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WHOLE No. 2292

The General Conference.

The report of Conference printed last week closed with the Sabbath services. A note told, also, of the election of the Moderator on Monday morning.

The report of the Sabbath Schools' Executive, presented by bro. J. E. McCready, in the Saturday evening sitting, and not printed last week, was as follows:

It is regretted that from a large number of schools, reports have not been received. Reports have been received from 86 schools, representing a total of 5,203 scholars and 451 teachers—on the face showing a decrease in totals, but in reality due to the failure of schools to make returns, as compared with the preceding year. The returns received, taken by districts, are as follows:

1st district—4 schools, 138 scholars and 12 teachers. Five conversions during the year.

2nd district—15 schools, 806 scholars, and 77 teachers; 26 conversions.

3rd district—11 schools, 696 scholars, 66 teachers; 28 conversions.

4th district—14 schools, 672 scholars, 54 teachers; 22 conversions, a gain of 3 schools, 150 scholars and 9 teachers.

5th district—9 schools, 339 scholars, 33 teachers; 11 conversions.

6th district—21 schools, 1,092 scholars, 96 teachers; 15 conversions, a loss of 3 schools, 233 scholars and 18 teachers.

7th district—12 schools, 1,460 scholars, 113 teachers; 17 conversions. Ten of the schools in this district are evergreen.

The seven districts reported in libraries 7,194 volumes, against 7,534 last year; \$1,448.75 cash received, against \$1,887.64 last year; property to the value of \$3,108.79, against \$2,104.29 last year.

The sixth, heretofore the banner district, has fallen back to second place, the seventh district taking the lead. The committee urge renewed efforts on the part of all school workers, pointing out that from the children came the hope of the church.

MONDAY—At 9 a.m. Conference resumed business, Rev. B. H. Nobles, Moderator, presiding. Prayer by Rev. G. W. Foster.

After roll call and reading the minutes, the Conference proceeded to elect a Moderator for the present year. The balloting resulted in the election of Rev. Gideon Swin as Moderator, and Rev. F. C. Hartley as assistant Moderator.

On retiring from the chair Rev. B. H. Nobles expressed his thanks to the members of Conference for their co-operation during his occupancy of the honourable position of presiding officer of the body. He welcomed his successor, Rev. G. W. Swin, on taking the chair thanked his brethren for the confidence reposed in him, and trusted that the session might be one of much interest and profit.

The nominating committee presented a report.

Committee on absent brethren—Revs. S. J. Perry, Geo. McLeod, Chas. Alexander, Alfred Slipp, J. McFarlane, Jacob Morrill.

Committee on Collections—Rev. John Henderson, F. C. Bloodworth, Chas. Vanwart, Peleg Smith, Jas. Macrae.

Committee on Appeals—Revs. John Perry, G. A. Hartley, J. J. Barnes, Elijah Gray, and Wm. Peters.

Committee on deceased brethren—Revs. Joseph Noble, J. W. Clarke, A. G. Downey, G. W. Foster, W. H. Perry.

Committee on correspondence—Rev. David Long, E. L. West, J. E. McCready, Rev. T. W. Carpenter, W. Sheppard.

Committee on district meetings—Rev. S. J. Perry, Rev. J. N. Barnes, T. S. Vanwart, Jas. S. Kinney, H. A. Bonnell, T. B. Bassett, E. Slipp.

Committee on literature—Revs. W. C. Kierstead, Gideon Swin, F. C. Hartley, C. T. Phillips, B. H. Nobles.

Committee on education—Revs. E. S. Parker, J. B. Daggett, W. C. Kierstead, S. J. Case and D. Patterson.

Committee on Sabbath—Revs. W. H. Perry, C. B. Lewis, J. J. Barnes, T. O. DeWitt and G. J. Worden.

Com. on temperance—Revs. A. G. Downey, E. B. Gray and W. Deware, I. W. Carpenter and G. W. Sharp.

