

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." -Peter.

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THE CONFERENCE.

SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION.

The seventy-second session of the Free Baptist General Conference of New Brunswick assembled at Tracey, S. Co., on Saturday of last week.

MINISTER'S CONFERENCE.

The General Conference, which always begins on a Saturday, is preceded by the Ministers' Conference on Friday. This year a special meeting of the Ministers' Conference was called for Thursday, thus affording the ministers two days for the transaction of the business peculiar to their meeting. Thursday morning found a good number of the ministers present. There was the usual hearty greeting of each other, some of them not having met during the year.

In the absence of the chairman, Rev. C. T. Phillips presided in the morning and Rev. H. A. Bonnell in the afternoon. The session began with a season of prayer, which was helpful. Revs. D. Patterson and R. Heine, members of the Nova Scotia Conference, being present, were invited to seats.

The Ministers' Conference is especially for the cultivation of "harmony in doctrine and practice," to deal with "matters of trial" between its members, if such things exist: "to investigate the moral character of its members," if there should, unhappily, be occasion for it; to "aid in the removal of difficulties between pastors and churches," should there be any; and to deal with "any matters which may affect the prosperity of the churches." There were no doctrinal or personal differences to be adjusted, no investigations of moral character necessary, and no difficulties between pastors and churches calling for attention.

The most of Thursday was given to consideration of the question of the proposed Baptist union, nearly all of the brethren expressing views.

Thursday evening there was preaching by Rev. A. J. Prosser. Rain had fallen heavily all day, but there was a very good congregation present to hear a good sermon.

Friday the regular session of the Ministers' Conference met at 9 a. m. Other ministers had arrived and there was a fairly full attendance of both ordained and licensed preachers. Rev. G. W. Foster presided. The devotional service was led by Rev. S. J. Perry. Revs. D. Patterson and R. Heine presented certificates from the Nova Scotia Conference. They were invited to seats. Rev. David Long was elected chairman for the year; and Revs. B. H. Nobles, G. W. Foster and W. H. Perry members of the executive.

Two ministers had passed away dur-

ing the year—Revs. J. T. Parsons and J. S. Jones. Tender references were made to them by many brethren, and their work for Christ and the Church was spoken of with thankfulness, and appropriate resolutions concerning them were placed upon the records of the Conference. Nine ordained ministers and three licentiates were not present at the meeting. Revs. T. O. DeWitt, T. W. Carpenter and G. Swim on account of ill-health. Prayer was offered for the sick brethren.

Consideration of the union question occupied most of the day, the brethren freely and fully expressing their views on the various phases of it. The following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the amendments to the Basis of Union made by the Baptist Convention, in August, 1904, viz.—

(a) The removal of section 11, as adopted by the Baptist Convention in 1887, and the amendment of it, as adopted by the Free Baptist Conference in 1903; and (b) The substitution of the following for section 16: "The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Christ, to be observed by the churches in the manner indicated by our Lord in Matt. 26: 26-27,—

are satisfactory to this Ministers' Conference, affording, us we are assured they are intended to do, the fullest and truest liberty to all.

Rev. F. C. Hartley, being about to remove to Houlton, Me., resigned the secretaryship. The resolution accepting the resignation expressed appreciation of his service as secretary, and regret that he is leaving the province. Rev. A. J. Prosser was elected secretary, to take the office at the close of the present session.—Adjourned.

In the evening there was preaching by Licentiate Wilson. There was a good congregation and an enjoyable service.

SATURDAY.

The devotional conference of the annual session began at 10 a. m., and continued till noon. A large congregation assembled. The pastor, Rev. J. B. Daggett, spoke words of welcome and expressed the hope that this meeting and the whole session would be a season of much blessing. Many spoke of God's goodness to them, and for lack of time many others testified their faith and love by simply standing. It was a season of spiritual refreshing.

