

One Million Families Enlisted in Movie Drive By Catholic Daughters

Washington, D. C.—An announcement by the Catholic Daughters of America states that a committee of 1,500 operating throughout the country for 10 months under the chairmanship of the Supreme Regent has concluded its report, which indicates that more than one million Catholic families have been personally contacted and enlisted in the crusade against evil motion pictures.

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Fr. Lord Sees Public Betrayal By Hollywood In Violating Own Code

The Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J., national organizer of the Sodality of Our Lady, in Rochester, Monday, granted permission to the CATHOLIC COURIER to reproduce his article in "Queen's Work," national Sodality magazine, wherein he reveals himself as one of a committee who prepared a code for Hollywood producers which he declares they have violated completely after signing their names to the code.

This is the inside story told by one who has been on the ground of what has been done by the motion picture industry leaders to keep the films from improving in moral tone after giving their word they would make such an effort.

Father Lord states: "This is the story of a great betrayal. It is the story of signatures written on scraps of paper. It is the record of words given and instantly violated, of men who made solemn pledges that they did not keep beyond the moment when the ink dried on the paper.

"I preface our Crusade for clean motion-pictures with this story simply because it will indicate to Socialists that they are not forcing anything on a group of frankly unwilling men. All you are asking from the motion picture industry is that they keep their own signed agreements and stop violating their own pledges.

"If the motion-picture industry were true to its promises and lived up to its own voluntary code, our Crusade would not be necessary. What we are doing is atoning by the agreement of decency and self-respect that the motion-picture groups solemnly signed and then immediately repudiated.

"Don'ts and Be Carefuls

"Follow the development step by step, and we shall see just what all this means. "Almost from the advent of Mr. Will Hays' so-called czarism over the motion pictures, there had been moral agreement among the producers known as the "Don'ts" and "Be Carefuls." There were certain things that should not be done or must be done with extreme caution. Explicitly, the producers had admitted that the motion pictures could not present certain scenes or certain types of conduct without peril to the audience.

"But these Don'ts and Be Carefuls proved entirely inadequate. The country showed signs of growing restlessness under the flood of increasingly unsavory films, and censorship on national or state lines loomed as a strong possibility.

"It was about this time that a small group of men, of whom I was one, entered the picture. We were asked to draw up a code of morality and conduct for the motion-picture industry, and we did so. This code was deliberately made broad enough to permit of such classic stories and such artistic presentation as the producer felt to be important. But it laid down the simple principles of decency in entertainment upon which all men, religious and unreligious, could agree.

"They Meet and Sign

"In March, 1930, I was asked to present this code to the producers. At a meeting presided over by Mr. Will Hays, all the important producing companies, large and small, met through their chosen representatives, all of whom were leading executives within the companies. I read and explained the code; then listened to the brief discussion that followed, and finally sat by while one by one these officially appointed representatives of the companies signed upon the dotted line.

"It was the most solemn sort of agreement, by which a group of men promised to present through their industry clean and decent entertainment.

"I for one thought that signatures had a solemn and binding significance. I felt that when men gave their word, they meant what they said and signed.

Enforcement

"At Hollywood a system for enforcing this code was set up. Mr. Jason Joy was placed in charge of its enforcement under Mr. Hays. Then the whole story of the code was given to the country with a great fanfare of trumpets and a great show of zeal on the part of all concerned. It was a magnificent piece of publicity. Newspapers wrote important and approving editorials about the step. Magazines devoted long articles to its discussion. Priests and ministers and educators admitted that in the newly adopted code they saw every hope of a reformation and the beginning of clean entertainment by this group of producers for the great public.

Sodality Head



The Rev. Robert J. Fox, Diocesan Director of the Sodality of Our Lady, is directing the Rochester Sodality Parish Union in a special campaign against indecent and crime-theme motion pictures. The Sodality of the Diocese are supporting the Legion of Decency movement under the direction of Archbishop Mooney.

