

In Sunday Schools reported during the Quadrennium is not greater than the Conference reports show it to have been.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL S. S. COUNCIL.

During the Quadrennium this important organization among the official Sunday School leaders of the Evangelical Churches of Canada and the United States has come into being. Its chief purpose has been to assist by counsel and conference the different denominations in the Sunday School work committed to them. Largely through its influence the denominations have been brought closer together and the ideals and standards of the Sunday School have been considerably elevated and developed. Doubtless the most important change in the Sunday School work of this continent during the present generation has been effected by agreement of the Interdenominational S. S. Council and the International S. S. Association, in the composition of an entirely new International S. S. Lesson Committee. It has been agreed that instead of as in the past, the lessons being prepared by a Committee of the Association, they shall be outlined by a committee representing the Association, the Council, and the different denominations co-operating. The International S. S. Lesson Committee is, therefore, composed at present of eight members representing the International S. S. Association, eight members representing the Interdenominational S. S. Council, and one member representing each denomination having a Lesson committee. The representative appointed by our Board at its recent meeting, on this newly formed International S. S. Lesson Committee, is Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D. The Lesson Committee of our Board as at present constituted comprises the following members: Revs. Dr. Chown, S. T. Bartlett, A. C. Crews, F. L. Farewell, G. S. Clendinning, Dr. W. A. Cooke, Prof. McLaughlin, and Messrs. Dr. F. Woodbury and T. F. Harrison.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PERIODICALS.

The Sunday School publications, under the capable editorship of Dr. Crews, have made great gains in circulation during the quadrennium. From a total output in 1910 of 363,000, they have increased to 452,792 in 1914. The Board expressed itself as delighted with this showing, and by resolution gave expression to its confidence in the editorial management, and congratulated Dr. Crews on his work during the past four years. The following memorial was also sent forward to General Conference in reference to the matter of financial support to the Board from the profits of the S. S. Publications: "That inasmuch as the increased circulation of S. S. periodicals is due largely to the promoting agencies of the General Board of Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies, this General Board memorialize the General Conference to make provision in the Discipline whereby twenty-five per cent. of the profits of the Sunday School periodicals (or such percentage of profits as it may deem fair), be paid by the Board Committee to the General Board of Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies for the promotion of its work."

FIELD WORK.

Attention is called to the splendid services rendered on many of our Districts by the District S. S. Secretaries working in harmony and in co-operation with the general staff. The holding of S. S. Institutes in influential centres has greatly stimulated the S. S. work throughout the whole Church, and much of the success attained is the direct result of the excellent assistance rendered by the District

S. S. Secretaries. The further development of this policy of District and sub-district Institutes is contemplated in the revised constitution which by order of the Board is being submitted to General Conference.

RELATION TO OTHER BODIES.

From year to year there has been a growing fellowship in service among the various denominations and associations especially concerned for work among the young. The relations of our Board with boards and committees of sister churches is most cordial. Your secretaries have received help and assistance from the Y.M.C.A., and towards the various provincial S. S. Associations nothing but the kindest feelings prevail. All this is cause for congratulation, for while more than ever the responsibility for caring on its own work rests primarily upon the church or denomination, a closer bond of fellowship and more intimate ties of co-operative service are requisite among all the bodies at work in our country, for the highest measure of success. Wherever possible the policy of the Board has been to unite with others in all matters of common interest, steadily pursuing its own work through the machinery created for this purpose by the General Conference. As Methodists we were never more loyal to the Church, as Christian workers we were never more cordial in all our relations to others laboring in the field.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

Statistical.—The comparative standing in number of societies and total membership in 1910 and 1914 may be seen from the following summary taken from the report of the General Conference Statistician:—

	Societies.		Membership.	
	1910	1914	1910	1914
Epworth Leagues	1,347	1,211	136 (d)	54,537 50,028
Young Men's Clubs	83	143	60 (i)	3,473 6,436
Other Y. P. Societies	101	101	1,572 1,164	2,963 (i)
Junior Societies	353	436	83 (i)	15,226 19,480
				4,254 (i)
(*) Net increase.	1,884	2,077	193 (i)	76,808 86,108
				9,300 (*)

It will be noticed that there has been a decrease in Epworth Leagues and in Epworth League total membership, but there has been an increase in Other Young People's Societies. The increase in Other Young People's Societies is not sectional, but distributed in about proportionate numbers through all the Conferences. Whether this increase means a transference of the young people from the Epworth League to societies of other form of constitution and work because the Epworth League is deemed unsuitable to their needs, the Committee of General Conference should seek to determine. Whether these other Young People's Societies are a compromise with the Epworth League and lacking the vital element of the Active Members' Pledge and organized committee work should be investigated. And whether the Epworth League constitution may be simplified and made more elastic, and therefore adaptable to all the various communities of Methodism, should remain the careful attention of the Conference.

It must not be hastily concluded from the statistics quoted above that the Epworth League is losing its hold on the youth of Methodism as a most valuable recruiting ground for Christians and church workers. The figures show that while the number of Leagues has decreased and the total membership has fallen off, the number of active members has actually grown from 33,784 in 1910 to 38,210 in 1914. The loss of members has been in the associate members class, which in 1910 numbered 20,753, while 1914 shows but 13,786. The converted young people of the Church are not losing their interest in the Epworth League, but the Epworth League seems to be losing its hold on the unconverted youth of our congregations. Perhaps in this its showing is, if not as satisfactory as we might wish, at least no worse than that of the whole Church generally.

In the judgment of your Secretary three things are essential for our Young People's work. (1) All societies whatever they may be called, must be maintained throughout on the basis of personal commitment of the individual to God; (2) they must make suitable provision for building up the membership in definite personal experience, and (3) in training them for Christian work. The Active Members' Pledge, Personal Testimony, and systematic Committee work are in our judgment absolutely necessary for success, and whether the society be male, female, mixed or junior in its membership, lacking these provisions it cannot be the source of permanent strength to the Church that it should be and is intended to be. Societies that are formed merely for literary, social, athletic, or any form of entertainment purposes only, can never do the work

purposed by the Epworth League. A thorough consideration of the present needs of the Epworth League with a view to increasing its efficiency through the whole Church is called for at this time perhaps as never before since the inception of our organized Young People's work. That the General Conference will give its consideration to the earnest expectation and hope of the General Board and its Secretaries.

FINANCIAL.

The following table has been compiled from the reports of the General Conference Statistician, and while perhaps not wholly correct when comparisons are made with the reports of the various treasurers of Connexional Funds, shows that the young people are not withdrawing their financial support from the various schemes of the Church. There have been raised during the quadrennium for the several funds, as follows:—

			Increase or Decrease		Quad.	Inc.	Dec
	1911	1912	1913	1914			
Local Purposes	\$43,924	\$43,592	\$46,960	\$48,701	\$183,177	\$49,911
General Y.P.S.	2,147	2,375	2,182	2,283	8,937	\$141
General Missionary	6,713	9,148	9,761	11,774	37,290	8,514
Forward Movement	49,209	44,890	45,131	45,239	194,469
Other Con. Funds	2,270	2,401	2,509	3,441	10,621	7,268
All other purposes	20,973	19,755	22,234	23,691	86,653	5,865
	\$125,236	\$122,161	\$128,777	\$135,079	\$511,253	\$71,417	Net Inc.