

Provincial Wesleyan.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1872.

IS AN INTER-PROVINCIAL
METHODIST CONVENTION PRACTICABLE.

The readers of the *Provincial Wesleyan* are aware that State Conventions have within a few years past become quite fashionable among United States Methodists. At these Conventions, leading laymen and ministers meet to interchange sentiments on all the great questions of the day, in relation to which it may seem desirable that Methodists should arrive at a common understanding. At first sight, it seems possible that such gatherings may be calculated to develop tendencies not favourable to the efficient operation of the regular Church court. And doubtless this is a danger to be sedulously guarded against by parties favouring these abnormal assemblies. But we do not learn that in point of fact these State Conventions have been characterized by any want of fealty to the church constitution, or that they have promoted other than desirable results. They have apparently aided to strengthen the ties uniting the ministry and the laity, to call into activity capacity for church work previously lying dormant, to interest large numbers in objects connected with the advancement of Christ's cause, to diffuse just and enlightened views among Methodists in relation to moral and social questions of high importance, and generally to increase the influence of the church for good. If, as we conclude, they have operated in this manner, they have supplied a want long previously felt, and may be deemed providential in their origin. So far as we can see, they are likely to be numbered in the future among the permanent institutions of American Methodism.

Would it not be advisable, if possible, to have a gathering of this sort in the Lower Provinces? Would not a well-attended well-conducted Convention do us a considerable amount of good? Manifestly it would be greatly beneficial to our church were the sympathies of our solid laymen stimulated into more active exercise in behalf of every object of special interest to our denomination, and were they to unite freely with the ministry in discussing important subjects intimately related to our connexion and well-being. If the holding of a convention such as our co-religionists have invented on the other side of the boundary line, would operate to produce such a result, we ought it possible to hold it. That it would thus operate seems reasonable to believe, if the experience of our United States brethren in this matter has any lessons for us.

There would, of course, be difficulties in the way of getting up an Inter-Provincial Convention among us, as there were obstacles in the path of such projected gatherings among our neighbours. But as the obstacles have been surmounted in the case among them, perhaps the difficulties apparent here would not on examination be found invincible.

THE PRESIDING ELDERSHIP IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

As with us, the territory included within a Conference in the United States is distributed into Districts, each District comprising quite a number of distinct circuits or charges. The Minister who takes the general oversight of each District is called a Presiding Elder. He is appointed by the Bishop who presides at the Conference Session. The Presiding Elder has no special charge such as our District Chairman always has, unless he happens to be our Editor, Book Steward, or connected with our Educational Institutions. The Presiding Elder is supported by contributions levied upon all the Circuits or Charges of his District.

The Presiding Elders of a given Conference form the Cabinet of the Bishop presiding over that Conference at its annual Session. Their functions when Conference is not in session, are to attend Quarterly Meetings, transact Circuit business, administer discipline, and generally to episcopize over ministers and members on their respective Districts.

In days gone by, the Presiding Eldership was an element of power in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its occupants were for the most part chosen for their ministerial efficiency, and ceaselessly performing the field entrusted to their oversight, rendered precious service to the cause in various ways. Sometimes when distinguished for pulpit gifts, they went flaming around their Districts keeping up a generous religious glow in all directions. Gifted with experience and business capacity they supplemented to the more scanty endowments of men who, amid the pressing demand for ministerial labour, were often thrust into the work young and untrained. It would perhaps be difficult to overestimate the value of the services performed by those able and powerful men in the more heroic days of the Methodist Episcopal Church. And even now in certain localities the Presiding Elder's functions are as important as ever they were. But generally speaking, the impression prevails in the Methodist Episcopal Church to-day that the Presiding Elder's office should either be abolished or greatly modified. In other portions of the Methodist field, in which the charges are ministered to by educated, able and experienced men, it seems fatuous to place over them an inferior or common place man, and a needless waste of power to put over them a superior man, to do that which they are perfectly well fitted to accomplish themselves. Hence there is a demand for a change of some sort or other. Some would transform the Presiding Elder into a functionary like our Chairman, having charge of a Circuit or congregation, and supported by it. Some would greatly enlarge the size of the districts and diminish the number of Presiding Elders. Many desire that these officers

should be elected by the Annual Conference, and not appointed by the Bishops. Before these remarks reach the eyes of Provincial Wesleyan readers, the General Conference, now in session, may make important changes in the law relating to the Presiding Eldership. Whatever may be effected in the matter will, we trust, be justified by the result.