Delegate to N. S. Conference—Rev. D. Long; substitute, Rev. G. W. Foster.

Delegate to the Free Baptist General Conference (triennial) of the United States—Rev. Dr. McLeod.

Home Mission Executive—Rev. D. Long, Corresponding Secretary; Rev. J. W. Clarke, Treasurer; Dr. Burnett, Rev. B. H. Nobles, Wm. Peters, Revs. C. T. Phillips and F. C. Hartley.

Foreign Mission Executive—Rev. G. F. Currie, Cor. Sec.; E. W. Slipp, Treas.; Dr. McLeod, Revs. J. Perry, G. W. Foster, H. A. Bonnell and G. A. Hartley.

Sunday School Executive—J. E. McCready, Cor. Sec.; Revs. J. T. Parsons and O. N. Mott, F. C. Bloodworth and C. W. Weyman.

Disabled Ministers' Executive—Gideon McLeod, Treasurer; Revs. G. A. Hartley, J. Noble, T. S. Vanwart, J. N. Barnes and C. T. Phillips.

The report was adopted.

The report of the committee on the Sabbath was presented by Rev. J. B. Daggett, as follows:

That in our opinion there are few questions of more vital importance to the Christian church than that of the proper observance of the Lord's day.

We would emphasize, and urge that our people keep close to the teaching of the Bible and the practice of the fathers in that the Sabbath day be a time when all business be suspended and that the day be spent in spiritual exercise and worship. We feel that any departure from this standard would be fraught with serious consequences to the church and nation.

We view with alarm the growing tendency to devote the Sabbath day to pleasure and to business in the running of Sunday excursions and the pursuit of business. We think the Conference should give no uncertain sound in condemnation of all such, believing them to be serious forms of Sabbath desecration.

The report of the Corresponding Secretary on the condition of the churches was taken up for further consideration. The Cor. Sec. said he felt sure that the financial statement was not complete, and that the actual totals were really larger than appeared in the report. But even at best it was not such a showing as the churches of the conference should have made.

Free Baptists were far from being a poor people. They were not doing what they should for the work of Christ. He had presented the facts in his report, and it was for the Conference to take what action it thought necessary.

Several brethren participated in the discussion of the financial exhibit.

They agreed that much improvement has been made in the reports from churches, but that there is yet an incompleteness which it is desirable to remedy; the churches should be more careful. None, we think, dissented from the view that our people are able to do much more for the support and extension of Christ's kingdom than they are doing.

Rev. G. W. Foster, for the committee on Sick and Disabled Ministers, reported that only one, Rev. Thos. Connor, was wholly disabled.

The committee on Denominational Literature, by Rev. J. W. Clarke, presented the following report:

Your committee on denominational literature beg to submit the following:

While we believe the printing press has been and is a great power for good, we also believe that much of its influence has tended to evil. In large proportions the literature of today, so cheap and so widely circulated, is of questionable character, the reading of which fascinates the mind and leads to immorality.

We, therefore, believe the Conference should be strong in its denunciation of the same, and that all pastors and Sunday School Superintendents should frequently speak on this matter, that our people may be educated to careful selection of books and papers.

Your committee further believe that greater uniformity should be had in the use of hymn books by the churches; and that in all our Sunday Schools Free Baptist quarterlies and other S. S. literature should be used—used only as helps, and always secondary to the Bible.

Your committee strongly favour resolution 35, on page 54 of the Year Book, 1896, in reference to a denominational Literature Agency, and recommend the reappointment of Dr. McLeod as such agent.

We most heartily endorse the RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER as our denominational paper. Believing that it merits the practical encouragement of, and that the denomination needs the benefit of its wider circulation, we recommend that the Conference pay for three hundred subscriptions to the INTELLIGENCER.

Dr. McLeod explained that he had been unable to carry out the instruction of res. 35 of the session of 1896, mentioned in the above report, and did not see his way clear to undertake it this year.

