

IRISH WELFARE BUREAU

HAMMERSMITH — LONDON

Fifth Annual Report 1975

55 FULHAM PALACE ROAD
HAMMERSMITH
LONDON W.6 8A4
TELEPHONE 741-0466/7

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The work of the Bureau has continued on much the same lines as before but on occasions during the year we had a "re-think" to examine our services to the dosser, the alcoholic and those of the drifting kind. It was agreed that although we had no special facilities to offer them our approach in supplying clothing, meal vouchers, accommodation in the larger hostels and above all an opportunity for them to come in and talk, was something we would endeavour to continue despite criticism of the "I would not help those layabouts" kind. Before we label these people or hesitate to support Welfare work because of them, let us remember that loneliness, mental illness, mental breakdown and similar problems are the silent causes of their holding up the "Broadway" or awaiting a soup-round in the various parts of London.

Presenting the fifth annual report gives me great satisfaction and pleasure, not so much because we have helped but rather because we have had the co-operation of so many people for the benefit of those less fortunate. The Bureau and its development has depended at all times on the efforts of our voluntary workers, and without them an annual report would be a flimsy affair.

On the subject of the voluntary contribution I must mention the tremendous show of strength by the Irish people in London for the cause of Welfare. On the instigation of the Council of Irish County Associations the first London Irish Festival day was held at Chelsea Football Ground. We were pleased to be one of the Welfare organisations who benefited financially from the festival and we know the monetary gain was important, but the Bureau gained as much from the experience of building a fellowship with a united front for one common cause. I would like to pay tribute to the many people who worked so hard to make this step forward possible. I feel it was one that will have far-reaching benefits for our community.

It was our most successful year for fund raising. As a bonus to our dances, jumble sales, card drives and support from County and Parish Associations, we had three massive financial infusions - the successful car raffle, the festival, and the £1,000 donation from the West London Irish Society. No words of mine are eloquent enough to express our thanks for these donations. To the donor of the car for his generosity and support, a heartfelt thanks.

In conclusion I salute Sr. Jane and staff and thank them for their loyal support and co-operation. To you, our happy band of voluntary workers, we are most grateful for your continued help. Keep up the good work, we need you so much. As a small cog in a very big wheel we acknowledge the support and encouragement of the Hammersmith Borough Council and our fellow members in the Hammersmith Voluntary Services Council. To my fellow priests in St. Augustines a sincere thank you for your continued interest in the work of the Bureau. With this spirit of co-operation so readily available I look forward to 1976.

Brian Lawlor, OSA.

SOCIAL WORKER'S REPORT

I have found from experience that Annual Reports tend to raise unrealistic expectations in various types of people who apply to voluntary agencies for help. Annual reports stress the positive work done by the agency. The work done will have stretched the agency's resources to their limits. People do not seem to recognise this, and when an agency such as the Hammersmith Irish Welfare Bureau offers a service in an "area of need", people make very big demands and expect them all to be met. I would therefore wish to stress that the Hammersmith Irish Welfare Bureau is a voluntary organisation with very limited resources. It is "primarily for the Irish Immigrants but not exclusively so".

Resources

- a) Since 1971 the Bureau has received a small yearly grant from Hammersmith Borough Council. This year the grant was increased to £840 which, in the present financial climate, was a very generous gesture.
- b) We were also fortunate to receive a grant of £2,000 from the first London Irish Festival held last July to help Irish Centres and Societies engaged in welfare work for Irish Immigrants in the London area.
- c) The Federation of Irish Societies paid the yearly rental fee for one telephone. We are most grateful for these grants.
- d) The additional funds needed to cover the work and administration of the Bureau were raised by individual contributions from County Associations, Parish Associations and by jumble sales, dances, disco's and raffles organised by our enthusiastic and generous supporters. Our sincere thanks are due to all concerned in these fund-raising efforts.
- e) The special raffle for the Ford Escort car raised £5,000 for the "New Hostel" Development fund. However, a very considerable amount of money is still needed before the proposed hostel for young Irish working men gets off the ground.

