

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

As most of you, I suppose, are aware, I have been undergoing a siege of very serious illness for the last five months. It would be impossible for me, on this occasion, to occupy sufficient time to express the desires of my heart and my feelings, as I would desire to express them to you, but I felt that it was my duty, if possible, to be present and take some little part this morning in the opening session of this eighty-ninth Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *

CLEAR OF MIND THOUGH WEAK IN BODY

For more than seventy years I have been a worker in this cause with you and your fathers and progenitors, pioneers who broke the way into these valleys of the mountains; and my heart is just as firmly set with you today as it ever has been. Although somewhat weakened in body, my mind is clear with reference to my duty, and with reference to the duties and responsibilities that rest upon the Latter-day Saints; and I am ever anxious for the progress of the work of the Lord, for the prosperity of the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world. I am as anxious as I ever have been, and as earnest in my desires that Zion shall prosper, and that the Lord shall favor his people and magnify them in his sight, and in the knowledge and understanding of the intelligent people of all the world.

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

I will not, I dare not, attempt to enter upon many things that are resting upon my mind this morning, and I shall postpone until some future time, the Lord being willing, my attempt to tell you some of the things that are in my mind, and that dwell in my heart. I have not lived alone these five months. I have dwelt in the spirit of prayer, of supplication, of faith and of determination; and I have had my communication with the Spirit of the Lord continuously; and I am glad to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that it is a happy meeting this morning for me to have the privilege of joining with you in the opening of this eighty-ninth Semi-annual Conference of the Church.

God Almighty bless you and those who shall address you, and President Lund, who will continue in charge of the services, in my absence, at least; and all who take part in the services of this conference, that you may have a time of rejoicing and of great reward.

SOME CURRENT HISTORY.

I have drawn a few items, by request, from the current events of the Church and its history, that I think will be interesting to be read by our people in the *Deseret News*, this evening, and for this reason I will submit these items to the clerk to be handed over to the *Deseret News* for publication.

Hoping that you will pardon my effort to say anything under so unfavorable circumstances to myself, I bless you in the name of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and invoke his favor and blessing and protection upon you now and forever. Amen.

At the close of President Smith's remarks the organist struck a chord of "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet." The congregation arose in unison, and without announcement, and under strong emotion, sang that sacred song so dear to the Saints.

The following are the items of current history referred to in President Smith's remarks:

TITHING

We have been blessed with a most abundant harvest in all the stakes and wards of the Church. The Lord has greatly blessed the people, and it is gratifying to note that our tithing records show an increase in tithing paid for the first nine months of this year over the corresponding months of 1917.

PRIESTHOOD ACTIVITIES

In consequence of so many of our young men being drafted into the war, the activities of our quorums of the priesthood, especially of the Elders, Priests and Teachers quorums, are very much impaired. In some wards nearly every priest and teacher of draft age is in the war. The quorums have been seriously depleted, and a corresponding effect has also been felt in the Sunday School and Y. M. M. I. A.

MISSIONARY WORK

The extension of the draft age has also affected our missionary work, and we are not now sending missionaries out who are within the draft age.

RELIEF SOCIETY WHEAT

Our Relief Societies were called on, just prior to harvest time of this year, to supply the government with all the wheat they had stored up for years. Of course, they promptly and loyally complied with the request, and the wheat has been taken over by the government and used to help meet the demand made upon this country by our allies. The money received for this wheat is a trust fund, and should be kept in the banks, and when the proper time arrives, used to purchase wheat to be saved up against another time of need. The policy inaugurated by the leaders of the Church years ago with reference to this matter is a sound policy and should be continued.

TEMPLES

The Hawaiian temple is now nearing completion. Substantial progress is being made with the Cardston temple. The building is enclosed, and the finishing work now in process.

MILITARY SERVICE

We believe that our brethren who have answered the call of their Country and entered the war should have their names on record in the Church, and Bishops should enter every member of their ward who is in

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the military service of the United States or its allies on the tithing record, as this record is a roll of honor. Further details will be given by the Presiding Bishopric.

REORGANIZATION OF THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC

Bishop Orrin P. Miller, first counselor to Presiding Bishop C. W. Nibley, passed away on July 7, 1918, after a long and severe illness. On July 18, Bishop David A. Smith was set apart as first counselor, and Elder John Wells ordained a Bishop and set apart as second counselor to Presiding Bishop C. W. Nibley.

DEATHS

Since our last conference Bishop William Fairbourn, of Crescent Ward, Jordan stake, has passed away; and Marion A. Woolley, of Kanab stake, and George E. Giles, of Provo, Utah, laboring in the Australian and Samoan mission fields respectively, also passed away.

NEW WARDS ORGANIZED

The following new wards have been organized since our last conference:

Redcliffe, Utah, Strawberry and Alterra wards, in Duchesne stake; Veyo and Central, in St. George stake; Wandamere, in Granite stake; Lark, in Jordan stake; Topaz, in Portneuf stake, and Pegram Branch in Montpelier stake.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

I believe I can answer for all present that we are most happy to have the privilege to see our beloved President with us again. I know that he has the prayers of his people who are asking the Lord to restore him, to strengthen him and to relieve him of his sickness, and I hope that the prayers of the Saints will be heard in his behalf, that we may again see him able to be with us, and again sit under his voice and hear his inspired instructions to us. The Lord bless President Smith and make him well.

ZION IS PROSPERING

I am glad this morning to see this sea of faces beaming with joy at beholding our President in the conference, and I believe that the Lord will bless his servants who shall address us this day. We can bring you the glad tidings that Zion is prospering, that the work is going forward, and, I believe that the Saints are making headway, both spiritually and temporally.

I received a few notes from Brother Wells, of the Presiding Bishopric. He tells us there has been an increase in the births, blessings and baptisms in the stakes of Zion compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. A larger number of recommends for the temples have been issued for the first six months of this year than in the same length of time of any previous year. During the six months ending June 30,