

London: Second Thoughts on New Abortion Law

By JOHN A. GREAVES (NC News Service)

London — Concern is mounting in Britain over the effects of the country's new abortion laws, which came

into force just over five months ago.

Already more than 14,000 women have had legal abortions, including some 9,000 of them free through the National Health Service. It is

estimated that the figure will reach 30,000 by the end of the first 12 months.

About 40 per cent of these operations have taken place in private nursing homes and from all reports the law has now legalized and encouraged the abortionist professions that the sponsors of the law declared it would suppress.

Opponents of the act had claimed that in practice it would allow abortion on demand through the National Health Service because of the "social clause," which permits abortion when pregnancy or birth not only affects the physical or mental health of the mother, but also of any existing child and allows the total social environment of the mother to be taken into account.

Three operating room nurses at Llandow hospital in Cardiff, Wales, have resigned for religious and moral reasons because of a twelvefold increase in abortions there since the new act came into force.

Other hospitals are also reporting resignations from their nursing and operating room staffs, many of whom are Irish and Catholic.

Hospitals generally are understaffed in this country and the situation can be expected to get worse with the reluctance of at least a percentage of their Catholic staff members to be involved.

Prof. T. N. Jeffercoate, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Liverpool University, said in a recent lecture that many young doctors without economic or professional security are being coerced into ending pregnancies when they could find little justification for doing so.

Many doctors also, especially the younger ones, feel they might jeopardize their careers if they followed their consciences in the matter and others still feared legal action — possible under the law in some cases — if they refused a request for an abortion, he added.

"We are approaching a situation which already obtains in many European countries where a doctor employed by the state has to perform operations which he regards as unethical, otherwise he loses his employment," Prof. Jeffercoate said.

In Dublin, Prof. A. H. Browne, president-elect of the Biology Society of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Ireland, described the new act as "a catastrophe."

The Observer, national Sunday newspaper, recently said that London is on the way to becoming virtually the abortion capital of the West, with abortion virtually available on demand.

London not only has more legal abortionists at work than any other Western city but many of them who are in private practice are actively looking for business," it said.

A pregnancy advisory service has opened in London to advise women where they may get an abortion.

Nuns Organize Councils

ROCKVILLE CENTER, N.Y. (RNS) — The major superiors of 30 communities of nuns working in the Rockville Centre Diocese have approved the formation of a permanent conference to foster better communications between the bishop and nuns.

Also approved was the creation of a Sisters Advisory Council to serve as a consultative body on all diocesan matters affecting the lives of the religious women.

There are some 2,000 nuns from 30 religious communities working in the diocese, and it is expected that they will elect 41 representatives.

Ecumenical Teaching Project Launched

Cincinnati — (RNS) — An ecumenical team teaching project has been introduced here for released-time public school students in an experimental religious education program.

Sponsors are the Catholic archdiocese and the Council of Christian Communions. Third and fourth grade groups are involved in the initial phase.

"Most of the children in the experiment are non-Catholic Appalachians and Negroes," an organizer said. Specific doctrines are not taught, but the children are instructed on the life of Christ, the world in which he lives and the basic principles of Christian living.

N. Y. City

Christmas holidays for many diocesan mean a trip to New York City to see a few Broadway shows. To aid them in choosing the plays or musicals before writing for tickets, we offer here a column called "Play Reviews" which appears regularly in the Long Island Catholic, with opinions by Howard Lord and Joan T. Nourse of its staff.

CABARET — A brilliant musical satire on the escapism of Berlin society which fled to its cabarets when the Nazis were taking over. Heavy sexual connotations. Only for the mature. (Broadway)

CACTUS FLOWER — A light comedy about a dentist who tries to elude matrimony by passing his prim secretary off as his wife. Naturally his flight from matrimony ends in marriage. (Longacre)

COCKTAIL PARTY — Eliot's classic mystery play about four souls helped to fulfillment by an unusual psychiatrist is not so well directed as to appeal to all, but Eliot devotees will find some rewards. (Lyceum)

CRY OF PLAYERS — William Gibson has written an eloquent, if sprawling, drama about Shakespeare's departure from Stratford for London. Outstanding performances by Frank Langella, Anne Bancroft, and Stephen Elliott. (Vivian Beaumont)

GEORGE M. — This musical version of the career of George M. Cohan hasn't a serious thought in its head, but it is distinguished by Cohan's ever fresh music and lyrics. Joel Grey's virtuoso performance as the showman and Joe Layton's ingenious production concept. Take the family. (Palace)

GOLDEN RAINBOW — Plus factors include Steve Lawrence, Eydie Gorme, Scott Jacoby, Robert Randolph's sets, Alvin Colt's costumes and Elliot Lawrence's musical direction. All other factors negative. (Schubert)

GREAT WHITE HOPE — May turn out to be the great American tragedy. White and black society force a black heavy-weight champion to be a stereotype, but, like Samson, he brings the temple down with him. Milestone performance by James Earl Jones. Highly theatrical, epic production. Must see. (Alvin)

HAIR — A rock musical passage rite focussing on a young man's encounter with the draft which "tells it like it is" exaggeratedly and unpleasantly about our young people. Despite a lively and melodic score and an energetic and talented cast, it will offend many. (Biltmore)

MAME — A bright and colorful musical version of the frivolous story of Auntie Mame. (Winter Garden)

MAN OF LA MANCHA — A deeply moving musical telling of the Don Quixote story.

