

REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN HOMES FOR CHILDREN

Throughout the year under review the Children's Homes Committee and the House Committees in the Homes which are auxiliaries to the main Committee have worked very hard to promote the Church's programme of child care in the Diocese. It has not been a year where there can be readily seen spectacular results but nevertheless some very useful work has been done in all three Homes.

This year within the report we have included reports from the three Matrons themselves, which indicate from a personal point of view the kind of activity that has been going on, and will give all members of Synod, I am sure, an interesting insight into the day-to-day activity at the Homes.

THE WORK OF THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARIES

No report would be complete without special mention of the splendid work which has been done by the Women's Auxiliaries that are attached to the three Children's Homes. A perusal of the Budget figures indicates for instance that there have been no purchases for clothing other than shoes and this indicates that the Auxiliaries throughout the year have met the full cost of the clothing of the children.

They have also been responsible for many creature comforts for the children. They have from time to time provided items of a capital nature which were beyond the resources of the Diocesan Committee. It is true to say that the Auxiliaries have meant that we have been able to carry on much more satisfactorily than would have been the case had we been obliged to meet all costs associated with the Homes. Apart from their financial assistance which is so readily given to the Homes, they have also been real friends to the children and have, with the Matrons, made the Homes homes of peace and love. The Diocese does owe a very real debt of gratitude to these devoted women at Cessnock, Singleton and Taree.

THE HOME MISSIONS WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

This Auxiliary too has met regularly during the year and has worked very hard indeed with its Opportunity Shop venture which is conducted regularly in the Diocesan Youth Centre in Telford Street. Last year the Children's Homes Committee budgeted for an amount of \$4,500 in its budget as likely income from the Women's Auxiliary. However, at the end of the year in December the Committee received

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through the Bishop a cheque for \$5,400 representing the proceeds of the year's work. This was a wonderful effort and since its inception some four and a half years ago, the Auxiliary has now payed across \$21,000 in total to the Children's Homes of the Diocese. To all the women who have helped, to parishes and individuals who have supported the venture with gifts in kind, whether of clothing or other items, we do say a sincere thank you. This work, whilst not only helping the Homes, does provide, we believe, a very needy ministry, to many people in our community who are in receipt of low wages or who are otherwise in difficult circumstances and this shop does help them to obtain clothing and other needed material at very reasonable cost. The slogan used in connection with the Auxiliary is "Your unwanted is our need." We do trust that parishes and individuals throughout the Diocese will really feel that they can support this splendid effort.

This year the Auxiliary received the resignation of Mrs. M. Stibbard as its President, but Mrs. Stibbard is still working with us, and the Auxiliary has as its President Mrs. F. Murray of Hamilton South, who is exercising splendid leadership amongst the women.

THE N.S.W. ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARING AGENCIES

This Association is still doing useful work, particularly in relation to our dealings with the Child Welfare Department. There have been some significant changes in membership of the Association, particularly with the resignation of the Very Revd. Monsignor J. F. McCosker as Chairman, and Colonel N. Pack as Treasurer. Monsignor McCosker has been replaced as Chairman by Fr. Davoren, a Social Worker attached to the Roman Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in Sydney, and Colonel Pack by Lt. Colonel G. Carpenter, formerly of Newcastle. The Home Missions Chaplain of the Diocese continues as Secretary of the Association.

This year much of the effort of the Association has been devoted to the improvement of standards of child care and of staff training. Certain submissions have been prepared for the Government so that these things might be achieved more satisfactorily. We have not lost sight of the need for further support from the Government in relation to maintenance subsidies that are paid for children in care.

The Association feels that whilst N.S.W. is doing more than it was doing in the past, and for this we are grateful, it is nevertheless far behind other States in Australia in relation to these grants in aid for children. This matter will be vigorously pursued by the Association.

