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# No need for local guilt

IN concept the idea of a Whitehough Camp School holiday for 40 Belfast children was admirable.

The intent was good. The result has certainly not been a happy one. But there is no cause for local recriminations.

There is no blame attached to those who conceived and planned the holiday and conscientiously strove to make it work out.

There is no criticism of the Whitehough school, where the headmaster, Mr Ken Oldham, and his staff have consistently shown in the past that they fully know what they are about in normal circumstances.

On the contrary, all concerned with trying to lift these Belfast youngsters, aged 11 to 13, even momentarily out of the hatred and disorder and danger of the Irish dilemma, are to be congratulated.

The intent, as we say, was to do good.

It failed — or at any rate, it did not succeed — because the children themselves, arriving in this country entirely unchaperoned, had come from an environment sadly steeped in lawlessness and violence and were, to say the least, quite a bit more than a handful by normal standards.

Attempts to either exaggerate or minimise "the troubles" at Whitehough this week are both unworthy of the situation.

The truth is that some — not all! — of these Irish lads, half Protestant, half Roman Catholic, have proved unruly and difficult to control.

The truth is that two of them returned home at their own or their parents' request, after only a few days.

The truth is that the rest of the party is returning to Ireland earlier than had been scheduled.

The truth is that many of the lads have been homesick — yes, even for bomb-blasted Belfast! — and want to return.

At the same time, it ought not to be thought that there has been any out-and-out "war" at Whitehough. Indiscipline, yes. Some trouble, yes. A potentially flashpoint situation, yes. But widescale vandalism and juvenile chaos? No, it has not been as bad as all that.

These youngsters, in fact, have found part of their holiday enjoyable — notably a day out at Blackpool.

The saddest factor has been that, conditioned by bad adult example in their deeply troubled home city, they have been unable to settle down to enjoy the rural and normally happy atmosphere of Whitehough.

That is not Whitehough's fault, Nor Rotary's.

It may even be that, on reflection, these youngsters will look back with some appreciation of what we tried to do for them.

Whether they do or not, at least we tried. And there is no need for any local guilt complex about that.

# COUNCIL NOW DEFY LAW?

A 1,600-NOME petition protesting against the Government's "fair rents" Bill, due to come into force in October and meaning an initial £1 rent increase to council house tenants, was handed over to the Mayor of Nelson, Coun. Bob Standage, on Wednesday evening.

The petition, signed by Nelson council house tenants and members of the newly formed Tenants' Association, called upon the council not to implement the bill. It was handed over by former Socialist Town councillor Mr Frank Clifford, who described the bill as "an anti-working class piece of legislation," and was immediately supported by a letter from shop stewards at Rolls-Royce, Barnoldswick, making the same demand.

After being told by the mayor that the council had not yet come to any decision, over 50 of the petitioners crowded into the council chambers.

Their interest was in one resolution passed at a prior meeting of the Housing Committee regarding requests from Halstead UDC, Essex, and the London Borough of Camden, asking for support in defeating the Government proposals following their decisions not to implement the system of fair rents and rents rebates.

In reply, Nelson Housing Committee said the council is "prepared to lend support to their efforts."

The tenants wanted this spelling out. Did it mean that Nelson would not implement the Bill?

They will, however, have to wait longer to know this. Already two members of the association have had talks with a Labour group of councillors on Monday evening, and next Wednesday a further four will discuss "fair rents" with members of the Housing Committee.

Only after that, pledged the housing chairman, Coun. Ted Myers, will a recommendation be referred to the full council for a decision.

Two facts, however, are clear now. The proposed Bill is abhorred by the town's councillors, but some are reluctant to defy it should it become law.

Ald. Stephen Shaw accused the Government of "holding a pistol to the heads of local authorities"; the control of housing would be taken away from local authorities; revenue from local government houses would be put into the pockets of house-owners in the private sector; and its implementation would undoubtedly cause hard-



Council house tenants crowded the corridors of Nelson Town Hall on Wednesday evening to see a petition protesting against the Government's "fair rents" bill handed over to the Mayor, Coun. Bob Standage. Our picture shows Mr Frank Clifford, of Hazelwood Road, Nelson, making the presentation. Photo: Anthony Braithwaite.

working within the government of this country and we must pay due attention to the laws put on the statute book."

Coun. P. Barnes, in asking exactly what form the support to Camden Borough and Halstead UDC would take, stated that the fact that council house tenants had formed themselves into an association suggested they were not satisfied with the efforts of the Housing Committee in regard to the Bill.

There was only one answer a Socialist council could give, said Coun. Jack Spencer, and that would be to support the Halstead and Camden councils, and even with the threat of fines or prison, say "No" to the Bill.

"I think we all know what the answers are now," he added.

A call for council houses to be offered for sale were put forward by Coun. Bernard Rothwell, to which Coun. Ted Myers, head of the housing committee, replied: "This Bill is designed to compel us to sell council houses."

Coun. Myers refuted Coun. Rothwell's opinion that the Bill would bring the price of some council house rents down.

Coun. Myers said no decision could be made straight away, but added: "We will have to make one. It is either in or out."

He told the tenants' association he welcomed them — such an association was long overdue in

## Honeymoon in the Lakes



WEARING a white Victorian dress of Swiss cotton and carrying a white prayer book with pink roses and white bridal flowers, Miss Sandra Moore married Mr James Tetley on Saturday.

The bridegroom, a draughtsman, is the son of Mr and Mrs H. Tetley, of Ross Lea, Juddon Fold, Roughlee.

The bride, a teacher, is the daughter of Mr and Mrs R. Moore, of St Cuthbert Street, Burnley.

Both brides were dressed with white crepe bodices and skirts in African violet and carried white prayer books with pink carnations and white bridal flowers. The junior bridesmaid wore a white crepe dress trimmed in African violet and carried a flower ball of pink roses and white bridal flowers.

The best man was the bridegroom's brother, Mr Michael Tetley, and second brother, Mr Roy Tetley, was a bridesmaid together with Mr Alan

Discharged  
 The Barrowford father Also admitted to the Council was Mr Sarratt's