

Quadrennial Report.

The Epworth League.

The following report was presented to the recent General Conference by the General Epworth League Board:

During the first few years of its history, the Epworth League grew with amazing rapidity, many young people coming into its ranks without any clear idea of the obligations involved. As might have been expected, there has come some reaction, with consequent decrease of membership. The novelty and glamor of the early days have worn off; the abnormal has passed away, and a normal condition of affairs has come. While there has been some lessening of the numbers, the working force of the Epworth League was never so great as it is to-day. The testing period of the past four years has made our Young People's Societies more serious, more energetic and more successful in doing the real work for which they were brought into existence. The testimony of pastors coming from all parts of the work is almost unanimously to the effect that the Epworth League has been a great help to them in their work, and added but a little to the spiritual life of the church.

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR DEPARTMENT

is regarded as the essential feature of League organization, and is kept well to the front. In almost every society much more attention is paid to the distinctively spiritual services than to any other feature. The literary and social elements have not overshadowed or displaced the work of this important department. Our young people have conducted cottage prayer-meetings and out-door evangelistic services. They have proved themselves most efficient helpers in revival efforts, and by their means much personal work has been done. The Forward Movement in Bible Study and Evangelistic Work has been continued with most satisfactory results. This year the Epistles of James and 1st and 2nd Peter have been chosen for Bible study, and the second Sunday in October set apart for Young People's Day, to be followed by a week of special services. The thirteenth anniversary of the Epworth League will be celebrated at the same time, for which a programme has been prepared by the General Secretary.

THE MISSIONARY DEPARTMENT.

One of the most striking developments in the Epworth League during the past four years has been the interest and enthusiasm aroused on behalf of missions, largely due to the introduction of the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions. The leading features of this movement may be expressed by its three motto words, "Pray, Study, Give," which have certainly been placed in proper order. The movement has been eminently sane, and intelligent, and great emphasis has been placed upon the dissemination of information. Missionary libraries have been established in many Leagues, and missionary literature has been widely circulated. In almost every Young People's Society the "two cent, week" plan of giving has been introduced, with gratifying results. In some places every member is contributing in this way. The amounts given by our Young People's Societies for missions have shown a gradual increase year by year, as will be seen by the following statement: In—

1895	\$4,023
1896	6,077
1897	7,445
1898	12,759
1899	16,955
1900	19,902
1901	21,678
1902	24,568

About thirty districts are supporting missionaries in whole or in part, and one district, Toronto West, has two missionary representatives in the field. It is not intended by any means, that two cents per week shall continue to be the standard of giving of our young people. This is simply regarded as a convenient starting-point, but it is expected that an advance will be made. There are some Leagues whose members average six cents per week.

THE LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

The Epworth League aims at the consecration of the whole man, body, mind, and soul. Its third department has for its object the culture and development of the mind, and one of its most important features is a regular course of reading. We believe that intellectual development is not at all antagonistic to spiritual growth, but rather contributes to it, as zeal and knowledge, culture and Christlikeness, should always go hand in hand. The pioneers of Methodism used to carry good books in their saddle-bags. Our methods of circulation differ somewhat from theirs, but the church still recognizes the importance of giving the people healthy and inspiring literature.

The Epworth League Reading Course began in the year 1895, with the selection of four books, specially suitable to young folks, bound uniformly, and sold at about half of the usual price. Its success was assured from the very first. During the past seven years 45,680 volumes have been circulated among the young people of Canadian Methodism. They have included such books as "Stalker's Life of Christ," "Torchbearers of Christendom," "Life and Conduct," "Social Law of Service," "Makers of Methodism," "The New Citizenship," "Making a Life." The unanimous opinion of pastors is that the Reading Course has been a source of great inspiration and blessing. During the past year, the number of books has been reduced from four to three, and the price correspondingly decreased, which has resulted in a revival of interest. The motto of the Course is "Better than Ever," and the purpose is to make each year's selection of books better and more attractive than the last.

