PARKA CHAPLAIN COVERS ALASKAN ROAD IN WINTER

Rev. Don C. Amos Reveals Details of Pioneer Work By Church

UNITED ENDEAVOUR

The "parka padre," Rev. Don C. Amos, Brantford, back home briefly (he is returning with his wife this evening) from a tour of the camps along the Alaskan road, last night told delegates attending the 19th annual session of the Hamilton Conference of the United Church of Canada that his tour of "the road," as representative of the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and United Churches, was, he hoped, an augury of the fashion in which the Protestant churches would co-operate some day in the settled communities of Canada.

Young, he cannot be more than 30 years of age, of a strong build that testifies his athletic ability at Victoria College, University of Toronto, and Emmanuel College, the "parka padre," so called because he wears the same clothes as the men among whom he works, told the Spectator something of his experiences, concerning which he elaborated when he addressed the conference.

Returns to Arctic

He revealed that he was returning to-night to the road after a three-month stay and that this time he would not leave until construction work had been completed.

"It was an experience in a thousand," he said, "the journey took me to Edmonton, and then to Dawson Creek, the end of the rail line. Last winter I moved by truck from camp to camp over an area 520 miles north and west of that little prairie town, a little prairie town no longer. I held services on Sundays and during the week, and in the first week in April I reached Whitehorse in the Yukon."

He pointed out that he worked exclusively among the Canadian and American civilians working on the road.

One experience he recounted had to do with an extraordinary bath. Taken in a hot spring, with the temperature hovering below the zero mark, it was followed by a snow rubdown, the tub itself being covered by a tent. As for his clothes, plaid shirt and breeches in the summer, parka and all the trimmings in the winter.

In his address to the delegates, the young minister stressed the fact that the spirit of the men was good with many of them rallying to the spiritual message he had to offer. The impact of thousands of workers as they flooded in on peaceful little towns had presented many problems, he confessed, with these centres taking on many of the characteristics associated with the boom towns of 50 years ago.

Spirit of Co-operation

Mr. Amos emphasized the spirit of co-operation that existed between the Canadian and American workers with both groups talking constantly of Uncle Sam when referring to problems connected with the road. None of these men, he said, would receive medals for the work they were doing, but by their persistence they were doing a great job. He referred too, to the "sons of fortune" who were frequently seen among the workers, men who tried to get an easy living by playing games of chance, and he stressed the fact there was a field along the road in which the churches could accomplish a great deal of good.

After describing the fashion in which groups of men in the various camps had voluntarily flocked to hear the services, many times he found "a ready-made group of elders and would-be choir singers," Mr. Amos told his listeners that it was among them that the front line of the work of God lay. "The front line is in the home where the children grow up," he said. "The value of the home cannot be over-emphasized, and that is where the work must be done."

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