

## Chapter 3

# Society and the schools

Prof. David Gwynn Morgan.

## Part 1 Social, economic and family background

### *Child poverty in independent Ireland*

- 3.01** In a very real sense, poverty was the reason for the Industrial schools. The result of the adverse economic conditions of the times was that the late 1920s, 30s and 40s were scarred by deep poverty. All the classic signs were there: tuberculosis ('consumption'); rickets; anaemia; emigration; apathy; money-lending and high unemployment, especially in the cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick.
- 3.02** An economic depression lasted virtually throughout the 1920s and 30s. The war years, 1939-45, were a period of further economic decline, with urban unemployment and a drop in real wages of 30 percent between 1939 and 1943 and a recovery to the 1939 figure only in 1949. Even then stagnation set in until 1958. Thereafter, the economy grew at an unprecedented rate through the 1960s (about 4 percent pa) and through the 70s in a more patchy way.
- 3.03** Another contributory factor to child poverty was the fact that during the period 1930-80, Irish levels of fertility were consistently the highest in Western Europe. Infant mortality, often invoked as a guide to living standards, was 90 per 1,000 in 1914. Then there was a reduction but it rose significantly during World War II (indeed during the period 1936-48 it remained between 60-80 per 1,000).<sup>1</sup> In sum, it was inevitable that one of the major (if seldom noticed) problems of public policy would remain a significant number of poor families. At the root of this poverty was unemployment, coupled with the lack of welfare benefits. Usually the reason for low income was unemployment, which was heavily concentrated in Cork, Limerick, Waterford and especially Dublin. The following Table shows the unemployment rates.

**Unemployment rates**

Year	Dublin County Borough		National	
	Unemployed Figures	Rate as % of those available for work	Unemployed Figures	Rate as % of those available for work
1926	13,580	14.7	66,393	6.9
1936	17,500	13.2	83,235	8.5
1946	13,141	9.7	51,809	5.4
1951	9,293	6.2	36,115	3.8
1956	9,861	6.6	55,157	6.6
1961	8,559	6.1	46,989	5.7
1966	7,514	5.1	43,864	5.3

<sup>1</sup> C O'Grada *A Rocky Road: the Irish economy since the 1920s* (Manchester UP, 1997) 17, 194 and Table 1.5. In 1949, one child in 16 did not live to see his or her fifth birthday. 100 mothers died in childbirth in 1949 compared to fewer than one per year at present (Central statistics Office, 2000).

**3.04** This general view is confirmed by a number of empirical pioneering surveys in or about the 1940s by doctors or other public-spirited citizens. Writing in 1938 about the general population, Dr Fearon<sup>2</sup> estimated that a weekly income of 30 shillings per week would be needed to keep a person, and of this amount the expenditure on food would be 10 shillings for a diet which 'is almost' nutritionally adequate. Yet 50 percent of the population had a weekly income of 20 shillings or less and spent 8 shillings or less on food.<sup>3</sup> In the same year, the Rotunda Hospital, in inner North Dublin, almoners carried out a dietary survey on a small sample of 50 families living in one-roomed tenements where the breadwinner was unemployed – in other words the families whose children were most likely to be committed. The almoners found that when rent, insurance, fuel and light were paid, the average weekly sum available for food and clothes, for each family member, was 3 shillings.<sup>4</sup>

**3.05** A few years later, in 1945, the cost of living had increased and another study of family income told the same sad story. This study of 10,500 families drawn at random from the Corporation's information on families in Dublin, found that 55 percent of them had an income that was below £2.10s 0d. The significance of the figure of £2.10s is as follows. The unemployment assurance was relatively high but only lasted for a few months. Where a man was unemployed beyond this period, he and his family would go on to either home assistance or unemployment assistance. In 1945, in the case of Dublin residents, this was 30 shillings per week. In addition, children's allowances would bring in another 7s 6d, food and (in winter) fuel vouchers would bring in another 6 shillings, and there might also be a grant from St Vincent de Paul or another charity. Yet experts at the time stated that the weekly minimum cost for a healthy standard of living ranged from £3.5s 0d. to £4.18s 0d for a family with five children between the ages of five and 15 (taking the lowest figure for rent and for nutrition which will create healthy growth and resistance to the social disease of tuberculosis and rheumatism). Extrapolating from these figures, one can deduce that throughout the country, there was likely to have been at least 60,000 children who, because of either their parents' chronic unemployment or inadequate wages, were living at such levels of destitution as to make them eligible for Industrial Schools.<sup>5</sup>

**3.06** A 1948 survey contrasted two types of meals, the 'bread and spread' and the cooked meal. The 'bread and spread' consisted of a tea or milk drink, bread and a butter or jam spread. The cooked meal consisted of fish, meat, or eggs and may also have included potatoes and vegetables or a pudding. For children under 14 years of age in slum families, 44 percent of all the meals they ate were of the 'bread and spread' type, while these figures declined to 36 percent of children in artisan families, and 18 percent in middle class families. The survey found that intakes of milk and cheese were insufficient in all income groups, although the deficiencies were most marked in slum families.

**3.07** As to housing for the poor, there was even at the higher level a shortage of adequate accommodation at affordable rents and, at the lowest level, an absence of any accommodation that was not overcrowded, unheated or often rat-infested.<sup>6</sup> The conditions were 'often quite

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<sup>2</sup> F Fearon 'The National Problem of Nutrition' *Studies* vol 26 (March, 1938). Twelve similar figures are given in an article based on the families of 60 patients attending the Rotunda Hospital in GC Dokeray and WR Fearon 'Ante-Natal. Nutrition in Dublin' (1938) *Irish Journal of Medical Science* (6th series) 80.

<sup>3</sup> O'Kinneide and Maguire, pp 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> E Holmes 'Medical Social Work' at the Rotunda in A Browne (ed) *Masters, Midwives and Ladies in Waiting*, p 216.

<sup>5</sup> See, to similar effect: TWT Dillon MD 'The Social Services in Eire', *Studies*, September 1945 329; Dunne 'Poverty Problems for a Patriot Parliament' *Journal of the Statistical and Society Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 1922:190; Dr Clancy-Gore 'Nutritional Standards of some working class families in Dublin' *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vol 17 (1943-44) 241.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes of the City of Dublin 1938-43* (Dublin: Government Stationery Office, 1944), p 15, quoted in O'Kinneide and Maguire, p 22.

unsuitable for cattle'.<sup>7</sup> Writing about housing conditions especially in urban areas in the 1930s O'Connell and Maguire state:<sup>8</sup>

Studies ... especially in urban areas in the 1930s suggest that housing conditions improved little from the beginning of the Irish Free State. In fact, one report noted that the number of urban families living in unsuitable or hazardous conditions in the intervening years rose from 25,820, in 1913 to 28,200 in 1938, in spite of slum clearance efforts in the intervening years.

**3.08** As late as 1950, there were 6,300 tenements housing 112,000 people or nearly one-third of Dublin Corporation population.<sup>9</sup>

**Table showing number of rooms per household**

	1926	1936	1946	1961
	No of households/ persons	No of households/ persons	No of households/ persons	No of households/ persons
<b>All areas</b>				
<b>Private households in 1 room</b>	47,000 140,000	43,000 125,000	34,000 89,000	15,000 27,000
<b>- with 1 or 2 persons</b>	24,000 35,000	23,000 33,000	20,000 28,000	12,000 15,000
<b>- with 3-5 persons</b>	17,000 85,000	15,000 56,000	11,000 43,000	3,000 10,000
<b>- with 6+ persons</b>	6,000 41,000	5,000 36,000	3,000 18,000	321 2,000
<b>Dublin City and County</b>				
<b>Private households in 1 room</b>	27,000 89,000	27,000 92,000	22,000 66,000	11,000 21,000
<b>- with 1 or 2 persons</b>	12,000 18,000	16,000 22,000	14,000 19,000	9,000 12,000
<b>- with 3-5 persons</b>	11,000 42,000	11,000 42,000	9,000 33,000	2,000 8,000
<b>- with 6+ persons</b>	4,000 28,000	4,000 28,000	2,000 14,000	258 2,000

Source: Census of Population 1961, Vol VI: Housing and Social Amenities, Table 6

NB Because of rounding to nearest thousand sums may not add up.

**3.09** The Table shows that, for instance, in 1946, there were 3,000 households comprising six or more people living in one-room accommodation. Two-thirds of these one-room accommodation units were in Dublin City and County. These figures were worse in 1936 and worse again in 1926. By 1961, however, there had been significant improvement on the 1946 figures. Small wonder that the numbers of Dublin children committed for reasons of poverty were disproportionately high.

<sup>7</sup> TWT Dillon 'Slum clearance past and future' Studies, March 1945, pp 13-20.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Health, National Nutritional Survey (Dublin: Government Stationery Office, 1968) quoted in O'Connell and Maguire *The Industrial Schools: A Monograph*, pp 33-4, citing as sources: WT Dillon 'Slum Clearance Past and Future' Studies, March 1945, p 163; *The Standard*, 14th November 1931, p 9; *The Standard*, 27th September 1935, p 2; *Irish Weekly Independent*, 25th December 1937, p 8.

<sup>9</sup> K Kearns *Dublin Tenement Life* (Gill and Macmillan, 1995).

**3.10** As the country became less poor through the late 1950s and 1960s conditions improved. In 1936, in Dublin inner city, a family would have to consist of nine or more persons in one room to merit Corporation housing. Even then, many families living 12 in one room had to refuse the offer of a corporation house because they could not afford the rent. With the advent in 1950 of the differential rents system for corporation houses, this difficulty fell away and, by 1961, while conditions were still not good, a family of three or four had a reasonable chance of rehousing.

**3.11** Although conditions were worst in Dublin, they were also bad in the provinces. The following descriptions of family circumstances were collected by O’Cinneide and Maguire from ISPC files:<sup>10</sup>

- One-roomed house, mud-walled cabin, overcrowded and condemned by CMO. One bed for entire family (family of five, 1938, Arklow)
- Two-roomed house mud walls and thatched in very bad state of repair; no rent paid. Home congested and damp, unfit for human habitation (family of four, 1943, Wexford)
- Living in with the paternal grandfather in one room. Very little furniture. One double bed, poorly covered. One pram. Room clean and tidy. Family are overcrowded (family of six, 1954, Wicklow).

**3.12** Income shortage was often compounded by bad management and debt was a major problem. Credit unions did not start until the late 1960s. Moneylenders charged up to 100 percent interest and took children’s allowance books as security. One poor mother described her whirligig of debt – to the landlord, ESB, shop on the corner, moneylenders – as being ‘as if my head and my feet are in a halter’.<sup>11</sup> Alcoholism or gambling were other thorns. Parents were occasionally in such severe straits that they refused to take their child home from maternity hospital. Dr Dillon wrote in 1945:<sup>12</sup>

The Poor cannot keep clean, because they are unable to buy soap or fuel to heat water. With every month at unemployment their position becomes more desperate, more hopeless, until they finally join the ranks of the unemployable. The mother starves herself to feed her children and, in a very high percentage of cases, is found on examination to be suffering from nutritional anaemia. The children fall behind in school and gradually slip down to a social status even lower than their parents. They are in the majority of cases all but useless to the modern employer. At the age of 18 they are replaced by some other unfortunate and join the ranks of the unemployable proletariat. There are families in Dublin in which the second generation is now well advanced on that dreary road.

**3.13** Family-planning facilities were virtually non-existent and many marriages floundered owing to these extreme family stresses. For instance:<sup>13</sup>

A typical example of the emigration pattern of the 1940s and 1950s was an expectant mother with five children alive out of eight pregnancies, who usually became pregnant during her husband’s infrequent visits home. She lived in two rooms at the top of a city tenement, and was known to the almoner from 1939 to 1957. She was distraught because she suspected that her husband, who was living in ‘digs’ in England, was having an affair with his landlady – ‘he never wires but send money regularly’. She described him as ‘indifferent’, having no affection for his children.

**3.14** As well as poverty, many related evils flourished in these extreme and unnatural conditions. In the years leading up to independence, Crown books (court records) show that prosecutions for

<sup>10</sup> O’Cinneide and Maguire ‘Findings from the ISPC records’ (2000) second progress report to the Sisters of Mercy. Industrial Schools in context project.

<sup>11</sup> Rotunda Hospital Annual Clerical Reports for 1936-68, Social Services section.

