

'Lax' Klansmen in Philadelphia Area

By TOM HINE

Of The Inquirer Staff

RISING SUN, Md. — About 250 men and women — some in white robes and hoods — gathered in a pasture enclosed by an electrified fence Saturday to hear the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America.

The noonday sun was bearing down when Robert Shelton arrived in his modish gray pinstriped suit, striped tie and blue shirt.

The hollow-eyed, 42-year-old Shelton strode onto the field, ignoring demonstrators outside the fence as a sound system blared "Gimmie That Ole Time Religion."

"Some day," he turned to a reporter, poking a long finger at his face, "something is going to happen to you to make you want to join the Klan."

Asked about the reported breakup of the Klan in the Philadelphia area, Shelton denied there had been a breakup.

"It was merely the dismissal of certain individuals from service," he said.

"They were lax in investigating the character and background of people they brought in. There were convicted felons, sex deviates, and one person had been convicted of sodomy," he added.



—*"Someday something is going to happen to you to make you want to join the Klan."*

—Robert Shelton

Most of the persons at the rally were from Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

He said these problems "could be eliminated by the Justice Department . . . and if the United States would stop granting \$5 million to Turkish opium producers . . . if Communist influences could be eliminated."

The Klan, he said, is made up of ordinary working people

Harold

PHILADELPHIA, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 20, 1971

Were 'Dismissed,' Imperial Wizard Explains

"tired of seeing the Flag desecrated, morals declining, youths brainwashed, the three Rs of education destroyed and the anti-Christ exerting its influence on the country."

Activities during the rally included the raffling off of a gun, a set of cutlery and a live pig.

About 45 demonstrators, some affiliated with Students for a Democratic Society, marched along the barbed wire fence in protest of the rally. The demonstrators left without incident after 2½ hours.

Shelton talked about crime in the streets, the drug problem and violence.

Shelton, who formed the United Klans of America in 1961, is credited with a recent resurgence of Klan activities, which he helped open to Catholics, now accepted as members.

Shelton, who operates out of Tuscaloosa, Ala., once was the object of a full-scale Congressional investigation after President Johnson termed the century-old night riders "a hooded society of bigots."

The Klan, said Shelton, "can be violent as it has to be.

"When we have to fight for the sanctity of our homes and the chastity of our women, we will," he said.