

### **POTPOURRI**

One of the most conspicuous, if not the most conspicuous, features of last summer's International Summer Seminar, the fourth of its kind sponsored by International Students Service of Canada, was the variety of discussion and the zeal of the discussions. In an environment such as that of the seminar, where Canada, United States, Europe, and Asia were well represented, the importance and value of open discussion as an important factor in one's education was easily realized.

It is not stretching the truth any to say that the Canadian students at the seminar realized this better than anyone. As hosts to this international assembly, they were expected to lead the way. They were the main defenders of that block of nations familiarly known as The West and also of democracy. And they were called upon day after day to tell others of Canada, of her people, and of her culture. Because they were called upon to do these things, they learned more about their country; for they made every effort to answer the hundreds of questions thrust at them in the clearest manner possible.

Even more interesting was the fact, agreed upon by many, that in discussion Canadians learned about Canada from Canadians. With every province but Newfoundland represented, there was a wide and varied exchange of views and information. And besides learning and discussing among themselves, they gleaned new facts and opinions from some of the political and cultural experts of the country. It seems significant that in a group bent on discussing the contributions and needs of East and West, the Canadian hosts found that they were learning more about their country and appreciating better what they had already known.

While that is significant, it ought not to be thought that Canada was the main or only subject of discussion. The fact that discussion on Canada was fairly extensive, even though Canada was incidental to the main theme, reveals how much one's own country enters into international discussions. Perhaps that is so because all international questions and problems have an impact on us as individual Canadians and on Canada as a country. Isolation is truly dead.

For instance, one of the most alive topics during the four weeks was that of "World Federalism." And, it might be pointed out, its most zealous advocates were Canadians. The discussion was formally opened by a professor from Ottawa University, unintentionally at that, and raged periodically for about two weeks. Those who call themselves "federalists" believe that the only way to insure peace in the world is by the establishment of a world state. They concede the standard arguments against it such as, the loss of sovereignty, the difficulty of co-operating with Communism, the diversity of political setups in present day national states. But they will not be deterred. It almost seems sometimes as if they would completely ignore such difficulties as they back their ideal with the highest of motives. They insist that this world state must be an organization of peoples rather than of states and the politics they play. The zeal of these idealists, and they are not ashamed of being termed such, is more clearly seen from the remarks of an atomic scientist, a rabid federalist, who claimed that the only way the world could avoid total destruction or at least avoid reduction to savagery was for it to become a single political entity.

From discussions on "Federalism" the trend switched to an evaluation of United States foreign policy in Asia over the past few years. Without any doubt the consensus of opinion was unfavorable to the United States' diplomatic tactics in the East. The U. S. was condemned for not recognizing the Communist Government of Red China. At the same time she was panned for cavorting with Chiang Kai Shek and Formosa. It was strongly suggested, by authorities at that, that American foreign policy in Asia was obviously inconsistent and showed a lack of faith in democracy. One example of inconsistency cited was the fact that she would not help the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa to regain China proper from the Communists while, on the other hand, she will not recognize Mao Tse Tsung's red regime on the mainland. It seemed that the crux of the foreign policy centered around the question of whether Red China was a puppet of Moscow. And it was argued that if China was not a satellite then the U. S. would be friends on the same basis as she is friends with Tito and Yugoslavia.

From this discussion on U. S. foreign policy the topic shifted to a debate as to whether Communism would ever gain control in Asia. This is where experts on India and

Pakistan had their most significant say. Of great importance in the subsequent discussions was the fact, very forcibly presented by the Asians in attendance, that the East is suspicious of the West. It was revealed that a feeling that the West has never done anything but use India and other Asian countries for anything for its own selfish gain is positively present among Asians. There is also widespread skepticism of the motives the West has in offering assistance to Asia. This argument is often used to defend the notion that Communism has a good chance of succeeding in the East because it offers help without any strings attached. Besides, economists point out, the poverty stricken plight of millions upon millions of Asians is a factor in favour of Communism. It was even suggested in the discussions that the traditions of the West are foreign to Asia and are certainly not conducive to the establishment of democracy. A most fervent democrat, with many years experience in Asia, maintained that only the Hindu religion and an all out effort in economic assistance by the West without any strings attached could save much of Asia from Communism.

Of course, no group either national or international could come together for a month of lectures and discussions without being involved in controversy over philosophy and religion. It is true, too, that these discussions, although not as protracted as some on politics and economics, were more fervent and heated than any others. An effort was made to establish some reason for being. It was pointed out that it is not enough to see man acting. It is necessary to know why he acts. Although there were some who warily steered a middle course, the whole discussion seemed to resolve into a question of whether man had free will or not. And, even though the atheists and agnostics proclaimed their stands, there was not much concern shown over the existence of God. What was argued at length was whether man was absolutely determined by his physical make up and environment. Incidental to the main discussions were such statements as "the ethics established by religion will soon be replaced by ethics established by the physical sciences," and "organized religion makes for disunity," and "religion, in its beginnings, fosters human progress, but as it installs itself it retards human development." The one setback this last proposition received was the failure of any of its exponents to properly define progress.

And so the seminar continued and ended without any conversions, without any unanimous agreements, without the establishment of a world government. That is to not say that it was a failure. The purpose was to encourage free discussion among different peoples with different beliefs. It did that well. Few there were who left without being impressed at the tremendous obstacles which stand in the way of firm and friendly agreement among nations on even the most fundamental questions. But few there were, too, who did not leave with the conviction that man is pretty much the same wherever he is found, and because he has so much in common with his fellow man there is room for plenty of hope.

—DOMINIC MacDONALD '52

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### TIGHT SPOT

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Well, there I was sitting at a table with three card sharks. We were playing poker—five dollars a chip—pretty high stakes, and I was knee deep in debt already. It seemed we were playing only a short time but I knew it was late, so I kept playing hoping to clear my debt with a few last lucky hands.

The cards were dealt for the last time. "This is it," I thought, and as I picked up the first two, I felt a queer sensation of uneasiness race through me. "These boys were playing for keeps. I had better be able to pay up or they would fix me good." Two aces! My third draw was another ace. My whole being gave off an erratic vibration and as my hand reached for the fourth card, it froze and felt clammy. Somehow I scooped up the card. A deuce! Then the final card. It was the fourth ace! My heart pounded like an African drum. Four aces!

"This has got to be it," I prayed. Confidence oozed through me and I bet everything I had on those four bits of cardboard. One of the three gamblers dropped out in the heavy betting. When the call came the big heavy bearded man opposite me laid his cards out. Four kings and a queen! I felt a tingle of joy; four aces beats four kings. Then it was time for me to lay down mine. I looked at the caller, who seemed to have an eerie smile on his face, then