<sup>12</sup> Dillon *The Social services in Eire*, p 331:

<sup>13</sup> Rotunda Hospital Annual Clerical Reports for 1936-68, Social Services section.

sexual crime involving children – indecent exposure, gross indecency, indecent assault, buggery and unlawful carnal knowledge – arising out of acts occurring in the Dublin tenements, were commonplace and prostitution was regarded as a common problem in Dublin. Of the 1,984 deaths from venereal disease recorded in Ireland between 1899 and 1916, 69 percent of the victims were children under five years of age.<sup>14</sup> However, according to a report ‘contrary to the currently accepted opinion, VD was widespread throughout the country and it was disseminated by a class of girl who could not be regarded as a prostitute’.<sup>15</sup>

**3.15** The illegitimacy rate was high (eg 295 per 1,000 births in 1929-30) and according . to one historical survey: ‘To judge from the pages of the *Cork Examiner*, (from 1925-6) infanticide was a weekly, if not a daily reality in Ireland.’ The reports were brief, factual and non-judgemental. The most usual outcome was a guilty verdict ‘with a strong recommendation to mercy’, partly due to the stigma already attached to the perpetrator and their family.<sup>16</sup>

**3.16** Against this background of extreme poverty, some saw the Schools as no worse than anything else and as offering children at least adequate food and housing. The type of situation which might easily lead on to entry to an Industrial School is described in the Rotunda Hospital Annual Report for 1955:

Mrs X was delivered of her fifth child in November, 1954. She was under the care of the Hospital for her four previous confinements in 1946, 1947 1952 and 1953. She is of low intelligence and has served several sentences in prison always on charges of stealing. Her husband is frequently unemployed. The family is almost constantly in debt. When a social science student visited the home, both gas and electricity had been cut off due to non-payment of accounts and arrears of rent amounted to £3.

In early February, 1955 the new baby was brought to the Paediatric Unit and found to have gained no weight since birth and was in poor condition due to neglect. The child had to be admitted to Hospital forthwith.<sup>17</sup>

**3.17** A newspaper report (source not given, in Lunney, at 93-94<sup>18</sup>) gives a graphic description of conditions in some Dublin homes under the heading of ‘Shocking Case of Neglect’, during the Second World War years.

Miss Hannah Clarke, Inspector of the NSPCC gave evidence in court, stating that when she visited the one roomed home of this particular family in Dublin, she found three very neglected children in the room. The eldest girl was six years of age. They were alone. According to Miss Clarke: ‘Mary was dirty, her hair verminous and her clothes dirty and verminous. She was wearing old slippers. Margaret was in the same condition. Carmel

<sup>14</sup> JV O’Brien *Dear Dirty Dublin* (Dublin, 1978), pp 167-8.

<sup>15</sup> NAI, DT, S4183, report on VD in the Irish Free State: Committee of Inquiry (1924–26). The report was not published (ibid, 7th May 1927) Here one ought also to mention briefly the Carrigan Report on Sexual Offences (1931) which led ultimately to the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1935. The immediate reason for its establishment was the fact that the English Law in regard to sexual offences against young person had recently been made more stringent including law on prostitution, carnal knowledge of an underage person. The Committee had a good deal of evidence about such crime, from, for instance, Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy. The Report was not made public on the advice of the Department of Justice and the Catholic Church, because it was thought that it would show Irish sexual morals in a poor light. The general lesson which this Report and its non-publication teaches is that there was a good deal of sexual crime against children in the early 1930s and there is no reason to suppose that this position changed at any rate for several decades; and also that the official approach was to sweep such matters under the carpet. The Report did not discriminate between crimes taking place within the family or at a school of whatever type. See generally: Report of the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendments Acts (1880-1885) and Juvenile prostitution (Dublin, 1931), p 26; M Finnane ‘The Carrigan Committee of 1930-31 and the moral condition of the Saorstát’ *Irish Historical Studies* (November 2001), p 519; F Kennedy ‘The Suppression of the Carrigan Report’ *studies*, Vol 89, No 356, p 362.

<sup>16</sup> Louise Ryan ‘The massacre of innocence: Infanticide in the Irish Free State’, *Irish Studies Review*, No 14, Spring 1996, pp 17-21.

<sup>17</sup> Rotunda Clinical Report for 1945-46, section on Social Services by the Almoner, Miss Murphy.

<sup>18</sup> Lunney’s survey of the Sisters of Mercy Schools.



was lying on a filthy bed. Her head was a moving mass of vermin. There was no food in the room and witness went to a shop and purchased bread, butter and milk for the children's tea.

The father stated that it was not his duty to clean the children while the mother admitted negligence but pleaded ill health. Both parents were sentenced to imprisonment. The report went on to state that in the opinion of the presiding justice, Mr Little, 'the children should be sent to one of those admirable institutions, miscalled industrial schools, which were really boarding schools for the poor.

**3.18** In the Rotunda Report for 1945-46 in the section on social services by the almoner, Miss Murphy, another case was summarised as follows:

Mrs N developed phlebitis following her discharge from the wards on her seventh confinement and she was advised to rest in bed at home. We were asked to arrange for a district nurse to dress her leg. Her home consisted of one small attic room. There were holes in the floor, the walls were wet and plaster was falling off them. All water had to be carried up from the ground floor. Mrs N was in bed. The head of the bed was against the damp wall and beside an open window. As a result, the baby had developed a cold. Mrs N and her husband and five children – the eldest aged  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years lived in this room and slept together on the only bed. In spite of the difficulties, the home was reasonably clean. Mr N, an unemployed cattle drover, was dependent on 18/4 unemployment assistance, 12/6 food vouchers and 5/- children's allowance pr weekend and his rent was 10/-. Occasionally he obtained a day's work and earned about £1. In addition the Society of St Vincent de Paul was giving him a food voucher value 4/- per week and the Catholic Social Service Food Centre was giving Mrs N dinner and milk every day. We applied at once to the Corporation Housing Department for accommodation for this family and seven months later they moved into a four-roomed corporation house.

### ***State financial support***

**3.19** In 1948, the maximum rate of unemployment assistance was 38 shillings per week. So, for a family with five children, the total income including children's allowances would have been 45s 6d. The NSPCC Annual Report of the Dublin Branch 1947-48 stated:

Allowing for a moderate rent of, say, 5 shillings per week, the amount available per head, viz,  $5/9\frac{1}{2}$  is well below the minimum necessary to provide food alone. ...It is true that in the worst cases the home assistance authorities sometimes intervene with an allowance for rent; but the total is still insufficient to provide proper nourishment for the children, to say nothing of clothing or bedding, much less for any less necessary amenities. It is a small wonder that some parents give up the unequal contest and apply for the committal of their children to industrial schools on the grounds of inability to support them, when, as we have so often pointed out, they cost the public funds 15/-a head.

**3.20** The unemployment figures were as low as they were because of the emigration of thousands of fathers, throughout the 1950s especially, and the fact that many do not feature in these figures because they were trying to eke out a living on smallholdings of land.

**3.21** Despite the valuable work done by private philanthropic organisations, like the Saint Vincent de Paul<sup>19</sup> or the Catholic Social Welfare Fund or such local charities as the Marrowbone Lane

<sup>19</sup> In Limerick, in 1936, the Society provided boots and clothing to nearly 2,000 families, and disbursed nearly £2,000 in assistance. This was in spite of the fact that the Society's resources were so diminished, and their donations significantly diminished, that they had been forced to reduce by nearly half the number of people they could assist (*The Standard*, 3rd April 1936, four cited in O'Cinneide and Maguire *The Industrial Schools Over a Hundred Years: A Monograph*, p 32). Dillon 'The Social Services in Eire' at p 329 states that, in 1943, the society distributed goods and grants to the total value of €150,000.

Samaritan Fund, Evening Herald Boot Fund, Belvedere News Boys' Club, Rotarians or the Penny Dinners, the long-term problem was so great that only State support could ameliorate it.

**3.22** At independence, systematic State assistance to poor people was confined to two relevant<sup>20</sup> supports. The first of these were the unpopular workhouses, which had been established in each Poor Law Union. Immediately after independence, in 1922, these were reorganised so that, in each county, there was one central institution, under the control of a local board of health. Between 1913-14 and 1924-25, the numbers of people, including some young children, living in these institutions declined by one-third (from 27,000 to 18,000).

**3.23** The second form of assistance was originally known as 'outdoor relief' (so called, by contrast with the workhouses). After independence, outdoor relief was renamed home assistance and restrictions on its payment to able-bodied persons or widows with a single child were dropped. As a result, between 1920 and 1925, the numbers receiving outdoor relief/home assistance increased from 15,000 to 22,000, which was still a very small figure having regard to the level of need, with total annual expenditure going from £114,000 to £373,000. The 1937-38 annual report of the Dublin branch of the NSPCC pointed out that while the rate of home assistance for Dublin was adequate at 25 shillings per week for a family of five children, rates prevailing elsewhere, specifically in Wicklow and Kildare, at a maximum payment of 10 shillings per week, were insufficient. Home assistance took the form not only of money but also food, clothing and bedding. Another form that home assistance might take – free or low-cost footwear – bears directly on committal to Industrial Schools: for, to take an example, during a three-month period in 1944, the Dublin Corporation School Attendance Committee dealt with 480 cases of non-attendance and, in at least 80 cases, the reason given was that the children had no footwear in which to attend school.<sup>21</sup> In 1939 the unemployment figure was at 100,000, with over 83,000 people in receipt of home assistance, of whom one-third resided in Dublin City or County).

**3.24** During the relevant period three further welfare benefits were instituted. The first of these, provided under the Unemployment Assistance Act 1933 was unemployment benefit, that is (means-tested) relief of able-bodied men and women, during periods of temporary unemployment. Before the 1933 Act, only a relatively small proportion of the population had been eligible for unemployment benefit which was funded mainly by social insurance. This meant that generally it was confined to better-off working people. The rest, including all agricultural workers and smallholders many of them unemployed in all but name, had to rely on home assistance or the occasional emergency relief provisions provided out of central funds during periods of severe unemployment.

**3.25** Secondly, the Committee of Inquiry into Widows' and Orphans' Pensions (1932-33) made recommendations that bore fruit rather quickly, in the form of the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Act 1935. This established pensions, on a contributory basis, for widows and orphans of wage earners; and also, on a non-contributory basis, for anyone in need.

**3.26** But most significant of all in the present context was the children's allowance, which was introduced in 1944. At the start, when it was confined to the third and subsequent children under 16, it benefited 320,000 children. This was not means tested, and provided a regular allowance, initially at the rate of 2s 6d per week. Dr Kennedy summarises the subsequent extension of the children's allowance:<sup>22</sup>

Children's allowances were extended to the second qualified child in July 1952, and to all qualified children from November 1963. Under the Social Welfare Act, 1973, the qualifying age for children's allowance was raised to 18 years for children in full-time education, in

<sup>20</sup> The other two income-support schemes, old age pensions and insured worker's benefits, are not relevant.

<sup>21</sup> *The Evening Standard*, 5th May 1939.

<sup>22</sup> F Kennedy *From Cottage to Crèche* (IPA, 2003), pp 218-9.

apprenticeships, or disabled. The total number of families in receipt of children's allowances has risen from 132,000 in 1944 to about 500,000 at present [2001].

**3.27** When first introduced, children's allowance cost the State £2 $\frac{1}{4}$  million. This was the equivalent of 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  percent of national income or a quarter of the amount spent on all the other welfare payments put together: old age pensions, widows' and orphans' pensions, unemployment insurance and assistance, workmen's compensation, national health insurance and public assistance.

**3.28** It is generally accepted that the decline in numbers in the Schools from the mid 1940s was partly due to children's allowances and it is noteworthy that the numbers being committed to the Industrial Schools peaked in 1943, the year before they were introduced.

### ***Groups from which the children came***<sup>23</sup>

**3.29** Children from the following socio-economic groups were more likely to end up in a certified school:

- 1) Low-income and large families
- 2) Single-parent families
- 3) Orphans
- 4) Mentally-ill children.

#### **1) Low-income and large families**

**3.30** Children from the lower socio-economic groups were represented in disproportionately high numbers in the Schools. The reason for poverty or deprivation might be badly-paid, insecure employment, unemployment or the loss of a parent. The Kennedy Report, Appendix E, Table 31 (Committee's survey) gives the following figures (as of 1968) for the occupations of residents' fathers. The penultimate column gives the percentage for each occupation as their children were represented in the Schools. For comparison, the final column shows the percentage of each occupation in the general national population.

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<sup>23</sup> School: A Sociological Study' (1971) Unpublished M Soc Sci thesis, UCD.



