

WHITBY MISSIONARY CONFERENCE 1926

By Miss Jean Cameron

July 2-9 were red letter days for some seventy Ontario folk who gathered at the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby for the annual Missionary Conference held under the direction of the Missionary Education Movement. Each day was filled with interest, and the time seemed all too short for the task before the delegates.

We were fortunate in meeting in an intimate way with such outstanding leaders in missionary enterprise as those who were the Conference leaders. Many who had previously only been names became true realities, and we will always feel that we know them personally. Rev. H. E. Stillwell, the presiding officer, needs no introduction, Rev. H. C. Priest, the efficient secretary of the Missionary Education Movement, and Mrs. Priest, seemed to be happy in seeing that everyone felt at home, and that each delegate was finding in the Conference what he most needed. In addition to the regular leaders, several returned missionaries and others who knew what the Conference meant to them, called on us, so that our sphere of acquaintanceship was greatly enlarged.

So many features of the Conference were outstanding that it is difficult to condense the account. We will always remember the Bible study periods in the morning, when Dr. P. M. Macdonald of Bathurst St. United Church, Toronto, led us in our study of the Acts. The experiences of these early missionaries were revealed to us in a new way, and we followed with great interest the accounts of their joys and sorrows in their work. Dr. Macdonald related the present day problems to those of the early disciples, making the study exceptionally practical and interesting.

Then the Mission Study Classes—the Conference broke up into three groups for an hour of definite missionary study. With such splendid leaders and such interesting text books, the choice of class was very difficult, but at the conclusion of the Conference, every delegate felt that the class he had chosen was the very best of all. The India group was led by Dr. J. M. Waters of Central In-

dia, and they studied "New Days in Old India." Rev. H. F. Woodsworth's class on Japan studied "Creative Forces in New Japan." The third group followed Rev. J. R. Turnbull of Bolivia in a study of "Looking Ahead with Latin America."

Another of the decidedly helpful phases of the Conference was the Method Study period. Under the leadership of Rev. H. C. Priest, the entire Conference joined in a discussion of the missionary situation in our churches, and the most effective means of imparting missionary information, creating and fostering missionary attitudes and habits, and directing missionary activities in the local church.

These regular study periods filled our mornings. Those who planned the program left the afternoon free for recreation, and every day our energetic sports committee planned for our entertainment. We had baseball games, tennis tournaments, swimming matches, a field day, and most exciting, a picnic! On this occasion we loaded on haycarts and were driven about three miles to the lake shore. After playing games and eating our supper we drove back to the College, singing as we went.

Shortly after seven every evening the delegates gathered for the Lawn Talks on Life Questions. The speakers in these meetings urged us all to seek the will of God for our own lives, and to follow His leading.

In the platform meetings, to which outsiders were welcome, we received messages direct from the mission fields. Dr. J. Lovell Murray in his address on the Sunday night struck the keynote of the whole Conference in his text, "Behold I have set before thee an open door" (Rev. 3:8). As we listened to messages from Japan, China, Korea, India, Bolivia, and other countries we could see the need of these people for the Gospel of Christ, and their willingness to receive it, but the missionary staff was in every case too small to meet the needs. The world is crying out for the Gospel of Christ. Are those who have it doing their utmost to share their privilege with those less fortunate?

It is impossible to more than mention other features. The morning worship service, the splendid singing which characterized