

Memories of the '67 WUS seminar

An examination of Canada and her problems

By CATHY ELIAS

In retrospect, the 1967 World University Service Seminar held in Canada must be considered one of the most profitable experiences of my life.

Although one might question the advantages of holding the seminar in Canada where the students would be familiar with their country, within a week of the meeting of students at Carleton University this assumption proved to be invalid. Granted, as Canadian students, we were not meeting a totally different social system as we moved from province to province, and yet we were constantly amazed by the varying values and aspirations held by people throughout Canada. In addition,

Through the foreign students we were able to catch glimpses of other cultures and lands; to compare and contrast these different social systems; to clarify the problems confronting Canada in her second century; and perhaps most important, as a result of synthesizing these views, to formulate far more concrete and relevant proposals for the future of Canada.

HARD TO DESCRIBE

As one recalls the seminar, one slowly recognizes that it is impossible to begin to describe in depth the places we visited, the people we met or the knowledge we gained. The seminar left an impression on all of us that was more than just meeting one individual or visiting one city. It was a total experience that I feel was responsible for changing viewpoints and attitudes towards life and people. The reason—the remarkable willingness to compromise which permeated the entire seminar. Under such a climate it was inevitable that hard line stands on any issue would slowly relax. Giving individuals an appreciation of the necessity of compromise in the world today was one of the most successful results of the seminar.

STANDS OUT

If any one topic stands out most clearly in my mind, it is surely the one most of the participants considered to be one of the gravest problems confronting Canadians—the question of the relation of Quebec to the remainder of the nation. It was inevitable that in any examination of Canada, the question would arise; for particularly in Eastern Canada, the imperative nature of Quebec's demands cannot be overestimated. Particularly relevant to this discussion are the observations of the foreign students who regarded with astonishment the apparent disunity in the country. As a result of their perceptive analyses, the Canadian students were able to place the problems faced by the country in a more realistic framework.

It appeared to most of the participants to be unfortunate and somewhat ludicrous that, as French-Canadians continue their struggle for equality in economic and cultural spheres, there are parts of the nation where an appreciation of the serious nature of this struggle is not forthcoming. This was the opinion of those who were on the western and northern tours. Their observations were much in line with those that have already been made in the preliminary report of the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism.



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ern reluctance to concede anything to the Quebecois.

PROPER REFLEX

As a westerner, I have found that it is practically impossible for anyone from the west to appreciate the significance of what is going on at the heart of the struggle without first going to Quebec. Only then does the fact that six million French-Canadians live in the same country as you do strike the proper reflex. Canadians can no longer afford to ignore the fact that these French-Canadians are extremely displeased with their status under the present Constitution.

Even if one decides that Tremblay's call for independence for Quebec is nothing more than a mere puff, one can not fail to see the determination of the political leaders in Quebec to secure a new status for French-Canadians, in addition to preserving the culture of the French.

Union Generale Etudiants de Quebec (UGEQ) has been formed as the answer to the Canadian Union of Students (CUS). UGEQ typifies the reaction of the intellectual elite of Quebec to the rather slow process they were making in the country.

CLASSIFICATION

Members of eastern tours, after visiting UGEQ headquarters in Montreal, could not help but observe a tendency typical of most French-Canadian students—a tendency to classify anyone outside Quebec as English; herein, it is my contention, lies one of the most significant reasons behind West-

ern reluctance to concede anything to the Quebecois.

This degree of resentment was not unexpected, particularly in the western provinces where ethnic people comprise a large segment of the population. It was further noted that in the west and north, there was a certain detachment from events going on in the east and especially those relating to Quebec. The problem as far as western provinces go was one of distance; whereas, in the Maritimes, economics seemed to influence the people's attitudes towards the French-Canadians. This was noted very emphatically in New Brunswick where the tour members could recognize the tension between the Loyalist segment of the population in the south and the predominantly French north, the south being in a far better position economically than the north and resentful for the economic equalization program being instituted by the French Premier, Premier Robichaud.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES

Generally speaking, the seminar participants found that the most favorable attitudes towards French-Canadians were to be found in Ontario, due in large measure to the efforts of the federal government to foster good relations between the two groups. The general consensus of the participants seemed to favor acquiescing to most of the demands made by Quebec which appeared to be quite reasonable in light of the desire of French-Canadians to retain their culture.

However, it was also noted that any fault for a breakdown in re-

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background

Cathy Elias was last year's World University Service International Seminar winner. The seminar was held in Canada for the first time, during our centennial year.

This year's seminar will be held in French West Africa. The seminar lasts for six weeks during the summer and examines the problems and some of the solutions to the problems that the seminar countries have.

the seminar afforded Canadian students and professors the opportunity to meet students and teachers from each of the countries which WUS has visited since 1949.

NOT UNUSUAL

During the total five weeks of the seminar, it was not unusual to see in the small hours of the morning, clusters of students discussing numerous topics ranging from the merits of socialism to the vastness of Canada. It was here, over a pizza and refreshments, that we exchanged our views and managed to assimilate in some small measure those ideals expressed by our fellow participants. The importance of these informal get-togethers can never be overestimated, for they gave to our study of Canada a relevance without which our analysis would have been very shallow indeed.

Two big features in Casserole this week. The first on C-2 and C-3 deals with last summer's WUS international seminar. The feature was written by this university's representative to the seminar, Cathy Elias.

On C-4 and C-5, Ron Yakimchuk reviews the situation with the North Garneau development. One of the basic points of his story is the way in which the planners intend to integrate the different facilities—that is, the integration of departments, residences, academic areas and parking, as well as the wider integration of the campus with the community.

Old Faithful! Rich Vivone has decided to adapt the recent "censoring" move of the city police to advantage. Read about it on C-3.

Our cover shot ties in quite neatly with the Garneau story. Coincidentally or not, the above design by Mr. Pythagoras was found in the pavement outside the architect's offices. Draw your own conclusions.



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