

Stephen Hilton The Vice-President

For a long period Mr. Stephen Hilton, of Leicester, has been one of the most distinguished of our laymen. On several occasions he has been nominated for the Vice-Presidency of the Conference, but usually has withdrawn in favour of others. Last year he allowed his name to go to the vote and was only barely beaten by Mr. Rawlings. It was recognised that no one else would this year would have the slightest chance if he were nominated, and, in the event, no one was put in competition with him, so that he had the honour of a unanimous election. He proved to be of great value to the Conference. He is clear-minded and can quickly see all round a situation, is ready in understanding the feeling of the assembly, and is a past-master in his knowledge of the rules of procedure. With that quick penetrating eye upon him any delegate who might have been tempted to do it would have felt that he could not afford to trifle with the authority of the chair. In addition to these qualities the Vice-president has perfect self-control. In his conduct of the business there is neither haste nor flurry on the one hand nor looseness and waste of time on the other. Indeed his chairmanship is just about perfect. Probably this is in part natural to him, and in part acquired through his able management of a great business, and his experience in public affairs. For he has long been a member of the City Council of Leicester, and last year was its chief magistrate. Great as have been the demands made upon his time and strength in his business and in public affairs, from his youth he has been a hard and consistent worker in the church. A town-bred man, for he was born and has lived all his life in Leicester, he has not only thrown himself heartily into the work of the Church of which he is a member, but has regularly carried the Gospel message to the villages round about. And as he has advanced in social position he has used his gifts and substance liberally for the good of God's cause. A few years ago a great sorrow came to his family in the death of his daughter, Mrs. Hallam. She was a charming young woman, beloved of all who knew her, and very dear to her kindred. To her memory the Vice-president erected the beautiful and commodious schools in Claremont Street. No reference to the Vice-president would even approach being adequate that did not recognize the readiness and tact and perfect taste with which he discharged those ceremonial functions that fell to his lot during the Conference proceedings. His numerous personal friends and the whole of the Church thank God for his life, and all will pray that his year of office, if laborious, may be a joy to himself and a blessing to the religious community with which he has been so long and so honourably associated.

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1906/659