

The Annual Meeting of the General Board of Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies

Not Minutes of the Sessions, but the Principal Business Transacted

The Annual Meeting of the General Board was held in the Board Room, Wesley Buildings, Toronto, on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 4th and 5th, and for the first time in the history of the Board all the members were in attendance. Rev. Dr. Carman presided, and the following gentlemen responded to the roll: S. T. Bartlett, F. L. Farewell, J. A. Doyle, J. P. Westman, J. K. Curtis, W. E. Willmott, A. W. Briggs, M. S. Madole, G. S. Clendinning, J. B. Gough, T. B. Darby, W. I. Croft, W. A. Davidson, F. C. Stephenson, F. B. Holthby, W. A. Cooke, A. C. Crews, H. Dobson, T. P. Perry, and E. W. Keenleyside.

After routine opening exercises, the General Secretary's report for the year was read. As it deals with the year's record generally in matters of Sunday School and Epworth League work, it is given here in full.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Gentlemen:—

I am pleased to be able to report that taken as a whole the year has been fruitful of much good. Anything like a detailed statement of the work done by your Secretaries on the Field would be tedious to you, hence I merely present the following summary:

During the year your Secretaries have accomplished the following:

Mr. Curtis has travelled over 11,000 miles and has delivered some 325 sermons and addresses on upwards of 175 circuits.

Mr. Farewell has travelled over 10,000 miles and has given some 300 sermons and addresses.

Mr. Doyle has travelled some 13,500 miles and has given upwards of 300 sermons and addresses.

Mr. Westman has travelled upwards of 11,000 miles and has given some 350 sermons and addresses.

I have covered some 7,000 miles and have given about 125 sermons and addresses.

These figures are only approximate, and do not include any work done since the Annual Conferences of 1912.

The sermons and addresses given have been under many and varied auspices—Conventions, Institutes, Conferences, Schools, Anniversaries, and such like—and the places visited have extended from end to end of the connexion. In addition to the work of the Field Secretaries, a great deal has been accomplished by some of our diligent and hard-working district officers both in Sunday School and Epworth League. A total or full inventory would be impossible.

In addition to the field work done by the regular Secretaries I am pleased to report an increasingly large amount of similar work on a smaller scale and within a more limited area on the part of many of our District Sunday School Secretaries. Many of these men are deeply interested in the success of their office and are seeking to make it effective. Others, of course, are inclined to look upon it as merely honorary. I have endeavored to keep in touch with all these men, to guide, counsel, and assist as far as possible. Many have responded splendidly, while others have remained inactive. I have sought to obtain a brief yearly report from each as to the work done or planned on his district, and would like the authority of the Board to prepare a suitable Report Form for the use of these officers and your instruction to obtain such re-

port properly filled from each one half-yearly. I submit the last lot of reports received from these men.

I hope you may see your way clear to assist such of these officers as prove willing to work, with such necessary help as they may require in carrying it on. Some districts needing just the service these men can render cannot at present at least meet the necessary incidental expenses incurred. I shall submit some few cases where faithful work has been done during the past year, and the District Secretaries have been out of pocket thereby, asking you to pay these men the amounts named to square their expense account. I trust that in the estimates for this year a sum may be appropriated, at last year, to cover this item. I have paid none of these sums, as I did not understand that I had the power so to do. Recommendations on the work of the District Secretaries will come before you from a representative gathering of the representatives of the five Central Conferences assembled in the Metropolitan Church only yesterday. I have to report a most enthusiastic meeting held as per authority of the Executive Committee at its last meeting. I am confident that money expended in making the office and work of the District Secretary effective will be well and wisely spent, and respectfully call your attention to this important part of our Sunday School machinery.

OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE.

As must be expected, this is on the constant increase, and every addition made to the staff of field workers, the development of the Teacher Training and our branches of the work, together with the incidental correspondence with all parts of the field, necessitate more work in the office. The extent of my mail may be gathered from the simple fact that for the first six months of this year 6,446 letters and cards were mailed, in addition to 1,221 parcels which were also sent out. Of course, the mail necessitated by the Rally Day Policy has greatly increased even this large amount since July 1st. This large correspondence, together with editorial, teacher training, and many other incidental duties, have, with the field work already reported, kept your General Secretary constantly engaged. I trust that before long some addition to our staff or some readjustment of the work in some way, may make it somewhat less strenuous at times. I have been greatly assisted by Miss Wallace, whose valuable services the Board cannot value too highly. Her full knowledge of the work and devotion to her duties cannot be overestimated.

One part of the office work which might be extended, I think, to the profit of the Board is what I may term the Sales Department. So far I have handled nothing but our Canadian First Standard Teacher Training Book. These we purchase from the Book Room for \$150 a thousand, and on their sale realize a small net profit. While I would not advise carrying anything like an assorted stock, I have had occasion at different times to think that we might, with advantage to all concerned, have a selection of leading Sunday School books, and if you think it well within our province so to do, I think the plan might be profitable and without prejudice to the Book Room.

SUNDAY SCHOOL STATISTICS.

A careful examination of the Statistical Records of the year, as prepared by the late Dr. Cornish from the Conference tables, reveals some conditions that, in my judgment, should be investigated. There is a reported decrease in Methodist preaching places of 317, a decrease of 28 Methodist Sunday Schools, and a decrease of 17 Union Sunday Schools on our circuits and missions. I have no idea that these figures are correct, but they are official and must be taken as stated. By Conferences the comparative condition is as follows:

Conference.	Preaching Places.	Sunday Schools.
	1911. 1912.	1911. 1912.
Toronto	555 555 same	445 453 2L
London	453 456 3M	442 439 3L
Hamilton	417 416 1L	397 394 3L
Bay of Quinte	483 465 18L	421 418 3L
Montreal	547 526 21L	436 427 9L
Nova Scotia	404 402 2L	239 219 20L
N.B. & P.E.I.	390 392 2M	216 214 2L
Newfoundland	386 377 9L	250 248 2L
Manitoba	352 402 50M	187 223 36M
Saskatchewan	630 524 106L	258 227 31L
Alberta	585 369 216L	246 245 1L
British Columbia	221 222 1M	125 127 2M

The total number of preaching places is 5,184; of schools, 3,697.

It will be seen by these figures that there is a reported decrease of 272 preaching places in the three Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and of Sunday Schools an increase of only 4. As will be later shown, we have sent free supplies to 179 newly organized Sunday Schools within the bounds of these same Conferences during the year, so that the reported small increase of 4 schools is the more incomprehensible. I would suggest that this Board conduct a census of all the Districts through the Sunday School Secretaries of Districts that we may know the true position, for the present reported standing is far from satisfactory and wholly out of harmony with what is supposed to be the growing condition of the West.

SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP.

Our total enrolment is now 406,130, being an increase of 13,299 scholars, 277 teachers and officers, or 11,506 total increase in all departments. There is an increase in all sections of the School but one, the Senior Grade between 16 and 20 years of age, showing a decrease of 1,490. This is largely, if not wholly, accounted for by the increase of Organized Adult and Young People's Classes, in which section there is a reported increase of 3,487 members.

I regret to report that only 11,371 have joined the Church from the Sunday School during the year, a decrease of 597 in comparison with the year preceding. This, notwithstanding the additional emphasis that has been placed on the evangelistic work of the Sunday School by the Standing Committee on Evangelism during the year, calls for most serious thought and earnest consideration. Only 752 schools out of our total of 3,697 report a decision Day, so we may conclude that nothing