

B.S.L. NOTES

For the Friends of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence

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

FITZROY

APRIL, 1959

No. 135

The Superior writes on . . .

PUBLIC OPINION – CHILD CARE – TWO IMPORTANT B.S.L. EVENTS

Dear B.S.L. Friends,

After more than 25 years of trying to make my contribution towards bringing about certain social reforms, I have come to the conclusion that the most valuable ally the social reformer has is that of public opinion. This of course is known to the politician, the would-be politician and other such people to whom public opinion is essential. With sufficient number of people behind him the politician is bound to retain or secure his seat in Parliament.

I fear I cannot say that our war on slums has been won, but of recent years progress has been made to rid our cities of this major defect. What has been done has been done largely because an enlightened number of people had demanded that something should be done. The same could be said in regard to the care of the aged. As the public became aware of the unhappy lot of countless numbers of old people, those in authority realized that action must be taken in the matter. Since 1954 over £4 million has been given by the Federal Government to people prepared to care for those who have already borne the burden and heat of the day. Although I sometimes think that this money is not always spent in the best possible way, very much good is being done, and I venture to hope that during the next decade, when the public realises all that is involved, this now pressing problem will be solved.

CARING FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN

There are, alas, still many other reforms that need to be brought about. One of the most pressing is that concerning the welfare of children whose parents, for various reasons, are unable to care for them. A report by Mr. D. Merritt has recently been issued by the Chief Secretary as to the state of those homes for children under the care of either the Church or State.

Parts of the report are far from happy reading. In many cases the institutions concerned are overcrowded

and understaffed. These are serious defects, but to my mind there is something far more serious. We know that vitamins in the right proportions are a vital necessity for the physical development of the child.

All human beings are endowed with a faculty to love. If a child is deprived of the opportunity of utilizing this God-given faculty, it is deprived of mental and spiritual stability. As the lack of vitamins endanger the physical health of children, so the lack of the opportunity to love deprives the child of mental and spiritual health. As babes, many children are entrusted to the care of institutions. I have no criticisms to make against those responsible to children in such places. They are, I am sure, in most cases given all love and care.

DIFFERENT MOTHERS

I have, however, criticism to make against the system of caring for those who cannot be cared for by their parents. At about the age of 18 months, a child begins to concentrate his affection on the one who cares for him. In most cases that one is the mother. In institutions that one is the nurse who has most to do with him. She becomes his "mother". He loves her as he would his real mother.

If such could go on all might be well; but from the babies' home the children are sent to the home for toddlers. After much unhappiness the child in mind begins to transfer his affection to someone in the new home. The process is then repeated when he is sent to a home for older

CHILDREN'S CENTRE OPEN AGAIN

In response to eager demands from local children and young people, the Children's Centre was opened in the week preceding Easter.

Although the new section of the Centre is still incomplete it was decided that the needs of the local children were so great that the Centre should be opened.

A considerable amount of work remains to be done on the alterations to the older section of the Centre and the new section still lacks vital equipment which will make the job of the staff and voluntary helpers difficult for the next few weeks.

In the absence of Mr. Alex Greig who is overseas, Miss Barbara Harkness is Acting Director of Youth Work. The evening Club programmes for boys will be run by Mr. Barry Martin and Mr. Tassie Pappas with the help of other regular voluntary helpers. Miss Harkness is responsible for general administration of the Centre, and afternoon clubs for school age children and the evening clubs for girls.

It had been hoped that the new Centre might be open earlier but there were considerable delays in the building programme.

No Bus Trip in April

Due to lack of support for recent bus trips to Carrum Downs there will be no bus trip in April. The next outing will be on Saturday, May 9th. Tickets are the usual price (6/6 return).

As many people have expressed the opinion that the trips do not allow sufficient time for people to see the Settlement and their friends among the residents, the May outing will leave Batman Avenue at 1.30 p.m. instead of the usual time of 2 p.m.

Tickets must be obtained beforehand at 51 Royal Arcade.

children. By then, a feeling of instability is part of the child's character.

In most cases this state will remain throughout life and will mani-

(Continued overleaf)

The Superior's Letter (cont.)

fest itself in many and varied undesirable traits. In childhood he has learnt to transfer his affection from one person to another. This tendency remains after marriage and results in broken homes and broken lives for the children born into such homes.

Psychologists who concentrate on child welfare, state that almost any home consisting of mother, father and children is better than an institution. In spite of this finding, the Government Housing Commission Authority, because of the inability of the father to pay the rent of the house, turns the family out, putting the children in a "Home" which may cost the Government £14 a week for every child. This is not only stupid from the financial point of view, but it also means depriving the children of that which should be their birthright—a mother's and a father's love, as imperfect as it may be. There is every possibility of such children becoming anti-social throughout life.

