

# Overflow Meetings Hear Oxford Group Members

## Simple Testimonies of New Life Told to Thousands From All Walks of Life

A crowd that packed the Crystal Ballroom of the King Edward Hotel and its gallery till not another chair could be squeezed in, and left many standing round the walls—that overflowed and filled the next largest room in the hotel, where a second meeting was started—that still left so many people outside, that St. James' Cathedral had to be opened to accommodate them — that was Toronto's response to the invitation to meet the Oxford Group Movement team last evening.

Notices had been sent enclosing many invitations each to every minister in Toronto. The response was a surprise to the group. Ministers of every denomination were there in numbers, university professors, students from every college faculty, leaders in finance and business—they and their wives in evening dress in many cases—and all sat for a couple of hours hearing simple but vividly told stories of Christian experience by men and women of the group. It was a "sharing," as the team calls it, before an audience rather than in a small gathering. About the only parallel to it is the "experience meeting" that is a feature of some Salvation Army gatherings.

### TELL SIMPLE STORIES

But the experiences were told by young fellows in evening dress, by young women in evening gowns. They were not lurid confessions, just stories of futile lives, so they described them, made vital as the result of a complete surrender to the will of God. And they each and all claimed that there was more "kick" in such a life than anything they had ever tried before.

Professor P. M. Brown of Princeton University, a member of the group, was the chairman. He started out by apologizing for the fact that because his baggage had gone astray he had to appear before the audience in

And listened and laughed and evidently liked the evening of singing, silence and sermons "for sinners only."

As early as 6.30 dozens of people from all walks of life—doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief, rich man, poor man—were turning into the King Edward hotel to attend the opening meeting of the Oxford Group in Toronto. By 7 o'clock the dozens had turned to hundreds and by 8 o'clock to thousands.

They surged by elevator and stairs into the ballroom on the roof of the hotel, overflowed into the ballroom on the second floor and then filled St. James' cathedral. They came by motor, street car, foot and crutches; there were white Torontonians and

(Continued on Page Two)

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 6)

# perflow Meetings

## Hear Oxford Group

a suit of brown tweed. He was glad to be included in such an exclusive audience of "sinners only."

Prof. Brown introduced to the audience Premier Henry, who was to extend a welcome to the visiting Oxford Group.

"I am glad to give you an official welcome," said the Premier. "The people of Ontario are looking forward to your visit with the keenest of interest, and know that when you leave us you will leave behind you something of the greatest value."

Prof. Brown, in introducing members of the group, declared that the world never had such spiritual need as it had to-day, when people were despairing.

"We believe there is an answer adequate to the problem; it is the spirit of Jesus Christ. The speakers will try to show you how His voice can be heard through the tumult of our times with a triumphant message."

### HIS BIGGEST "KICK"

"Reggie" Holme, New College, Oxford, was the first to "witness." Religion had lost its vitality to him; he was trying to get his biggest kick out of week-end motorcycling with a bunch of similar spirits of the "drift and pleasure" crowd, when the group got hold of him.

"I didn't get views about Jesus Christ. I got news of what He did for people," he said. "They put it up to me that I might do more good trying to repair broken lives than tinkering up motorcycles. That was the challenge to me. I accepted it, and I have seen lives changed in England, Holland and South Africa, and got more kick out of it than anything I ever tried before. It is a real adventure. I want to say this thing is not an emotional revival—it's a survival, something that stays with you," was his epitome of the movement.

Miss Marie Clarkson, of Oxford, admitted that three years of her life at the great university had been a round of parties and dress and boy friends. A very futile and unsatisfying career, nothing worth while accomplished, she said. "Then I learned that such a life could be changed to one of power and direction, that Christ was the answer to futility."

### HAD TRIED PREACHING

Another young collegian confessed to having had a pretty good opinion of himself; thought that as the Church needed the best men in Britain he ought to don the cloth. He had tried preaching to what he thought were sinners, and was set back when at the end of an appeal, a woman remarked, "You've got a very nice face, my boy."

"I guess I was one of God's knotty problems. I felt I was quite good enough for all practical purposes," he said. Then he began to realize his ineffectiveness, and finally made complete turning over of his inefficient life to a higher power.

"I've seen it work. The executive of a big sugar mill have solved all their problems by letting God into their lives. It changed their whole business; it will change the whole country. I believe in it," he declared.

### A REALITY TO BELIEF

Baroness Lilian Van Kell, of Holland, in excellent English, declared that she had learned from an Oxford group's visit to her home that they had a quality of life that made her feel she was merely standing still. There was a reality to their belief in God; they would do anything and go anywhere.

"The secret of it was an uncompromising surrender of the life to Jesus Christ. I was afraid of it at first, but now I have seen wonderful things done in my home and in my country. God's spirit gives the power to pass it on."

Eleanor Forde, of Montreal, said she had been "converted" once, but it didn't get her anywhere. She felt she had the makings of a first-rate hypocrite; she had nothing to offer anyone else.

"It's not the pagan who is God's problem; it's the Christian who won't go the whole way," Miss Forde averred.

### SOUTH AFRICA STIRRED

Mrs. Jessie Sheffield, daughter of Sir John Fraser, South Africa, added her quota to the effect that a Calvinistic upbringing had given her no liking for religion. She had had a troubled life, and was trying to forget it in high living, when the group in South Africa touched her life, and she realized she had never been honest, but always superficial. So great had been the results of the group movement in Africa that Boers and English, long embittered, were now meeting together. Whites sat with downtrodden blacks. Leaders in the state were beginning to believe such a vital Christianity was solving South Africa's problems.

Dr. and Mrs. Morris, New York, and Dr. Frank N. D. Buckman were among those who spoke shortly. The founder of the movement announced that on Friday meetings were to be held at Simpson's Arcadian Court, at Metropolitan Church and Carlton Street Church at 8.30. A meeting for ministers will be held at 11 o'clock; and one for women at 3 p.m.