There was further consideration of the Cor. Sec's report, the principal object being to get the correct statistics.

Rev. J. Henderson, for the collections' committee reported that the Sabbath offerings amounted to \$49 00, which sum goes with the Fund for the relief of Sick and Disabled Ministers.

Rev. J. T. Parsons, Secretary of the Ministers' Conference, presented the following:

Rev. W. J. Halse, a minister of this Conference, came before his brethren in Ministers' Conference, and stated that from differences regarding matters of doctrine he felt it his duty to ask for his dismissal. The Ministers' Conference, therefore, voted to recommend the General Conference to grant Rev. W. J. Halse the dismissal asked for.

The recommendation was adopted, and the dismissal granted.

The committee on Temperance, by Rev. W. C. Kierstead, presented the following report:

Sec. 1.—At each successive conference this denomination has declared itself to be in direct antagonism to the liquor traffic. It is hardly necessary to restate our position. We believe temperance the greatest evil of our country, the enemy alike of the individual home, church and state. We demand total abstinence of the individual. We impress upon him his duty to labor for prohibition for the state.

Sec. 2.—We think a question so vital should be made a supreme issue, so that on either side of it political lines would be drawn. We urge upon our members their duty at the primaries, party caucuses and at the poll in dominion, provincial and municipal matters to bring the temperance question to the forefront.

Sec. 3.—We believe in prohibition by a dominion law. While the plebiscite was not of our seeking, we think if fairly taken, the temperance cause has nothing to fear. We think the plebiscite should be a straight yes and no pronouncement on prohibition. This conference most emphatically protests against any other submittal, either in restrictions or complications with other questions, as revenue, compensation, etc. If properly presented, we urge our people to do all in their power to make the election a victory for temperance.

Sec. 4.—We think the license law passed at the session of 1896 by the local legislature was not in the interests of temperance. As we will in the near future have a provincial election, we urge our people to be very careful in the selection of candidates. No bad man can be a good citizen or lead a good cause.

We would also urge them to retain the Scott Act in preference to the License law, and to elect councillors who will vigorously support the enforcement of the Act.

Sec. 5.—We think while the average citizen recognizes his rights he fails to understand the duties of citizenship. This reform can be carried when men have principles and vote for them. Opposed to the cause will be the iniquitous influences and machinations of self-seeking politicians. We urge therefore that our pulpits give strong teaching in this matter. The reformation of politics will follow the regeneration of the individual.

The report called out very little debate and that little on the section respecting provincial legislation.

In answer to a question by Wm. Peters of St. John, Rev. Joseph McLeod D. D. vigorously contended that the legislature had taken a retrograde step when it provided for the regulation of liquor license by commission.

There were no politics in the conference he said. Both parties were alike when they got into power so far as this great moral reform was concerned.

The report was adopted.

AFTERNOON.—Conference reassembled at 2 p.m. Moderator in the chair. Prayer by Rev. Abram Perry.

Revs. T. S. Vanwart and D. Long and bro. C. W. Weyman were appointed a committee on leave of absence.

Rev. J. W. Freeman, pastor of the Baptist church in this city, was introduced and invited to a seat.

The Cor. Sec's report again received brief consideration. There was a very good discussion of the financial exhibit.

At 3 p.m. the Conference adjourned to permit the W. M. Society the use of the church for the society's public missionary meeting.

EVENING.—At 7.15 p.m. Conference reassembled. The first half hour was a service of praise and prayer. At 7.45 the Moderator took the chair. Scripture lesson, Ps. 24; prayer by Rev. A. Perry. After routine, the Treasurer of the H. M. Executive, presented his report as follows:

Balance on hand, Oct. '96, \$268 91

Receipts..... 516 03

Total revenue..... 784 94

Disbursements..... 513 20

Balance on hand..... 271 74

[The itemized statement is omitted.]

REPORT OF THE H. M. EXECUTIVE.

