

THE COUNCIL FOR THE IRISH CENTRE,
51/52 CAMDEN SQUARE, LONDON, N.W.1.

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ending
31st December, 1966.

As we write these lines in 1967, we can look back with a certain amount of sadness on the year that is past. Sadness, not because of lack of progress in the Irish Centre but because of the departure of Rev. Fr. Sweeney, Director. These few lines are a tribute to the work done by him during his term of directorship. Fr. Sweeney can be termed a 'progressive' in the best sense of the word - his work always and at all times was to make the Centre what it should be. During his time here even though not in good health at all times, the Centre went from strength to strength due to his initiative and his interest in the welfare of Irish emigrants. In October Fr. Murray took over the directorship and continued the good work so ably fulfilled by his predecessor. To both of them the Centre owes a great deal.

1. HOSTELS: (numbers accommodated during the year):
- (a) MEN: (1) at 51/2 Camden Square 618
(2) at 57 Tollington Park 177
Total 795 (590 in 1965)
- (B) GIRLS: At 29/31 Hornsey Lane Gardens 592 (436 in 1965)
- TOTAL (both sexes) kept in 1966 ... 1387 (1026 in 1965)

This brings the total numbers accommodated since 1955 to 15,197 (7,633 men and 7,564 girls).

NOTES:

- (1) of those kept in our hostels 94 men and 57 girls gave their age as under eighteen;
- (2) 230 men and 165 girls were without means on arrival - the majority of whom were first-time emigrants.
- (3) During the year a number of Irish Bank Officials were accommodated in our hostels during the Bank strike in Ireland.

2. SUMMARY OF WELFARE REPORT:

It is a remarkable coincidence that the number of people catered for by the Welfare Office in 1966 was 1966. In 1965 the figure was 1803 and in 1964 it was 799. So that, despite the fall in emigration figures the demands on our services have increased. The following is a break-down of the figures:

	First-time Emigrant	Others	Total
MALE	1007	468	1475
FEMALE	260	109	369
FAMILIES	30	35	65
TOTAL	1297	612	1909
		Other Nationalities	57
		GRAND TOTAL	1966

149 persons (111 boys and 38 girls) were under eighteen years of age. Most of these were re-patriated. These figures are an increase of fifty per cent on last year and are very alarming. It does not seem to be realised in Ireland that wages paid to juveniles under eighteen years are less than those paid to adults, and are not sufficient to provide for persons living away from home - it is assumed that persons under eighteen years are living with their families.

There is also an increase in the older age-group - the over forty-fives. There were 133 last year, 95 men and 38 women, compared with 97 in 1965.

Dublin sent the most, 621 (417 in 1965), followed by Cork 220 (153 in 1965), Limerick 125 (84 in 1965) and Tipperary 115 (52 in 1965). Among the enquiries handled by the Welfare Office during the year were 1266 for accommodation, 1118 for employment, 548 for financial assistance, 81 psychiatric cases, 80 re-patriations and numerous others with every possible kind of problem. It was gratifying to note a decrease in the number of psychiatric cases, but this was offset by an increase in those requiring re-patriation.

There is an office of the Marian Employment Agency in the Irish Centre and it must be recorded that the help and co-operation they have offered to the Welfare Office is most necessary and is very much appreciated.

We owe a debt of gratitude also to the Welfare Services of the London Borough of Camden for their kind co-operation and help; to the Irish Embassy, the Ministry of Social Security, Ministry of Labour, Crusade of Rescue, Legion of Mary, the Irish emigrant Chaplains and numerous others without whose willing and understanding help the task would have been impossible.

(It should be noted that the figures given here do not include many cases dealt with by post and telephone, nor do they include the hundreds of moral welfare cases dealt with by the chaplains.

It should be noted also that the policy of the Irish Centre does not cater nor encourage 'layabouts'. No able-bodied man or woman is ever given financial assistance, until he first accepts employment and this assistance is only given after thorough investigation and then in cases of genuine distress)

The Administrative Committee place on record their appreciation of the tremendous work done by Dr. L. Morton whose dedication is an inspiration to all.

