

Colour prejudice of the South Africans

Caux, Switzerland.

EVIDENCE of the wide scope of Moral Re-Armament activities is obtained within a few days merely by attending some of the twice-daily meetings held in the lecture-room of the Mountain House at Caux.

Each of these meetings occupies about two hours and is relayed, through interpreters, into several languages for the benefit of the many nationalities present.

In one short week of thus sitting in intermittently—whenever I was in the mood to break away from the magnificence of the surrounding mountain scenery with the Lake of Geneva lying below—at these meetings and hearing person after person from an infinite variety of classes, creeds, colours and races, stating their case for Moral Re-Armament, I was frankly amazed to realize the depths to which this ideology has penetrated into every section of the human family.

In the course of a few days I have heard managing directors of leading industrial concerns from Europe's largest capitals, as well as the smallest, testifying to a new conception of business based on Moral Re-Armament in which employers no longer worked solely for profits, nor workers for wages alone, but in which the great purpose of industry has become changed to management and labour working together to satisfy the needs of the world.

Officials

AMONG these speakers (covering, be it remembered, only a few days) have been the president of the jute industry of France, the national secretary of the textile workers in France, the general manager of a great steel rolling mill in Germany, top-ranking officials in the American airways, the managing director of a group of mines in Germany, where 28,000 men are employed, and the vice-president of the employers of Northern France.

The professions, too, have been represented by the assistant secretary of the British Medical Association, the senior lecturer in history at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, an atomic research scientist from Manchester, groups of students from leading German universities, the editor of the well-known German newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung," and top-ranking generals from Germany, France and Britain have taken their place on the platform.

Labour

REPRESENTING labour were such persons as the chairman of shop stewards for the 10,000 men in the Dunlop Rubber Company, Birmingham, delegates from 23 French factories in the industrial region of Lille and Paris, from United Steel in England and from automobile companies.

The president of the All-India Air Employees' Union also spoke, and two rival trades union leaders from Jamaica.

Italian workers have come from the Montecatini Chemical Industries, Pakistan has sent one of its Ministers of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister has attended from the Philippines.

The Mayor of Eindhoven and a member of the Upper House of the Dutch Parliament has been present from Holland.

Members of the Japanese Diet have flown from the Far East and from the distant reaches of Tibet has come a Buddhist priest who announced publicly his decision to dedicate three years of his life to spreading the Moral Re-Armament ideology among his 83,000 fellow priests.

The list might go on indefinitely, making of this story little more than a statistical record. The re-

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markable fact to be gauged from these typical instances alone is that, at two daily meetings, throughout the week and for the three-month duration of the Assembly, Moral Re-Armament is able to produce an unbroken stream of speakers from all walks of life and thus prove its tremendous world-wide ramifications.

It must be remembered, too, that these same scenes are being simultaneously enacted in America where Dr. Frank Buchman, the originator of Moral Re-Armament, leads the Assembly at Mackinac, in the State of Michigan, continuing from there to important conferences at San Francisco.

This in itself is telling evidence of the unarguable appeal of the ideology as the solution of world problems. The depth of sincerity of its adherents is such that tears often sting the eyelids of even the least emotional at some of the stories told.

South Africans

AT the time of writing there are a dozen or so South Africans at Caux, but their voice is a small crying noise in the loud hub-bub of the thousands of people around them.

Both here and in England I have found that little is known of South Africa.

On all sides at Caux there are constant requests for more knowledge, especially of South African national affairs, and the South African representatives are looked at with no little curiosity as a virtually unknown race in the great, dark continent of Africa.

It came as a shock to me to be regarded as a linguist because I spoke English, and to be asked what "the South African language" really was.

This, of course, is an extreme instance of the ignorance found regarding the Union, but it is mortifying to find that those who best know all about South Africa are the Indians, the Nigerians, the Japanese and members of any race that has a coloured skin.

Gulf of colour

BETWEEN South Africans and persons of these races difficulty is still experienced in bridging the gulf of colour prejudice that lies so forbiddingly between them.

As one South African remarked to me: "I shook hands with a Nigerian, but I only gave him my hand, not my heart."

One of the major issues at this year's assembly at Caux is to find a common ground on which South Africans and those of darker skins can meet in better mutual understanding.

Altogether, our petty racial problems appear as pinpricks beside the threatening clashes in Europe today under the infiltration of Communism. The ignorance of European nations regarding our national affairs can be understood, in the circumstances, but in racial issues one wonders whether we all do not have something in common.

Here at Caux, at any rate, is a fine opportunity for South Africa to broaden its parochial outlook, to learn something from these others, and above all to sink its political preoccupations and repressive immigration policy in favour of such internationalism as is advocated in this ideology.