J. R. N.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE.

Death of Professor Maurice—The strike among Agricultural laborers—The Ballot Bill—The Licensing Bill—May Meetings—The Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society—Mr. Wiseman's departure to the General Conference—Death of the Rev. George Morrison.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—The decease of the Rev. J. F. D. Maurice may appear to many to be an event of slight importance, yet the intelligence will be painful to thousands of earnest thoughtful minds on both sides of the Atlantic. He must be ranked as a prominent man, a diligent student, and a clever, if not brilliant writer, in this day of busy active life and intellectual progress. It cannot be said that he was a popular man. His gifts were not of the order that ensure the following of enthusiastic and admiring crowds. As a preacher he was calm, impressive and discriminating. His teaching and writings have exercised an immense influence upon many who are engaged in teaching others, and will thus be widely disseminated at home and abroad. From our standpoint as Wesleyan theologians his views upon several vital doctrines are far from being safe or satisfactory. Upon many truths, generally embraced by professed Christians he gave no certain sound. He earnestly adhered to his views, and made costly sacrifices of place and friendships in making them known. Apart from these views which he held, he was known and loved by good and true men in the Establishment and the other churches of the land. In toil and effort for the welfare of the people, and especially the working classes he was widely known, and much respect has been shown to his interest. The honor of a grave in Westminster Abbey was offered but not accepted, and he rests with his kindred in the quiet of the public graveyards. His name will go down to posterity as one of England's gifted sons, and many of his works are worthy of enduring remembrance.

We have at length a "new thing under the sun" in the form of a strike or a revolt among agricultural laborers. It is no wonder that they have arisen to demand a little of the favor which is now so generally accorded to the working men of England. If ever there was just cause for a strike it is in the case now before us. The condition of nine-tenths of our agricultural laborers is a foul blot upon our civilization, and a disgrace to our country. Their pay is wretchedly low, and the only prospect in store for them in a time of heavy sickness or old age is the Union Workhouse. The amount of their wages is so generally so low, that it is not only a disgrace but a positive increase of wages in many districts, in the removal of some to portions of the country where labor is in demand and well paid, and in the promotion of plans for the emigration of many hundreds to Canada and elsewhere. Great consternation is being manifested among the landed proprietors, and the clergy of the olden type. But it is a sign of the times, and will eventually tilt in favor of the most patient and highly deserving class of toiling men.

There is nothing very special to report in Parliamentary matters. The few important bills which are before the House are being pushed forward with some progress. It was supposed that the ballot bill would this session have almost a clear course, as so much time was taken up with it last year. But again it is being fiercely assailed, amendments are being presented in every variety, and the Government cannot have their own way with it. The Committee of many outside the House is that the bill is not only a disgrace but a positive increase of wages in many districts, in the removal of some to portions of the country where labor is in demand and well paid, and in the promotion of plans for the emigration of many hundreds to Canada and elsewhere. Great consternation is being manifested among the landed proprietors, and the clergy of the olden type. But it is a sign of the times, and will eventually tilt in favor of the most patient and highly deserving class of toiling men.

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The preparations indicate much life and hopefulness on the part of the managers of the great societies whose anniversaries are to be held and reports of large and gracious success will gladden the hearts of thousands of the people of God, and inspire them for future efforts. The programme of the meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society has been before the public for some time, and under the Divine blessing the great gathering is likely to prove equal to any that has been held for many previous years.

