

Messenger and Visitor

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The Convention in Retrospect.

The Convention of 1899 in Fredericton will be remembered as one of special interest and significance seemed to be the feeling prevailing among those of the delegates who have been accustomed to attend its annual sessions. External conditions were favorable, the fine weather continued unbroken until near the close of the last session. The local management in the hands of Pastor Freeman and his little army of willing helpers was most complete and satisfactory. The Fredericton church could not of course provide free entertainment for all, but the people did their part generously and those who could not be entertained in the homes were furnished with comfortable quarters at very moderate rates. If anybody growled or grumbled we heard nothing of it. It was an eminently good-natured convention. The number of delegates was, we believe, not so large as it has been in several previous years, but that probably was less because free entertainment could not be provided for a larger number, than because the place of meeting would involve for many a long and expensive journey. The Convention made very steady and satisfactory progress with business. Little time was wasted in pointlessness or fruitless discussions or wrangling over points of order. The discussions were free, frank, sometimes especially in the case of the temperance report—waxing warm and earnest, but they were never acrimonious and they stirred up no bad blood. This is matter for congratulation, as it is also that the accounts of the different Boards had been kept with such care and presented with so much clearness, that there seemed to be no need to spend time in dealing with unpleasant financial questions or enquiring into apparent irregularities. The one thing to be desired in connection with the financial statements was that the credit side of the accounts might have shown more generous contributions toward the great Christian enterprises which the Convention has undertaken to promote.

The Convention on its intellectual side was above the average. The public addresses at the meetings of the B. Y. P. Union were of a high character. The papers and discussions before the Institute on Friday afternoon were full of interest and charged with inspiration to thought and study of the vital questions of theology. The addresses at the public meetings of the Convention on Saturday, Monday and Tuesday evenings and Sunday afternoon were also of a high average. Some of them were especially strong in thought and eloquent in expression, and among them all there was not one that was weak, tedious or uninteresting. But if the Convention was helpful because of its intellectual forces, it was still more helpful because of the spiritual influences that were present. These influences were felt not only in connection with the devotional services but were present in the business sessions, helping the delegates to maintain a Christian temper. They were present in the meeting of Saturday evening when the hearts of the people were drawn out toward the foreign mission work and the sum of \$1500 was subscribed or guaranteed upon the spot. And surely these gracious influences were present in the meeting of Tuesday afternoon, when brethren who had been divided in sentiment and effort felt that they had reached a point where they could sink their differences and unite hand and heart in the Lord's work and for the glory of His name. We desire to add just here that the plan projected for conducting home mission work in this Province, and adopted by the Convention with so much unanimity and heartiness, at that session has our cordial approval, and we trust that the plan may be carried into effect in the same Christian spirit in which, as we believe, it has been initiated.

It is one of the misfortunes of the editor of a religious paper that, under the political conditions

existing in this country, his utterances on certain questions, whether written or spoken, are very liable to be wrested from their true and legitimate intention with a view to serving the interests of one or other of the contending political parties. The regular readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, as well as those who know its editor personally, are not, we take it, likely to believe that any remarks of his at the recent Convention were made with a purpose to promote the interests of any political party. But lest silence on our part should be misinterpreted, we desire to say here that certain statements which have appeared during the past week in daily papers of St. John and Fredericton, representing the editor of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to have made a speech in defence of the course of the Dominion Government in reference to the Plebiscite, are misleading. What the editor said in connection with the discussion of the Temperance report on Monday afternoon—as reference to the report of proceedings which appears elsewhere in our columns shows—was in reply to a direct and pointed criticism upon the paper, and simply aimed to present the reasons why the paper had not joined in the demand for immediate prohibition on the mandate of the plebiscite vote. And while it is true that the paper has not seen its way clear to unite with those who were condemning the Government because it declined to consider the result of the Plebiscite a sufficient mandate for the bringing in of a general prohibitory law, it is not true that the paper has found no fault with the Government on account of the course which it has pursued, as reference to our columns, at the time when the subject was prominently under discussion, will clearly show.