Contrary to many peoples' expectations we are : A) Not an Accommodation Agency and we do Not have units of accommodation in which we can house Irish families or childless couples who come to London and find themselves homeless in an area in which homelessness is a major problem. The best we can do accommodationwise at present is to recommend hotels, bed-and-breakfast and lodging-house hostel accommodation, and "good digs" (when there are vacancies available), to responsible young single people who come to London prepared to support themselves for some time while seeking suitable employment. In cases of need, a few nights' emergency accommodation is given at our expense to single people in bed-and-breakfast lodging-house establishments, or in hostels. Due to the high cost, we cannot offer to do this for families. I would ask Emigrant Bureaux in Ireland to continue to discourage families from coming to Great Britain unless they have Employment and Homes to come to.

B) We are Not an Employment Agency, but if responsible young people with experience of particular work and with good references come to us we can sometimes put them in touch with people offering suitable employment.

Requests from other Agencies: We had numerous requests from local authority social workers and social workers from voluntary agencies for financial help for families with rent, light and gas arrears. We gave considerable help in this area of need but eventually reluctantly had to refuse help, as the demands were far beyond our resources. We are NOT a Charitable Trust and have no funds invested from which we could help with these problems.

In spite of the lack of accommodation, employment and other resources, and with limited funds, a considerable amount of financial, material, supportive help, information and advice was given to many people who applied to the Bureau. The following figures and the statistical tables at the back of the report show the extent and variety of help given.

Number of cases dealt with :	881
This figure is made up of :	
a) New applications :	635
b) Cases continued from previous years :	246

Long term help was given in 64 of these cases.

This total of 881 cases dealt with shows a marked increase on 840 in our last report which actually covered a 14 month period. There were 85 clients newly arrived from Ireland as compared with 41 in our last report.

The "newly arrived" included many young persons, who had done quite well in their Leaving Cert. exams but who did not qualify for a grant to go to University or College, or who could not find employment in Ireland on leaving school. Some of these expressed the sentiments "that they feel they had been a burden on their parents long enough and wished to help the family by leaving home and getting work in England".

I appeal to parents and to all people dealing with such young persons to discourage such thinking. The situation in Great Britain is similar. School leavers with good O and A level Certs. are finding it very hard to get employment. In view of the high rate of unemployment and the lack of suitable accommodation at reasonable prices, encouraging young persons to come to London could be the means of leading them into a life of degradation.

The work done in the 881 cases dealt with entailed:-

Interviews	2,107
Home visits	385
Hospital visits	80
Prison visits	10
Supportive appearance in Court	6
Bureau Business	83
Escorted to the train or boat	28

We also had 2,450 telephone enquiries.

The cost of direct basic help given to persons applying to the Bureau was:-

Emergency accommodation	£ 482. 00
Meal Vouchers and groceries given to families	£ 538. 00
General Welfare (small grants and fares)	£ 326. 00
	<u>£1346. 00</u>

This total does not include the following expenses:-

- a) Grants given to families with financial problems.
- b) Grants given under our Summer holiday scheme to help with holidays for unsupported mothers or single elderly persons.
- c) Grants given to supplement fares in cases of repatriation.
In certain specific cases the Irish Embassy refunds to the Bureau the cost of the fare from London to the port of disembarkation in Ireland. It is not always practical to ask a client to hitchhike the rest of the way home or to look for further help at the port of disembarkation. Money given for food etc. on the way home is included under General Welfare.
- d) The cost of Administration including car expenses.
- e) The Social Worker's Salary.

Material help was given by way of clothing, footwear, household articles, furniture and bedclothes. We get a great demand for these items and welcome gifts, especially of bedclothes, mensclothing, shirts, socks and footwear. Please note !!!

The work of the Bureau could not be done without the co-operation of many people - my colleagues in the Bureau, social workers in Statutory and voluntary organisations, the staff and owners of hostels and boarding houses to whom we send our clients, and the friends and supporters of the Bureau.

I assure them all of our thanks.

Sister Jane Francis Dip. Soc. Econ. Stud.
C.M.W.
M.B.A.S.W.