The deputation to the General Conference in Brooklyn, New York, seems doomed to frequent changes. At the very last a painful domestic affliction prevented Mr. Perks from proceeding on his Atlantic voyage; and Mr. Wiseman was nominated to take his place. No man more worthy of the honor, or more capable of nobly representing English Methodism could have been selected.

Our beloved Secretary and prospective President is now on his ocean voyage, and the only regret we feel upon the matter is that he will be unable to do more than attend the General Conference, and consequently neither Canada nor Eastern British America will be favored with his presence and official services.

The Rev. G. T. Morrison—a London minister, in the prime of his days—earnest, able and beloved, has been suddenly taken from our midst by his eternal reward.

CLASS MEETINGS.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

After having imperfectly stated the nature of this means of grace, both positively and negatively—what it is, and what it is not; we will briefly proceed to point out some of the benefits arising from its diligent employment. They are undoubtedly, very numerous and important, which will be best in a general sense. First, this Christian fellowship of the class-meeting, or in other words, the separation of all the followers of Christ from the world is a special manner, is alone calculated to define the kingdom of Christ. Satan and the world have leagued together to confound all spiritual discipline, to lower the tone of Christian character, to profane what is holy, and to falsify what is true. Their highest aim is, and what is true, to break the bands of brotherhood, to sow the seeds of discord, to bring the Church of Christ down to their own level, to make Christianity time-serving, and to supplant the true gospel-fellowship by a spurious admixture of the "unrighteous mammon." What then will secure, in these days of spiritual declension, days of non-distinction in high places, "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not?" what shall secure the existence of the Church of God, and the glory of Christ among men, but a zealous maintenance of Christian fellowship in its original purity? It is evident, that nothing can be of greater moment to the cause of Christ, than that His rule and His subjects should be accurately defined.

Secondly, we regard Christian fellowship as the great safe-guard of Gospel Theology. The existence of the Jews as a distinct people, has always been considered a great collateral argument for the truth of the Scriptures. Their religion binds them together, into one "committed to the oracles of God," and they jealously preserved them, although subsqually they misunderstood the import of the prophecies and the types which foretold and shadowed forth the blessed Messiah; and the sacred deposit was, therefore taken out of their hands. God has now committed the custody of His word to the Christian Church, and she has the commands of Christ, and ought to be faithfully interested in their guardianship. When the term Church no longer signified a voluntary society of persons devoted to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, but was used to signify councils and conclaves of mitres, and hats, and crowns; when many barred away their spiritual birthright to priestly usurpers, then came sorrow on all sides, then a flood of errors, war-like came rolling in on every side; and to this day, the desolations which sweep away "the truth as it is," are the result of the "legion of unclean spirits" which carry me to the chapel, and God bless me. My soul is growing more happy as I approach nearer to eternity. O Religion! O Methodism! what do I owe you? what I never can repay!

But the most interesting letter to us is one from Rev. D. Jennings, dated Upham, which he says, shows the position of Methodism on this Circuit at that time. He says:— "The state of this Division is as follows: First, St. Martin's. This may be considered the most interesting part of the field. The class, consisting of eleven members, is doing well; the congregation also commenced preparations for building a chapel, forty-two by fifty, eighteen feet high, with a tower. A spot of ground has been offered and selected near Mr. Bustin's house, a building committee chosen, and from sixty to seventy pounds subscribed. South Stream is the next place of importance. Here we have a good congregation; a class of twelve members, and walking in the fear of the Lord; and the people in general are much interested in providing a house of worship in connection with our Church.

Budequack (now Passkeag), fifteen in class, and the congregation increasing. Upham, nine in class; congregation about as at first. Salt Springs, twelve in society; congregation large. Hampton, eight in class; congregation small. We have in society sixty-seven members, two local preachers, and four class leaders.

I preach from five to six times a week, and walk about an hundred miles in three weeks. Twenty-eight years after the above was written there was something like the following:—St. Martin's, no chapel at all! (in the town) eight members! That chapel (I cannot here tell how) passed into the possession of the Episcopalians; and we preached in a hired hall. Now the Baptists have kindly offered us the use of their fine church.

