

County Council, Minister And Housing Grants

Important discussion took place at a recent meeting of the County Council regarding the scheme of housing loans which the Council had unanimously adopted earlier in the year. The Co. Secretary (Mr. T. F. Brown) before the Council a report on the recent Council deputation to the Minister for Local Government on the housing loans question. The report was as follows:—

The Co. Secretary stated that the County Council (through the Housing Committee) had over a period of six months been considering a scheme which was finally approved and submitted to the Minister for Local Government on the 17th August. People throughout the county had become aware of the scheme through the Minister's reports and later the Minister's circular letter of 17th August. It had been received notifying the Council of the Minister's decision in respect of the scheme, which provided for grants of 12 1/2 per cent to persons who had already qualified for State Grants.

The Minister stated that he did not think an "open" scheme of the type submitted was the best one. He stated that there was need of some provision to help the smaller houses. The ratepayers should not be asked to carry the burden of providing houses for persons who were able to finance the building themselves.

SMALL FARMER CLASS.
The Chairman (Deputy Collins) stated that as Chairman for many years of a Public Utility Society he was fully aware that when the Council considered grants for housing loans there would be a large number of persons of the class known as "small farmers" who would benefit from the scheme. He stated that as a member of the Co. Council he had been prepared to recommend consideration of future schemes of the kind indicated by the Minister.

Deputy Hartney said that the Limerick Co. Council had not adopted this scheme — a committee had first examined the matter carefully and after consideration of all the relevant factors had decided on the scheme adopted. Originally it had been thought that a scheme to provide small farmers and agricultural labourers would suit but the point was raised that the people who would benefit most from the scheme were excluded from the benefits of it. After consideration of this and the administrative difficulty of dealing with the scheme and other limits (with- out being actually unjust to some persons), it was decided to fix the limits. A scheme of this type really will only benefit people living a house within the limits fixed for the State Grant.

Deputy Madden expressed agreement with the points put by the Minister although he had agreed with the scheme when first the Council.

WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE

The County Manager said that a deputation would appreciate the guidance as to the fixing of limits, etc., which would enable the Council to formulate a scheme of loans for a loan from Local Loans Funds.

The Secretary of the Department indicated that the definition "agricultural labourer" was very wide and that certain safeguards would be necessary in a scheme.

Mr. Murphy, Assistant Secretary of the Department, said the Co. Council might consider that where grants are given remission of rates need to be given also.

The Minister said that the decision given in the circular letter of 17/8/51 had been given by the Minister for Finance and he (Mr. Smith) was not in any position to consider it. Having stated that he appreciated the difficulty of drafting a kind of scheme he would like to see, he asked that the Council would submit modified proposals in

the matter.

The County Manager stated that the matter would be considered by the County Council. The deputation then thanked the Minister and his officials and withdrew.

SEVERAL APPLICATIONS

The Co. Secretary told the Council that he had received 32 applications already from people who could be classed as agricultural labourers and on whose behalf the Council would be entitled to borrow from the Local Loans Fund. They were the type of people whom in the ordinary way, the Council would be bound to house. Besides these there were numerous other applicants including seven farmers under the 10 valuation, 18 farmers over the 10 valuation, and nine persons who would come within the definition of the professional classes. There were five applications from people such as Gardai and other civil servants. The Council could not borrow from the Local Loans Fund for the purpose of giving grants to the last three categories of applicants. The Council thus had to consider the question of raising a loan from other sources such as an insurance company or a bank. The best quotation received was for £10,000 from the Irish Assurance Company, Ltd. at 4 per cent. for any period between ten and 25 years. Actually the Council had in mind borrowing £10,000 over a period of 25 years for the accommodation of the classes who would not come under the definition of agricultural labourers.

THOUGHT THEY SHOULD SCRAP THE SCHEME

Mr. D. P. Quill said that in view of the Minister's decision refusing to sanction the borrowing of money under the Local Loans Fund for all types of applicants, he thought they should scrap the whole scheme of grants. If they continued the scheme the Council would, in a few years, find itself embarrassed financially. Were he in order at the moment, he would have no hesitation at all in proposing that the scheme be abandoned.

The Chairman said the scheme had been sanctioned by the Minister, and approved unanimously by the Council.

Mr. J. Hayes said the Council should be proud that so many of its county agricultural labourers preferred to build their own houses to waiting for the Council to build them. These were the people the Council would be bound to house eventually, and the mere £125 they would give in grants would save them a tremendous amount, having regard to the £1,000 they would expend to erect a house in each case.

Mr. D. Naughton—If these people had any sense they would not apply for these grants. They don't know what they're letting themselves in for.

