

N.S.W. HUMANIST SOCIETY

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT AND BALANCE SHEET PRESENTED AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
23rd JULY, 1964.

We are now nearly four years old and it is a good time to look around and take stock. I think we can say that we have had a successful year in which the Society has further established itself as a responsible and respected body. A year in which a fair amount has been accomplished and a year in which our membership has increased to 400. The increase has certainly slowed down; I suppose this is to be expected, as the reservoir of joiners from amongst those who are sympathetic to our view is depleted. I like to think that for every member we have at least 10 to 20 somewhat active sympathisers, but I may be too optimistic.

We have in this year had a great deal of co-operation from the Press and other mass media. We are being increasingly asked to put our view, and it is realised that we put this view firmly, but fairly and tolerantly.

On the debit side I think that the main springs of the early enthusiasm which has driven the Society forward are running down a little. I think we need new impetus but I think impetus in the same direction. The work and trend of the Society are right I think, but some of us are probably now a little stale and need replacing.

This most fortunately does not apply to our Secretary who has again been the basic force behind the Society, and without whose selfless efforts the Society would not function. I particularly want to place on record my thanks for the work she is doing and the help she receives from her husband.

I want to give my thanks to all the members of the Committee and the Sub-Committees. Some have worked harder than others and I think again that some of us should make way for the more active.

That the Humanist Society fulfills a tremendously important need in New South Wales is clearly realised. We have certainly established ourselves, and established ourselves as a force to be reckoned with, but there is a lot of consolidating to be done. We need more new blood and more new members, and again I think that active help from the Universities has been disappointingly low.

I would like to review the activities during the last twelve months briefly.

In August, 1963, the Society was still feeling the echoes of its action in July, when we withdrew from the Any Questions programme, and when we criticised the Australian Broadcasting Commission for having uninspiring and uncontroversial programmes. I think I can say that some of the criticism has had at least a little effect and that the Australian Broadcasting Commission within its limits has been 'trying'.

Our meeting in August, 1963, was Ken Buckley's "Police Methods and Civil Liberties" which sparked off a first class and most desirable controversy, and which helped to bring about the formation of the Council for Civil Liberties. If it had done nothing else, the Humanist Society's part in helping the Council for Civil Liberties to become established has made this last year worthwhile.

A well attended meeting in September, 1963, heard Mr. E. L. Wheelwright on "The Politics and Economics of Malaysia" and it was in this month also that the sterilization report by the Sex, Marriage and Divorce Sub-Committee was issued.

In October, 1963, we had a talk by Dr. Neville Yeomans on "Crime and Mental Illness" and saw the establishment of the University of Sydney Humanist Group under the Chairmanship of Professor Bennett.

In November, 1963, a group of four young Americans talked on "The United States in the Nuclear Age" - a very well attended and controversial meeting. This month also, had some newspaper controversy over Sir Marcus Oliphant's Canberra speech on "The Physicist's Concept of God" in which some members took part.

Our end-of-year-get-together was held on the 9th December, 1963. A most successful evening and some New Year Eve Parties for members were held in two homes kindly put at our disposal.

In February, 1964, we received news of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and the Society decided to support its aims. The public meeting in this month was by Professor Martin on "Sex Education and Freedom" which received a good deal of publicity.

Three young speakers in March, 1964, spoke on the problems of youth, and in this month also we publicised the availability of Counselling services to members and friends. These services, given by members of the Society expert in relevant fields, have continued through the year and have had considerable response.

The April, 1964, meeting was "A Critical Look at Modern Humanism" and the speakers were Mr. Alex Carey, Mr. Jack Taylor and Dr. J. H. Hirshman. The Committee felt, in response to members' suggestions, that two meetings each year should be devoted to basically Humanist themes, particularly discussions on the basis of our view points and their criticism. It is probably quite true that we do not devote enough time on each platform to a discussion on Humanism itself and tend to neglect the members whose reading and sophistication is not as advanced as we pretend ours to be.

The Secular Education Society which had been doing important work throughout the year, decided during this month to send copies of the United States Supreme Court Judgment in Federal Aid, to schools and all Parliamentarians, and the Humanist Society gave financial assistance.

We had an interesting meeting in May, 1964, when Professor Cross spoke on "Australian Culture", but one of the most important discussions in May centred around the suggestion that the Humanist Society should acquire its own small building and should launch an appeal towards that end. The Society had been renting a room in William Street near the City, but it became clear in May that we would have to vacate. We have indeed vacated and our need for accommodation is acute. I will say more about the building appeal at the end of my report.

