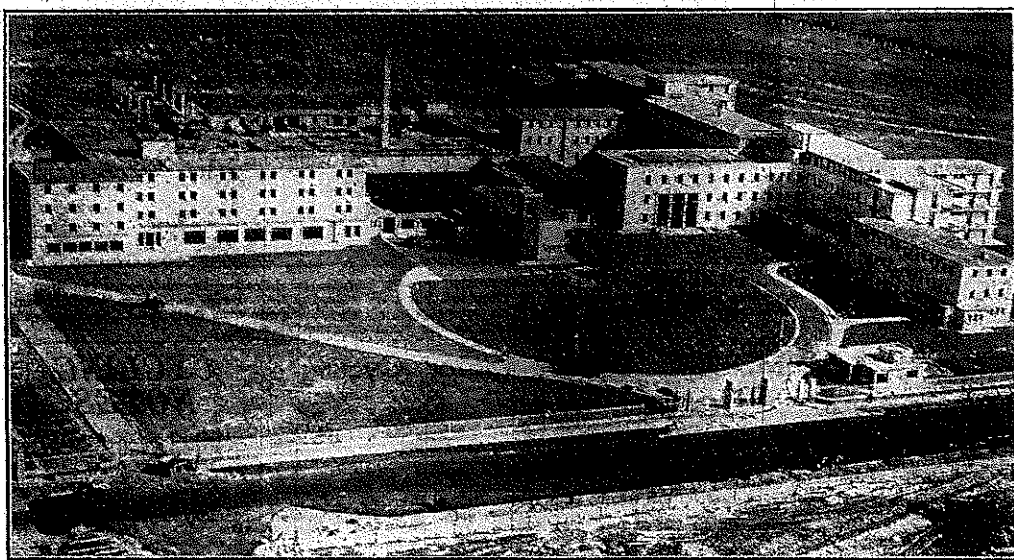


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A striking aerial view of the Limerick Regional Hospital, which was officially opened on Monday last.

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Interesting Story Of Big Undertaking

AN interesting story of how the Regional Hospital came to be built and how the work progressed was given by the architect and designer, Chevalier P. J. Sheahan, F.R.I.A.I., at the ceremony of formal opening on Monday. He said:—

This ceremony to-day marks the end of a strenuous effort to provide Limerick with a modern regional hospital. The story is a long one and it might be said to have started with the report and recommendations of the Hospitals' Commission on the hospital situation in Limerick City and County which was issued in May, 1938—nineteen years ago.

The main recommendation of the Commission was as follows:— "The erection of a new general hospital of 200 beds adjacent to Limerick City and County and to be a Regional Hospital centre for Clare, Tipperary, and perhaps North Kerry."

In the following year, 1937, a Joint Committee of the Limerick County Board of Health, and Limerick Corporation was set up and held its first meeting on the 29th October, 1937, at the County Council offices. I am glad to say that a number of the members of that Joint Committee are with us to-day. Some, however, of the most energetic workers on this scheme, Mr. John McCormack, for many years Chairman of the Limerick County Council and Limerick County Board of Health; Mr. John Quaid, of Milford, also for some years Chairman of the Board of Health; and Mr. John King, for many years Secretary to the Limerick County Board of Health, have since gone to their eternal reward.

At this first meeting in October, 1937, I was appointed as architect for the project. Advertisements were issued inviting offers for sites and when the Committee met a month later, 18 offers were considered. These were examined by Dr. McPolin, Co. M.O.H., and myself, and as a result, the choice was reduced to two sites, one at Ballycummin and the other at Doora Doyle. After further consideration, the Committee decided on the Doora Doyle site. It was not found possible to reach agreement with the landowner on the purchase price and finally it was found necessary to proceed with a Compulsory Purchase Order. Occasional meetings of the Joint Committee were held up to 1939, and in July, 1939, I was in a position to supply a detailed report on the proposed hospital and a set of draft plans. I may mention at this point that in the preparation of the scheme to the sketch plan stage, I had the invaluable assistance of Messrs. Stanley Hall, Easton, and Robertson, the eminent Consulting Architects of London.

OFFER OF SITES.

The estimated cost of the hospital at that time, 1939, was a little over £300,000, provision being made for 241 beds.

The question of the acquisition of the site now arose, and as the Joint Committee had no official status, it was decided that the Compulsory Purchase Order would be made by the Limerick County Board of Health. The necessary legal preliminaries were put in hand and handled by Mr. Maurice Noonan, solicitor to the Board of Health, and the final confirmation of the order was received in February, 1940. The area of land acquired was approximately 34 acres.

PLANS REVISED.

The emergency caused by the effects of World War II now brought building to a standstill, but during the following years I was in close touch with the medical and architectural advisers of the Department of Health, and the plans were revised and brought to their final stage, making provision for 288 beds.

I would like to pay a tribute here to the co-operation received from Dr. Lysaght, Department of Health, and from Mr. Norman White, Chief Architectural Adviser, Department of Health, at all stages of the planning.

As soon as emergency conditions began to ease off, arrangements

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

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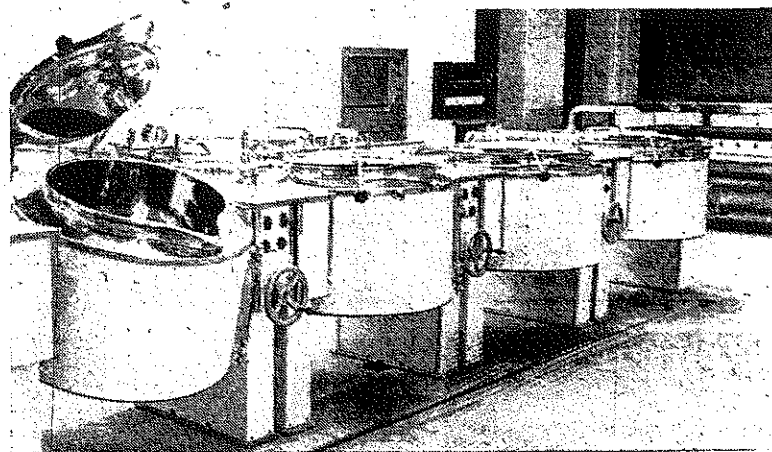
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