Rev. F. C. Hartley, Cor. Sec. of the H. M. Executive, presented the following report:

BROTHER MODERATOR.—The meeting of Conference this year in Fredericton calls to mind the fact that it was here thirty-three years ago that the Free Christian Baptist Home Mission Society of New Brunswick was first organized. No doubt many of the older ministers will remember that occasion. The scattered position of many of our churches, the many calls for labor and help, the splendid opportunity for the extension of our denominational borders and the salvation of precious souls, made the organization of a Home Mission Society a necessity. After all these years of history coming again as we do to the place of

its organization we naturally ask ourselves the question, Has the society justified its organization? The growth and development of our denomination and its condition now as compared with its condition when our Home Mission Society existed is in part an answer.

No doubt the denomination would have lived and grown had the organization never been effected, but that the home fields would have been as well developed and arranged as it now is, is not at all probable; when we think of the many successful and zealous missionaries who have labored under the Boards direction, of the churches strengthened and encouraged, of the hundreds of souls—some of them now in Heaven, many of them standard bearers in our churches—which have been converted to God and added to our membership, we have a reason for much gratitude and a most complete vindication of the existence of the Home Mission Society.

Our people recognize now as they did not years ago—they have learned it by experience—that a regular gospel ministry is not only an ordinance of God, but is the best means of permanently developing the strength and life of the church, as a result of this nearly all, if not all, of our churches are grouped in convenient pastorates and in a position to receive regular ministerial care.

From the very first it has been the object of our society to assist all our weak and struggling interest and to put the gospel within the reach of all the people of this province. During the thirty-three years of the society's history much, very much has been accomplished much more ever still remains to be done. We have been progressing and to make still greater advance is our supreme desire.

During the past year the Executive have been convened five times, considerable business has also been done by way of correspondence. To all the business coming before it the executive has given its best consideration and has always endeavored to do what in their judgment seemed for the best interests of our denomination as a whole.

In general missionary work the executive have not accomplished as much as in other years. Immediately after last general conference an effort was made to secure the labors of Bro. E. A. Currier as missionary but the brother accepted a pastorate in Nova Scotia and we were consequently disappointed. Bro. T. O. DeWitt has given a large portion of his time this year to the pastorless churches in the fourth District, part of the time his labors have been directed by the Home Mission Executive. Three months ago was given to the church at Upper Gagetown, where five persons were baptized. Eleven persons were also baptized and added to the church at Ruisiaghish. Bro. C. T. Phillips and Samuel Perry spent a short time at Riley Brook and succeeded in organizing a church there. Bro. Perry baptized three persons and added six to the church.

In assisting young men to secure fields during their summer vacation, the Executive have done what they could. Bro. F. A. Hartley, a student at Cobb Divinity school, spent the summer on the Prince William-Queensbury Circuit. Bro. M. L. Gregg who graduated this year from the Provincial Normal School spent the Summer on Deer Island while Bro. Douglas Milbury has been at Beaver Harbour. All of these brethren have worked faithfully and well, most encouraging reports have been received of the acceptance among the people and of good accomplished.

As in other years so this year the executive have been called on for assistance by several of our weaker circuits which in themselves are not as yet self sustaining. Several circuits receiving help from the Home Mission society last year, have been able this year to do without any outside assistance; this is as it should be and is very gratifying. In the First District, Rev. S. J. Perry the energetic and efficient pastor of Bath-Arthurville circuit has had the assistance of the executive. He has covered a large extent of territory, ministering to no less than seven churches. Special effort has been put forth at B. A. L. or Perth, Arthurville and Riley Brook. Two persons were baptized at Lower Perth, five at Arthurville and three at Riley Brook.

In the Second District the Brighton and Hartland circuit of which Rev. J. N. Barnes has been pastor the past two years, received a continuation of the grant of last year. Bro. Barnes has been very successful on this pastorate and we are sorry to hear that he has resigned his pastoral care. During the past year a new church was organized at Havelock consisting of seventeen members. Bro. Barnes also baptized one at Hartland.

