

## Storm over illegal immigrant

# HURD WARNS OFF THE CHURCH



HURD: Approval

By JOHN DEANS and MARGARET HENFIELD

### CHURCHES were ordered last night not to give sanctuary to fugitives from justice.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd spoke out after more than 50 police and immigration officers raided a Manchester church and seized a Sri Lankan trying to avoid deportation.

Brushing aside protests from Labour MPs, Mr Hurd pressed and defended the dawn sweep, insisting that attempts by 22-year-old Viraj Mendis to win asylum in Britain after more than 13 years as an illegal immigrant 'are now exhausted'.

Three of the Sri Lankan women supporters were dragged kicking and screaming from the Stangers' Gallery and there were shouts of 'Yes, Yes and Jackboot Hurd'.

But the Home Secretary won the overwhelming approval of Tory MPs when he declared: 'The church needs to think very carefully before it opens its doors and custom of giving shelter to people defying the law. It is not right to let someone defy the law by seeking a church.'

Mr Hurd was summoned to Westminster to make an emergency statement on the case of Mendis, who is being held in Fentonville jail and will be deported to Sri Lanka tomorrow unless he can find another country to take him.

### Justified

He had been claiming sanctuary for more than two years in the Church of Ascension at Hulme. But six 7.30am yesterday police, who had been watching him for months, staged their raid. At least 10 officers surrounded the church and 16 of them smothered their way in after the priest said he could not provide a key. They broke down two doors and forced their way into the fugitive's makeshift bedroom. When he handcuffed himself to a radiator they used bolt-cutters to remove him and dragged him out screaming in his pyjamas.

The Rev John Methuen, of the Church of Ascension, said: 'Just before 1.30 am I was asked to meet senior police officers, many of whom were already in my house.'

'They told me they were accompanied by two

### ROMANCE OF 'BLUE LAGOON'

# The Castaways



In search of paradise: Martin and Helen

By FRANK THOMPSON

IT was the film *The Blue Lagoon* that first put a faraway look in Martin Poppelwell's eyes.

Ever since he has dreamed of being a castaway on an uninhabited island with only a pretty girl for company.

Today he sets his wish. He is setting off for a six-month Crusoely-style existence on a wild, remote island in the South Seas.

And instead of Brooke Shields — star of the remake of the 1960s *Swimming with the Sharks* — Helen Martin is taking, with him Helen Freeman, who answered his advert for a castaway companion.

The couple are not romantically involved, but yesterday 10-year-old Helen, who has known Martin for only a few weeks, admitted that some 'special relationship' might develop.

'We go through such extremes of experience together and I think that is bound to bring us closer,' she said before going on a last shopping spree in Chichester.

Martin's first problem was to find the

### WOMAN WHO VOLUNTEERED TO LIVE ON A SOUTH SEA ISLAND

perfect island. After much poking over maps he decided on Pasangora island, south of New Zealand in the southern Tasmanian Channel Islands.

'The next task was finding a Girl Friday. The advert for one — and a Christmas, after interviewing many others, he made them.'

'It's astonishing to realize that we're

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## Fergie cuts it fine on her return home

From RICHARD KAY in Kingston  
THE Duchess of York is to extend her Swiss ski holiday by another day.

She will return for tomorrow's memorial service for the victims of the *Shannon* oil disaster at the last possible moment.

She will fly back into Britain just hours before the service at Westminster Cathedral is due to begin.

And she will almost certainly be late should her flight be delayed by bad weather or if her 800-mile trip to Zurich airport is hit by snow.

However, plans for the Duchess to fly back to resume skiing with Prince Andrew in Klosters within hours of the service evening have, I understand, been aborted.

Buckingham Palace was horrified at these plans and it is understood they have been told this must not happen.

The Duke and Duchess have faced a

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