

EYES ON PACIFIC

Serious Issues Impending

DR. J. R. MOTT ARRIVES

That the centre of interest and concern to discerning people is in the Pacific basin is the opinion of Dr. John R. Mott, one of the outstanding figures in American religious life and community social welfare work, who will address a series of meetings in Adelaide before leaving for New Zealand to attend a missionary conference. He arrived today by the express from Melbourne.

Serious issues were impending, continued Dr. Mott, who said that he was making a tour of the countries in the Pacific basin under the auspices of three organisations, to all of which he was officially related. One was the World's Student Christian Federation, which was 30 years of age. It united all the Christian movements among students the world over. It was a powerful agency with 300,000 members and branches in 3,000 universities and colleges, representing literally every corner of the learned world.

It was in connection with this that he had made his first visit to South Australia 30 years ago, when the late Sir Samuel Way (then Chief Justice, and Chancellor of the University) and St. Peter's and Prince Alfred Colleges took an interest in his work. Sir Thomas Buxton (then Governor) also took a deep interest in his visit.

Missionary Council

His second organisation was the International Missionary Council, a new body which grew from the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. He was elected president of that conference. The movement united all the missionary forces of Christendom. He added that he was also a member of the world committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, and had been elected to preside over the international conference at Finland next year. All these bodies had been profoundly impressed with the growing importance of the Pacific basin.

The centre of gravity, as it were, had moved from the other side of the world to the Pacific. Everything gravitated that way. Serious issues were impending. The centre of interest and concern to discerning people was in the Pacific basin. That was not surprising in view of the development of world communications. There were the unfilled portions of the world and also great concentrations of population.

In Java, he continued, an area, equal only to that of New York State, 40,000,000 people lived. Problems such as the subdividing of the great continents like Australia, Canada and Siberia needed solving. There was migration and immigration.

Vital Questions

Continually there was a movement of population. Involved in this was the problem of Christianising the impact of East and West. It was an impact of commerce, industry, finance and travel, and was raising vital questions, in which the societies he represented were interested.

All these matters will receive the attention of Dr. Mott, who, on his return to Europe will report to the national bodies upon his observations. At Melbourne bodies have been investigating such questions as the plight of the aborigines, and the White Australia problem, and reports on these questions will be submitted.

Regardless of religious persuasion, Dr. Mott contends, we must have additional strength to meet the contingencies of modern age.

"I do not sympathise with the pessimistic view that the nations are out to destroy each other," added Dr. Mott. "I resent the idea that they have sinister notions and damaging policies. It is true that some—Soviet Russia for one—are instances of the blind leading the blind. In such cases, nations are prone to run amok and do harm."

Prohibition and Christianity

Questioned regarding the possibility of alterations or modifications of the Volstead Act, as suggested in a cablegram, Dr. Mott said that there was no more likelihood of America reversing its decision than of the sun failing to rise.

"I do not mean that there will not be stupendous discussions and changes in the interests of enforcement," he added. "In any great social reform changes are necessary."

Statements that the spirit of Christianity in America has waned since the Great War are not supported by Dr. Mott. The churches had grown steadily, he said. There had been enormous increases in the circulation of literature of reality, dealing with international relations and personal religion.

PROHIBITION LAW.

Effect in America.

Opinions of Dr. J. R. Mott.

One of the greatest social leaders of the present day in the person of Dr. J. R. Mott arrived in Adelaide on Tuesday. He is at present making a tour of the countries surrounding the Pacific basin, under the auspices of the World's Christian Student Federation, of which he is the Chairman. Dr. Mott is also leader of the world committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations and Chairman of the International Missionary Council, and this is his third visit to Australia.

Speaking yesterday of the Christian Student Movement to a representative of The Register, Dr. Mott said it had existed for 30 years, and he had been its chief executive officer for 25 years, and Chairman during the last five years. The movement, he said, had grown to be a powerful agency. It had 300,000 members, and had branches in 300 leading universities and colleges in every corner of the learned world. The International Missionary Council, of which he was Chair-



DR. J. R. MOTT.

man, had grown out of the world missionary conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. The council now embraced all the missionary forces of Christendom, and he was travelling partly under its auspices. His third position was that of a member of the executive of the world's committee of the Y.M.C.A., which had its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. There were more than 30 councils, and they were united in the world body.

Future of the Pacific.

