

Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints and Its History



JOSEPH SMITH



RESIDENCE OF JOSEPH SMITH, INDEPENDENCE, MO.



W.S. HAWORTH, AUSTRALIA



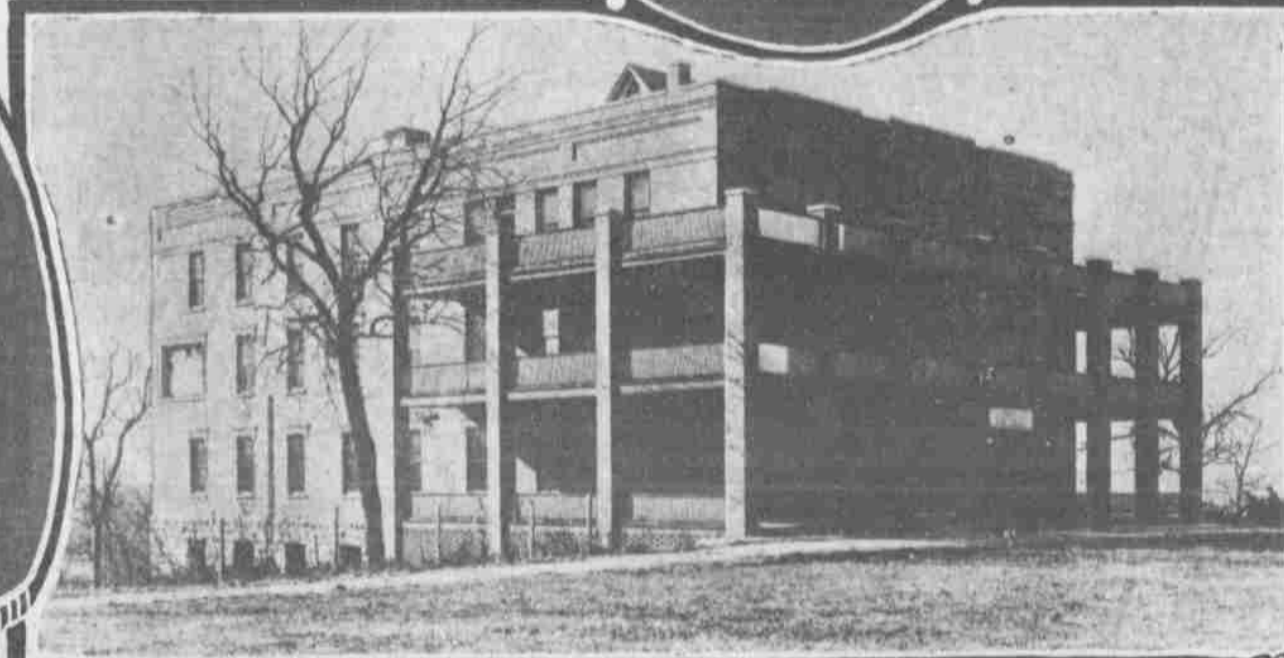
DANIEL MACGREGOR, CANADA



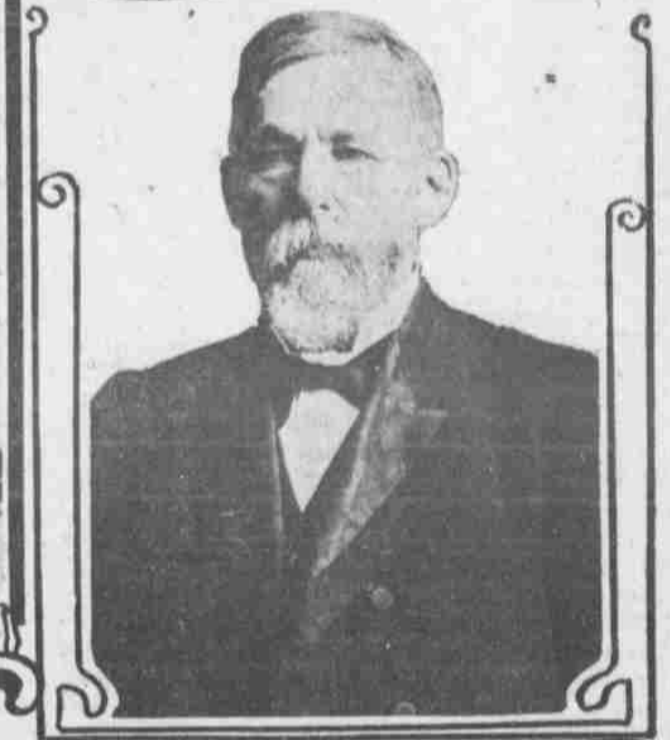
INDEPENDENCE, Mo., March 27.—(Special Correspondence.)—President Joseph Smith, the venerable head of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a resident of this place, is making his preparations to go in a few days to Lamoni, Ia., to be in attendance at the annual general conference of his church, which convenes there on April 6, and at which delegates will be present from many parts of the world. The fact that the noted churchman is going to conference has not in past years been of much concern to his people, for they have taken it as a matter of course that he would be there and take his place as the presiding officer of the convocation, but for the last year he has been in very poor health, and especially the last month, and much concern has been felt about him, and much speculation indulged in by his people whether or not he would be able to attend the conference. He has become much enfeebled, his eyesight almost entirely failing him; but his presence at the general conference means so much that he will make a great effort to attend, that his wonderful experience and keen intellect may assist the delegates to solve some of the perplexing problems which are confronting the church today, many of which are in connection with the "gathering" of the Saints to Independence, Mo., and the "regions round about."



