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EDITORIALS

CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE

A two-day Catholic Rural Life Conference was held at St. Dunstan's University on August 5 and 6 of this year. This conference, the first of its kind ever to be held on Prince Edward Island, was sponsored by the Extension Department of the University under the direction of Rev. William Simpson. The theme of the conference was: Education for Rural Life. The delegates at the conference tried to bring to light the rural problems of our province and suggest possible solutions for these problems. Attending the conference as guest speaker was Monsignor L. G. Ligutti, who is Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in the United States. The organizers of the conference were fortunate to have this man, who is so widely known for his knowledge of and experience in rural life problems, attend the conference.

Since the conference was, in general, concerned with education for rural life, it was appropriate that as many Catholic teachers from the Island as possible attended it. The remaining delegates were also representative of the province's population because they consisted of the pastors and two laymen or women from every parish on the Island. The conference itself was very well organized. There were some sessions in which the delegates were divided into groups of priests, sisters, teachers and laymen and each group was addressed by someone who had prepared a paper on the particular subject which was to be discussed at that session. There were other general sessions which were attended by all the delegates of the conference. The papers which were prepared concerned different aspects of the general theme such as the basic rural problems, the philosophy of rural life, rural education and the school curriculum and the material and spiritual possibilities of the land.

During the course of the conference, there were many rural problems brought forward for discussion. Dominating

all of these problems and considered basic to the others was the problem of so many of the young boys and girls leaving the farm to go to the urban centres. Lack of organized social life and recreation, and lack of technological advance in the rural areas, privation on the part of the parents of a great interest in the farm for the youth, and the attractions of the urban centres were some of the factors proposed as contributing to this exodus. Underlying these factors, however, was the argument that our educational system was not imbuing the youth of our rural communities with that true picture of rural life which would influence them to choose it as a way of life in preference to urban life. Since no one can give that which he does not possess, this task of imbuing our youth with rural philosophy would have to begin with the teacher acquiring it first. In addition to this, if the curriculum could be patterned in such a way that the cultivation of an appreciation of the land and nature could be brought into harmony with the other studies of the classroom, then we would have a possible solution to this exodus.

A start having been made, it is hoped that Catholic Rural Life Conferences will be continued in this province and extended to include representatives of lay women in the province. St. Dunstan's deserves much credit for its pioneer efforts in this endeavour. At the time the conference was held, its success surpassed the expectations of those who had planned it but its true success and value may not be fully known until some years hence.

THE SOVIET-CANADIAN STUDENT EXCHANGE

At the National Conference of NFCUS, St. Dunstan's did not have a vote in plenary session because the College was only an associate member. However in commission St. Dunstan's did have voting power and it was exercised against the proposed student-exchange. We would offer here reasons for our stand, not in the nature of an apology, but rather in the form of practical objections which make such a student-exchange impracticable.

We, like all other Universities, are in favor of student-exchanges as they are a necessity of our time. But in order for them to be profitable, they must be made on a sincere

basis with the co-ordinating agents free from political obligation and the participating countries giving to the delegates liberty of action. Now the very elements which we would consider necessary for a student-exchange to be an exchange in the true sense of the term, would most likely not be present. This is shown in the light of practical difficulties and from past experiences. The interchange of ideas which is an essential would be very difficult or impossible due to the language barrier which could not be satisfactorily overcome. Also, the shortness of the stay, the lack of common objectives and all that this entails, and the restriction of movement all add to the objections. Moreover, the lack of sincerity and bad faith nearly always manifested by the Reds must not be overlooked. They may make manifold promises but, as was said in the U. N. lately, "The Russians are not famous for keeping their word." These objections, far from being unrealistic, are further strengthened by the experiences of English students who made a tour to Russia in May, 1951. The disappointments which they experienced prompted their saying: "We came away feeling that our time could have been more profitably spent."

