

Worker-Priest Tells of His Activities

“ALTHOUGH I am a priest, I spend very little of my time on religious activities,” the Rev. Tony Williamson told the Southwark Diocesan Conference yesterday.

Mr. Williamson, who was ordained last year, is employed as a manual worker by the Pressed Steel Company at Cowley, Oxford.

His hours of work are from 7.15 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. from Monday to Friday. In addition he is a Labour member of Oxford City Council, and is away from work, on part pay, for Council duties for about thirty hours a month.

“As you may expect, my time is full. I say Mattins before breakfast each morning, except Wednesday, when I celebrate the Holy Communion

in church at 6.30 a.m. On Sunday I celebrate at least once and sometimes preach. Apart from an occasional baptism, wedding or church meeting, this is all the specifically religious activities I perform.

“Therefore, although I am a priest, I spend very little of my time on religious activities. But, with my roots in the Church, I try to carry my Christian belief into the complex matters of secular affairs.

“I see nothing contradictory in this position, and I am sure that there is no theological necessity for a priest to be a professional religious man. Anyone who disagrees with this would, I think, have to show which functions of priesthood cannot be performed by a worker-priest, or what essentials of the priesthood are incompatible with the life of a manual worker.”