

Some Meditations of an Itinerant

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When the Editor asked me to give some account of my experiences and Impressions as Field Secretary, for the past six months, I wanted to know what space was at my disposal. "Make your story just as long as you can make it interesting," was the wily editorial reply. This is not an easy feat, but here goes for the effort.

Anything relating to Sunday Schools and young people is a great theme, and anything said about this great theme should be interesting. If it should prove otherwise then fall upon the writer.

As I take an hour now and then to meditate, I try to recall where I have been. This itself is difficult. So swiftly do modern means of transportation convey one over the Province, and so closely do Institutes and Conventions follow each other, that on arriving back at home the whole itinerary seems a dream. When I refer to my diary, however, it all comes back. There are the entries for payment of railway tickets, baggage transfers, lunches, berths, 'bus fares, tips, hotel bills, postage stamps, liveries and so on. There I see accounts of addresses given, round table conferences, resolutions, plans for next year, and such like. And then I recall the personnel in the con-

Brockville, Chatham, Belleville and Cannington Districts.

District Epworth League Institute, one, viz.: Mount Forest District at Grand Valley, Oct. 29-31, three days, inclusive. The programme for this Institute, printed in full in the January ERA, was ideally suggestive and practical, and was splendidly worked out by the President and the Associate officers of the district.

Local Sunday School Institutes, seven, viz.: Ip Bowmanville, Matilda, Stratford, Brighton, Ottawa and Peterboro' Districts.

Lectures given to the students of the Deaconess Home and National Training School—eight.

Between times I have given a deal of thought and time to the raising of a special fund for Sunday School work and to committee meetings of more or less importance.

This brief summary indicates the nature and variety of the work attended. And even then these lines of activity are only a few of those that ought to be opened up and followed in this great field of Christian enterprise and service. Readers might be interested in a running comment on personal experiences, men and events, and much might be said

have opportunities for service in number and in kind beyond those given to any preceding generation.

3. A growing conviction is gradually possessing the minds of the more thoughtful and conscientious that these opportunities bring with them increasing responsibilities of kingdom citizenship which must be assumed and carried forward in this generation.

4. Our young people and others working in the Sunday School and Epworth League and elsewhere have the capacity for leadership and work necessary to the full assumption of these responsibilities and all the work attaching thereto. This is not to deny the materialistic conceptions of life, the superficiality and contentment to live upon the lower levels, possessing the minds of so many Canadians. All this is only too true, but is due not to lack of capacity, but to lack of education, vision and leadership.

5. This general lack of leadership and of vision and the corresponding prevalent indifference and doubt are largely due to differences of opinion, one might call it a cleavage of opinion, between the conservative and radical, the past and the present, the old and the new, in respect of conceptions, beliefs, methods, organizations and many other things bound up in the development of the kingdom. This paralyzes that unity of purpose and leadership and effort, so essential to pro-



GETTING THERE!

ALL READY!

JUST A MINUTE!

THE STUNT!

GOING HOME!

tinuously moving drama:—Chairmen of districts, Sunday School secretaries, other ministers, superintendents, teachers, parents, Epworth Leaguers, other young people, and last, but not least, that row of boys in the back seat—hard to interest, perhaps, but who, after all, constitute the hope of the community and of the nation. Well, where have I been?

Summer schools attended as a member of the staff, three, viz.: Hamilton Conference at Elora; Sault Ste. Marie at Kensington Point; Ontario Sunday School Association at Geneva Park.

Summer Schools attended as a student, one, viz.: Winona Lake, Ind., August 10-21, where sixty lecture periods were devoted exclusively to the different phases of Sunday School work.

Conference Epworth League Conventions, one, viz.: Hamilton Conference at Guelph, where the Institute idea was worked out with great success.

Ontario Sunday School Association Convention, one, viz.: At Hamilton, Oct. 21-24.

Boys' Conference, one, viz.: At Toronto, Dec. 31.

Joint Epworth League and Sunday School Conventions and Institutes attended, ten, viz.: Brampton, Barrie,

on these themes and in respect of the splendid natural scenery through which one passes in the two great central Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The vista is ever changing, and as one passes through town and city and hamlet, along river and lake, and up hill and down valley, his heart swells with gratitude for the gift of this beautiful land of Canada. But we have neither time nor space for such a comment.

I should like, however, to give a few impressions as they have come to me from time to time, not only in the past few months, but as they have been confirmed on different occasions throughout my field experience. And in order that no words may be lost, I shall state them categorically.

1. There is abroad an enlarging conception of Christianity—a growing belief that it deals not only with the mere saving of a man in the sense that he may go to heaven, but that it has to do with social life and invention and trade and commerce and politics and education and sanitation and housing, and everything that maketh a man and bringeth in the kingdom.

2. There is the free admission that young people living in Canada to-day

But in spite of these results, I am an optimist. For when the old weds the new and the past and the present merge into the future, and the radical is tempered by the conservative, and the present period of exceptional transition gives place to the constructive force of the coming generation, then look out for the great revival. Meanwhile, mighty movements are on foot.

6. The Sunday School under present conditions is more and more recognized as the greatest conservator of life, and, therefore, fundamental to church and other Christian institutions. We should therefore give it our first thought.

7. While I have much sympathy with the conception that the larger Sunday School ideal comprehends all that the League and other young people's organizations stand for, I am persuaded that now and for a long time to come there is and will be a great and necessary place for our present young people's societies. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the Sunday School is just as far from the realization of its ideal as the Epworth League from what it conceives to be its highest possible. But we have not seen this yet. I hope we may shortly. When we do there will be