Father's occupation	Industrial Schools			Reformatories					
	Boys' Schools	Girls' and junior boys' Schools	Totals	Boys' Schools	Girls' Schools	Totals	Totals for Industrial Schools and Reformatories %		National %
Farmer	4	42	46				46	1.9%	28%
Higher professional		7	7				7	0.3%	2.5%
Lower professional		9	9				9	0.4%	3%
Employer/manager		4	4				4	0.2%	1.5%
Commercial worker (eg agent)		12	12				12	0.5%	12%
Clerical worker	10	29	39	3			42	1.7%	
Intermediate non manual worker	27	85	112	4	1	5	117	4.7%	9.5%
Skilled tradesman	44	118	162	6	1	7	169	6.8%	7%
Semi-skilled worker	34	122	156	12	5	17	173	7%	7%
Agricultural labourer	22	76	98	1	1	2	100	4%	9%
Non-skilled worker	43	268	311	27	3	30	341	13.8%	5.5%
Unemployed	39	169	208	16	-	16	224	9%	7.3
Disabled	6	67	73	5	1	6	79	3.2%	
Itinerant	11	51	62	4	1	5	67	2.7%	
'In England'	10	71	81	4	-	4	85	3.4%	
Occupation unknown	95	349	444	3	1	4	448	18.1%	
No reply	306	203	509	20	24	44	553	22.3%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>38</b>		<b>2476</b>		

**3.31** The McQuaid Artane survey found that a disproportionate number of School residents came from large families.

## 2) One-parent families

**3.32** A great proportion of children in the schools came from families that were non-marital or one or both parents had died. Where it was the mother who died, then the conventional view might be taken that the father, especially if a full-time breadwinner, was not equipped to bring up the family (and even, because of an unspoken fear of incest, where there were daughters in the family

should not do so). If it was the father who died then, while the homemaker remained, there was no breadwinner so that the family was likely to be impoverished.

**3.33** If the child was born out of wedlock, the mother was likely to find herself in either a mother and baby home or a county home. The child might then be adopted formally or informally, boarded out or sent to an Industrial School.

**3.34** The Kennedy Committee ascertained that only about 18 percent of children were known to the School to have parents who were married, alive and living together. Some 30 per cent of the children had one parent who was dead and it was not known in 35 percent of cases whether the father was alive, although the mother was.

**3.35** The background of broken homes from which many of the residents came is captured by the Tuairim Report, 29:

Some of the children in these schools will have no parents, or a parent with whom they have no contact, others may have both parents living but temporarily or permanently unable to provide for them. The committal of the children of one family to different schools, particularly if one parent is dead, often means the complete disintegration of the family as a unit. The surviving parent may marry again, set up a new home with the new spouse, and, when more children are born, abandon completely those of the first marriage who are, in any case, scattered in schools in different parts of the country.

### 3) Orphans

**3.36** There was a high number of orphans in Industrial Schools. The Kennedy Committee survey found that the Schools knew that both of a child's parents were dead in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  percent of cases and did not know whether they were both alive in a further 10 percent. Another survey – Lunney's survey of the Sisters of Mercy Schools – which checked the various school admission registers from the establishment of each School up to 1950 – elicited an average figure of 11.2 percent.<sup>24</sup> As a comparison, during the same period, the numbers of orphans was about 0.25 percent of the general population.

**3.37** The full significance of these striking findings, here and under category 2, is brought out by Dr McQuaid:

Not to know whether one or other or both of the parents were alive or dead... represents a remarkable level of basic ignorance of the facts about the children, in dealing with whom this information is most fundamental. For the responsible authorities (one does not necessarily mean the schools) not to be aware of these details is one of the most shattering indictments of the 'system'. For the children themselves, these facts are also vital. When one considers that in all of us the prime requirement for effective functioning is a secure and unshakable sense of identity, it must be plain to everyone that for a child not to know who his parents were, nor where they are, nor how he can get in touch with

<sup>24</sup> Number of orphans admitted to various Industrial Schools from establishment to 1950

School	Orphans	Total admissions	Percentage of School population
Clifden	33	1,015	3.25
Clonakilty	188	1,306	14.39
Dundalk	138	773	17.85
Galway	78	1,090	7.16
Goldenbridge	85	1,755	4.84
Limerick	285	1,663	17.14
Mallow	41	751	5.46
Newtownforbes	241	1,434	16.81
Templemore	122	813	15.01
Westport	94	1,065	8.83

them and maintain contact, must seriously invalidate whatever else may be done to help and rehabilitate him.

#### **4) Physical or mental illness**

##### **3.38** O’Cinneide and Maguire observe:

The Boards of Health and Public Assistance received many requests, from parents and guardians, resident managers of Industrial Schools, and other concerned individuals to have children with physical or mental handicaps admitted to the various institutions that catered for people with disabilities. The various local authorities seem not to have operated according to a standardised set of criteria, and many cases of obvious merit were turned down because parents could not contribute to their children’s upkeep in institutions. For the most part, the Boards were extremely tight-fisted when it came to maintaining children in special institutions, and one can only imagine how many disabled children languished at home, with parents who could not cope or provide them with even a rudimentary education, because of the Board’s strident policies in this area.

...Cases that were clearly worthy, given the circumstances of the parents, were rejected on the grounds that the parents were not eligible for public assistance and thus the Board could not accept responsibility to maintain their children.

##### **3.39** The Kennedy Report, Appendix F, reported on a survey across different age groups and genders testing for intelligence, perceptual ability and verbal reasoning etc. Each category revealed broadly the same picture. The results of intelligence testing, in essence, were that (at p 113):

11.9 per cent of children in Industrial Schools are mentally handicapped compared with approximately 2.5 per cent in the population, and that 36.6 per cent are borderline mentally handicapped compared with approx 12.5 per cent in the population in general. This leaves 51.5 per cent who are of average or above average intelligence compared with about 85.0 per cent in the population at large.

## **Part 2 Other institutions for children in care**

##### **3.40** A child might live in a School and, at a different period, in one of the alternative residential institutions. An example of such transfers is given by Professor Dermot Keogh, in a report he prepared for The Presentation Brothers relating to St Joseph’s Industrial School Greenmount and submitted to CICA, at 108:

According to Fr James Good, who was appointed chaplain in Greenmount Industrial School in mid-1955, the following arrangements were in place in the Cork area for the receipt of children. Babies born in the home for unmarried mothers at the Sacred Heart Convent, Bessboro, normally stayed there for two and a half years with their mothers. Between the age of two and a half and ten they lived in a junior Industrial School, generally Passage for boys and Rushbrooke for girls. On their tenth birthday, the boys were usually transferred to Greenmount or Upton. At age fourteen, they were ‘out of books’ and usually worked in the bakery or at shoe repairs. At sixteen, they were released to farmers, for whom they worked as labourers or to take up employment in the army, industry, domestic service or the trades.

##### **3.41** Two comprehensive tables<sup>25</sup> show the various facilities available for children in care and also the scale on which they had to be utilised.

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<sup>25</sup> Taken from E O’Sullivan, PhD.

Table 5 Number of children regulated by census year													
	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1926	1936	1946	1951	1961	1966	1971
Children in workhouses/county homes	12,307	12,089	11,618	6,618	5,527	5,213	1,900	1,291	800	400	100	53	40
Children in mother and baby homes	-	-	-	-	-	-	607	887	869	817	-	-	-
Children in Industrial Schools under detention	-	2,482	6,279	8,547	8,254	8,382	5,927	6,039	6,510	5,844	3,686	2,456	1,072
Children in Industrial Schools voluntarily	-	200	434	376	298	427	350	250	150	89	99	123	70
Children in Industrial Schools by health authorities	-	-	-	-	-	49	-	-	-	339	388	433	511
Total number in Industrial Schools	539	2,682	6,713	8,923	8,552	8,858	6,277	6,289	6,660	6,272	4,173	3,012	1,653
Children in Reformatory Schools	-	970	1,151	786	596	652	115	109	237	214	205	145	42
Children in approved institutions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	245	425	532	788
Children in orphanages	5,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	2,500	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	750
Children in prisons (under 16)	1,345	912	912	574	200	5	4	2	2	1	9	2	61
Children boarded out	-	1,476	2,250	2,540	2,370	2,623	1,906	2,304	2,419	2,283	1,692	1,162	914
Children hired out	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89	131	170	145	184	100
Children nursed out (infant life protection)	-	-	-	-	-	411	803	2,800	2,493	1,500	505	382	365
Total	19,191	23,553	25,644	22,724	20,245	20,762	14,112	16,271	15,631	12,902	8,254	6,472	4,713
Population under 14 (,000)	1903	1914	1614	1529	1353	1301	873	820	823	856	877	901	931
Number of children per 1,000 population	10.1	12.3	14.1	14.9	15.0	16.0	16.2	19.8	19.0	15.1	9.4	7.2	5.1
Ratio of children in institutional care to non-institutional care		14.7	10.4	7.8	7.5	5.8	4.2	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.4

**3.42** Dr O'Sullivan comments:

The table presents the total number of children in institutional care of the State, of whatever type, as a ratio of total population under the age of 14. The ratio rises continuously from 1861. 1936 was the peak year, with 19.8 per 1,000 of all children under the age of 14, in the care of the State. This ratio dropped slightly to 19.0 in 1946 and had declined to 7.2 by 1966. The ratio of children in institutional forms of care, rather than family placements can also be clearly seen. Although the ratio declined significantly over the period under review, by 1966, there were still 2.7:1 children in institutional rather than non-institutional care.

**Table 5.5a Number of children regulated by census year (%)**

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1926	1936	1946	1951	1961	1966	1971
Children in workhouses/county homes	64.1	52.3	45.3	29.5	27.3	25.1	13.5	7.9	5.1	3.1	1.2	0.8	0.8
Children in mother and baby Homes	-						4.3	5.5	5.7	6.3	-		
Children in Industrial Schools under detention	-	10.7	24.5	38.1	40.8	40.4	42.0	37.1	41.6	45.3	44.7	37.9	22.7
Children in Industrial Schools voluntarily	-	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.5	2.1	2.5	1.5	1.0	0.7	1.2	1.9	1.5
Children in Industrial Schools by health authorities	-					0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.7	6.7	10.8
Children in Reformatory Schools	2.8	4.2	4.5	3.5	2.9	3.1	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.7	2.5	2.2	0.9
Children in approved institutions	-									1.9	5.1	8.2	16.7
Children in orphanages	26.1	21.6	11.7	13.4	14.8	14.4	17.7	15.4	12.8	7.8	12.1	15.5	15.9
Children in prisons (under 16)	7.0	3.9	3.6	2.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.3
Children boarded out	-	6.4	8.8	11.3	11.7	12.6	13.5	14.2	15.5	17.7	20.5	18.0	19.4
Children hired out	-					2.0	5.7	0.5	0.8	1.3	1.8	2.8	2.1
Children nursed out (infant life protection)	-							17.2	15.9	11.6	6.1	5.9	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Dr O’Sullivan’s comment here is:

Table 5.5a shows the same data as Table 5; but in percentage form. This highlights the rapid growth of the Industrial School system as the primary form of state intervention into the lives of children, reaching a peak in the 1940s and 1950s with just over half the children regulated by the State in industrial schools. Although Boarding-out increased its share of children in care, Reformatory schools for convicted delinquent children and prisons played a relatively minor role in the regulation of children and the role of workhouses diminished rapidly from the 1920s. In summary, although the sites for the regulation of children shifted from the mid-nineteenth century, the number of children as a ratio of those under 14, rose steadily throughout this period and only declined from the 1950s.

- 3.43** Besides the Industrial Schools there were alternative residential institutions in which a child in the care of the might be placed.

### ***County homes (formerly workhouses)***

- 3.44** The Local Government (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923 brought the administration of the public assistance services formally into the Irish Free State. It provided that in each county one workhouse building should be retained as a ‘county home’ in which all the non-medical inmates in the county were lodged. In the clinical language of a 1920s Report on the County Homes, there were approximately:

11,000 itinerant beggars who moved from workhouse to workhouse; a delinquent element, including prostitutes and young criminals, often the product of an earlier workhouse upbringing; a large group of infirm old people no longer able to care for themselves; so-called idiots and imbeciles, mentally handicapped people for whom there was as yet no special public provision; lunatics unable to secure admission to the overcrowded district lunatic asylums; unmarried mothers and their *so called illegitimate children*; rejects of a disapproving society; and *orphaned and abandoned children*.<sup>26</sup>

- 3.45** At independence, the only places that would receive unmarried mothers were the workhouses/county homes. In 1926, there were over a thousand unmarried mothers with their babies in county homes; by 1950, there were still over 800 children in county homes, but by 1966 only 53. The children remained for one or two years.

