

The wages paid are the recognised trade union rates plus a share in the surplus produced each year.

The desire to own shown in these various historical periods is not yet dead. Many workers are eager to try to own their own business in these post war years. There will be a rush into one-man shops and as history shows the vast majority of these newcomers will fail. There will be a trickle into smallholding. But no one who could give a lead is offering any encouragement to skilled workers to become owners. But attempts will be made. Start has already been made in Glasgow where several groups of war time factory workers are planning future activities. In that area the lead has been given by a group, calling itself the 50 Group. These men, who all worked in the vast Hillingdon factory during the war, have pooled their war time savings. As a start towards ownership they have bought a toy factory and are operating it on a part-time basis. When the problem of supplies become easier they will launch into a sphere where their engineering abilities will stand them in good stead. Reports of their activities, which have appeared from time to time in the *Catholic Worker*, have roused considerable interest and other workers are beginning to plan what they can do to realise the ideal set out in *Quadragesimo Anno* that:

' We deem it advisable that the wage contract should, when possible, be modified somewhat by a contract of partnership . . . in this way wage-earners and other employees participate in the ownership, or in the management, or in some way share in the profits. '

R. P. WALSH.

THE ANTIGONISH MOVEMENT

ADDRESSING a petition to the Legislature of Nova Scotia in 1866, Bishop MacKinnon described St. Francis Xavier College of Antigonish as having "spacious and commodious buildings" and an enrolment which had "reached the high number of fifty-eight." He pointed out that "the said College is the only institution in Eastern Nova Scotia, inclusive of Cape Breton, in which the sciences of Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Moral and Dogmatic Theology are now taught," and he asked that it "be empowered by charter to confer degrees on such of its pupils as after due examination shall have been proved worthy of the honour." The power was granted, and eighty years have passed since the Bishop signed his petition. The two wooden houses which seemed "spacious and commodious" to him have become a campus in brick and stone, and the student body has grown from fifty-eight to over seven hundred.

The institution with this humble beginning has become better known than perhaps any other small university in the world. The good Bishop would be pleased with that, but he would be amazed to find that it has achieved this fame for work which he never thought of as a university function. Eighty years ago—and indeed almost down to our own day—the university concerned itself solely with those attending regular intramural classes. Rarely did the professor venture off the campus to speak, and then only to select groups on cultural or highly specialized subjects. But to-day St. Francis Xavier, like many other universities interested in broader social matters, is concerned with more than the few hundred who are able to attend college courses; it has gone out to serve the thousands who can never set foot on its campus, and for this work it has won the attention of people everywhere.

Within a week during the autumn of 1945, an official delegation from Puerto Rico and visitors from Costa Rica, Western Canada, United States and China came to Antigonish to study the extension work of this university. Correspondence is maintained with leaders in many parts of the world, and enquiries come from such distant places as Britain, South America and Australia. During the past decade, commendatory messages have been received from the Holy Father himself and others high in both Church and State. Since the staff, budget and facilities of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier are small compared with those maintained by other universities, it is interesting to enquire why its work has won such widespread admiration. By telling the story of the Antigonish Movement, this paper will attempt to give the answer.

We must go back even farther than 1866 to find the roots of the work. The end of the eighteenth century brought to Nova Scotia the first wave of Scottish immigrants who were forced from their homes during the unhappy days of political and religious turmoil following the Jacobite risings. In his book *Catholic and Scotland*, Compton Mackenzie says: "That in the diocese of Antigonish in Nova Scotia there should be over 80,000 Catholic Highlanders, more than half of whom are Gaelic-speaking, is a matter of imperial pride; but it does not compensate for the desolation of Glengarry and Knoydart, once a thickly populated Catholic district, now a wilderness with a congregation of hardly more than fifty souls." The persecution that depopulated the Catholic glens and islands of Scotland filled the new land with stalwart pioneers. Along with Acadian French and Irish settlers, who also came to Nova Scotia under the goad of persecution, these Scots in two generations built a strong pioneer country, and by the time of Bishop MacKinnon they had al-

ready set the pattern of a culture that has left a deep impress on Canadian life.

If that culture had produced banner farmers as readily as leaders in the learned professions, the university which the pioneers founded would perhaps never have opened an extension service. But the sons of these pioneers soon began to leave the land, and by 1880 there started from the farms of Eastern Nova Scotia a migration which in time left many districts as desolate as Glengarry and Knoydart. The population of Antigonish County itself was reduced from 18,000 to 10,000 in the fifty years between 1881 and 1931, and the rural population of the counties within the Diocese of Antigonish decreased by at least 30,000 in that period. The young and more ambitious turned to Central Canada, the United States and "the West," leaving the population debilitated. To counteract this decline, to give leadership to those engaged in the primary industries, and to bring the learning of university men to bear on the problems of the people, the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier was opened in 1928. At first confined to the Diocese of Antigonish, the work in time spread to the Maritime Provinces, until to-day "The Antigonish Movement" has come to mean the broad adult education programme going on in Maritime Canada.