In compliance with a request of the Third District meeting a grant was made the Upper Hainesville circuit, which includes Staple Settlement and Milville, both needy churches.

Rev. T. S. Vanwart has had pastoral care of this field and writes encouragingly of the future.

As the Southampton Circuit was anxious to retain the services of Licentiate Coombes but were not able to raise the required salary your Board thought it wise to make the circuit a grant; Bro. Coombes has worked very faithfully during the year and his

labors have not been without good results. Bro. J. W. Halse assisted the pastor in special services at Eel River and at Campbell Settlement. At Eel River, nine were baptized and the church greatly strengthened, while at Campbell Settlement nineteen received the rite of Baptism. Bro. Kierstead a member of the Executive has visited the Southampton church on two occasions and administered baptism. In the Fourth District: The Oromocto-Ruisiaghish Circuit has not been visited this year. This was not however the fault of Bro. Stirling who has ministered very acceptable to a part of the circuit.

The churches over which he has had charge have had a little assistance from the Executive. Bro. Sterling held special services at Waasis and at Oromocto at the former place ten persons were baptized.

Bro. H. A. Bonnell pastor of the churches at Oak Point, Brown's Flat, Westfield and Hamilton Mts., all situated in the Fifth District sends a very satisfactory report of the work done in that circuit during the year. He has baptized ten persons, considerable money has been expended for building and improvements.

At its last session the General Conference recommended the Home Mission Executive to make a grant of one hundred dollars to the church at Moncton. This request has been complied with. The church has enjoyed a year of unusual prosperity under the leadership of its new pastor the Rev. E. S. Parker.

In the Seventh District aid has been extended to the pastorates on Grand Manan and Campbell; on Campbell aid was given the North Road church to assist in securing the labors of Rev. David Patterson. The church now holds regular preaching, prayer and conference meetings and has a good Sabbath School. Bro. W. H. Perry has spent the year on Grand Manan and has been very faithful to his people. He has baptized seven persons during the year.

It will be seen from this report that considerable Home Missions work has been done during the last year. The aid given the pastorates has been greatly needed and not as large as we might wish it were it has been extended over the entire field. Churches in each of the Seven Districts receiving assistance. In all twenty nine churches have been helped.

In presenting this report the executive would desire to call the attention of the Conference to the request made of the District Meetings that each appoint some person who might be consulted by the Home Mission Executive in regard to Mission matters in his District. We think the District meetings should give more attention than they do to Home Mission work and believe that it would be a more in the right direction and greatly profitable if the secretary or some member of the Executive could attend each District meeting and be afforded an opportunity of presenting the work and claims of the society.

The Church of Christ—and we are a branch of that church—has a great work before her; through her efforts the ends of the earth are to hear the gospel. It is her business to make the gospel the property of all nations. To effect this design the church of Christ must exhibit a liberality as yet unknown, and we are constrained to believe that until the benevolent effort and holy sympathy of the strong churches and able individuals is brought to bear on the weak place in our home field our denomination as such is not in a position to do her part in carrying out our Lord's command.

That is an erring benevolence indeed that seeks to illumine all other lands and neglects our own weak interests. The wise course is that we seek to follow to well evangelize our own land and thus bring its concentrated power, holy and invincible to bear on the condition of the world.

In closing this report we desire to express great gratitude to God for all the success of the past year and a hope and prayer for even greater things in the year upon which we are about entering.

The adoption of the report was moved by bro. A. C. Smith in a practical, business-like, christian speech. He spoke of the great indebtedness of the denomination to home mission work. In the early days it was not done by direction of a society or a Conference which became responsible for the missionary's support, but by men who went out on their own responsibility. He had been talking with the only living link between the early days and the present, and had been deeply impressed as he had listened to the story of the difficulties encountered in those days. He has wondered whether the young men of to-day would, in like circumstances, rise to the heroism of the fathers. We are enjoying the blessed fruitage of those heroic labours. He spoke of the aggressiveness of the fathers, and traced the history of the denomination, showing the home mission work done, and the results. He referred to the too small contributions, and urged a more generous support of this and every branch of the work.

