

Church Leaders Assail New English Divorce Law

London — (RNS) — Sweeping new British laws which go into effect on Jan. 1 are interpreted in an important memorandum of pastoral guidance issued here by the two primates of the Church of England, with a warning that the Church utterly opposes any marriage contract terminable at will.

Known collectively as the Divorce Reform Act, the new laws were passed a year ago after long controversial debates in Parliament. Their major provisions — divorce after two years' separation if there is no objection, and after five years if there is objection — are expected to loosen a flood of divorce applications by husbands early in the New Year.

The first of these provisions has been and still is popularly described here as "divorce by consent." But in their memorandum the two Primates — Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury and Archbishop Donald Coggan of York—say:

"We recognize that the new legislation may create the impression that henceforward marriage is merely a contract terminable at will, and even by one partner alone after five years. That it can create this impression is undoubtedly unfortunate; and if it encourages these ideas that is more deplorable still.

"Such a concept of marriage the Church utterly opposes."

The primates also foresee the new law causing increasing tensions in the whole domestic field of marriage and divorce and urge clergy to make every endeavor to achieve reconciliation in cooperation with social agencies.

The law has already been widely criticized by Roman Catholics. Earlier this year the mass-circulating Catholic weekly, the Universe, wrote editorially that the great objec-

Blacks Reject Bishops' Aid

Washington, D.C. —(RNS)— Blacks will no longer be the "kept people" of the Roman Catholic Church, the new chairman of the National Office of Black Catholics said here as he formally rejected the \$150,000 offered his organization by the U.S. Catholic bishops.

At the same time, the 32-member board of directors of the NOBC unanimously called upon the Church to initiate an investigation of the commission for Catholic missions among blacks and American Indians.

The NOBC's formal rejection of funds from the Catholic hierarchy followed an unofficial rejection Nov. 20 during the bishops' annual meeting in Washington. The hierarchy authorized only \$150,000 of the \$659,000 the NOBC had requested.

The bishops also stipulated that funding would be only for one year and that the NOBC would then have to accomplish its own fund-raising. The black organization was seeking almost 3 million over a four-year period.

POPE MEETS ENVOY

Vatican City —(RNS)— The new Uruguayan ambassador to the Holy See, Venancio Florez, has presented his credentials to Pope Paul VI. Ambassador Florez, in an address to the Pope, underlined the value of pontifical teachings and efforts for achieving social justice and peace in the world. He assured Pope Paul of Uruguay's efforts to achieve those objectives.

Courier-Journal

Cardinal Cooke Off on Tour

Seoul, Korea — (RNS) — Terence Cardinal Cooke of New York, military vicar to Catholics in the U.S. armed forces, arrived here on the second leg of his three-week Christmas tour of the Pacific and Far East.

Besides the week-long visit to Vietnam, the prelate will also stop in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines, Okinawa, Truk, Guam and Hawaii. Before leaving New York, Cardinal Cooke showed newsmen a telegram

from President Nixon thanking him for making the trip and asking him to convey to the military abroad "my warm good wishes" and the hope that 1971 will herald the "beginning of a generation of peace."

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