

Director: Fr. Brian Lawlor, O.S.A.

Social Worker: Sr. Veronica B.Soc.S., Irish Sisters of Charity

♣ IRISH ♣
WELFARE
BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER 1971 - 2

*55 Fulham Palace Road,
Hammersmith, W6 8AU*

Telephone: 01-741 0466-7

Directors Report

On reflection the Bureau's second year in existence has many similarities to the one year old baby that was, like the baby, this time last year the Bureau was beginning to make strides, endeavouring to find its feet in the community. The past twelve months have seen these strides lengthen with cooperation and support from the many people who have taken an interest in its work. The strength of any voluntary organization depends on the willingness and devotion of its helpers, during the year the Bureau has been blessed with an increase in the number of such people.

The work of the Bureau continued in the basement of St. Augustines Priory till early in the New Year. ⁷² On February 23rd ⁷² we came above ground and moved into our new building, it was a wonderful feeling to see day light in more senses than one. It's a swift-plan building with offices, interview room, committee room, waiting room and toilets. Since moving in the work of the Bureau has developed in line with its original aims. We are most fortunate with the buildings location, its situation gives the privacy that one desires when dealing with peoples personal problems.

Having all these facilities in such a short space of time was indeed a great step forward, having them without the heavy burden of debt was a real blessing. For a time it looked a serious problem especially when our application for an Urban Aid grant was refused. On the terms of the application the Hammersmith Council were most considerate and gave £300 towards the reduction of capital expenditure.

However, the real burden of debt was taken away during the year when the Irish Immigrant Episcopal Commission made a substantial capital grant towards the building. For these two major contributions the Bureau is indeed grateful.

The setting up of the new offices involved the voluntary help of many people, were it not for these the move over would have taken a far longer period with a greater capital outlay. In particular I would like to say a special word of thanks to Don Marron, John Keane and Frances Egan and Nan MC Gill.

In January, Sister Alice was recalled for work in a Welfare Centre in Dublin. As one who had done so much to set up the Bureau the news of her departure was a sad one. During her fifteen months she worked tirelessly for all the people who came to her for help and advice. We wish her every success in her new appointment in Dublin.

In recalling Sister Alice the Mother Provincial of the Irish Sisters of Charity appointed to the Bureau a social worker of great experience in the person of Sister Veronica. Having worked at the Crusade of Rescue for many years she was well known by many of her fellow social workers in local authority. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Sister Veronica and express my gratitude to the Irish Sisters of Charity.

The every day running of the Bureau would be impossible without our voluntary helpers and financial resources. For the organization and efficiency of the office no words of mine can express the debt the Bureau owes to Mrs. Christine Willison and her devotion over the past twelve months has contributed in no small way to our

present development. The fact that we can offer material help to people is due in the main to our many friends who work so hard throughout the year organizing various functions. I would like to thank everyone who in any way supported the Bureau by coming to our dances, jumble sales, raffles etc. In a special way I would like to thank the Monaghan Association, Joe and Eileen McEvoy and their friends in the licensed trade, the Cork Parish Associations (Middleton, Drimoleague, Dunmanway, Skibbereen and Clonakilty) The Catholic Transport Guild, The Union of Christian Mothers for their fund raising efforts over the past year.

The Bureau is fortunate in having many friends in Ireland who have contributed so generously to our appeals, for their kindness I would like to thank Mrs. Diver and her friends in Buncrana, Mickey Duffy and his committee in Monaghan and my many friends in Dublin.

Since the formation of the Middleton Association Sister Rosario of the Presentation Convent, Middleton has shown a keen interest in the Welfare of our immigrants. To acquaint herself with some of the difficulties that face these people she forfeited a month of her summer holidays to come and work at the Bureau. We were delighted to have Sister with us and I would like to thank the Presentation Convent for making the trip possible.

In looking to the future my attention is drawn to the numbers of young boys coming to London and the accommodation problem that faces them. Over the past few months we have given serious

consideration to the possibility of having a small hostel to accommodate these boys. We hope early in 1973 to make more positive steps in this direction.

My final words of thanks are to the Parish Priest and members of my own community at St. Augustines. Without their cooperation and kind help my task in running the Bureau would be a much more formidable one.

Father Brian Lawlor O.S.A.