WOULD BE MOST DISHONOURABLE

The Chairman again pointed out that it would be a most dishonourable thing for the Council to withdraw a scheme of which the members had all approved, which had been advertised and for which applications had been received. The necessity for the scheme should be very apparent considering that over 30 agricultural labourers have applied. "I would like to make it quite clear," he said, "that in this scheme we will be providing mostly for the poorer type of person, whom we would have to house anyway."

The Secretary said that already they had got applications from 65 persons who would qualify for grants under the scheme already approved by the Council.

Mr. G. Hayes said that now the Council had adopted the scheme they should let it run for the whole period up to March 31st next. In the future he would be in favour of asking the Council to provide houses for the people who were unable to house themselves.

Mr. P. Maguire—Go ahead with the scheme for this year anyway. After further discussion, it was decided to leave the matter for later consideration by the special committee set up for that purpose, who will later report back to the Council.

NEWCASTLE WEST TRADERS AND COUNTY COUNCIL

"I THINK that until we re-establish the Town Commissioners we won't have any standing whatever," declared Mr. J. Murphy, P.C., at a meeting of the Newcastle West Traders and Ratepayers' Association, arising out of a discussion on complaints that replies were not being received to letters addressed to the County Council by the Association.

The Chairman (Mr. J. J. Phelan) said the question was one on which they could have the views of the townspeople. Personally, he felt that they could do very well without the Town Commissioners.

(The Newcastle West Town Commissioners were abolished in the early 1950's following a public opinion inquiry held into the administration of their affairs by Mr. J. P. Geraghty, Local Government Inspector.)

Earlier in the meeting Mr. R. Nash (Joint Hon. Secretary) had complained that no replies or even acknowledgments had been received to a number of letters addressed to the County Council on matters raised before meetings of the Association.

The Chairman remarked that his experience was that they never seemed to get satisfaction from letters addressed to the County Council or deputations to them.

Mr. P. Murphy, P.C.—What is our standing?

A BODY OF RATEPAYERS.
Chairman We should have some standing, anyway, as a representative body of ratepayers. At least we should get replies to our letters.

Mr. R. Nash said he thought it was only a waste of time to be writing letters to the Council.

Mr. Murphy—I think that until we re-establish the Town Commissioners we won't have any standing whatever.

The Chairman observed that the Town Commissioners had nothing to do with the matters under discussion. Over two years ago as the result of a deputation to the County Manager they were led to believe that a public sanitary service would be provided in the town, and still nothing was done. All they could do now was to ask the local Councilors to bring these matters before the Council. They could also ask the Co. Manager to receive a deputation to discuss the various matters under consideration.

Mr. T. Leslie inquired if there was any way of reviving the Town Commissioners.

Chairman—Of course we could have the views of the people of the town on that. I don't know what the people of the town think about it, but I feel myself that we could very well do without the Town Commissioners.

Mr. Murphy—I am afraid that we will have no standing until we get back the Town Commissioners.

IN THE HANDS OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE

Chairman—The question is entirely in the hands of the townspeople themselves. If the people want to revive the Town Commissioners it would be easy, I am sure, to find out how it could be done. If the members wish we can ask the Co. Manager when the deputation meets him if the Town Commissioners could be revived, but for my part I think we could very well do without such a body.

Mr. Leslie—I don't think so, because we are powerless otherwise.

Chairman—Very well. We can also bring that question before the Co. Manager and see what he has to say about it.

MEMORIAL CROSS

The Chairman said it had been suggested that a suitable protection railing should be erected round the Holy Year Memorial Cross which had been erected by the Association in the Square.

Mr. Cullhane said the suggestion had been made to him. It was felt only proper that an ornamental railing should be placed round the cross.

It was decided to ask Mr. Ambrose, B.E., for an estimate of the cost of the proposed railing.

TOWN LIGHTING

Mr. Leslie asked that steps be taken to provide the four additional lamps already agreed on at Maiden Street, North Quay, South Quay and Old Pike.

Mr. O'Neill said that an extra lamp was also wanted in Upper Maiden Street.

Mr. J. Roche complained that the Square was badly lighted. The public lighting of the town did not seem to be nearly as good as in Rathkeale.

A number of members complained of the obstruction caused by posts erected on some of the town footpaths by the Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

LIMERICK CITY STREET NOMENCLATURE

(To Editor of "Limerick Leader")

DEAR SIR—Once again we must say that your correspondent who writes for the Limerick Men's Social Club in Dublin is under a misapprehension about us. Before we say any more we will point out that there was nothing in our references to such a Club as he represents which could have been misconstrued. We suppose that a citizen here would incline to the belief that the existence of such clubs should mean something to the good and we are prepared to admit that Mr. Gleeson and his friends seem to have their sentiments in the right place with the City by the Shannon. Indeed, in general outlook he appears to us to be genuine.