SIMPLE ANALYSIS OF REFERRALS

Age Groups:

0-16	17-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not known
239	65	53	102	134	143	59	43	26

Types of problem:

	Nov-Oct 1972-73	Nov-Dec 1973-74	1975
New arrivals from Ireland	85	41	96
Financial	183	254	207
Accommodation	268	241	229
Employment	62	67	58
Information	35	46	32
Advice	28	74	54
Material (Clothing, food vouchers, etc)	36	98	157
Personal	63	50	28
Marital	27	35	22
General Welfare	10	61	45
Emotional and Mental	25	28	33
Ex-offenders	15	26	21
Alcoholic, drugs, etc	10	21	20
Pregnant & Unmarried mothers	14	18	21
Repatriation	20	18	9

* * * * *

Males	330	436	465
Females	341	332	229
Families	60	121	95
Cases continued from previous years	72	149	246
Domiciliary visits	208	185	385
Hospital visits	41	52	80
Prison visits (including supportive appearances in Court)	35	10	10
Continued supportive work	40	48	64
Telephone enquiries		2400	2450
Escorts to trains, planes etc for repatriation			28

SOURCES OF REFERRALS

	1972-73	1973-74	1975
Personal application	92	197	194
Clergy	73	172	183
'Friend'	30	137	127
London Borough of Hammersmith	42	63	14
Medical Social Workers (Hospitals)	10	15	6
Health Visitors (L.B.H.)	2	6	1
Citizen's Advice Bureau	2	4	3
Probation Service	-	5	1
'Roof'	-	-	1
Irish Centre, Camden Town	-	6	2
Centre Point	-	51	30
Legion of Mary	-	-	1
Samaritans	-	5	3
Cyrenians	-	3	1
Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (Dublin)	-	7	11
Chas	-	-	1
St. Vincent de Paul	-	-	1
Crac	-	-	2
D.H.E.S.	-	-	2
Shac	-	-	2
AA	-	-	1
Chiswick Women's Aid	-	2	3
Wandsworth Women's Aid	-	-	1
Relatives	-	-	24

* * * * *

OTHER LONDON BOROUGHES

Brent	10	1	6
Barnet	-	-	2
Camden	-	-	3
Greenwich	-	-	1
Kensington & Chelsea	23	3	1
Wandsworth	20	3	7
Walthamstow	-	-	1
City of Westminster	17	5	2

COUNTIES OF EIRE AND NORTHERN IRELAND

County	1972-73	1973-74	1975
Antrim	4	36	19
Armagh	1	10	5
Cavan	4	5	4
Carlow	5	4	1
Clare	14	9	16
Dublin	90	103	62
Cork	54	102	65
Derry	5	7	9
Donegal	3	20	25
Down	38	9	1
Fermanagh	-	-	4
Galway	16	40	30
Kerry	21	22	29
Kildare	1	4	11
Kilkenny	2	12	12
Leitrim	3	8	3
Limerick	3	8	26
Longford	2	3	6
Louth	4	6	4
Mayo	15	23	31
Meath	3	5	4
Monaghan	2	8	6
Offaly	1	5	8
Roscommon	3	8	3
Sligo	6	9	15
Tipperary	20	21	23
Tyrone	-	-	6
Waterford	10	22	12
Westmeath	1	11	6
Wexford	8	8	11
Wicklow	1	2	4

'Irish', county unknown - 34

Other nationalities - unknown - 4

OTHER NATIONALITIES

	1972-73	1973-74	1975
<u>United Kingdom</u>			
England	110	83	78
Scotland	18	25	33
Wales	2	4	8
* * * *			
Australia	2	4	2
Burma	-	1	1
Canada	-	2	1
Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	-	-	2
Egypt	-	2	1
Fiji	-	-	1
France	-	-	2
Gibraltar	-	-	1
Guyana	-	1	1
India	2	1	1
Jordan	-	-	1
Malta	-	-	1
Mexico	-	-	1
Philippines	-	-	1
Poland	1	1	11
West Indies	3	5	4
S. Africa	-	-	2
Venezuela	-	-	1