

# World facing agricultural crisis

by Arnold Mosher

"Overpopulation is the main problem in the world today, not the shortage of food," said Dr. David Pimentel of Cornell University. Pimentel, who spoke at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro last Tuesday had worked in the field of pest control as well as studying the relationship of man to food and energy.

Pimentel, who has done extensive research into the statistics of the world food situation, painted a grim picture for the future.

Pimentel said there existed a correlation between energy use and population; population being dependent on food, and agriculture which produces the food needing the energy. The main uses of energy in today's intensive agriculture system are for fuel for machinery, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides, said Pimentel.

Since 1945 there has been a three-fold increase for agricultural energy inputs, said Pimentel, with only a two-fold increase in production. In 1945 very little energy was needed, but today approximately 200 gallons of fuel is needed to raise a hectare of corn.

Pimentel said that to produce corn in Mexico today requires a minimal amount of energy but demands 500 man hours of work per hectare,



whereas in Canada only 5 man hours are required but there are larger energy needs.

The world population is growing and the amount of farm land is not, said Pimentel. He said that because of the shrinking amount of arable land per per-

son (1 hectare per person, today) that which is farmable must be worked more intensively, i.e. more energy inputs are needed.

But this intensive use of farm land leads to extensive erosion. Pimentel said that in the Midwest of the United

States up to a quarter of an inch of topsoil is lost every year which is substantial when one considers it takes 100 years to form 1 inch.

As for converting more lands, deserts, for example, into arable land, the cost in energy would more than

outweigh the benefits, said Pimentel.

Pimentel said the oceans will not provide the answer, the fisheries producing only 5 percent of the world's food and even with new innovations the relative production is not likely to increase.

Although he is hopeful in the discovery of new energy sources, Pimentel said things like the gasohol project in the U.S. is more a political affair than a practical alternative.

Pimentel said new energy sources are needed, for to feed today's world population of 4 billion would require, using U.S. agricultural technology, 1700 billion gallons of fuel per year. This would exhaust the proven reserves of oil in 13 years.

Pimentel's lecture may have given many the wrong assumptions as to the real problems of the world today. For example, one question posted to Pimentel asked whether the whole world problem was not just caused by overpopulation in third world countries. Pimentel pointed out that even Canada and the U.S. had increasing populations.

When asked whether he thought that many of the problems in intensive agriculture were caused by mining the soil rather than farming it, Pimentel did not give a direct answer.

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## Saint Mary's Students Protest 1.5 Grade Point Average Again

by Sandy Smith

Students at Saint Mary's University held an information picket protesting the school's 1.5 grade regulation outside the universities payroll office last Friday.

Student Representative Council President Mike McNeil explained on Friday that, "Today is the monthly payday for Faculty. We prepared a fact sheet to show the faculty why we are opposed to the regulation, because they have a voting majority on the Senate. By lobbying them directly we could get to them directly rather than through their representatives."

The 1.5 regulation was passed at the final 1979-80 meeting of the Senate at Saint Mary's, with three of the five student Senators not present. The "1.5" states that students on academic probation, those unable to maintain a C-average, cannot, "represent the University in any public activity such as dramatics, debating, oratorical contests, or athletic competitions; may not serve as arts student representative in an academic department; may not hold office or stand for election to any office in any student organization; and may not be involved in the organization of any extracurricular activity."

Council's protest of the 1.5 is based on three grounds;

legal, statistical, and moral.

The information sheet prepared by council says that the senate of the university "is empowered to deal only with educational policy." It further states "by its Act of Incorporation the Student's Association is given responsibility over extra curricular activities." The conclusion drawn by Council is that the Senate has overstepped its legal boundaries.

Statistically, council says that only 15% of students returning to Saint Mary's placed on probation last May were involved in extra-curricular activities. They therefore conclude that involvement in extracurricular activities cannot be the cause of poor marks and ask "What is the real cause? Why isn't it being addressed?"

The fact sheet states that basic civil rights are being denied to those students on probation as, "a student on probation can be forced to withdraw for organizing a campus mass or a campus political party." The sheet also points out "Dr. Ken Ozman, President of SMU, is on record as being opposed to this regulation because of its infringement on student rights."

McNeil felt that Saint Mary's students were better informed because of the pro-

test as only three copies of the six hundred fact sheets made were left over. He also felt that some "good discussions were initiated" between students and faculty members.

In two final notes, McNeil said that it is important to know that "this regulation is the only one of its kind in Canada" and that "70 odd year-old chaplain Father Hennessey even took part in the protest."

## Trudeau

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rights is by-and-means a simple, open-and-shut matter. There is the problem of their essential abstractness which means that attempts to codify and enforce them lead to endless legal difficulties; difficulties which serve the ends of those who seek to get around and exploit them as much as it serves loftier purposes. There is the problem that rights do not come out of the sky or from Pure Reason or whatever; they reflect a common political wisdom which must be consulted and respected. Once rights are translated into purely legal terms, they become fixed and undebatable and tend to be left to the interpretation of judges and advocates. Freedoms are

everybody's business, not a matter for panels of experts, even judges.

So there is a sense in which to "trench" rights into constitutional law is to do just that, to bury them. The Step-Father of Confederation has said just that—he wants them placed "beyond the reach of parliament", he said, where no one can monkey with them; no one except governments, of course, which can always initiate changes it might desire (as now), suspend them whenever there's trouble (as they do in India) or uniformly ignore them (as they do in Russia). Basically what he wants is to convince the people that their rights are too sacrosanct to be trusted to elected representatives, to be tried and tested in Parliament.

And here is where the real crunch comes. Human rights after all, are principles which express our freedom and the kind of society we think, in general, is consistent with that freedom. Whatever rhetorical lip service is made to rights, the only way they become real and effective is through actual legislative reform, which means that the place where, above all, the conception of rights and freedoms must be operative and debatable is in the legislature, where the people through their representatives can have their say. This is contrary to Trudeau's Republic.

This man is dangerous. Trudeau's terrifying consistent program to convert the parliamentary system of democracy into a republican,

populist one, also means the creation of an essentially centralized unitary authority which will override any autonomy provincial legislatures and governments now have. The effect of this is to destroy parliament and our political system as we know it: those who see this and are saying it are not kidding or being partisan or sensational.

Ontario supports this destruction because, for one thing, it is already thoroughly American and republican in mentality and sees no evil in it. But also it knows very well that a Canada without internal boundaries would be a Canada it could dominate even more than it presently does.

The British Parliament and people must be made aware of what they are being asked to do. Quite rightly there is a strong feeling in London that Parliament should in no way interfere in this purely Canadian affair, and this seems to suggest they simply do what they are asked, without question. But what are they being asked to do? They are being asked **both** that all constitutional authority be transferred forthwith into Canadian hands and also that it be radically altered in fundamental ways immediately prior to the transfer. This request is an attempt by the present majority government to have the British Parliament write in, at the eleventh hour, the changes which Trudeau would like to see, but knows he might not be able to sell were those amendments to be proposed in Canada after the transfer.