

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE N.S.W. HUMANIST SOCIETY.

13th July, 1967.

The year has seen a further growth in our membership to 770 (210 new members and only 30 non-renewals), with increasing activity in a variety of groups within the society. It became apparent that our constitution needed modifying to incorporate rules for the conduct of Suburban Groups, Branches outside the Sydney area, and the Young Adult Group. A "Ways and Means" Subcommittee (Dr. R. Chalmers, Mrs. L. Keenan and Mr. P. Bason) has had about eight meetings to work on these amendments and arranged a very successful meeting of delegates from suburban groups with the Committee. Recently members of the Committee also met representatives from Wollongong and Newcastle Branches, and from a new group starting in the Blue Mountains area, in discussions that should be mutually beneficial. Although these meetings were primarily to discuss the new constitution and the structure of the society, they have been so successful that it is intended to arrange more such meetings in future.

Two more Suburban Groups have started this year: the new Western Suburbs group has had attendances of 20 to 36 at its first four meetings, and the new Eastern Suburbs group now has 23 members, having met twice for discussions, once for a debate, and once for a theatre party. The Lower North Shore group has had an average attendance of 20, mainly for discussions, but on five occasions guest speakers were invited, and two social functions were held. Ryde-Parramatta group has difficulties arising from a widely spread membership, but has had meetings throughout the year with an attendance of 6 to 18. The Ku-ring-gai group (formerly Turramurra-St. Ives) has had regular discussions, sometimes based on tapes, and an evening of Public Speaking; average attendance has been about 15. St. George group (formerly Strathfield-Hurstville) has had an average attendance of about twenty at its meetings for discussions, sometimes with guest speakers. Sutherland Shire group, with an average attendance of about 14, has had mainly discussion evenings, with some guest speakers, as well as two house parties and two theatre parties.

The very active Branch at Wollongong founded just over a year ago, has had well attended monthly meetings for discussion, and has also arranged four public meetings. Two of these were addressed by Mr. Ronald Strahan: on "The Problem of Origins", and on "The Human Animal". Mr. Maslyn Williams spoke on "Australia's Part in the Third World", and Dr. Kemp Fowler on "Citizens' Rights". The recently formed Newcastle Branch has already held two public meetings. A Blue Mountains group formed in May 1967 has held three meetings with 11 to 13 attending, as well as some visitors from the Young Adult Group.

The Young Adult Group, meeting usually at Humanist House at 194 Crown St., has had a busy programme, with mid-week discussion meetings, guest speakers on most Sunday evenings, as well as a variety of social activities.

They have also started, experimentally, a Sunday platform at the Domain (on the understanding that the N.S.W. Humanist Society is not directly involved). Attendances at meetings with guest speakers have been about 25 to 35 and for Discussion Evenings about 15.

Three Youth Groups, ages 8 to 12, 12 to 14, and 14 to 17 years, continue successfully under the guidance of members of the Education Subcommittee; so much so that with 120 members, a fourth group will soon have to be formed. Educational activities have included guest speakers, discussions and debates, films, and visits to places of interest such as the Observatory. Arts and Crafts activity has included painting, drama, folk singing, and photographic and sketching expeditions. Outings have included picnics, hikes, geological and architectural expeditions, and camps.

A Drama Group formed only last month has already 35 members and hopes to produce a play soon. Watch "Viewpoints" for further news!

Humanist House is being used very frequently by such groups, by the General Committee and by sub-committees and for delegates meetings. If anything, we could use more space, but it is certain that without it the activities of the society could not have expanded as they have.

Public Meetings have continued to attract audiences of up to 200 or more. Two of our speakers were overseas visitors: Dr. C. J. Knop, of the Dutch Humanist League spoke on Humanism in Holland at our November meeting, while in May Prof. Sergei Kapitza, Professor of Atomic Physics at Moscow University spoke about the organisation of education and science in Russia. Aspects of international relations were discussed by two speakers: Mr. Max Teichman, in August, on "Australia, Armed and Neutral?"; and Dr. Kemp Fowler, in February, on "The Pugwash Movement". The other five meetings dealt with topical problems in Australia; Prof. D. Maddison, at the September meeting, "A Psychiatrist looks at criminal behaviour". In October Mr. G. W. Ford: "Poverty in Affluence". In

March, Mr. Craig McGregor, "Political Man, Pop Man, and Just Plain Man". In April, Dr. S. Sax: "Modern Society and the Aged". And in June, Dr. K. Rivett and Mr. I. McDougall: "A Case for Non-White Immigration".

