

CAPITOL HILL ROUND-UP



Bishop James E. Kearney will be guest at annual benefit card party at Cenacle Retreat House, East Avenue, Rochester, at 8 p.m. Monday, April 8. Pictured from left are Mrs. William Kramer, general committee co-chairman; Miss Geraldine Moylan, ticket co-chairman; Bishop Kearney; Miss Rosaline Nesser, general co-chairman.

Abortion Foes Work As Legislature Rests

Debate on proposed changes in the state's abortion law continued this week as the Legislature recessed until April 15.

Highlights were the following:

Members of the diocesan Right To Life Committee continued to urge citizens to write their state senators and assemblymen to express their views on abortion legislation which may reach the floor of the Assembly when the Legislature reconvenes.

More than 200 members of Auburn Council, Knights of Columbus, went on record as opposing new abortion legislation at their annual "Communion breakfast" March 23.

They took the action following an address by Dr. Thomas R. Sweeney, Rochester, co-chairman of the Right To Life Committee.

Nearly 100 persons attended a "Kill-In on Abortion" meeting at St. John Fisher College March 27. Sponsored by the college's Christian Affairs committee, it included a panel of a philosophy professor, three doctors and a layman.

"Neither the philosopher nor the legislator lives in a vacuum," declared Father Robert G. Miller, CSB, chairman of the college's philosophy department.

"Data arrived at by the most recent scientific procedures, concur that the newly-fertilized ovum has as much genetic information as the adult which eventually he will be."

Father Miller contended: "There is no qualitative difference between life at conception and life after birth."

He pointed out that "liberty, equality and the rights to life are values which our society recognizes in constitutional law and which are to be protected by the state."

"Because there are illegal abortions," he continued, "this does not mean that present laws on abortion should be withdrawn, because millions of other unborn children would become as equally unprotected as those who were victims of abortion."

Thomas Shea, another panel member, claimed that "arguments for abortion legislation are made on the basis of emotion."

What is involved, he maintained, "is when life begins, and that is when conception occurs. The 23 male chromosomes of the sperm and the 23 female chromosomes of the egg have

all the potential for full life when united."

Dr. Mary Ann Fredericks of Strong Memorial Hospital said that to question when life begins is merely to quibble. She did not commit herself as to when she thought life began.

"Our society," she said, "does permit killing — for example by sending men to Viet Nam."

She said "present abortion laws are not enforced, so therefore what is not enforced should not be on the books." The decision for abortion, she declared, should lie "mainly in what is best for the woman involved, and what is best for society."

Dr. Robert Boon, a University of Rochester medical professor, noted that "law and moral code are not necessarily synonymous." He said the law should be liberalized, but with certain safeguards to prevent false claims in such areas as rape and incest.

Dr. Jean Sherman of Strong Memorial Hospital said abortion should be removed from the legislative arena, and that "responsibility for determining whether an abortion should be performed should be left in the hands of the New York State Medical Society." She added that no woman should be forced to have a child she doesn't want.

Dr. Sweeney, who was in the audience, noted that the panel did not include any physicians who oppose change in the law, "nor were there any attorneys on the panel."

Meanwhile, around the na-

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Albany—New York State's Catholic bishops this week urged passage of legislation to provide additional unemployment insurance for persons with children to support and to remove the Blaine Amendment forbidding state aid to parochial schools.

The state's bishops, speaking through the New York State Catholic Committee, urged favorable action on the measure, pointing out that "this bill strengthens the benefit structure of unemployment insurance in a way which will enable many persons who are unemployed without fault to avoid seeking partial public assistance," especially if they have children.

The bishops said in support of the measure, "So long as we recognize that the unemployment insurance system is just one part of our total social security network to provide for maintenance of income of persons whose real wages are unable to meet their everyday needs, we can see the necessity of graduating the benefits to the unemployed father where he has one or more children to support. The bill accomplishes this very purpose and does so within the framework of the present unemployment insurance system."

The Catholic bishops' statement to the legislators argued:

"Logical, legal uniformity, and administrative simplicity require that there be one basis on which to provide education programs with Federal and State funding. This requires the replacement of Article XI, Section 2, (the Blaine Amendment) by the Federal First Amendment. It is hoped that you will support this desirable objective, for first-time passage this year."

The committee's statement told the legislators:

"The migration of workers, described by some as the lost soul of labor, is pleaded for by the state's Catholic Bishops who asked the Legislature to approve bills which 'would eliminate many of the inequities and discrimination... they have suffered for years'."

The plea on behalf of the migrant workers was contained in a letter from the New York State Catholic Committee, which speaks on behalf of the Bishops of all Catholic Dioceses in the State.

"The big 12 bills" of migrant labor legislation were endorsed "for passage this year," by the Catholic Bishops.

These are the 12 bills whose passage was urged by the Catholic Committee:

- To extend Workmen's Compensation to farm laborers.
- To clarify Workmen's

support. The bill accomplishes this very purpose and does so within the framework of the present unemployment insurance system."

The state's bishops through the Catholic Committee have also resurrected a demand for repeal of the Blaine Amendment which has stood as a barrier against state aid for parochial schools since 1896. A state-wide referendum on the new state constitution killed the possible change of the Blaine Amendment in 1967.

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"In these days where there is major interchange between the Federal, State and local governments in providing aid to education at all levels, it is essential that a single Church-state standard govern. The Federal standard as interpreted by the Supreme Court, will always be the only guide-line for Federal programs. Therefore, in order to co-mesh and co-mingle programs and funds, it is essential to make the standards coterminous under the Federal First Standard."

This week's questions:

Q. How many new laws have been made thus far in Albany?

A. Some 115 new laws have been passed in both houses and signed by the Governor as of this writing.

Q. For example?

A. One new law raises the top speed limit in the state from 50 to 55 miles per hour for highways except expressways. Another law deals with trout fishing in Long Island waters. Another has to do with the War of 1812 commemoration.

Bishops Plead for Migrant Laborers

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Compensation coverage of farm workers.

- To extend coverage of the Labor Relations Act to farm workers.

- To require written contracts for migrant farm workers.

- To give the Attorney General the power to protect the migrant farm worker from unfair practices by stores and employees.

- To extend coverage of the minimum wage law to farm laborers.

- To require that the employer obtain a health certificate of any migrant brought into the State.

- To require adequate toilet facilities in farm labor camps.

- To require the employer to give the farm laborer his name, address and Social Security number.

- To extend unemployment

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