

# Condition of city schools needs attention urgently

By PADDY MORONEY

THE condition of secondary schools in Limerick is a matter which needs urgent attention, according to Tommy Francis, a candidate in the forthcoming Seanad elections on a visit to the city.

He said that "the state of schools in Limerick, as evidenced in a survey" showed the need for a united voice for parents, teachers and "everyone with a stake in a better education service".

He added: "There is more than enough work to be done."

He was meeting local teachers as part of a country-wide itinerary from his home in Co Donegal.

In a statement issued afterwards, Mr Francis, a teacher himself, said he agreed with the Limerick teachers who had said that all the stakeholders in the second-level education system deserved full-time attention in the Seanad.

"Part-time senators must become a thing of the past," he advised.

"Unlike the primary and third-level education sectors, second-level education



Seanad candidate Tommy Francis, of the NUI panel, pictured at a recent meeting with West Limerick teachers (from left) Padraig Feehan, Bernatette Normoyle, John Hurley president-elect ASTI, and Tommy Francis.

has not had a Seanad representative for almost 30 years."

He reminded the Limerick teachers of the finding of a major survey on second-level schools in the Limerick area, undertaken for the ASTI, the secondary school teachers' union.

This showed that  
- 73% of schools relied on voluntary contributions for essential services;

- Only 8 out of 19 schools were able to offer two hours of physical education per week;

- Eleven out of nineteen schools had sought building extensions and had to rely on pre-fabs; and

- Only three had a medical or sick bay.

Mr Francis stated: "It is important that the NUI panel seats in the Seanad are independent of political parties or big business."

He said he believed that teachers and members of the other caring professions and services had a vital role to play in the social, economic, and cultural development of our country.

He said that the proper priorities should include "tackling educational disadvantage, fighting for a fairer taxation system, the development of a more caring and tolerant society, and the creation of real jobs for real people".