Sub-Committees that have continued to meet throughout the year include those of Sex, Marriage and Divorce, on Ethics, on Sex Education, and the Education sub-committee that is responsible for the three Youth Groups. The Ways and Means sub-committee has already been mentioned. A sub-committee met to consider a submission to the Attorney General on proposed amendments to the laws on obscenity and on uniform censorship. An Adoption Sub-committee drafted a submission to the Minister for Child Welfare regarding the new Adoption of Children Act. As a result of our submissions, an amendment was made to the original draft Form of Consent. One result of the amendment has been that the natural parent of the child need no longer express a wish as to the religious upbringing of her child. (Refer to March "Viewpoints" for details). We are greatly indebted to Mr. Colin Marks for his work on these submissions.

Sponsoring of Migrants: Members of the Committee recently conferred with a representative of the Immigration Department, as a result of which the Society has offered to act as Sponsor for a number of migrants from Britain.

The Council of Australian Humanist Societies held its second Annual Convention in Melbourne at Easter. As well as our delegates, a number of our members were able to attend as guests, and all enjoyed the opportunity to meet Humanists from other States. The current Executive of the Council is in South Australia, and Mr. Bruce Muirden of Adelaide continues to edit the magazine, "The Australian Humanist", the second number of which has just appeared.

To be able to publish this magazine an assured number of subscribers is needed, and it is intended that it be published quarterly. Accordingly, the Committee suggests that annual subscriptions be raised by one dollar, which will approximately cover the cost price of four issues of the magazine. It will also be noticed that the proposed new constitution (Addendum 1) provides that one third of the membership fees collected from members of a Branch outside the Sydney metropolitan area will be refunded to that branch.

"Viewpoints" continues to appear monthly. During the year Mr. G. Roe took over as Editor from Dr. J. Woolnough. In addition, they have acted in turn as Assistant Editor for N.S.W. for "The Australian Humanist".

Humanism in the News. During the year I was interviewed as Chairman on two television and one radio programme on the subject of abortion law reform; and at Easter the Daily Mirror published two double page features - a discussion between Rev. Broughton Knox, Principal of Moore Theological College and myself on the meaning of Easter.

In September Mr. Alex Carey made a series of ABC broadcasts in a dialogue with Rev. N. Webb on Humanism and Christianity. The ABC also rebroadcast the BBC programme - Inquiry into Humanism; and some English Young Humanists acquitted themselves well in one of the Malcolm Muggeridge series on television.

A word of thanks is due to all those, too many to name, who in one way or another have contributed to the work of the society during the year. Once again our Secretary, Mrs. Weeks, deserves special mention for her untiring work. I should also mention Mr. W. Weeks for his practical help in a great many matters; and Mrs. V. England, our Treasurer. Also Mr. Harper, who has accepted the position of Auditor, and Mr. W. Meldrum, who produces the posters for our public meetings. All the members of the Committee deserve thanks for many hours of committee work, as well as a number of other tasks taken on by individuals; in particular, Mr. Peter Bason who has been largely responsible for arranging speakers for our public meetings, and our Vice-chairman Mr. Taylor who, because of pressure of work, is resigning from the Committee after a number of years of valuable service. He will, however, be continuing as one of our principal speakers.

Finally, in offering my own resignation as Chairman, may I offer my personal thanks to everybody for their support, assistance, and friendship.

DR. I. S. EDWARDS (Chairman)

Inquiries re N.S.W. Humanist Society to:-

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NEW SOUTH WALES HUMANIST SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 1967

<u>RECEIPTS</u>		<u>PAYMENTS</u>	
	\$		\$
Subscriptions		Printing and Stationery	609
Donations:		Capitation fees - Council of	
Sundry	546	Australian Humanist Societies	386
Bihar project	<u>7</u>	Purchase of Equipment:	
Sale of literature		Duplicator	200
Rent received	260	Lino etc.	104
Bank interest received	164	Vacuum cleaner	<u>29</u>
Phone box collections		Donation - Bihar project	333
	27	Rent of halls and cost of suppers	266
	<u>10</u>	Loan to Council	266
TOTAL RECEIPTS	3,023	Donations and affiliation fees	200
Funds on hand, 30 June 1966	772	Telephone	142
		Building fund	132
		Repayment of Loan	120
		Literature	100
		Advertising	88
		Petty cash disbursements	75
		Typing	65
		Youth Group	63
		Rates	57
		Postages	56
		Electricity and gas	43
		Insurance	31
		Cartage of refrigerator	29
		Refund of subscription	16
			<u>2</u>
		TOTAL PAYMENTS	3,079
		Funds on hand 30 June, 1967	<u>716</u>
			<u>\$3,795</u>
	<u>\$3,795</u>		

HONORARY AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the records of the New South Wales Humanist Society for the year ended 30 June, 1967, and report that in my opinion the above statement shows a true and fair summary of cash receipts and payments of the Society for that year.

L. G. HARPER
Public Accountant
Registered under the Public Accountant's
Registration Act 1945 as amended.