

Priest brought true spirit into homes of lonely, poor

By M. McIntyre Hood
LONDON — Father Joe Williamson, of St. Paul's Church, Stepney, in London's slum-ridden East End, is retiring from his charge at the end of this year. But he will always be remembered by his parishioners as their priest who brought the true spirit of Christmas joy into the homes of the aged, the lonely and the poor of his parish.

This all began when one Christmas Day he saw a lonely old lady, well over 80, about to sit down alone to eat a Christmas dinner of one small chop. That was too much for Father Joe Williamson. He hurried from the home of the old lady, Mrs. Clara Few, in John Fisher Street, Stepney, to St. Paul's Vicarage in Dock Street, where his family and friends were preparing to enjoy a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Quickly carving a portion of turkey and making up a generous hamper of food, he was soon back with Mrs. Few, serving her the best Christmas dinner she had ever had.

STARTED PROJECT
That incident happened nine years ago, but it was the start of an annual Christmas project which has made Father Williamson beloved throughout his parish. Every Christmas since then, the 67-year-old white-haired vicar of the East End parish, has collected money to buy Christmas dinners for the old, lonely and infirm people of Stepney.

This year, he is going to make a banner Christmas before his retirement. The man known to his parishioners as Father Joe plans to provide a Christmas dinner and a TV show afterwards for 20 to 30 people at the church hall. For those who cannot travel, he will still tour houses on Christmas morning giving away food parcels.

"I will get help in cooking the dinners and bringing people to the hall" said Father Joe, "but we need from \$100 to \$210 to provide the food. Most of these people would not have any Christmas dinner, and this is the least I can do for them." It is little wonder that he is in little wonder that he is given an assurance that he will again be running his Christmas dinners.

Taste for wine up in holiday season

By M. McIntyre Hood
LONDON — While beer is still the main alcoholic beverage of the average Englishman, wine trade has been reaching boom proportions. Comments from the leading wine companies have all been enthusiastic. A typical comment is: "Christmas this year has been very good. The people have had a lot of time to get their supplies. There is the Saturday well ahead of Christmas, many people will be working on Monday, so they will be out and about. It really amounts to a long weekend of Christmas celebration."

EFFECTS OF TAX
Last year, Christmas sales were held back by the purchase tax surcharge which was imposed in July of 1961. It made a considerable difference to the prices of wines and spirits. This year, people have had time to become accustomed to the higher prices. And while in the early months of 1962 the figures

of sales left much to be desired, there has been a very strong pickup in the latter part of the year, and Christmas trade has been reaching boom proportions. Comments from the leading wine companies have all been enthusiastic. A typical comment is: "Christmas this year has been very good. The people have had a lot of time to get their supplies. There is the Saturday well ahead of Christmas, many people will be working on Monday, so they will be out and about. It really amounts to a long weekend of Christmas celebration."

Theatre features Noddy in Toyland

LONDON — London's Scala Theatre has chosen Enid Blyton's story of Noddy, that immortal creature-part boy, part puppet and part crocheted old man, as its pantomime for the 1962 Christmas season. And the part of Noddy in this pantomime — Noddy in Toyland — is to be played by Carlo Cura, a small boy of 12 years old with brown eyes, freckles and little curls.

Caro's father is a restaurant proprietor, with his establishment on Duke Street, in Mayfair. He is now newcomer to the stage, because he has been taking part in stage productions since he was four years old.

CHOOSING CAST
It was quite a day at the Scala Theatre when scores of children turned up for auditions for the leading parts of Noddy and Silkie. Carlo Cura had taken the precaution of turning up in a Noddy hat. It was of blue felt, pointed, and with a bell. He was wearing a Noddy red jersey, and he had also learned the Noddy song for his audition. All morning long, aspiring Noddies took the stage to present their talents. Most of them were boys in little grey shorts and sweaters. They sang varied selection of songs, ranging a little way from "The Skye Boat Song" to "Marching Through Georgia." Some of them quavered nervously when they reached the top notes. One small boy sang "Silent Night". The pianist did all he could to help by putting in masses of expression.

Gaspe County Given Praise

OTTAWA (CP) — Quebec's Gaspe County has been cited in the Commons as a model of bi-cultural, bilingual unity.

Roland English (PC-Gaspe) said his riding's 7,800 French-speaking families live in peace and harmony. They are true Gaspeans, he said. There was no talk of race. They didn't speak of religion. And there was no talk of language. Mr. English said veterans of both languages mix freely in three Royal Canadian Legion numerous appearances in London's West End.

Warehouses Burned

MANILA (AP) — A waterfront warehouse filled with textiles, rubber and American tobacco burned Saturday. Estimates of the loss ran as high as \$10,000,000.

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