

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 at. ding 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.

"One year later I went again to Hollywood and spent almost two weeks going over the stories that seemed to violate the code, and then giving to the heads of the industry, meeting again under Mr. Hays, a resume of the code and what I had seen were violations of its clear law. Once more the code was accepted and again approved by the men responsible for making the pictures.

"Never Revoked" "What actually happened? That's an interesting story. "The machinery for enforcing the code fell to pieces. The men responsible for the films were interested in one thing—the money they could make from a picture. If morality stood between them and the making of that money, morality was simply cast aside and with it their solemnly signed code with its formally acknowledged responsibilities and obligations.

"Of course no one could possibly guess what might have happened to the pictures without that code. Thousands of feet of film were cut because of it and thrown into the scrap heap. Hundreds of stories, too terrible to be given in detail, were rewritten to meet some of the requirements of the code. "Plays from Broadway were toned down and somewhat fumigated. Best-selling novels were made a little less ferocious in their attack upon morality. And though authors raved and cursed (as I have heard them do) and directors demanded license to do what they pleased with their pictures, those who were appointed to enforce the code struggled to maintain some of its standards of decency. A Torn Code "Then came the crash of the Depression, and the immediate objective of each company was to make money if possible, and if the code got between them and their profits, then the code had to suffer or go. They rapidly learned to 'outsmart' the code. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer seemed to lead the way with its plays like 'Possessed,' which was clever enough to violate the code without appearing to violate it. Warner Brothers and others developed the same gentle art. And one after another the companies got out pictures in a descending scale of morality and a more and more flagrant violation of their own signed code. "Seduction and prostitution, the commonest vulgarity and the most flagrant living in sin became the ordinary subjects of the films. More and more the sinful woman was glorified. Any sort-of-life-of-crime was patched up by a brief punishment or repentance at the very end of the last roll of film. Dirty jokes, explicitly barred from the films by the code, became a matter of ordinary occurrence, as did dirty songs and situations. Undressing scenes, with no connection whatsoever with the plot, were dragged in for 'punch' situations; and men and women were shown living—in all possible violations of the code and of the common decencies of life. "Bedroom scenes, breakfast scenes, successful seductions, mistresses, women of the streets, rakes and roués became the ordinary grist for the mill, and all these things were against the code, throwing the interest and sympathy of the audience away from good and toward evil. Box Office Only "When we protested, we were shown the profits made by some of our film as a convincing argument that we were wrong and the producers were right. "At the present moment never less than fifty per cent, and usually as high as sixty per cent, of the films frankly and unblushingly violate the producers' own signed and accepted and published code. "So there is nothing to be hoped for there. The producers prefer to enrich themselves rather than to keep their pledged word. The signing of a code means nothing to them if that code stands between them and dividends. "Now there are within the industry honest men who would prefer to make decent films. There are those who regret the shame of the industry in this open violation of its own solemn agreement with the public. In our crusade for decent films we are backing up these men and helping them to enforce the code."

Need of Medical Missioners Cited By Father Mathis

Philadelphia.—(NGWC)—The need for scientific conduct of medical missions is so widespread and the foundation of a community to conduct Catholic medical missions on the field is so desirable that the headquarters of the Society of Medical Missionaries in Washington, D. C., has been literally swamped with requests for missioners from Bishops of almost every foreign land, the Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C., says in an article in The Ecclesiastical Review.

Father Mathis' article, entitled "Medical Vocations," which also has been published in pamphlet form, gives facts which show the dire need for this service. "In the Holy Cross Mission of Dacca, India, which is typical of the foreign missions generally," he says, "there are only one European doctor and about ten Indian doctors, qualified according to western medical standards, to serve 12,000,000 people. One hospital and six Government clinics serve this huge population." In the United States, he reminds, there is one doctor for every 700 persons.

"There is unlimited opportunity for medical women to bring relief to their less fortunate sisters," Father Mathis points out, declaring: "The little scientific medical aid available, at least in India, is generally speaking, restricted to boys and men. Girls and women are practically excluded from such aid by strict social laws, called purdah, that prohibit any care of women by men not of the household. Women are ministered to in their sicknesses often by the most ignorant and unsanitary representatives of their sex."

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

(Continued from Page 9) of enforced black-booking 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'

(Continued from Page 9) 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 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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