

# Senior pupils banned from Ulster lecture

By CLAUDE THOMSON, Our Municipal Correspondent

Fifth and sixth-year pupils in Glasgow schools are to be banned from attending a lecture on Ulster to be given under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association.

The WEA's annual Christmas lecture is to be given on December 16 by Professor Richard Rose, an American political scientist who is professor of politics at Strathclyde University. His subject is "Conflict in Ulster — What are the right questions?"

The corporation education committee yesterday decided by 17 votes to 8 not to make the usual arrangements for fifth and sixth formers to attend the annual WEA Christmas lecture "having regard to the nature of the subject."

Councillor Dr Daniel Docherty, convener, said:—"To have this type of title for a lecture in this part of the country is most untimely."

He suggested that if the lecture was in the evening fifth and sixth formers who were anxious to go could attend, but the committee as an education authority should not start getting involved in that kind of thing.

Councillor William Harley, who opposed the ban, was told by Mr John Bain, director of education, that for several years it had been the practice for the WEA to invite senior pupils from Glasgow and surrounding counties to a Christmas lecture, which this year would be in the new arts building at Glasgow University.

In view of the subject this year the director felt it should be brought to the notice of the committee for them to decide whether Glasgow pupils should attend.

Councillor Harley said he was disturbed by the situation. Conflict in Ulster was a matter of great moment. It was difficult for anyone to be objective about Northern Ireland, but he would have thought an American might come closer than others.

Could there be a more modern study than Ulster? Were we not to consider alternatives? Even within the past 24 hours an initiative had been taken by Mr Harold Wilson which should be examined. It seemed a negation of education to take away from young people the opportunity to decide whether to attend the lecture or not.

The reasons for suggesting pupils should not get to the lecture were not sufficiently strong, and he suggested that the matter should be reconsidered.

Councillor Elizabeth Taylor said:—"I think we are being insulting to our senior pupils."

Councillor Nancy Ballantyne said the sub-committee who had considered the matter had been unanimous in recommending that arrangements should not be made

for pupils to attend the lecture, and added:—"We feel the subject is untimely and that it has been more than well covered by television and the press. We are a wee bit anxious to play down the whole subject at the moment."

Mr Robert Lochrie, West of Scotland district secretary of the WEA, said normally about 120 children attended such lectures, 60% of them from Glasgow. He was disappointed with the decision, but acceptances had already been received from Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, and Stirlingshire. The lecture would go ahead.

He added:—"This is not a political meeting. I cannot see how we could get anyone better in terms of objectivity than Professor Rose to take this lecture."

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