South Stream (Barnesville), church finished; congregation small; five members. Budequack (Passkeag), congregation large; thirteen members. Upham, congregation fair; seven members. Salt Springs, Not even preaching at the place above named for years past. Hampton, congregation large; no members in society.

The total membership was larger twenty-eight years later, amounting to about one hundred, but new places had been taken in. Here is a contrast inviting deep and earnest thought. We have yet no comment to make or thought to offer, save this: It is advisable to spread our work out over fields of general usefulness, and to preach to the forgotten; can a minister do himself, his people, and, above all, the cause of God, justice, with more than six congregations of churches pastorally to care for? J.B.H.

Hampton, N. B., April 23, 1872.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

(Reported for the Provincial Wesleyan.)
The Twentieth Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was opened in this city (Brooklyn, New York), at the Academy of Music, this morning, Wednesday, May 1st, 1872, at 9 o'clock.

Bishops Morris, James, Scott, Simpson, and Ames, with Father Boehm, who is ninety-eight years of age, occupied the platform of the Conference.

The assembly was called to order by Bishop Morris. Bishop Ames read the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. Bishop James gave out the hymn commencing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name." Dr. G. Peck offered prayer. Bishop Simpson read the twelfth chapter of Paul's First Corinthians, "I love thy kingdom Lord." Rev. Peter Akers offered prayer.

Bishop James then took the Chair, and called for the reading of the roll of clerical delegates. Dr. Harris was re-elected Secretary. Dr. Jesse T. Peck offered a Resolution which brought up the whole question of admitting to the Conference the lay delegates elected, and of so changing the Constitution as to make lay representation constitutional. The discussion of this question occupied the remainder of the day; and it is not yet ended. Drs. J. T. Peck, D. Curry, E. O. Haven, Hibbard, Reed and others, took part in the debate.

of Canada. It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of this session of the General Conference to the church, in whose interests it is assembled, and to the age.

A *Daily Christian Advocate* will be published during the session. The Government of the United States has established a Post Office temporarily in the building where the Conference is held, for the especial benefit of its members.

Revs. Luke H. Wiseman and Alex. McAulay from England; and J. W. McKay, from Ireland; and H. Pope, Junior, from St. John's, are in attendance as Fraternal Delegates to the General Conference. Rev. Mr. Perks has been prevented from coming on account of the serious illness of his wife. Rev. Mr. Punshon and others from Ontario are expected to arrive in a few days. There are probably several hundreds of ministers here, in an unofficial capacity, from different parts of the country. Your Reporter has noticed several prominent members of the Conference of Eastern British America taking part as earnest listeners in the exercises of to-day, namely, Revs. Messrs. Pope, M. Pickles, Duncan, S. F. Huettis, P. H. W. Pickles, Leonard Gaetz, and Cowperthwaite.

D. D. C.
New York, May 1, 1872.

Circuit Intelligence.

UPHAM AGAIN.

At a friend's house the other day I was looking over some old magazines, and came across a Supplement to the *B. N. A. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for 1843, containing some very interesting matter, especially from the Circuit and other correspondents. They all tell of the prosperity of the work of God, and of religion in their own souls.

There is a letter from the Rev. S. Dunstun to Rev. C. Dewolie, giving an account of a storm at sea during a voyage from Liverpool, G. B., to Halifax, N. S., in which he says that he and Mrs. D. rejoiced in the prospect of entering the "haven of rest" from earth's stormy sea, having their "anchors cast within the veil."

Another from Rev. S. Hasky, dated Point DeBute, in which he says the Stewards and a few friends taxed themselves \$60 each to meet the deficiency in the salary at the close of the year. A very good hint for certain ones in certain quarters, at this time of the year.

