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Free Baptist Conference.

The Free Baptists of New Brunswick met this year in their annual Conference at Hampstead, Queens County, October 6, Rev. Dr. Hartley, Moderator, presiding. Rev. W. H. Perry was chosen Moderator for the present year. The report of Dr. McLeod, corresponding secretary of the Conference, showed that 107 churches had reported to the Conference this year. The reported membership is 8,539, but it appears that there are in all about 50 churches not reporting this year, and the total estimated membership is 12,352. The number of baptisms was 196, forty-one less than last year. The net gain for the year is 134, the same as last year. Two ministers died during the year, one was ordained, four are out of the Province. The number of ordained ministers is 43, of whom 28 have been in the pastoral work during the year. Six pastors have one church each; three have three churches each; seven have four churches each; six have five churches each; four have six churches each; one has seven churches. The total contributions for all purposes as reported by the 107 churches reporting, was as follows:

Salaries,	\$13,429 30
Church current expenses,	2,869 77
Buildings,	4,157 28
Home Missions,	275 15
Foreign Missions,	443 20
Conference Fund,	475 06
Minister Students' Fund,	152 38
Aged and Sick Ministers Fund,	34 29
Women's Missionary Societies,	987 05
Other Funds,	1,021 90
Total,	\$23,815 39

The value of church property reported is \$155,625. The report urged the need of a great spiritual revival. The report on Sunday Schools showed an increase of 10 schools, 1,000 scholars and 60 teachers over last year. The number of schools reporting is 88, with 5,483 scholars. The number of conversions reported from the Sunday Schools is 129. The Conference rejected a motion made to change its time of meeting from October to June, also a proposal to make superintendents of Sunday Schools, who are members of the denomination, members *ex officio* of the Conference. The Committee on Education showed that there are in schools and colleges twelve ministers and licentiates connected with the Conference, and, to carry out the expressed desire of the Conference for an educated ministry, the committee urged the necessity of more generous contributions to the aid fund. The report of the Committee on Sabbath Observance expressed regret at the violations of the Sabbath and recommended magistrates and good citizens to use their influence against "this growing evil." The Conference evidently expects its ministers to attend the annual gathering or to show reason for their absence. Nine ministers were reported absent this year,—two of them are absent by reason of old age, two on account of sickness, two are studying, one is teaching, and two are not accounted for. The report of the Committee on Temperance, presented by Rev. Dr. McLeod, condemned the action of the Dominion Government and Parliament in the matter of prohibition, and approved of the platform of the Maritime Prohibition Association which aims to have prohibitionists elected in every constituency, and which seeks to do this by working in the party caucuses for the nomination of suitable candidates. The report recommended that more attention be given to temperance teaching and work in the churches, and that at least one Sunday in the year be observed especially as Temperance Sunday, also careful instruction in temperance in the Sunday Schools and the use of every practicable means for the speedy delegatization of the liquor traffic. On motion of Dr. McLeod, the Conference put on record its thankfulness for the success of British arms in South Africa and its sympathy for those whose friends have fallen in the war. The Conference is to meet next year at Waterville, Carleton County.

The Elections.

The dissolution of the Dominion Parliament and the date of the general election for a new House of Commons have been officially announced. Nomination day is fixed

for the thirty-first of October, and polling-day will be a week later, that is on the seventh of November. Only about four weeks intervenes between the date of announcing the dissolution and election day. But there appears to be no disposition to complain that the time is too short. It cannot indeed be said that the announcement of the near date of the elections has taken the country by surprise, since it has been the general expectation that they would take place this fall. The political campaign has really been in active progress for some weeks, and in a large number of constituencies the parties had already selected their candidates. The elections can be held at this season of the year with as little expense to the country as at any time, and the time is favorable for securing a large vote as the fishermen will generally be at home. If all the expectations and prophecies of politicians shall be realized in the election the new Parliament will be one of remarkable dimensions, and both Sir Wilfrid and Sir Charles will appear with a good working majority at their backs. It is difficult however, to see how all these prophecies are to be realized, and it seems fair to conclude that there will probably be some disappointments.

Lord Roberts' Successor.

