

Further delays for an abortion

ABORTIONS are not emergencies, claims Mr Donald Menzies, consultant and Chairman of Liverpool Women's Hospital Medical Board, in a ruling over the junior doctors' dispute.

The result is that women seeking abortions there have to wait four weeks for an appointment to see a consultant, and to learn whether or not they can have a Health Service abortion.

The delay means that in some cases abortions are becoming a much more complicated and dangerous operation than they need be.

Before the sixteenth week of pregnancy a vacuum abortion can be performed safely and easily in one day at a cost of around £29 to the Health Service if specialised facilities are available.

If delayed to between 16 and 20 weeks, induced labour becomes necessary. This means a stay in hospital of nearly four days on average and a cost to the Health Service of £105 in 'hotel' facilities.

87% of women who want abortions seek advice in the eighth week of pregnancy. Stalling by GPs and consultants can mean a wait of two to three weeks for confirmation of pregnancy.

Mr Menzies' ruling adds another four weeks, bringing many women close to the stage where a simple operation is no longer possible.

National Health abortions are difficult to get anyway. Walton and Fazakerley did one in the first quarter of this year, compared with 204 at the Women's Hospital.

Nevertheless 69% of Liverpool women are forced to seek private treatment, mainly because other women from outside the city take up hospital places in Liverpool.

Welfare Rights Course starts

A 10-week Welfare Rights course starts on September 13. Aimed at those doing advice or advocacy work, or who simply want to know their rights, it's at Millbank College, West Derby, on Monday nights at 7pm.

Supplementary benefits, FIS, rent and rate rebates, and tenants' rights will be among topics covered.

More details from Gerry Cordon at Millbank. Tel. 220 4661.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

Mr. Gregg's act behind the scenes at the Floral Hall

ON JULY 20 Sefton Council's Director of Publicity and Attractions, Paul Gregg, "resigned" from his £7,500-a-year job.

A joint statement by Gregg and the Council's Chief Executive Officer, John McElroy, gave as the reason Mr Gregg's private business interests in the entertainments industry. They stressed that these interests were outside Southport and Sefton.

Since then, Sefton Council have gone to some lengths to hush the matter up. One councillor is even considering legal action against the authority because he has not been allowed to see the full reports of the case.

These reports, marked "Most Confidential", reveal that:

● By not declaring his business connection with The Spinners folk group, Gregg probably committed

a criminal offence.

● Unknown to the council, a company run by Gregg and his wife was promoting concerts by artists he also booked as Director of Publicity and Attractions for the council-run Southport Theatre.

● These private and council concert dates were often so close together that "arrangements could well have been dealt with at the same time".

● On at least one occasion Gregg's company paid less than the council for the same act.

● A car, bought by Gregg with a council loan, appeared in the company books as company property.

On July 19, Sefton's Personnel sub-committee decided to sack their Director of Publicity and Attractions for "gross misconduct". The police are making further inquiries.

Double Booking

PAUL GREGG became manager of Southport's Floral Hall in February 1970, when it was owned by Southport Borough Council. He eventually became the Director of Publicity and Attractions for the new Sefton Council, with a salary of £7,522.

But, unknown to either council, Gregg had other irons in the fire. From September 1970 until May 1973 he and his wife ran GAP Promotions. After that Paul and Anita Gregg became the only directors and shareholders of Kim Promotions Ltd.

In their first year the directors were paid a total of £1,300. And, in the year to April 1975, they received £3,500.

The company's business was to promote and advertise live entertainment. This was also, of course, Gregg's job with Sefton Council.

According to Gregg, his private business promoted 17 concerts between October 1970 and May 1976. They included appearances by top artists like Cliff Richard, Neil Sedaka, Jack Jones, Mud, and the Harry James Orchestra.

All these artists also appeared at the council's Southport Theatre. And, as the Chief Executive's report stated: "The dates of appearances by artists for the local authority and the partnership/company were often close to each other and in some cases consecutive. The close relationship between the bookings inevitably

leads us to assume that arrangements for the various performances could well have been dealt with at the same time."