At one o'clock the Conference met in business session, the Moderator, Rev. Abram Perry, in the chair. After singing, and prayer by Rev. Dr. McLeod, the roll was called by the secretary, Bro. D. McLeod Vince, and the Conference was regularly constituted.

The Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Jos. McLeod, D. D., then presented the report on the state of the denomination, as follows:

Bro. Moderator and Brethren,—

This report on the state of the denomination is not as complete a statement as is desirable. It is, however, as full and accurate, as can be made from the data furnished by the churches and ministers. The number of churches reporting to their district meetings—while larger than in earlier years—has not varied much in recent years.

This year one hundred and ten churches sent reports to the District Meetings. In one district only, the Seventh, did all the churches report. For three successive years the Seventh District has made this good record. It is due, in part at least, to the painstaking care of the clerk of the district, Mr. Peters. The churches, too, their pastors and officers, share in the credit of so excellent a record. What the churches of one district have done in this respect, the churches of all the districts can do.

Besides the reports presented to the District Meetings, fourteen other churches have, since the District Meetings, sent reports to your Corresponding Secretary in response to his letters of inquiry. All the other churches written to have made no response.

Your Secretary has endeavored to present this year a complete record of the churches, their location, clerks, pastors, value of property, financial support of the work, public services, gains and losses, present membership, etc. The undertaking has not been wholly successful, but more nearly so than any previous attempt. The table furnished herewith is the result.

It is too large to be printed in detail in this report, but its facts are summarized in the paragraphs following.

Of the one hundred and forty-five churches in the accompanying record, reports are in hand from one hundred and twenty-four.

They are grouped in thirty-eight pastorates. Seven of the pastorates have one church each; five have two churches each; the others have each from three to six churches and preaching stations. One hundred of the reported churches have had more or less pastoral care. The others have had only occasional preaching, and no pastoral attention. One new church has been organized—that at Beaconsfield, V. Co., and was received into the First District.

In the Second District four churches were removed from the list—East Bridgewater, Me., Brookville, Somerville and River Bank. The first named, being in Maine, was advised to unite with the Aroostook Quarterly Meeting of Free Baptist churches; the other three, never strong, numerically, and now much reduced by deaths and re-

movals, and their remaining members being convenient to other churches of the denomination, were advised to disband and seek membership in the nearest churches.

The membership of the reported churches is 9,056. The additions in the year were 237; the net gain being 47.

The improvement in the spiritual strength of a considerable number of churches is gratifying. The number reporting gain in spiritual life is 49, being more than have made such report or several years.

Revivals have been experienced in 34 churches.

The number baptized in the year is 196.

In financial strength 31 churches report that they have gained; thirty-eight churches say they have increased their support of local, and twenty have increased their support of general Christian work.

CHURCH BUILDINGS.

Four new church buildings were dedicated during the year—at Geary, S. Co., Gaspereaux, Q. Co., North Lake, York Co., and Cornhill, K. Co. These are very excellent churches. Two new church edifices are in course of construction—one at Marysville, and one at Rowena. Several of the churches have been improved at considerable cost.

Two parsonages have been completed—one at Fredericton Junction and one at Blissville. The erection of one at Keswick has been begun.

The following financial statement is not at all complete. It does not show fully the contributions of all the churches to the several branches of the denominational work, nor even the support given by the churches that have reported. Many items in their financial returns are incomplete, and some are not given at all. The imperfect reports make the aggregates in this table: (See page 4).

The financial showing is better than last year, due principally to the larger number of reports received. The items in which there has been increase are current expenses of churches, buildings, etc., home missions, Conference Fund, and other funds. The increased amount credited to the W. M. Society is due to the fact that your Secretary has secured the figures from the treasurer of that society instead of relying on the reports of the churches. The amount under "Other Funds" includes the few Sunday-school items reported, and the contributions to the Ministerial Students' Fund and the Aged and Sick Ministers' Fund. The contributions to the two last named funds are small, and by only a very few churches.

A large number of churches appear to wholly neglect many of the interests which appeal to them for support.

(Continued on page 4).