Also one from Rev. S. Bamford, dated Digby, which gives an account of the dislocation of his hip, and the fracture of Mrs. B's arm, being thrown from a carriage, and concluding thus, "The leg stiffens, and I cannot walk. Preach every Sabbath. Thy Jesus," overspread "the truth as it is," in three quarters of the globe, where once the blessed gospel, shone forth upon the benighted souls of men. Let us jealously guard the holy fire, ere its flame die, and we once more have to mourn the departure of our "cloud of glory," and the Temple of our God again becomes a "house of merchandise," and we have to say, "How rare the mighty fallen!"

Thirdly, we consider that Christian unity is the great means of strengthening the cause of Christ. In these days of wonderful benevolence it is quite needless to insist on the advantages to be derived from union. We all know something of the value of aids, which in themselves, are small and weak, but which possess an indefinite power when brought together; so it is in the Church of Christ, "The united we stand, the divided we fall." It is a sign of the times, and will eventually tilt in favor of the most patient and highly deserving class of toiling men.

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vocate Harbor. Spring Hill, another one of our preaching places, where coal mining operations have been begun, and are daily being carried on extensively, is about thirty-two miles from the head of the circuit, and cannot receive the attention which it requires.

Notwithstanding the pressure of ordinary circuit work, we tried during the winter to hold some special services at Maclean Mountains and Five Islands, but the remarkably changeable weather and frequent calls to other parts of the circuit, operated very much against us, yet we believe that our "labor was not in vain in the Lord."

The church was revived, and the cause of religion generally was strengthened. We believe that the work of religion is deepening, and that Methodism is taking a more firm hold upon the affections of the people. Our services generally are very well attended, and the people manifest an interest in the word spoken. At the village especially, the attendance and interest in the services are very good. Still we may well join in the prayer so often offered for the church, "Awake, O North Wind, and come thou South; blow upon "our" garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let "our" beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits."

The subscriptions not being sufficient to meet the requirements of the circuit, were supplemented by donations on various parts of the circuit, the amount thus raised was one hundred and seventy-one (171) dollars, besides some presents to Mrs. Alcorn from Capt. Andrew Thompson and some others, as indicative of their esteem for her.

The last of these pleasant little parties was convened at the residence of Amos Lawrence, Esq., Maclean, whose kindness and attention, as also that of his worthy lady and interesting family, merit honorable mention, and I do not doubt that they are remembered with gratitude by all who shared their kindness. At Economy we were favoured with the presence of Rev. Mr. McKay, (Presbyterian) and his estimable lady, whose presence added much to the pleasantness of the occasion. The remarks of that Christian gentleman on presentation of the purse to his brother minister (Mr. Alcorn) were extremely appropriate, and as he referred to the discouragements with which ministers meet and again to their hopes and encouragements his remarks were pregnant with that brotherly kindness and tender sympathy which true Christianity abounds in connection with true Christianity.

J. F. B.
West Brook, April 24th, 1872.

H. M. STATION.—DIGBY NECK, April 19th, 1872.—In furnishing you with a report of this H. M. Station, I must apologise for not doing so earlier. Through the difficulty of travelling I was unable to visit Brier Island for seven weeks, and wishing to do so before writing the report, I have delayed till now. Here things are looking more cheering than for some time. We have ten members, and at the close of some special services seven young persons united in an enquirer's class, we have formed, and we humbly trust, are earnestly seeking the sinner's only Friend. On Long Island at Freeport, where there never was a Methodist Society, but where the people are very anxious to have us come to them and preach the Word of life, we formed a Society last Monday, which bids fair to be the means of doing much good, besides having united with us, and we expect several more the next time we visit them. We have also secured a room that will seat 100 persons in which to conduct our services. Our humble and united prayer is, for the baptism of Fire. This people are anxious for a Methodist Minister, and are ready to make a large sacrifice in order to support him. Because of the distance and difficulties connected with reaching these places, we visit them but once a month, and our labours among them do but little good. May the Lord of the harvest, who sees this field already white with the harvest, be pleased to send a labourer. Yours truly,

JESSE B. GILES.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE.

