

Conference in the Deanery of Thunder Bay.

This deanery extends over 300 miles along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Bishop's visit this year had been looked forward to for some time with great interest, as it was his lordship's intention to spend a longer time than usual in the deanery, in order to become better acquainted with its vast extent, and the Church people. The clergy and laity were invited to meet at Port Arthur, on Thursday, Sept. 14th.

The duties of the day commenced with a celebration of the Holy Communion in St. John's Church, at 7:30 a.m. the Bishop being assisted by the Revs. J. W. Thursby and T. J. Hay. At 9:30 a.m. the Rev. T. J. Hay read Morning Prayer.

Shortly after 10 o'clock, the Conference assembled in St. John's School House. There were present: The Lord Bishop of Algoma, President, Revs. Rural Dean Thursby, Port Arthur; E. J. Harper, Fort William; J. P. Smitheman, Schreiber, and T. J. Hay, Oliver; and Messrs. F. H. Keefer, W. H. Langworthy, and John Forde, of Port Arthur, Mr. Coe, Fort William; R. Hall, of State River, in the Mission of Oliver, and Mr. Dennison, Schreiber. The weather was accountable for the somewhat small attendance. Several who had intended being present were prevented. The season had been so wet, they were compelled to take advantage of fine weather to harvest their crops.

The opening prayers having been said, the Bishop welcomed those present and trusted that the Conference would be of benefit not only to the Parish of Port Arthur and the members present, but to the whole deanery.

Rev. T. J. Hay was appointed Secretary to the Conference.

The first paper was read by the Rev. Rural Dean Thursby, and its subject was, "The Conditions, Prospects, and Needs of the Church in the District of Thunder Bay." This was an especially interesting and able paper. Beginning with a description of the geographical situation of the deanery it went on to give a history of the work that had been carried on in the district by the Church, from the day of beginning to the present time. A short discussion on this paper followed.

The next paper, "Church Principles, and How to Maintain Them," by Rev. E. J. Harper—a most able paper throughout—took up the rest of the morning session to read and discuss it. At 12:30 the meeting adjourned.

The Conference re-assembled in the reading room of the Brotherhood House, Court street, and was graced by the attendance of several ladies.

Rev. J. P. Smitheman read a paper, "How to Retain Church Members," which, though short, was not without interest. The speaker urged the necessity of obtaining the co-operation of the laity, the special need of Bible classes, the sympathetic co-operation of clergy and laity, the distribution of Church literature, more elasticity in Church services, cultivating Church teachers, and a cultivation of the social element. We do not keep our young people in the Church, because they see no reason for staying. Their baptismal vows are forgotten, because some Church teachers ignore the fact that these vows should form the basis of all taught to her children. Clergy should pray better, preach better, visit better, and would then excel in all good works.

Next came a paper from Rev. T. J. Hay on "Liturgical Worship." This was a carefully prepared paper, and Mr. Hay treated his subject thoroughly. He showed the antiquity of forms of prayer, which were common to both the Jewish and early Christian Churches. The public worship of God consisted of two parts—prayer and praise. By the former His people praise His Name for His goodness, greatness and mercy. By the latter they supplicate His favour and continued protection. That part of the service called the sermon was introduced into the Christian Church to encourage people in the discharge of their Christian duties and for the explanation of difficult parts, but it was not intended to occupy the principal place in the service, and to take up the attention of the people so as to exclude the great duties of prayer and praise. For, after all, the principal object of meeting together is to praise God for His goodness and to ask His favour. The Scriptures, both of the New and Old Testaments, require the use of the Psalms in offering up praises to God. In Scripture precomposed forms of prayer are found from the beginning to end of the Bible, and are frequently absolutely commanded to be used. Objections to a liturgy were looked into. An objection which, if real, should have great weight, is that forms of prayer are a hindrance to the spirit of prayer. If this be so, they ought to be abolished. What is meant by "spirit of prayer"? The spirit of prayer is defined to be an inward good and pious disposition of the soul, wrought in us by the grace of God, an unfeigned humility and hatred of ourselves when we confess our sins and ask for pardon, a tender appreciation of our needs when we ask for all things needful and necessary for this life and the life to come, a happy state of mind when offering up our praises and thanks for the blessings received, a complete submission of our interests to God's disposal, and a dependence upon Him for granting our requests when we have made our prayers unto Him. Whosoever has these has

the "spirit of prayer." He may not be able to fitly utter one word, yet can and will pray well. Those who complain they have no interest in forms of prayer ought to examine and see if they have not paid more attention to flowing language, or excitement of feelings, or something else, instead of the spirit of prayer. Moreover, the true spirit of prayer is encouraged and strengthened by being directed. If objections to liturgies were thoroughly examined and enquired into, they would be found generally to proceed from habit, education or practice than from any good reason. Brief allusion was made to the many excellencies which our liturgy possesses.

The liturgy of our Church is remarkable for purity of style, correctness of expression and solemnity, all of which add to its value. In it are recognized all the great and leading doctrines of the Catholic Church, and it serves as a standard of faith, as well as a form of devotion, and under God's blessing, we have good reason to believe that while error in doctrine and corruption in practice, have and will prevail, the liturgy of our Church has, and ever will be, a check to both. All should remember that they have a part to perform as well as the minister, and that it should be done distinctly and audibly by all. None who attend Divine service should fail to take their part. It is a great addition to its beauty and solemnity when rightly used.

People should never forget that the institution of public worship is to further the salvation of souls.

An excellent but shorter paper was given by Mr. F. H. Keefer, dealing with the important subject of "Systematic Giving."

Following him came Mr. G. H. Coe with his paper "On the Relation of Sunday Schools to the Home and the Church." The paper pointed out the influences which Sunday Schools exert and the best means of extending their usefulness; their relation to the home, of freeing the parents from responsibility of training their children in religious truths; of beneficial effects which the Sunday Schools must have, not only on the children themselves but on the parents too, and the good seed sown must filter through the homes in some shape or other. Great care should be taken in choice of Sunday School papers and library books. The difficulties of obtaining teachers in the Sunday School was dwelt upon. A discussion followed.

The last and yet one of the most interesting papers of the day was from Mr. John Forde, of Port Arthur. Though it was short it was pithy and full of excellence. It was entitled, "What Answer Should we Make to Those Who Wish to Know Why we are English Church People?"

The evening was devoted to a general meeting for the discussion on the affairs of the whole Diocese of Algoma, and the placing of its actual situation before those who were gathered.