Having conceded so much we must now come to the point where your correspondent tries to put one over on us by alleging that we are ignorant of the origin of street names. Mr. Gleeson has no right to make such an assertion. When a report of ours was published in the Press he saw fit to comment on it and said that three streets in Limerick—William Street, Catherine Street and Henry Street—were called after the Arthur family.

Limerick's famous historian, Maurice Lenihan, tells us that few streets in Limerick had particular names before the year 1786. Then there is no proof that William Street or Catherine Street was named after the Arthurs, as after 1786 the whole area embracing the streets mentioned was in the hands of the Sexton Perys. It is very unlikely that a Limerick Catholic would have been commended by these bigots. The historian says that George Street was called after King George of England in 1779. William Street was named in 1782, and Lenihan does not say that the street was called after one of the Arthurs.

There is a date stone in very good condition outside Houlahan's, at the top of William Street, which is inscribed June 2, 1789. We can remember that Edmund Sexton Pery was granted his spoils during the reign of Henry VIII, whose wife was Catherine.

One could, therefore, entertain a good suspicion that William Street, Catherine Street and Henry Street were given English titles, though we have not absolute proof to advance. An old map shows that Arthur's Quay, Patrick Street and Ellen Street were in the Irishtown district outside Newtown Pery, and we can be quite clear that these places were called after the Arthur family. Lenihan states that Patrick Street and Ellen Street were called after the Arthurs, but these places are not in our contention.

In the matter of nomenclature we believe that patriotic and renowned Limerick citizens should come first. Also we would particularly like to see Rutland Street changed officially in name because, contrary to what your correspondent has said, this has not been done. If one of the new name plates which the City Council have on hand is made out to show only Pádraig Matthew Street, then it would be time for us all to say that Rutland Street no longer exists.

Your correspondent tells us that he will avoid controversy. We are in full accord with him. We are of opinion that many streets in Limerick are of questionable origin and that a debate on nomenclature is due. The matter, however, does not concern only ourselves or Mr. Gleeson. It must be properly left to our City Councilors for future discussion.

The description of "The Parish" seems to contain an error as regards Catherine Hayes. Maurice Lenihan says that this lady was born in No. 4 Patrick Street (not Sheep Street).

We were glad that we were demolished because all that Mr. Gleeson sets forth is an admission of our belief that there are many places in Limerick which should be changed in title. In all that he says about Newtown Pery we are in agreement. In living memory all this district was English. Also we are grateful to him for his evident intention to give us a few compliments. We for our part will give full support to any plans which we deem to be of benefit here.

Any doubts about topography would be dispelled by a glance at the official City Electoral Lists, a copy of which we have seen, and which give not only the name Rutland Street, but also Little Catherine Street, which terminates Catherine Street.

Yours faithfully,
ST. JOSEPH'S CRAOBH, CLANN NA POBLACHTA—
J. O'BRIEN, Chairman.
P. J. DORR, Secretary.

LIMERICK LEADER

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1951

Things That Matter

THE reading needs and interests of children have at no time received the amount of attention in this country that they deserved. It is highly satisfactory to note, therefore, that the matter was the subject of very useful consideration at the Library Association Conference at Sligo last week. At that gathering a strong case was made for the establishment of juvenile sections in the public libraries and it was shown that in the absence of such departments the young mind was likely to suffer not only negatively but in a positive way as well.

★

Boys and girls of tender years are both impressionable and inquisitive and if they are not given something to read that will be not only instructive in a right way but also interesting they will very probably fall a prey to what will tend more to their degradation than to their upliftment. Ireland is at the moment being flooded with imported "comics" of a character definitely injurious to moral, mental and social well-being. An excellent and very necessary purpose would be served by providing an effective and wholesome antidote to these in the shape of suitable publications that would appeal to and be a source of sound enlightenment and inspiration to the young.

★

Mr. P. J. Madden, now Cork County Librarian and formerly Assistant Librarian for County Limerick, read a valuable paper on this very important question at the Sligo Conference. Pointing out that library provision for children in rural Ireland is "totally inadequate and unrealistic," he said that authority was given in the Library Acts to library authorities to establish libraries in schools and he urged that this be done. The county library authorities, he believed, would be the best fitted to take on this work but he held also that the State should be prevailed upon to give grants. Mr. Madden's views and others to which they gave rise are worthy of sympathetic examination with a view to seeing how they can be made the basis of definite and practical action.

★

In the meantime the inflow of "comics" of an undesirable character is a serious and urgent problem that ought to be tackled at once. We see no reason whatever why these harmful publications should not be rigidly excluded. Surely the country will be much better without them, because their circulation amongst our young people can do no good whatever while it is productive of immense harm. The so-called "intellectuals"—many of whom are in reality among the least intellectual of our people—would, no doubt, raise their eyes in horror at the idea of such interference with

ST. PATRICK'S H.C.