The 18th Annual Meeting of the Conference of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church began at Melbourne on the 18th of January last, and after a three week's session closed on the 7th of February.

The Melbourne *Wesleyan Chronicle* of the 20th Feb., which we have just received, contains a very interesting report of each day's proceedings.

On the roll being called the first day about 100 ministers answered to their names. In accordance with the previous year's Australian Conference nomination and English Conference appointment the Rev. Benjamin Chapman was installed as Presiding Elder, and afterwards the Rev. John Cope was elected Secretary.

Fifteen probationers were admitted as ministers into connexion. Fifty-three ministers were recommended to be continued as probationers: 12 in New South Wales, 8 in New Zealand, 11 in South Australia, 2 in Queensland, 3 in Tasmania, 2 in Fiji, 1 in the Friendly Islands, and 14 in Victoria. Seventeen were received on trial as Candidates for the ministry. The most interesting case among these was that of Leong-on-Tong, a native of China, who arrived in the colony fifteen years since, and was converted eight years since. He was reported to be possessed of piety, zeal, and intelligence, was married to a Chinese Christian lady, and was very much respected by the European and Chinese population in and about Castlemaine.

A report prepared by Rev. J. Cox, of Hankow, in China, in reference to Leong-on-Tong's preaching, knowledge, of theology and educational attainments, was read by Rev. W. P. Wells. Mr. Cox had heard him preach three times in the sermons on Acts xv. 23. "For I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown God.' The sermon was very thoughtful, full of apt quotations from the Bible, sentences of ancient Confucian classics, and familiar Chinese proverbs. In reference to his knowledge of theology, Mr. Cox stated that he possessed an intelligent acquaintance with the New Testament, and good ability in supporting its doctrines by quotations. His Chinese education had extended over seventeen years, seven years having been given to the ordinary course of education, and ten years to compulsory examinations, his educational attainments being superior to those of the majority of native preachers in China.

In addition to these six native missionaries were received into full connexion, and 10 were received on trial.

The minutes of the last Conference show that in connexion with the Wesleyan mission in the South Seas and New Zealand there were 64 native missionaries and assistants, 10 in Fiji, 6 in New Zealand, 1 in Samoa, 10 in the Friendly Islands, and 47 in Fiji.

A resolution of the Tasmanian District west-

ing, recommending the appointment of the Rev. N. Bennett to Launceston for a fourth year, because of the severe affliction of Mrs. Bennett was considered. The quarterly meeting of the Launceston Circuit requested Mr. Bennett's appointment and the trustees of the Launceston Church approved of it. As it is not customary to appoint any Wesleyan minister for more than three years to a circuit, the subject was discussed at considerable length, and ultimately it was resolved, solely on account of the state of Mrs. Bennett's health, to appoint Mr. Bennett to Launceston for a fourth year.

ANNUAL AND GENERAL CONFERENCE.—The recommendations from the various district meetings on this subject were read.

1. The Melbourne District recommended that each colony should be constituted a separate annual Conference, or if this be impracticable with regard to Tasmania and Queensland, that the form be attached to the Victorian, and the latter to the New South Wales Conference; that there should be a general triennial Conference, composed of delegates from each of the annual Conferences; and that the plan recommended by the Melbourne district meeting in 1868, be the plan for the formation of annual and general Conferences.

2. The Geelong and Ballarat District was of opinion that it was desirable to modify the constitution of the Australasian Wesleyan Church, so as to provide for an annual Conference in each colony instead of an inter-colonial one as at present, a general Conference being held every four or five years.

3. The Castlemaine and Sandhurst District Meeting was of opinion that the time had come for the creation of colonial Conferences in connection with the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, and respectfully requested the Conference to take immediate action, as annual Conferences would secure the better representation of laymen.

4. The New Zealand North District Meeting was of opinion that the time had not yet arrived for the establishment of a New Zealand Conference, and earnestly asked that there might be no hasty legislation so important a subject.

