

rity of these Homes as well as Homes in England.

I have had long discussions with Care Workers and Senior Personnel both here and in England, and with Social Workers, Teachers, and Parents. We have an excellent library and a good coverage of developments by journals and magazines. My paper then is my own personal digest of these many threads, and my vision of and commitment to what I detect as being the highest principles that here in Ireland, we are striving to make available to the children in our care.

One of the declared ideals in the writing of the Constitution of Ireland was " To cherish all the children of the nation equally ". It is a very high ideal socially, politically, religiously, educationally and economically, and in a sense is the measure of our Society's success or otherwise. The area of Residential Child Care is not a large one in terms of educational or sociopolitical systems, but by very fact that it contains the weakest, poorest, youngest, deprived section of society, it is a pulse rate of that ideal in practice. It is a crucible of society. (1)

May I say at this point also, I am indebted for some new insights and ideas to the members of FICE that I met in Amsterdam, Prague and Ubdy Denmark. Language is really not a barrier between those who care and wish to share, nor are different cultures or social systems. We have much to give and much to learn from each other.

The purpose of my paper is not so much the words I have written, but the thoughts that hopefully it may provoke. It is intended as a contribution that may enable us to be

" a little less solid in our prejudices, a little more careful about our own commitments and a little more sceptical about the commitment of others - and perhaps a little more compassionate on our journeys through society " (2)