### ***Mother and baby homes***

- 3.46** The undesirability of having mothers and their infants in the county homes was recognised and in the 1920s and 30s the policy was implemented of providing ‘mother and baby’ homes for unmarried women who were having children for the first time. These were reserved for young mothers who had ‘fallen’ once only and thus were likely to be ‘influenced towards a useful and respectable life’<sup>27</sup> (leaving those unmarried mothers pregnant for the second or later time to the

<sup>26</sup> Saorstát Éireann *Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane Poor* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1928), p 5 (our italics); J Robins *From Rejection to Integration: A Centenary of Service by the Daughters of Charity to Persons with a Mental Handicap* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992), pp 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Local Government (1928) Annual Report 113, quoted in Kilcummins at p 84. In response about eight ‘mother and child’ homes were set up for unmarried mothers giving birth for the first time. In 1922 the Sacred Heart Home in Bessboro, County Cork, managed by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, was opened. Similar homes were established by the same Order in Roscrea, County Tipperary, in 1930 and Castlepollard, County Meath, in 1935. The Sisters of Charity of St Vincent De Paul opened a similar institution on the Navan Road, in Dublin, in 1918 and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd opened a home in Dunboyne, County Meath, in 1955. In addition, three special homes were provided by local authorities themselves in Tuam, County Galway, Kilrish, County Clare and Pelletstown in County Dublin: See further Kilcummins ‘The Origins of Penal Policy’ in *Crime Punishment and the Search for Order in Ireland* (IPA, 2003), pp 82-6.

county homes). As can be seen from Table 5.5, from the 1930s to the 1950s, there were more than 800 children in mother and baby homes, but none by 1960.

- 3.47** The usual practice in a county home or mother and baby home was for the mother and her child to remain for one or two years, while the mother carried out domestic labour working to pay off their keep and (possibly) to make another lapse unlikely. After that period the child was boarded out<sup>28</sup>; or adopted (informally or when the Adoption Act 1952 came into force, legally) or sent to a junior Industrial School. By the 1960s, it was also becoming more common for children to be taken by their parents.

### ***Institutions approved by Minister for Health (but not Industrial Schools)***

- 3.48** According to a Health Circular of 1954, there were 43 Schools and institutions approved by the Minister for Health. One was also a Reformatory (St Anne's, Kilmacud) and 30 were also Industrial Schools, leaving 12 that were neither Industrial Schools nor Reformatories and thus not available for committals through the courts.
- 3.49** By 1969<sup>29</sup> there were 18 institutions approved by the Minister for Health which were not also certified schools. These institutions accommodated (in the 16 homes that responded to the Kennedy questionnaire) just over 700 residents (aged 0-2 years: 278; 2-14: 328; 14-18:73).
- 3.50** Kennedy<sup>30</sup> showed the distribution of children in the schools with relatively few below the age of six and observed that the figures seemed to suggest that a large number of pre-school children were accommodated in homes and institutions other than Industrial Schools.

### ***Voluntary homes***

- 3.51** Historically, by the 1850s, the majority of orphanages had been taken over by local religious congregations. Their funding came from relations of the children in the orphanages or other private sources such as endowments or charity sermons. In addition, boarding out was phased out and the orphanages became exclusively institutional. A number of these orphanages were certified as Industrial Schools under the Industrial Schools Act 1868. However a majority remained outside the State-subsidised scheme of institutional child welfare and a very few new orphanages were established in the twentieth century. These institutions were officially referred to as 'voluntary homes' because they were not State funded. In popular jargon, they remained 'orphanages'.<sup>31</sup> but in many cases the residents were not orphans but simply children whose families were in crisis of one sort or another.
- 3.52** There was no State control, monitoring or supervision of such voluntary homes<sup>32</sup> and consequently no central source of information about them.<sup>33</sup> Children were admitted on a voluntary basis. The homes were not certified to receive children committed through the courts. They had considerably more freedom of administration and organisation than did the certified schools and could exercise more flexibility in admission and discharge. They were thought of broadly as institutions for the middle classes<sup>34</sup> and this was often indicated in their advertising.

<sup>28</sup> National Archives, DT S14472b – Report of the Interdepartmental Committee appointed to examine the Question of the Reconstruction and Replacement of County Homes, p 24.

<sup>29</sup> Kennedy Report, Appendix E.

<sup>30</sup> At para 3.2.

<sup>31</sup> TE O'Sullivan Child Welfare in Ireland, 1750-1995: A History of the Present (TCD PhD, 1999), pp 204-7.

<sup>32</sup> In other words, in the Irish Legislation there was no equivalent of Part V of the (English) Children and Young Persons Act 1933 provides for the registration of all homes and other institutions, supported wholly or partly by voluntary contributions, and receiving poor children and young persons. By section 25 of the Children Act 1908, there was a bare power of inspection with no power further to intervene in any way and certainly none to investigate individual children; nor was any duty to register imposed.

<sup>33</sup> See eg Health Discovery, 42

<sup>34</sup> Barrett, 'The Dependent Child' *Studies*, Winter 1955 at p 422.

**3.53** The average length of a resident's stay in an orphanage was shorter than that in an Industrial School.

**3.54** Thirteen of these Homes were run by religious Orders, the others by committees or private individuals. Two were for short-stay children. The Tuairim Report<sup>35</sup> found:

The Homes' relative independence makes it possible for the private Homes to develop in different ways from the certified schools. Many of them have evolved a 'family' system, and in most children have fewer restrictions on their freedom than children in certified schools. These are some of the quotations from responses to our questionnaires: 'As far as feasible, I try to make it as much like a home as can be. There is a minimum of regimentation and the boys have much the same freedom as boys who live at home with their parents'. 'We try to have our Home as like an ordinary Home as possible'. Our own impression of the Homes we visited endorse these statements ... Only one of these Homes does not send at least some boys to an outside school for tuition. Boys, in particular seemed to have greater educational opportunities than those in certified schools.

The manager maintains close personal contact with the surviving parents or guardians of the children and very frequently the parents contribute something towards the child's maintenance. By paying something the parents feel their responsibility and fulfil their duty to the best of their ability.

**3.55** The Kennedy Committee<sup>36</sup> has the following information.

Number of voluntary homes contacted	Number replying	Numbers in various age groups			
		0-2 Years	2-14 Years	14-18 Years	Total
24	20	66	571	365	992

This gives an average figure for residents in each School of 50 (Tuairim has a similar number of orphanages and an average of 42) compared with a figure for Industrial Schools, in 1966, of about 100.

### ***Protestant children***

**3.56** The last Protestant Industrial School closed in 1917 so the only institution to which a child could be committed was Marlborough House. Children who came before the courts were usually entrusted, through the local Gardaí, to the care of the local clergyman or minister of religion concerned and he assumed responsibility for having them placed in the care of a suitable family, school or home.<sup>37</sup>

**3.57** In regard to children who were not committed by the courts but needed to be in care, many of the Protestant homes situated in the State were closed or amalgamated. Although the numbers of children for which the remaining homes had to provide was greatly reduced, so, were the sources of their finance. Sometimes, the closing of a home or sale of a redundant building resulted in the creation of a fund which was applied for the support of children in the remaining homes or in

<sup>35</sup> At pp 33-4.

<sup>36</sup> Table 34. Kennedy states: 'One of the tasks we attempted was to draw up a list of private voluntary Homes. Their principal sources of information were the Irish Catholic Directory and the Church of Ireland Handbook, but as there is no standardised classification of private Homes, it is possible that, in spite of independent checks, we have overlooked some Home or school which should have been included.'

<sup>37</sup> Kennedy, para 1.5.

ordinary boarding schools. Money from these and other charities was used to assist needy parents to keep their children at home, each diocese having its Protestant Orphan Society, which made such grants. Dr Barnardo's Homes also provide grants for Protestant orphans living in Ireland. Another relevant factor is that there was a waiting list of would-be adopters.

## **Part 3 Facts and figures**

### ***Children***

- 3.58** The size of the schools' population reflected the fluctuations in economic conditions. After independence, in 1924 the total population of all the Industrial Schools and Reformatories was 5,192. This figure remained steady in the 1920s and 30s. Then it rose to a peak of 6,979 in 1946-47. After the high point of the 1940s, the population declined gradually in the 1950s and more steeply in the 1960s and 70s.
- 3.59** The reasons for the reduction from the peak in the 1940s included the introduction of children allowances in 1944, the Adoption Act 1952 and the rising tide of the economy from the mid/late 1950s that lifted all boats. In addition, from the 1950s on and quickening in the 1960s, the courts displayed a greater reluctance to send children away for long periods and when they did do so it was only for shorter terms.
- 3.60** While the numbers committed by the courts fell in the 1960s, there was an increase in those placed by local authorities. A possible explanation is that there is an irreducible minimum number of children in the community who require alternative care to that of their own families and that this number was gradually increasing because of a growing population, particularly in the larger urban centres.

<b>School</b>	<b>Accommodation Limit</b>	<b>Order</b>	<b>Date closed**</b>
<b>Senior boys Schools</b>			
Artane, Dublin	830	Christian Brothers	1969-70
Baltimore, County Cork	170	Order of Charity	1950
Greenmount, County Cork	235	Presentation Brothers	1959
Upton, County Cork	300	Rosminians	1967
Killybegs, County Donegal	144	Order of Charity	1950
Carriglea, County Dublin	260	Christian Brothers	1954
Letterfrack, County Galway	190	Christian Brothers	
Salthill, County Galway	208	Christian Brothers	
Tralee, County Kerry	150	Christian Brothers	1970
Glin, County Limerick	214	Christian Brothers	1967
Clonmel, County Tipperary	200	Rosminians	
<b>Junior boys Schools</b>			
Passage West, County Cork	80	Sisters of Mercy	
St Patrick's, Kilkenny	186	Sisters of Mercy	1967
Drogheda, County Louth	150	Sisters of Charity of St V de P	
Cappoquin, County Waterford	75	Sisters of Mercy	
Rathdrum, County Wicklow *	100	Sisters of Mercy	
<b>Girls Schools</b>			
Cavan	100	Poor Clares	1967
Ennis, County Clare	110	Sisters of Mercy	1964
Clonakilty, County Cork	180	Sisters of Mercy	1965
Cobh, County Cork	60	Sisters of Mercy	
Kinsale, County Cork	180	Sisters of Mercy	
Mallow, County Cork	80	Sisters of Mercy	
St Finbarr's, Cork	200	Good Shepherd Sisters	
Boosterstown, County Dublin	96	Sisters of Mercy	
Goldenbridge, County Dublin*	150	Sisters of Mercy	
Lakelands, Sandymount, Dublin *	110	Sisters of Charity	

<sup>38</sup> Sources: Mary Raftery and Eoin O'Sullivan *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland's Industrial Schools* (Dublin: New Island, 1999), Appendix 1; Dail Debates Vol 220, col 687-88 (2nd February 1966); Kennedy Report, para 1.5; Cussen Report, para 17 and Appendix B; Department of Education compiled from quarterly returns from each School to the Department.

School	Accommodation Limit	Order	Date closed**
High Park, Dublin	100	Charity of Refuge	
Ballinasloe, County Galway	100	Sisters of Mercy	1968
Clifden, County Galway*	120	Sisters of Mercy	
Lenaboy, County Galway*	88		
Loughrea, County Galway	100	Sisters of Mercy	1967
Tralee, County Kerry*	85	Sisters of Mercy	
St Joseph's Kilkenny*	126	Sisters of Charity	
St George's Limerick	170	Good Shepherd Sisters	
St Vincent's, Limerick	180	Sisters of Mercy	
Newtownforbes, County Longford	240	Sisters of Mercy	1970
Dundalk, County Louth	100	Sisters of Mercy	
Westport, County Mayo	117	Sisters of Mercy	
Monaghan (moved to Bundoran, County Donegal in 1958)	140	St Louis Sisters	1966
Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon	90	Sisters of Charity	1969
Birr, County Offaly	100	Sisters of Mercy	1963
Summerhill, Athlone	200	Sisters of Mercy	1964
Benada Abbey, Ballymote, County Sligo	106	Sisters of Charity	
Sligo	200	Sisters of Mercy	1958
Cashel, County Tipperary	125	Presentation Sisters	1969
Dundrum, County Tipperary	80	Presentation Sisters	
Templemore, County Tipperary	70	Sisters of Mercy	1965
Waterford	200	Good Shepherd Sisters	
Moate, County Westmeath *	74	Sisters of Mercy	
New Ross, County Wexford	100	Good Shepherd Sisters	1968
Wexford	146	Sisters of Mercy	
<b>Mixed Schools</b>			
Killarney, County Kerry *	138	Sisters of Mercy	

\*Girls Schools certified for the reception of a limited number of boys of tender years. Commencing in 1970, most of the junior Boys Schools also started to take girls. The only one to do so before 1967 has also been asterisked. In case of these schools, the figures given include boys and girls.