5. The resolution of the Middle District Meeting of New Zealand was to the effect that another year's experience of the present system had confirmed the views expressed by the southern districts for several years past that a change is absolutely necessary, and has strengthened the desire, both among the laity and the ministers, to have a conference for New Zealand.

6. The New Zealand South District Meeting re-affirmed its resolutions of 1868, 1869, and 1870, requesting the establishment of a New Zealand Conference, deeming it necessary to add only the expression of its belief that further delay would be exceedingly injurious to the interest of the churches in New Zealand.

The Rev. J. Eggleston moved: "That the time has arrived when a plan for annual and general Conferences should be adopted by the Conference." Mr. Eggleston said that it was thirty-three years that day since he arrived in Australia. He had laboured in most of the colonies in the connexion, and took great interest in every part of it. For the last twelve years this subject had occupied his attention, and had often been brought before the Conference. His convictions as to its importance had been deepened during this Conference. The great expense incurred, the long periods of absence by the ministers from their circuits in attending the Conference, were strong reasons for the change proposed. The routine business—such as the accepting of candidates, stationing of ministers, &c. which formed so large a part of the business of the Conference now, could be better transacted by Colonial Conferences; while there would be improved legislation by a General Conference composed of representatives.

The Rev. J. S. Waugh seconded the resolution, and said that in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria and New South Wales there was no body corresponding to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the Church of England Assembly.

The Rev. Mr. Piddington opposed the resolution. He thought that immediate action was not necessary. He did not think that there would be any saving of time or expense by the proposed alterations. He ministers had to attend both a district meeting and a Conference every year, there would be two prolonged absences from home. He argued that the delay in legislating on this question was an evidence that there was not so strong a need for these changes as he believed that its advocates asserted. He believed that no alteration in the machinery of the Church was required, but that the great want of the Church was more of Divine influence.

The Rev. J. C. Symons agreed with Mr. Piddington that the great want of the Church was more of Divine influence, but contended that the more perfect the Church made its machinery the more right it had to expect Divine influence. He alluded to several instances of delay in legislation through the present arrangements, and stated that there was no way in which the Wesleyan Church in Victoria could speak as a united Church upon questions of public interest, and even if by the alterations proposed there should be no saving of time or money, there would be increased efficiency.

A long debate followed, during which one or two amendments were proposed. The Rev. Messrs. Nolan, Hurst, Turner, Rigg, and S. Williams spoke against the motion, the Rev. Messrs. Buddie, Harcourt, Watford, Wilson, and Kelynak speaking in its favor. On the votes being taken, there were 74 votes in support of the motion, and 15 against it.

The discussion on the plan for Annual and General Conferences was continued on two or three subsequent days, and it was ultimately resolved: "That for the present four annual Conferences be formed, viz., an Eastern Conference, including the colonies of New South Wales and Queensland; a Western Conference, including the colonies of Victoria and Tasmania; a Conference in South Australia, and a New Zealand Conference."

The Conference also decided that a General Conference be held once in three years; that the South Sea Missions during the interval between the General Conferences be under the management of the Eastern Conference, and that the plan be forwarded by the President of the Conference, through the missionary Secretaries in London, to the British Conference for its sanction, and, if approved, that it might be brought into immediate operation."

THE REV. G. HURST was set apart from ordinary work for another year and appointed General Secretary of the New South Wales Sustentation Society, and the Rev. J. G. Turner gave notice of motion: "That the Conference suggest to the consideration of the Home Mission Committee for Victoria its opinion that it would greatly serve the objects of the Home Mission Fund if a minister were set apart from circuit work as travelling secretary."

MEMBERSHIP.—In the colonies 27,583 members, with 1,836 on trial; in the Missions Districts 32,064 members, and 5,609 on trial, or a total of 59,647 members, and 7,532 on trial. 1,840 Sabbath schools, with 17,122 teachers and 136,800 scholars in the colonies; and in the Mission Districts 1,278 Sabbath schools and nearly 60,000 scholars.

