

YOUR ATTENTION

FROM

January 13, 1947

No. 67 CONFIDENTIAL1. Contact with Archbishop of Montreal.

When the story about the Montreal Jew who received an apostolic benediction came to our attention, we consulted a priest with whom we are in contact who saw the Archbishop himself on it. It was there that we received detailed instructions on how the matter may be handled publicly and privately. These instructions were carried out fully and in contact with the authorities. At that time, the Archbishop indicated that he might utilize this occasion to receive a delegation from the Canadian Jewish Congress as a formal gesture, to receive the thanks of the community and of Mr. Obront, the recipient of the benediction and to exchange assurances of goodwill, etc. Msgr. Henri Jeannotte, who is on close terms with the Archbishop, was to arrange the details of protocol. We tried to utilize this opportunity, but had our reservations in the light of personal circumstances. We unofficially conveyed the existence of these reservations to a member of the church and were told that this would be looked into. We saw Msgr. Jeannotte. He told us very forthrightly that the church is very much concerned at the present time in our community and would be interested in finding a practicable method for working together vigorously on the common ground of interests in religion. Any suggestions that we have for such a program would be welcomed. The Archbishop is looking for the opportunity of meeting with the representatives of the Jewish community for an exchange of sentiments at a very early opportunity, but Mr. Obront does not warrant such an honour as to have a meeting of this sort in connection with him. Msgr. Jeannotte believes that a proper opportunity will present itself within the next few months and he is himself anxious to find it and to utilize it.

The Monsignor is quite well informed on the Jewish community and takes a deep interest in it. He knows Hebrew and Aramaic and reads Yiddish fluently, often reads the Jewish Daily Eagle. He has become convinced that the Jewish community of Canada is fundamentally disinterested in its own religion. He stated quite categorically that the church has no intentions or plans to proselytize among Jews, but he is shocked by the disinterest of the Jewish community in its own faith. He met with a prominent rabbi in this city whom he knows rather well and when attempting to discuss the Jewish religion with him, the Rabbi, who is in executive work, said that he was not interested particularly in religion. The Jewish man on the street, the Monsignor said, knows and cares even less, and he is seeking representative and orthodox rabbis with whom to establish connections. We told him that he was a little misinformed on the temper of the community and that the rabbis with whom he met are not truly representative. Rosenberg's study, which stresses a high correlation between Canadian Jews by race and Jews by faith, impressed him. We also informed him that the government of Canada, for its chaplaincy purposes, considered the Canadian Jewish Congress and its Religious Welfare Committee as the representative of the religious phase of Jewish life in this country, and we would be glad to assist him in his further studies. He asked for certain specific information, such as the extent of Jewish religious instruction in the country. When we told him that the Congress identifies itself sufficiently with Jewish religious education to sponsor the Igud, he was very much interested and asked for further information on this as well as on another subject which we opened to him, the extent of religious instruction in the so-called worldly Jewish school, such as the People's School, etc.

National Headquarters: CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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Msgr, Jeannotte also stated what we had known from other sources, that the Archbishop here is very much concerned with the question of Jews in the school system. He is, of course, au courant with the situation in Outremont, and stated readily that the Archbishop was prepared to take the matter up with the Government at any time. The Archbishop seems to be thinking along the lines of schools for Jews with instruction in the English language, with a large measure of autonomy, within the Catholic school system on condition that Jewish religious instruction be compulsory. We did not follow the subject up with him.

2. Formation of a Catholic Committee.

Our plans for the formation of a Catholic Committee to assist us in our public relations work are far advanced. A dinner to organize it formally will be held within several months. The following agreed to act on the committee:- Jacques Perreault, Lawyer & Director of Le Devoir; Prof. Jacques Dansereau, Professor at the University of Montreal; Prof. Jacques Rousseau, Director of the Jardin Botanique; Jacques LaMoynes, Journalist; Joseph Charbonneau, Publisher & Author.

Each of the members of the Committee is preparing a pamphlet in a series to be sponsored by the Committee. Subjects included: The scientific problem of race, legal aspect of race and minorities in Canada, Canadian unity, Church and Racism, Jacques Maritain, French Ambassador to the Vatican, is being invited to write in this series.

3. Maritime Campaign.

We arranged with Mr. Skorneck of the J. D.C. for a speaker for the Maritime Campaign in 1947. Several people were discussed; Mr. Skorneck will clear with the Maritime community leaders and try to have an excellent fund raiser with European experiences delegated for our Maritime campaign.

4. Inner Executive Meeting.

The regular semi-monthly luncheon meeting of the Montreal members of the National Executive was to be held on Tuesday, January 14th. It has been postponed for Wednesday, January 15th.

5. Dr. B. Pliskin's Visit to Montreal.

Dr. B. Pliskin, representative of the D. P.'s in Germany arrived in Montreal. He will meet with the members of the National Executive, the heads of the Verbands and the Leaders of the Combined Jewish Appeal in Montreal at a luncheon meeting on Tuesday, January 14th. He will also participate at the meeting of the Dominion Council, which is being held on the same day.