

THE CANADIAN EPWORTH ERA

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REV. A. C. CREWS, - - Editor.
REV. WILLIAM BRIGGS, Publisher.

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Editorial

This Paper

The first number of this paper was issued on January 1st, 1899, consequently we are closing, with this number, the tenth year of its history. The preliminary calculations showed that a paper like this could be published at 50 cents, provided that a circulation of 5,000 could be secured. This was done, but unfortunately for the paper, during the past few years the cost of printing has steadily increased, so that each annual report has shown a deficit. This has become so serious as to demand attention. Other papers have met the same difficulty, and have solved it by increasing their subscription price, as both the *Guardian* and *Outlook* have recently done.

At the last meeting of the Executive of the Book and Publishing Committee we were face to face with the alternative of either reducing the size of the EPWORTH ERA or increasing the price, and it was felt that the former would be the better thing to do. About the only fault that we have heard concerning our paper is that we were giving the subscribers too much for their money, and that the amount of reading matter was too great to be properly assimilated. Beginning with next number we shall publish 24 pages instead of 32, but we will try to give our readers the same variety of topics, only the articles will be somewhat shorter. This change will, however, only partially meet the loss, and we will also need a substantial increase in the circulation. If the subscription list falls off to any appreciable extent, the result will be that the ERA will go out of existence altogether, a consummation devoutly to be regretted. Let it be understood that the only way for the Epworth League to have a paper of its own is for its members to rally to its support in a loyal and enthusiastic way.

What Shall We Do for Christmas?

This is a question which an organization like the Epworth League should seriously consider, so that whatever is undertaken may be done intelligently and thoroughly. In any benevolence that the League plans for, care should be taken to look after those who are most likely to be forgotten. The Church as a whole, and the

charitable institutions are likely to supply the needs of those who are known to be poor, for the spirit of goodwill is in the air, and some families will probably receive beyond their needs, at this time. Let the League seek out those who perhaps may not be in actual want, and yet would appreciate a little kindly attention. There may be young men and women in the community who have no homes to go to at Christmas, who would appreciate an invitation to dinner. There are doubtless persons in the neighborhood who have had great trouble, to whom a Christmas message of good cheer would come as balm. Remember that there are countless ways of illustrating the Master's "Inasmuch as ye have done it," besides the giving of money or provisions, and Christmas is a good time to put them in action.

Spiritual Stock-Taking

This is the time of the year when merchants and others "take stock." It is quite a common thing to see the sign on the door of a business house, "Closed for a few days on account of stock-taking." Before entering upon another year of activity, the business man must pause for a little while and deliberately look over his business, discovering how much has been sold, what remains, and what have been the profits or losses of the year. If this is important in a mercantile concern, would it not be a profitable thing to do in connection with an organization like the Epworth League. Let the officers get together in private session for the purpose of spiritual stock-taking, and let them not be afraid to ask themselves some very plain questions, such as, "Are we really in earnest in carrying on this work?" "What accessions have we had to our membership this year?" "How many of our associate members have become active?" "Are the young people of the congregation being led into closer fellowship with Christ, and into fields of active service?" "Are we looking after the home field, by visiting the sick, helping the needy, and cheering the despondent?" Other questions will suggest themselves, but there is enough here to fill a serious hour or two.

Three Important P's

In England there is a movement which aims at reaching non-churchgoers, by providing "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," in the form of interesting religious services which are marked by good singing and bright, breezy talking. One of the leaders in this movement says that three things are necessary to make it successful—prayer, preparation and publicity. These three words suggest the conditions of success for religious work of any kind, with special appropriateness to Epworth League meetings. Of course Christian people would not think of undertaking anything relating to the Master's Kingdom without much prayer. This lies at the very threshold of every Christian campaign. Then should follow preparation—painstaking and systematic. Successful services do not happen, but are the result of careful planning and earnest work. This is a fact that is too often lost sight of. Last of all, but not least, there must be publicity. What is the use of spending time and effort in getting up a first-class programme if you do not let the people know about it. Use posters, blackboard bulletin, hand-bills, invitation cards, and, best