

1956

# B.S.L. NOTES

For the Friends of the Brotherhood of S. Laurence

The Brotherhood helps all in need and endeavours to arouse thought and action on social questions.

FITZROY

MARCH

No. 117

## The Superior writes on . . . "LEAVE IT TO THE GOVERNMENT" - TALK OR ACTION? - A VISION

Dear B.S.L. Friends,

"Leave it to the Government"—this we are too prone to do. I believe that we should do all in our power to urge those in authority to act along lines we think to be right. This the Brotherhood has done over the years in regard to slum clearance and other social evils. We have, however, done something more than urge the Government. We have done something about the matter ourselves, but it is not my intention at this stage to write about ourselves.

Those who have a social conscience and are alert to the many wrongs that need to be righted are prone to become frustrated at the slowness of progress being made. It is well at such times to assess what is being done. I am always cheered when I hear what individuals and groups of people are doing to right those things that they believe to be wrong. They may continue to urge the Government, but they are not content merely to "leave it to the Government."

### ABORIGINES

I have in mind the work being carried out by Sergeant Feldtmann on behalf of the Aborigines living on the outskirts of Swan Hill. For years past the unhappy lot of the "remnant that is left" has been a disgrace to a country such as ours that professes to be and calls itself Christian. These poor unfortunate people live in miserable hovels near some of our provincial centres. They are ill fed and ill clad and no-one seems to care. Of course they get into bad ways, some drink and some steal, some are lazy and some are dirty. Such was the state of those living near Swan Hill, until Sergeant Feldtmann did something about it. He inspired others with his own enthusiasm.

A hostel has been built for the children and everything possible is being done for the uplift of the people. Similar work is being done in Robinvale. If others in other parts of the State were to follow the example of these two pioneers the aborigine problem would be solved and the disgrace which has been ours for so long would be ours no more.

### THEY ACTED

I was talking recently to a man who is one of an enthusiastic band of people working for the advancement of spastic children. His face lit up with enthusiasm as he told me of all that had been done for the youngsters and all that is being planned to be done. **These people did not sit down and moan, what the Government should do. They did something about it themselves, and**

(Continued on page 2.)

## "JAYCEES" WORK AGAIN FOR THE B.S.L.

Each week-end a busy band of young men invade the garden of the Fitzroy Coolibah Club for elderly people. They are members of the Community Service Section of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, who are constructing a Handcraft Block for the elderly club members as the 1956 "Jaycee" community service project.

The building will be opened at the end of the Jaycees' "Welfare of the Aged" week on 29th April.

Three years ago the Junior Chamber erected the Cottage Hospital at Carrum Downs. Since then they have successfully carried out many other Community service projects, including the construction of a recreation block for the Gordon Boys' Home, so putting into practice their ideals of service to the community.



Business is brisk at the St. Laurence Co-operative Store run by the Carrum Downs residents. The store is now operating in its new premises in the new Community Centre.

now the Government is helping. Nothing stirs the Government or any other body more than example. Actions are of greater value than words. If we think something should be done for a righteous cause we should set about getting it done with what resources we have.

A small match can start a big fire, but the match has to be struck. May God bless those match strikers such as Sergeant Feldtmann, my friend who is working for spastic children of his district, and all who are doing things instead of merely talking about them.

### THE REAL JOY

I do not think that those who know me would say that I am a "kill-joy." I believe in the value of recreation. Sport in its various forms can play a very important part in the social well being of a community. I would that more in this fair country of ours could enjoy the benefits which come from clean and manly sport. I think here of those whose playground is the street and those who have to be content with being merely lookers on while others play.

A sport most certainly brings its joy, but I am sad to think of the many who miss the true joy of life.

I hope that the good Sergeant Feldtmann has time for a round of golf or a game of tennis sometimes, but I think the real joy of life comes to him from the satisfaction that is his, in his efforts to bring happiness and hope to the lives of those who have been unhappy and hopeless.

### A VISION

I often wonder if parents do all that they could to show their children from whence comes this true happiness of that which makes life not merely worthwhile, but a satisfying and exciting experience. Is it not true to say that the happy in life are those who make others happy. By all means let parents encourage their children to "get on" in the calling they have chosen, by all means encourage them to take part in recreation that is essential to their well being. But above all let them make sure that their young people know where to seek, if they want to make the best of life. Solomon in his wisdom tells of "where there is no vision the people perish."

Let us see that all, and especially our youth, have a true vision of what life might be, and a true vision of what our country might be—a land where all have the

opportunity of framing and fashioning their lives according to the will of God. A land where all wrongs are being righted, where all are working for the good of others. Very visionary perhaps, but without that vision we perish. We must, however, be more visionary, we must by our actions make our visions, our dreams, come true.

The Brotherhood is always looking for young men with this all important vision to which I refer.