Total number of Circuits and Mission Stations in 19 Districts 208—supplied with about 270 ministers and 700 assistant or native ministers. The Rev. Thomas Williams was nominated as President for 1873.

Among the Miscellaneous Matters which were brought before the Conference the following will be regarded as of interest by some of our readers.

LAY REPRESENTATION IN CONFERENCE.—Recommendations on this subject were read from three district meetings, and, on the motion of the Rev. J. S. Waugh, it was resolved, "That as lay representation in Conference is at present receiving attention in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as in America, this Conference regards it as expedient that it should take no action respecting it until it has been discussed by older and larger Conferences in other parts of the world."

NOMINATION OF MINISTERS IN QUARTERLY MEETINGS.—The Secretary read a letter, signed by Messrs. J. Wilton and J. Parry, the circuit stewards of the Melbourne Wesleyan Church Circuit, conveying the following resolution of the quarterly meeting of that circuit: "That the Conference be respectfully requested to decide whether the excessive right of nominating a minister to be invited to a circuit rests with the circuit stewards, or whether it is competent for any member of the quarterly meeting, after the circuit stewards have nominated a minister, to vote an amendment to the effect that another minister be invited to the circuit."

After an hour's discussion, the Conference passed this resolution: "The Conference declares that, according to the general usage of the connexion, the right of nominating ministers to be invited to circuits belongs exclusively to circuit stewards; that on the nomination of the circuit stewards, no amendment can be moved; but that a quarterly meeting may proceed by resolution to invite another circuit steward declining to exercise their right."

RECEPTION OF MARRIED MINISTERS.—The last Conference, held in Hobart-town, in 1871, passed the following resolution: "That as the difficulty of providing houses for those ministers who have primary claims upon this Conference for support as married ministers is not diminished, but rather increased, the Conference is compelled to adhere to the resolution of last year, and to decline the offer of any married minister from England or elsewhere."

Several married ministers having offered themselves to the Conference as ministers in connexion with the Australasian Wesleyan Church, the Secretary read a recommendation of the Sydney District Meeting, recommending that the Conference re-affirm its resolution of last year.

It was moved that the Conference approve of this recommendation.

The Rev. J. S. Waugh moved, and the Rev. J. C. Symons seconded, the following amendment: "That the applications from married ministers to be received by this Conference be decided upon their merits."

After a very long, able, and animated discussion the amendment was carried.

The Rev. J. M. Higgins, a minister in connexion with the Irish Wesleyan Conference, asked to join the Australasian Wesleyan Church. Mr. Higgins has been in the Wesleyan ministry thirty years, and has come to Australia solely on account of the delicate health of some members of his family. Testimonials to Mr. Higgins' personal worth and ministerial ability were read from distinguished ministers of the English and Irish Conferences. After some discussion the following resolution was agreed to: "The Conference regrets that, owing to the difficulty of providing houses for those ministers who have primary claims for support as married ministers, this Conference is unable to accept the offer of the Rev. John Higgins, of the Irish Conference, but it consents to any circuit needing such services as a superannuated minister supply that want."

The Rev. Mr. Piddington opposed the resolution. He thought that immediate action was not necessary. He did not think that there would be any saving of time or expense by the proposed alterations. He ministers had to attend both a district meeting and a Conference every year, there would be two prolonged absences from home. He argued that the delay in legislating on this question was an evidence that there was not so strong a need for these changes as he believed that its advocates asserted. He believed that no alteration in the machinery of the Church was required, but that the great want of the Church was more of Divine influence.

The Rev. J. C. Symons agreed with Mr. Piddington that the great want of the Church was more of Divine influence, but contended that the more perfect the Church made its machinery the more right it had to expect Divine influence. He alluded to several instances of delay in legislation through the present arrangements, and stated that there was no way in which the Wesleyan Church in Victoria could speak as a united Church upon questions of public interest, and even if by the alterations proposed there should be no saving of time or money, there would be increased efficiency.

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