

# 2 . Major cash boost for Regional

A £350,000 allocation to improve facilities at Unit 5B, a 50-bed Acute Psychiatric Unit at the Regional Hospital, Limerick, has been announced by the Mid-Western Health Board.

However, the board has warned that further progress in developing community-based mental health services in the region is dependent on a massive injection of capital investment from the exchequer.

"We are already on record as welcoming the support given to our modernisation policy by the Minister during his recent visit to Limerick.

This policy will involve the closure of St. Joseph's Hospital, but there is a limit to what we can do out of our own resources at a time when our allocation has been declining in real terms for the past eleven years", said special hospitals programme manager Stiofan de Burca.

Welcoming the publication of the 1988 reports of the Inspector of Mental Hospitals, Dr. Dermot Walsh, which were critical

of conditions in St. Joseph's at the time, Mr. de Burca said: "These criticisms were made during the early stages of a period of revolutionary change in our psychiatric service.

"Improvements across the board have been noted in later reports by the inspector, which have not been published, and in particular the 1991 report."

Mr. de Burca said the 1991 report included an overview which stated: "Our final impression on the Limerick psychiatric service on this visit is the progress which we have observed in improving this service in recent years, which continues.

"We are happy to record the clearly perceived objectives on the part of management, clinical and non-clinical, and an enthusiasm in working towards those objectives."

Mr. de Burca said that admissions to St. Joseph's in recent years had been drastically reduced. The rate had fallen from 10.7 per thousand to 5.9 per thousand in city and county, i.e., from one of the highest to the lowest admission rates

in the country. There had been only 64 direct admissions to St. Joseph's in 1991.

2,500 acute cases were dealt with in day hospitals in Limerick in 1991, in contrast with the 1,000 in-patient acute cases.

Eighteen community residences are now operating in the Limerick area, catering for former long-stay patients.

Mr. de Burca said that there had been significant improvements in industrial relations and staff training over the past four years. He added that the bottom line in introducing further improvements was money.

"The new style service in the Mid-West," he stated, "has been brought about against a background of constant annual reductions in the revenue allocation for mental health.

"In fact, the special hospitals care programme has borne a significant portion of the board's shortfall in its revenue requirements since 1986.

"Our records show that no capital sum has been

allocated to the Mid-West to develop these services since 1987. Despite this, the Mid-Western Health Board has managed to find over £1,000,000 from its own scant resources to develop alternatives to consigning people to Victorian era institutions."

Mr. de Burca said he was aware that the contents of the Inspector's reports for 1988 and 1989 on St. Joseph's would give people cause for concern.

"However, it is important to bear in mind that these reports are a snapshot of a particular moment in time, at the start of a revolution in our Mental Health Care System.

"When the reports for subsequent years are published, and the sooner the better, I am confident that people will appreciate the sweeping changes for the better that have taken place.

"The ball is now at the Minister's feet. Our message to him is give us the money and we will finish the job", he said.

**MARIAM O'DONOVAN**

103 O'Connell Street, Limerick.  
Tel. 061 - 53789.

**Summer  
Sale**

beginning

**Friday, June 12**

at 9.30 a.m.

—Fantastic Reductions in  
Special Occasion Wear, Co-  
ordinates, Knitwear & Shoes.  
—Large Selection of Bridal  
Gowns also reduced.

(16c)

**The**

**COMPUTER**

2.

# Major cash boost for Regional

A £350,000 allocation to improve facilities at Unit 5B, a 50-bed Acute Psychiatric Unit at the Regional Hospital, Limerick, has been announced by the Mid-Western Health Board.

However, the board has warned that further progress in developing community-based mental health services in the region is dependent on a massive injection of capital investment from the exchequer.

"We are already on record as welcoming the support given to our modernisation policy by the Minister during his recent visit to Limerick.

This policy will involve the closure of St. Joseph's Hospital, but there is a limit to what we can do out of our own resources at a time when our allocation has been declining in real terms for the past eleven years", said special hospitals programme manager Stiofan de Burca.

Welcoming the publication of the 1988 reports of the Inspector of Mental Hospitals, Dr. Dermot Walsh, which were critical

of conditions in St. Joseph's at the time, Mr. de Burca said: "These criticisms were made during the early stages of a period of revolutionary change in our psychiatric service.

"Improvements across the board have been noted in later reports by the inspector, which have not been published, and in particular the 1991 report."

Mr. de Burca said the 1991 report included an overview which stated: "Our final impression on the Limerick psychiatric service on this visit is the progress which we have observed in improving this service in recent years, which continues.

"We are happy to record the clearly perceived objectives on the part of management, clinical and non-clinical, and an enthusiasm in working towards those objectives."

Mr. de Burca said that admissions to St. Joseph's in recent years had been drastically reduced. The rate had fallen from 10.7 per thousand to 5.9 per thousand in city and county, i.e., from one of the highest to the lowest admission rates

in the country. There had been only 64 direct admissions to St. Joseph's in 1991.

2,500 acute cases were dealt with in day hospitals in Limerick in 1991, in contrast with the 1,000 in-patient acute cases.

Eighteen community residences are now operating in the Limerick area, catering for former long-stay patients.

Mr. de Burca said that there had been significant improvements in industrial relations and staff training over the past four years. He added that the bottom line in introducing further improvements was money.

"The new style service in the Mid-West," he stated, "has been brought about against a background of constant annual reductions in the revenue allocation for mental health.

"In fact, the special hospitals care programme has borne a significant portion of the board's shortfall in its revenue requirements since 1986.

"Our records show that no capital sum has been

allocated to the Mid-West to develop these services since 1987. Despite this, the Mid-Western Health Board has managed to find over £1,000,000 from its own scant resources to develop alternatives to consigning people to Victorian era institutions."

Mr. de Burca said he was aware that the contents of the inspector's reports for 1988 and 1989 on St. Joseph's would give people cause for concern.

"However, it is important to bear in mind that these reports are a snapshot of a particular moment in time, at the start of a revolution in our Mental Health Care System.

"When the reports for subsequent years are published, and the sooner the better, I am confident that people will appreciate the sweeping changes for the better that have taken place.

"The ball is now at the Minister's feet. Our message to him is give us the money and we will finish the job," he said.

## MARIAM O'DONOVAN

103 O'Connell Street, Limerick.  
Tel. 061 - 53789.

# Summer Sale

beginning

## Friday, June 12

at 9.30 a.m.

- Fantastic Reductions in Special Occasion Wear, Co-ordinates, Knitwear & Shoes.
- Large Selection of Bridal Gowns also reduced.