After Gregg - as a council employee - put on 'Mud' at the Southport Theatre in February 1974, his private company went on to arrange other concerts for the group in Preston, Hull, Manchester, Halifax and Sheffield during April. The company received a commission.

According to Gregg, his company paid about the same as the council for each performance. Even so, on December 3, 1970, Southport Council paid £1,000 to the Woody Herman Orchestra while ten days later GAP Promotions got them for only £800.

Besides this, Gregg said he was concerned with no less than 113 concerts by 'The Spinners', for which his company was paid one-twelfth of the net profits (after promotional expenses).

Tony Davis of 'The Spinners' told the Free Press: "He just helped us with advice and publicity. He wasn't an employee of ours."

Gregg went into more detail in his statement to the council. He said he had formed a very close friendship with 'The Spinners' agent, Colin Hogg while working in Oxford in the late sixties.

"Out of a discussion about The Spinners' hopes for the future came a suggestion that I assist them with



Paul Gregg, whose business interests cost him his Sefton Council job.

BOOKINGS AT SOUTHPORT FLORAL HALL/THEATRE					PARTNERSHIP & COMPANY BOOKINGS		
Artist	Date	No. of perf.	Terms	Payment to artist	Date	Terms	Paid
Harry James	3 Oct 1970	2	£1,250	£1,250	1 Oct 1970	£1,250	£1,250
Woody Herman	3 Dec 1970	2	£1,000	£1,000	13 Dec 1970	£800	£800
Glen Miller	4 Apr 1971	2	£1,125	£1,125	18 Mar 1971	£1,125	£1,125
Tom Paxton	19 Oct 1972	1	£750 or 60%	£764	15 Oct 1972	£750 or 60%	?
Jack Jones	28 May 1973 - 2 June 1973	9	£15,000 or 75%	£15,000	26 May 1973	£3,500	£3,500
Tom Paxton	11 Nov 1973	1	£750 or 60%	£750	12 Oct 1973	£750 or 60%	?
Mud	8 Feb 1974	1	£500 or 60%	£742	7,9,18,19,23 April 1974	85% of net profit	?
Cliff Richard	22,23 Nov '74	3	£5,650	£5,650	14 Dec 1974	70% gross receipts	£4,046
Neil Sedaka	14 Feb 1975 & 8 March 1975	2	£4,500	£4,500	9 Mar 1975	£2,000 + 30% of net profit	£2,154
Cliff Richard	13-15 Nov '75	5	£10,100 + support	£10,250	12 Nov 1975	70% gross takings	£3,214
Hot Chocolate	9 June 1976	1	75%	£812	10-11 May 1976	£530 or 90% gross takings	?
Blaster Bates	23 June 1976	1	£500 or 70%	£1,109	30 Apr 1976	20% of net profit	?

On the left the artistes booked for Sefton Council.

On the right, the dates they were hired by Gregg's own firm.

publicity and promotion in their own concert promotions.

"The way I dealt with matters impressed the Spinners and, as their business activities increased, so I became part of an efficient team to promote their own concerts..."

"I have handled a considerable number of concerts for The Spinners both privately before I formed GAP Promotions with my wife, and afterwards whilst my wife and I controlled Kim Promotions Ltd."

In his statement Gregg insisted he had never received any of the profits from The Spinners' appearances at Southport.

But the fact that he did not declare an interest when the group appeared there probably meant he was breaking the law anyway.

Under the Local Government Act 1972, local government officers have to declare any interest in a contract with their authority. An official has an interest where he "is in the employment of a person with whom the contract is made."

Both Southport and Sefton councils have had contracts with The Spinners

while Gregg was working for them.

As the Chief Executive's report stated: "The fact that Mr Gregg did not give notice of such employment at the time that the contracts were made might constitute a technical offence." The penalty is a fine of up to £200.