You will be glad to know that the Collins Court extensions are well under way. This really promises to be something unique. The building is to be opened by Mr. C. H. Rowe, Director-General, Department of Social Services. We will let you know the date of the event in good time.

With Greetings to you all, from us all,

I am,

On behalf of the B.S.L.,

Yours very sincerely,

*G. Kennedy Tucker*  
Secretary B.S.L.

## BROTHERHOOD REPORT SHOWS PROBLEMS OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

A survey conducted by the Brotherhood on the incomes and spending habits of a group of low-income and large families in Housing Commission homes has aroused considerable interest.

The survey was carried out by Miss S. Moser, B.Sc., Dip. Dietetics, to obtain factual information, as the Brotherhood's social workers felt that many of these families were getting into serious financial difficulties when they moved from low rent and low cost areas in Camp Pell and inner suburbs to new Housing Commission homes.

The report entitled "A Survey of A Large Family, Low Income

Group in Housing Commission Homes" has been presented to the Royal Commission on the Housing Commission and sent to State and Federal members of Parliament, many of whom have expressed their interest in the findings.

Evidence to the Royal Commission has also been submitted by Mrs. C. Johnston, Senior Social Worker, and Mr. David Scott of the Brotherhood.

## INDONESIANS HEAR OF THE B.S.L.

Two months ago Mr. Muharam of the Social Welfare Department of the Indonesian Government visited the Brotherhood's Fitzroy and Carrum Downs centres. Shortly after he made a broadcast through the A.B.C. to his fellow countrymen in Indonesia and spoke of the Brotherhood's social service work.

Mr. Muharam is one of a number of Asian administrators and students who are visiting Australia under the Colombo Plan or United Nations' fellowships. Their itineraries, which are planned by the Commonwealth Department of Social Service often include spending a day or more with the Brotherhood's social workers.

The benefits are mutual as we learn a great deal of interest about welfare work in their countries and their plans for the future.

*A corner of the new women's club room.*

## COOLIBAH CLUB CATERS FOR THE AGED IN MANY WAYS

The Coolibah Club, opened in 1945, was the first elderly citizens' club to be established in Melbourne on a regular, full-time basis. In this article Miss Jessica Sumner, who has been responsible for the Club's growth, tells of its present day programme.

In November, 1954, alterations and additions to the premises enabled us to extend club membership to Women Pensioners. An enlarged dining room, a new kitchen, and a women's club room greatly increased our facilities. Modern colour schemes and picture windows have transformed the old building, but the lawns and garden are probably the most valued and charming additions.

Heavy expense of this renovation prohibited the building of showers, occupational therapy room and workshop. However, we trust the community's interest in our work will provide these essentials in the near future.

The Club has 173 members, of whom approximately one-third are women. A nutritious meal, morning and afternoon teas, are served at a nominal charge. Membership fee is 3d. per week. Rises in Age and Invalid Pensions do not keep pace



with rises in cost of living, and our recognition of this fact has ensured that charges have not increased during the Club's 10 years of existence.

Social events popular with members continue to be the monthly film night, visits to the countryside, Sunday teas and, possibly most successful of all, a dance. Recently tried as an experiment, it is now hoped that the "Club Dance" will become a regular part of our activities.

As in past years, our Holiday Home at Mornington has provided rest and change for many pensioners, members and non-members alike. It is impossible to estimate the benefit, mental and physical, of this branch of our work.

In pursuance of our firm policy of avoiding any taint of "hand out," clothing is available to pensioners at a nominal cost—to Club members

through the Club Store, to "outside" pensioners at our Fitzroy shop.

### OUTSIDE THE CLUB:

Advice and assistance are available to all pensioners, members, non-members, and relatives alike. 1,355 is an extremely conservative average of "outside" pensioners helped in any given year.

In no report of B.S.L. work must the services of our voluntary workers be overlooked; their value cannot be fully assessed. Suffice to say that it is difficult to imagine our position without them.

Looking back over the year, it is plain that progress has been made in some degree, but the basic problems of the aged remain unchanged. A report of this nature is no place for full discussion, and until public conscience is made fully aware of these problems, no salutary change can be expected.

### BOTTLE TOPS

Dear Editor,

I have been collecting bottle tops for the Brotherhood ever since you asked for them. May I tell others who do this the method I adopt. I used to find the collecting and taking them into you rather troublesome. I now have a container over my sink. When taking the tops from the bottle I fold it into at least four portions and put them in the container, thus being closed in this manner I find there is no need to wash them as there is no odour. The other great advantage is that there is no bulk handling either by me or by you.

Yours,

"A Bottle-top Collectress."

## HOLIDAY SEASON OPENS AT B.S.L. HOLIDAY HOME

The holiday season for aged pensioners opened early in March, when the first group of eight elderly pensioners enjoyed an eight day holiday at "Morven," the B.S.L. Holiday Home at Mornington.

