

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

JUNE 36

No. 118



"BETTER WAY" FUND GROWS

Almost £500 is now in the Brotherhood's "Better Way" Fund. When sufficient money is in hand, the first "Better Way" cottage for an elderly person will be built to commemorate departed ones whose friends and relatives used "The Better Way" to honour their memory.

Instead of sending expensive floral tributes to funerals many people have preferred to send a donation to "The Better Way" Fund, and the Brotherhood sends an "in memoriam" card to the next of kin. The wording on the card is "In memory of....., in whose honour..... has sent a gift to the Brotherhood of St. Laurence."

In Sweden, where a similar scheme was inaugurated many years ago, over one thousand elderly people have been housed in two villages.

Although it has not been widely publicised, "The Better Way" is gradually becoming known in Victoria. Very often people who have received a card of sympathy send for further details and use "The Better Way" when they wish to express their sympathy to friends or relatives of others who have passed on.

We hope that B.S.L. Friends who support the "Better Way" will interest others in it.

The Superior writes on . . .

PENSION SCANDAL – SETTLEMENTS – "JAYCEES AGAIN" –

Dear B. S. L. Friends,

I am one of those fortunate ones who do not feel the cold unduly. This, however, is a cool night and before beginning this letter I was glad to be able to switch on the radiator. Not having to try to exist on the miserable pittance the Government hands out by way of old age pension, I can keep the radiator on as long as I like, knowing that in so doing I shall not have to deprive myself of food. When I have finished writing to you I shall be able to go to my warm bed, and if it is cold in the early morning I can pull on an extra blanket. I can even afford to buy a hot water bottle!

Tomorrow I can have all the food necessary. I have plenty of warm clothes, and should I break my dentures new ones can be procured without depriving myself of food and warmth. As far as is possible to do so in this insecure world I can look forward to security for life. For all this I thank God, but in doing so I think of those countless thousands of old folk who in this Australia of ours are deprived of those things which are the right for all who live in this age of progress and prosperity.

PROTEST

I think the time has come for all who live in reasonable comfort to rise up in protest against the shocking way in which we treat our aged pensioners. This is nothing less than a national scandal of which we should all be heartily ashamed. All know of the high cost of living, and all except the pensioner can do something about it. Some can go to the Arbitration Court for an adjustment in their wages and others still more fortunate can appoint a committee to go into the matter and then raise their own salaries. The pensioner, however, has to suffer in silence—and what suffering!

We must think about this, we must get it on our conscience, we must not rest until this terrible wrong is righted. It is obvious that £4 per week is not sufficient to give anything like reasonable

comfort, and this is specially the case in regard to people living by themselves, who have no one to whom they can turn for help and who have no means of augmenting their income. Something more, however, must be done than merely raising the pension rate. In most cases the basic cause of the suffering of pensioners is that of housing. As much as 30/- a week is sometimes charged for one room.

We of the Brotherhood are able to help a certain number of people by providing firewood in the winter, the giving of warm clothes and in some cases money, but while we help tens, thousands continue to suffer. With your co-operation we shall continue to do what we can, but even if we could help all in need such would not be the right method. Decent old folk should have something more than all-too-small pensions and charitable hand-outs.

SETTLEMENTS—ONE ANSWER

We do not say that Settlements such as ours at Carrum Downs are the only answer to the problem, but it is one answer and from experience gained over the years we are convinced that people of advancing years need not become burdens to themselves and the community. We maintain that as soon as people reach the pensionable age they should be provided with suitable accommodation at a low rental, should have companionship and

(Continued on page 2.)

*Senior Club Members at
Craft Work*



CLUB PROVIDES A VARIETY OF INTERESTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Alert and dark-eyed Toni is a New Australian member of the Children's Club. Toni, his six brothers and sisters and parents, live in one room above a shop in a busy Fitzroy street. To Toni the Club offers much that is found in most Australian homes but is lacking in his mean and overcrowded dwelling.

Together with 133 other young Club members, Toni shares in the healthy, constructive leisure-time activities provided by the Club.

From 3.30 to 5 p.m., five days each week, boys and girls under 9 years of age enjoy painting, drawing, knitting, reading and games. Entertainment is provided with strip films and, weather permitting, groups of children are escorted through busy streets to the Carlton Gardens' Play Centre.

Two staff members provide leadership, assisted by a team of 25 young voluntary helpers.