The Maritimes are the three eastern provinces of Canada, jutting out into the Atlantic like a pier on the continent of America. The total area is about 50,000 square miles, with hundreds of miles of jagged coastline. The people to-day number something over one-and-a-quarter millions (One can appreciate the urban concentration in Canada when he realizes that there are as many people in the metropolitan area of Montreal). The industries are farming, lumbering, fishing, and coal and steel production. Around all is the sea, within sight of which most Maritimers are born.

When the leaders of the Extension Department first went out from St. Francis Xavier they did not announce a definite programme. Although the general guiding principles to be followed were clear enough, many details would depend on the facts yet to be ascertained. Besides, it was considered preferable to guide the people in discovering for themselves what plan of action was feasible. At that time farmers were found to be discouraged, industrial workers restless, fishermen utterly disheartened, and young men and women fresh from school convinced that only far away from the Maritimes could they hope to find a satisfying life. But they kept speaking to the people everywhere, as individuals, in small groups, in mass meetings. They told them to study, to discuss their problems together, to open their eyes to opportunities at home, to organize, to do things for themselves. Scepticism, lack of enthusiasm, the de-

fealist outlook, despair—these were all encountered and had to be broken down. The people needed, above all else, a new attitude, a new faith in the country.

How do you build a people? Surely not with arm-chair theories, quick panaceas, or state paternalism. The first step is to get the people to turn the searchlight of self-criticism upon themselves to discover their weaknesses, to find out where they have failed in the past. When they realize that their problems start within themselves and must be solved by themselves, the most difficult step in the process is taken. Leaders, of course, are needed—and not the doctrinaire planners of bureaucracy, but the natural leaders from the people themselves whom the first impact of study and organization will throw up from the masses. These are the ones who will have to plan the battles of the people and give fearless leadership throughout.

For there are battles to be fought; the people have enemies besides their own apathy. Their worst enemy is the exploiter—he who grows fat off the masses and assumes that their rôle in the scheme of things is to provide the fertile soil in which his personality shall grow and reach full flower. He may be a small trader or a multimillionaire industrialist, but his outlook and aims are generally the same. While humanity struggles for something “of, by and for the people,” he plans for something of, by and for himself and his class. He is backed by a host of camp followers and press agents usually from the professional and better-educated class—who do not believe in the people *en masse*, who think that the best the working class can do is produce a few bright individuals who can rise to the top to be skimmed off and placed with the élite of society.

This is the class war which has been fought from time immemorial in all lands. It will end only when all men unite in Christian charity and brotherhood.

The next problem in the programme is that of technique—how to reach the people? how to get ideas to them? how to educate them? The spearhead is a mass meeting at which leaders throw out ideas and move the people to think. Small discussion circles of five to ten persons are then formed to study printed material. Larger conferences are held and organization is laid. Pamphlets and books are distributed in large quantities; radio and films are now being used more and more. Then the people are mobilized for action and their study given direction towards a concrete programme for social and economic betterment.

As stated before, the leaders of the St. Francis Xavier Extension Department did not set out in the beginning with any fixed plan.

They started with little more than a deep concern for the people, but in a short time some definite scheme with an underlying philosophy did take shape. It is a mosaic of ideas and experience drawn from many sources and synthesized into a people's movement. From the Scandinavian countries came the marketing co-operatives; from Britain, consumer co-operatives; credit unions from the United States. To these have been added the teachings of a host of writers and thinkers who have attempted to analyze the great social and economic questions of our time. Underlying the programme are the basic social verities of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno*.⁽¹⁾

A few general principles of the movement should be stated here. The first is the primacy of the individual; and this is the principle which underlines the teachings of both Christianity and Democracy. Hence the espousal of the cause of the common man and the belief that only by raising his position can the general level of humanity be improved. But alongside this principle must be set the welfare of the community, and therefore we have the complementary principle of the necessity for group action to curb the evils of ultra-individualism.⁽²⁾

The balance between these two principles has led to the emphasis on co-operative organizations as a middle-of-the-road course between the *laissez-faire* economy of the past and the collectivist tendency which threatens from the extreme left to-day.

Next is the importance of education, with its corollary of sane leadership. Only through continuous education can we have both improvement of the individual and social progress; but because of great inequality in natural capacities in men, we must depend on a few of outstanding ability and sincerity of purpose to lead the masses.

