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The Earl of Malmesbury feared a great increase in blackmail; the Archbishop of Canterbury could not support the clause; the Lord Chancellor found it «most highly disputable upon its merits.»

Discussing in the Lords recently the laws still applying to men, the present Lord Chancellor declared the Government's unwillingness to take the «serious step» of reversing «provisions of the criminal law which have stood for a long time.» The Englishman's wellknown aversion from even appearing to condone sins that only tempt others cannot, it seems, be overcome by the knowledge that virtually all European nations have long since found reasons of justice and common sense for abolishing their own antique laws against adult homosexual behaviour.

Wolfenden Report

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir, — Sir Henry Slessor asserts in his letter on December 16 that «homosexuality is contrary to the natural law,» but the examples he furnishes merely show that it has long been contrary to the law. It is a questionable contention whether homosexual behaviour, which, according to Kinsey, occurs at some time in the lives of about one-third of the male population, can be regarded as contrary to nature. All that can be said is that it has no biological value, as it does not lead to procreation.

But is the moral obliquity of «normal sexual depravities» — presumably «normal» because procreation may result — so much less, as Sir Henry Slessor seems to imply? Acts which may cause the birth of illegitimate unwanted children, who may even be infected by venereal disease, are surely the cause of greater social evil, than two adult homosexuals cohabiting in private? Yet while the former acts are not regarded as criminal offences, the latter are the subject of what Mannheim has referred to as «Draconian penalties.» It is true most courts now act humanely, yet shockingly severe sentences are inflicted at times.

A great deal of misunderstanding on this subject arises, I am sure, through the public confusing the stable, otherwise perfectly respectable homosexual with the licentious psychopath, in whom the homosexuality is only one facet of a disordered personality. The real «objection» and tragedy of homosexuality lies in the inability to have a proper home, the companionship of marriage and children, which the sufferers feel keenly.

That punishment is no way of dealing with the problem was forcefully brought out in the recent debate in the Lords by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who contended that if the law was changed homosexual activities might diminish. Though impossible to put to the test, I have the impression that if public conduct were no longer an offence this too would diminish, as the danger is an added stimulus.

In the same debate the Lord Chancellor, speaking of prostitution, said allowances must be made for human nature, and that imprisonment would not solve the problem. In homosexuality it presumably can! Finally I submit this is not a question of seeking changes in the law on account of this being an «enlightened» age, but in the hopes that it might be regarded as a rational one.

Both from: The Times, London.

Foolishness and loneliness are never far apart, but one of the stupidest things a man can do is «to have fun» because he is lonely.

C. H. Lejeune.

„der neue ring“

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