

Historical

Early in 1876 a notice from the Foreign Mission Committee of the Canada Presbyterian Church (Western Division) appeared in the Toronto daily papers calling a meeting of ladies to consider the formation of a woman's society for foreign missions. The first meeting was held on February 17th at which the Rev. Dr. MacLaren and Rev. Dr. Topp were present and expressed the wish of the Committee that such a society be organized on similar lines with existing societies in the American Presbyterian Church. A committee, composed of the Rev. Drs. Topp and MacLaren with Mesdames Ewart, King, Macdonnell, Harvie, Gregg, Topp, Reid, McMurrich, Cameron, Robb, McLellan, Smith and Miss Haight, was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws. Several preliminary meetings were held for this purpose, and on March 21st the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized in due form, the constitution and by-laws adopted, and the board and officers appointed.

The object of the Society, as the Constitution set forth, was to aid the F. M. Committee in the support of its work among heathen women and children, to interest the women and children of the Church in this work, and to call forth in a systematic way their prayers and free-will offerings in its behalf.

From the beginning the organization and management of the Society has been entirely in its own hands, the executive business being vested in the Board of Management. The Board was at first composed of thirty-two ladies residing in Toronto. In the third year it was increased to thirty-six, including six non-resident members selected from central points throughout the Society, with the Presidents of Auxiliaries as Vice-Presidents. This arrangement lasted until the ninth year. From that date the thirty-six were always chosen from those resident in Toronto, Presidents of Auxiliaries and Presbyterian Societies continuing to be Vice Presidents *ex-officio*. In 1884, Mission Band Presidents were added and became entitled to a seat on the Board. The Board and officers have always been elected at the Annual Meeting of the Society, every member having paid the annual fee of one dollar or the life member's fee of twenty-five dollars being qualified to vote.*

The first Nominating Committee was selected in 1883. It was composed of members at different centres, its object being to seek out suitable persons during the year to fill vacancies in the Board of thirty-six.

* Life members' certificates were first issued in 1883, and it was at that time that the Society's motto "The World for Christ" was adopted.