The Convention.

(Continued from page one.)

the attitude taken in this matter by the religious press and directed a particular and pointed criticism to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR because it had not denounced the course pursued by the Government in reference to the plebiscite.

At this point it was moved by Dr. Trotter, seconded by Dr. Saunders, that the report be referred to the committee, enlarged for that purpose, with a view to revision and condensation, with the hope of making it more generally satisfactory to the Convention. The discussion on the general subject however went on, and was participated in by Rev. J. H. Hughes who held that it was not the province of a religious press, representing necessarily a constituency of a mixed character politically, to antagonize a political party by denouncing the acts of government, and he regretted to see reports brought into the Convention which must arouse political animosities. According to Baptist principles the affairs of church and state must be kept separate.

Rev. W. E. McIntyre said he was prepared to endorse the preamble of the report referring to Baptist principles, but there were, he considered, things in the report which were not in harmony with those principles, and which, therefore, he could not endorse.

Rev. H. F. Adams held himself to be a Liberal in politics, but he strongly disapproved the course pursued by the government in the matter of the plebiscite and expressed himself vigorously in reference to the bad influence of Roman Catholic Quebec upon the affairs of the Dominion.

The Editor of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR said that since in the course of the discussion a pretty sharp criticism had been pronounced upon the paper and its editor because of the course pursued in connection with the subject under consideration, he felt it necessary to say a few words in his own defence. He had stood for prohibition, and during the Plebiscite Campaign he had sought to use the influence of the paper to make the affirmative vote as large as possible. But when the results came to be summed up and it appeared that the affirmative vote represented about 22½ per cent., and the negative vote about 27½ per cent. of the total electoral vote of Canada, then, considering what this indicated as to the forces upon which government could rely for support, and the forces which it must antagonize, in administering a general prohibitory law, he had come to the firm conclusion that, under conditions indicated, the enactment of a general prohibitory law for Canada would mean not triumph but disaster for the temperance cause. He had not therefore been able to coincide in the views of many brethren most highly esteemed by him and join with them in a demand upon the government for immediate prohibitory legislation. He had endeavored to consider the question in the light of facts and upon broad principles and he could not consciously advocate views contrary to those which he had thus reached.

Senator King of Chipman expressed surprise at some things in the report. He argued that a prohibitory law could effect nothing of value unless there were back of it an effective public opinion, and in support of this referred to the fate of the New Brunswick prohibitory law. He referred also to the history of temperance legislation in Canada to show that a Government which introduces prohibitory temperance legislation is not likely thereby to win much support from the temperance men in the other party. He held that the vote recorded in the plebiscite did not constitute a mandate in favor of prohibition, which the government could be expected to accept, and that the denunciation of Roman Catholicism in such reports as that before the convention was only likely to make it more united and aggressive.

The President of the Convention said that there were statements as to facts in the report with which he could not agree, and said that if such statements were adopted by ever so small a majority they would be sent all over

the country and used for partizan political purposes as being the deliverance of the Baptist body in the Maritime Provinces. He would always recognize the law of prohibition as binding upon himself and he desired to promote the cause of temperance, but he believed that to pass the report as then before Convention would not be a move in that direction.

The vote was then taken on the amendment to send the report back to the committee, and carried. The original committee, of which only Revs. H. F. Adams and B. H. Thomas were present, was enlarged by the addition of Senator King, Dr. B. H. Eaton, Revs. Dr. Keirstead, E. J. Grant, Dr. Saunders, A. H. Lavers and F. H. Beals.

MONDAY EVENING.

