

IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION  
PRESENTS

# FELIX

No. 7

FRIDAY MAY 5th. 1950.



EVERY FORTNIGHT

3<sup>rd</sup>



## Editorial

### The Refectory.

The recent further increase in the prices of all refectory meals has caused great indignation throughout the College. Students trying to live on less than a labourer's wage are bound to take grave exception to any increase in their cost of living, particularly when that increase is brought about by an organisation that is part of the College.

Two years ago lunch in the Union cost 1/6d. and the refectory showed a considerable loss - of the order, we understand, of £3,000 in a year. An efficiency expert (soi disant) was therefore called in, who promptly raised prices all round. In view of the staggering loss, however, this was accepted by the students as inevitable, and it was hoped that he would then increase efficiency so that ends might meet. He introduced tickets, bought new cutlery, removed some animals heads from the walls, moved the tables around, and left - but the refectory still shows a loss.

In the public bar of an ordinary London pub lunch costs 1/9d, and there are many restaurants that serve lunches for 2/- and less. These are commercial establishments that have to pay for rent, lighting, heating, periodic redecoration and refurnishing, and pay a dividend on the money invested in them. These are all items that do not appear on the refectory balance sheet, and yet our prices are higher, and the food certainly no better.

Why? In a pamphlet which has just been circulated we are told that the reasons are:-

(a) that the refectory runs at a loss in vacations, and (b) the profits on many meals (all, apparently, except lunch) are too low to contribute towards overheads and running expenses. The Committee have therefore decided that the deficit shall be met partly by reorganisation and partly by increased prices.

We feel that the College is almost unanimous in believing with us that the whole deficit could be met by reorganisation. Is it necessary, for instance, to employ a number of male chefs when women cooks command a lower salary? Is there no room for staff reductions? How many staff do we pay to keep in (presumably) comparative idleness in the vacations, and why? These are typical of the questions students are asking.

When one draws the comparison with outside restaurants, and remembers that Queenie, with her smaller and more efficient organisation, was showing a profit at the old prices, it is almost impossible not to draw the conclusion that there is gross inefficiency in the refectory. The time has come when the Union should demand a complete and ruthless reorganisation, and perhaps a new Committee to see that it is done.

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### Theft in the College.

There have recently been a large number of thefts from the Colleges and the Union, particularly from the changing room, cloak-room and Hostel. We trust that Council will take whatsoever steps may be necessary to stop the trouble, but in the meantime, take heed of this warning: it is not safe at any time to leave valuables unattended in the College, and Hostel rooms should never be left unlocked.

It is a thoroughly unsavoury situation, but it must be recognised.



ON BEING EXCHANGED (Continued).

In the first part of this account of American university life I said that this continuation would include some remarks about the examination system and the social and residential life of M.I.T., but first I must not forget to mention a rather striking comparison in what I can best describe as a student's allegiance. In England a student is primarily loyal to his college, and a usually friendly and healthy rivalry exists between individual colleges; in America the allegiance is decidedly and strongly associated with the student's own particular year. Those who are now Seniors and who finish their undergraduate careers this summer are known as 'the class of 1950'; to-day's Freshers are already known as 'the class of 1953' and such a date of graduation becomes as much a part of a student's name as are his initials. Each such class elects, for each of its four years at College, its own President, and on graduation a permanent President and Secretary whose job it is to maintain the class spirit of their year for the rest of their lives. Each class organises when the time arrives elaborate five-year, ten-year, twenty-five year, etc., reunion week-ends and vie with the other classes in making large gifts (usually financial) to the College. The graduated classes as a whole make up the College's Alumni Association and in the case of many Colleges their Alumni Association seems to wield considerable power in the running of the College; this seems to me to be a most undesirable state of affairs but it is almost traditionally accepted. While I am touching on financial aspects it might be of interest to mention that the total tuition fees for an ordinary four-year course may be over £1000.

