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Editorials

N.F.C.U.S.

The National Federation of Canadian University Students held its twelfth annual conference at the University of Montreal on December 28, 29, 30, and 31. Mr. Wilfred Driscoll, vice-president of St. Dunstan's Students' Union, represented our student body at the meeting. Upon his return, Mr. Driscoll gave a complete and comprehensive report to the student at the first annual meeting.

During the conference many matters were discussed and several important decisions were made. One of the most tangible accomplishments of the conference was the recognition of the necessity of compiling information in scholarships which are available at the various Canadian Universities, and the appointment of a committee to have such information distributed in booklets. Such an undertaking should prove very valuable; every year a considerable number of scholarships are unclaimed because students do not know of their existence. The compilation of briefs on each Canadian University, in concise form to include information on courses available, tuition, housing facilities, and other pertinent facts, is another important result of the meeting. A separate report is also being drawn up on summer study opportunities; it will contain information on all summer school courses available in Canada. Definite plans were laid for the holding of a Quebec Seminar on "Problems in Canadian Unity" during the summer of 1950; and some progress has already been made with the Quebec government in the matter of financing the project. It was also resolved to work in closer cooperation with the National Employment Service in obtaining graduate and undergraduate employment. In addition a committee was formed to inquire into the text-book problem with a view to obtaining reduction in prices; and it is the hope of the federation that all colleges will soon be able to place their orders for books with exclusively Canadian agencies. The students also appointed a committee to contact the proper governmental authorities and to impress upon them the necessity of equality of opportunity in education, and to recommend the continuation of federal aid to universities by two means: on a scale similar to, but smaller than, the one now in operation through D.V.A.; and the continuation of the Dominion-provincial scholarship plan. In this respect, as well as in others, N.F.C.U.S. is working in close cooperation with the National Conference of Canadian Universities. (N.C.C.U.). Perhaps the most important development of all was the decision to disaffiliate with the International Union of Students, because I.U.S. is at present dominated by Communists, and to deal with more specific Canadian problems and concentrate on making other organizations stronger in Canada.

These then are some of the immediate accomplishments of the national conference of Canadian students; but there are other less tangible, but perhaps more significant, results of the meeting. The conference brought together students from coast to coast, from St. Dunstan's to the University of British Columbia; and the meeting of students from the various educational institutions, the exchange of ideas, etc., is something which the conference

produced that cannot be measured in terms of "what will we get out of it." It is indeed unfortunate that St. Dunstan's is unable to send more than one representative to such a meeting.

St. Dunstan's is a member of N.F.C.U.S.; and it would seem that, since we belong to such a national organization, we should make it our business to learn as much as possible about its aims and objectives, even if only for the purpose of criticising its past actions. For only by so doing can we know what to expect from it or what we can contribute to it.

There is need for a federation of this kind because all students have certain problems in common—problems which can be dealt with only by such an organization. We should also be aware of the fact that we have a duty to look beyond ourselves, and, at least, to be interested in what goes on outside our own limited sphere of activity. There is no better way to prepare ourselves to contribute something to the welfare of society and to play our proper role in the world. N.F.C.U.S. has already made some very concrete contributions to Canadian students; and it does provide an authoritative voice for us in national affairs. But N.F.C.U.S. should command our support chiefly because it provides a means of expressing our opinions on national and local matters, because it gives us an idea of the educational trend which other students are following, and because it gives us an insight into the thinking of other students. At first glance this "raison d'être" may seem obscure; but we must realize that students, as a group, are becoming a larger and more vociferous part of our population; and by establishing these contacts, especially in the international sphere, we can be an influence in their life, we can propagate the democratic idea, we can give others an idea of what Catholic education is, and we can do more to "swing our weight" in preparing for the final battle for the democratic way of life, which is sure to come in the near future. We, as students, should be conscious of these things. We must realize that it is we who will be guiding the destinies of Canada in the near future. It is well to think about those things now; otherwise we shall be in danger of losing much, if not all, of what we now take for granted.

I. S. S. and S. D. U.

The International Student Service was founded soon after World War I; and has been functioning as an organized unit since then. Before World War II, its activities were confined chiefly

to student and professor exchanges, international conference, study tours, etc. With the coming of war, I. S. S. undertook a broad programme of relief for students of the war-ravaged countries of Europe. Until this year St. Dunstan's was not a member of I. S. S., although our unit of the C. F. C. C. S. contributed generously to the I. S. S. campaign for student relief last year. The success which attended the students' efforts last year has prompted them to undertake an even larger share in the activities of I. S. S.; and the students are now conducting a drive to raise the funds necessary to bring a "Displaced Person" student to S. D. U. next year. Definite plans have been laid, and the campaign is already well on the way to being a success. The students also hope to avail themselves of the opportunity of sending one of our number to attend the I. S. S. Seminar, which is to be held in Europe next summer.