The fourth principle is that education must begin with economic matters and the everyday problems that affect the livelihood of the people.

The final principle is that the ultimate aim of the movement is the full and abundant life for all in the community. This may involve certain changes and loss of power and influence for some, but the net result will be a better and richer life for the great majority.

¹ For example, when questioned about their interest in organizations of primary producers, workers of the Extension Department could read from the latter encyclical where Pope Pius XI. spoke of "the gratifying increase and spread of associations amongst farmers and others of the humbler class. These excellent organizations, with others of a similar kind, happily combine economic advantages with mental culture."

² In *Quadregesimo Anno* we read: "Free competition, though within certain limits just and productive of good results, cannot be the ruling principle of the economic world. This has been abundantly proved by the consequences that have followed from the free rein given to these dangerous individualistic ideals."

This article can only summarize the actual achievements of the people organized with these techniques and guided by this philosophy. Fishermen soon banded together for group marketing and erected their own factories for the processing of fish. Their central agency, United Maritime Fishermen, has now become a major concern in the Atlantic fisheries. Some four hundred credit unions, "The People's Banks," have been set up and through these the ordinary folk of the Maritimes have handled loans for provident and productive purposes amounting to over \$17 millions. Co-operative stores now number 125; and their central wholesale, which started as a small farmers marketing organization, now does a business approaching \$5 millions annually. Smaller regional wholesales (two now operating) will supply local co-operatives with consumer goods and will act as marketing agencies for farmers. A few urban groups have successful housing organizations. A Maritime scheme of group hospitalization now protects over 150,000 people. Farmers have set up various marketing co-operatives, like poultry pools, which have increased their returns and raised the quality of farm products as well.

Throughout, the emphasis is on ownership for the people and organization for service, not somebody's profit. With this foundation ownership the people are beginning to widen their horizons. One can see the beginnings of a new faith in the fishing village and the countryside; there is a new interest in education, in public welfare, in community life. As the economic problems are solved, the people push on to higher things. The movement has within it not only the germ of a new economic order, but also the dynamics of a better society.

We should now try to answer the questions: why is this extension work successful in spite of serious limitations? why has it won such acclaim? Four reasons are given here:

- 1) It is different from other university extension programmes in that it is directed to those who are most in need of adult education. It is not something to fill the leisure hours of the dilettante. It accepts the people where they are and provides a realistic programme geared to the level of those whom it seeks to educate. It did not start with culture but with the pressing needs of the common people. If they needed cheap fertilizer, then the Extension Department dealt with fertilizer and not Art. If they needed a new way to market lobsters, then the subject was lobsters, not literature. So the people found the field-workers talking their language, discussing things that meant bread and butter to them. Instead of shouting theories from an ivory tower, the university came to walk among men and become a power in their everyday lives. The people ac-

cepted it because they felt that this was the leadership they wanted.

2) It is fearless. It does not accept anything that conflicts with the well-being of the people. In the beginning the Extension Department dared to speak out against vested interests that did not promote the welfare of the countryside and its people. It preferred to incur the hatred of those who had profited from the *status quo* than to glide along in smooth acquiescence with the accepted order of things.

3) The programme was sparked by great personalities who had both the moral courage and the physical vitality to go out and fight for the things in which they believed. The work that might well have become a milk-and-water, innocuous programme to placate the people, instead became in their hands a vital work to build something new and different.

4) The work fortunately won the support of a large body of clergymen and government officials, without whose aid what has been done in fifteen years might well have taken fifty.

In conclusion it must be made clear that the work has only begun—to use a Churchillian phrase, we are now reaching the end of the beginning. As this is being written, there is evidence of the impact of the work on both the economy and the social structure of the country. Ground has been broken, but the final harvest must wait for another day. In a few places great progress has been made in a single decade, but in most it will take many years before the work begins to bear fruit. Over the whole country the final result will not be seen in our time. But it is the hope of those who now labour in the Antigonish Movement that in days to come a new generation of men and women, strong and free, will grow up in a land that once had lost faith in itself.

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NOTE: Success among Catholics in the Co-operative Movement is also marked in Canada by the co-operatives run in conjunction with the Laval University, Quebec. A great deal of literature on this particular movement may be had from *Conseil Supérieur de la Co-opération*, C.P. 186, Quebec. The March number of their lively periodical *Ensemble* 1, edited by Père Bélanger, O.P., is devoted to the Co-operative Union and Council of Canada. Of itself the number gives much information about the various co-operatives throughout Canada, but readers are advised to write to the *Conseil Supérieur* for literature, etc.—EDITH.