The four-years of a normal course are divided into eight sixteen week terms, during each of which about five subjects have to be taken. About every three weeks, at his discretion, the instructor teaching a subject holds a one hour 'quiz' - a somewhat informal but unseen examination. A student thus must sit for an average of about two quizzes each week. The quiz papers are marked and count roughly fifty-fifty with a three hour final examination in the subject at the end of the term. On this basis the student gets awarded a 'grade' (percentage mark) for each subject as he takes it. A progressive cumulative of all his grades is kept - (if it ever falls below a prescribed minimum he bids a reluctant farewell to the College) - and his eventual degree is distinguished not by a class but by a final average grade. The quiz system is a masterly device which ensures continuous cramming with the maximum encouragement to forget each portion of each subject as rapidly as possible.

Considerable residential accommodation is provided in the College; it also, perhaps unintentionally, fosters student stratification in their respective years, with Dormitories mostly for Freshers and Sophomores, a Senior House for Seniors, and a Graduate House for postgraduates. Quite a large percentage also live in fraternity houses; these are not owned by the College but are large houses in the neighbourhood which form each the local affiliation of the corresponding fraternity organisation, most of which I believe are nation-wide. New members are elected by invitation from the Freshers during the week before their first term (they arrive early to be given what must be a very rapid once-over). Once elected a student lives in his fraternity house for his College career. Apart from the fact that they tend to encourage a certain withdrawal of their members from full College affairs these fraternity houses seem to be entirely successful from a social point-of-view. They organise social activities to a noticeably greater extent than was evident in the College itself; there has been discussion whether or not, from the College point-of-view, they are satisfactory; the answer may be that with such large numbers some breaking up of the population into smaller components is inevitable.

D.A.



Profile: Maurice Denham.

'Dudley Davenport at your service, Sir!' Well, Mr. Denham did not use quite these words when I 'phoned him but he gallantly consented to be 'done' for FELIX. Though Mr. Denham has no connection with the College, we believe that Dudley has a number of close cousins within our walls.

I found Maurice Denham pullovered and gumbooted in his garden. Nobody could be less like the immature youth Dudley, nor yet another of his characters - Mr. Blake, the sexton. With his stocky build and measured tones, the pipe smoking Maurice Denham may be pictured somewhere between the two - which description, if not precise, is at least not pedantic. He told me he had always had a hankering after the stage; did amateur dramatics whilst an apprentice with Waygood-Otis, but got more lift out of life when he joined the Hull Repertory Company. After this and work with other reps. he got his first West End part in 1937. He wrote to the B.B.C. for an audition - got one a year later! - and did a number of broadcasts in Childrens Hour, Band Wagon and various plays. In 1939 he went away with the B.B.C. Variety Company and played in the first 25 ITMA'S with the late Tommy Handley. This was followed by the Army - he served with the Buffs in France and Germany till 1945. In 1947 he joined up with Murdoch and Horne's Air Force, then newly demobbed into the famous club at Much Binding. Dudley Davenport soon won a place among the permanent staff along with the improbable Samuel Costa.

He offered me a cigarette and re-lit his pipe. I asked how theatre audiences compared with a live mike. "No two audiences are alike," he said: "emphasis and timing often require changing according to the 'feel' of the audience. But in broadcasting one must try to 'sense' the unseen audience - a more difficult matter." As to microphone nerves he confessed that he suffered! "It gets worse and worse. As time goes on, people expect more of you and you expect more of yourself. But a mistake in a live broadcast is often funnier than the original lines."

Maurice Denham is married, has two boys and a baby girl. He has no ambition to reach for the stars; he is content with his family and his garden. With his whimsical air and quiet calm manner he seems to have found a workable recipe for life. "Let us cultivate our gardens" said Voltaire. Maurice Denham does just that.

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SPORTS DAY .

Our annual inter-college sports this year are to be held at Motspur Park on May 17th, that is on next Wednesday week.

Last year this function was rather poorly attended, but it is traditionally one of the great social occasions of the College year. It is the time when not only the members of the Colleges turn out to cheer and encourage their athletes, but so also do their wives, girl friends and parents - as well as the sisters, cousins and aunts. It is the occasion when the summer worries of exams and unfinished course work are cast aside, and the College enjoys itself.

Let us hope, then, that this year the stands may be packed, the sun shine, and our own College win.

TECHNICAL ITCH? Extract from a letter to R. Swain, Secretary of U.L. Tennis Club:- "Dear Sir, My opponent, Mr. ...., has decided to scratch himself....."



"Nil Desperandi - The Reporters Lament."  
or "Date with an Immortal."

