

DIOCESAN DELEGATE REPORT

(PARISH ASSEMBLY JAN., 29, 1967)

On Friday and Saturday, April 29 and 30, 1966, the 64th annual assembly of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America was held in the St. Thomas Church of Tenafly, New Jersey. Our church was represented by our pastor, Very Rev. Karekin Vardabet, now Bishop Karekin, and Messrs. Dikran Koumjian and Caspar Kasparian.

The diocese has 42 parishes and 41 own their own churches. At the time of the assembly there were 44 clergymen in the diocese, including four bishops, Archbp. Sion, Archbp. Tiran, Bishop Elisha and Bishop Papken. Last spring 39 parishes had pastors with six of these parishes sharing the services of a priest. The need for qualified clergymen is acute in the diocese. There are currently seven deacons who are awaiting ordination. St. Nersess Theological Seminary in Evanston does not have a current class but the hope remains that our youth and people will awaken to their responsibilities and will have the far-reaching wisdom to encourage and insure the continuance of the seminary.

In 1965 the diocese had expenses of \$97, 543.55 which exceeded income by \$3,178.50. The assembly approved a budget of \$104,750 for 1966. Our church's dues to help meet this budget were \$1050 all of which was paid by the church treasurer as it fell due. With regard to further obligations of our church it was reported to the assembly that six churches, ours included, have not completed their quotas for the \$50,000 Reserve Fund. Our church was listed as owing \$200. I have informed the church treasurer and he in turn has requested clarification from the diocesan office since we were unaware there was an amount due from us.

Further, eight churches, ours included, were listed as delinquent in repaying loans secured from the Diocese for church construction. Although these loans were made as interest-free loans for periods of up to four years the delinquent churches have exceeded their loan periods and the fund announced that there would be 4% interest charge. Our obligation is \$10,000 and it is my understanding the the Building Fund Committee is planning for repayment as soon as possible.

The proposed date for completion of the cathedral is September 1967 at which time His Holiness Vasken I has indicated he will be present for the consecration. As we all know there is an urgent need for all of us to contribute our share to this worthy project. A quota was placed upon each church to raise \$1 million but this quota has now been tripled in order to meet the total estimated obligations. In connection with the cathedral project, Mr. Koumjian of our church made a proposal that a fund be created to defray the cathedral expenses as well as to finance scholarships for seminarians by getting 100 persons to purchase \$10,000 life insurance policies payable to the fund. The proposal was referred to the Diocesan Council and the Cathedral Committee for study.

The most important work of the assembly as to elect a primate and to revise the diocesan by-laws. Both of these tasks were accomplished. There were three nominees for primate presented to the assembly by the Diocesan Council. They were the Most Rev. Sion, Bishop Elisha and Bishop Torkom. The Rt. Rev. Elisha withdrew his name and Very Rev. Muron Vard. was nominated in his place. The first ballot did not produce a majority vote for any of the candidates; accordingly the two highest vote receivers were declared as candidates for a second balloting. The outcome of the second ballot was Archbp. Sion, 60 votes and Bishop Torkom, 64 votes. It was proposed that Bishop Torkom be

unanimously elected. A subsequent vote resulted in 118 for Bihsop Torkom and 6 opposed.

The by-laws were reviewed in detail by a committee that considered comments by the various shurches, our church included. At a full meeting of the assembly the revised by-laws were approved article by article and changes were incorporated as desired by the assembly. We now await approval of the Catholicos and publication by the diocese.

The next assembly will be held this spring in Detroit, Michigan.

Recent happenings of interest in the diocese are of course the election of our former pastor as Bishop of Australia and his appointment of Catholical Representative for the Far East, the election of Bishop Elisha as primate of The California diocese, appointment of the Very Rev. Vasken Keberslian, former pastor of Cleveland as Vicar-general, the appointment of Very Rev. Vatche Hovsepian of Union City as Vicar-General of Canada in residence in Montreal and Eppointment to Deacon Kasparian as the coordinator of ACYOA and Sunday School Activities.

The lay delegates paid their own expenses to the 1966 assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caspar M. Kasparian