\*\*If no date appears, the school was still in operation in 1970.



## **Reformatories**

- 3.61** At independence, there were four Reformatories in the Irish Free State and one in Northern Ireland. However by 1927, the number had fallen to two. St Joseph's Reformatory in Limerick was for girls and was run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. The other was St Conleth's for Boys at Daingean, Offaly, run by the Oblates. During the years 1934-41, Daingean was temporarily closed and the residents transferred back to Glencree, which had been Daingean's predecessor. In 1974, Daingean closed, to be replaced by Scoil Ard Mhuire in Lusk,<sup>39</sup> which was initially run by the Oblates but later transferred to the direct administration of the Department of Education.
- 3.62** In 1944, a second Reformatory for girls was established, St Anne's School Kilmacud, County Dublin, conducted by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge.
- 3.63** In 1949, there were 212 boys in Daingean, 31 girls in St Joseph's, Limerick and 13 in St Anne's, Kilmacud. In 1967, there were 124 boys in Daingean and a total of 18 girls in St Joseph's, Limerick and St Anne's, Kilmacud.

## **Industrial Schools**

- 3.64** The category of Industrial School covered a very wide range of institutions, from the equivalent of orphanages run by nuns to usually larger institutions, which took young offenders. In the case of a girl, a resident would usually remain in the same school until released at 16. But junior and senior boys had separate schools. If a boy had been put into a school below the age of 10, he would at that age be transferred from junior to a senior school.<sup>40</sup> A number of senior boys Industrial Schools in effect acted as Reformatories. There was no Reformatory for those under 12. Almost all male offenders in this age group were sent to Letterfrack Industrial School, County Galway.
- 3.65** At their maximum, in 1898, there were 61 Industrial Schools caring for approximately 7,500 children in the 26 county areas. By 1922, there were 53 Industrial Schools. During the 1920s High Park (previously a Reformatory) was recertified as an Industrial School and the girls' Schools at Roscommon and Tipperary were closed. Thus, by the time of the Cussen Report, there were 52 schools in operation certified for 6,400 children.
- 3.66** For much of the period under review, there were 11 senior boys' Industrial Schools, five junior boys', 35 girls' and one mixed for girls and junior boys. Two senior boys Schools were closed for particular reasons in 1950.<sup>41</sup> Later on, with the fall in numbers of residents, in the 1950s, two senior boys' (Carriglea, 1954; Greenmount, 1959) and one girls' School (Sligo, 1958) closed.
- 3.67** In the 1960s there was a steady stream of closures and by September 1969,<sup>42</sup> there had been a sharp drop to 31 schools. The remaining Schools numbered: senior boys – five; junior boys – three; girls' schools – 23. The remaining Schools were certified for more than 4,000 (1969-70)

<sup>39</sup> Classified as a special school with the Department of Education, it is still in law a Reformatory which is managed by the Oblate Fathers who have a long-standing tradition of residential child care in Ireland. It caters for up to 60 boys from all parts of the Republic, as the only Reformatory facility. The age range of boys referred would be between 12 and 17 years and the other main criteria for admission include the seriousness of the offence and whether a committal is for more than one year. The school is run on the basis of four units with one being an intake unit.

<sup>40</sup> This transfer which was effected by means of three forms (until an administrative reform in the late 1950s reduced this to one). First the Manager of the junior School completed a form of transfer which was returned to the Department. This form was forwarded to the Manager of the senior School who returned it, signifying his willingness to accept the child. Finally, the Minister made a transfer order, exercising his power under s 69(2) of the 1908 Act, transferring a youthful offender or child from one industrial school to another. Notification of this was sent to the Manager of each school.

<sup>41</sup> These were the Baltimore Fishing School (under the management of a local board of which the Bishop of Ross was chairman (SD, vol 25, col 495 (5th March 1941)), closed, under Departmental pressure in 1950; and the school in Killybegs, closed, on its acquisition by military authorities in 1950.

<sup>42</sup> Kennedy Committee, para 1.5.

children but were actually catering for 1,700. Artane, by far the largest school, closed in 1969. Its numbers had fallen from 700 in the early 1950s to 300 as late as 1968.

### **The Orders**

**3.68** After the closure of the last School under Protestant management in 1917, all the Schools were owned and run by Catholic religious Orders, apart from two Catholic Schools that were run by the local clergy and which closed in 1950. One of the consequences of the lack of positive control by the Department is that the Orders that carried out the work of running Schools were usually self-selected. This did not always make for an appropriate match. Kennedy<sup>43</sup> remarks gently 'some of the Orders in charge of Industrial Schools and Reformatories are engaged in other work which is of more direct concern to them and which comes more into the public eye'. Likewise a Departmental memo of 30th September 1963 noted that:

The Good Shepherd's are not a teaching order and by vocation are better fit to look after underprivileged children than the Sisters of Mercy where, perhaps the Industrial School Section could be the poor relation in a foundation catering for Secondary, Primary and Domestic Economy training.<sup>44</sup>

**3.69** The largest male Order involved in Industrial Schools (as also in regard to general primary or secondary education) was the Christian Brothers who operated schools for senior boys (10 to 16 year olds) at Artane, Salthill, Letterfrack, Glin, Tralee and Carriglea. Two others were run by the Rosminians (Clonmel, Upton) and one by the Presentation Brothers (Greenmount).

**3.70** The Sisters of Mercy ran two-thirds of all Schools consistently accommodating about 60 percent of girls and 40 percent of all residents. As of 1950, they ran 22 of the girls' schools, three of the junior boys' schools and the mixed school for girls and junior boys in Killarney (which was the only mixed school before 1954) The remaining girls' Schools were conducted by the following Orders: Poor Clares (one); Sisters of the Good Shepherd (four); Sisters of Charity (four); Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge (one); Sisters of Saint Louis (one); and Sisters of the Presentation Order (two).

**3.71** The Sisters of Mercy also ran four of the junior boys schools and the fifth was run by the (Irish) Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul.

**3.72** The only School formally categorised as a 'Mixed School' (as far back at least as the Cussen Report: para 18) was St Joseph's, Killarney, which had accommodation limits of 98 and 50 for girls and boys respectively. However, in the 1950s, because they were short of residents, a few of the girls' Schools started to take in junior boys. Commencing with Goldenbridge in 1954, eight Girls' Schools became what the annual reports describe as 'Girls Industrial Schools certified for the reception of a limited number of boys of tender years'. In practice, this seems to have meant that they had accommodation limits for boys up to about 10-15 percent of the figures for girls.

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<sup>43</sup> At para 4.6.

<sup>44</sup> The Poor Clares were founded in 1204, committed to a life of prayer and penance, among the strictest orders in the Catholic Church. Generally, one might doubt as to whether celibates would make good mother and father figures (horses for courses). How did the Poor Clares get into this field? Were they in need of the income? A contemplative order, their concepts of love focussed on Christ and Our Lady had complete charge of young children deprived of family life. The isolation of the community of St Joseph's Orphanage, Cavan meant that the fire of 1943 claimed the lives of 35 girls as well as one woman.

According to the official history of the Christian Brothers order (*A Christian Brother* (1926), pp 524-5):

This was a congregation which stood apart as a body of men committed to the education of boys, especially poor boys; which before independence, had stayed outside the National System for ideological reasons; which asserted its independence from each local bishop; and which, most significantly, was the principal provider of secondary education for the Nineteenth and most of the Twentieth Century.

## Boys and girls

**3.73** The aggregate Schools' population, from all sources (courts, health authorities, voluntary committals) during the entire 1936-70 period, contained 47 percent boys and 53 percent girls (though, in the case of Dublin County Borough this imbalance was reversed, with 56 percent boys for the period 1939-59). The following Table gives the figures for particular years:

	1937*	1939	1950	1960	1970
<b>Boys Schools, Total</b>	2,733 (45%)	2,786 (45%)	2,819 (47%)	1,709 (45%)	534 (43%)
<b>Girls Schools, Total</b>	3,341 (55%)	3,440 (55%)	3,165 (53%)	2,105 (55%)	722 (57%)

Source: Department of Education Annual Reports

\*First year for which statistics by school available

**3.74** During the 1936-70 period, the average percentages of boys committed in each year were: 93 percent (offenders), 90 percent (non-School attendance) and 75 percent (uncontrollable: a relatively small category).

**3.75** On the other hand, in the case of those sent by local health authorities for the 1949-69 period (figures from Kennedy Report), the aggregate average figure is 49 percent for boys. For the large group of children within the category 'lack of proper guardianship' (including 'having no home') committal figures for the period 1936-70 show an average of 45 percent for boys. From 1949-50 until the early 1960s, when there is a clear change in the pattern, more girls than boys were committed every year under 'lack of proper guardianship'. Again, while the real figures are small compared to the other categories, it is striking in the case of voluntary places the average figure for those sent annually during the period is only 16 percent boys.

**3.76** One major reason why there were more girls overall lies in the age at which the children were committed. The annual reports from 1937-46 show that for children committed under the age of six the number of girls was 63 percent of the total. After 1946, annual education reports do not give figures for those committed under the age of six. The closest information (in Table F of the Kennedy Report) gives figures for the three categories: 10 years and under; 12-14; and over 14. It is possible by comparing these figures with the total numbers to deduce the numbers of boys and of girls below the age of 10 who were admitted. If a girl was committed at a younger average age, she stayed for a longer period in the school.

**3.77** It is impossible to come to any definite conclusion on the question of whether the system was in some way biased in favour of sending girls to Industrial Schools. The difficulty is that almost the only information available is the net result, in other words the numbers of each gender sent to the Schools.

**3.78** Recognition of an imbalance and speculation as to the reasons for it are to be found in a Department Memo, dated 16th April 1943.

There are about 500 more girls than boys detained [the total School population in 1943 was 6,000]. The difference between the numbers of girls and boys in some counties is very great, e.g. Co Sligo 139 girls and 35 boys; Co Wexford 175 girls and 85 boys; Co Monaghan 78 girls and 26 boys; Co Cavan 70 girls and 14 boys. A comparison of the numbers of girls in these schools from wealthy counties like Wexford and Sligo with the numbers from much larger and poorer counties like Donegal (19) and Mayo (112) suggests that undue advantage is being taken of Industrial Schools in some districts.

This may be due to some extent to the better distribution of the girls' schools (there are two in each of the counties Wexford and Sligo), and the objection of parents to allowing their children to be sent to schools at a distance from their homes. This does not, however,

explain the fact that from Co Cork which is well supplied with Boys' Industrial Schools, there are 298 girls in these schools as compared with 187 boys.

The present unduly large number of girls in industrial schools must be due largely to the fact that the Managers have an organised system of 'touting' for children; they have social workers who act as a sort of agent and get children committed to the schools. We have no means of preventing this practice, but I suggest that we consult the Department of Local Government with a view to getting the assistance of the Local Country Managers to ensure that children are not committed without sufficient reason, and to obtain periodical reports on the parents means when children are committed on the grounds of poverty.

**3.79** It may be relevant here that there were more vacancies for girls. Another explanation that has been offered is that the imbalance is a reflection of the Catholic Church's traditional concern with sex and sexual temptation. In one particular situation – a widower left with female children and no female family member to act as a mother substitute – anecdotal evidence is that such figures as the parish priest were quick to pronounce that the father could not cope and scandal might follow if the father should attempt to do so. Accordingly, his daughters had to be sent away and a School was often the recourse.

### *Size of schools*

**3.80** Another difference between boys and girls lies in the difference in size of the Schools for each gender. The following tables give the numbers of residents actually in the Schools, for the years indicated, not the accommodation limits.