PAUL M. HANSEN



LATTER DAY SAINTS' SANIARIUM — INDEPENDENCE, MO.



BISHOP E. I. KELLEY, INDEPENDENCE, MO.

Mixture of Communism and Individualism.

The Saints hold peculiar views on social questions and their books teach a sort of communism, but a communism so strangely mixed with individualism that the scheme is unique. The "gathering" is preliminary to putting into effect their peculiar beliefs as to the social relations of the individuals of the community. Happenings within the church the last year indicate that the time draws near when the members of the church will be called upon to show their attitude on the social question, and throughout the church one can hear the members discussing "consecration" and kindred questions. By consecration is meant the giving of all their property over to the church and each member receiving in return something in the way of a "stewardship," which he shall manage for the benefit of the church, the interests of each individual being thus conserved by serving the church.

The general conference, held each year, beginning on April 6, is the legislative body of the church and is composed of delegates appointed by the various districts and branches of the church throughout the world, and ex-officio members composed of the general authorities of the church and the missionaries sent out by the conference each year.

Government a Mixture of Forms.

This reference to the conference as the legislative body of the church quite naturally brings up the question of the form of government, and in examining it we find a queer mixture of theocratic, aristocratic, representative and democratic forms of government. Belief in revelation from God is a fundamental doctrine of the church. At the head of the church stands the prophet, seer and revelator, through whom God speaks to the church in giving the laws to govern it. This introduces the theocratic form of government. The present prophet to the church is President Joseph Smith, now in his 79th year. Associated with him in the presidency of the church are his son, Frederick M. Smith, his first counselor, and Elbert A. Smith, his nephew and second counselor. These three constitute what is known as the First Presidency. Where is the second presidency if this is the first? It is found in what is termed the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, twelve men selected by revelation and approved by the church. This quorum makes practically all the missionary appointments, subject to the approval of the conference.

What might be termed the third presidency is found in the Quorums of Seventy, of which there are at present three in the church. As the name indicates, these quorums are composed of seventy members each, all active missionaries. These three quorums (or seven when the church is more fully organized or has need for so many), together with the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency, constitute what are termed in the constitutional law of the church the three councils of co-ordinate jurisdiction in determining what shall be church law. The decisions of any two of the councils, when unanimous, determine what shall be the law. This introduces the aristocratic form of government.

Revelations Passed On By Conference.

But all revelations, all matters of church government, laws, etc., are presented to the general conference, which is a delegate body, and there finally passed upon before becoming binding upon the church. Thus the representative form of government comes in. While the local branches, in a very democratic way,

determine their business matters in open business meetings, at which any member of the branch (as the local congregations are called) can vote. The branches send delegates to the district conference (each district being formed by associating two or more branches in contiguous territory), the district conference in turn sending delegates to the general annual conference.

The executive arm of the church is organized on the hierarchical order, the highest body being the First Presidency, having oversight of the work of the church in all the world and in all its departments. Next to the Presidency, and working under its directions, are the Twelve Apostles, who have oversight of the missionary work, each apostle being placed over a "mission" as its president. Under the direction of the apostles the other missionaries work the Seventy in particular, who stand next to the Twelve in authority. Over the work of the districts and branches stand in order the high priests, elders, teachers and deacons, while the temporal or financial matters of the church are looked after by an order of bishops, the chief of whom, the general bishop of the church, is Bishop E. I. Kelley, with headquarters in Independence, Mo. He has two counselors, one of whom is George H. Hilliard of Independence and the other is E. A. Blakeslee of Galien, Mich.