The three bodies with which he was connected, said Dr. Mott, had been profoundly impressed with the importance of the Pacific basin, which embraced the western shores of South America, the United States, Canada, the eastern shores of Siberia, China, the Philippines, Japan, and Australia. The societies he represented believed, as he believed, that the centre of gravity, so far as future problems were concerned, had shifted from the other side of the world to the areas he had mentioned. It was singular that the largest unoccupied and the most thickly populated areas were contained in the territories he had mentioned. He was amazed to ascertain on a recent visit that more than 50,000,000 people inhabited the Dutch East Indies, and Java had more than 40,000,000 people. It was necessary to populate the great continent of northern Australia, and make it productive to the greatest extent. The migration in the countries he had mentioned was not extensive, but it was significant. One was the spread of the Chinese and Indians over the Pacific islands, and of the latter to Africa. As a traveller, he was conscious that these people were growing in power, and their migration was raising vital questions. All the societies with which he was connected were concerned in the same direction—the relationships and influence that these peoples had on the rest of the world. It was a matter of profound concern, regardless of the religious aspect.

He had found that the world was greatly concerned as to the relationships between man and man, between rich and poor, capital and labour, white and black. They had their different policies, but they were parts of the world, and were desirous of showing their influence in the most constructive way. He did not hold the pessimistic view that the nations were out to fight one another, and that there would be strife and disintegration internally. Taking Russia as an instance, he did not think that the intentions of its people were as sinister as some people thought. They were led by blind leaders, who had ran amok and done harm.

Prohibition Come to Stay.

Dr. Mott was shown a cablegram from Washington which had appeared in the press this week regarding a proposal to amend the Volstead law. He said that, in his opinion, there was no chance of the United States reversing its position on prohibition. There might be alterations and improvements, but such were necessary in all great reforms. The mind of the American people, as a people, had been made up on this question long before the war. America had been becoming dry, State by State, over a period of 50 years, and the majority of the States had adopted prohibition prior to the war. Prohibition was not an aftermath of the war, as many people thought. Further, America had decided that there should be no partial measures. It must be thorough, root and branch, prohibition. In order to reverse the prohibition question, Congress must have a three-fourths majority, and three-fourths of the Legislatures of the States must reverse it also. The populace had been educated on the question during the past generation on scientific and not on narrow puitanical lines, and he was sure public opinion would never turn against prohibition. He admitted that prohibition was not the success that was intended to New York city, and that was the source from which travellers from other parts of the world formed their opinion. They had to remember, however, that seven-eighths of the population of that city were of foreign and not of Anglo-Saxon origin. They would find that the Anglo-Saxon population of America was almost wholly in favour of prohibition, and those against it were the comparatively recent arrivals from Europe. All the railroads of America, which employed 10,000,000 men directly and indirectly, and the great commercial concerns were wholly in favour of it.

Advance of Christianity.

Questioned regarding the reported wane of Christianity in America since the war, Dr. Mott said the tests on that point would be the numbers attending and joining the churches, the classes of books and periodicals that were in demand, and the attitude of the educated section to the subject. He could say positively that, with the exception of one or two minor denominations, the attendances at churches had much increased, and the greatest circulation in literature was of those writers who had the courage to deal with present-day social, political, and religious questions. The reply to the third point was the great growth of the Student Christian movement, and the tremendous expansion of universities and high schools. He was anticipating a great crop of writers on religious subjects in the near future. The religious writings of Kagawa, the Japanese Christian Socialist, had had an unprecedented sale in that country. The 300th edition of one of his books had been published, and this exceeded the sale of any work in the world. The best example of the growth of Christianity was the great development of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. Since the war more than 40 million dollars had been given towards buildings for the Y.M.C.A. in the United States.

The Racial Problem.

In conclusion, Dr. Mott said the racial question was very acute immediately after the war, and it was accentuated because the negroes who returned from the war had been made much of by the French and others. A constructive plan for dealing with the racial problem had been evolved. There were between 11,000,000 and 12,000,000 black men living in the southern States, and inter-racial commissions composed of the best of the black men and the best of the white men and women had been formed. The commissions had been collaborating, and wonderful things had happened. So successful had been results that reformers from Europe and South Africa were visiting the States in great numbers to ascertain the methods adopted. The relations between the Orientals and Asiatics and whites on the Pacific coast were greatly improved. Since the war there had been a thorough "facing-up" of social and international problems, and things now looked much brighter than at any time in the past.

LUNCHEON AT Y.M.C.A.

