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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITTHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1896.

The Provincial Sunday-school Convention.

THE Provincial Sunday-school Convention, held in the Dundas Centre Methodist church, London, in October, was one of the most successful ever held in this Province. The attendance was large, the enthusiasm was high, the spirit of consecrated zeal, intense. The most delightful feature of this convention is its thoroughly interdenominational character. Although the Methodist Church has its own Sunday-school Board Work and its Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund, which very properly engages much of its interest, it also gives hearty co-operation to this Provincial movement of all the Churches, contributing liberally to its funds and furnishing some of its most active workers. Its new President, its Secretary and several members of its Executive and its most earnest workers are members of the Methodist Church.

The following remarks, emphasizing the interdenominational character of the presiding

chairman, Mr. J. E. Paterson, of Toronto, strike the keynote of the meeting :

We forget all distinctions and obliterate all differences in the common thought that we are Christian fellow-workers in one of the noblest causes that God has entrusted to our care. We have left behind us the joys and the sorrows, the golden days, the leaden days, and the triumphs and defeats of twelve months since last we banded together ; we ever welcome at convention after convention new faces, new forms, new aides and new soldiers in the front ranks of school work. The work can never grow cold or old ; fresh vigor brings warmth, and we assemble to build another citadel of Sabbath-school effort from which stronger battle can be waged against the enemy called evil, and the fires of conflict made hotter and the dawn of the coming triumph made yet brighter. As Sabbath-school workers, it is our business to devise the best means, and to cherish and unfold the divine seed of immortality that is implanted in every human heart."

The report of the General Secretary, giving a resume of ten years' work, shows very satisfactory progress. The increases were as follows : In 1886 there were 3,977 schools, with 35,149 officers and teachers and 298,746 scholars, while the income of the Association was \$2,287 ; in 1896 there were 5,019 schools, with 49,610 officers and teachers and 423,646 scholars, the income of the Association being \$4,200. This shows at the present time a Sabbath-school for every 350 of the Protestant population, and nearly 28 per cent. of such population enrolled in these schools. Teachers' meetings exist in every ninth school in the Province, and a normal class for every thousand teachers. Special attention has been paid to the primary department with gratifying results.

A very able paper on "System Without Ruts in Sunday-school Operation" was read by Mr. C. E. German, of Strathroy. He said that some people seem to think that business principles have no place in a Sunday-school, but he (the speaker) knew of nothing in Sunday-school enterprise which is not vastly improved by being systematized and managed upon business principles. The superintendent should always try to be the best qualified teacher in the school. He must have control of himself, never fussy, never impatient, always ready to do the right, or at least a proper, thing next. His authority should be absolute and the entire staff should have such confidence that they give him their unqualified support, and, further, there must be no monotony. To keep the management free from ruts the superintendent and his advisers must do some independent and practical thinking—of the methods being employed, of their utility, of possibilities for improvement, and they should also seek some means of bettering the methods already in use. The paper closed with this line, "Keep on the rail ; keep out of the rut."