It came to pass that on a certain day,  
The son of Felix, Felixson by name,  
A noble venture pondered in his mind.  
"The Profile, is it not a little staid  
And too mundane?" He thought. "What Felix needs  
Is something shining like a star - a STAR!"  
He sat. (To think in this blank verse is quite  
A strain.) And who but now resided in  
The Town on visit brief and businesslike?  
Why, star of "White Heat", "Wonderman", and such,  
The lustrous 'Ginny, Miss Mayo for sure.  
Straightway he reached the telephone and rang  
The Dorchester. As straight the answer  
"No reply from suite" (or was it Sweet?)  
" - try Denham where she works" - as if such sylph  
Her hands would deign to soil with common work.  
To Denham, then to Elstree in mad chase  
Of SHE, or he to whom the power of audience  
Fell. Referred and cross-referred, as in  
A nightmare came the voice "Try Warner House,  
Bob Dexter is your man - Gerrard Five Six  
Owe Owe." He rang. Th'assistant of the great  
B.D. with dulcet tones his hot brow soothed.  
"Tight shooting schedules - up at six o'clock,  
Back home at eight to crawl into her bed.  
She's very busy but I'll do my best  
To get an interview for Felixson.  
A fortnight hence please ring - you have a chance,"  
She said.

O Time of fleeting wings? - not now.  
The days dragged by - at last THE day was here.  
He rang with bated breath. Burr-burr. Burr-burr.  
"I'm sorry but Virginia leaves tonight,  
Th'Atlantic liner 'waits her at the port."  
The Movie Moguls grin. In Wardour Street all  
Is quiet. A student's curse the night air rends  
Of Kensington. What will the sub-ed say?  
"In sinu sine remo" \* more than like.  
A lesson learnt - 'tis easier far to enter  
Bank of England with a penknife than  
To interview a great film star.

D.J.P.

\* Freely translated: "Up the creek without a paddle." - Ed.

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Notices.

Commemoration Day Ball.

This will be held on 27th October 1950 in the Grosvenor House Hotel. Tickets for present students and those who left in the last two years are 17/6d. each; for staff and others 27/6d. They will be obtainable from the bookstall.

Back copies of Felix.

A number of requests have been received for copies of the first and second issues of Felix. If anyone has copies of these two issues which they would be prepared to sell, they are asked to contact the Editor, either personally or through the I.C. Union letter rack.

Sports Day.

This will be held on May 17th. Tickets may be obtained from the bookstall.



I.C. MEN SAIL ON "DISCOVERY II"

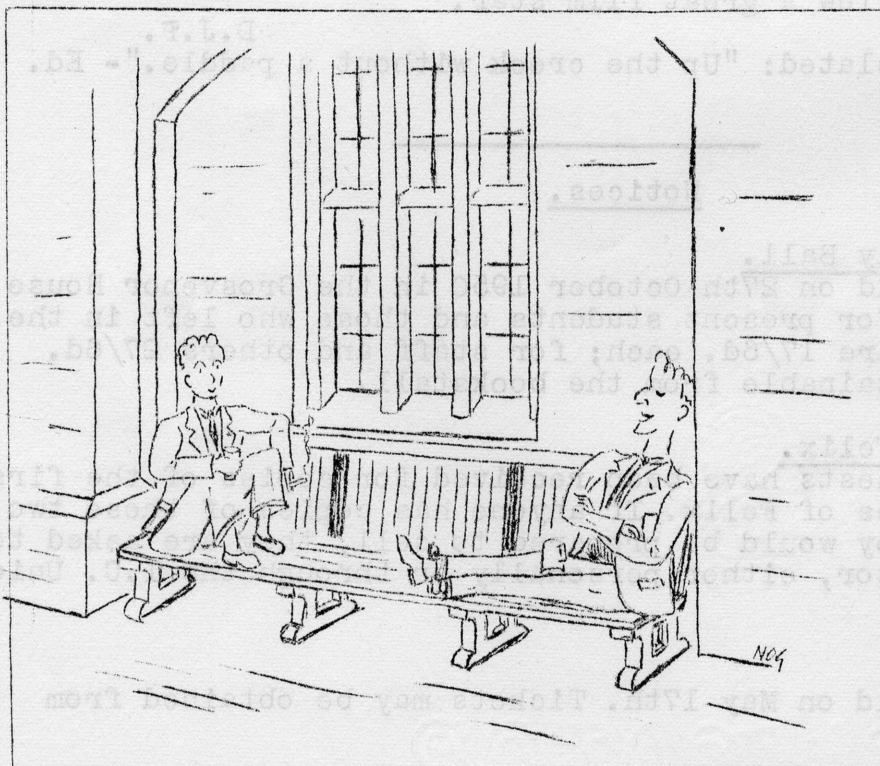
The R.R.S. Discovery II sailed from London recently on a two year expedition to the Indian Ocean, South Pacific and Antarctica. Among the research team aboard are two I.C. men, Roland Cox and John Hooper, both chemists from Chem. Tech. The expedition is sponsored by the National Institute of Oceanography, under the Admiralty, and is the sixth of a series of voyages originally planned by the Falkland Islands Survey between the wars. The object of the present expedition is to complete the oceanographic work undertaken before the war and will include the study of whales and other marine creatures, movements of water, sea temperatures and the mapping of the ocean bed.

