

Ambassador of Italy Visits UPEI

by Amy Gallan

Dr. Andrea Negrotto Cambiaso, the Ambassador of Italy to Canada, made his first official visit to Prince Edward Island on Wednesday, October 4th. Fourty-five minutes after his arrival in Charlottetown he made a quick stop at UPEI's faculty lounge where he met a small group of people composed mostly of students who have previously taken an Italian course at the university.

His visit was a part of a plan for all the ambassadors to Canada to try to familiarize themselves with Canada, and all of the provinces in particular. The Ambassador was accompanied by the Consul General of Italy to Canada, Carlo Selvaggi. The meeting also had much to do with trade. The two had official meetings with the premier, several ministers, the lieutenant-governor, as well as those in the business community who are presently doing business with or in Italy and those who would like to.

Upon his arrival to the university, the Dean of Arts, Robert Campbell, gave a short welcome speech to the Ambassador:

I extend the warmest welcome, sir, to you and your colleague on the occasion of your visit to the University of Prince Edward Island. Our President extends her regrets at not being able to be here personally, but she hopes your visit will be a pleasant and productive one.

I understand that you will be talking to the business community here on the Island, but we are very pleased that you were able to come to the university as well. Needless to say, within these walls we are very conscious of the enormous contribution that Italy has made to the development of Western Civilization -- from the era of the Romans, through the Renaissance, to modern times. In this building, which houses most of the Faculty of Arts, not a day would go by without reference, probably numerous references, to Italian music, and art, and literature, and as I have seen here this evening, to the Italian language.

I have had the great pleasure of visiting Italy. I remember soft late summer days spent on the shores of Lake Maggiore, and a memorable Christmas

spent at Assisi, with midnight mass in the church of St. Francis. I remember as well the beautiful city of Rome, which my Celtic ancestors (the Gauls) visited briefly in 390 BC, and which would have fallen completely to them except for a warning given by a flock of geese! In return, of course, the Romans conquered us with their language, and the larger Italy has done so with its culture.

And finally, we remind ourselves at this university that Bologna has a strong claim to be the first of the Medieval universities, and thus spiritually or symbolically the parent institution for

Yugoslavia, unfortunately, but there is a new spirit in Europe -- Europe is trying to better itself."

The Ambassador was very impressed with the Island and the university. "Well, I arrived three quarters of an hour ago, but I can tell you this feeling of warm welcome I received here, makes me so thankful to you. This is leading, the way I feel it, for a great love for this Island, and I hope tomorrow to, on the completion of official part of the visit, to at least explore this Island then come back with my family and stay longer," said Dr. Cambiaso.



The Ambassador chatting with student and painter Terry Stevenson *Photo courtesy of Dr. Falvo*

all of us.

So welcome, Mr Ambassador, and welcome, Mr. Consul General. You are amongst friends.

Italian students and others in attendance also introduced themselves to the Ambassador, the Italian students in his native language, causing their professor, F. F. Falvo, to feel great pride in his students. "They find it difficult. . . challenging. . . but I know that deep down they love it."

Dr. Cambiaso's speech was spoken in very simple Italian. The Ambassador underlined the fact that Europe is at a turning point. "It has centuries of wars behind it, and two World Wars during this century. . . The wars are still going on in the former

Ambassador Cambiaso also went on to say that, in his opinion, Canada had the greatest potential for success in the whole world. "First of all," the Ambassador said, "it [Canada] is a country where hundreds of thousands of people, coming from everywhere, now especially from underdeveloped countries with mainly economic problems and problems of survival, are finding Canada their new home. This was true even for so many Italians after World War II. . . They found here a welcoming country and rooted here, and got established here. I have seen so many of them all throughout the country, all of them feeling very much at home."

Andrea Negrotto Cambiaso was born in Rome, January 4, 1937. He entered the foreign services in 1962 and,

after attending specialized courses occupied many important positions including the Permanent Representative of Italy to the EEC and EAEC, EEC in 1964; the Deputy Diplomatic Attaché to the President of the Council of Ministers Mr. Alco Moro, 1975; 1983, Ambassador in Valletta (Malta); Decorated Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy, 1986; Permanent Representative of Italy to the conference on Disarmament in Geneva, 1989; 1992, Chief of Cabinet for the Minister of Foreign Affairs [Italy], finally, in 1994, the Ambassador of Italy to Canada.

Later, Dean Campbell complimented Professor Falvo on his superb language skills, saying, "I'm very impressed with the way your students speak Italian and I'm impressed at your willingness to speak out in Italian." He says a great deal about the way you are teaching the course."

Most of the students were impressed with the Ambassadors visit. He liked it very much, especially when he showed his appreciation to us for learning Italian," said Reynold Vail, who learned Italian at UPEI.

Sylvia Johnson, another student who also learned Italian at the university said, "I think it's great that we are having a visit from Europe that focuses on trade between the Atlantic region and Italy."

Professor Falvo was very enthusiastic, saying, "It is a tremendous experience." He also reminds us that an Italian course will be held next semester for those interested.

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