

EDITORIAL

A YEAR OF SOCIAL AWARENESS

That there are gross injustices in the present social and economic order of the world is so obvious that one would have to be utterly blind not to see them, or, worse still, callously selfish to the point of being totally uninterested in the misery of those around us. Famine joined to overproduction! One third of the world is surfeited, while the other two-thirds suffer from hunger and give signs of exhaustion and utter lack of resources. It is a fact that certain vast countries are often burdened with surpluses of cereal. The United States, Canada and Australia, to mention only a few of these countries, have far more food than they know what to do with. Without even going as far as other underdeveloped countries, we have only to look around us to see the scandalous disproportion of wealth distribution: 83% of our people barely survive, while about 1% hold in their hands the greater bulk of material blessings. This is a situation that cries out to the high heavens!

The Church has long been aware of this and has not been slow in condemning the evils and in pointing out the remedies. There were the social encyclicals, 'Rerum Novarum' of Leo XIII (1891), 'Quadragesimo Anno' of Pius XI (1931), 'Mater et Magistra' (1961) and 'Pacem in Terris' (1963) of John XXIII. Then there was the Second Vatican Council, in which there was constant reference to the problem of social justice, world peace, the political order, the underdeveloped countries. Finally, on March 26, 1967, Pope Paul VI added a precious contribution to the already long list with his encyclical 'Populorum Progressio'.

With the declaration of this present year, 1968, as the 'Year of Social Awareness' by our beloved Bishops we feel, in a more