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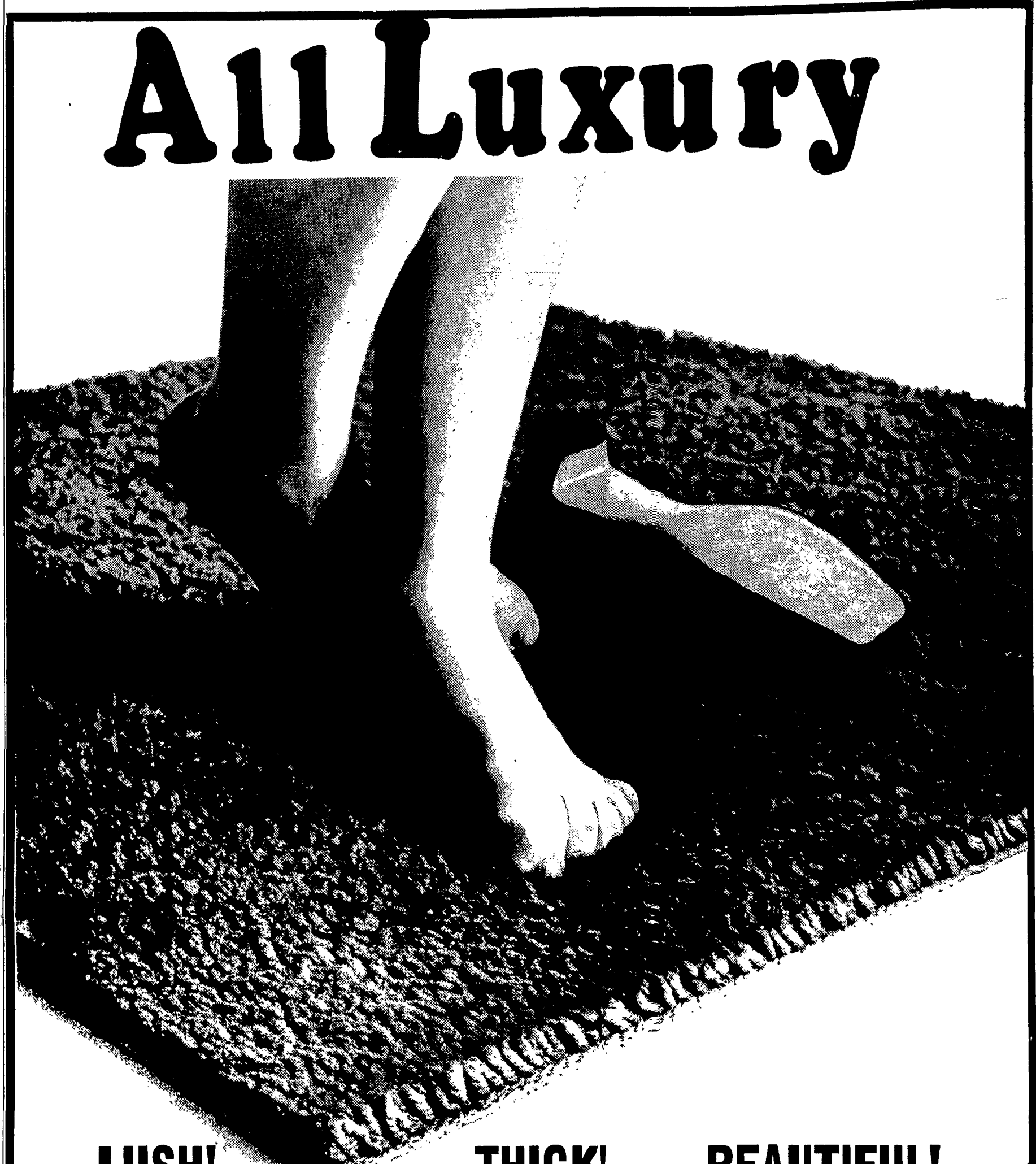
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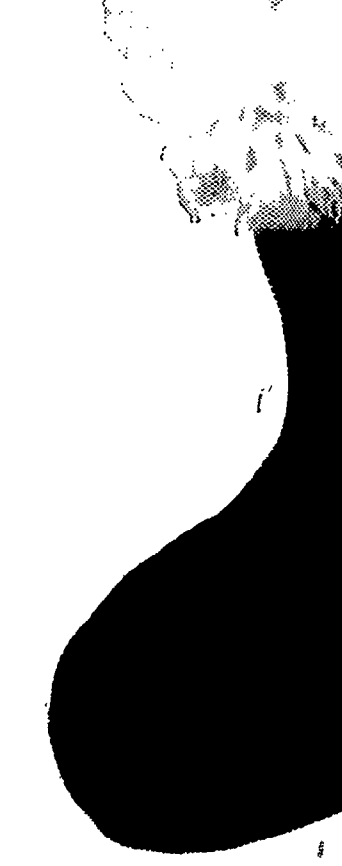