PROTESTANT CHURCHES FOR FILM DECENCY

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of enforced book-banking and blind-buying of films. "Fourth, that pastors in all denominations throughout the country be urged to use the third Sunday in October as an occasion for discussing the motion picture, its potential value to society and religion, and the issues involved in improving the moral and social qualities of films; and that the Department of Church and Social Service be requested to take such steps as necessary to secure the most effective observance of the day and also the participation of church organizations, including young people's societies, in the movement.

"In determining what pictures are indecent or otherwise morally objectionable and what local theatres should be denied patronage the individual must be guided by his own conscience after reading photoplay review services or after making personal inquiries. Such inquiry should be made about other features of the program, for it is a frequent practice of exhibitors, in order to please other patrons, to show an objectionable subject with a clean and desirable picture.

"The need of better films councils in communities which the Federal Council has been urging and helping to organize, and the need also for a national photoplay review service for the Protestant churches which the Council plans to issue as soon as it can be financed are emphasized by the present movement. Thousands of people now will want guidance on films which they will often find it difficult to get. The community itself should be in a position to act on these problems through a better films council, representing the religious, civic, educational and welfare organizations of the community."

ENGLISH PASTOR HONORED

Paris, (NGWC)—Father Gabriel McDarby, who for 20 years has been pastor of St. Joseph's, the church for English-speaking Catholics at Paris, has been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

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FR. D. A. LORD PLANS MOVIE 'WHITE LIST'

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remains to be seen. I don't know positively whether the question comes within their jurisdiction. However, if a "white list" is not forthcoming from the committee, we will issue one from the Central Sodality office very shortly."

At the present time, the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae publishes a list of films from time to time suited to the various types of Catholic taste.

Father Lord was enthusiastic over the support given the movement thus far from ranks within and outside the church. He said that he has received letters from Protestant bishops and Jewish rabbis, all expressing the single thought that "now we can work together for a common cause." The 6,000 sodality units comprise men and women ranging in age from fourteen to thirty years and a great number believes they are doing a great work in lending their support to this move.

In a large eastern city, the bishop of the diocese turned over the entire program for the drive against indecent movies to the young people and their response was splendid, many going so far as to write letters of protest to the individual theater managers, according to Father Lord.

Father Lord pointed out the case of a small town where members of the church joined the Legion of Decency. In the single movie house in that place the Sunday attendance dropped from 500 to 200 and the daily attendance dropped from 200 to an average of 50 the next year.

Even the financial centers have felt the backlash of the drive. Father Lord said, as he quoted an article from the National Investment and Transcript of Camden, N. J., where in a financial writer warns the readers to "sell all motion picture bonds and stocks. The general public is getting sick and tired of indecency."

"Father Lord added that he notices a "tremendous change" in the general moral tone of some of the forthcoming productions from Hollywood. He said the double feature program presents a vexing problem to theater managers and declared that a recent poll showed the vast majority against such a practice although it is still being carried on.

The method of protest to the in-

dividual stars, as advocated by the "Queen's Work," is proving highly effective, the priest said. He cited the example of Will Rogers, who received 2,500 letters of protest because of an off-color scene in his picture "State Fair." Rogers did not appear in the scene but told Father Lord he was unaware of its existence until the film had been marketed. The star promised that such a thing would not happen again in any of his pictures. The priest-editor declared that the drive must be carried through to a successful conclusion and once the goal is attained there should be a constant vigilance of the film fare presented to the American people. He indicated that the next object of attack in the general drive against indecency are some of the current books with a wild moral tone. Inasmuch as some of the films are derived from books, this type of literature is a natural feeding ground for gross productions and the movies can be cut off from a potential source of supply. Father Lord explained. While in Rochester Father Lord conferred with the Rev. Robert A. Fox, diocesan director of the Sodality and the Rev. Leo C. Mooney, diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and managing editor of the Catholic Courier.

ASK the MEN who SEE the LOSS



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