

Catholic Statement On Gordon Bill Opposes Move For Easier Divorces

The following statement was delivered by George W. Wansman, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Assembly at 1:40 p.m. Thursday, March 5, 1953, in the Assembly Chamber, Albany, N. Y. The hearing was held with relation to the Gordon bill which proposes that a study be made of the laws relating to matrimonial family relationships. Mr. Wansman is a prominent Catholic lawyer in Western New York, and is President of the Catholic Lawyers Guild of Buffalo and Past President of the Erie County Bar Association.

Statement of New York State Catholic Welfare Committee at Legislative Hearing on Gordon Bill To Establish A Temporary Commission To Study Laws Relating To Matrimony and Family Relationships

(The New York State Catholic Welfare Committee, representing the Catholic people of the State of New York, welcomes this opportunity to come before your Committee today to state its opposition to the bill sponsored by Mrs. Gordon, A. Int. 972, which proposes that a Temporary State Commission be established to study and recommend concerning "the problems created by marriage, the family, and related matrimonial matters, actions, and proceedings.")

The introductory section of the bill emphasizes the need for "the preservation of the marital relationship and the family unit" (emphasis added), and for combatting "wide-spread fraud, perjury, collusion, and connivance which permeate matrimonial actions and proceedings." With these commendable objectives, which are undoubtedly the motivation of many who support the bill, we are heartily in accord. There is, however, a marked shift in scope and emphasis between the objectives as stated in the introductory section and the duties the bill actually imposes on the Commission.

The overwhelming majority of the people of the State unquestionably deplore abuses in the administration of the law. We, for our part, side with any groups wishing to eliminate such evils from our society. Representatives of our faith in New York City have met in recent weeks with representatives of other religious denominations in an effort to strengthen moral values in political life and inspire standards of conduct in public life which would be a credit to our religious heritage.

FRAUD, PERJURY, collusion and connivance in matrimonial actions are symptomatic of a decline in standards of morality which has been evident in segments of our society in recent years. When they exist in the administration of justice in our State, we believe that the judges of our courts, the district attorneys of our counties and other public officials should be encouraged to perform their duties in prosecuting those who are guilty.

If additional steps are required to insure that the administration of justice is not thwarted by those who disregard the law, we would support that district attorneys throughout the State designate an assistant to cooperate with the justices of our Supreme Court in the uncovering of fraud, perjury, collusion and connivance, so that those who abuse our courts will be brought to the aid of justice promptly and effectively. We believe that the members of the bar who violate their duties as officers of the court.

Some years ago, the Legislature passed a law which, in the establishment of the Judicial Council, authorized the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals to study present procedure and to recommend such changes as he deemed necessary. The Council is authorized, that law, provided over by the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, to study present procedure and to recommend such changes as he deemed necessary.

commodate prospective perjurers. A proctor whose office would be that of a defender of the marriage bond, and whose main object would be to protect the public interests would supply the deficiency.

INCREASING THE grounds for divorce would not achieve the stated objective of the bill, namely, "the preservation of the marital relationship and the family unit." It would defeat it. The bill could have been drawn to invest the Temporary Commission with powers expressly limited to seeking means to preserve the family, reunite broken homes, reduce our rapidly climbing divorce rate, and explicitly excluding from those objectives the increase of grounds for divorce. That would have been a much different bill than the one now under discussion.

In answering those who would advocate "liberalized divorce" through the device of a Temporary Study Commission, it is incumbent upon you to consider the gravity of your decision. Many of the evils in our society, many of the social costs placed upon taxpayers of the State, have their origins in divorce and broken homes. Crime, juvenile delinquency, mental instability are only a few of the unfortunate results of a disregard of the essential permanency of the marriage union.

Today, we in New York stand able to meet the challenge of the disrupting influence of the divorce laws. Let the responsible officials of our State see that our laws with respect to marriage are obeyed in spirit as in letter, and let our people know that they are obligated to society, as they are to God, to preserve their marriage relationship. The good that will flow to us and to our children will multiply, and our example will be a source of inspiration to our sister States.

We urge upon you to accept this challenge and to vote against this bill as written to create a Temporary Study Commission.

Solar Study
Washington (NC)—A grant of \$1,107 has been awarded to Georgetown University here by the Office of the Chief of Naval Research. The money will be used in the university's observatory for the preparation of two maps of the solar spectrum.

TYPICAL OF these advocates is a group which has long been vocal in its sponsorship of this bill and of "liberalized" divorce in New York. That group has approved a resolution to establish seven grounds for divorce in New York, and it is the apparent objective of a committee of that group to promote that legislation by first promoting a commission to investigate.