NEW TRENDS

Reform in such matters will only come about when the community becomes aware of this particular social problem and demands that something should be done about it. It is good to know that a system adopted by the Church of England in England some 50 years ago is being adopted here in Victoria—but not yet I think by the Church of England here. I refer to the "Cottage" system where each home is in charge of a specially selected husband and wife who act as "father" and "mother" to the 8 or 10 children of various ages who are put in their care. In this way the family of baby to teenagers becomes as near a normal home as possible. This is specially the case when the house is in an ordinary suburb with nothing to distinguish it from any other house in the street except its number. This kind of "set-up", or the extension of private foster homes, should be our aim for some 6,000 children of this State, now in institutions. I leave this matter to your careful consideration, with the hope that you may do your part to create that public opinion without which no worthwhile reform can be brought about.

TWO BIG EVENTS

I hope that you will make a note in your diaries of two important Brotherhood functions. On Saturday, May 16th, our new building at Fitzroy will be opened by the Minister of Health, the Hon. E. C. Cameron, and the Chapel of St. Mark will be dedicated by the Archbishop

B.S.L. STAFF CONFERENCE AT CARRUM DOWNS

The annual staff conference of the Brotherhood was held at Carrum Downs on Easter Tuesday. Father Tucker opened the Conference and Archdeacon Sambell surveyed the whole range of Brotherhood activities. Questions and discussions followed. The conference opened with intercessions in the Chapel.

The annual staff conference is a vital function in the work of the Brotherhood. As the various departments now cover such a wide range of services and are located at Fitzroy, Carrum Downs, Lara, Mornington and East Preston, a certain separation of activities can result unless everyone is aware of the job of work carried out and the problems which beset people in other departments. The conference discussed community needs which are still unmet and requests made by other organisations for the Brotherhood to extend its services and provide new ones.

Problems raised at the staff conference and other meetings include:

- Provision of more trained social workers in local areas to help people, particularly in new housing areas, who need advice and help when their difficulties are in the early stages. At present there is a natural tendency to wait until the problem has developed to crisis proportions before making the long journey in to see a social worker in the Social Service Bureau.
- The need for a home for re-training mothers who neglect their children. At present these mothers are often sent to gaol.
- The need for a small home for children who are to be placed in foster homes so that their needs and problems can be observed.
- The need for more services such as the Family Service Project where

intensive preventative work can be carried out with problem families.

- More social action on housing and social action to bring about some improvements in the delays now occurring before people in need receive Government social service benefits.
- The need for flats for elderly people in suburban areas.

The staff realise that at the present the Brotherhood is limited by shortage of suitable personnel and limited finance from tackling many of these problems but it is encouraging to know that those who are working in the Brotherhood are looking beyond their immediate work at general community problems.

Archdeacon Sambell pointed out that although the Salvage Division was now making an important contribution to the financing of Brotherhood social services we still relied on donations and bequests to provide 80% of the money required.

Over 5,000 people each year make donations to the work of the Brotherhood and, unless this interest and support is maintained, the work of some departments would have to be curtailed.

The growth of Brotherhood Auxiliaries was most encouraging, not only because of the splendid financial contribution made, but also because of the large number of people who, through Auxiliary membership, were made aware of social problems and the Brotherhood's work in helping to solve and relieve them.

of Melbourne. This will be one of the most important events in the life of the Brotherhood as it will mark the successful culmination of the efforts of many people to extend and make more effective our activities that are centred at Fitzroy. I do hope a large number of our Friends will come to see the results of their efforts and interest.

The second important event will be the Foundation Day at St. Laurence Park, Lara. This will be held on Saturday, April 18th, and Geelong representatives of many fields of service to the community will plant trees. I hope that many of you will be able to be with us on that day of which you will see particulars elsewhere.

Some of us remember Carrum Downs when the Settlement was no more than a few humble cottages

set down in a roadless paddock. It has been interesting to see it grow from a very puny infant to a well matured adult. I hope that those of you who are with us on Foundation Day will see the same development at Lara. The growth there, however, should be far more rapid than at Carrum Downs, for the Brotherhood itself was little more than an infant in the early "Carrum Down Days" with only a handful of Friends.

Our Greetings to you all,

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

G. Kennedy Tucker

Sekern BSL

TREE PLANTING AT LARA ON APRIL 18th

Trees representing many fields of community service and the aspects of community life will be planted by leading Geelong citizens on the Foundation Day of the St. Laurence Park, Lara, housing project for elderly people, on Sat. April 18th, at 3 p.m.

St. Laurence Park is on the outskirts of Lara township close to the

railway line. Lara is ten miles on the Melbourne side of Geelong, and the turn off from the Melbourne-Geelong road is clearly marked.

Visitors will see the first four cottages in the early stages of construction. Father Tucker hopes to see a good attendance of B.S.L. Friends.

Thailand man with B.S.L.