THE SOCIAL DEPARTMENT.

Much has been accomplished by the Social Department of the Epworth League. It has sought to develop a practical form of Christianity in welcoming strangers, visiting them in their homes, and interesting them in the church. The Floral Committee, by its distribution of flowers, has cheered the hearts of many sick and discouraged ones. Services have been held for the old people in many places, where a number of aged saints have enjoyed the privilege of attending church through the kind attention of the young folks.

SUMMER SCHOOLS.

We are gratified at the success which has attended the summer schools held at Toronto, and Killarney, Man., for the study of the Bible and Missions, and would strongly recommend their continuance, and the organization of similar schools at other points.

THE JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

does for the boys and girls what the Epworth League is expected to do for the young men and women. It is in no sense a rival to the Sunday-school, but rather the complement of it. The motto of the school is "Teach." The motto of the League is "Train."

The Junior League is intended to afford an opportunity to put into practice the knowledge gained in the Sunday-school. The best way to keep the ranks of the Epworth League replenished is to conduct a live Junior League.

THE CONVENTIONS.

Our Epworth League Conventions during the past four years have been exceedingly practical and helpful, and show no signs of slackening interest. At San Francisco last summer, the International League Convention touched high-water mark in attendance and enthusiasm, and the London Conference Convention held in London last March was the largest and most successful Conference gathering ever held in Canada. The District organizations have, however, been the most valuable part of our machinery, and the interest in them has been well sustained.

THE LEAGUE PAPER.

The last General Conference authorized the publication of a monthly paper in the interest of Epworth League work. The Canadian Epworth Era has been well received by the young people, and has steadily grown in circulation until it is now on a self-sustaining basis. The statement presented at the last meeting of the Book and Publishing Committee shows that there are now 5,165 regular subscribers, an increase of 434 during the past year.

OFFICE AND FIELD WORK.

During the past eight years, a Central Bureau of Information has been maintained in Wesley Buildings, Toronto. A large amount of literature has been circulated with the object of increasing the efficiency of the Epworth Leagues and Sunday-schools, and the various enterprises of the department have been pushed. In addition to carrying on a very large correspondence, and editing The Canadian Epworth Era, the General Secretary has attended anniversaries and conventions in various parts of the country, and as far as time permitted has conducted Institutes and Round-Table Conferences and delivered addresses on Sunday-school work. During the past four years he has attended 752 public addresses, 1,000 sermons, and has travelled 67,115 miles in the interests of the work.

Provincial C.E. Convention.

The fourteenth annual convention of the Ontario Christian Endeavor Union will be held in Ottawa, October 7-10. The sessions have been planned for Knox Church and Dominion Church, and it is expected that the programme will be one of the best ever arranged for a Christian Endeavor convention in Canada.

A great attraction will be the presence of Rev. F. E. Clark, D.D., president of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, who has recently returned from an extended trip around the world. He is always a great favorite in Christian Endeavor gatherings, and no doubt will receive a hearty welcome. Mrs. Clark will accompany him, and will speak on "Junior Work." Dr. Clark will speak on "The Quiet Hour," and The Social Side of Christian Endeavor," and will conduct a "Question Drawer" on Endeavor Problems.

An interesting feature of the convention will be a trolley trip to Cherry Cottage, Aylmer, Guelph, the birthplace of Dr. Clark.

Other speakers will be Rev. C. W. Gordon (Ralph Connor), Mr. R. W. Dillon, Dr. F. C. Stephenson, Dr. Scofield, Rev. J. G. Shearer, Rev. W. W. Weeks, Rev. Thos. Brown, B.D., Miss Jean Scott, Canon Richardson.

Corresponding secretaries of Leagues which take up the Forward Movement in Bible Study and Evangelistic Work, or even observe Young People's Sunday on October 12, are urgently requested to send a brief report to The Era as promptly as possible.