In May, 1964, Dr. J. H. Hirshman participated in a Nations Forum of the Air on the question of should abortion be legalised. In this month also the Council for Civil Liberties had its first victory in the Courts when it helped an Aborigine to defend himself.

In June, 1964, there was a public meeting addressed by Dr. S. Encel of the Australian National University on "Politics and Education" - a very good and stimulating talk indeed.

Dr. Hirshman took part in a "Four Corners" television session on abortion. The Society failed to get a delegate elected to the Executive of the United Nations Association which we feel to be unfortunately an uninspired minority-controlled body. On the other hand the Society played an important part in the Annual Conference of the Worker's Educational Association to which we had become affiliated during the year.

An important development during the year was our Youth Group. I would like to pay a tribute to Mr. Beauchamp and his helpers, who in a room rented from the W.E.A., have arranged regular enjoyable functions for the children of members and friends. This is an important and stimulating educational activity which is sure to grow.

"Viewpoints", our monthly periodical, has continued regular and valuable appearance. My thanks to Dr. Woolnough and all others associated with its publication, but we do need more contributors.

Suburban groups also function well and have expanded over the last twelve months. In these groups members have more chance for discussion and social contact than during our public meetings.

Our sub-committees were again active. The sub-committee on Sex, Marriage and Divorce produced the sterilization report already referred to, and the contraception report in July, and is currently considering the "minor" problem of marriage. The contraception report has already led to a discussion over 2GB and was viewed extensively in a Channel 7 programme on contraception. A committee produced a further reading list - a most valuable contribution. The Civil Liberties sub-committee has lapsed since the foundation of the Council for Civil Liberties and is really no longer required. A sub-committee on Marriage and Funeral services has produced

the report you will have before you to-night, and the sub-committee on Radio and Television has a draft report before it.

We will have to think of further sub-committees and I would welcome suggestions.

In view of possible proposals that a study group of Aborigines' problems be formed, could I mention the formation of the "Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs" under the Chairmanship of Professor Geddes at the University of Sydney. I have become a member of its Executive Committee and consider this body to be worthy of your support. In my opinion this is a break through with a chance of doing something really constructive for the first time.

Let me now return to two things of vital importance:-

- (1) The question of membership. (2) The building appeal.

It has always puzzled me why more of our members cannot get more of their friends to join. I wonder why it should not be possible for all of us to get one or two members. We must all know people with similar views, and while some may be unwilling to join a body, some could surely be shown the necessity in our Society of a group such as ours, without which many of their rights would go by default.

I consider the success of the building appeal as very vital. A small building of our own would give the Society a permanent basis; so far only sixty-two members have already promised £1,850. If only the rest would come in, even with much smaller amounts, we could reach our goal, be independent, have good facilities and a small income. I ask you now to think seriously of the part you could play in helping this to succeed. We have now paid a deposit on a small near city house.

Many thanks to you all again.

CHAIRMAN J. H. HIRSHMAN.

N.S.W. HUMANIST SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30.6.64

<u>RECEIPTS</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Balance from previous year:-			
Bank	148. 4. 4	Hire of Halls	98. 0. 0
Cash on Hand	1. 3. 6	Literature, R.P.A.	42.17. 2
Donations & Collections	293.19. 2	Advertising	37. 7. 4
Literature	44.10. 2	Postages	11. 1. 8
Membership Fees	391. 7. 0	Printing, Typing & Duplicating	176. 7. 6
Bank Interest	8. 8. 7	Stationery	4. 0. 6
		Donations & Affiliations:-	
		Lord Russell Peace	
		Foundation	20. 2. 0
		Sec. Ed. Soc.	20. 0. 0
		W.E.A.	12. 6. 0
		U.N.A.A.	6. 6. 0
		I.H.E.U.	12.13. 0
		Office Rental	87.15. 0
		" Cleaning	1. 0. 0
		Telephone	4.11. 8
		Social Evening	42. 8. 8
		Petty Cash	24.17.11
		Audit Fees	3. 3. 0
		Dishonoured cheque	6. 0
		Literature (local)	5. 1. 3
		Balance on 30.6.64 - Bank:-	276. 4. 7
		Cash on Hand	1. 3. 6
	<u>£887.12. 9</u>		<u>£887.12. 9</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT.

I have examined the books and vouchers of the N.S.W. Humanist Society for the year ended 30.6.64 and in my opinion the above statement shows a correct summary of receipts and payments of the Society for that year.

21 July 1964.

Alexander SILLS, A.A.S.A.

Registered Public Accountant

Registered under Public Accountants' Registration Act, 1945, as amended.