IRISH CENTRE CLUB:

Our gratitude is due to the Club Committee and its willing band of helpers for their devoted and self sacrificing work during the year. Parish Re-Unions organised by priests from Ireland continue to increase.

As in 1965 a large number of Old Age Pensioners from the Borough were entertained at the Club's Annual Christmas Party.

The Bacon & Cabbage Dinners were still as popular as ever on Saturday evenings.

New efforts:

1. The charge for temporary membership introduced at the Club Annual General Meeting last year was put into operation and is a very successful innovation;
2. A Gala occasion during the year was the Football Game in the White City Stadium between the All Stars (members of Irish Showbands) and a team composed of past exponents of Gaelic Football. A very successful dance was held afterwards in the Galtymore, Cricklewood. To Mr. Thomas O'Gorman a very special word of thanks is due for his sincere interest and hard work in this highly successful event of the year.
3. A very successful Garden Fete was held during the year.

4. Starting last October, a second night of Bingo was introduced and was an unqualified success. It has helped to solve the problem of our £1,000 Bingo Licence.
5. A pleasant outing was had by all to the Portsmouth Irish Centre, this will now be an annual event.

FINANCE:

The Accounts show that our liabilities have increased by £20,619 to £59,160, whilst our fixed assets have increased by £20,713 to £89,004. It should be pointed out that 'fixed assets' represent capital expenditure to date, less depreciation and bear no relation to the aggregate current market values of our properties.

In reviewing the reliability of our sources of revenue it will be noted that the total received during the year from covenants, appeals, collections and donations offset approximately the amount of the overall deficit in revenue.

The Covenants of £1,101 were from the following:-

Arthur Guinness, Son & Co. Ltd.	£850,
M.J. Gleeson, Ltd.	£100,
The Slattery Foundation	£100,
Miscellaneous	£ 57.

Church Appeals - £2,944.

Brompton -	£498	Lewisham	£204
Wembley	£315	Kenton	£182
Chiswick	£249	Kingsland	£148
Highbury	£235	Clapton	£120
Fulham Road	£222	Walworth	£120
Stockwell	£218	Bermondsey	£109
Enfield	£214	Paddington	£104.

We express sincere thanks to our Patrons for permission to make these appeals in their Houses and to the Parish Priests for permission to appeal in their Churches.

Appeal to Irish Clergy	£960.
Donations, Grants, etc.	£5,074.

Donations from Irish County Associations (£501)	Donegal Social Club	£100
	Fermanagh	£ 75
	Donegal Society	£ 61.17. 6d
	Sligo Association	£ 50
	Galway Association	£ 50
	Westmeath "	£ 50
	Clare "	£ 50
	Limerick "	£ 25
	Wicklow "	£ 20
	Monaghan "	£ 20
Council of Irish County Associations £100		

Cardinal Heenan	£1000	The Bishop of Cloyne	£25
Irish Bank Officials Union	£ 250	Miss Scann ll	£25
Irish Dance Hall Proprietors	£ 100	Fr. Hayes	£25
Portsmouth Irish Society	£ 100	Mr. B Wall	£21
Fr. Fitzpatrick, Clzre	£ 100	Kentish Town P.T.A.A.	£10
Islington Borough Council	£100	Archbishop Simms	
Guinness G.A.A. Wembley	£ 63/10.	(Dublin)	£10
Irish Club	£ 50	St. Christophers Club	£10
Estate of M. Clinton, decd.	£ 50	M.J Burgess	£10
Wembley Irish Society	£ 26	D. Matthews	£10
The Dean of Lourdes	£ 190		

In conclusion the Committee would wish to express sincere thanks to our Patrons for their encouragement, and particularly to Cardinal Heenan; to the priests of the various parishes who have been so co-operative, to our many friends, helpers and benefactors, to the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Council of Irish County Associations and other Irish organisations which help us from their limited resources, to our Consulting Engineer Mr. Noel O'Connell, our Honorary Accountant Mr. P.J. Keegan and our Auditors Messrs C.F. Burton & Co, represented by Mr. T. Brennan for their continued generous assistance.

A special word of thanks is due to all our staff for their hard work and loyal service.