I asked Cox how he came to be involved in the expedition - an unusual type of job for a chemist. He said that he had applied quite innocently to the Civil Service Commissioners for a quiet little research niche for himself. The first question at his interview was: "Would you go on a research ship to the Antarctic?" Regarding this as a trick question and wracking his brains for a 'different' answer he found himself saying - 'yes.' A week later he was astonished to get an invitation from the Admiralty to consider joining the "Discovery II." Many men will envy him this opportunity to combine research with globe-trotting. However, it is work under exacting conditions (e.g. how does one use a balance on board ship?); also there will be plenty of routine work: analysis of sea-water, sediment from the ocean bed, some botanical work; and remember - he has no professor he can consult!

The leader of the expedition is Dr. Herdman, a physicist; others of the team include two biologists, a photographer, meteorologist, and a doctor. Cox and Hooper have the grand designation of "Hydrologists."

Fremantle, W. Australia will be the base port. From there the 'Discovery II' will voyage into the Southern Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, re-victualling periodically at other ports. The 'Discovery II' is due back in England by Christmas 1951.

Footnote. Wed. April 26th: The Discovery II was held up at Sheerness with boiler trouble.



'IF ONLY WE'D WORKED  
OVER THE EASTER WE'D  
HAVE AVOIDED ALL THIS  
LAST MINUTE RUSH'



### MANDRAGOLA.

When it was announced in the last issue of Felix that Machiavelli's play "Mandragola" had been described as having a plot "sufficiently scandalous to account for its having been suppressed in most countries," ticket sales for the Dramatic Society's Easter production soared. "This," people thought, "is going to be good." The event, unfortunately, did not live up to these expectations.

This was not due to inadequacy in the cast or production; they were both up to the standard usually set by the Dram. Soc. Christopher McKoen as the Monk, in particular, played his part with relish and humour, and Joyce Churchman as the heroine gave a much better performance than her part in "Much Ado" might have led one to expect.

The fault lay in the choice of the play, and in this the Dram. Soc. are not to be congratulated. It would seem that they are, this year, frightened of comment from the audience ruining a straight production; at Christmas their "Much Ado" was a great success because Shakespeare's comedies were written with a view to participation from the pit, the audience had in many cases studied their part beforehand, and the whole performance was carried through with wit and good humour. With "Mandragola" it seems that the Dram. Soc. tried to stifle comment by choosing a play so bawdy that little comment could be passed without being crude. This and the fact that the play was not a good one left the audience yawning like hens with the gapes.

By all means let us occasionally have productions in which the audience may take part, but let us also have plays that are enjoyable for their own sake.

### The New Phoenix.

There seems to be general agreement that the new bird is more sprightly by far than its recent predecessors. It is presented with imagination, clarity and a good use of the always limited material available. Successive copies of our magazine have suffered in the past from not being sufficiently "our" magazine; it has seemed that a collection of peculiar highbrows have striven to display their erudition with no particular regard for the readers' enjoyment. At last may it be said that "Phoenix" produces readable articles which, while being of a good literary standard, are not so confoundingly boring as to cause the reader to do no more than scan the pages. Two major criticisms come readily to mind: Goethe's bicentenary was flogged to death by the B.B.C. and the press some time ago; the fine resources of the Photographic Society could surely be more effectively used than by printing 4 photographs by one artist of similar subjects. We have genius in our photographic midst; let it be displayed in Phoenix. I hope for more "Phoenix's" of even brighter plumage, to reflect even better the artistic aspirations of ourselves. For this one, I would say "Well done Mr. de Reuck, may you have even more success!"