Mr. Paul Gesmankit, a Social Studies graduate from the Sydney University, spent two weeks observing the work of the Brotherhood recently. Mr. Gesmankit is studying in Australia under a Colombo Plan Scholarship. He worked in the Social Service Bureau, Family Service Project and visited Carrum Downs as well as making visits to other Melbourne welfare organisations.

Brotherhood of St. Laurence

requests the pleasure of the company of Brotherhood Friends

at the

OFFICIAL OPENING

of the Extensions to Fitzroy Headquarters

by

The Hon. E. P. Cameron, Minister of Health

also

DEDICATION

of the Chapel of St. Mark

by

The Most Reverend Frank Woods, Archbishop of Melbourne

Saturday, May 16th, at 2.45 p.m.

Afternoon tea will be served and the new building consisting of the Chapel of St. Mark, Social Service Bureau, F.S.P. Social Workers' Offices, Children's Centre, Roof Playground and Coolibah Club extensions will be open for inspection.

67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

News from B.S.L. Auxiliaries

FAIR MEETING

The first meeting to discuss plans for the 1959 Annual Market Fair in the Lower Melbourne Town Hall will be held in the Victorian Housewives Association Rooms, 11 Flinders Way, on April 10th, at 2 p.m. Mrs. K. Kimpton will be President of the Committee. Anyone who is interested in helping to stock or staff stalls is invited to attend. Further information regarding the Fair and the meeting is available from Miss Nell Rawlins at JA 3057.

CAMBERWELL Auxiliary has been reconstituted as so many of the original members were unable to carry on for many and varied reasons. Mrs. Read is the new President and she will be supported by Mrs. Balderstone, Vice-President; Mrs. Hudson, Treasurer; and Mrs. Bignell and Mrs. Blanche as Joint-Secretaries. A workers' committee of twelve has also been formed. The first luncheon will be held at Mrs. E. H. Hudson's home, 26 Christowell Street, East Camberwell, on April 16th, when Father Tucker will be the speaker.

ARMADALE AUXILIARY are again hard at work knitting baby clothes. They are willing to take orders and anybody who would like to buy beautifully made baby clothes at a low price should ring Mrs. Thorne, President, at 50-7169. The group meets on the second Wednesday in the month at 81 Kooyong Road, Armadale, and would welcome new members.

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HUGHESDALE-MURRUMBEENA:

The auxiliary members are finding the new Malvern shop premises a joy to work in and the result of teamwork has shown itself in takings which have been much higher than expected for this time of the year. Apart from duties at the shop, our members give valuable time sorting at Salvage. The first meeting of the year will be held at the home of Mrs. Curtis, 5 Fellows Street, Hughesdale, on Monday, April 13th, at 2 p.m.

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PRESTON AUXILIARY:

A street stall will be held on April 24th. Card evenings are held each third Friday of the month at Mrs. Gardiner's home. Mrs. Gardiner would like to hear of any Preston or Northcote ladies who would care to join the auxiliary. Telephone JU 5833.

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DANDENONG AUXILIARY:

is growing in numbers at every meeting. Mrs. Peachey is the new President, Mrs. White, Vice-President and Mrs. Moodie, Secretary. Arrangements are being made for a Button Day and card parties.

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CHELTENHAM-MENTONE:

At their first meeting, the auxiliary decided to carry on with their monthly card-afternoons and the next one will be held on April 2nd in the meeting room of the Council chambers. The auxiliary welcomes any folk who would care to come along and also those who would care to join the auxiliary in their willing efforts of raising money. An interesting note: the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. McLean and Mrs. Doyle of the Waterside Hotel, ran a dinner-dance and gave the proceeds of same, approximately £70, to the auxiliary who are really very thrilled.

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BRIGHTON AUXILIARY: This auxiliary will hold a street stall on Friday, May 7th, at Church Street, Brighton. Various other fund-raising efforts are being planned.

FORTUNAS GROUP: At the annual meeting in March, Mrs. P. Penney-cooke was elected President in place of Mrs. J. Ellis who has agreed to become assistant-secretary. Mrs. A. H. Morris, Vice-President, and Mrs. J. Chadwick, Secretary. The group are very active and have arranged many and varied fund-raising efforts. A cake stall will be held at the Greythorne shopping centre on April 11th. A party of 80 will enjoy "My Fair Lady" on May 19th. A Luncheon will be held at Mrs. Harris' home, Kenmare Street, Box Hill, on April 28th.

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ORMOND AUXILIARY: have now taken over the shop in Katandra Road and are running it as an auxiliary project. We are lucky to have Mrs. L. Stevenson as our new Treasurer who replaces Mrs. Fenton-Smith who had to resign owing to pressure of business. The annual meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Hudson, 21 Lillimur Road, Ormond, on Tuesday, April 7th, when Archdeacon Sambell will be the guest speaker.

Donation Slip

THE SUPERIOR,
BROTHERHOOD OF ST. LAURENCE
51 ROYAL ARCADE

Please find my donation £ : :

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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