Our growth, he said, has been great, but it should be greater.

Rev. J. W. Clarke, seconding the motion to adopt the report, spoke of those who plead inability to support missions. He thinks their chief trouble is unwillingness. If their hearts were interested, they would be able to give something into the Lord's treasury. He had observed that not those who have the least give least to God's cause. He urged especially a more generous attitude towards the weak and destitute places in the home field. He spoke, also, of the importance and value of prompt payments.

The report was adopted.

REPORT OF THE F. M. EXECUTIVE.

Rev. G. F. Currie, Cor. Sec. of the F. M. Executive, presented the following report:

BRO. MODERATOR.—That it is the duty of the christian church to propagate Foreign Missions, is now so generally admitted that there needs be but little argument adduced to show to christian people their privileges in this matter. It may be said however that the church, in this day that refuses to engage in Foreign Mission work; refuses to be aggressive, and fails to carry out the great and last command of her Lord viz. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The inevitable result of such failure cannot be other than weakness, decay and death.

In scanning the whole field, which is the world, and carefully noticing the work to be done and the workers &c. we cannot but conclude that the present seems to be a critical time with the whole missionary enterprise. Some eminent and life-long advocates of Foreign Missions are viewing the present status of missions as peculiarly alarming and dangerous. Not that missionaries are being exposed to more than usual persecution and death, not that God has failed to bless and give success to the heroic men and women toiling for Him in lands of darkness, not that doors have not opened, great and effectual, and in such miraculous ways as to seem to be the very voice of God bidding His people go up at once and possess the land. But where-in lies the danger? The danger is in what appears to be a growing apathy and indifference throughout the church as to the world's evangelization. The outcome of which is failure to discern the signs of the times and to notice the movements of God opening ways and commanding His church to go forward, enter and in the name of Christ take possession of those whitened fields all ready for the harvest.

It is not alarming when we consider the abundance of wealth possessed, and the luxuries enjoyed by christians in this home land, and compare the small and inadequate amount given to this great work. That missionaries are being crippled in their work by insufficient support. That the Mission Boards, without scarce an exception, are not only embarrassed but in many cases almost hopelessly overwhelmed with debt. And instead of being able to advance and occupy the entire world for the Master, their drums beat a retreat and they are compelled to call loudly to retrench. In the Foreign Mission work it is not so much opportunity to do work nor consecrated men to perform it, but money, money is the great need-to-day.

It should provoke us as a denomination to thanksgiving that the terrible plague which of late has raged in India has not reached the district occupied by the Free Baptist Mission. The effects of the famine however, have been felt somewhat in the scarcity of rice and the consequent increase in price. From the reading of the Yearly Report of the Free Baptist mission in Southern Bengal, it is evident that the missionaries have done faithful work throughout their diff-

(Continued on page four.)

Among Exchanges.

"BECAUSE OF."

Baptized for remission of sins, means baptized because of remission of sin. Just as a man may be hanged for murder—because of murder and not in order to commit murder.—Chris. Messenger.

EXACTLY.

He who declines to pay \$2 for his own home paper because the big constituency of another paper enables its managers to give it to him for \$1 is like one who refuses to go to his own church because he can slip into another, larger and wealthier, for next to nothing.—Morning Star.

THINK BEFORE WRITING.

A new book is out, entitled, "Practical Hints for Young Writers." Among its rules is this, "For every ten minutes' writing spend half an hour in quiet thought." "The Evening Post" approves the rule, and suggests there are doubtless young writers who would do well to mix the thought and writing at an even higher ratio than three to one. We have had to return many articles which would have been kept had there been fewer words in the manuscript and more thought in the words.—N. Y. Advocate.