

Central Montana Priest Tells of Visit to Poland

The Rev. John Haligowski, Central Montana Catholic pastor, told of his visit this summer to Poland, the country where he was born and lived until 1940, at a regular meeting of Rotary club Monday noon at the Calvert hotel.

The Rev. Father Haligowski was captured by the Nazis in 1940 and from that time until last July he had not set foot on Polish soil. After spending time in three German concentration camps, Father Haligowski came to the United States and in 1950 he became assistant pastor at Sidney, where he served before coming to Central Montana. He now serves Catholic churches in Hilger, Danvers, Roy, and Winifred.

Father Haligowski said that many things had improved for the citizens of Poland since last October's revolution and the emergence of Wladyslaw Gomulka as head of the Polish Communistic government. However, he gave a number of examples showing the woeful living conditions throughout Poland.

Since Gomulka has come into power, Father Haligowski said that now citizens can own private property, build their own homes, have private farm land, and are able to take part in religious worship and education.

He pointed out that very few Polish people know wealth and that generally living standards are deplorable. Taxes are extremely high in Poland, he said.

There are few private cars anywhere in Poland and there is an acute shortage of rooms and homes throughout the nation, he said.

One of the surprising things about Poland is the fact that the citizens freely criticize communism, since the October uprising, which is not true in other Red countries, the Rev. Father Haligowski said.

Commenting on transportation,

he said that the taxis in Warsaw were in terrible shape and that other means of travel include trains, streetcars, motorcycles and bicycles.

He told of cramped living quarters with a number of families sharing the same kitchen. Lack of electricity, refrigerators, and freezers impose hardships on the people, he explained.

He told of one Polish citizen who boasted: "We too in our country have two cars for every family."

"What is this, a joke?" Father asked.

"We do have two. One to take you to the hospital in and the other to take you to the police."

He pointed out that American travelers in Poland are very rare and that his relatives thought of him as their "rich uncle from America."

The Rotary club members called attention to the joint meeting of the Moore Women's club and their husbands with the Rotary club and wives Monday night at 8 p.m. Oct. 14 at the Moore High School auditorium.