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The Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific — training for peace

In the following article, Thomas J. McElligott, a former teacher at the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, shares his impressions and memories of this unique educational institution, designed to be an instrument of peace.

It is 7 p.m. on the campus of the Lester B. Pearson College near Victoria, British Columbia. A line of students stretches along the dining hall. They chat about the weather, the last class, their latest activities. Mealtime passes, and the students drift away to meeting rooms or the special "family rooms" where smoke, laughter and lively discussion serve as a backdrop for the exchange of ideas.

The college bears no resemblance at all to one's preconceived notion of a teaching institution. It is more like a kind of village of 250 inhabitants, 200 of whom are students from all over the world. Credit for the establishment of this unique school must go to former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, who was the winner of the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize. Mr. Pearson was convinced that people of all races and religions had to learn to live together; he came up with the idea of

founding a college and welcoming representatives of all countries to study there.

Teaching methods impressive

In Wales a college of this sort, the College of the Atlantic, was already in operation; there, in addition to their regular classroom studies, students learned land and sea rescue techniques and regulations. Mr. Pearson had been deeply impressed by the teaching methods of this college, which brought home to students the practical implications of their studies. He succeeded in interesting a number of Canadians in the idea, and convinced them that a similar college should be established in Canada. Thus the College of the Pacific was built, on a Vancouver Island hillside overlooking the ocean, among centuries-old trees, some of which reach 80 metres in height.

The college opened its doors in September 1974 under the directorship



Students, who have recently arrived from the People's Republic of China, meet with other students on the campus of Lester B. Pearson College.

Thirteen years ago this week...

On June 9, 1968, a debate by leaders of the major Canadian political parties was televised for the first time. Participants in the debate, which preceded the federal election of June 25, were Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party; Robert Stanfield, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party; Tommy Douglas, leader of the New Democratic Party; and Réal Caouette, leader of the Social Credit Party.

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