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We have also had useful staff conferences throughout the year, both on a residential basis, and in regions of the State. Last year we went to Bathurst for such a conference which involved people from all over that part of the State, and this year we went to Armidale in August to conduct a conference of a similar nature. The Child Welfare Department has also offered places on its child care training courses to staff attached to voluntary homes through the State. It is hoped that we will be able to avail ourselves of the opportunities thus offered. The N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies since its inception has done much to promote the cause of Child Care in N.S.W., and the Diocese has been involved in this work right from the beginning.

ANNUAL RUNNING COSTS

There has been a significant improvement in relation to the running costs of the Homes. This has been achieved, we believe, by a very careful administration, particularly through the work of House Committees which, with the Chaplain, have met with the Matrons at Singleton and Cessnock regularly to review the affairs of the Homes. It is true to say that the Committees have done all possible to achieve a degree of economy.

The increased support from the Child Welfare Department in regard to their weekly maintenance figure and the further assistance that has been received from the Education Department in regard to Secondary School allowances have made a significant difference to the figures. Mention has already been made of the Women's Auxiliaries and their efforts, and the income figure of \$4,500 from the Home Missions Women's Auxiliary did do much to improve our situation.

We must remember, however, that despite much effort in this regard, there have been increased costs for food and other provisioning for salaries and educational needs. This is a common problem in the field of child care work throughout the State, and indeed throughout the nation, and therefore a very careful watch must be kept on expenditure.

There has been an improvement of \$3,532 in the overall cash deficit in 1967 as compared to that in 1966. It is hoped that the Committee and those responsible will be able to continue this improving trend in Homes' affairs.

THE LATE DIOCESAN REGISTRAR, MR. F. A. TIMBURY

No report for this year would be complete without special mention of the tremendous contribution made by the late Mr. F. A. Timbury to the affairs of the Children's

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Homes in this Diocese. Prior to the time that the Home Missions Chaplain was appointed, practically the whole business of the Homes was handled by Mr. Timbury. When the Chaplain took over his duties Mr. Timbury gladly surrendered much of this work to him. However, his abiding interest in the welfare of the children was still very evident, and he still worked very hard to assist in the administration of the affairs of the Homes. The cause of needy children was very dear to the heart of the late Mr. Timbury. This was evident not only in Children's Homes work, but also in his work for the Legacy Club of Newcastle. His quiet but firm interest and concern in the Homes and in their economy and primarily in the welfare of the children will be long remembered. It is no secret that much of the routine work of the Homes, particularly in relation to finance, has been carried out wonderfully well by the late Registrar in his official position as Treasurer of the Synod. We do extend to his widow and family our deepest sympathy and we pray that God will give to him a place of refreshment, light and peace.

THE HOME MISSIONS CHAPLAINCY

The work of the Home Missions Chaplain in the Diocese and beyond is ever increasing, and it has become obvious that the time has come when the Diocese should give consideration to the proper establishment of a Department of Social Work. This proposal, it is hoped, will be debated before the present session of Synod with a view to promoting an Ordinance for the establishment of such a department. It is felt that this will be a distinct step forward in the promotion of the Church's work. The Chaplain as well as having direct responsibility for the executive work connected with the Children's Homes has also the responsibility of a like nature for the C. A. Brown Homes for the Aged at Booragul, for the Chaplaincy work in the Newcastle Children's Court and for other work of a diocesan nature. As Chaplain he is becoming increasingly involved in co-ordinated work with other agencies. This applies to the N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies, the N.S.W. Association of Voluntary Geriatric Agencies, and also the chairmanship of the local group of this Association. The Chaplain has also been asked by Government bodies to accept membership of various co-ordinated committees dealing with the problems of social welfare work generally. This involvement is somewhat time-consuming but well worthwhile if the Church is to make its real impact in the fields of community and social welfare. The basis of the proposal, which will be discussed by Synod, is that a proper Department should be established

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and that consideration should be given to the proper development of the Church's work in this field. It is hoped that the present committees will be streamlined and will in fact become management committees of the various institutions which they represent. The total social work programme of the Diocese will be in the hands of a diocesan committee or board, who it is hoped will be able to plan our social work on an overall basis. At this moment the Homes and other social welfare activity take just under 25 per cent of the Diocesan Budget. When expenditure of this nature is considered, it is felt that the time for the establishment of such a board is long overdue.