The evening Club programmes for the older children are designed to do more than take children off the streets. Although the facilities

are limited there is an extensive programme of woodwork, sewing, dressmaking, sloyd, leatherwork and other craft activities. Once a week educational and entertainment films are screened, with an occasional concert or puppet show.

An inestimable contribution is made by the voluntary helpers who not only attend regularly on week nights but are available for special functions and outings. Each leader has "adopted" six children as part of a plan to get to know them and their home circumstances more intimately.

All Club members are entitled to an annual holiday at the Brotherhood's Holiday Home at Mornington, and each month a picnic or

outing is included in the programme. In January, day picnics are organised for nearly 1,000 children.

The change in the population of inner areas is reflected in the Club membership, which now includes five different nationalities.

In an area where delinquency figures are high and many homes are sub-standard and overcrowded, there is an urgent need for extending the membership and facilities of the Club, which are now limited by lack of space.

Staffing of the Club and provision of equipment are financed by the very active Children's Centre Committee.

Brotherhood Friends are Invited to

*The presentation by MR. DENIS JOY, President of the
Melbourne Junior Chamber of Commerce, of the*

WORKSHOP and HANDCRAFT CENTRE

*constructed by the Melbourne Junior Chamber of Commerce
for the Coolibah Club for elderly people.*

SUNDAY, 27th MAY, at 3.15 p.m.

at 67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Afternoon tea will be served in the Coolibah Club.

interest in life and, perhaps above all, be free from the continued worry of what is to become of them when they are really old and unable to care for themselves.

With the assets to which I refer we contend that in most cases old people could be healthy, happy and helpful to the end. Although I criticise the Government for failing to assess the pension with the cost of living I commend the Government on its readiness to give £ for £ to organisations that are providing housing for the aged. I do not think that we are making the best use of this statesmanlike action on the part of the Government. Were all who have the welfare of the aged at heart to co-operate with our leaders in regard to the housing of the aged, this real and pressing problem could be solved within the next ten years. The present system is as uneconomical as it is unchristian. It is as stupid as it is callous.

THE JAYCEES HELP AGAIN

The charming little building at Carrum Downs, which is now the Nurses' quarters and was formerly the hospital, stands as a memorial to the generosity of the Melbourne Branch of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, who built and furnished it for us. They have once again come to our aid by building a workshop and handcraft centre for the members of the Coolibah Club in Fitzroy. In so doing they have supplied a long felt want for as we so often say it is very necessary that old people should be given some form of occupation. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be with us on Sunday, May 27th, at 3.15 p.m., when Mr. Denis Joy, President of the "Jaycees" will hand over to me the building they have so generously donated.

I want you to come and see the new building and also the Coolibah Club. I want you to come too to

join with us in showing our appreciation of the work of this inspiring body of young men who not only help us but are in the forefront of those who are battling to right wrongs and do the kind of things that must be done if Australia is to maintain its true greatness and so play an effective part as a worthy partner in the Commonwealth of Nations. The practical Christianity as demonstrated by the Jaycees enables one, even in these difficult days, to "thank God and take courage."

With our Greetings and our thanks for all you enable us to do,

Yours very sincerely,

E. Kennedy Tucker
Secretary B.S.L.

IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH CLUB

"Five lads who were members of the Youth Club of the Brotherhood Children's Centre came into conflict with the law and were sentenced to imprisonment while the Club was closed for six weeks in January and February. Two others were committed to the Children's Welfare Department.

"While it would be wrong to say that these incidents were caused solely by the closing of the Club for this period, it seems probable that the fact that the lads were deprived of their usual programme of activities contributed to their getting into trouble."

There was no alternative to closing the Club in January, as the Club Leader was fully occupied in organising the Holiday Camps and outings programme and the voluntary Club leaders were away on their own holidays.

In a negative way this report from Mr. Alex. Grieg, Club Leader, shows the importance of the work of the Centre. It shows, too, how urgent the need is to extend the staff and facilities to provide full-time, year-round programmes.

FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS WANTED FOR FAMILIES

Wardrobes, cupboards, chests of drawers, bedspreads and curtains are urgently required by social workers in the Family Service Project.

The seven workers engaged in this project are now working with some 80 families who have recently moved, or will soon move, to Housing Commission homes. These families are all in the low-income group, and in most cases are large families. It is impossible for them to buy furniture and furnishings at the normal retail prices, so the Brotherhood is helping them to acquire these basic needs as cheaply as possible.

