS .- The superintendent

of each circuit or mission shall prepare annually not later than the first day of the annual district meeting, a list of all subscribers of two dollars and upwards-also the aggregate of all collections and sums under two dollars-such lists to be sent without delay to the Conference Treasurer or chairman, who shall forward them to the missions rooms with a statement of the gross receipts, local

disbursements and remittances. VIII. CENTRAL BOARD .- 1st. There shall be a Central Missionary Board for the management of the Missionary Fund, which meet annually at such time and place as it may appoint. 2nd. The Board shall be composed of the President of the General Conference, the officers of the Missionary Society, one minister to be chosen annually by each annual conference, one laymen to be chosen annually by the laymen of each Conference Mission-Committee, and six other persons, oneary half of whom shall be laymen, to be appointed by the General Conference, and to continue in office for four years. 3rd. The duties of this Board shall be to review the missionary work, and apportion the funds committed to them to the respective conferences according to the necessities of the various departments of the work; also to make the necessary appropriations to the various mission districts. 4th. Vacancies occurring among Conference representatives may be filled by the Executive Committee of the Conference affected, and vacancies occurring among those appointed by the General Conference may be filled by the Committee of Finance. 5th. In the event of the death or the disability of any of the officers of the Society, the Committee of Finance shall appoint a suitable person to fill the vacancy till the next meeting of the Central Board, when such appointment may be confirmed or chang-

(Continued on fourth page.)

law arising in the annual conferences, and its

be made from the Court of Appeal to the

The clause was adopted.