In all our work we are seeking as best we can to extend the love, compassion and mercy of Christ to those who often, through no fault of their own, have been deprived of those things which ought to be the birthright of every child. Therefore in His name we seek to fulfil that gap. To all who have helped us in any way, we offer our sincerest thanks.

The reports from the three Matrons of our Children's Homes are attached to this report for consideration by members of Synod.

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOME FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, TAREE

Matron G. King reports as follows:

In presenting this report I am pleased to say the year generally has been a happy and successful one.

The year began with the return of the children from very enjoyable Christmas holidays (with private families) to settle in happily at home once more, with excited chatter about their experiences and preparation for their return to school.

Three very necessary and pleasing events during the year were the painting of the Chapel by the Anglican Fellowship, and the donation by the Rotary Club of Taree of 20 attractive chairs for the use of the children in Chapel each evening (they had previously to sit on the floor). We are very happy with the chairs. The covering of the Chapel floor with carpet and a runner in the entrance foyer were made possible by a generous donation.

Also the gift of a large wardrobe unit by Taree Apex Club has proved very useful indeed.

I have very few problems with the children who are happy and contented. Of those attending schools, their reports are very satisfactory, which is surprising when one considers their unhappy background. When possible they each in turn spend week-ends with private homes, and of

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course all holidays. I consider it a good thing for them to have the experience of private home life as distinct from community living at the Home. People are very kind and from the Taree and Wingham towns and district we receive repeated requests for children to spend the week-ends, or for days or for the school holidays. Requests come from everywhere.

A very enjoyable and successful children's fancy dress frolic held during the year provided fun and excitement for the kiddies, organised by our very enthusiastic and hard working Women's Auxiliary, who do wonderful work for the Home. They provide all clothes for the children (who are always very well dressed), spending money, organised outings such as picnics, etc., and help in so many ways.

My main problem is that of finding suitable staff. We need girls who are fond of children and domestic work.

My experience is they like children and not work, or neither work nor children. If only girls could be found who have a vocation for work in Homes with young children, the problem would be solved.

We were very pleased to receive this year the gift from all the parishes in the Taree district — the proceeds of their harvest festival. A wonderful variety of vegetables, fruit, a large quantity of tinned fruit, home-made cakes, biscuits and jams were received with grateful thanks and appreciation.

In closing this report I wish to say a sincere thank you to Canon McCulloch for help and advice when needed. To all those people and organisations who helped in any way, thank you all.

ST. ALBAN'S HOME FOR BOYS, CESSNOCK

Matron D. Barry reports as follows:

The twelve months ended June, 1968, have been very busy with all beds occupied most of the year. We are fortunate to have had only one staff change in that time, which has helped to maintain a feeling of stability in the Home.

I am always amazed at how quickly the new boys settle down to the routine of the Home, joining in the daily tasks and times of worship most agreeably.

School results are generally rather poor, due no doubt in most cases to the fact that these children have not attended school regularly prior to admission to the Home. Tests show that the majority of our boys are of below average ability, but since the Warden has commenced

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supervised homework of at least one hour each week day, there has been an improvement in most cases and the teachers at both the primary and secondary schools have remarked that the boys' attitude to school work has improved noticeably.

Holiday placements are generally successful, but I would like to have a waiting list of the names of people who would be willing to take a boy at these times. Many of the parishes could, I believe, help with this matter if the people were made aware of the need. Ten of our boys were the guests of the Maroubra Apex Club during the May holidays this year and were billeted with people in various parts of Sydney. Several of them have been invited back for the August-September vacation and I have had very good reports of their behaviour.

One of our greatest problems is to find suitable employment for these lads when they reach the school leaving age. Combined with this is also the need for a home or lodging place, preferably with someone who is prepared to help them adjust to living in the world and managing their own affairs.

We are most thankful for the ministry of our Rector and his assistants, Rev. Ken Munns, Rev. David Crain and Bro. Clive Picton. They are always ready to help with any problems which may arise and the love and concern shown by them to the family at St. Alban's is outstanding.

