

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:—

The cause of this letter was a simple, stray thought that happened along, that thought took me back to St. Dunstan's of five years ago. At that time, I was a sophomore. Then, and likely now too, it was quite common to find a group of sophomores sitting around discussing anything and everything that was open to debate. On this particular occasion, as often happened in such "sessions", the discussion turned to the favorite topic—S. D. U. After going the round of sports, college magazine, studies, etc., we came to the usual conclusion that S. D. U. was just about tops as far as we could see.

Then the thought suddenly struck me: "How do we know we are right in our opinion? Perhaps we think a lot of our college because we don't know any others, and haven't a chance to compare?" I dismissed the thought as leading nowhere, and promptly forgot all about it. But memory is a funny thing, and sometimes what has been buried for years pops to the surface. That is the way it was with this particular thought—it came back after five years. But this time it had an added interest, for now I am in a better position to answer that query than I ever dreamt I would be. If I was wishing that I could make a comparison then, I can look back now on a varied road, by which I was able to take courses from four different colleges. The comparison is worth making, because it shows S. D. U. in a new light.

When I left S. D. U. on the completion of Sophomore, I joined the Oblate Fathers to study at their scholasticate in Ottawa. The varied course began when, by reason of their extension courses, I was able to finish studies for my B. A. from St. Patrick's College. The next turn in the road took me to Ottawa University to finish philosophy. The Oblate scholastics can follow courses at the University's department of philosophy. Since I am now at the Angelicum, Rome, that constitutes my fourth college including St. Dunstan's. You are liable to say to yourself, that after such a bizarre course I mustn't have two convictions left intact. Sure, and there is the reason why I thought of writing this letter. For, I was struck by the fact, that of all the groundwork laid at S. D. U., I have not had to change a single conviction!

It is rather difficult to say exactly what I mean by that. There are so many ways that good influences can work on us when we are in a Catholic college. Gradually ways of looking at life, attitudes, and ideas soak into us to stay. You might say, you can learn for life from those who know how to live. Anyway, it is when we are trying to push the structure of knowledge higher, that we find out how well the foundation has been laid. To give just one example, I will always be thankful for the appreciation of literature that I acquired at S.D.U. The ever high standard of the Red and White is ample evidence of the attention given to literature.

Sometimes we are inclined to the idea that our biggest chances of inspiration come from sitting at the feet of the big-name professors of the great universities of the world. I am beginning to think that usually it is the other way around. It is the personal contact

with the educators that counts, and very often that is impossible in bigger universities. I like S. D. U. because it was family size, and so we could get to know the ones we lived with. That's what makes its spirit which has been remarked by outsiders.

This brings to mind, that if I come to certain conclusions, it is not only on my own opinion. We of the Island, who have been in Ottawa for some time have had a chance to hear what others say of the individuals who wander up from the coast with red dust on their pants. I am thinking particularly of the students for the course of "Social Work". We once had a conference by Father Bowers, O.M.I., Director of School of Social Work, St. Patrick's College. In the course of the talk, he mentioned the students from the Island with a special note of praise, to quote his very words: "Those from the east seem to have a certain something that we haven't got up this way!" I suppose that he could have meant anything, perhaps a liking for fish, but the favorable opinion of an educator in social work should be a good indication.

Then, of course, we will never forget the occasion when the Canadian Intercollegiate Debating schedule brought our Classmates to the capitol. Of the first team, Driscoll, MacDonald, MacGuigan, the first two were my former classmates. We were right behind them when they defeated Ottawa University, and also, at the final debate when they met U.B.C. When it was all over, we felt that all Ottawa must have been Island-conscious. We thought it to be one of those occasions of a lifetime, but just two short years later, we all assembled again to see the Alma Mater take the Dominion title. This time, Lorne MacDonald, O.M.I., of the former team, saw his brother, Allan, and Wallace Reid carry away the day. There were so many Islanders there, that the visiting team had as enthusiastic a support as the home team. Because St. Pat's is an Oblate college, we were a little hesitant about cheering for St. Dunstan's. But our older loyalty won out. There is a father here with me from St. Pat's, and we get a kick out of recalling the ink-on-the-face episode. The opposing team took a long time to forget that.

Well, I see that my stray thought has called up a lot of other stray thoughts. Since I took the notion to jot them down, I thought I might as well share them. And who should be more interested than those whom they more or less concern? In today's world of give and take, when people don't think well of some one, they will grab their pen and let him know about it. Sometimes, it might be a good idea, when we think favorably of people, to pick up our pen and let them know about it.

Yours sincerely,

JOSEPH KANE, O.M.I.