#### 1946

Classification	Over 300	100-200	200-300	50-100	Under 50	Schools	Pupils
Girls only:	-	14	-	21	1	36	3,666
Junior boys:	-	2	-	3	1	6	596
Senior boys:	1	5	4	-	-	10	2,595

Classification	Average No of Pupils	Range
Girls	102	38 to 200
Junior boys	93	42 to 183
Senior boys	260	126 to 823

(Girls' Schools started to take junior boys only in 1954.)

#### 1966

Classification	Over 300	100-200	50-100	Under 50	Schools	Pupils
Girls only:	-	1	8	13	22	1101
Girls and junior boys:	-	2	4	1	7	562
Junior boys:	-	1	3	2	6	386
Senior boys:	1	3	3	-	7	990

Classification	Average No of Pupils	Range
Girls, and girls and junior boys	57	7 to 123
Junior boys	64	27 to 104
Senior boys	141	64 to 310

Source: Annual returns made by the Schools to the Department: DE1P0085

These Tables shows that for both years the average number of children living in senior boys' Schools was more than twice that for girls or junior boys' School. Even if the figure for Artane is excluded, this only reduces the average in 1946 from 260 to 177 against an average for girls of 102. In 1966, the corresponding figures are from 141 to 97 against an average for girls of 57 for senior boys to 177 (1946) and 97 (1966).

***Proximity of places available to resident's homes***

**3.81** The following table presents figures which show the places available in Schools in each county and the number of residents who came from homes in that county.

**Industrial Schools 1946-47**

County	Boys			Girls		
	Accommodation in Schools	Residents from homes in county	Ratio	Accommodation in Schools	Residents from homes in county	Ratio
Carlow	0	19	X	0	30	X
Cavan	0	14	X	100	30	30%
Clare	0	88	X	110	139	126%
Cork	785	243	31%	700	369	53%
Donegal	0	13	X	0	22	X
Dublin Corporation	0	1061	X	360	811	225%
Co. Dublin	1150	188	16%	96	117	122%
Galway	398	131	33%	408	236	58%
Kerry	40	100	25%	183	140	77%
Kildare	0	44	X	0	55	X
Kilkenny	186	64	34%	126	61	48%
Leitrim	0	14	X	0	24	X
Laois	0	37	X	0	35	X
Limerick	214	159	74%	350	190	54%
Longford	0	16	X	240	18	8%
Louth	150	41	27%	100	38	38%
Mayo	0	44	X	117	94	80%
Meath	0	33	X	0	28	X
Monaghan	0	20	X	140	52	37%
Offaly	0	42	X	100	46	46%
Roscommon	0	29	X	90	86	96%
Sligo	0	25	X	305	86	28%
Tipperary	200	235	118%	275	305	110%
Waterford	75	128	171%	200	108	54%
Westmeath	0	53	X	274	52	19%
Wexford	0	76	X	246	175	71%
Wicklow	100	51	51%	0	31	X

- 3.82** On the assumption that when it was possible to do so, a resident from the county was sent to a School in the same county, the third column shows the ratio of places in Schools to residents with homes in that county. Where the ratio is less than 100 percent, it would have been possible for the Schools in the county to have accommodated all the residents for that county. On the other hand, in some other counties, the ratio exceeds 100 percent. This means that the number of residents with homes in the county exceeded the number of places in Schools in the county. Thus, even assuming that none of the places in the Schools in a county was allocated to a resident from outside, it would not have been possible for the Schools to have accommodated all the residents from that county. In a number of counties, there were no Schools, which is indicated by an 'X' in the third column.
- 3.83** Figures are taken from the annual departmental reports for the year 1946-47, when the Schools population was at its highest. The problem of children having to be sent to a School outside the county of their homes would have lessened after 1946-47, although some allowance should be made for the fact that two senior Schools, Baltimore and Killybegs, closed in 1950. Cork, Limerick and Waterford cities' figures are added to those of their counties.
- 3.84** Most schools took only boys or only girls. The Table reflects this by giving separate figures for boys' and girls' Schools. As regards boy's Schools, the Table shows that in 17 of the counties there were no Schools, so that residents from those counties had to be sent outside the County.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the ratio exceeded 100 percent in Tipperary and Waterford.
- 3.85** In the case of girls, there were seven counties with no Schools. And in Dublin Corporation, County Dublin, Clare and Tipperary the ratio exceeded 100 percent so that some residents from those counties had to be sent to a School outside the County. The most significant conclusion is that for both boys and girls, the gravest effect on the family life of residents impacted on those from Dublin. This effect was heightened both by the numbers going to the Schools from Dublin and also by the distance from Dublin to most of the Schools outside Dublin.

## Part 4 Independent monitoring

### *The Oireachtas*

- 3.86** During the relevant period, discussions of the Schools in the Dail were infrequent and brief, and even more so in the Seanad.
- 3.87** With a single exception, there were no general motions on Industrial Schools. Even the reaction to Cussen and Kennedy came not in the form of a formal ministerial statement followed by a debate, but as incrementally expanding replies to Dail questions. The exception was in the Seanad and was a general discussion, lasting five hours, on a motion to take note of the Kennedy Report (though taking place on 10th December 1973, some three years after publication of the Report) proposed by Senators Robinson and West, representing Trinity College, Dublin. This elicited an unusually detailed, unguarded and heartfelt response from John Bruton, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Department of Education.

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<sup>45</sup> In fact, this effect is greater than appears from the Table since the Table treats boys in a single category yet boy's Schools were divided into those for junior or senior boys. A consequence would be that a greater number of boys than those shown in the Table would have had to be sent outside their home county because there would have been no School available for someone of their particular age. In the interest of simplicity we have not gone into this effect. Another detail that is omitted, but which would have told in the opposite direction, is that, in some cases, girls Schools took junior boys. This would have had the effect of enlarging the number of places available in the county to boys.



**3.88** Likewise, there was little debate on the estimates for the Schools. With most estimates, Opposition deputies seize the latitude allowed to roam around the subject matter, unrestricted by the procedural limitations that apply in other forms of proceedings. But in this field, the estimate was usually passed off with an unchallenged statement from the Minister of the amount to be spent.

**3.89** The daily adjournment debate (a maximum of 30 minutes in all, consisting of a speech from the member who initiated the debate, followed by a reply from the responsible Minister) enables a member to agitate some matter in a fairly narrow, often local, field. This might have seemed to be just the procedural vehicle for some allegations of individual injustice in a School to be ventilated. In fact it was seldom so used. One exceptional case in which it was invoked arose out of an incident in which a 14-year-old boy had his arm broken by a Brother at Artane using a sweeping brush when he refused to submit to additional beating. Both the Minister (Sean Moylan) and the Deputy, Captain Cowan, who raised the matter were concerned to emphasise that this was an 'isolated incident'. In response to the debate, the Minister remarked rather broadly, that 'this is an isolated incident...[and] any guarantee I give parents of full protection of their children is no licence to any of the children to do what they like'. He stated that he had visited practically all the schools and, rather unexpectedly, that 'they are deficient in many things [and] in future a wider provision for expenditure must be made if these schools are to serve the purpose they ought to serve in the nation'. In one other rare adjournment debate, Deputy James Dillon set out the increasing figures for the committals by the Dublin Children's Court and asked unavailingly that the Minister should review each individual committal.<sup>46</sup>

**3.90** Although Dáil questions were occasionally the source of some exact information not available otherwise, they are of their nature episodic with their content depending on Deputies' interests. They concerned such issues as: funding of children's travel home for holidays; the failure on the part of the schools (or Department) to inform or warn parents when their children were transferred; and the suggested replacement of a police car as the vehicle for conveying children from the Dublin Children's Court to the Industrial School because of the embarrassment it caused.<sup>47</sup> Many of the questions asked simply for the numbers of committals on the various legislative grounds, in the previous year, figures that were published anyway in the departmental annual reports. Others urged medium-level changes of policy, for instance, repeatedly in the late 1930s, the adoption of the Cussen Committee recommendation that the salaries of literary teachers should be paid by the Department. The Deputy who asked the initial question seldom put a supplementary in response to the Minister's reply.

**3.91** In short, despite the panoply of weapons available to members, the 'big issues' in regard to the Schools were raised only seldom and then usually without preparation, passion or persistence. For instance: 'It costs about 15 shillings per week to keep [a child at Industrial School]. It has often been said to me that if some of that money were used to help the parents, there would be a very big change in their conduct.'<sup>48</sup> (There was no reply to this from the Minister, perhaps because he concentrated on another query advanced in the same interjection.) Another comment was:

Six months would be quite sufficient [for a child committed under the School Attendance Act]. There is a great inclination, when children are sent to Industrial Schools, to send them there for long periods.

<sup>46</sup> DD vol 145, col 946–52 (23rd April 1954); SD vol 75, col 60 (1st June 1973); vol 252 (25th March 1971); DD vol 75, col 150 (28th March 1939); vol 94, col 272-7 (13th June 1944), respectively.

<sup>47</sup> For questions in this paragraph, see respectively DD vol 127, col 274 (7th November 1951) (stating that the police car used to transport children to the schools had been replaced by a station wagon the previous month); vol 49, col 1359 (28th June 1944); DD vol 174, cols 126, 272 (8th and 9th April 1959).

<sup>48</sup> DD vol 88, col 2271 (19th November 1942).

To which the Minister replied:

Absence from school leading to committal would never be of such a character that six months would be sufficient ...This proposal would mean setting up a new institution. Resident Managers would not accept a child for a short period.<sup>49</sup>

Next, as regards early discharge, Minister O'Deirg stated:

If responsible people— the local clergy or prominent Deputies who show that they realise both sides of the case could testify to [the Minister] ... an application for early release will be considered.<sup>50</sup>

A request for the setting up of a system for hearing individual complaints against the Schools received surprisingly little discussion with the Minister for Education emphasising the inherent difficulty confronting anyone evaluating a complaint from a child or parent:

You have the situation that the child probably had been proved before a police court to be a notorious liar... Nevertheless some great abuse may have crept in and you are in this dilemma, that it is impossible to satisfy your mind that the allegations made by the children have absolutely no foundation.

Improved after care was suggested, including compiling figures on those former school children who were subsequently in trouble with the law.<sup>51</sup> And it was put to the Minister, with no thorough examination of the difficulties and possible solutions:

if he will get his colleagues [in Finance and Local Government] to provide for suitable foster parents remuneration on the same scale as the state is paying to industrial school... half the number of children in Industrial Schools... will go into decent families.<sup>52</sup>

The following exchange was over in an instant:

Mrs O'Carroll asked the Minister whether he is aware that the whole system of detention of boys and of Industrial Schools is out of date and needs to be reviewed and overhauled  
General Mulcahy: I am not so aware.<sup>53</sup>

That is all

### 3.92

There was an air of Ministerial detachment in the Dáil exchanges arising out of the closure, in 1959, of Greenmount School. Deputy Stephen Barrett asked the Minister for Education, Jack Lynch, if he was aware that the Greenmount children had been 'dispersed without any prior discussion with their parents and that, in fact, the parents were not aware that the children had been removed from the Industrial School to other Industrial Schools until after the dispersal had taken place?' The Minister replied:

The conductors of the school did so for what they considered good and sufficient reason and there was no intention whatever to ignore parental rights. They did so in the best interest of the management and conduct of the school.

<sup>49</sup> DD vol 88, cols 2270–3 (19 November 1942).

<sup>50</sup> DD vol 88, col 2273 (19 November 1942). See too, col 2536:

I have a case here, for example, of a boy aged 11 years, who was three times before the court before he was committed in July 1941. In August, 1941, I ordered his release. He did not attend school, and during the period after I ordered his release in August, 1941, and before October, 1942, when he was recommitted, he was before the court no less than six times.

<sup>51</sup> DD vol 66, col 25 (31st May 1937); DD vol 126, col 1732, 1744 (17th July 1951).

<sup>52</sup> DD vol 94, cols 272-7 (13th June 1944). See also vol 126, cols 1699, 1731, 1744 (11th July 1951).

<sup>53</sup> DD vol 151, col 20 (25th May 1955).

Deputy Barrett pressed the point by stressing that the interests of the parents had been ignored and that the promoters of the Industrial School knew that they were ignoring the rights of the parents. Minister Lynch's answer was:

I think it ought to be made clear that they acted strictly within their rights and within the terms of the Children Act, 1908, which governs the conduct of Industrial Schools.<sup>54</sup>

**3.93** The tone of the debate was invariably respectful and grateful to the authorities who ran the Schools<sup>55</sup>, though sometimes there was an air of 'formal pleading' about this. There was surprisingly little reference to what was happening in Northern Ireland or other jurisdictions.<sup>56</sup> Down the decades, the same few members took part in debates, on the subject.