Leaving to you the other considerations of propaganda value to them, the improbability of our "influence" on them helping the cause of better understanding and the very small benefits, if any, which would be derived from so great an outlay of money, we will consider the plan with regard to the body, NFCUS. This is a federation of Canadian students which is designed to promote a better understanding, a greater degree of co-operation and correlation among Canadian University students. Thus we see that it is a National organization for the benefit of Canadian students. Even at the last conference of this federation, the student Presidents forming Committee No. 5 passed this resolution: "That the NFCUS put forth greater effort proportionately into the work on the domestic level than has been put to date." Shortly after this resolution was passed unanimously, most of these very presidents fought honorably and dramatically, yet illogically, for a program which would see the greatest single expenditure of NFCUS go to finance a risk on the international level!

Many University students in Canada today are dissatisfied with the achievements of NFCUS in consideration of the money it has been given. The Soviet-Canadian stud-

ent-exchange adventure would not benefit the individual student in any conceivable way, and, adding further cause to this dissatisfaction, might well prove the demise of NFCUS.

Therefore since this proposal is not only impractical but inadvisable and out of the realm of the NFCUS activities, if the students of Canada desire international goodwill and the intellectual and material advancement of world students, then there are many opportunities, for the accomplishment of these ends, which are much more feasible and effective than the Soviet-Canadian student-exchange. Why not, for instance, give meaning to the empty phrase in which we promise support of the program of World University Service of Canada? This is just one of many ways in which Canadian students can prove to the world that they really do want peace, harmony and prosperity in the world and are not desirous of an impractical risk which, far from achieving its desired goal, might well make us all the laughing stock of those working to destroy that for which we stand.

THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN

This month we celebrate one of the great feasts of the Church, the feast of the Nativity or Birth of Our Lord. It is a season characterized by joy—this season of Christmas—joy, because at this time almost two thousand years ago God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was born of the Virgin Mary. You may regard this latter statement as a platitude which we usually hear at this time of year, but it too often happens that its implications are disregarded and not realized, so absorbed are we in things of secondary importance which have conventionally become associated with the Christmas season. A sketchy examination of the events leading up to the Nativity may bring us to a better knowledge of its significance.

After God had created Adam and Eve, the common stem from which we have all descended, he placed them in a "terrestrial paradise". Here their desires were completely satisfied and they were in a state of happiness. But Satan, envying their state, tempted them to commit the sin of disobedience which changed the order which God had in-

tended for man. Our first parents lost the perfect balance of the elements of their nature, the freedom from sickness, pain and immortality of the body, but worse than all else, they lost the friendship of God, and the sharing of His God-life. The descendants of Adam gradually became more and more corrupt from the inherited effects of original sin until mankind was, as St. Augustine termed it, a "mass of sin". Despite the fact that humanity had deserved the wrath of God for its sin, nevertheless, God, perceiving the depths to which the creatures, made to His own image and likeness, had fallen, and out of love for them, deigned to renew man's communication with Himself and afford man the opportunity to return to Him whence he had come. To do this a mediator was necessary to go forth to mankind who would, by some act, atone for the offenses of man for all time so that the gates of Heaven would be re-opened. To do this task God ordained that His Own Son would assume our human nature in addition to His Divine Nature by being born of one who had never been stained by original sin, the Virgin Mary. Therefore in the little town of Bethlehem angels announced the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds. There was great rejoicing because He had been born who was to renew the communication between man and God; Who was to establish His Church on earth; Who was to be the Way, the Truth and the Life of men. Christmas, then, is the celebration of the birth of Our Mediator, the Founder of Our Church, Our Model and Our Saviour. It is in the light of such considerations which have just been given that we can enter into the true spirit of Christmas.

We are told in the gospel account of the story of the Nativity, when Joseph was enquiring for lodging for him and his wife, Mary, in the crowded town of Bethlehem, that there was no room for them in the inn. In our time, people are so taken up with festivities, gift-giving, and merry-making in whatever form possible that they overlook completely the sublime drama which is Christmas and the central figures in that drama, the Holy Family. **Red and White** urges the students not to become victims of the commercialized atmosphere of Christmas, but rather to prepare well for this great feast during Advent so that they may understand its significance and be able to pass it along to others by example.