The meeting of Monday evening was occupied with a platform discussion of the Educational interests of the body. Dr. Inch, Superintendent of Education for the Province, occupied a seat upon the platform. The first speaker of the evening was Mr. Horace L. Brittain, the new principal of Horton Academy. Mr. Brittain is youthful in appearance. He however manifested a quiet self-possession on the platform and gave the impression of a man of hopeful, earnest temperament, who possessed resources and who would not be easily daunted in the face of difficulties. Mr. Brittain clearly recognizes the competition which Horton Academy must encounter in the public high schools of the country. But he believes that the Academy, by reason of its proximity to the college and the Horticultural school and its connection with the Manual Training school, is able to afford to the student an educational environment and opportunities which are much superior to those of the public schools. Mr. Brittain spoke of a plan which he had in mind to start a Library for the Academy. He hoped to secure for this purpose donations of books and he requested that those who might have books of a suitable character, which they were willing to donate for the purpose, to communicate with him.

Rev. J. H. MacDonald, Principal of Acadia Seminary spoke in the interests of that institution. He said that the Denomination which is not making provision for the education of its young people must deteriorate. It is not only to give a literary or a musical education, or to afford what are called accomplishments that Acadia Seminary exists, but for the development of the entire womanhood, the cultivation of all that is best in intellectual, social and religious life. Therefore the institution has a large claim on the denomination. Mr. MacDonald spoke of the excellent staff of teachers which the Seminary possesses, including Rev. Dr. Sawyer as teacher of Ethics. With such a staff, he said, we can confidently ask for students to be sent. He had been encouraged in his search for students. But the people know too little about the Seminary. Mr. MacDonald dwelt in closing upon the importance to the denomination of educating its young women who are to make the homes and mould the life of a generation to come. He had consecrated himself to this work and to it he would give the best service of which he was capable.

The third speaker of the evening was Miss dePrazer of India who also had spoken in connection with the missionary meeting of Saturday evening. Miss dePrazer began by paying the president of the Convention a very graceful compliment. Proceeding, she explained that she was working in India in connection with the Dufferin Society for rendering female medical aid to women. She explained how, according to Eastern customs, it is not permitted a woman to see a male physician and how in consequence great and needless suffering has often to be endured. It was to meet the need here indicated that the Society which was the outcome of the generous impulse of the Countess of Dufferin, and which bears her name, was formed. Miss dePrazer showed the lack of education among the people of India, giving instances to show how superstition prevails among them and how their superstitions prevent them receiving the medical treatment of which they stand in need.

President Trotter's address which followed was a fine effort. He began by expressing his pleasure in listening to the new principals of the Seminary and Academy, and welcomed them to the fellowship of service in the work of Education. Proceeding Dr. Trotter spoke of the college and the four years course of study leading to graduation and the B. A. degree. The college course is a means to an end. The purpose is to send out an educated personality. An educated man is one whose mind has been developed and enabled to take a broad view of things, so that he is able to see a question in its manifold relations. Education gives power of patient thinking, argumentation and adequate expression. In order to the reception of such education there is necessary a natural development of the mental powers, which is not reached until the time of early manhood or womanhood. The college course is needed as a foundation for the professional course which tends to narrowness by calling into use only a limited range of faculties. The value of a college course to persons in the ordinary walks of life, for broadening the mind, enlarging influence and outlook and promoting refinement in the home, was dwelt upon. Dr. Trotter closed with an earnest plea on behalf of the collegiate training of young women which would give them ability for large and efficient service whether in the home or elsewhere.

Rev. W. E. Hall, as the last speaker, spoke briefly in connection with the financial side of the educational work. He referred to the important results which had been accomplished in connection with the Forward Movement. There was however, a certain percentage of loss on the subscriptions and it was necessary to secure new pledges in order to meet these deficiencies and enable the obligations to be met as they mature.

TUESDAY MORNING.

The session of Tuesday morning was occupied largely with hearing the report of the Secretary of the Home Mission Board, the report on the State of the Denomination and a number of other reports which were read and adopted with but little discussion. For these reports we have not space this week but will endeavor to make room for the more important of them at least in another issue.

One brief but important report presented and passed at the Tuesday morning session is appended herewith.

Rev. J. M. ... being reported for the committee to which the cause on reinforcements in the Foreign