

RUSSIA TODAY — NFCUS REPORTS

(This is the first in a series of articles taken from a brief submitted to the 1961 NFCUS Commission of International Affairs by the four Canadian delegates, who visited the USSR this past summer. NFCUS sponsored this visit which was the second half of the USSR - Canada student exchange plan.)

"The exposure of Canadian students to the most powerful country in the world today is absolutely necessary if Canadians

are to play any effective role in world politics. We must have more Canadians in responsible positions, both economic and diplomatic, who know, understand, and can judge the Russians and their actions. Only personal contact will provide the base from which study can be commenced, which will provide that vital sprinkling of Canadians of other fields who are 'in the know' about Russia. Russian exchanges would be based on the idea of 'understanding men's

minds', rather than the idea of 'winning men's minds.'

There are many interesting and admirable features to be found in Russia, features which we in Canada might think about. There is equality of access to higher education. The children are well-disciplined, there are fewer neuroses, the people know how to enjoy a simple walk in the park. The Government has spent money in the public sector of the economy to provide parks, schools, stadia, sanatoria for vacations, youth camps, etc. While I don't feel we should adopt the indoctrination which accompanies these features in the USSR, the features themselves are worthwhile. Notable too is the emphasis on physical fitness and on music and ballet. Unfortunately two powers-that-be have sentenced Russia to fall far behind in art and architecture by invoking the theory of Socialist Realism. I was very impressed by the size and diversity of the USSR and by the signs of economy progress everywhere. (It does seem strange though that a country which can send out men into space does not turn more of its industry to putting them into heated homes with plumbing.)"

(The following are excerpts from one delegate, Jules Belanger

of the University of Montreal on the subject of education):

"In the USSR there are four levels of education: the kindergarten, for children from 3-7 years of age; the primary school, for children from 7-15 years of age; the specialised school, for the young people from 15-18 years of age; and the university. The kindergartens allow parents to have their children cared for while they are at work. These kindergartens are very well organised, if one can judge from that which we saw in Kiev. They have an extensive educational program and free time is well filled. These children are cherished by their supervisors.

The primary schools give a general course, based primarily on history, geography, the sciences and manual work. The specialised schools permit young people to prepare themselves for entrance into a certain faculty of the university or into some specialised institute. In each university there are the regular classes, the night classes, and the correspondence classes. Sometimes there are more part-time students at a university than there are students enrolled in the regular classes. In the agricultural institute at Kiev the proportion is 3,000 to 6,000. The institutes

are often faculties which have separated from a university in order to form an autonomous school. In certain universities or institutes, such as the University of Tbilisi, a student can take his first two years on a part-time basis and the remainder of his course on a full-time basis. Recently the government has made it obligatory for students to work for two years before entering university, so as to create a sense of fellowship between workers and students.

On one occasion in Moscow we attended a primary school history class. The teacher asked a little girl to talk to us about Laos. For five minutes she gave us a sketch of the Laotian situation, better than many Canadian university students could have done. Then a little boy got up and did the same thing on the subject of Lyndon Johnson's visit to Asia. We left rather stupefied. Who would expect a primary school pupil in Canada to study the conflict between Fleming and Coyne? These children study all the achievements of the regime and are taught to love and admire the communist government, through its works."

(Watch The Brunswickan for future articles on Russia Today)

Moscow Joke

A Ukrainian tractor driver, visiting Moscow decided he would buy some smart shoes. He asked at the desk of the Hotel Moskva where he should go, and the desk clerk gave him an address. The Ukrainian found the building and walked inside unchallenged.

In front of him there were two doors. One was labelled MEN'S SHOES, the other WOMEN'S SHOES. Without hesitation he chose the right-hand, MEN'S SHOES, door and pushed it open. In front of him there was a long corridor.

He walked along it until he

came to two more doors. One was labelled SUMMER SHOES and the other WINTER SHOES. It was summertime, so he chose the right-hand, SUMMER SHOES.

He opened the door and again found himself in a long corridor. At the end of the corridor were two more doors, one labelled PARTY MEMBERS, the other NON-MEMBERS.

The tractor driver, a non-member, pushed open the appropriate door and found himself back in the street.

(from October NATO Letter)

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