

Senate Bill S-1 Attacked As Threat to Civil Rights

By MARTIN TOOMBS

The Bill of Rights is threatened by a bill sponsored by Senators Mansfield and Scott, who "don't know what's in the bill at all" according to Esther Herst, coordinator of the Washington office of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation.

She adds that "very few Senators

have read" Senate bill S-1, the Criminal Justice Reform Act of 1975.

Ms. Herst spoke before approximately 125 people here at the invitation of the Rochester-based Coalition to Defeat Senate Bill 1. She and two other speakers pointed out some of the damaging effects they see in the 753-page, three-inch-thick document.

President Lyndon Johnson commissioned the codifying of federal law in 1966. President Richard Nixon rejected the report in 1971, and ordered Attorneys General John Mitchell and Herbert Kleindienst to make changes. Their proposal is the one now before the Senate, and has been labeled "Nixon's revenge" by its detractors.

The sections of the bill objectionable to various groups are too numerous to list. Ms. Herst noted that each time her group looks at the bill they find something else which is objectionable to them. She pointed out their most recent discovery: the removal of wording that had exempted labor disputes from statutes concerning extortion and riots. S-1 would make possible prosecution of unions for striking, as extortion against the company. Nearly any picket could be creating "a grave danger of, or imminently causing, damage to property" and therefore would be subject to prosecution under anti-riot clauses. The same applies to demonstrations on federal property.

Other provisions Ms. Herst expressed objection to:

The press would be forbidden to publish any information about government activities except that issued specifically for publication by someone authorized to issue it.

Prosecution of government officials for illegal conduct would be prohibited if they had acted in "mistaken belief" that what they were doing was "required or authorized or based on written interpretation issued by the head of a governmental agency." The effect of this provision and of the control of the press would have prevented public knowledge of Watergate, Ms. Herst noted.

The death penalty would become mandatory in some cases. A person under 16 — too young to be executed — could be given a life sentence, with no parole.

Any dissent calling for non-cooperation with government requirements would be illegal. The Rev. James Franz pointed out that under S-1, Thomas Jefferson would have been arrested for writing the Declaration of Independence.

Attorney Charles Crimi, former president of the Monroe County Bar Association, also spoke against the bill, noting that it was intended to "pacify the hue and cry that crime is running rampant in the streets." But street crime, he noted, comes under the jurisdiction of the states. He objected to the watering down of the Miranda decision, which requires that a person's rights be read to him when he is arrested. He observed that "no professional criminal has to have his rights read to him" and that the statute would hurt only first offenders, the young, and the uneducated.

Ms. Herst asked that letters be sent to the Senators, urging them to read the bill, and to vote against it. She said that she felt most Senators are presently in favor of the bill, and people should write and tell them to examine it more closely.

The local organization is seeking support; those interested can contact the organizer, Rev. James Franz, 101 S. Plymouth, Rochester 14608.

CIM LECTURE

Elmira — Dr. Allen Berger, professor of religion at Syracuse University, will speak on the book, *Night*, by Jewish author Elie Wiesel at 8 p.m. on March 15 at the Park Church. The book describes the author's experiences in a concentration camp.

New Principal Chosen For Mercy High School

Sister Mary Bonaventure Hall will become principal of Our Lady of Mercy High School July 1, succeeding Sister Mary Bryan Ford. The latter has resigned, with a view to entering some other field of work.

Sister Bonaventure will be the fourth principal of the Blossom Road school and the first chosen through a new congregational process, instead of by the superior general.

She has been associated with the school since 1944, chiefly as a mathematics teacher, and has served on the congregation's five-member executive council since 1970. She also has been a member, and president for a year, of the Diocesan Sisters Council, a board member of St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell and Notre Dame High School in Elmira, a member of the Becket Hall advisory board and of various committees.

She joined the Sisters of Mercy in 1939. She holds a Ph.D. degree in secondary school administration from St. John's University, Brooklyn, a B.A. in Latin from Nazareth College and an M.S. in mathematics from Notre Dame.

Sister Mary Bryan entered the congregation after her graduation from Seton Hill College and has been a teacher or administrator at



SISTER M. BONAVENTURE

Mercy ever since. She has a master's degree in education psychology from Fordham and has studied also at the University of Rochester and in the Rutgers University School for Alcohol Studies. She taught history and social studies at Mercy and was chairman of the guidance department from 1955 until she became principal in 1967.

Both Sister Bonaventure and Sister Mary Bryan are Rochesterians and graduates of Mercy High School.

16th Warders Unite To Save Neighborhood

By MARTIN TOOMBS

Anyone who said that the city of Rochester couldn't afford to improve housing in the inner city would be promptly told by the 16th Ward Coalition that the city couldn't afford not to.

The city's cost caused by vacant housing was one point made at a conference on Housing and Neighborhood Abandonment sponsored by the 16th Ward Coalition Feb. 26 at 316 Bay St. More than 150 people attended, including city officials, state and local representatives, and representatives of many local community action groups. Neighborhood landmarks include Mt. Carmel and St. Francis Xavier churches.

The four year old Coalition is working to turn around the housing situation in its northeast section. It cites figures showing that 190 vacant structures, one-fifth of the city total, are in the 16th Ward. Demolition has left the city in possession of 160 of the 220 vacant lots in the ward. The Coalition estimates that the city spends \$200 to maintain each lot, \$100 to board up a house and \$1,500 to demolish a house. It estimates that \$264,800 is owed to the city in taxes on vacant housing, and \$154,000 in taxes lost through demolition and consequent city ownership of vacant land. The city also expended more than \$23,000 last year to fight fires in 16th Ward vacant structures.

Terry MacLennan of the Lewis St. Center said people in the area are "not willing to see any more houses that can be saved torn down" and that sections of the ward are a "desert" as a result of demolition. Once a house has been demolished, often it is impossible to build on the lot, as it doesn't meet current size requirements.

Those attending the conference tried to determine ways to stop further deterioration and to improve the present housing conditions in the ward. Recommendations included laws requiring a listing of two contacts on the tax rolls so the City Bureau of Buildings can find landlords more easily with fines for non-compliance and more inspections, stronger and faster action by the Bureau to correct housing code violations. Proposed community activities involved citizen patrols to stop vandalism, hiring people to live in vacant buildings, neighbor awareness of empty homes, and immediate reports of problems to the Bureau of Buildings.

Organizers are hopeful that the conference will provide a basis for concrete action to improve housing, by banding together interested individuals and groups in the area, and by convincing government officials that they need to work on the problem as well.



Bicentennial Plan

Pupils and teachers at St. Stephen's School in Geneva recently celebrated the bicentennial in a two hour program, presented in the church for parents and friends. Shown are fourth graders as they enact a play written by their teacher Mrs. Ciolli.

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