Voluntary drivers took the holidaymakers from Fitzroy to Mornington, where they were welcomed by Mrs. Chisholm and ladies of the Mornington Auxiliary who provide hospitality and entertainment in addition to assisting with the running of "Morven."

Many other pensioners are on the waiting list for a holiday at Mornington, and the Brotherhood hopes that throughout the year it will be able to act as "host" to some 250 age or invalid pensioners.

Some are members of the Coolibah Club, others live in slum rooms in Melbourne's inner suburbs, and others are referred by Doctors and Hospital Almoners as being urgently in need of a holiday. The cost of providing a holiday for an elderly person is £4, and the Brotherhood is always glad to hear from people who would like to sponsor an old person for a holiday.

## WE WELCOME THESE NEW B.S.L. FRIENDS

Miss Cochrane, Toorak.  
 Mrs. Lang, East Malvern.  
 Mrs. Hurst, Box Hill.  
 Miss Mackenzie, St. Kilda.  
 Mrs. Jones, South Yarra.  
 Miss Matheson, Frankston.  
 Mrs. Simons, Bentleigh.  
 Mrs. Porter, East St. Kilda.  
 Mrs. Perry, Hughesdale.  
 Mrs. Hall, Essendon.  
 Mrs. Nott, Toorak.  
 Mr. Faulker, Sth Yarra.  
 Miss Tate, Blackburn.  
 Mr. Baynes, Box Hill.  
 Miss Lachmund, Northcote.  
 Mrs. Bavinton, Nunawading.  
 Mrs. Fowles, McKinnon.  
 Mrs. Cowan, Balwyn.  
 Mrs. Newport, Footscray.  
 Mr. Ellis, Brighton.  
 Mrs. Edwards, Essendon.  
 Mrs. Ward, Abbotsford.  
 Mrs. Bruns, Canterbury.  
 Mr. John, Carnegie.  
 Mrs. Morne, Albert Park.  
 Miss Kneebone, Kew.  
 Mrs. Mahony, Toorak.  
 Mrs. Bamford, Camberwell.  
 Miss Costello, Balwyn.  
 Mrs. Cavanagh, Mont Park.  
 Mrs. Fraser, Laverton.

### B.S.L. FRIENDS ARE ASKED TO . . .

1. Take a sympathetic interest in B.S.L. activities.
2. Interest their friends in the Brotherhood and to get them to become B.S.L. Friends, and perhaps join a "B.S.L. Group," whose aim is to organise an annual function for B.S.L. Funds.
3. Pay 5/- a year to help defray the expense of printing and posting the "B.S.L. Notes."

Humanly speaking, the success the Brotherhood has had over the years is due to a very large extent to its Friends. As our Friends have grown so has the B.S.L.'s work. The effect of what we do in the future depends on our success or otherwise in gaining new Friends.

Mrs. Thorn, Nar-nar-goon.  
 Mrs. Andrew, Nar-nar-goon.  
 Mrs. Gilmartin, Nar-nar-goon.

Have you renewed your

**"NOW!"**

subscription?

B.S.L. Friends who are subscribers to "NOW", the Brotherhood's monthly journal on social problems, are asked to renew their subscriptions when they receive a notice that the subscription is due for renewal. "NOW" is the Brotherhood's voice on social questions.

### DONATION SLIP

THE SUPERIOR,  
 BROTHERHOOD OF ST. LAURENCE,  
 51 ROYAL ARCADE,  
 MELBOURNE, C.1. Central 2721.

Please find my donation for £ : :

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

## CHELTENHAM GROUP HAS SUCCESSFUL YEAR

After a busy and successful year the Cheltenham-Mordialloc Auxiliary has raised sufficient money to furnish the new dining room which will be included in the extensions to Collins Court.

Secretary of the Auxiliary is Mrs. A. H. Geer, 30 Latrobe St., Mentone, XF1480, and she would be pleased to hear from B.S.L. Friends living in the district who might be interested in joining this active group.

### ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The Annual Report of the Brotherhood for 1955 is now available, and while it is not possible to mail copies to all B.S.L. Friends we will be happy to send copies to any who might wish to have them. The Report is presented in booklet form and gives detailed description of the social service work carried on in all departments.

Write or call at 51 Royal Arcade for copies.

### TRIBUTE TO B.S.L. FRIEND

All friends who know Miss Dick, a member of our city Opportunity Shop from its very beginning, will join with us in wishing her all the best on her 80th birthday. Every Monday come rain or sun she is to be found behind the counter serving and helping people in her calm undisturbed manner. We all hope she will be with us for many years to come. A birthday party was held at the home of Mrs. Crosbie by members of the Shop Auxiliary, the cake being made by the Hon. President, Mrs. Kimp-ton.

Winifred Rogers.

### NEXT BUS TRIP TO CARRUM DOWNS

Next bus trip to Carrum Downs will be on

Saturday, April 21st.

Tickets, 6/6 return, are available at 51 Royal Arcade.

The May trip will be on  
 Saturday, May 26th.