In assuming those responsibilities, our students are evincing not only a desire to come to the relief of the less fortunate students of Europe, but also a recognition of the fact that we cannot isolate ourselves in a small intellectual sphere of our own. The intellectual needs of Europe are perhaps greater than the physical. For the greater part of Europe is even now subscribing itself to a programme of intellectual oppression and cultural isolation. Communism has made great strides in Europe. It has catered to the material needs of the people; but it has also offered them a philosophy which, despite its erroneous doctrine and dialectic basis, does provide them with an answer to many of their problems. The most pressing needs of those who stand for spiritual and intellectual freedom and the propagation of Western Culture is a unity of purpose, a sense of oneness, and a philosophy which can be our guide in a unified struggle for freedom of all peoples. Such leadership can only be given by our educational institutions; and that is why our participation in international student affairs is important. For we have a philosophy which offers the only cure for a world ravaged by war and threatened by atheistic Communism. We have something to give foreign students, a philosophy and way of life which Communism regards as its deadliest enemy. Through contacts with Europeans, through discussions and exchanges of ideas, and through our mutual alleviation of intellectual isolation, we can help to unite the Western world, and as a result present a common front against the Communists when the time comes for the final struggle with the Red menace.

NO C.F.C.C.S. ?

In 1940, the Maritime Region of the Canadian Federation of Catholic College Students was organized; and three very successful annual conferences were held in the three years that followed. Then for some reason or other, the C.F.C.C.S., became to all outward appearances, extinct. An attempt was made last year, after the national conference to resurrect and revitalize the federation, but the effort was at best only an attempt. Again the C.F.C.C.S. has ceased to function as an organized unit in the Maritimes.

Why the lethargy on the part of students of our Catholic educational institutions? Has an organization such as the C.F.C.C.S. no place on our campuses in the Maritimes? Have we, Catholic students of the Maritimes, nothing to give one another, nothing to discuss, no problems in common? The answer to all but the first of these questions must be an unqualified "Yes". Then, if the C.F.C.C.S. can be a force for good, if it can be a means of uniting us on the firm foundation of Catholic principles, if it can help us through Catholic activity to "change the world", why has it become victim of a fatal paralysis? Is it because our Catholic student are not interested in a common program of Catholic activities, not aware of their responsibilities as students and future leaders of Church and State; or, is it because of some inherent weakness in the C.F.C.C.S.? If the former, then it is a sad reflection on both the Catholic college students of the Maritimes and their education; if the latter, then it is the duty of those students to do something about reorganizing the regional unit.

IGNORING ST. THOMAS ?

On March 7, 1922, the first Philosophers' banquet was held at S.D.U. as a climax to the holiday given in honour of St. Thomas Aquinas. The students of philosophy of that day little dreamed that they were instituting what, in a few years, was to become an honoured and revered tradition at St. Dunstan's. But they were doing just that, and, as the years ticked by, the annual Philosophers' banquet became as much a part of college life as the annual Field Day. It became something that the philosophers learned to look forward to about the first of March. It became something in the life of the philosopher that seemed to mark him off from the ordinary student—something special that lifted him above the crowd.

It is a compliment to a student to be termed a philosopher. To hold a banquet which he and his fellow philosophers alone may attend does him an honour. To know that by attending such a banquet he is upholding and passing on one of the proudest traditions of S.D.U. should give him a feeling of great pleasure. And more than the pleasure derived from it, it should also make him realize the duty he has of carrying on this tradition.

But when things come to such a pass that there is no Philosophers' banquet, when there is complete indifference and no attempt to prepare one, when a group of students in their senior year will call a meeting to discuss the possibilities of having a banquet and then, before the business of the meeting is even half finished, will adjourn the meeting and leave the loose ends hanging in the air, when a class of college Seniors will be guilty of a farce like that and do nothing about it afterwards, then, to our mind, there is something sadly lacking in that class. There should have been a Philosophers' banquet this year and the fact that there was not one is a sad reflection on the Senior class. There have been many excuses offered, but those making the excuses and passing the buck should have realized what they were getting into when they were approaching the subject in such a lackadaisical manner. It is said, for instance, that there was no co-operation from the Juniors. But how could there be any when their co-operation was not even invited? The president of the Junior class was not even approached, and was as ignorant of what the Seniors were attempting to do as were the majority of them themselves.

Rivalry may be a good thing, but this one case where the Seniors should have forgotten their personal differences and worked together for the good of all and especially for the good of old St. Dunstan's.

It's too bad!

AS WE SEE IT

After having spent four years at St. Dunstan's, we cannot but arrive at some definite conclusion on education, on students, on discipline, etc. Thus, almost on the eve of our graduation, we find that our observations and reflections have engendered two convictions that stand out above all others: first, that in many cases an education, depending, as it does, more upon the educand

than upon his professors, is not being acquired; secondly, that our system of discipline is at variance with the aims of an educational institution, and not sufficiently conducive to the formation of character.