We would be pleased if you would telephone the Fitzroy Headquarters, JA 3335, JA 2255, if you can assist by providing any of the above articles.

Clothing, too, is always in demand, particularly in the winter, and can be called for by the Brotherhood van if it is not possible for you to take it to a railway station or bring it to the city.

It is impossible for us to undertake to pick up goods on any particular day or time, as we only have one van and the whole of the metropolitan area to cover. Goods will be called for within 10 days from time they are offered.

FAMILIES MOVE TO NEW HOMES

Since the Brotherhood's Social Workers commenced work at Camp Pell 18 months ago, 44 of the families they have been working with have been accepted by the Housing Commission as eligible for Housing Commission homes.

The remainder of the families in Camp Pell have been moved to another emergency housing area, where B.S.L. social workers are continuing to assist them with housekeeping, budgeting and child welfare problems. Aim of the Project is to help the families become self-supporting and to take their place in normal community life.

Seven trained social workers are now engaged in the project.

WARMTH FOR AGED

Distribution of firewood and briquettes to aged pensioners started in May. The Brotherhood hopes to be able to provide 200 pensioners with regular supplies. With split wood now costing 9/8 per bag it is quite beyond the means of pensioners to provide themselves.

BUS TRIP DATES

Bus trips to Carrum Downs Settlement will be on Saturday, June 23rd, and Saturday, July 28th.

Return fare is 6/6. Tickets may be booked at 51 Royal Arcade. Book early to avoid disappointment.

THESE ARE THE B. S. L. ADDRESSES

Headquarters,

67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.
JA 2255, JA 3335.

- Social Service Bureau
- Children's Health Clinic
- Children's Club
- Coolibah Club
- Family Service Project
- Legal Aid Service.

"Morven," Holiday Home,
Tanti Avenue Mornington.
Mornington 2248.

City Office,

51 Royal Arcade, C.1.
Central 2721.

- Opportunity Shop
- "NOW!" Editor's Office
and Circulation Office
- "Better Way" Fund Office.

Carrum Downs Settlement,

Dandenong-Frankston High-
way. Carrum Downs 236.

- Enquiry Bureau
- Superior's Lodge
- Hospital
- Community Centre
- Collins Court.

WELCOME TO NEW FRIENDS

Miss Telford, Ringwood
Mrs. Fuller, Melton
Mrs. Bridgeman, Glen Iris
Mrs. Orton, Westgarth
Mrs. Warren, Balwyn
Mrs. Bade, Alphington
Mrs. Raitt, Beaumaris
M/s. Tucker, Mont Albert
Miss Hagger, Preston
Mrs. Crawford, Werribee
Mrs. Read, Surrey Hills
M/s. Beathe, Thornbury
M/s. Compston, Goroke
Mrs. Cowen, Toorak
Mrs. Wisewould, Jindivick
Mrs. Hutchison, Jindivick
Mrs. Gason, Toorak
Mrs. Kirby, Mordialloc
Mr. Langford, Coogee, N.S.W.
Mrs. Clayton, Bendigo
Mr. Fisher, Ivanhoe

♦ ♦ ♦ MORE STAMPS, PLEASE!

Used postage stamps help maintain the Brotherhood's work and we need many more than we are now being supplied with. Any local or foreign used postage stamps can be left, or posted to 51 Royal Arcade.

♦ ♦ ♦ FILM NIGHT AT CHELTENHAM

The Cheltenham-Mordialloc Group is organising a film night for Wednesday, June 20th, at St. Matthew's Parish Hall, Cheltenham.

Adults 2/-, Children 1/-.

The Hon. Secretary, Mrs. A. Geer, 30 Latrobe Street, Mentone, would be pleased to hear from other B.S.L. Friends who would like to attend the picture night or to join this very active group.

♦ ♦ ♦ MEETING TO PLAN FAIR

The first Committee meeting to plan the 1956 Annual Market Fair will be held on 15th June. President of the Fair Committee is Mrs. K. Kimpton and Secretary Miss E. Rutter. Friends who would be willing to serve on the committee and help plan and organise stalls are invited to attend the meeting, which will be held in the Victorian Housewives Association rooms, 12 Flinders Way, at 2.30 p.m.

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."