The Board of Directors of the Adelaide Young Men's Christian Association entertained Dr. J. R. Mott at luncheon at the association rooms at 10 p.m. on Tuesday. There were present members of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board of the Y.M.C.A., representatives of associated institutions, religious bodies, and the Student Christian Movement, the President of the Melbourne Y.M.C.A. (Mr. C. F. Crosby), the general secretary (Mr. G. W. Hughes), Mr. L. Jenner, of Melbourne, a member of the National Committee of the Y.M.C.A., team managers of the visiting associations, and others.

Mr. A. T. Wreford, who presided, welcoming Dr. Mott, said his visit was to be all too brief. What Dr. Mott would say to them would only whet their appetites to hear more of what he had to tell. Their guest was not only an American, but a citizen of almost every country, so extensive were his activities. He was a representative of that type of internationalism that would change the world for the better, in contrast to those types of internationalism that would drag down and destroy what was good in the world.

"The Fork in the Road."

Dr. Mott, in reply, expressed appreciation of being given the opportunity to meet those present. He recognised they were composed of the directing and vitalizing forces of the Commonwealth. After all his years of ceaseless travel he had come to the conclusion that the present time was one of the most decisive in history. In other words, they had come to the fork in the road. He did not see how it was possible for them to evade the serious issues they were called upon to decide, and the associations represented there that day would have to decide whether they would expand or contract. They were living enterprises, and the spirit of the living Christ was breaking out in each of them. He was sure that he had not come among those who would lend themselves to a policy of contraction. He was not unmindful of the difficulties that had come in the backwash of the Great War, and the tremendous social convulsions that were succeeding it. God grant that in the coming age it could not be said that they had lagged behind, or marked time, when they had come to the fork in the road. The momentous decision whether they would be guided by the past, or by the future, was for them to make. He had found too many so-called leaders who were living in the past. The hand of Christ pointed to limitless opportunities, but if they followed any other lead they would find themselves in a blind alley. How would society be changed, he asked, if it followed the pierced hand of Christ, and how much more would it impress sceptics and unbelievers that it was a religion of reality that was dealing with things as they were at present, and not as they once had been. Men of vision, in a day like this, had to decide whether they would see the kingdom of this world become the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He was not a pessimist, and he came among them greatly heartened by his experiences during the past four months. He could stand there with unshakable conviction and proclaim the living Christ. It was for them to decide whether they would regulate their spiritual plans by their material resources, or, on the other hand, by the invisible spiritual resources. He believed that there was an economic basis to every spiritual enterprise. They had to be sagacious in the furtherance of their social improvements, and to regulate their plans by their invisible spiritual resources. They had to choose between seeing opportunities, and seizing opportunities. Many business men saw opportunities, but it was the successful men who seized them. It was for them to seize their opportunities, and remember that theirs was a living Christ, and not a dead one.

The Rev. G. H. Wright, in behalf of the associations represented, thanked Dr. Mott for his splendid address. It was of tremendous advantage, he said, in these days of world-wide problems, to have them explained by a man like Dr. Mott, who could speak from first-hand knowledge.

WELCOME BY BOYS' CLUB.

Dr. Mott attended a tea given by the League of Boys' Club of the Y.M.C.A. at its rooms on Tuesday night. Mr. A. T. Wreford (Acting President of the Y.M.C.A.) was in the chair. There were also present representatives of several boy welfare institutions. In a short address Dr. Mott emphasized that there was no more important work in connection with the Y.M.C.A. than the boys' department. The work of relating the boy to the living Christ was the most enduring and helpful work in any part of the world, as boys were "wide open" for Christianity and responsive to teaching.

Questions were then asked by some of the representatives present, and answered by Dr. Mott.

Later Dr. Mott proceeded to the social room, and addressed a meeting of young men, including the visitors to Adelaide in connection with the annual tournaments. He urged them to preserve the best traditions of the Christian religion, and said that if they wished to become real leaders they had to be prepared to pay the price. A man could not hope to achieve distinction if he were not thorough, and every boy's ambition should be to be better than his fellow. Thinkers and mechanical workers and men responsive to new ideas and better methods were what was required in business. The man who was willing to rest on the stepping stones of yesterday was not set down for leadership. They should never be content with their achievements, but press on, and acquire the power of leadership so as to be of service to their fellow-men. They must be earnest, steadfast, and have plenty of vitality. There was no room for pessimists, who would never become the leaders of nations.

Dr. Mott was thanked for his address.