

Mt. St. Mary,

Strathfield.

3rd June 1946.

Recd. 11 June, 1946

My most dear Br. Superior-General,

Under separate cover, by ordinary mail, I am forwarding copies of application for dispensation received during the year. You are anxious to have the opinion of the Provincial Council in these matters, and that creates a difficult position. One member of the Council thinks it not right to ask for such opinion by letter, and suggests that a secret vote be taken. For this purpose he would like to see the Council come together each year, say in August or July, and vote on any matters requiring a vote. If a vote is necessary at other times he would like to see a co-opted Council record a vote.

Though there is much to be said in favour of the first suggestion, it would be difficult to carry out in practice, owing to the size of the Province and the vast amount of work to be got through. It might also happen that the Co. would be assembled from distant parts and little work be ready. Probably after they had dispersed it would start to come in. I do not favour co-opting to deal with dispensation cases. It does not give the opinion of the Provincial Council, nor does it seem to me correct procedure. I would like to have directions from you.

The following have recently applied : Brs. C.Kinnaird (394), B.O'Connor (367), V.Levander (490). I shall send on their letters, and, if possible, the recommendation of the Provincial Council. Br. J.McFadden (546) applied earlier, but I advised him that I did not consider his reasons adequate. I expect to hear again from Br. A.Mullavey (450). Br. B.McInerney (427) wrote enquiring about progress in his case. Were it not for the scandal that might be given to the weak, I would favour moving them all on. Br. V.Keenan (267) was in serious trouble again, interfering with a boy at Lewisham. In 1941 he was in similar trouble, and, I think, actually had his dispensation, but refused to accept it. He was to make up his mind at Retreat about applying for a dispensation, but I have not yet heard from him. He says that when he was in trouble before he made as strong a resolution as possible to avoid trouble, but still lapsed. He thinks and I am inclined to agree that the probability is against him. In many ways he is excellent - efficient, hard-working, loyal, and apart from this a fine man - but he does seem a self-satisfied type. He and Br. B.O'Connor are regular to all appearances, and the Brothers generally know nothing of any troubles they may have - hence the greater danger of scandal. I am putting these things before you in a preliminary fashion only.

Lewisham. There is immediate need to provide a decent home for the Brothers here, where living conditions are very bad. Three of the above are from the Lewisham community, also the young man Knights, and another who may have trouble passing for Vows at Christmas. In no case can anyone be blamed except the man himself, but the appalling living conditions might easily create an atmosphere of discontent. I would like you to treat this work as of absolute urgency, and allow it to proceed as soon as possible irrespective of cost. The architect hopes to have a rough sketch ready before the Third leaves in two or three weeks. Lewisham, Rose Bay, St. Patrick's Strathfield are I think our worst places as far as the living conditions of the Brothers go. There is always danger that men will seek their pleasures outside if they haven't a decent home.