### *The newspapers*

**3.94** When, as they did only spasmodically, the Schools were referred to in the newspapers, it was mainly in three contexts. First were court reports of committal proceedings. Dr Maguire<sup>57</sup> states:

Regional newspapers and several of the Dublin evening papers published extensive accounts of committal hearings in Children's Courts in Dublin and around the country, although it must be said that this coverage was varied and inconsistent: such reports were regular weekly or monthly features in some newspapers, while others reported on court proceedings not at all, or only in extraordinary cases.

Both the (Dublin) Evening Herald and the (Dublin) Evening Mail (and later the Evening Press, which began publication in 1954), usually reported on the same cases each week, and these published accounts were remarkably similar. It could be that a single correspondent provided coverage for all three papers, although it is impossible to know this for certain as the stories did not carry by-lines. Coverage of committal cases in the Dublin evening papers began to fall off in the early 1960s, and this trend could be due to a variety of factors; the folding of the Evening Mail in mid-1962; a decline in court committals, and/or a growing trend towards an overhaul of the industrial school system coupled with a growing awareness of the need for privacy and discretion in cases involving children.

**3.95** Secondly, there were accounts, generally in local papers, of the very occasional discussion of the Schools at a local authority meeting. For there seems to have been, if only spasmodically, livelier debate on the general topics of the School system at local authority meetings, sometimes inspired by resentment at the financial burden imposed by local residents in the Schools.

**3.96** On this O'Conneide and Maguire state<sup>58</sup>

The attitude of local authorities toward their responsibility for maintaining children in industrial schools, and general attitudes toward the efficacy of an institutional method of

<sup>54</sup> DD vol 174, col 272 (9th April, 1959).

<sup>55</sup> See eg DD vol 126, cols 1699, 1731, 1744. There were no sweeping condemnation, the equivalent of Deputy Dillon's comment on Summerhill, (not an Industrial School but a residential institution for juveniles (see 00) run by the Department of Education). He stated:

Summerhill is closed. Ten weary years of battering at the walls of Summerhill have at last brought them down.

Deputies may remember the Taoiseach saying that he thought Summerhill a very nice place to which he would send his own children if they did not behave themselves... the alternative accommodation [is] Glasnevin.

FILL OUT. On another occasion, Deputy Dillon said he would not like to see greyhounds or terriers kept in Summerhill: DD vol 88, col 1580 (28th October 1942). For Summerhill (later the place of detention was transferred from Summerhill to Marlborough House) see: para 00.

<sup>56</sup> Deputy A Byrne is an exception, referring to Scotland and the US at DD vol 82, cols 1120-1 (11th December 1940).

<sup>57</sup> M Maguire 'Briefing Paper Newspaper Research on Former Residents of Mercy Industrial Schools', Sisters of Mercy Industrial Schools in Context.

<sup>58</sup> At 46. Sources: *Connacht Tribune*, 24th January 1931, p 2; *Connacht Tribune*, 22nd January 1938, p 3; *Connacht Tribune*, 29th January 1938, p 6; *Irish Weekly Independent*, 13th April 1935, p 1; *Irish Weekly Independent*, 14th May 1932, p 9; *Connacht Tribune*, 8th July 1939, p 9; *Irish Weekly Independent*, 22nd November 1930, p 9.

dealing with poor and neglected children, are themes that run throughout press coverage of local authority meetings and the often extensive coverage of children's court proceedings. In an interesting and insightful discussion at the monthly meeting to the Galway Board of Health, one committee officer expressed a concern that the local ISPCC inspector, Mary Monnelly, was having children committed to institutions without the proper authority, and without consulting the appropriate local authorities. The Commissioner of the Board of Health instructed the superintendent home assistance officer to inform Monnelly that she was to consult with the local authorities before seeking the committal of children to industrial schools.

In 1938 the Galway County Homes and Home Assistance Committee had a discussion, that was reported in the press, about the merits of boarding-out children rather than committing them to industrial schools. The committee was considering a proposal to discontinue boarding children out in favour of maintaining all local authority children in industrial schools. Alice Lister, the Department of Health inspector of boarded-out children, argued that children could never receive the same kind of care and attention in an institutional setting that they could in a good foster home...

Other members of the committee countered these claims by pointing out that industrial school children received training in a skill or trade that would help them to support themselves upon release, while children boarded out, particularly with poorer families, were not guaranteed such an education or training...

After much debate the proposal to discontinue the boarding-out system was defeated. The following week the local newspaper, the *Connacht Tribune*, published an editorial that attempted to provide both sides of the story but came down squarely in favour of industrial schools.

**3.97** The third type of material about the Schools that occasionally appeared was human interest stories. For instance, an account of the visit of a dignitary (as when, in 1935, Eamon de Valera visited Artane and spent two hours in the School 'and was treated to a performance by the famous Artane Boys Band'). Another similar report described a fund-raising carnival held at the Lenaboy Industrial School in Galway city.

**3.98** The result was that, up to the time of the Kennedy Report, as Dr Keating writes<sup>59</sup>:

[Apart from Michael Viney's articles of 1966] the rest of the sparse coverage of the Schools was treated either with the nostalgic gloss of Patrick J McNulty's article of 20-21 June, 1969 entitled *Memories of Artane* or as simple reportage devoid of analysis, despite opportunity for greater analysis as a result of conferences on the inadequacies and dangers of the system.

**3.99** Serious cases of sexual or physical abuse were not reported, even if they came to light by way of a court case. Thus, for instance, a letter to *The Irish Times* on 11th May 1999, from a former reporter (and subsequently editor) of the *Evening Herald*, Brian Quinn, stated that in the 1950s the writer had:<sup>60</sup>

witnessed one of the worst of the Christian Brothers break into the office of the manager and demand that a court case that mentioned Artane should not be used in the *Evening Herald*. Before the manager could lift a phone, the Manager would push open the editorial door to tell us the manager had instructed that the case be dumped.... Those requests should have alerted journalists to start inquiries into what was happening in Artane. That we did not is a heavy burden.

<sup>59</sup> At p 275 of his PhD thesis.

<sup>60</sup> Brian Quinn, editor of *The Evening Herald* (1969-76).

- 3.100** Significantly, the case referred to in this letter seems to have gone unreported also by the other newspapers. Likewise, when in January 1951, an attendant employed at Marlborough House (not an Industrial School, but a place of detention, run by the Department of Education) was convicted of sexually abusing two boys detained in the institution, there were no newspaper reports.
- 3.101** A Departmental report by Dr McCabe of 8th January, 1948 recorded that following the death of a child in Rathdrum, owing to careless supervision, Dr McCabe visited the school and sought to get a 'callous' resident manager to appreciate the gravity of what had occurred:
- I drew her attention to the bad impression that would be likely to be created regarding the conduct of affairs in her school on anybody who would read the inquest proceedings in the newspapers. She told me that the matter had been taken care of in Carysfort and that there would be no report in the press.
- 3.102** Even if a skeleton made its way out of its cupboard, the newspapers could be persuaded to turn their back. An example from as late as 1964 was a story about head-shaving in the *Connacht Tribune*, which was picked up by the British Sunday paper, *The People*; but no Irish national paper reported the story.
- 3.103** The second omission was even more serious. With very few exceptions, there was no comprehensive survey of the School system and no accounts of the every-day experiences of the residents in the Schools. Specifically, so far as any serious discussion of the School system goes, in the 1940s and 1950s, only two contributions in daily papers have been found. Each was a multi-part feature in *The Irish Times* (referred to below).
- 3.104** The Kennedy Committee Report, while it attracted more attention than any other single episode, was not front page news. Even the significant *Doyle* Supreme Court constitutional case<sup>61</sup> received little coverage outside the *The Irish Times* of 13th October 1956.
- 3.105** A series of four articles appeared anonymously ('By a Special Correspondent') in *The Irish Times* in February, 1950. The author appeared to have been well-informed about the system and aware of the history of the institutions and of developments in the State and elsewhere. The series was very critical of the system and proposed radical changes to do away with institutions. The writer expressed limited approval of the Cussen Commission, which did valuable work but failed 'to see that something more revolutionary than improvements in the existing structure was necessary'. There was little reaction to the articles, which seem to have gone largely unnoticed in official and political circles as well as among the general public.
- 3.106** The lack of interest generally is evident in a response by the Department of Education to a question from the Commission stating that it had found no records referring to *The Irish Times* articles on child delinquency in 1950. This is consistent with an expectation that there would be no interest in the matter among the electorate or public representatives. Otherwise, it would have been expected that cuttings would be kept and a defence dossier compiled.
- 3.107** Another breach in the iron curtain was the work of Michael Viney. He wrote a series of articles<sup>62</sup> in *The Irish Times*, based on six weeks' research. Significantly, even this major series attracted only one (published) letter to the editor,<sup>63</sup> and it seems likely that given the expenditure of resources, the paper would have published any reasonable letters received. Likewise, the series

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix, Vol V, Part B.

<sup>62</sup> This is one of a number of pioneering series by Mr Viney, 27th April– 6th May 1966. D Gageby 'The Media' in JJ Lee (ed) *Ireland 1945-70* (Gill and Macmillan, 1979), p 133, refers to 'a whole new world of cool clinical reporting which came from Michael Viney, with novel studies of unmarried mothers, alcoholics, deprived children and other castaways of the 1960s.' The other exceptions were *The Irish Times*, 3rd February 1950

<sup>63</sup> This letter (10th May 1966) was from Captain Edgar White from the First Dublin County Boys ' Brigade. It suggested that uniformed organisations like the Boys' Brigade, Catholic Boy Scouts, could provide persons capable of acting as voluntary welfare liaison officers. A comment in response from Michael Viney indicated that in his opinion, voluntary workers were not the answer and would only provide the State with 'an excuse for further procrastination'.



was met by an eerie silence from other Irish newspapers, which declined the opportunity to mine the rich lode, which, it might seem, had been opened up by Mr Viney.

**3.108** It should be noted that in the 1960s, the rare journalists who wished to do so, like Michael Viney and another journalist, Joseph O'Malley (who wrote a single article in *The Irish Independent*) were not discouraged by the Minister (George Colley) from visiting and inspecting the Schools subject to the fact that the particular schools permission would have to be obtained. And in fact, the Schools facilitated their visits.

**3.109** This lack of investigation and reporting may reflect the absence of interest in this subject by the public. As regards the personal attitude of journalists, a journalist who was the educational correspondent of one of the national dailies in the 1960s recalls:

We saw educational issues as involving middle class concerns like curriculum development or Church and State, not 'the lesser breeds without the Law' in the Industrial Schools. After Kennedy, there was some improvement but we didn't push as hard as we should have done.

### **Reaction to press criticism**

**3.110** When a rare derogatory comment was published, there was a strong defence from the Orders. In the 1950s, Fr Nagle of Lower Glanmire Parish, Cork, said something that seemed to be a criticism of the Schools; the Christian Brothers' Managers' Association was quick to demand an apology. As reported, the priest had said:

We are convinced that an indifferent home is better than a good institution, because in an indifferent home children receive at least from time to time some love, affection and interest from their parents. They cannot receive this in the institution and this has an unfortunate bearing on the children's emotional and mental development.

The Managers' Meeting of the Christian Brothers responded:<sup>64</sup>

We assume that the institutions referred to are the Industrial Schools. You may not be aware that all these Industrial Schools, in which there is accommodation over seven thousand (7,000) children, are conducted by Religious Communities of Priests, Brothers and Sisters. According to your statement, as reported, children in these schools cannot receive even from time to time some love, affection and interest from the Religious who have dedicated their lives to this noble and necessary work. Your statement has been deeply resented by the members of our Association and they fail to see what purpose such a statement, so unrelated to facts, can serve other than to belittle their work.

It was also stated that 'Father Nagle was simply echoing his Bishop's pronouncement – Dr Lucey seems to be totally opposed to the Industrial Schools System'. Fr Nagle's reply was that:

I did not state that the children cannot receive love etc from the religious. I stated that they cannot receive *parental* love. I have the highest regard for the Religious who cared for those children. I genuinely apologise for any offence, but I insist that it was unintentional.

