

August 1971

Letter from New Zealand

H. P. Dunn

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

Recommended Citation

Dunn, H. P. (1971) "Letter from New Zealand," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 38 : No. 3 , Article 7.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol38/iss3/7>

Letter from New Zealand

Financially it has been a bad year, with falling export earnings and internal inflation. Our pastoral economy is very vulnerable, but manufacturing is expanding and we are making remarkable sales such as carpets in Paris, electrical parts in Indonesia, automobile parts in U.S.A., and even aircraft in Australia. This beautiful country will soon be smiling again.

The birth rate fell steadily from a peak of 26.4 per 1,000 in 1960 to 22.1, following worldwide trends, but in an underpopulated country the implications are serious. The Pill is taken by about 25% of all childbearing women, a world record which we share with Australia. We excel other Western countries in illegitimate births which now number 13% of all births. This is an interesting manifestation of a sex-obsessed, but outwardly puritanical, community. Still, it's an ill wind — without the unmarried girls obstetrics would be a dying specialty.

I have recently led a committee which extracted improved maternity fees from the Department of Health. For an average general practitioner case, with 13 antenatal visits, normal delivery and postnatal check the fee has risen from (expressed in US dollars) \$62 to \$77. Specialists receive the same fee, and charge the patient approximately another \$75.

With the threat of legalised abortion spreading in a wave of hysteria round the world from Britain to New York, and even to South Australia, we have taken defensive action and started the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. President is Prof. A.W. Liley who introduced intrauterine transfusion for Rh affected babies. A Jewish mayor and I are Vice-Presidents. A broad spectrum of religious and civic leaders are on the committee. Our success has been phenomenal; within one year we have gained 15,000 members (out of a total population of 2½ million). Everywhere there is great enthusiasm. At a meeting to found a branch in Dunedin (pop. 110,000) there was an attendance of 2,000.

For our first Annual General Meeting in July we feel sufficiently confident to bring out as a guest speaker Mrs. Jill Knight of the House of Commons, London. She will be an invaluable ally. The opposition Abortion Law Reform Association has started, with 200 members, but we hope to give the politicians such a fright that they will not dream of introducing liberalised legislation. Prof. Liley and I have been invited to speak at a meeting to launch a similar society in Melbourne in June.

Catholic physicians must fight unceasingly to protect the unborn child who is the modern martyr. This may mean for us professional, social and financial martyrdom too, but we will not have to suffer any more than the children do, or than Christ did before them. At least life will not be dull.

H.P. Dunn
1222 Remuera Rd.
Auckland, N.Z.
May 5, 1971