

circuit for two preachers, and the new arrangement appears to be quite satisfactory to all concerned. This might have been effected ten years ago, and \$7,000 to \$8,000 saved of missionary money.

I find the missions on this district have cost the Methodist Church, since the union, \$20,990 in grants; but during that time these missions have raised, for ministerial support, \$9,659, besides contributing to connexional funds \$6,000. Again, in addition to this, the people have contributed over \$5,000 for new churches and improvement of connexional property. In a word, while the Methodist Church has paid for its domestic missions on this district nearly \$21,000, the people themselves have raised fully as much more, in the last ten years, the whole aggregating nearly \$42,000.

Nor can we lose sight of the most important matter in all church operations, viz., the spiritual results. After allowing for a large number of removals and for further depletion caused by death, etc., we find the membership returned at last Conference was over 1,200, against 720 ten years ago; and, after all, in this consists the chief joy of every Christian heart—especially of the faithful ministers, to whom souls saved under their ministry will be a joy forever.

While no department of our work demands closer supervision and keener administration, because of the immense interest involved, than that of missions; and while sometimes, on the surface, it may appear doubtful if so large an annual expenditure is followed by results that justify it, the very life of the Church depends upon its missionary spirit and enterprise; and of all our missionary operations, our Domestic Missions must ever, in a country such as Canada, be an object of earnest solicitude; and, while they necessarily draw largely on the Mission Fund, it is a question if any other investment of the Church gives so sure and satisfactory a return.

Hoping that the importance of this matter may appear a sufficient apology for the length of this letter,

I remain,

Yours very truly,

J. J. RICE.

Tamworth, August 20th, 1895.

### Japan Conference Notes.

THE Ministerial Session opened on Tuesday, June 25th, in the Azabu church, Tokyo, the President, Dr. Macdonald, in the chair. The full Conference met the day following. All the Conference officers were re-elected:—Rev. D. Macdonald, M.D., president; Rev. Eber Crummy, B. A., B. Sc., English secretary; Rev. M. Kobayashi, Japanese secretary. Mr. Kobayashi has held his office continuously since the Conference was organized.

The case of the Rev. T. Iizuka, mentioned recently in our notes on the Kanazawa District Meeting, occupied a great deal of time, and was very carefully considered. Ultimately the following resolution was passed: "As Mr. Iizuka has doubts regarding certain fundamental doctrines of Methodism, and has requested to be relieved of work for the present in order to devote himself to the special study of these doctrines, resolved that he be left without appointment for the ensuing year." It is perhaps twisting the Discipline just a little to pass a motion of this kind in relation to a brother who is unable to answer satisfactorily the question, "Does he believe and preach all our doctrines?" and is strongly inclined to Unitarianism. But it was felt that we must by some means try to save to the Church one who thus far has proved an excellent and useful man in the work of God. It is hoped that, properly directed and helped in his studies, he may soon come out into the true and clear light again.

Three tried men were ordained to the office and work of the Christian ministry. May they be workmen that need not to be ashamed. Many such are needed. Though we have ample evidence that God is blessing our labors, yet—quoting from the pastoral address just adopted—"we deem it a time when every member of the church should pray earnestly that the Lord may send forth more laborers into His harvest."

Our hearts are encouraged by an increase of 89 in church membership, and 648 in the number of Sabbath School scholars, making the totals respectively, 2070 and 2812. The Lord be praised. And may He enlarge our borders still more abundantly.

Owing to the war, financial matters have been subjected to a severe strain, and the contributions of the people have fallen off somewhat. Nevertheless, it is still true that only a few churches in Japan excel us in the average giving per member, while quite a number are far below us. Very earnest efforts are constantly being made for the development of self-support.

The most interesting feature of the session was the announcement that the students of Victoria University, Toronto, had provided a scholarship by which a Japanese brother might take a three years' special course of study at "Old Vic.," and the election of the happy man who was chosen to represent us as "scholar" there. On the first ballot, the Rev. M. Takagi, the popular pastor of Azabu church, Tokyo, received a majority of the votes cast. The official mention of his name was the signal for enthusiastic cheers. Mr. Takagi will do credit to himself, his people, and our Alma Mater. It is most gratifying that the students at home manifest so steady and practical an interest in the great work that God has here opened up to our church. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." We are all sincerely grateful, and a letter of thanks will be sent.

Your readers will also be interested to note that a committee, formed last year to take steps to form something corresponding to the Superannuation Fund of the home church, brought in full details of a regularly constituted "Ministers' Mutual Aid Society," which were unanimously adopted by the Ministerial Session. The writer has for some years been convinced that in Canada, too, instead of a Superannuation Fund, we shall gradually come to have some system of ministerial mutual aid merely—or nothing—and every year the conviction strengthens. The latest General Conference legislation points decidedly in that direction, and even more so the tone of the ever-recurring discussion of the subject. The Japanese seem to have acted wisely in deciding to appeal to the laity for living salaries for present workers, rather than for old-age pensions.

A departure was made in providing, for the first time in this country, for the holding of Financial District Meetings, at which all general estimates shall be prepared, to be submitted to the Council later for approval and transmission. This, it was thought, would give the laymen a more active and responsible part in Church finance, and aid in promoting self-support. But it was found necessary, in order that all estimates might be in time for the annual meeting of the General Board, that a change should be made in the time of holding our Annual Conference, which, consequently, is likely to be convened hereafter not later than the second Wednesday in May. We have arranged to meet next year on the first Wednesday. Several advantages will accrue from meeting earlier, not the least of which will be the avoiding of the intense heat of the end of June.

The routine of business was very pleasantly broken on the afternoon of Saturday the 29th, by the Christian ladies of our Tokyo churches, native and foreign, uniting to entertain the members of Conference in Shiba Park, in that most kindly and pleasing manner, in which the ladies of Japan yield to none anywhere.

On Sunday evening, some of us had the pleasure of listening, for the first time, to a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Macdonald. It was an excellent discourse, very earnestly and effectively delivered, and we cannot suppress the wish that we may have the privilege of hearing him more frequently.

The session was a cordial and happy one, and we all return to our fields with strong hope and determination.

#### COUNCIL MEETING.

The Council had really very little business to do. No changes were made in the appointments of missionaries, and the routine work of passing estimates, etc., was quickly disposed of, there being nothing of a very special character this year requiring attention or demanding large expenditure.

Messrs. Crummy and Coates were appointed a committee