

Catholic Marriage Advisory Council for Hong Kong

IT has been decided to set up a Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in Hong Kong, beginning in April with a medical advice service.

What follows is the first half of a statement issued by the organizers of the Council.

The family forms the basis of society. If we wish to cure our social ills and to aim at the restoration of society we shall do so only by fostering a healthy family life. Families in Hong Kong in these days are under considerable stress. The lack of space, the housing problem, the immense poverty of so many, contribute greatly to all this. The Chinese family, and in particular the Catholic family, is in need of help if it is to preserve its sound principles of family life. Prominent lay people have expressed their belief that education for marriage, especially amongst Catholics is needed now in Hong Kong more than ever. If we are able to begin to found an organization similar to the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in England, then a service to the community will be available which hitherto did not exist here, especially in the field of education. Engaged and young married couples will be able to avail themselves of this service, provided it is well run by competent officials. Furthermore with re-

gard to forming public opinion and to doing research in this field, an organization such as this, run by lay experts, would be of endless value.

Medical Advisory Service

There are no experts in this field in Hong Kong. In England, the C.M.A.C. has been extremely successful. It is well known to and approved by the government. It is a lay organization, and it is run on a professional level, although it is a voluntary organization. This C.M.A.C. has a three-fold function: education for marriage, a medical advisory service, and marriage counselling. We, in fact, are going to begin here with our medical advisory service. The plan is to begin with one or two clinics on either side of the harbour, and to have them staffed by really qualified persons. With this object in view, a specialist in this field has been invited to come to Hong Kong for a period of five weeks beginning April 24

— Dr. W. M. Moore from the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Postgraduate Medical School of London. Dr. Moore has had unique ex-

perience in this field. He spent six months in Mauritius at the invitation of the local government, setting up rhythm clinics. During the past year he has been engaged in research work in the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, U.S.A. He is very anxious to do some clinical tuition here in Hong Kong, and it is hoped that he may have the opportunity of doing some during his short stay of five weeks. More details about the proposed clinics in Hong Kong and Kowloon will be given next week in these columns.

The plan to start an organization similar to the English C.M.A.C. does not end with a medical advisory service. Indeed the main utility of such an organization lies in the field of marriage education.

Marriage Education and Marriage Counselling

It is hoped that through this organization we may be able to have a small team of devoted educators in marriage preparation and also in the field of marriage counselling. This latter is a very difficult and delicate task, and we realise fully that to have fully qualified marriage counselling we should need to have personnel with proper qualifications. As for marriage education, there seems to be an immense desire for it on the part of the young.

The plan to start a marriage guidance organization and a marriage education organization in Hong Kong has been discussed for many years. But in the past six months a small group of peo-

ple have come together and decided to take some practical steps. It is hoped that these first steps will lead to further development, and, in order that this venture may succeed, we need both goodwill on the part of the general public and help from those sources that are capable of giving valued assistance.

If we may judge from the reaction of these people, whether in government service or on professional levels, this plan certainly has the good-will of the great majority of the citizens here in Hong Kong.

It depends to a great extent upon the first members and those they serve whether the plan will readily reach those it desires to reach.