One of the highlights of our year is the annual St. Alban's Day celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Chapel, followed by breakfast which is attended by officiating clergy and any friends present. This year we were all conscious of the absence of Rev. Peter Rushton, now stationed at Wyong. During his time at Cessnock he was very much a part of the family and indeed a true brother in Christ.

The people of Cessnock and district show their interest in the boys in many ways, by gifts of clothing and food, outings for the boys and each year the various service clubs invite the children to be present at their Christmas parties. Kurri R.S.L. and Citizens' Club continue to donate the proceeds of the annual Wine Dinner to the Home.

It is now twelve months since the mini-bus was purchased for the Home by the Ladies' Auxiliary and the Vintage Festival Committee. This has been a great boon to us all. It provides safe transport to and from school in all weathers and I have the comfort of knowing that the children are all safely in school and not off into the bush for the day, studying nature instead the three R's and

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perhaps in danger of falling down an old mine shaft. The bus is also used to take the children to church and on various outings.

I cannot speak too highly of the wonderful work done by the St. Alban's Ladies' Auxiliary who are untiring in their efforts to raise funds to provide the boys with clothing and all other personal needs. In addition this year they have donated to the Home a steam and dry iron, a self-propelling Victa motor mower, aluminium awnings for the hall, electric fans for the dining room and new curtains for the hall and office.

The Cessnock branch of the C.E.M.S. has accepted the responsibility for the registration of the bus, donated a battery-operated clock for the dining room, assisted the Warden in the painting of the staff house and have instituted an annual games night at the Home which is eagerly looked forward to by the boys. The C.E.M.S. and their families each year organise a picnic for the boys which is always most enjoyable.

Many people have visited the Home and we are always happy to welcome them, as in many cases they know little of the work the Church is doing in the field of child care. We have been the recipients of many gifts during the year and the hospitality extended to the boys by church and service groups has been most generous.

Ground improvements are going ahead steadily. The trees and shrubs which were planted almost two years ago have all grown and the spring should show that almost all the ground area which was so barren is now covered with grass.

The re-painting of the exterior of the Home was completed just before the end of 1967. This was essential to preserve the woodwork, particularly the doors.

Although it is difficult with such a large family to give each child the amount of individual attention we would like to, we do strive most earnestly, with the help of God, to make each child feel secure and that St. Alban's is indeed his home.

ST. ELIZABETH'S HOME FOR GIRLS, SINGLETON

Matron K. Lloyd reports as follows:

I feel that the year to June, 1967, as been one of achievement — spiritually, academically and socially — interspersed of course with the usual disappointments and problems associated with child care work.

Spiritually, St. Elizabeth's is ideally situated for the stimulation, example and awareness of participation in the Christian acceptance and way of life.

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My sincere appreciation of the close association and co-operation given to our children by the Revd. Canon M. Williams and the Revds. G. Parker and D. Pullar.

We have not the problem which so often exists of parents "sending children to Church." We the staff as a whole are active in our participation of parish activities and are regular Churchgoers. Sunday School teachers, relief Sunday School teachers and religious instructors at primary schools are all to be found amongst our staff.

At Confirmation age our children attend Companion-ship Classes and have attended the six weeks' Teacher Training Course recently conducted in our parish by the Department of Christian Education, and already we have Sunday School teachers among our senior girls. Some 12 girls are members of All Saints' choir and apart from a dual attendance as such, each Sunday are invited to attend various Patronal Festivals in the parish churches, and our latest contribution is to make tape-recordings or hymns for parish churches who are without music.

Academically, our relationship with the schools is at a high, close and interesting level. To create a greater understanding of the emotionally disturbed child among the teaching staff, the headmasters and staff of infants, primary and High schools are invited on separate afternoons to St. Elizabeth's where the teachers handling the children are made aware of the children's problems and thus is created a closer bond of understanding and tolerance of the children and what parental deprivation involves.