According to Mr. I. N. Ford, the London correspondent of the New York Tribune, there is a good deal of speculation in London as to who will be Lord Roberts' successor in command of the British military forces in South Africa. It is thought probable that Lord Roberts has been asked to name his own successor, and it is considered certain that the choice lies between General Buller and Lord Kitchener, but it is said that both are reluctant to remain in charge of the police work. General Buller is said to have a remarkable talent for the details of military administration, and this would be most useful in effecting the pacification of the two new colonies and bringing about the restoration of public order. Lord Kitchener is a man of iron will, who would be stern and relentless in dealing with lawlessness. His appointment to the chief command would be welcomed by those Englishmen who have grown impatient over the prolonged delays in the military operations. Gen. Buller out-ranks everyone in South Africa except Lord Roberts, and Lord Kitchener would require promotion in order to succeed Lord Roberts. It is perhaps nothing to Lord Kitchener's discredit that he has made enemies among the officers during the campaign. He has upset the regular transport service, and shown no mercy for incompetent officers. His appointment as Adjutant-General would be the strongest possible assurance that the British military system would be reformed at the weakest point, namely, the training and discipline of the officers. Military men in London are naturally opposed to the general shaking up which would follow his transfer to headquarters at London, and prefer to have him sent to India or put in command at Pretoria. Lord Salisbury has little enthusiasm on the subject, but he is known to admire Lord Kitchener immensely. He sent Lord Kitchener to South Africa and may bring him back to London. Late despatches state that General Buller has taken leave of his command in the Transvaal, and is supposed to be about to return to England. It may be however that he is about to make a visit home preliminary to taking chief command of the military forces in South Africa.

China.

The news from China indicates that the country continues in a disturbed condition on account of the movements of the Boxers or other insurgents. There have been conflicts between these rebellious forces and the Imperial troops, and though the Chinese official reports state that the insurgents have been defeated, there are in some cases reports to the contrary, and statements to the effect that the Imperial troops have suffered defeat at the hands of the rebels. The Boxers are said to be in great force east and west of Pao Ting Fu. The condition of affairs is so threatening in that part of the country that an expedition of the allied troops is being sent to Pao Ting Fu, to

overawe the disturbing element. The German, French and Italian troops which take part in this expedition are under the command of General Bailloud, head of the French military forces in China, while a British column, 2,000 strong, is co-operating under the command of Lord Campbell. The expedition will make a demonstration through a wide district not heretofore covered by the allies, and while no opposition is expected at Pao Ting Fu, the commanders believe that hostilities are possible in the intervening country. Li Hung Chang is reported to have at last arrived in Peking and to have begun to make formal calls upon the legations. He is said to have expressed anxiety to make peace, and it is stated that Earl Li and Prince Ching will shortly address a note to the ministers, asking that a meeting be held for the purpose of beginning negotiations. The remarkable statement is added that Li Hung Chang expresses doubts as to the authenticity of the decree pronouncing banishment against Prince Tuan. It has been a matter of difficulty to account for the decree as based upon the authority of either the Emperor or the Empress Dowager, and in some quarters there has been an inclination to regard Li Hung Chang himself as the principal author of it.

The Coal Strike.

The striking miners of the anthracite coal region of Pennsylvania, held a Convention last week to consider the operators' offer to concede an advance of ten per cent. in wages, and to endeavor to adjust other matters in dispute with their employes. The Convention voted to accept the offer of the operators, but with certain attached conditions which, it appears, the operators are unwilling to agree to, and it cannot therefore be said that the end of the trouble is within sight. One thing on which the miners insist is that the operators shall enter into an agreement that the advance in wages shall continue until the first of April next at least. They also demand that the sliding-scale of wages which has been operative in the Lehigh and Schuylkill regions be abolished, that in those districts the scale of wages remain stationary at ten per cent. above present prices, and that the companies shall agree to adjust with their employes other grievances complained of. In event of this basis of agreement being refused by the operators, the Convention proposes that all questions at issue be submitted to a fair and impartial board of arbitration, and that the strike shall continue until the operators shall signify their acceptance of these propositions. While there is no authoritative statement from the mine operators in reply to the terms of settlement proposed by the Convention, a canvass of opinion among individual operators indicates that the overture of the miners is not acceptable. Operators object especially to binding themselves to pay a ten per cent. advance in wages for a given time. The miners on the other hand naturally consider that if there is no guarantee that the advance in wages will last even six months, the offer does not represent a concession of any great value.

The Great Rain.

The rain storm of last week was one of the heaviest on record in this part of the country. In St. John the rain-fall amounted to between eight and nine inches, and it probably did not vary much from these figures in other parts of the country. Washouts on the C. P. R. between St. John and Fredericton Junction have stopped all movement of cars over that part of the line since last Thursday morning, and it will at least be the middle of the present week before the regular service can be resumed. Meantime connection is being made by means of steamers between St. John and Fredericton and the branch line from Fredericton to the Junction. United States mails are reaching St. John by way of Montreal and the I. C. R. In addition to the washouts on the railways a good deal of damage has been done by the flood in the upper country, in the destruction of bridges, the drowning of cattle, sweeping away of hay, etc. It is stated that a large number of cattle and sheep were drowned along the Oromocto valley, one man having lost his entire herd of thirteen cattle. One hundred is given as a conservative estimate of the number of cattle drowned in that section.