

Convention News

SOCIAL MISSION OF CHURCH

THE two sections, Trends and Recommendations, of the draft document's Ch. V (Housing and Public Transport) were discussed at the last meeting of Group 7 (October 20). The first point brought up was the movement of residents from older-type resettlement estates to larger quarters as the family grows and begins to earn. Speakers pointed out that families do not like moving because it inevitably means higher rent and greater distance from work; it is just when the children are growing up and the parents have to pay more for their clothing and education that they are unable to shoulder the added expense of higher rent. Moreover to have your application for larger quarters processed takes much time and many interviews: workers cannot afford to take so much time off from work. A delegate said that where families do move into larger quarters they tend to remain within the same estate. An unfortunate consequence of such moves is that the top earners are constantly being siphoned off the older-type blocks, which consequently get progressively more drab and impoverished-looking.

A delegate remarked that everybody wants accommodation near his work, but this is not easy; Government has already built 500 resettlement-type blocks and has approved in principle the construction of low cost housing for a further 300,000 people within the next six years. But where are these new blocks to be built? If in the New Territories will people be willing to go and live there?

The next problem discussed was that of cleanliness—or its lack—in many of the estates. A delegate thought that the tenants themselves are largely responsible for the present unsatisfactory situation. A young worker agreed, but felt that not enough had been done to educate the residents. The cleanliness campaigns, he said, have remained largely ineffective because badly conceived. The solution, another speaker pointed out, lies in the development of a community spirit which would bring about a change in people's outlooks. In this context reference was made to the efforts being carried out at the Tung Tau estate where stress is laid on educating people for living together.

Another speaker thought that here was an area in which the Church could and should play a greater role. The experiment at Tung Tau estate should be watched and imitated elsewhere and perhaps its scope extended to include non-Catholics also. The success of the drive towards greater municipal cleanliness in Singapore was referred to: there a start was made in the schools where cleanliness was presented as an exercise in responsibility towards the community; in addition, hawkers are required to keep near them a refuse bin and the public is

encouraged to point out the error of their ways to those who do not cooperate in the anti-litter campaign, thereby shaming them into compliance; and in case all this fails, there are strict laws to correct the recalcitrant.

A number of delegates expressed their opinions on the question of developing a community spirit: for some the solution lay in the provision of community centres in the estates. However, other speakers pointed out that such centres are largely unused. Parish community rooms are used only for dances, one delegate stated; adults prefer to go to tea-houses and there discuss business. Perhaps we should try to change this situation by propaganda, by organising events that older people like. In Kwun Tong, for example, Catholic representatives from all the blocks surrounding the church meet every two weeks to discuss their common problems. Where there is a lack of premises for community activities, a delegate said, we should think of making the classrooms of our schools available in the evenings, as well as whatever playing facilities they have.

A delegate pointed out that the facilities in Morse Park, Wong Tai Sin, are not used at anything like their full capacity; in other playgrounds too, soon after the opening ceremony, young people grow tired of the facilities provided and do not use them. If adults prefer to go to tea-houses and discuss their affairs should we try to make them change their ways and impose our ideas upon them? The important thing is to realise the need for creating a greater sense of community and to get as many Catholics as possible involved in efforts in this direction. An organisation like that of the Legion of Mary, this speaker said, would be ideal for this kind of work: numerous small groups with a well defined procedure and a clearly mapped out programme.

COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

At its last meeting (October 21) Group 8 continued its discussion on the radio. The first speaker said that we should be asking ourselves what we can do within the framework of the present programmes; we should listen to these and see how they can be improved. One important step would be to set up a training course for promising directors and script writers as well as for speakers. Quite often the opportunity for taking part in a programme is offered us but we have no one prepared to speak and so are forced to turn down the invitation.

The draft document includes a suggestion that "lessons in catechism be given in radio broadcasts." A member of the original drafting commission stated that this proposal had been added only because so many letters from the faithful had mentioned it. A delegate

thought that such programmes were not suitable for public broadcasts and proposed that this paragraph be omitted. Other speakers agreed, saying that such programmes would have little popular appeal and that we need a much more sophisticated approach in trying to communicate our ideas. A delegate felt that the idea as proposed in the draft should be dropped, but this should not mean leaving no room for serious discussion of what the Church holds on important current issues.

The chairman then appealed for practical suggestions concerning broadcasting to be included in the document in the form of recommendations. The following three proposals were among those put forward: the diocese should formally set up a committee entrusted with the promotion of the apostolate of the radio; we should set up a sound recording studio and build up an audio-visual library; more persons should be assigned to the preparation and production of religious broadcasts.

One delegate pointed out that adequate funds would be necessary in order to carry out many of the recommendations made. Another delegate maintained that we should be content to start in a very modest way, for instance, a small room could, without too much expense, be turned into a recording studio. To this it was replied that Radio Hong Kong demands a very high standard of recording and in order to measure up to this high standard we would have to start in a way that could perhaps be modest but would certainly be expensive. As re-

gards personnel, a delegate pointed out that there surely must be many among Hong Kong's 200,000 Catholics who would be willing to cooperate in this field.

With reference to the perennial problem of finance a speaker maintained that elsewhere in Asia much had been done to promote the apostolate of the radio without diocesan funds. Those in charge had been given the hierarchy's blessing but little else. They themselves contacted various overseas foundations and having shown that there was need for money, that they knew how to put it to good use and that there was a demand for the service they intended to provide, the foundations had provided them with funds. Another delegate felt we could be more ingenious in getting financial assistance from Government. A further suggestion was an annual collection on some Sunday during the year. It is also important, a speaker said, to try and get across the notion that if people want the diocese to undertake some service they must be ready to do their bit towards paying for it.

A delegate complained that much of what they were discussing had been proposed some 16 years ago when he was connected with preparing the broadcasts. He wanted therefore to know why nothing had been done since then towards putting the recommendations into practice. In reply it was suggested that it was not at all surprising that so little had been done. We must be aware of falling into the trap of thinking that we can solve everything by setting up one

more committee. What we need, this speaker said, is individuals who are prepared to do whatever they can; committees come in useful only when something vital is already taking place.

ECUMENISM

At the last meeting of Group 9 (October 22), Miss Evelyn Eaton gave a commentary on a recent document issued by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. It was felt that many of the points considered in this document, entitled *Reflections and Suggestions concerning Ecumenical Dialogue* (c.f. *Sunday Examiner*, October 9, 1970) should find a place in the Convention statement on ecumenism. It is important too, Miss Eaton remarked, that we should try and reflect in our document the same breadth of outlook that characterises these recent guidelines on ecumenical dialogue.

The second half of the meeting was taken up with a continued discussion of the revised version of the draft. As the contents of this new version had already been discussed, the comments were intended to assist the redrafting committee in arriving at better ways of expressing the ideas already agreed on.

Programme of Working Group Meetings during coming week

Religious	No Meeting
Evangelisation	Monday, November 2
Social Mission of Church	Tuesday, November 3
Communications Media	Wednesday, November 4
Ecumenism	Thursday, November 5
Government of Diocese	Friday, November 6

Place: Catholic Centre, Hong Kong.

Time: 8 p.m. — 10 p.m.

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