

# Thousands Attend Opening Meetings Of Oxford Group

Overflow Accommodation  
Necessary, Yet Leader  
Tells Audience Aim Is  
Not Numbers, But to  
Reach Individual Lives  
—Average Person of  
Today Does Not Know  
How to Pray, Speaker  
Fears

## TESTIMONY GIVEN ABOUT NEW LIFE

Thousands of people sitting spell-bound for two hours last night testified to religion's vital spark and to the belief in the power of Divine rule and guidance.

Not that the thousands of Toronto citizens who thronged two huge rooms at the King Edward Hotel and crowded St. James's Cathedral constituted all that wanted to hear the opening night's messages of "The Oxford Group," which is said to have been sweeping the world in its endeavor to "change lives"; apparently there were multiple times that number who would have come if they could have been accommodated.

And yet Frank N. D. Buchman, the predominant member of this Oxford Group of three score visitors, just descended on Toronto from Detroit, rather deprecated numbers in his opening night's "message" to the crowded audience in the King Edward Hotel ballroom. "Our aim really is not numbers," he said. "Our aim is individuals changed."

### Rather Abrupt Manner.

Far from a wheedling type, this Mr. Buchman has a rather abrupt way of dealing with his audience. "Nobody move!" he commands sharply at the end of the meeting, after testimonies have been given and that "get-away stir is heard among the chairs. And "Some people like to go to meetings," they have always gone to meetings," he says, rather sarcastically, referring to the size of the throng before him. "Numbers don't interest us very much; they can be a real hindrance. Oh, I see you in the audience; I know you; some great old sermon-tasters."

Undenominational or "supradenominational," they say; slightly unorthodox in their manner of procedure; unusual, to say the least, in that the bulk and the greatest of their meetings are held, not in sacred edifices, but apparently in hotels or large auditoriums, or "house parties," as they were referred to last night; and the frankest of people in their personal testimonies, which apparently constitute the meat and bones of their meetings, these Oxonians simply radiate good-will on their hearers as they detail the manner and time of their "change"—they do not call it conversion; conversion, apparently, is only a starting point in their doctrine (but there, again, they have no doctrine). And there is no organization, no association to join. The audience was told last night they could not "join" if they wanted to.