

MINUTES OF THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE IRISH CENTRE

HELD ON 2ND APRIL, 1974

The President of the Council for The Irish Centre, the Rt. Hon. Lord Longford K.G., presided at the meeting, and it was opened by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. John Nee, reading the Notice convening the meeting.

P.J. Keegan proposed the Minutes, having been circulated, taken as read and adopted. This was seconded by Fr. McNamara.

The Chairman, Mr. Martin Moroney, rose and welcomed everyone, particularly the President, Lord Longford, for his presence with us once again, and Mr. Laurie Arnold, a distinguished Vice-President, particularly as this had been an eventful year in the history of the Centre. Many things had happened in recent months, but particularly in 1974. However, this meeting covered 1973, and Fr. Mee would deal with this later in his report.

Mr. Moroney went on to say that during the year Mr. Charles Gallagher had to resign from his office of Chairman of the Administrative Committee and that, as Vice-Chairman, Mr. Moroney had been acting as Chairman for the remainder of the term. He wished to thank the other members of the Administrative Committee for guiding and helping him throughout the year. He hoped they had done the right things - he thought they had as the Centre itself seemed to be doing well. He tendered his thanks to all the delegates, and for the tremendous support we received from everyone - which was, in fact, increasing - and now we were not able to accommodate everyone who wished to use the Centre, which seemed to assure its' future in the years to come. We looked forward, therefore, to an even more successful 1974.

The President then called on Fr. Mee to give the Annual Report.

Fr. Mee then gave his Report and explained that as two very important events had culminated at the beginning of 1974 he had briefly added these to his Report because they had a bearing on the whole of the 1973 year. These were the purchase and opening of Hope House as our new young mens' hostel, which would mean reorganising ourselves in many ways, as Hope House would run itself. The second event was that we received notice from British Railways that our option would cease in 31.12.74. We, therefore, approached the Allied Irish Banks for a loan and they granted us the money. Thus we have finally purchased the adjoining property also.

Fr. Mee concluded in thanking everyone for their efforts in this fine accomplishment.

Lord Longford rose and congratulated Fr. Mee on the news contained in what he termed a splendid report, and the way it had been given.

Clr. P. O'Connor, Vice-President, commented that the Mortgage granted by Camden Borough for the purchase of Hope House should be reduced to an interest free loan, and we should go to the Borough and ask for this.

It was agreed that Fr. Mee would put this proposal before the Administrative Committee at the first meeting.

The President asked for the adoption of the Report and this was proposed by Mr. T. Dunne and seconded by Mr. Michael Casey. The Accounts were proposed by Mr. John Liddy and seconded by Mr. Sean Donlon.

During the ballot for elections Rev. Fr. P. Cassidy addressed the meeting saying that as a member of the Administrative Committee he wanted to explain that the Committee met once a month and discussed matters arranged by Fr. Mee and the other Chaplains of the Centre. It was well known that the Chaplains gave a total dedication of work and co-responsibility at the Centre and he had discussed it with Cardinal Conway recently at the opening of Hope House that here at the Centre the combination of their work, together with that of the lay people involved, was a perfect example of the Church at work. Fr. Cassidy continued that he would like to put on record an appreciation of this. The problems involved covered a 24-hour day, and to the Chaplains, the Bar Manager & Manageress, the voluntary workers and staff and all the people involved were to be congratulated on their achievements. In the past two years since Fr. Mee's arrival at the Centre, there had been a vast development and it was due to his dogged determination that Hope House had been acquired and also the property next door. We now wondered what was going to happen in the future, but we know we can leave this to Fr. Mee to continue.

The President, Lord Longford, thanked Fr. Cassidy and said that he attended the impressive gathering for the opening of Hope House during the previous week, and everyone had to be congratulated on this fine achievement. He spoke of the troubled North of Ireland situation and expressed the optimistic hope that we would see a united Ireland before too long. He concluded in hoping the Centre would go from strength to strength.

APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

The President proceeded to announce the following appointments:

- (a) Cardinal Heenan had appointed Father Patrick Mee OMI as Chaplain for the coming year, and Rev. Fr. P. Cassidy as Westminster Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.
- (b) Archbishop Cowderoy had appointed Father Ambrose Woods to continue as Southwark Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.
- (c) Bishop Patrick Casey had appointed Father John Gordan as Brentwood Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.

Under Rule 6 (ii) of the Constitution the following were appointed to serve on the Administrative Committee:

Mr. M. Moroney
Mr. J. Nee
Mr. T. Dunne
Mr. K. Keenan

Mr. K. Keenan is filling the vacancy caused by Mr. Gallagher's resignation.

Under Rule 6 (i) of the Constitution five outgoing officers of the Administrative Committee were re-elected as follows:

Mr. M. Brunton
Mr. T. Gorman
Mr. L. Kennedy
Miss M. Kenny
Mrs. M. Hopkins

A further three new members were elected due to the resignations of Clr. B. Duggan, Mr. W. Darmon and Mr. J. Bradley, namely:

Mr. P.J. Keegan
Mr. John McCann
Mr. John Brooks

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Messrs. C.F. Burton & Company were appointed Auditors for the coming year and Mr. P.J. Keegan was appointed Honorary Auditor.

Proposed by: T. Dunne
Seconded by: J. Nee

The Chairman then concluded the meeting in thanking Lord Longford for attending and presiding over the meeting which was always an education to everyone.

The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.