D.C.H.

Competition. Entries are invited for the completion of a short poem whose first line is: "There was a maiden so demure". Entries which would lower in any way the high moral tone of this publication will be reserved for the amusement of the Editorial Bawd.



EASTER FIELD TRIP.

Geology's a subject that's best studied out of doors  
In the wetter parts of England and the colder sort of moors,  
And so when Easter comes along a motley crowd leaves Coll.  
To go and knock the rocks about and learn a bit of Geol:

A lecturer comes out with us to help us darn our socks  
And act as chaperone, to introduce us to the Rocks.  
He knows the outcrops by their names, and tell us all their ages-  
And other things too intimate for printing on these pages.  
He knows the path to all the pubs, and where the best beer's  
found,

And knows the steepest way up all the hills for miles around.  
His legs may seem a trifle short; his aspect old and fragile,  
But years of chasing Students for Reports have kept him agile.  
While armed with inclinometers and compasses prismatic  
We climb the highest peaks, our breathing laboured and asthmatic  
He prances on ahead of us, our protests irrespective,  
And goads us on to Higher peaks with rather crude invective.

"What rock is that?" he shouts at us, "Come, tell me if you're  
able."

But though we searched it high and low we couldn't find a label;  
We looked at it through lenses, we asked it once or twice  
It answered not and so we thought it wasn't very gneiss.

Another day dawned cold and grey and raining cats and dogs  
We hoped to spend the time before a fire of blazing logs  
The lecturer said "Get your coats. A day like this we should  
Spend in the field; the blessed rain will do the outcrops good."  
We wished the outcrops in a place where water isn't stable,  
And wished the lecturer below the present water table,  
And though we searched the countryside for six hours and a  
quarter

The only mineral that we identified was water.

We found a good exposure in a trench, beneath some wattles  
And mapped the boundary between the tin cans and the bottles.  
We found some horizontal beds with lovely joints and all  
But found out later on that it was someone's garden wall.  
We looked for fossils in a pit amongst some likely shales  
But all we found were two dead sheep and several rusty pails.

So though our maps are hazy on the local types of stone  
We've lots of information on scrap-iron, rags, and bone,  
And if we fail Geology and can't get back next term  
We're going to get our maps out and start a Salvage firm.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Gerrards Cross.  
23.3.50.

Dear Sir,

As a visitor to a recent performance of "Mandragola",  
the behaviour of a section of the audience prompts me to  
remark how well Shakespeare knew his "rude mechanicals"  
when he clothed one of them in an asses head and with a most  
delicate choice of words called him - Nick Bottom.

They still bray.

Yours etc.,

E. Rourke.



IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION DIARY.

May.

Tuesday 9th. I.C.Dramatic Society A.G.M. Committee Room "A" 5.15  
Thurs. 11th. I.C.UNION GENERAL MEETING, Gym. 1.20  
Maths. and Phys. Soc. Dinner 6.45  
Friday 12th. L.I.F.C.U. Open Meeting, Gym. 1.15  
R.C.S. Boat Club A.G.M., "A" 1.30  
Rifle Club Dinner 7.00  
Monday 15th. L.I.F.C.U. Open Meeting, Zoo. Theatre 5.15  
Tuesday 16th. Table Tennis Club A.G.M. "A" 1.20  
Social Clubs Committee Meeting, "A" 5.15  
Thurs. 18th. Fencing Club A.G.M. "A" 1.20  
I.C.U. Council Meeting, "A" 5.15  
Railway Society Dinner 7.00  
Friday 19th. Links Club Dinner 7.30

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THE HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE. by our Rowing Correspondent.

Words fail me. Even now, three days after the event, there appears in my mind's eye, like some nightmare horror, a picture of the First Eight passing the Boathouses at Putney. Much water will pass under many bridges and much strong language through many megaphones before that awful sight can be erased. What was it a coach once said to a crew? "Sitting in a boat like eight sacks of....." No, that does not nearly express my feelings.

