Closing of Second Term at the Ecumenical Institute

On Thursday, March 25th, the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, celebrated the closing session of its second term. The courses had been attended by 38 young theological students from fifteen countries.

The first two speeches were made by students, a Hungarian and a Dutchman, who both emphasised the importance of the course "as a lived fellowship". "I felt here as a member of the family, like a finger of an outstretched hand", said the Hungarian, adding that only as Christians of many lands stretched out their hands to each other could a world church fellowship be created. "The course gave us a world wide outlook", emphasised the Dutchman, "although it made us realise that theological questions are not so simple as we thought. But precisely because it is so, the experience of the 'oecumene' cannot be made early enough."

Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, emphasised in his closing address the pioneering character of the Bossey Institute. "You have done with us pioneering work", he said. "Many look to Geneva as a place where an ecumenical orchestra plays a symphony. The students have now learned that there is no finished orchestra. We try to play together and sometimes there are discords as well as harmony. The ecumenical future depends on the renewal of every single Church. The repentance of all the Churches is necessary. Therefore everyone of you should go back to his community with a firm desire to introduce a new ecumenical spirit."

Dr. Hans Hoekendijk, director of the winter term, summaried the course saying that its basic idea has been that the Churches cannot renew themselves, only Christ can renew them. The renewal of the Churches is not a less miracle than the resurrection from the dead.

E.P.S. Geneva

ITALY

Protestants Plead for Religious Freedom

Although the newspapers have announced that the Lateran pacts have been included in the Italian Constitution, we give the following information concerning the visit paid by the representatives of the religious minorities in Italy to the President of the Republic.

On March 22nd, Monsieur Enrico De Nicola, provisional chief of State, received three deputies from the Constituent Assembly, who introduced to him the representatives of the religious minorities in Italy: Pastor Virgilio Sommani, President of the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy and Moderator of the Waldensian Church, Monsieur Raffaele Cantoni, President of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy, and Messieurs Giovanni Gonnet, Giorgio Peyrot and Mario Alberto Rollier of the Waldensian Churches of Rome and Milan.

Pastor Sommani showed the President some publications sent by the organs of the different communities represented in the delegation to the deputies of the Constituent Assembly, for the purpose