

Convention News

THE first fortnightly cycle of meetings of the Convention Working Groups after the summer recess was marked by greatly reduced attendances. Not only were there fewer members of the public at the meetings, but—what was particularly noticeable—large numbers of delegates were missing. For the first time since the Convention started, one of the meetings could not begin punctually at eight o'clock because at that time a quorum (in the case of the Working Group involved, eleven Convention delegates) had not turned up! A number of people are still on holidays and have not yet returned to Hong Kong; more, perhaps, are still infected with the holiday spirit. It is to be hoped that the delegates will continue to attend as faithfully as they did before the recess, at least the meetings of the Working Group to which they are attached.

The deadline for the Groups to finish their work is next Easter. This may seem a long way off. But in terms of the number of fortnightly meetings, it is only just around the corner. Each Group will meet only eight times more before Christmas; and twice again before the Chinese New Year—and four further meetings brings us to Easter: a total of 14 meetings in all. When it is remembered that each Group met 10 times between the start of the Convention and the summer break, the need for a rate of progress in the discussions many times faster than that achieved up to this appears in all its urgency.

COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

GROUP 8 at its meeting on August 26 discussed problems connected with the distribution of the *Sunday Examiner* and *Kung Kao Po*. Delegates were of the opinion that increased circulation is not a matter merely of improving the contents of the papers, of secularising, maybe, the approach in the hope of widening their ap-

peal, though this aspect is important: as one speaker put it, our aim should be that people buy these papers not just out of a sense of duty or of piety or under pressure of any sort, but because they find the contents stimulating and interesting. Increasing the number of readers is also a question of improving organisational techniques. Some delegates therefore suggested the appointment of a sales manager to be put in charge of the promotional efforts of both weeklies; others pointed to the necessity of increasing the number of annual subscribers, perhaps at reduced rates: the financial situation of the Catholic papers, it was maintained, could be improved by increasing the number of advertisers, and prospective advertisers are far more interested in the guaranteed sales than in across-the-counter sales in parishes, etc.

Another speaker proposed selling the diocesan weeklies at some of the more conveniently placed newspaper vendors, e.g. at the ferry concourses. In reply to this proposal it was stated that this had been done some years ago but the practice had been stopped due mainly to the difficulty experienced in obtaining payment for the copies sold at certain of the outlets.

A delegate complained that insufficient copies of the papers are supplied to some parishes with the result that they become unobtainable at the later Masses. Others felt that the parish priests could do a great deal more in promoting sales: a speaker claimed that the priests of his parish never encourage their parishioners to support the diocesan papers. Another suggestion was that members of the Legion of Mary might sell the papers during their visits to Catholic families.

A question was asked about the way the Catholic papers are promoted in our schools, since a number of letters sent to the Convention last year complained that students (including non-

Catholic ones) were forced in some Catholic schools to buy the papers. A few delegates spoke of the practice adopted by schools they knew of. If the schools they spoke of are truly representative of the majority of Catholic schools in the diocese, there would seem to be no longer any grounds to support the charge of compulsion in the sale of the diocesan papers.

Another delegate suggested that teachers of civics should make use of our Catholic weeklies in their classes. In this way, even though the volume of sales might decrease, the contents of the papers would be got across to the students. This, after all, is the purpose of publishing these papers.

Much was said on the question of seeking more advertisements for the *Sunday Examiner* and *Kung Kao Po*. Secular newspapers, it was pointed out, need advertisers to survive; some people buy certain papers just for the sake of the advertisements. As against this it was stated that increasing the number of advertisements would mean in-

creasing the number of pages, with a corresponding rise in costs which might not be offset by revenue from advertisements; moreover doubts were voiced as to the effect a large number of advertisements would have on what was called the "dignity" of the papers.

GOVERNMENT OF DIOCESE

GROUP 10 at its last meeting (August 28) began discussing the third chapter of the draft document, dealing with the diocesan curia. The first paragraph of this chapter (Section 13) provides some general information about the makeup of the bishop's curia. One speaker at the outset of the meeting maintained that in this whole chapter there is practically nothing to discuss since it is an explanatory chapter, merely describing the situation as it exists. In spite of this the Group spent nearly two hours talking about the first subdivision of the chapter.

A delegate pointed out that according to the mind of the Vatican Council the diocesan

curia should not be concerned merely with administrative details. It should be so organised that it can serve the bishop in the carrying out of the works of the apostolate. This delegate therefore proposed changing the title of the chapter to the Structure of Diocesan Government. Another delegate suggested postponing any decision until the Group finishes discussing the contents of the whole chapter: they would then be in a better position to choose the most satisfactory title.

The draft states that "the diocesan curia consists of those priests . . ." It was pointed out that at present there are members of the curia who are not priests and that the trend to avail of the services of lay people in the administration of the diocese would probably increase.

A delegate expressed the opinion that the section under discussion could do with a certain amount of pruning; it seemed to enter rather too much into detail on point of canon law. To determine just what should be left out in the revised version of the draft it is necessary to decide the purpose of setting down this detailed description of the various offices of the curia. The purpose, it was suggested should be to enable readers to make up their mind how best the administration of our diocese can be renewed in the spirit and according to the principles of Vatican II.

Another delegate felt that rather more stress should be placed on the paragraphs in the chapter that deal with the new, post-conciliar vision of church government.

To a delegate's query why there is no mention in the draft of a legislative department in the diocesan curia, the chairman replied that the sole lawgiver in the diocese is the bishop; in diocesan government there is no legislature as is the case with secular governments.

Programme of next week's meetings of Working Groups

Place: Catholic Centre
Religious
Social Mission of Church
Communications Media
Ecumenism
Government of Diocese

Time: 8 p.m.
No meeting
Monday, September 7
Tuesday, September 8
Wednesday, September 9
Thursday, September 10
Friday, September 11

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