However, the council's investigation was concerned with whether Gregg had broken his conditions of service and not whether he had committed any offence. The information they collected was incomplete - there were no detailed accounts of Gregg's company or partnership, nor a statement of his precise relationship with The Spinners.

But enough emerged to show that Gregg's private business interests and his position as a public official overlapped.

This was illustrated in a small way when Gregg bought a new car. As a local government official he was able to get a loan from Sefton Council to buy it. But, according to the accounts of Kim Promotions Ltd until April 1975, the car had been bought and paid for by the company.

Corpy refuse to back Kirkdale housing co-op

LIVERPOOL Corporation is set to spend £50,000 making a Nineteenth Century square into a wasteland, despite the wishes of people living there.

A professional housing group has also said it would be cheaper to improve the houses than demolish and replace them.

Brunswick Square, off Westminster Road, has been described as a 'lovely little backwater of old Kirkdale'. Built in 1842, the 23 semi-detached houses originally surrounded a railed garden.

Although the railings have long since disappeared, local residents have fought hard to preserve the now grassed square and its trees by paying out of their own pockets for fencing in an effort to prevent its use as a car park by football supporters.

In 1972 the square was declared part of the Medlock Street Clearance Area. Local residents were irate and held a meeting at which 12 said they wanted to stay, 5 wanted rehousing, and 2 did not attend. A campaign to

save the square was mounted when the Compulsory Purchase Orders were confirmed.

Mrs Freda Vine, an owner-occupier for 26 years has struggled for 4 years to have the CPO's removed. She and her neighbours have contacted MPs, councillors, the Industrial Archeological Society, and personalities like Spike Milligan. But the corporation have stood firm.

NOT WORTH PRESERVING

Unlike the people who live in them, the corporation feel that the houses are not worth preserving. The housing inspector states that 'the houses are featureless and have no architectural merit. The overall appearance is one of general dilapidation. Some houses are vacant and derelict, others are in considerable disrepair...'

In fact, the houses are roomy; many have indoor toilets and bathrooms; and most have large gardens. Structurally they are sound and would lend easily to improvement. Remarkably, in the individual reports by the inspector,

only one was described as derelict, one as unstable, and one in disrepair.

Proposals were that part of the square be included in the new Medlock Primary School site, and that the rest be allocated for dual use open space since it is protected by an old deed. However, the properties fronting Westminster Road and the small commercial properties behind have not been included in the CPO.

It now seems unlikely that a new school will be built. And open space provision is unnecessary since Kirkdale Recreation Ground is only 200 metres away from the proposed school site and is itself under-used.

In May Neighbourhood Housing Services surveyed the existing properties with a view to modernisation. Immediately, five families requested consideration for them. NHS - who said preservation would be cheaper - were confident that a housing co-op could be set up and the houses improved. But the corporation disagreed and refused to provide financial backing.

Hacks cough up improved image

LIFE isn't at all easy for John Price. As Merseyside's Industrial Development Officer, his job is to attract new firms to the area.

He's been doing a bit better lately. Enquiries to his office have soared to four a week, compared with less than one a week a year ago.

He believes this could be improved still further if Merseyside had a better image. Some employers have got the idea that if they come here, the workers will hinder them in the serious business of making money.

But then Mr Price had a brain-wave. Perhaps if employers don't hear about the 'problem' it will go away.

So the former diplomat invited "senior representatives" of the local and national press and radio to his office for a little chat. And without much persuasion they all "undertook to do their utmost to

co-operate... to give Merseyside a positive new industrial relations image."

That, presumably, is a diplomatic way of saying they will hush up disputes, or at least make it look as though the employers are always winning.

N.B. "Senior representatives" of the Free Press did not attend.

● Diplomatic relations between Granada Television and Merseyside police have been resumed. Their quarrel dated back nearly two years to a 'Granada Reports' film on allegations of police brutality in Liverpool. But last month Granada's managing director, David Plowright, broke the ice by inviting Chief Constable Ken Oxford over to Manchester for lunch. Granada is now expected to be less inquisitive about police affairs.