

Synthetic Rubber Process Priest Discovered Plays Major Role In Wartime

(By N.C.W.C. News Service)

The nation's current plans for development of a synthetic rubber supply that will free the United States from dependence, for military purposes, on the natural rubber plantations of the East Indies were made possible, it is recalled, chiefly through discoveries made by a Catholic priest.

It was the late Rev. Dr. Julius Arthur Nieuwland, C.S.C., Professor of Chemistry at the University of Notre Dame, a botanist of distinction and one of the most brilliant chemists of the century, who through research carried on over a period of almost 30 years, made possible the development of the first commercially successful artificial rubber ever produced in this country.

Processes developed from Father Nieuwland's researches and discoveries in the field of acetylene chemistry will be the chief ones used in producing 400,000 tons of artificial rubber annually, according to proposals under the recently announced \$440,000,000 emergency plant-financing program of the Government.

Process Long Sought

For years before Father Nieuwland's discovery, chemists and rubber manufacturers sought in vain for an artificial rubber process that would be comparatively cheap and at the same time yield a product comparable in resistance, durability and elasticity to natural rubber.

Father Nieuwland, a native of Belgium who came to the United States as a child, was graduated from Notre Dame University in 1899 and ordained a priest in the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1902. After completing graduate work at the Catholic University of America, he returned to Notre Dame where he taught until his death in 1928.

Father Nieuwland made synthetic rubber production possible through a reaction—discovered by him and developed with his help

by industrial chemists who heard him describe it at a scientific meeting which produced "monovinylacetylene," an acetylene derivative that can be "polymerized" into long "chain" molecules.

Overcame Chief Barrier

This process of polymerization, graphically described by a young laboratory assistant of the priest as "making one molecule turn around and bite the tail of its neighbor," had proved the stumbling block to previous efforts in the synthetic rubber field.

In 1935, four years after the first synthetic rubber had been commercially produced from Father Nieuwland's monovinylacetylene, the priest-chemist was awarded the Nicholas Medal, the highest honor of the American Chemical Society. In an address at the presentation it was stated that he "provided the cornerstone on which a new branch of our chemical industry is being built."

A notable factor of Father Nieuwland's discovery is that the rubber produced is of such quality as to encourage peacetime production on a modest scale, thus preparing the groundwork for the extensive emergency production on which the nation is now embarking.

Always a believer in publishing the results of his research so that they might aid others, he was also faithful in attending scientific meetings of the many societies of which he was a member. It was at one such meeting, the First Organic Symposium in Rochester, N. Y., September, 1925, that an industrial chemist first learned from the priest of his work on copper catalysts for polymerizing acetylene.

Partition Seen Chief Irish Problem

LONDON.—The universal belief of Catholics in Ireland is that a settlement of the partition dispute "is the one thing necessary to the establishment of fruitful relations between the peoples of Great Britain and Ireland," the Rev. Dr. John Heenan, noted English radio priest, says in a further report on the attitude of the Irish towards current questions, as he found them in a recent visit there.

Dr. Heenan's findings are appearing currently in a series of articles in the Catholic Herald here. "What seems to be required to solve the problem is not politics but statesmanship," Dr. Heenan writes. "It is impossible to believe that there could be no better solution than a regime of bigotry, race hatred and violence. The mutual good will of all classes and creeds, so conspicuous in National Ireland, is barred in the Six Counties."

Reviewing the religious difficulties resulting from the partition, Dr. Heenan points out that four Catholic Dioceses at the border between Eire and Northern Ireland are themselves partitioned. "The Primatial See itself is partly in Eire and partly in the Six Counties," he writes. "The Cardinal and 130,000 faithful of Armagh feel outraged that they (in St. Patrick's See) are cut off from the national life of Catholic Ireland."

The six counties of Ulster that were partitioned into a separate State from the rest of Ireland do not all have a Protestant majority, Dr. Heenan states. "The counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh are mainly Catholic and the people of some sections of the other four are 'wholeheartedly opposed to partition,' he reports.

India School Headmaster Takes Final Jesuit Vows

CANNANORE, India.—Members of the faculty and students of St. Michael's European High School here attended the ceremonies in Holy Trinity Church when the Rev. William Sequiera, S.J., headmaster of the institution, took his final vows as a member of the Society of Jesus. All received Holy Communion.

De Sales High School Notes

By MARY SNOONEY

GENEVA.—De Sales High School Sodality met in regular session on Tuesday evening.

Rev. John Guy, as guest speaker, gave an instructive talk on the Five Scapulars. He described each of the five scapulars separately and explained the special privileges granted to those who wear them, as well as the Sabbath privileges.

John Skaner read a letter received from Bishop O'Hara, concerning the recent drive for Catholic magazines sponsored by the Sodality for the armed forces. A report on Red Cross work being accomplished by the knitting classes at De Sales was given by Mary Snowney. To date Sr. M. Joannico, Jacqueline Stockman and Mary Snowney have earned their Red Cross Service Pins.

LOURDES LECTURE

Rev. Joseph Gefell, chaplain at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Rochester will give an illustrated lecture on Our Lady of Lourdes at the first regular meeting in February.

VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN

Saturday morning Peter Carney, Richard Walsh, and John O'Malley put the finishing touches on the U. S. O. Drive for Catholic magazines. As a result five large boxes of reading matter is on its way to five different army chaplains in New York State.

Record Class Ordained By Brazil Prelate

SAO PAULO, Brazil.—A record number of deacons was ordained to the priesthood when the Most Rev. Jose Gaspar de Aronsonca y Silva, Archbishop of Sao Paulo, conferred the Sacrament of Holy Orders on 40 candidates at a ceremony here.

There are 8,000 priests, diocesan and regular in about equal numbers, now laboring among Brazil's 40,000,000 people.

We gain double when we relieve a brother at the price of our own humiliation.—St. John Francis Rejis.

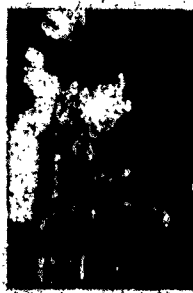
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