

Convention News

PLANS are going ahead for the first meeting of the delegates to the Diocesan Convention on Sunday, February 15. The concelebrated Mass to mark the occasion will be held, not in the Cathedral, which is still undergoing repairs, but in the nearby Caritas Hall. Perhaps this is symbolic of the shift in emphasis around which much writing and discussion revolves today. The role of the Church in this age of increasing secularity was a problem discussed at the recent Combined Christian Consultation on the Mission of the Church, sponsored by the Hong Kong Christian Council. If one of the purposes of our Convention is to clarify our priorities for the years ahead, it will be very necessary to have clear ideas on this much-debated issue. The same problem was keenly felt at the World Council of Churches Uppsala Assembly of 1968. The Rev. Kenneth Slack in his paperback *Report on the Assembly* (SCM Press, 1968) put the difficulty like this: when Christians "believe that concern for human need must reorder the priorities of Christian discipleship, how are they to ensure that there is anything specifically *Christian* in their humanitarian concern? Is worship just a private hobby of some humanitarians? Is the Church, in the sharp phrase of a later speaker (at the Assembly) just 'a social service in which the officers occasionally pray?'"

During the whole of the month of January just two letters were sent to the Convention, so that the total number received has just topped the 700-mark. These last two contributions called attention to certain shortcomings in our schools and hospitals. The complaint levelled at the schools was the familiar one of too many demands being made on the pupils for contri-

butions to this or that worthy cause, thereby saddling parents of modest means with a financial burden they ought not be asked to carry. The other letter described a friend's unfortunate experience on being admitted to hospital and ended with the plea: "why cannot our Catholic hospitals be less mercenary than non-Christian ones."

Another kind of letter is now beginning to arrive. At the end of the Convention documents published so far this appeal is made: "The Diocesan Convention wants your comments on this draft document. Please pass them on to any of the Convention delegates or send them directly to the Diocesan Convention, Box 2984, Hong Kong." Three people so far have availed themselves of this invitation and have sent in their observations on the draft document on the Communications Media. These letters have been handed over to the chairman of the commission that drafted this document. We hope that many more written comments will be sent in during the weeks ahead.

The printing of the documents so far received is proceeding at an unspectacular rate. The third document, on Ecumenism, should be ready and have been sent to delegates before these lines appear. The English version of the Priestly Life document will be ready by next week. The document on the Social Dimension of the Church (alias Social Apostolate) has already been sent to the printer. Some documents are still being touched up by the drafting commissions. These will probably have to appear first in mimeographed form so as to be ready for the meeting on February 15. As soon as possible after that they will be got ready for printing.