It is difficult to define education; volumes have been written on it, and we are not so presumptuous as to try to add to the wealth of literature already written. Christian education has been dealt with exhaustively by Cardinal Newman, who succinctly described it in these words, "Christian education is the formation of a cultured Christian gentleman." Cultured gentleman—these two words suggest one who is a gentleman in the accepted sense of the word, and by implication, one who seeks after truth, one who recognizes and appreciates the good and beautiful in all its forms, one who has acquired a cultured intellect. Pope Pius XI, in his memorable encyclical letter *Divini Illius Magistri*, describes the product of Christian education as "the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason . . . ; in other words the true and finished man of character."

We are fortunate in being able to attend an educational institution where these are still the aims of the educational program; but the regrettable fact remains that the majority of students—we use the term in the loose sense—do not realize that they must play the leading role in this business of acquiring an education. Worse still, those who realize it do not seem to care. They will swallow what is necessary to pass examinations; but anything more is just not worth the trouble. The development of his own potentialities does not seem to interest the average student in the least; the discovery of himself, so to speak, does not seem to concern him at all; and the development of his own personality, in order to bring out all that is good in him, and so prepare him for his place in the world, does not seem to him to be worth the effort involved.

These are sweeping accusations; but a glance over the student body only serves to reaffirm our convictions. But these are not the only indictments which we would level at many of our students. An educated man, we repeat, is a cultured gentleman. But when one observes many of our students, particularly those in senior years, who should be setting a good example for others, not only must a description of them as cultured be questioned, but even the use of the word "gentleman" seems inapplicable. Though we admit that the "species," like its counterpart in the feminine gender, is indeed becoming rare, we should expect to find many representatives in a Catholic college.

There is nothing wrong with our educational system; it is the best that can be devised. It has the wisdom of ages behind it, and it embodies the best that has been thought and said. We have, moreover, instruction and training in our Catholic faith, which not only looks to our spiritual welfare, but also acts as a unifying principle, uniting the various fields of knowledge into an organized whole. With such means at our disposal, is there any reason why we cannot measure up to Newman's concept of the educated man? There is none—except the student himself.

In every organized group of persons, whether of men or of women, young or old, legislation, according to the strict exigencies of the natural law, is indispensable in order to enable the society to carry out its avowed policy. This is true of the State, where laws are enacted for the common good of all; and it is true of all social groups. The laws of all societies, political, social, cultural, and the rest, have one thing in common: they are all designed for the attainment of the end for which the society was formed. Educational institutions, no less than any other society, must have rules and regulations which will ensure their proper functioning. But like any other society, the end for which the university exists not only must be kept in mind when rules and regulations are being formulated, but it should also be the guiding principle of the legislators.

The development of the individual, the formation of proper habits of study, of punctuality, of life, etc., the strengthening, the perfecting and the moulding of character are all integrant parts of the educational process. Moreover, for the development of these, discipline is necessary; and, it would seem, for their proper development, the accent should be upon a specific kind of discipline, viz., self-discipline. Therefore rules and regulations instituted for discipline's sake should be enacted with a view to inculcating as much self-discipline as possible.

To suggest that that part of our discipline which is directed to the individual's own welfare stresses self-discipline, or that it even attempts to train the individual to discipline himself, is, it seems to us, an overstatement. Moreover, to insist that discipline is fulfilling its purpose, that of training the individual and moulding character, seems, in view of recent events on our campus, to be only wishful thinking; and a look back over the past few years reveals an ever-increasing disregard for rules and regulations.

Evidently something is wrong. Are the students at fault? Or are we to suppose that our present system of discipline is ineffectual? These are good questions, and the answer to the alternative is difficult. The best reply, however, seems to be that both are to blame. The students refuse to demonstrate the maturity that will warrant a shifting of emphasis from compulsion to self-discipline; and the disciplinarians demand from the students evidence of a greater sense of responsibility. Neither seems to realize that the one is dependent upon the other, and hence we find ourselves in a vicious circle.

We recognize the fact that some rules and regulations are necessary in order to ensure the integrity of the rights of other students; with those we have no quarrel. It is with the discipline—or lack of it—that is directed to the individuals own welfare and development that we take issue. If the aim of discipline is to develop character, then it is not attaining its end. If such discipline is discipline for the sake of discipline,—and, if it is not, it should be,—then there is too much emphasis on compulsion, and not enough upon self-discipline. We admit that it is difficult to ascertain just when an individual may be considered mature enough to be entrusted with the responsibility of choosing what is good and avoiding what is not, of doing what he should do and resisting what he should not do, but should not his scholastic attainment be an indication?

Discipline is necessary. But a Senior is not a high-school student; and no one can produce any proof of the hypothesis that our system implies, that a Senior becomes a "Christian gentleman" immediately upon receiving his degree, that he can take his place as a leader in society, that he is ready to accept all the responsibilities that will be his, when he is not "mature" enough to accept the larger share of the responsibility for the development of his own character.



It's time for the second installment of the 48—49 edition of the Chronicle, and, with much to report, we'll get right down to work.