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Cuttings from English Newspapers

Change Urged in Sex Laws

(Roman Catholic Proposal)

A report of a Roman Catholic committee commissioned by the late Cardinal Griffin to make recommendations to the Home Office departmental committee now examining the law on homosexual offences and prostitution proposes an amendment of the criminal law.

Consensual acts done in private by adult males should be excluded, says the committee. But it recommends the retention «to the full extent» of penal sanctions to restrain offences against minors, offences against public decency, and exploitation of vice for the purpose of gain.

The report adds: «The existing law does not effectively distinguish between sin, which is a matter of private morals, and crime, which is an offence against the State, having anti-social consequences.

«In matters of sex this distinction may not always be easy to draw, but it is certainly ignored by Section II of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, which, for the first time, imposed penal sanctions in respect of acts of gross indecency done by adult consenting males in private.»

«Under the existing law criminal proceedings against adult male persons in respect of consensual homosexual acts in private inevitably fall upon a small minority of offenders and often upon those least deserving of punishment.» The committee reaches these conclusions:

1. imprisonment is largely ineffectual to reorientate persons with homosexual tendencies and usually has a deleterious effect on them; and
2. a satisfactory solution of the problem is not likely to be found in places of confinement exclusively reserved for homosexuals.

No positive recommendation is, therefore made as to the method of detention.

The committee, whose report is unanimous, accepts the use, under medical supervision, of drugs to suppress sexual desire and activity, with the consent of the patient. It holds that such treatment is permissible where serious pathological conditions obtain and when other remedies have failed.

(From: Daily Telegraph, London.)

List Appals A Judge

«I am appalled,» said Mr. Justice Oliver, referring to the list of prisoners and charges at Suffolk Assizes at Bury St. Edmunds.

«I have never seen anything like it—it is absolutely appalling,» the Judge added.

Out of 26 prisoners for trial, 24 were accused of offences concerning males or offences against young girls.

The Judge bound over two men who were convicted of offences involving other men. He said there was so much of that kind of conduct that he did not believe that imprisonment was a cure for it. If men behaved in that way and were of full age, he saw no use in sending them to prison.

«There should be an island,» the Judge told the men in the dock, «to which you would be deported and you would live after your own fashion. There would be no women on that island. »

Prostitution

It comes as a shock to decent, stay-at-home British people to be told that London is recognised by many travellers as the worst city in the world for open display of sexual vice. The haunts of the prostitute in Mayfair, Soho and Hyde Park are as obvious to the most incurious visitor as they are notorious to the Londoner. To these familiar marts, and to more squalid established highways of the trade, have lately been added, as a poignant report from Stepney recently revealed, fresh areas of organised commerce.

To say that something must be done is easy. To be certain what it is best to do is much more difficult. Parliamentary and public opinion has been hungrily waiting for the informed guidance of the Wolfenden Committee on Homosexuality and Prostitution. It finished taking evidence last year, and its report was confidently expected nearly six months ago. If, as is rumoured, the delay is due to unresolved differences among its members, they should make the supreme effort to reach agreement, and if they fail should present their rival conclusions for public judgment without more waste of time. *From: Sunday Times, London.)*

Night Encounter

Dark was the night, and, full with liquor
I strayed along the streets;
You were my contact, strange savage being.
I was drawn with longings fulfilment unfilled.
You were wanton, desire your aim,
Love and its passions your only hope.
Cruel your embrace and hard your grasp:
I remember you yet, and still I desire
The illicit love and shadowed passion
So freely you gave in covering shade.
Your desire for experience, and satisfied surrender
Still haunt me, and passion rebellious, still craves you.
Ever I desire the feel of your lips, those avid lips,
Which seeking, resisted, but ever impelled
To further excess.

SCRIVENOR.