

The Groups in Canada :

B.W. In Reply to Rev. H. C. L.

2.11.33

Heywood

To the Editor of THE BRITISH WEEKLY.

DEAR SIR,—I have no desire to enter into a criticism of the Oxford Group Movement or any of its works, but in the interests only of truth and a fair understanding I would ask you to give space to this letter.

In your issue of October 5, just to hand, there appears an article by the Rev. H. C. L. Heywood, which contains the following paragraph :

"The Bishop of Durham quotes from *The New Outlook* of December 21, 1932. He does not, however, state that the criticism in that issue was by one who had never attended a meeting of the Groups. Nor does he seem to know that an answer to that criticism by Professor Grensted was never published and that many Christian leaders protested to *The New Outlook* against this gross misrepresentation of facts."

We do not suppose that the writer of this article had any opportunity of knowing personally what took place in Toronto during the visit of the Oxford Groups in December last, and we cannot blame him for any wilful misstatement or misrepresentation, but it does seem unfortunate that the information given him, from whatever source, should have been so far from the facts in the case. We presume that the "one" referred to as responsible for the criticism complained of was the Editor, and the facts in that connection are these. The Editor attended practically every meeting held by the Groups during the stay in Toronto that was open to ministers, as well as the public meetings, remembering that on several occasions two or three meetings were in progress at the same time. His associates in the office did the same, so that there was no type of meeting, weekday or Sunday, morning or evening, during all the days on which the Groups operated in Toronto at which *The New Outlook* was not represented. If it was not the Editor that was meant, the statement made by Mr. Heywood is equally untrue of the others who wrote criticising the Groups in the same issue.

In connection with Mr. Heywood's reference to Professor Grensted's letter, it is true that the Editor did get a letter signed by Professor Grensted, but it came to him by the hand of a minister of the city who was enthusiastic for the Groups and when the issue of December 28, in which it was definitely stated that, in the interests of peace and good will throughout the Church, no further discussion of matters concerning the Groups would be allowed in the columns, was running on the press. This was fully explained to the bearer of Dr. Grensted's communication.

As to the "many Christian leaders" who protested against the paper's "gross misrepresentation of facts," this is to be said, the Editor did receive several score of letters following the issue of the paper referred to, many of them favourable to the Groups. However, the majority of them approved of the stand taken; they did not protest against "misrepresentation of facts," but rather against the methods of the Groups. In fact, many of these letters said stronger things in criticism of the Groups than the Editor had said.

There is another paragraph in Mr. Heywood's article that does not specially concern the Editor of *The New Outlook*, but he would like to make the briefest reference to it. The paragraph says :

"The Bishop also quotes with approval from the 'careful and discriminating report' of 'thirty religious leaders in Toronto.' He does not add that those 'leaders' published that report anonymously."

It is true that the pamphlet in question was published without the names of those who prepared it, but those names were widely known and were available for anyone who desired them, and included a number of the outstanding religious leaders in the city, many of whom had definite responsibility in various organisations of the Church. They met to discuss what their policy should be, after having attended the meetings of the Group and having a number of interviews. The committee first set down everything that could be said in favour of the Groups, all of

I trust, Mr. Editor, you will allow these things to be said in the interest of the absolute honesty and love which the Groups would have us all accept.—
Very sincerely yours,

W. B. CREIGHTON,
Editor, *The New Outlook*.
Toronto, Canada.
October 19, 1933.

which is reported in the pamphlet, and followed this by carefully considered, critical statements. It is hard to see how any fault can be found either with the method or the spirit of their study or with their manner of reporting their findings.