

Health Board to censure Desmond on contraception?

THE Midland Health Board looks set to oppose proposals from Health Minister, Barry Desmond, T.D., to liberalise laws governing the availability of contraceptives. The Board will meet in special session in Tullamore next week to discuss the Minister's controversial proposals regarding new legislation which would make contraceptives freely available to people over age 18.

However one member of the Health Board in a statement made at a board meeting shortly before Christmas inferred that

the Minister has been influenced by and was supporting a minority group which is endeavouring to encourage sexual promiscuity and the legalisation of abortion.

Mr. C. J. McCormack who is a consultant surgeon to the Portlaoise General Hospital, suggested that Mr. Desmond was connected with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which according to Mr. McCormack "has amongst its stated objectives abortion on demand for all."

"The I.F.P.A. is affiliated to the Planned Parenthood Federation and the Minister is said to be a member of the I.F.P.A. and has not denied it," he said.

In a blistering attack on the Irish Family Planning Association, Mr. McCormack accused that body of having "a vested interest in the promotion of sexual promiscuity."

He went on to state incorrectly that the I.F.P.A. "did not give advice on natural methods of family planning nor on the moral aspect of sex." A spokesperson for I.F.P.A. confirmed to the "Westmeath-Offaly Independent" on Monday that they do in fact hold regular counselling sessions on natural methods of contraception.

"We have a clinic on natural methods at both our centres in Cathal Bruagha Street and Synge Street in Dublin by appointment and we certainly do not promote abortion nor do we provide such a service," the spokesperson said.

Mr. McCormack also described the I.F.P.A. establishments as "walk-in outlets which are potential health hazards," unlike "the family doctors of Ireland" who already provide family planning advice and services and who take responsibility for any ill effects."

Introducing a religious and moral dimension to the issue.

Mr. McCormack said that morality or religion and health matters have always been closely related.

"Nature or the Deity has reacted to the depredation of man, i.e., the dust bowls of the U.S. and the plagues of Egypt," he said.

"I am sure that the majority of the Irish people - of all denominations - do not want this and I feel that this Board should display its opposition at least in the interests of health - if not morality," he concluded, having argued that free availability of contraceptives led to an increase in venereal diseases, abortion, pregnancies out of wedlock, promiscuity and homosexuality.

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Mr. McCormack said that the
city of Dublin and Health Board
have always been closely
related.

"Nature of the Board is
related to the character of the
area, i.e. the fact that the
Board is not a body of 12 people."

"I am sure that the majority
of the people - of all demon-
strations - do not want this and I
feel that the Board should dis-
play an opposition at least in the
interest of health - if not more
and, he concluded, saying
that the free availability of
contraceptives is an important
in general health, abortion,
pregnancy and so on."

Mr. C.J. McCormack, who is
committee member in the
Provisional Council Hospital,
suggested that Mr. Desmond
was connected with the Irish
Federation, which is a body of
Mr. McCormack, "has enough
to state objective opinion on
desires for all."

"The I.F.A. is affiliated to
the Planned Parenthood Fed-
eration and the Minister is said
to be a member of the I.F.A.
and has not denied it," he said.

In a discussion on the
Irish Family Planning Assoc-
iation, Mr. McCormack stated
that both of them "are
interested in the promotion of sex
and procreation."

He went on to state incidentally
that the I.F.A. "did not give
advise on natural methods of
family planning nor on the moral
aspect of sex." A spokesman
for the I.F.A. confirmed to the
Wednesday-Only leader,
president, on Monday that they
do in fact hold regular coun-
selling sessions on natural
methods of contraception.

"We have a clinic on natural
methods at both our centres in
Cathal Brugha Street and
St. James Street in Dublin by
appointment and we certainly do
not promote abortion nor do we
provide such a service," the
spokesman said.

Mr. McCormack also
denied the I.F.A. was
connected with the Health
Board, which are potential health
partners, while the family
doctors of Ireland, who
already provide family planning
advice and services and who are
responsible for the majority of
abortion, "including a reference
which is known to the Board."

The Dublin Health Board took
proposals from Health Minister, Harry Boland,
to liberalise laws governing the availability of
contraceptives. The Board will meet in special session
in February next week to discuss the Minister's con-
tractual proposals regarding new legislation which
would make a certain contraceptive freely available to people
over age 18.

The Minister has been influenced
by and was supported strongly
by a group which is understood to
encourage sexual promiscuity
and the liberalisation of abortion.

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