Starting No. 10 behind the New College Oxford, the first eight, (no, I refuse to give them capitals), made a moderately good start and by Barnes Bridge had caught up New College and were overlapping their rudder. So far so good, and much according to expectations --- then things began to go wrong. A tail wind after Barnes knocked the crew off their feet and losing their heads at the same time they began to drop behind New College. Thereafter the details become too disheartening to relate. Suffice it to say that no amount of Coaching and help from Coach or Cox made any difference. The crew were neither listening nor thinking.

How did the other nine I.C. crews fare? No amount of good rowing in the lower boats can excuse the disgrace of having the first eight finishing 28th. Yes, TWENTY EIGHTH.

The Fourth Eight rowed well as their final position shows and, with the exception of Thames III, beat the third eights of every other Club. A good effort indeed, but one which is completely overshadowed by the shocking bad effort of the first eight.

What now? Let it be set down in print, that unless the crew that goes to Henley realises that they are up against real fanatics at their own sport, they might as well not enter. The College crews at Henley will have been rowing in real earnest every day. No nonsense about nights off at the pictures, or at dances, or evenings out with the girl friend, but an intense effort ---- waking, sleeping, breathing and talking rowing. Any Tideway Club if it hopes to compete on anything like equal terms must have the same tenacity of purpose and live to row and to row hard every day, from April to July. Nothing else is nearly good enough. It is attitude of mind that wins races, - attitude of mind and plenty of honest hard work and concentration during training.

Wake up I.C.B.C. You cannot expect to live in the reflected glory of traditions handed on to you by others. It is up to you to work hard to maintain those traditions and to strain every nerve in an effort to hand on to those who will follow you, a Club of which they can be justly proud.

Final Placings.

I.C.I: 28, I.C.II: 43, I.C.III: 50, I.C.IV: 56, I.C.V: 134,  
I.C.VI: 183, I.C.VII: 188, I.C.VIII: 196, I.C.IX: 193, I.C.X: 204.



UNIVERSITY SPORT.

Congratulations to the following members of I.C. who featured in the University colour awards for the Winter Season 1949-50:

A. Barnard	Half Purple	Fencing
G.L.M. Gillett	Purple	Hockey
E.C. Green	Purple	Hockey
D. Hughes	Team Colour	Rugby
Y.S. Lau	Purple	
	(Special Award)	Badminton
B. Robins	Purple	Rugby
W. Robinson	Purple	Rugby
R.T. Severn	Purple	Rugby
K.A. Stacy	Half Purple	Fencing
Miss M. Anthony	Team Colour	Women's Squash
Miss D. Fisher	Team Colour	Women's Hockey

Congratulations are also due to the U.L. Soccer XI on reaching the final of the A.F.A. Cup; this is to be played on May 6th at Brentford F.C. ground against Cambridge Town. One of I.C.'s two representatives in the team, Pete Davies, informs us that in spite of getting a black eye, he played brilliantly in the successful semi-final replay.

The University Boxing Championships were held last week at I.C. and resulted in a good win for I.C. (17 points) from R.V.C. (9), L.S.E. (8), and Kings (5). Special mention must be made of G. Tait and M. Humphries who collected U.L.A.U. individual winners medals.

Athletics. Felix was pleased to notice the part played by I.C. Runners in the London - Paris Match last Saturday; particular congratulations are due to K.J. Brookman who won the Javelin event with a throw of 148' 2". Tony Watts took his usual position in Wint's slipstream - try some more steaks Tony!

TO THE SPORTS EDITOR.

Dear Sir,

After the sporting way in which the Rugby club has played the Netball team at their own game, surely the girls should feel morally obliged to challenge the men to a game of rugby?

Yours faithfully,  
Peter Rowe.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS RECEIVED AT FOOD OFFICE:-

Please send me form for cheap milk as I am expecting mother.  
Please send me form for cheap milk for having children at reduced prices.

I posted my form by mistake before my child was filled in.

I have a baby 18 months old, thanking you for same.

Will you please send me form for cheap milk. I have a baby two months old and did not know anything about it until a friend told me.

I had intended coming to the milk office today but had 15 children this morning.