

National Convention of Catholic Youth

(The following article was written by John A. McDonald, '38, a former Editor of *Red and White*, who attended the Catholic Youth Convention at Ottawa last year).

This is an age of organization. All about us we see organizations in national, political, social, industrial and other fields. Some of these societies are highly successful and useful, others are dormant and ineffectual. Close examination will show that those in the former category are motivated by an important objective and sustained by an energy that maintains a vigorous pace. Catholic youth, then, stepping over the threshold of life and facing a broad world beset by malignant forces which would destroy our Christian civilization, has a very serious reason for organizing.

In Canada the basis for a successful Catholic Youth Organization has existed for some time. The incomparable bond of union in a common religion, coupled with the acceptance of the dynamic principles of that religion needed only the good will and initiative of Catholic Youth for its realization. Difficulties had to be surmounted, however, due to the fact that in our country there are Catholics whose mother tongue is English, others whose mother tongue is French, and still others, with briefer histories, lesser strength and diverse racial characteristics, but with equal Canadian aspirations and patriotism, all within the fold of this proposed union. Yet out of this heterogeneous group there has recently evolved a great national organization known as the Canadian Catholic Youth Union with the significant motto "Sint Unum."

Tribute must be paid to L'Action Catholique Jeunesse Canadienne, when, at the request of our beloved and revered Canadian Episcopate under the leadership of our esteemed Canadian Cardinal, they undertook the heavy task of organizing such a union on a dominion-wide basis. The officers of this splendidly organized French-Canadian Youth group gave unselfishly of their time, energy and experience in assuring that the movement would be a success. And the establishment of one central organization for the Catholic youth of Canada is a truly great achievement. In view of the steps made by the movement here a similar organization is being planned for the United States.

This first National Convention of Catholic Youth was held in the Chateau Laurier at Ottawa on October 8th, 9th, and 10th, of last year. On the opening day, following the preliminaries of registration, His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, opened the Convention with a stirring address and concluded with a special message from the Holy Father. The presidents of the meeting, Mr. Paul LeBlanc, President-General of the A. C. J. C., and Mr. Timothy Slattery, President of the Gasson Associates of Montreal, addressed the audience giving in their turn the rallying cry to the whole of the Catholic Youth of Canada. Roll call revealed that thirty-six dioceses were represented covering the territory from Halifax to Vancouver. There were 472 delegates, 37 observers and 105 members of the clergy, representing approximately 400,000 young people. With brief despatch the assembly proceeded to the election of the Executive for the Convention and of the Committee for the study of the Constitution. Throughout the evening, delegates studied attentively the different articles of the projected constitution as drawn up by a Committee of Archbishops and accepted it with some slight modifications.

On the following day meetings of the Committees for the Study of the Program were held. This included two committees sitting simultaneously, one studying subjects relating to Catholic Action, and the other, subjects relating to social and economic action. The reading of well-prepared papers and subsequent discussion on these topics opened the way for the resolutions which were adopted by the Convention on the closing day. At eleven o'clock Low Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral by Archbishop Forbes of Ottawa. Sermons for the occasion were preached by His Eminence, Cardinal Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, and His Excellency, Archbishop McGuigan of Toronto. During the Mass the "Credo" was sung by the delegates which was followed by the consecration of the Catholic Youth to Christ, the King, by the provisional Presidents of the Union.

In the afternoon a parade took place when almost 10,000 young men marched through the principal streets to the Auditorium where a mass meeting was held. Present at the demonstration were His Eminence, the Cardinal, His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, a large number of Archbishops and Bishops, Rt. Hon. Dr. Manion, Opposition Leader, Mayor Stanley Lewis, and other eminent personages. All the proceedings were broadcast. Interesting features were the ascending to the platform of a delegate

from each diocese and the short speeches given in their mother tongue by representatives of the many different nationalities at the Convention.

The last day of the Convention was a busy one beginning with the placing before the plenary assembly the details for the acceptance of the Constitution. It was decided that the National Committee on the basis of proportional representation consist of 12 English-speaking members, 17 French-speaking, one representative for other nationalities. This Committee was to meet quarterly and carry on the work of the Union in conjunction with the permanent secretariat established at Ottawa. In the afternoon the delegates met and after brief discussions, concurred with the resolutions proposed by the Resolutions Committee only one being left in the hands of the National Committee. Resolutions adopted on Catholic Action included those on the Integrity of Personal Life, Organization of Catholic Action, Study and Diffusion of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Uniting the Catholic Youth of all Races, deploring legislation facilitating Divorce, and others. Resolutions adopted on economic and social action included those dealing with Youth Employment, Workingmen's Unions, Feminine Education, Reform of Rural Education and the settlement of Youth in these Districts, as well as resolutions of sympathy to the Catholic Youth of Germany, Spain, Mexico, and Russia. It was also agreed by the assembly that all organizations of Catholic young women be admitted on the same basis and participate in future conventions. The closing event of the Convention was the banquet held on the last evening under the patronage of Cardinal Villeneuve with fifteen members of the Canadian hierarchy present as well as a number of other distinguished lay and religious personages.

Since the Convention, organization has been going on slowly throughout Canada. Each diocese has a Director of Youth Activities but as yet the Diocesan Committees of the C. C. Y. U. are for the most part in the process of formation. From these Committees the organization branches out to include all the parochial Catholic youth groups of the diocese.

Already tangible results have been seen through the efforts of the National Committee and the permanent secretariat. Two important projects have been launched and carried out with great success. The first is the publication of a bilingual monthly magazine called the *Union* and the

second is the nation-wide drive against immoral and indecent literature which was launched during Lent. Excellent results of this important drive are already in evidence and the National Crusade for Good Reading has been acclaimed by every one.

When the time is opportune for organization it is felt and hoped that the youth of the Charlottetown Diocese will meet with the same spirit of complete unity and indescribable enthusiasm which characterized the First National Convention of the C. C. Y. U.



How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.

—*Shakespeare.*

The perfection of art is to conceal art. — *Quintilian.*

A song forbids victorious deeds to die. — *Schiller.*

