

## CURRENT TOPICS AND EVENTS.

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### THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The approach of the Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada furnishes an occasion of looking back and noting the progress of the four years past. Such a retrospect calls forth a feeling of devoutest gratitude to God for the tokens of His approval which have been vouchsafed the operations of our Church. The admirable statistical tables drawn up by the Rev. George Cornish, show in the three Western Conferences 161 ministers on probation, 613 effective, 100 superannuated, 41 supernumerary—a total of 915, being an increase of 210 in the ministerial staff. Deducting 113, belonging to the late N. C. Church, we have a net increase of 97 during the Quadrennial term.

The membership returns show in these three Conferences an increase of 2,053 during the past year, and of 23,275 during the quadrennial term, from which deduct 7,439 belonging to the late N. C. Conference, and we have a net increase in the four years of 18,736.

The returns from the Eastern Conferences have not yet been tabulated nor are the financial returns at all complete. We will present at as early an opportunity as possible a complete abstract of the four years progress.

Notwithstanding the unprecedented hard times, the financial exhibit of each of our funds will show a marked increase. But the demands upon them have also largely increased, especially on the superannuated and missionary funds, so that in those important departments of economy there is a serious deficiency.

The progress of church and parsonage building is beyond all prece-

dent in the history of the Church, both in number, beauty and costliness of these structures.

The increase in circulation of our periodical literature has also been very gratifying. Our Sunday-school work especially, in all its departments, is exhibiting unusual prosperity and extension. At the beginning of 1874 the circulation of the *Sunday-School Banner* was 2,650. Since then it has increased one-fourth in size and more than doubled in circulation. We are now printing 5,500 copies per month. The circulation of that highly efficient Sunday-school help the *Berean Leaves*, has also advanced from 22,000 per month, four years ago, to 58,000 per month. The *Sunday-School Advocate* has also shared the general prosperity of our S. S. publications, its circulation in two years having increased 1,723 copies. It has also been greatly improved in character, and the number of the engravings largely increased. The success of this MAGAZINE, has surpassed the expectations of some of its most sanguine friends. It has won warm tributes of commendation from the leading journals of Methodism both in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. It is admitted to be mechanically the handsomest in the Dominion. Of its literary merit it becomes not us to speak. During the past year—notwithstanding the extremely "hard times," its circulation has increased 1,035—a proof of its growing popularity. The increase of our veteran weekly, the *Christian Guardian*, never more full of moral and intellectual power than at present, during the year as reported to the Conferences—the latest dates at hand—is nearly 1,000. These facts and figures are full of encouragement and are an augury of still greater success in the future.