

sessions at Walmer Road. For the coming year the Board of Education of Toronto have granted the use of Brown School, on Avenue Road, one of the newest and best equipped public schools in the city. This is especially valuable to the Elementary Division, for they will be able thus to keep in touch with all the latest equipment in primary and junior work. The kindness and generosity of all these church and educational authorities is very gratifying, and is very encouraging as an evidence of the growing appreciation of the value of the Sunday School.

As to results. The enrolment for the first year was about 750, with an average attendance of over 200. The pressure of war conditions and other causes reduced the enrolment the second year to about 275 and the average attendance to about 125. It is expected that the third year will see a very large increase, although the demands on the time and

strength of our Sunday Schools continue to be very heavy. The general recognition, however, that our Schools ought to measure up to the new demands imposed upon them by the world War and that they should be ready for the boys when they come home is a motive power that will send our workers into new activity to prepare themselves for these new responsibilities.

It is not enrolment, however, that is the only or the supreme test. The training has been of a high order and the testimonies from the students are most encouraging. The Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee are planning great things for the future, and are looking forward to a time when not only will the Toronto Institute of Religious Education touch every School in this city, but when every other city in Canada will have a similar Institute developing and inspiring our workers everywhere.

The Rural Sunday School

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It is very easy to get away from the real purpose of the Sunday School, which should be the teaching of the Bible. Thinking back to younger years, when I attended both rural and urban Sunday Schools, I am impressed with the fact that the rural School was responsible for more Bible verses, psalms, paraphrases and catechism memorized, while the town School carries memories of more pleasantly and interestingly taught lessons but less real work done by myself as pupil. The former, the memorizings, etc., have remained; the latter have left their general impression for good but the impression lacks the specific content of the former. That was a third of a century ago.

A week ago, I met a church elder three score and ten years or more of age, still in harness in a Sunday School near the scenes of my early rural memories, and I asked him if it were still the case that the young folk in his class memorized and studied the Bible itself. His reply was that "things had changed;" young people even in the country would not study the Bible and memorize passages as they did in former years. "And are you as well satisfied with your work as a teacher as in those former days?" I asked. "No," was his reply, "but I do not seem to be able to help myself. They will not study."

There are exceptions both in the rural and the urban School, but the exceptional cases are in the main the younger members of the Sunday School, and they soon seem to get out of the habit. Whether it will ever be

possible to get back to the days of more real study and memorizing that called for application of effort, I do not know. That it is desirable, every one, I am sure, realizes. It would make the Bible a more real book in modern life. The home, perhaps more than the Sunday School, is responsible for the general spirit of laxity that prevails, but I know of instances now where, here and there, a thorough Sunday School teacher is encouraging good old fashioned memorizing and studying of the Bible.

But while this Bible study and memorizing in the rural Sunday School in the old days built character and real worth, it did not solve the rural problem. Rather, the problem became more acute.

The facts are that the rural problem, which in the main is one of depopulation, is not a religious problem at all. People leave the country because they believe that life in the country is not socially and financially as satisfying as life in the city. Therefore to solve this problem we must solve the social and financial problem of the country.

And where does the Sunday School fit into the solving of the rural problem if its solution lies largely along what may be regarded as purely material lines? To my mind, it should fit in just as the church and the pastor should, namely, in the realm of leadership. In doing this, the Sunday School must never give up one bit of its essential work, the teaching of the Bible. But if the leadership of the Sunday School will aim to identify the Sunday