

## Oxford Group



**REV. NORMAN S. DOWD,**  
Minister, Church of Our Father,  
(Unitarian), Ottawa.

### CHANGING THE SOCIAL ORDER

The visit of the Oxford Group was a significant event in the religious life of Ottawa. Quietly, simply, and in the most friendly manner, its members brought a non-theological, undogmatic religious message to thousands of people, many of whom had lost all contact with organized religion. On the surface, it was difficult to recognize in this group of well-educated, well-dressed moderns, an affinity with the prophets of olden time, but the prophetic spirit was clearly in evidence, in the stress which was laid on repentance and obedience to the will of God, and the way in which sectarianism was transcended. It must have taken faith and courage to invade a complacent, self-satisfied city like Ottawa, to establish quarters at the Chateau Laurier, and to expect any worth-while response. Yet, to our vast astonishment, the people turned out in great numbers, and the lives of many have been changed from boredom and futility to joyous Christian activity.

The real test of the vitality and the validity of the message, and the sincerity of those who accepted the Group's way of life, must, however, now be faced. It is not unfair to say, that the Group's social philosophy was based on the belief that men and women whose lives were changed by the re-affirmation of their ideals in the light of the ex-istencies should be recognized. The churches need the help of those whose lives have been changed, and they need, in turn, the stimulus and encouragement which the churches can give. There has already been manifested, as a result of the Group's visit, a refreshing and gratifying spirit of fellowship among various denominations. Religion is coming into its own as a binding, not a divisive force, and the possibilities of closer co-operation among the churches are unpredictable.

It is a great pleasure for me, therefore, to join with my fellow-ministers in commending highly the spirit of good-will which animated the Oxford Group, and to express the hope that it will spread far and wide, until we have established in our city the "beloved community" of our hopes and aspirations.

**NORMAN S. DOWD.**