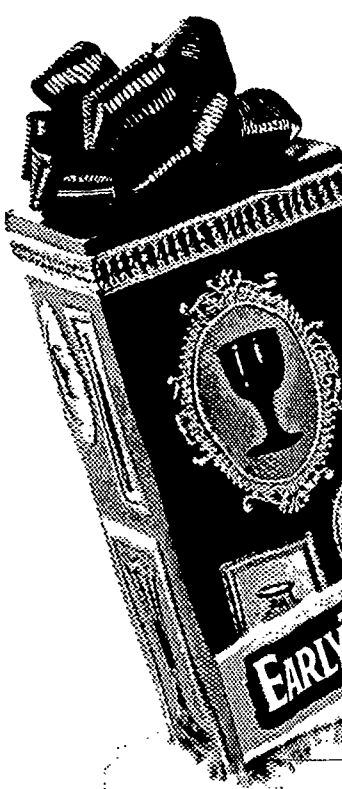
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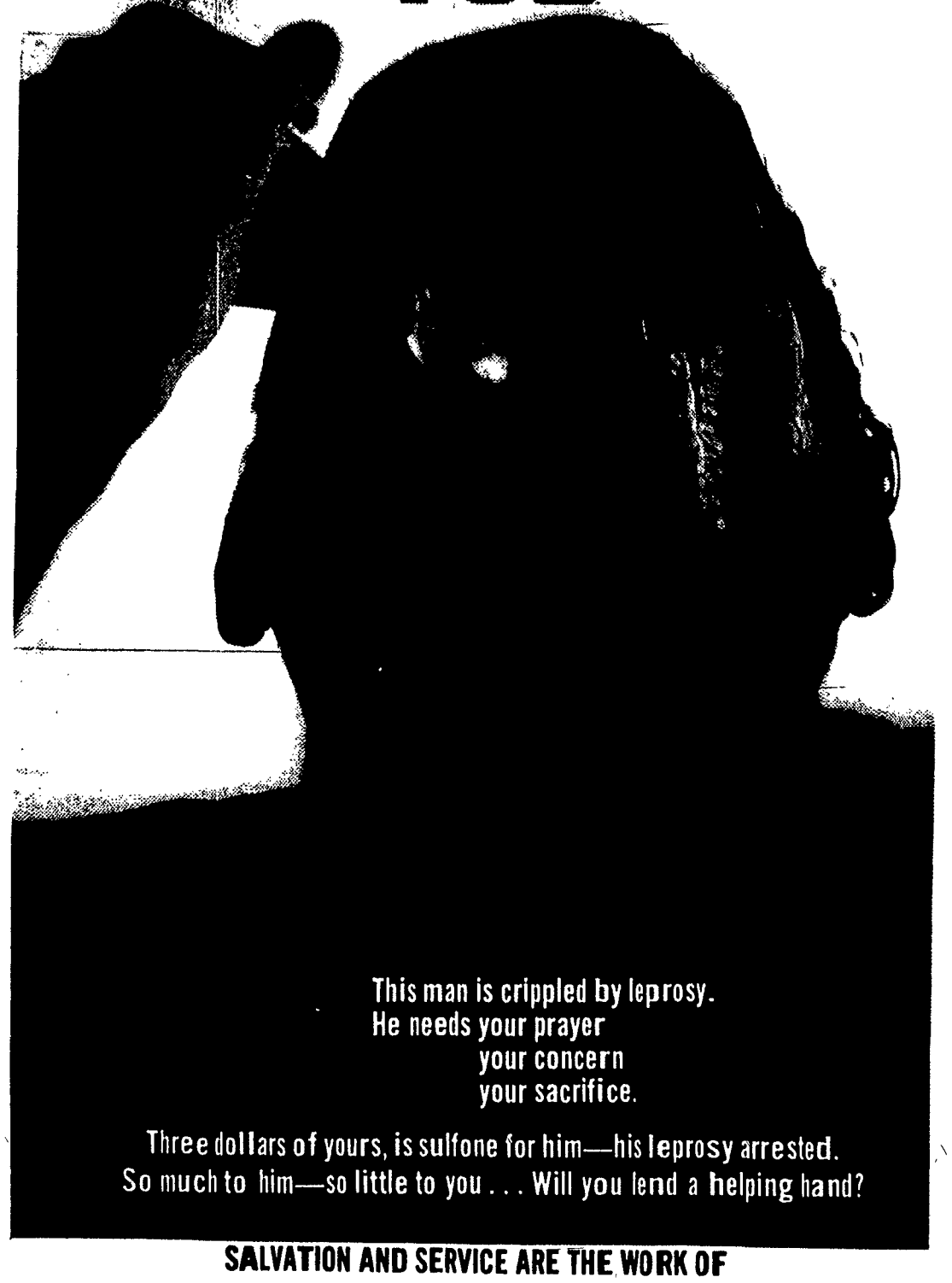
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