Strangely, most of the teachers admit this is their first association with children of parental deprivation. To quote one headmaster: "My staff are much the wiser for these annual visits" — our likewise, our children remark how interested their teachers have become!

This year we celebrated "Mother's Day" on 4th May, with an invitation to parents and relatives of our children to attend and see where and how these children are cared for. We chose this date, as Mother's Day usually falls within the school holidays which is a closed Home holiday. We were truly amazed at the response. We anticipated the usual four or five parents and were amazed when together, children and parents, relatives and staff sat down to a barbecue provided by the parents — some 130 people were present.

After a tour of the Home, a mannequin parade by the three debutantes of the previous night — the G. F. S. — Guides — Brownies' Choir and the various school uniforms. The parents were amazed to see the care and training given

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to their children by the Church. As one overcome parent was heard to say: "Why these people are doing more for our children than we ever did."

Our girls are presented as debutantes at the annual Anglican Ball. This year there were three. Their clothes were made within the Home and a pre-Debutante Ball Party given with all the frills and finish. These gracious gestures were made possible by our Ladies' Auxiliary.

To our Ladies' Auxiliary I pay affectionate tribute in making the so many necessary amenities and gracious living — cultural learning and participation — the clothing, the cosmetics — the feminine things belonging in any normal girl's life — is made possible by the self-sacrificing and tireless efforts of these ladies, who also pay for music fees, technical college art and commercial fees and any other cultural, physical or beneficial need arising.

During the year 21 of our senior girls were taken by bus to Taronga Park Zoo and a harbour cruise by the generous gesture of our beloved Mr. E. Worley, who in the past has made many similar trips possible.

Maroubra Apex Club included 13 of our children in their invitation to Sydney from children drawn from Homes within the Hunter Valley for the May holidays.

Together with social and cultural invitations from parish social activities, Singleton service clubs, Masonic Club, Police Boys' Club, Singleton Dramatic Club, A.B.C. orchestral concerts, Brownies, Guides, G.F.S., school plays and carnivals and historical excursions, National Fitness Camps and Singleton Rural Youth, our children are incorporated in most local activities, if not participants, then as guests.

To our staff, who co-operate in loving care of our children in their role as substitute mothers — their warmth, affection and unlimited time, devoted in restoring self-respect, trust and security to their charges. For their efforts the Warden and I are indebted and sincerely appreciate their co-operation in being able to function as a family unit rather than as employees.

A remarkable feature is the direct contact being made by diocesan parish groups, i.e. Home Missions Auxiliary, Women's Guilds, Mothers' Union, New Lambton Anglican Men's Group, G.F.S. and Y.A.F. together and outside of Singleton.

These groups have approached us with a request for a project to work for us, thus saving diocesan funds in needless duplication. For instance one group's project has been a T.V. and now busily engaged in supplying a library

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of modern literature and text books as requested by the schools. Other have projects for blinds, curtains, towels, outdoor furniture, having children for week-ends and holidays, etc.

The wisdom of this is that these people have made a direct approach to our real needs, rather than supplying at random and obviating, as I have said, needless duplication and spending.

My grateful thanks for my inclusion at the Summer Training Seminar in January as arranged by the Council of Social Service of N.S.W., the fees for which were paid for by the Diocese.

And in conclusion, our respect and admiration to Revd. T. J. Johnstone for his leadership, understanding and encouragement.

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REPORT OF ST. HILDA'S HOSTEL FOR GIRLS

We have pleasure in submitting this report of St. Hilda's Hostel, but regret that this has not been such a profitable period.

We feel that this is in great measure due to the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme which caused a year of pupil shortage and therefore a lesser need for student accommodation.

Under the circumstances we consider that the debit balance of only \$3126 is quite an achievement, and due in the main to careful management.

The Hostel has a full complement of girls at the moment and we would like to extend our congratulations to all those who did so well in their final examinations.

We wish to give thanks to Mrs. Housden, our chairman, Matron Yarham and Mr. Timbury and his staff for their ever willing help over the year.

M. BRENT,
Hon. Secretary.
