

Slur on Big Families Stirs Bitter Tempest In English Parliament

NC News Service

London — Three Catholic Members of Parliament forced Prime Minister Harold Wilson to disavow a family-planning speech made by a leading member of his party. The three MPs — James Dunn and Simon and Peter Mahon, brothers — threatened to resign from the governing Labor party following a much-publicized attack on big families by Douglas Houghton, chairman of the party in the House of Commons.

With about a dozen other members of their party they signed a parliamentary motion to go before the House of Commons "deploring and regretting" Houghton's affront to the family life of the nation. Wilson eventually had to intervene personally. He wrote the three Catholic parliamentarians a personal letter, assuring them that Houghton's views of big families "do not in any sense represent the views or policy of Her Majesty's government nor are they in any way party policy."

Houghton had made it quite clear, Wilson added, that what he had said had never been intended to commit anyone but himself. "I fully accept that," the prime minister added. "And I ask you to do the same."

Wilson pointed out that by tradition the party chairman in the House of Commons — who has no ministerial rank — retains his freedom to put forward personal views in public much in the same way as other "back benchers" (ordinary party members of parliament).

The Catholic MPs and their supporters said that they are "very satisfied" with Wilson's assurances and accordingly withdrew any threatened action.

Houghton, who enjoys exceptional prestige and status in the eyes of the public as an elder statesman of the Labor party, had made his remarks while opening a research center sponsored by Britain's major manufacturers.

New Priest Offers Webster Folk Mass

Father Douglas C. Hoffman offered a Folk Mass of Thanks-giving in his home parish, St. Rita's Church, West Webster, last Sunday.

Father Hoffman, ordained in Rome on December 21, 1967, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoffman of 825 Grant Road, West Webster.

The music for the Mass, compiled in a book by Father Hoffman called "Gather Round to Give Thanks," included an Israeli folk song, "Peace Song," by Judy O'Sheil, for Communion, and "Alleluia," by Ray Repp.

Officiating at the Mass with Father Hoffman were Father Francis Kleehammer of St. Rita's, who presided; Monsignor Joseph Brennan from St. Bernard's Seminary; Father James O'Connell from St. Agnes Church in Avon; and Father Kevin Murphy from St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua.

Insurance Company Forms New Firm

Mutual Protective Insurance Co., 3960 Leavenworth St., Omaha, Neb., which has specialized in low-cost health and accident coverage for Catholics for more than 35 years, has formed Medico Life Insurance Co.

The new company will be headquartered in Omaha. In addition to life insurance, it will offer a complete line of health and accident coverage.

Officers include George W. Eggenmayer, president; Richard F. Norris, executive vice president; and A. Lee Bloomingdale, vice president and secretary.

Catholic Nurses Hear Methodist

Poor Called 'Rejects of Work World'

Denver — (RNS) — "The only way the poor are ever going to get out of poverty is for you and me to change our attitudes, especially about why people are poor," a Methodist minister told Catholic nurses here.

The Rev. Donald E. Hall of the Detroit Methodist Conference spoke at "The Culture of Poverty" at the annual Convention of the National Council of Catholic Nurses.

"There may be many solutions to the problems of poverty," he said, "but before anything can begin to happen we must rid ourselves of the idea

that people are poor because they are lazy and don't care."

"We have got to begin to see," he continued, "that there is a culture of poverty in operation which perpetuates poverty and which only we the prosperous can break down."

He explained that the poor of America are rejects from the "work-world." They are born into or fall into the economic underworld of affluent America.

They include, he said, the small farmers and migrants who inhabit the wastelands of rural poverty, the 20 million black

Americans who live in ghettos of poverty, and senior citizens living on pensions and social security.

"Add to our list of those in poverty," Mr. Hall continued, "the handicapped, both physically and mentally, the retarded and near psychotic, the alcoholic and the dope addict."

"And don't forget the children," he said. "Children live in poverty, not in India, nor in China or Africa, but in the United States."

"We don't want to be reminded," he observed, "that we

discriminate daily and belong to a system that has discrimination built into it."

"We don't want to be reminded," he added, "that we

don't give a damn for the migrant workers, or old people.

"We justify our unjust attitudes," he continued, "by putting the blame on them — why don't they get off their seats and go out and get a job, instead of living off the taxpayer — that's us."

"We need to rethink our understanding of what it means to work," Mr. Hall said, "and what it means to be paid a fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

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