Social Workers Report

As anticipated our move to our new premises has resulted in a growing awareness of our existence and consequently an increase in referrals and new applications. These have risen from 511 last year to 678 this year involving a total of 1091 interviews. The type of problems dealt with remain the same but with greater emphases on some age groups, in fact at both ends of the scale i.e. 0 - 16, 50 - 70+.

It is of some significance that the figures for age group 0 - 16 have jumped from 8 to 95, a large proportion of whom arrive without jobs, accommodation or financial support. Two facts may be deduced from this:

a) They were directed to us from sources in Ireland.

Here we would like to make a plea to priests in parishes, teachers in schools, parents and social workers generally to encourage notification of impending plans and needs. This gives us the opportunity to offer up-to-date information on the job and accommodation situation and the advisability of coming at that particular time. For a considerable number of those who wrote to us beforehand we were able to procure both employment and accommodation. On the other hand, some young people, within 24 hours of arrival have already been introduced to the drug scene and/or have fallen foul of the law. With preventive work at an earlier stage this might have been avoided.

b) The school leavers in Ireland appear to need more career guidance and counselling for their futures.

The increase from 61 to 128 in the 50 - 70+ age group reflects an accommodation crisis resulting from the closing down of the local Rowton House, a men's hostel catering for over 500 inmates. We would like to think that our involvement in this emergency gave some positive help in easing the pressures on the L.A. Social workers in the Borough areas.

A crisis at a higher level is seen in the number of families from Northern Ireland (118 in all) whom we helped with a limited amount of accommodation, financially until Social Security was arranged and with furniture, bedding and household goods when housing was available for them.

A drop in the figures for General Welfare from 71 to 27 points to a more specific identification of the problem. This is a natural outcome of our previous years experience and consolidation. The number of families helped (143) necessitated many visits to homes and hospitals.

In spite of the title, Irish Welfare Bureau (or perhaps indeed because of it as the Irish are traditionally known for their hospitality and friendliness) it is evident from the number of nationalities dealt with, 97 as against 55 last year, that we are seen by the community at large as a caring agency regardless of race, creed, class or colour. This is how we would like it to be.

Sister Veronica.

Simple Analysis of Referrals

OCTOBER 1971 - 1972

Age Groups	0-16	17-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not Known
	95	64	105	78	106	58	82	46	44

Overall Total : 678

Types of Problem	No.	Types of Problem	No.
New Arrivals from Ireland	55	General Welfare	27
Financial	209	Ex-Offender	31
Employment	79	Mental & Emotional Disorder	22
Accommodation	333	Pregnancy	14
Marital	26	Repatriation	18
Material	39	Information	20
Personal	34	Alcoholic	13
Advice	31		

Males 424

Females 268

Families 143

Other Nationalities 97

Cases continued from previous years 113

OTHER NATIONALITIES

COUNTRY	NUMBER
England	53
Scotland	18
Australia	1
Wales	11
Guernsey	1
Germany	2
Spain	3
Italy	6
Africa	2
Ceylon	1
Mexico	1
India	1
South America	1
United States of America	2
West Indies	5

COUNTIES OF EIRE

COUNTY	NO.	COUNTY	NO.
Carlow	2	Louth	3
Cavan	3	Mayo	24
Clare	3	Meath	4
Cork	58	Monaghan	3
Donegal	15	Offaly	4
Dublin	105	Roscommon	3
Galway	27	Sligo	14
Kerry	22	Tipperary	22
Kildare	7	Waterford	13
Kilkenny	5	Westmeath	3
Leitrim	3	Wexford	15
Limerick	22	Wicklow	1
Longford	1		

1st November 1971 - 31st October 1972

COUNTY	No.	COUNTY	No.
Antrim	55	Limerick	22
Armagh	49	Longford	1
Carlow	2	Louth	3
Cavan	3	Mayo	24
Clare	3	Meath	4
Cork	58	Monaghan	3
Derry	6	Offaly	4
Donegal	15	Roscommon	3
Down	9	Sligo	14
Dublin	105	Tipperary	22
Fermanagh	1	Tyrone	10
Galway	28	Waterford	13
Kerry	22	Westmeath	3
Kildare	7	Wexford	15
Kilkenny	5		
Leitrim	3		