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NATIONAL UNITY

RADHAKRISHNAN'S CALL

NEW BUILDINGS FOR CITY COLLEGE

MADRAS, July 24.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Indian Union, declared open last evening the new buildings of the Stella Maris College in Cathedral Road and said that national unity was the greatest need to-day and that national discipline leading to national coherence would have to be built in small institutions like colleges.

The largely attended function was presided over by Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor.

On arrival, the Vice-President was received by the Principal and the Vice-Chancellor.

Prof. M. Ruthnaswami welcomed the Vice-President on behalf of the Management and said that the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary had founded not only the Stella Maris College but also half a dozen other colleges in the other parts of the country. The Stella Maris College had made great progress since its inception more than a decade ago and had become very popular. He thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the great consideration he had shown to the institution. He expressed the hope that the institution located in the "Cloisters" would help the students not only by giving them academic education but also by inspiring them to live the right type of life.

Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar said that the Stella Maris College was started on August 15, 1947, in a humble way and it had since expanded much. The college offered subjects suited to the needs and aptitudes of girls besides art and science courses. He thanked the managements like that of the Stella Maris College for what they had been doing for women's education in the State and said that, at present, the number of girls studying in the State in art, science and professional courses stood at 8,500. There were women students studying engineering, technology, medicine, agriculture, veterinary, nursing, commerce and law.

Dr. Radhakrishnan praised the management of the institution for their efforts and the way in which the institution catered to the needs of the women and said that Professor Ruthnaswami had mentioned the fact that the buildings were known as "Cloisters". In other words, he made out that the institution was to serve not merely the intellectual needs but also spiritual needs of the community. Dr. Radhakrishnan said that it was not possible for them to turn out well proportioned individuals if they merely emphasised one side and neglected the others. "If many of our students in this country," he said, "find themselves bored after the class hours, simply face emptiness, wish to be lost in the collective warmth of crowds and do not know what to do with their spare time, it is due to this fact that we have not given them an idea of the purpose in life—something for which they have to live, something they do in life which will outlast their life."

Briefly referring to the advantages of cloisters, Dr. Radhakrishnan said that they helped to develop a passion for solitude. Great things happened, he said, not by corporations but by individuals. Early this week, the President of the Royal Society, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Society, said that the achievements in the three centuries were due to the action of rare individuals. He was making out that the great works of art and literature, science and technology, were not due to syndicates, committees and corporations, but were due to individuals who were able to sit alone, concentrate their mind on some aspects, have some glimpse of the object, bring it down to earth, clothe it with emotions and do some service to humanity.

One of the essential things which a college had to do, Dr. Radhakrishnan suggested, was to develop among the young folk the passion for solitude. "We cannot say," he said, "that the students who are now going out get a very good example from their elders about the way in which they have to behave. Here is a country which is trying to make itself modern, and which is trying to introduce a democratic pattern of life. In doing so, the young people look to the elders. But if the elders do not set a good example, that is no justification why the young people should indulge in activities which are unworthy of us."

"Youth," Dr. Radhakrishnan added, "is an adventure. It is the spirit of renewal. It is something

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which does not rest content with mere stagnation. One of the famous thinkers of the world said 'life is a perpetual offensive against mechanical repetitions of the past'. You do not make progress in the past, if you merely imitate what your elders have done and not advance on them, it will not be possible for you to make any kind of progress at all. The spirit of youth is the spirit of hope." He said that when he listened to the welcome song by the students, he marked the words that the youths felt an ardour and they wished to make a new country of the motherland and they would be guided by the message of truth, charity, *satya* and *dharma*. He stressed that they should deepen their awareness in the pursuit of truth, and widen the objects of their compassion. That was the pursuit of *dharma*. If every one was affected by the ideal of seeking the truth and practising the good, they would be able to do something very substantial towards the growth of the community.

MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

Stressing the importance of moral standards, Dr. Radhakrishnan said that democracy was something which required a great deal of restraint. It asked them to be modest when they were meeting an opposite view and think that they might be wrong perhaps. It wished that they should have some kind of consideration for other people. It wanted them to adjust themselves to the majority will in the hope that the present minority might become a majority. "Democracy," he emphasised, "does not mean mediocrity. It does not mean corruption. It does not mean nepotism and abuse of power and privilege. Democracy is ruled by moral standards. If you do not have moral standards it might lead this country into chaos. Every one must feel that he is a trustee for this country and in whatever he does he should try his utmost to subordinate his own interest to the national interest."

"We are living at a time," Dr. Radhakrishnan said, "when things are happening in this country which will make us ashamed of ourselves. We cannot call ourselves civilised in the way in which some of us are indulging in anger, passion and violence on account of our adherence to certain ideals. A cynic said 'the only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from it.' This country in the past suffered a great deal on account of sectarian controversies—national weakness so as to say—provincial jealousies, caste spirit and local patriotism that has been the ruin of this country for ages. If still we are alive, it is because some of us were able to stand beside or above these things and stand up for the right ideals."

"It is necessary, at a time," Dr. Radhakrishnan stressed, "when our national unity is being under-mined by provincial, linguistic, caste and communal prejudices, that we should put national unity higher than all those other loyalties in which we sometimes indulge. In a college like this, where it is possible for you to get together members from different communities, different provinces, and different religions to work together as members of one home, it will be possible for you to make a substantial contribution to the progress of our country."

Referring to the fact that the college was started on August 15, 1947, when power was transferred to the Indians by the British, Dr. Radhakrishnan said that political independence was only one step. Economic independence and social equality and revival were also necessary things. If they had to promote real freedom in all spheres of their existence, political independence should be regarded as merely an opportunity which they had to employ for developing those several forms of independence. They in the college had, therefore, a great opportunity—when they had to deal with human individuals and when they were building the soul so to say—to make refined and civilised human beings.

LOYALTY TO COUNTRY

A great deal of emphasis was laid, Dr. Radhakrishnan added, on industrial development to-day. All that was necessary. But industrial development could not supersede the more urgent need of shaping the minds and hearts of the millions of people who lived in this country. Nations, which were industrially great and which were scientifically well-equipped without the qualities and virtue of humanity, had come to nought and had perished practically. If, therefore, they want to assure the safety of the future of this country, they must put first things first and try to integrate the different elements of this vast country into a single homogeneous community professing its loyalty to the country whatever be the race, religion, community, caste or creed they belonged to.

"It is, therefore, necessary," Dr. Radhakrishnan concluded, "that we should realise that edu-

cational institutions have a great part to play. They must recognise national unity to be the greatest need to-day. National discipline is the only way to promote national coherence. That national discipline will have to be cultivated in small institutions like this college if our large country is to grow in a manner of which we can be proud."
Mr. A. Dorairaj proposed a vote of thanks.