

Noonan gives further £24m to hospital

By EUGENE PHELAN

HEALTH Minister Michael Noonan this Tuesday sanctioned a £24m extension to Limerick Regional Hospital.

And while some opponents criticised the timing of the announcement, there was no doubt that it would boost Minister Noonan's vote in the election.

The cost of phase two will be in the order of £13.15m, and work is scheduled to begin in August by John Sisk & Son.

"Phase two will cost in the region of £24m after equipping and furnishing and taken with the cost of phase one will bring the total commitment to the hospital to over £40m," said Minister Noonan.

He said that the fact that the building would begin before the end of the summer was evidence of his commitment to getting the second phase of the development underway without delay.

"This reflects the importance this Government attaches to the role the Regional has to play in providing acute services for the

population of the Mid-West," said Minister Noonan.

The new wing will include a new paediatric unit, new laboratory, new designed hospital course, physical medicine

rehabilitation, a refurbished radiology department, a refurbished accident and emergency department, and a refurbished central sterile supplies department.

"In addition, the board will be building a new

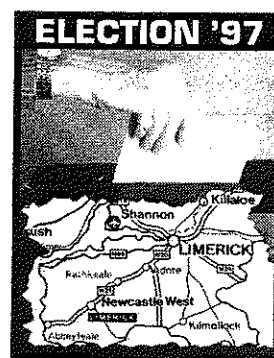
orthopaedic trauma unit to supplement the existing orthopaedic services in the region. In this context, I am pleased to announce that I have approved a fifth consultant orthopaedic surgeon post for the Mid-West," he stated.

Wade tackles FG's dogs of war

EDDIE Wade's campaign feels a bit like Napoleon's march from Moscow - very fast and disorganised at times.

"The rest of them are way up the road. They're going through places too fast. Get then to slow down," he constantly asked his lieutenants, as he canvassed the Dublin Road and Rhebogoe areas on Monday evening.

A crowd of 40 or so left the A1 Bar and marched out the Dublin Road, hoping to cover between 600 and 700 houses before calling it a night. Before they even reached the Parkway the group was fragmented, with a large crowd already in Rhebogoe while Cllr Wade and his aide, former City Councillor Larry Cross were still at the wrong side



of the roundabout.

But logistical problems aside, Cllr Wade feels this is his year.

It is his third Dail campaign, and he had come agonisingly close in the past - the last time he missed the seat by just 74 votes.

"I feel it going well, and we are getting a great reac-

tion on the doorsteps. I am better know now than ever. I am getting a better reaction the then last time, and I honestly fell this is my time. I always pick up a good city vote and a good GAA vote as well as the country vote, and people are saying I am entitled to my break by now.

"This election is different from the last one. Then you could fill the first four seats with O'Dea, Noonan, O'Malley and Kemmy, and that left Peader Clohesy and myself fighting for the last one. But this time it is different. I don't see Kemmy or O'Malley doing as well again, and I'm confident."

"He should be confident," echoed Larry Cross.

A city canvass is less leisurely than a county canvass, and people don't tend to linger too long on the doorstep. A quick word, a quick job if Eddie knows them, and on to the next house.

At one house a small ter-



Hospital plans: The Minister for Health, Michael Noonan, at Limerick Regional Hospital this Tuesday when he announced £24m for the next stage of its development, with, from left, Paul Robinson, CEO, Mid-Western Health Board, Cllr John Ryan, Junior Minister for Technology, Pat Rabbitte, Nora Fitzpatrick, matron, and Cllr Jack Bourke, chairman, Mid-Western Health Board.

Sen Jan battles apathy Harney denies that Dessie is fighting to keep his seat

By TRISH O'DEA

"TIS sales people they should be, comments Frank O'Mahony of Mayorstone as he waves goodbye to Jan O'Sullivan's canvassers from his doorstep.

Frank is a nervous canvasser's dream come true. "Isn't the street alive?" Frank responds when asked if the interruption bothers him.

He admires the party faithful who walk the streets each evening with their candidates: "Every one of them is trying to do something good for the country."

The response on the whole is excellent when Senator O'Sullivan arrives on the doorsteps in Mayorstone, helped, no doubt, by the presence of local councillor, Frank Prendergast.

While happy with the response she is getting around Limerick East, Sen O'Sullivan is conscious of "a certain apathy about the election".

Niamh Bhreathnach's introduction of free third level education can be credited for at least one vote: one man, pointing to his son, tells her: "I am not forgetting the team that gave him free education."

He admits that he usually votes PD, but "they will only bring back Fianna Fáil, and I don't want that".

Sen O'Sullivan, a city councillor since 1985, member of the health board since 1991, senator since 1993, and Mayor of Limerick in 1993-94, she is hoping that her public image will help her build on her showing of 3,019 votes in the last election.

She is delighted with the response she received in areas such as Killeely and Moyross, but that one thing that came up again and again was the need for a feeling of security.

"They want to have the gardai out and about and visible in the communi-

ty—in their uniforms not in plain clothes," she says.

One woman asks for her help in getting a medical card.

"I am on the same pension as other people who have a medical card, and I have none," she says, and the Labour candidate promises to look into it.

Apathetic or not, there are still some who will hold the candidates that little bit longer, and make them work for a vote.

Emily Keyes in Mayorstone admits: "It can be a little testing and very demanding on the mental faculties if one is to make the right decision."

Emily admits to being less than knowledgeable about politics because, "I find it so boring".

But she only has one request for whoever gets in: "Be honest".

"Let's hope in all walks of life and in all places there are people with integrity left," she tells the Labour candidate.

By NORMA PRENDIVILLE

PD LEADER Mary Harney, last night rejected speculation that her colleague in Limerick East, Des O'Malley, would be fighting for the last seat.

"I don't think there is any question of fighting for the last seat," she told the Limerick Leader during a brief stopover visit to Newcastle West.

She acknowledged that it would be "difficult to hold the two seats", but dismissed rumours that Mr O'Malley was in any trouble.

"I don't believe that is the case," she said. Mr O'Malley had repre-

Clifford warning

FIANNA Fáil Limerick candidate Clifford, has warned of a per cent reduction in revised Structural Funds after 1999.

This, he said, has huge implications for Limerick West in relation to its support, rural development, such as Leader maintenance and environment programme.

Cllr Clifford said the Rainbow would be nodding to power, this would be nodding and it was vital "with a commitment to Ireland, such as displayed by Fianna Fáil will control Government".

into Newcastle helicopter, also a suggestion that the deal between Fianna Fáil and the PDs would be up.

"Bertie Ahern asked for transparency," said. "The Minister showed one third of the PD votes transferred and half the PD votes transferred to Fianna Fáil, that will move clearly we won't get more."

She was convinced there would be enough majority.

"It should be five seats to make get three three and to make sure two out of four." Ms Harney, who was "up-beat" about the situation, said.

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