Annual Gathering at Lamoni.

While thus there is observed the hierarchical order of authority and responsibility, the history of this church has shown that there is seldom any entrenchment upon the rights of the people, for in all the conferences of the church, both local and general, nothing provokes more sudden or heated debate than

any measures which threaten in any way to curtail the rights of the members or their liberties.

The annual gathering of this church, which this year will be held in Lamoni, Ia., the legal headquarters, cannot but be of interest to the public at large, because of the many articles which have been appearing of recent months in the magazine literature of the country and the exposures which have been made of the unholy alliance which seems to exist between the Utah church and the politicians at Washington and other places in the country. It has become generally known now that the Utah church, under its present leaders, is reactionary, and that polygamy is still rampant there, while the covenants which that church made with the government of the United States in order to secure statehood for Utah have been broken. The duplicity of the Mormon leaders, their intrigues and unholy practices, have justly brought odium upon the name which they bear.

From this opprobrium the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is too often made to suffer by an indiscriminating public. The leaders of the Reorganized church have always been characterized by loyalty to the state, while the members are everywhere recognized as good citizens, made so by reason of the teachings of their church. No organization in the United States has done more to combat the progress of polygamy as promulgated by the Utah church than has the Reorganized church. For more than half a century it has kept missionaries in Utah and contiguous territory fighting the evils of polygamy and calling upon the Utah church to repent. And yet, after seventy years of combat, with the corrupt Mormon church of Utah too often in the minds of the public, the Reorganized church is confounded with the Utah church. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is claimed to be the one in true succession to that founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith in New York, while the Utah church is held to be a corrupt offshoot, having been led into error by Brigham Young, who introduced polygamy and other sinful doctrines.

Public Gets the Smiths Mixed.

One reason that confusion exists today in the minds of the public is that the president of each

church is a Smith, cousins, but entirely different men in character and work. The president of the Utah church is Joseph Fielding Smith, an alleged five-ply polygamist, who is said to openly defy the law by persistently living in polygamy, as he stated on the witness stand in Washington during the Smoot investigation. The president of the Reorganized church is Joseph Smith of Independence, Mo., son of the original founder of the church. This Joseph Smith has always been characterized as a law-abiding citizen, in precept as well as example, while by teaching and practice he is a strict monogamist, and has been a lifelong opponent to the Utah church and polygamy. A magazine recently made the blunder of including this

man's picture in a galaxy of leading Mormons who were said to be enslaving the men and women of Utah in polygamy, a blunder which has aroused the members of the Reorganized church all over the land.

Among the delegates which will be in attendance at the coming general conference at Lamoni will be Apostle Gomer T. Griffiths, recently returned from Jerusalem; Apostle John W. Rushton, lately over from England; Elder Charles H. Lake, for many years missionary to the South Sea Islands and at present in charge of that mission, and also editor of a paper published there in the native language; Elder Walter J. Haworth of Australia, editor of a local church paper published in that country. Another delegate will be Elder Daniel MacGregor, a resident of Canada and editor of the official organ of the Sunday school association of the church, of which Elder MacGregor is the general superintendent.

Whatever one may think of the teachings of the Latter Day Saints, he cannot but admire their zeal. Their missionaries and others in positions of responsibility are not salaried men, but get "allowances" sufficient to cover very ordinary living expenses. In many instances these allowances afford a very meagre living, a condition which can be borne uncomplainingly only by enthusiastic propagandists willing to sacrifice for their beliefs.

Largest Congregation at Independence.

The largest following of Joseph Smith of the Reorganized church is in Independence, Mo., and vicinity. There is one congregation in Independence numbering about 2,500 souls. These worship at what is familiarly known as the "Stone church" on West Electric street, while another congregation of about 200 worship in a neat brick church building on the South Side. In Kansas City the church has some eight or nine congregations, most of them owning their own church buildings. The largest congregation in Kansas City is located at Ninth and Lydia streets, where they have a building valued at about \$25,000, purchased about four years ago from the Southern Methodist Episcopal church. It is usually spoken of among the Saints as the Central Kansas City church and houses a steadily growing congregation of zealous worshippers.

(Continued on Page Two.)



APOSTLE J.W. WIGHT, LAMONI, IOWA



FREDERICK M. SMITH, OLDEST SON OF JOSEPH SMITH



BISHOP G. H. HILLIARD



MYRON C. MCCONLEY, HUNOLCLO, I.A.



ELBERT A. SMITH, LAMONI, IOWA