The approach of such advocates, however sincere, is misguided. Increasing the number of grounds for divorce in an effort to eliminate perjury and connivance would have the opposite effect because to increase the grounds for divorce is but to multiply opportunities for perjury and subversion.

The well known "history of divorce" in this State is that there is just as much perjury when there are numerous grounds as when there is the sole ground of insanity. These advocates will be willing that the evil arise not from the number of grounds, but rather from the apparent inability of the courts to come to the investigation of perjury and connivance whenever they arise.

If present procedures for testing the veracity of witnesses and maintaining perjury and fraud in divorce and annulment suits are inadequate, the answer is to improve them, not to acc-



MEDICAL AID FOR THE AFFLICTED—An American nurse-doctor in the Maryknoll Sisters' Clinic at Pusan, Korea, examines a child, assisted by a native nun, while an anxious mother looks on. Funds received from the annual appeal of the U. S. Bishops' Welfare and Emergency Relief Committee will make possible the shipment of sorely needed medicines and equipment for clinics in refugee centers throughout the world.

Medical Mission Nuns Assigned Oversea Posts

Philadelphia (NC)—Seven Medical Mission Sisters, two of them physicians, the other nurses, have been given mission assignments by Mother Anna Dengle, community superior there is opened officially.

SISTER M. MADEIRINE of Newark, N. J., will join the nursing staff at Our Lady of Coromoto Hospital, Maracaibo, Venezuela. Sister Marianne, also a nurse, is headed for Ezerkum Gold Coast, West Africa, and the first Catholic hospital and nursing school opened by the Medical Mission Sisters there.

And Sister M. Bonaventure, who hails from Brooklyn, N. Y., has been assigned to Washington, D. C., to make further studies at the Catholic University of America.

Sister M. Bertrand of Syracuse, N. Y., who is a nurse, will join the staff of Holy Family Hospital in Patna, India, which also operates a Grade-A nursing school.

Sister M. Josepha of New Britain, Conn., also a nurse, has the hopes of reaching Karachi, Pakistan, before a new 100-bed addition to Holy Family Hospital of the Burlington diocese.

Irish Nuns Form Philadelphia Convent

Philadelphia (NC)—A small group of nuns have come here to set up the first American foundation of the Missionary Sister of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, a congregation founded in Ireland in 1924 to work in the African missions.

With the permission of Archbishop John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., of Philadelphia, the newcomers are planning shortly to open the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy as the first step toward encouraging more American girls to devote themselves to the work of the foreign missions.

Among the pioneers of the American foundation is Sister M. Philomena Fox, a native of Philadelphia, who sailed to Ireland to join the Sisterhood the same year that it began its work.

3,000 Girls Launch 'Crusade For Modesty'

San Francisco (NC)—Decision of 3000 Catholic teenage girls to stage a mass rally against immodest fashions drew front page attention in one of San Francisco's daily newspapers.

The San Francisco Call-Bulletin announced: "3,000 S. F. School Girls in 'Crusade for Modesty.'" A by-line story disclosed that the girls, students of the city's 13 Catholic girls' high schools, would stage a "fashion project" March 8 in which a representative of each school will model clothes designed with an eye to modesty, style, and beauty.

LARGE PHOTOS with the story illustrated what the girls have in mind as modesty-plus-attractiveness. The event was given the title "fashion project" instead of "fashion show" because of its Lenten timing.

"This is more than just a show—it's a cause," said Doris Munstermann of St. Bridget's high school, chairman. "We want to demonstrate that clothes can be modest without being dull and stodgy."

"A few far-sighted young people, fellows as well as girls, across the nation have decided to 'dress up' the nation's garment industry," she told the Call-Bulletin.

THE NATION-WIDE drive, she explained, started several years ago as the "Supply the Demand for the Supply" movement. Miss Munstermann listed as its three objectives:

- 1) To prove that beauty, style, and modesty are synonymous.
- 2) To show that stylish, modest clothing is available for the making in local stores, or will be made available.
- 3) To bring the modesty issue to the attention of local store buyers.

The Monitor, archdiocesan newspaper, reported early plans for staging the modest-fashion event, and progress of the crusade has been covered on the paper's youth page.

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Offenders Ordered To Attend Church

Camden, N. J. (RNS)—Two Atlantic City men who pleaded guilty to operating a still were ordered by Federal Judge Thomas M. Madden here to attend church every week for five years or go to jail.

Judge Madden also imposed \$500 "civil penalties" on the two.

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