

'A League that Lives by Doing Things'

Elm St. Methodist Church, Toronto

BY REV. KENNETH J. BEATON

Elm Street! What historic memories the mention of the name of the old church rouses in the minds of Methodists, especially in Toronto. Started fifty-five years ago, for many years a flourishing family church, now facing the down-town problem, and drawing its congregation largely from the boarding-houses, the old church has seen great changes. Five years ago, when Rev. T. E. Bartley, now President of Conference, was appointed pastor, some were in doubt as to its future. He immediately organized the Epworth League for a thorough canvass of the constituency. This involved about 60,000 personal calls, but it gave him a splendid basis for operations. Such a canvass, though not so extensive, is made annually, with the result that the church has more than doubled its membership and the League has grown proportionately. Elm Street has made the League and the Sunday School, the two chief factors in her effort to solve the down-town problem. It will be easier to outline the work by departments.

The Executive consists of (1) the off-



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cers, (2) the conveners of committees, (3) the president of each affiliated society, and meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each month. Out of 35 members the average attendance is 25. Written notices containing an itemized statement of business to be transacted are sent out for this and all other committee meetings.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR DEPARTMENT.

The Programme Committee of this, as in other departments, spare no effort and expense in making the meetings interesting. A series of meetings on Doctrine, when written requests were sent to the members asking them to mail in reply answers to questions on (1) sin, (2) atonement, (3) repentance, etc., were very helpful. Separate consecration services for men and women were very successful. At these services the roll is never called. Some more original method of getting members to speak is always planned, e.g., the members were asked recently to come prepared to state seven causes of thanksgiving, one of which had

been written down each day of the preceding week. The response was gratifying.

The Evangelistic Committee arranges for (1) a service for which the League is responsible at Yonge St. Mission, the first Saturday evening of each month; (2) a prayer meeting at 6.15 p.m. each Sunday to pray for conversions in the evening service; (3) cottage prayer meetings when requested by the deacons and pastors; (4) open air meetings during the summer. Some of these services Sunday evenings after church were attended by 1,000 people. To secure the League's interest, a Monday night meeting was held in the open air, right in the heart of "the Ward." The reflex influence on the lines of the Leaguers was incalculable.

The Look-Out Committee is divided into (1) Men's Department, (2) Ladies' Department. Under each of these are three sub-committees. (a) The Absentee committee visits members who are absent from three consecutive meetings. To aid this committee each member, on joining, is given a number, the odd numbers having the odd and the ladies the even numbers. Each member registers by number with the secretary before entering the meeting Monday evening. He makes three copies through carbon paper, keeps one for his own record, and hands one to each Absentee Convener. The blanks used in Look-Out work, are in the form of receipt pads, with a stub for keeping records.

(b) The Church Strangers' Committee is so organized that a young man, and a young lady are placed in each aisle of the church and gallery to welcome strangers, secure their names and addresses, and invite them to League and Bible Classes. They are provided with cards for the purpose. The names are given to:—

(c) The New Member's Committee, who visit them during the week, and endeavor to secure them for membership. Some idea of the need of this is shown by the fact that an average of five members a week are received, yet the increase has been less than 100 in 18 months. The present membership is 250, of whom 75 are men. The average attendance at the League meetings is 150.

Everybody is forced to enter the League service through the Primary room, which is used as a business office. The Look-Out workers have a separate room. A Welcoming Committee bids strangers a hearty welcome. Many new members are secured in this way. These workers are supplied with the pledge cards, published by the League and specially adapted to the work. The Look-out workers make an average of about forty calls a week.

MISSIONARY DEPARTMENT.

The Programme Committee has so assiduously gone its work that the missionary meetings always draw the biggest crowds. Elm St. believes in developing her own members, and not more than one meeting a month is addressed by an outsider. Novel missionary programmes have been: "A Mock Trial" and a "Parliament of Missions," the material for which was prepared and given entirely by the members themselves. A unique meeting was the one when natives of India, China, Persia and Japan, dressed in native costume, spoke of the needs of their re-

spective countries. These men are students in Toronto. Their addresses were interspersed by missionary music obtained from New York by the League choir and orchestra. These number thirty, and provide plenty of lively music at every meeting. Two programmes are in course of preparation, "A Missionary Cantata" and "A Missionary Drama," in three acts, written entirely by one of the members.

The Mission Study Committee aims to have one or more mission study classes constantly at work. Marvellous results have come from this work. The League sent two delegates to the W.H.I. Conference last July. Both became volunteers. One came back so enthusiastic that he organized a class for the study of "The Moslem World," which had an attendance of from 12 to 15 during July and August. This taught us (1) that it pays to send delegates to conferences and conventions; (2) that a mission study class is possible at any time. This committee has charge of the missionary post office, the free literature bureau, and the



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League library. The library was at first entirely missionary, but a few months ago the Executive added select fiction, poetry and devotional books, mixing them among the missionary books in the catalogue. More missionary books are read now than formerly. An effort is made to add one new book every two weeks. The librarian also has charge of the Elm St. pins and the note-paper with the League crest, which are supplied to the members at cost. This distinctive crest is very useful.

The Temperance Committee does more than arrange for temperance meetings. In the recent license reduction campaign this committee added 30 names of Leaguers to the voter's list, two-thirds of whom, in order to vote, paid an income-tax of \$8 on salary which might have been exempt. The League was responsible for canvassing and getting out the vote in two subdivisions, and this was done so successfully that only two temperance votes were left unpolled. This is a record for the lower part of Ward 3.