

Sunday School

An Encouraging Report

The General Conference Statistician, Rev. Dr. Cornish, has supplied this paper with the Annual Report for our Sunday Schools. It is an interesting statement, but too long to publish in full.

The following extracts are made:

Number of Sunday Schools....	3,439
Increase.....	15
Officers and Teachers.....	33,717
Increase.....	528
Number of Scholars.....	273,962
Increase.....	5,691
Home Department.....	14,294
Increase.....	1,915
Cradle Roll.....	8,241
Increase.....	1,600
Total Sunday School Force.....	321,492
Increase.....	8,241
Number United with Church.....	12,086
Increase.....	2,322
Contributed for Missions.....	\$24,135
Increase.....	1,725
Schools with regular teachers:	
Meetings for Study of Lesson.....	2,232
Increase.....	8
Number of schools that have:	
Normal Classes.....	106
Increase.....	11
Schools Observing Rally Day.....	1,035
Increase.....	174
Schools holding Decision Day.....	2,549

It is gratifying to note these increases in almost every department, the only decrease being in the number of scholars who are pledged abstainers, and there is evidently a mistake here.

The disappointing features of the report are at the close, which show a surprisingly small number of schools conducting Teacher-training Classes, and holding regular teacher's meetings for the study of the lesson. Although there is an increase, we are very far from having the showing we ought to have. Let there be an earnest effort during the coming year to bring up these figures.

A Progressive Sunday School

The City of Belleville recently held an "Old Boys' Reunion," which was largely attended by former residents. The Sunday school of Bridge Street Church, with its usual enterprise, took advantage of this event to publish a souvenir booklet of twenty pages, showing the growth and development of the church and school from the beginning.

The statistics of the school are given for thirty years. In 1874 there was an enrolment of 465. In 1897, high water mark was reached, with a membership of 1083. Owing to decreasing population in the city, there was some falling off in the school attendance for a few years, but the figures for the past three years show an advancing tendency. The total membership is now 786. During the past thirty-one years 5,000 persons have been members of the school.

One of the distinguishing features of this school is the large number of adults who attend its sessions, as the school is regarded as the teaching department for the whole congregation.

The success of the Sunday school is largely due to the efficient work of the Superintendent, Mr. William Johnson, who has been in charge for the past thirty years. He is assisted by a very efficient staff of workers.

The idea of bringing the Sunday school

prominently before the public by a souvenir of this kind is an excellent one, which ought to be copied by other places.

Rally Day

As its name betokens, the object of Rally Day is to rally the scattered Sunday School forces. The long and hot summer tells upon the school. Teachers' meetings are suspended. The attendance of scholars is diminished. The work lags, and body and spirit are tired; the return of autumn, with its activities, the starting up of business life in all departments, the opening up of the secular schools—these are the admonitions to the Sunday School that its forces also must be rallied.

In every school, especially in the Intermediate Department, there is a tendency toward absenteeism. The big boys and girls begin to drop out. The case is not hopeless at first. The old school feeling comes over the absentee at times. The Rally Day helps this. It masses the forces, puts everybody on parade, makes an extraordinary effort to get back all its members.

Rally Day arouses and interests the parents, whose pride in their children leads them to come to this annual gala-day of the school. The fact that a special programme will honor their presence is an incentive. Rally Day is practically Church Day in many schools, the one day in the year when a generous and sympathetic interest from the Church towards the school finds expression. Rally Day stimulates the school. The faithful minority who have held on through the heat of summer need the stimulus. The Superintendent needs encouragement. It therefore becomes a day of recognition of faithful officers and scholars who have borne the heat and burden of the day.

It marks the entrance upon a year of more aggressive work. It tones up the school, and is the time for talking a "fresh start."

Summed up in a few words, the Rally Day serves especially the following ends:

- It rallies the stragglers.
- It interests and enlists the Church.
- It arrests absenteeism.
- It encourages the officers and scholars.
- It inaugurates a new campaign of better work.

Here are some of the best methods for observing Rally Day:

Advertisement.—A Rally Day needs persistent advertising for weeks beforehand. First, by the pastor from the pulpit; next, by the Superintendent from his platform, after that, in the newspapers. If it is worth having, it is worth knowing of, and the widest publicity should be given it.

Invitation.—A Committee of Invitation should personally invite every member of the church and school, or those who might be induced to attend the school or furnish scholars to it. A personal invitation will count much more than a written one.

Rally Day Cards.—In addition to personal invitations, issue a neat invitation card. Many are beautiful and attractive. This is what business men do—set forth their wares in the form of original and captivating invitation.

Special Honors.—For those who come a service of special recognition should be devised, either by introduction to the school, by giving them seats of honor, or by making special mention of their presence. If old scholars who have dropped

out return for the day, an urgent invitation should be given them to rejoin the school. To newcomers there should be an urgent plea for continued membership.

Special Programme.—The regular order should give place to a crisp, bright programme of music, recitation, short addresses, a word from the pastor, an explanation of Rally Day by the Superintendent, and his frank statement of the condition and needs of the school. The Secretary and Treasurer should read summaries of attendance and finance of the year preceding, marking the progress of the work. Some schools supply special Rally Day programmes.

Care should be taken to greet and welcome each comer, old or new. A committee should be charged especially with this. The spirit of the day should be peculiarly gracious in all proper social ways.

A Correction

Mr. Marion Lawrance, General Secretary of the International Sunday School Association, sends the following personal note to the editor of this paper:

"I wish to express my very great delight at receiving the July number of 'The Canadian Epworth Era.' You have given a larger proportion of space to the great Sunday School Convention, held in your city, than any paper I have seen. It is well done, too. I am sorry to notice one little inaccuracy, which does Canada an injustice. You see I am jealous of Canada, because of her splendid treatment of me every time I step over the line. In the next to the last item on page 213 the number of scholars enrolled in Canada should really be teachers, for the scholars enrolled are nearly ten times that number. I thank you most heartily for your splendid work in giving publicity to our wonderful convention. Long wave the Canadian Epworth Era!"

The item referred to stated that there are 85,021 Sunday School scholars in Canada, which of course is incorrect. The editor is thankful to Mr. Lawrance for calling attention to this mistake, and also for his kind words concerning this paper.

Heart of the Situation

The Committee on Resolutions at the International Sunday School Convention in Toronto presented the following, which expresses the greatest need of the Sunday School:

"In view of our conviction that the teacher is the heart of the Sunday School situation, and that the training and equipment of the teacher is of more importance to the progress and success of the cause for which this convention stands than any other matter with which we have to deal, not excepting such matters as organization, architecture, grading, or even the lesson system itself, we heartily commend the growing attention which is being given to the systematic training of the teacher, and the action of the Executive Committee in creating and appointing an International Committee on Education and an International Teacher-training Secretary, and we cordially endorse every proper step that is being taken by our Committee on Education and our Teacher-training Secretary to arouse widespread interest in the need of better teaching, and to disseminate information as to how better teaching can be attained."