**3.111** Again, in 1963, a solicitor, who was representing two boys in Galway District Court, urged the court not to send his clients to Letterfrack. He said that every murderer in the country had served time there and that he would prefer that his clients were sentenced to six months in prison than two years in Letterfrack. The district justice's response was to the effect that 'there may be a great deal in what you say but I cannot do anything about it'. Exceptionally this exchange was covered

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of Christian Brothers' Managers Meeting of 30th April 1957.

in *The Evening Press*, *The Connaught Tribune*, *The Connaught Sentinel* and *The Tuam Star*. The manager of the school wrote to the Minister demanding to know what he proposed to do about these ‘very scurrilous and false allegations’ and adding ‘I also wish to draw your attention to the fact that too many TD’s are applying to Minister for Education to have certain boys discharged from here.’<sup>65</sup>

### ***Boards of Visitors, committees of management or godparents’ associations***

**3.112** It might have been expected that, in the same way as prisons and (in recent times) national or secondary schools<sup>66</sup>, each Reformatory or Industrial School would have had its own ‘Board of Visitors’, namely, a group of respected local citizens who would make regular visits to a school, be aware of what was going on there, encourage improvements and inquire into any complaints.

**3.113** A broader question is why, until the 1970s, even in the wider educational field, there were no local boards overseeing primary and secondary schools. The answer was regarded as self-evident, namely that the religious were giving their entire lives, usually working long hours, for scant financial reward, to serve the community in buildings that they had also provided. In an unsuspecting and deferential age, it would have seemed perverse to require that there be accountability to a board of lay outsiders. As against this, it might be thought that a special case should be made in regard to Industrial and Reformatory Schools because they were closed worlds with vulnerable inmates.

**3.114** In fact, relatively late – in 1962 – the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders did recommend the establishment of visiting committees for certified schools. Mr Haughey, Minister for Justice, wrote to Dr Patrick Hillery, Minister for Education, commending this proposal and received the following lukewarm and third-person response:

In view, of the rejection by the school managers some years ago of this Departments proposal that they be visited by an ad hoc committee of representatives of the Departments of Finance, Social Welfare and Education in connection with the managers appeal, at the time, for improved grants, the Minister is not over-sanguine as to the managers’ attitude to the idea of Visiting Committees. Neither is he clear as to how best such committees, if agreed to, should be brought into existence. He proposes, nevertheless, once more to approach the Managers’ association with the present suggestions.<sup>67</sup>

**3.115** Starting mainly in the 1950s, Godparents’ Associations grew up for some Industrial Schools but they had no formal status, their central purpose being to provide as many of the children as possible with a person or family who would take a personal interest in them and bring them into their homes at some weekends or holidays. There was no connection between individual associations. The judgments they expressed on the Industrial Schools they knew were usually unfavourable and their presence was at best tolerated by Managers and at worst regarded as

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<sup>65</sup> DJ 93/182/17, cited in Keating at pp 201-2. We do not have the Minister’s response. On 18th February 1955, the Joint Committee of Women’s Societies and Social Workers, who had a long-standing interest in the Schools wrote to the Minister suggesting various reforms, among them a visiting Committee for each institution, appointed by the local authority and comprising members of the council and outside social workers.

<sup>66</sup> National School Boards of Management did not start until 1975; and Boards of Management for secondary schools started somewhat later: *Fuller Irish Catholicism since 1950* (Gill and MacMillan, 2002), p 161. (There is no need to go into the precise gradation of functions and powers between committee of management or a board of visitors because the essential point here is that there was next to nothing in the way of either type of body.)

<sup>67</sup> DJ 93/182, quoted in A Keating, PhD, pp 224-6.



meddling. The Catholic Godparents Guild<sup>68</sup> hosted children from several Schools throughout the State. The other associations each focussed on a single school, for instance Artane or Upton – or, at most, two Schools in the case of the Galway Godparents Association, which was concerned with the children in St Anne’s Lenaboy and St Joseph’s Salthill. This association found the Managers of each school uncooperative in the efforts it made to bring greater interest into the lives of the children.

### **Pressure groups**

**3.116** A pressure group that took an interest in the Schools from the 1940s-70s was the Joint Committee of Women’s Societies and Social Workers.<sup>69</sup> Their submissions to the Minister were striking for raising not individual complaints but rather suggestions for the sort of innovation that ought to have been debated more frequently within the Department and the Schools themselves. For instance a letter of 2nd February 1966 to the Minister contains a constructive suggestion:<sup>70</sup>

In the matter of further education, that is, in preparation for a career, we would advocate the authentic training of the Vocational School, which, again, could serve as an interim

<sup>68</sup> According to the minutes of a discussion between the Inter-departmental Committee on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment Offenders and the Catholic Godparents Guild, 6th November 1963, (the Kennedy Committee being missing, we are using the evidence to the Inter-Departmental Committee):

The Catholic Godparents Guild originated (1949) in personal contacts when Miss Wogan enlisted the aid of certain individuals in sending presents to industrial school children and it has preserved this personal, discriminatory approach to new membership. (In the first year of its existence it dropped 25 members who did not keep to the high standard set.)

Furthermore, the Guild has now for the first time a surplus of potential godparents, and proposes to communicate with all industrial schools asking for the names of children. This move may enable it to interest more industrial school managers in the idea of the Guild and in the ideas of Visiting and After-Care Committees. Mr MacDaibhid [of the Department of Education] undertook to supply to Miss Fleming a list of all industrial schools. It was remarked that not all industrial schools cooperate with the Guild, but Mr JJ McCarthy was able to assure the representatives that most industrial school managers with whom the question of a Visiting Committee was raised had welcomed the idea. In view of the experience of the Galway Godparents Association one would suggest that there was an element of wishful thinking here.

<sup>69</sup> However, occasionally suggestions came from, for example.

i) Irish Association of Civil Liberties. On 28th May 1963, the Association proposed that the Department should take advantage of the declining numbers in the 1960s, to widen the categories of children they took, in order not to break up families, for instance: ‘Cavan Senior Girls school is looking for permission to take boys, Rathdrum junior boys wants authority to take girls and Drogheda junior boys would like to keep their children until the age of eleven years.’

ii) See, too, Knights of St Columbanus: letter to the Minister, 4th November 1966, complaining that Daingean residents were not eligible for free health services provided by the State and noting that the Knights took an interest in ‘after-care and improving amenities for the institution’.

iii) Following a visit to Artane by the Junior Chamber Commerce, Junior Chamber, in a letter of 24th June 1966 offers the help of its membership equipping the boys ‘to take their place in society’: see fn 215 of Education Discovery, May 2006.

iv) See also the following extract from the Incorporated Law Society’s (18th January 1971) response to the Kennedy Report:

The Society’s committee was chaired by Cork Solicitor, John B Jermyn. ‘Full use should therefore be made of Organisations like Rotary and the Lions Club. These Bodies consist of representatives of all the Professions and Trades and would find little difficulty in placing any boy or girl on release from an Industrial School. Some years ago a Scheme was evolved with the Cork Rotary Club for such a purpose. The intention was that the Club would form a permanent standing Committee who would make contact through the Manager of Upton Industrial School with all boys aged 14 or 15. They would get to know them as intimately as possible and learn their capabilities so that when their 16th birthday arrived they would be employed immediately in a suitable position. The Committee would then continue to act in loco parentis to the children so placed and be available at all times to advise them and help them out of trouble. Unfortunately the Scheme was killed at birth because the then Manager of Upton Industrial School would not give it his blessing as he felt that it constituted a trespass on his own preserves.

<sup>70</sup> See the Department’s earlier brush-off on a memo submitted by the Joint Committee of Women’s Societies and Social Workers on Children in Institutions, dated 18th February 1955.

As the members of the joint committee heartily endorse the view that a bad home is better than the best institution they obviously have very little sympathy with or appreciation of the excellent work being done in Irish orphanages and Industrial schools for the homeless or deprived child. Indeed the Joint committee would appear to have a strong prejudice against the system and in these circumstances it is difficult to see what contribution they can make to the problem beyond airing their prejudices against the existing system. I hold that while the system can never replace the good or moderately good home, it has a lot to recommend it.

introduction to the normal community into which the boys must, in two years time, become suddenly integrated. This would of course necessitate their sharing the benefits accorded to other boys, but surely they have as great a claim. Towards this end we would suggest that a proportionate number of places be reserved at each Vocational School.

We have been particularly interested in the methods used by Br Stephen Kelly at St Patrick's in Belfast. He employs a Social Worker, a layman, who meets each boy and follows his progress through the school, paying attention to his aptitudes. It is interesting to note that boys without homes are not automatically boys for farming.'

### **Ministers**

**3.117** Between 1970-74, the Minister for Justice was Des O'Malley (as it happens Donagh O'Malley's nephew and the inheritor of his Dail seat). In an interview in 2002, Mr O'Malley told Dr Keating that he was concerned about the Industrial and Reformatory Schools sector, in part because of the general public erroneous belief that it was the responsibility of the Department of Justice. A few months after taking office as Minister for Justice, Mr O'Malley happened to take a family holiday in North Connemara near Letterfrack and heard and observed personally a certain amount about that institution. On his return to Dublin, he made some inquiries and was told by the Secretary of the Department to 'leave it to Education'.<sup>71</sup>

**3.118** In contrast, according to the memoirs of Pdraig Faulkner, Minister for Education 1969-73:

It was to be quite some time after I left the Department of Education that I first heard the word 'paedophile'. During my time as Minister I hadn't an inkling that child sex abuse existed. When I published the Kennedy Report in 1970 Dail questions on a variety of aspects of it came thick and fast. Some deputies praised the diligence and selflessness of the religious orders in caring for Children in care. Nobody raised the question of abuse. Dr Noel Browne and Dr John O'Connell were among my most persistent questioners and nobody doubts that if these deputies had heard so much as a whisper about abuse, they would immediately have raised the matter in the Dáil.

### **Sexual abuse**

**3.119** Even among external observers who scrutinised the schools, there seems to have been little or no contemporary knowledge of sexual abuse. Mr Michael Viney, for instance, who visited several schools, over a six-week period, in 1966 researching his 15,000-word series in *The Irish Times* in 1966, did not discover any evidence of sexual abuse (though, in those more innocent days, he was not looking for any). In the Tuairim Report of 1966,<sup>72</sup> nothing is said in about sexual abuse because, according to one member, they could not believe what they were being told.

**3.120** A district court clerk who served in the 1960s remarked:

We knew about the sexual abuse in the Schools because one of the Gardai who drove the children from the Court to the Schools told us about it. In today's climate I'd have protested to the Department of Justice. But in those times, at best my protest would have been ignored, at worst I'd have been disciplined.

### **The public**

**3.121** It seems that the general public living in the locality of a School had some broad idea of the conditions. It was not uncommon for parents to threaten children who were misbehaving with some such formula as: 'Stop it or you'll be sent to Artane / Upton / Letterfrack...' Both sides knew what was meant. When John B Keane wrote in 1967 about farmers exploiting cheap labour of

<sup>71</sup> This paragraph draws on the detailed account in A Keating, pp 244-89. See also Keating 'Marlborough House: A Case Study of State Neglect' *Studies* Vol 93, No 371, p 325.

<sup>72</sup> Some of our children – a report on the residential care of the deprived child in Ireland, No 13, January 1966

youths from an Industrial School, it seems likely that he expected his readers to know what he was writing about. *Letters of a Successful TD*<sup>73</sup> contains the following passage:

We will never again see a worker like Topper. I will never forget him a long as I live. You probably don't remember Jeremy Tlopper. He died of TB when you were about three or four. It still plays on my conscience that I might have driven him too hard. In those days we used to get youngsters out of Kilnavarna Industrial School to work as farm labourers. They were usually aged about fifteen or sixteen. You didn't have to pay them much and I know for a fact that most people paid them nothing.

I had several lads but they were better for eating than they were for working. It was a mistake, too, to get fellows who hadn't made their Confirmation because you would have to leave them off every day for catechism.

Jeremy Topper was different. He had made his Confirmation. He was a great worker and a light feeder. He was as thin as a whippet but I never heard him complain and he worked out-of-doors, hail, rain, or shine.

I often worry that I might have misused him, but no, that isn't true, because he worshiped me as a son would. He had no father or mother but that was during the Economic War when nobody could afford a regular workman and dead calves were blocking the eyes of the bridges.

The only labour we could afford were young lads or girls out of orphanages or Industrial Schools. Jeremy died when he was twenty but I think he killed himself. I never touched him, although I know of boys and girls who were whipped and punched like slaes and there were young girls who were badly abused by certain farmers who are pillars of the Church to-day. May God forgive them and the priests who knew what was going on. I put up headstone over Jeremy when he died. There was no cure for TB in those days. ...

**3.122** In that year, 1988, there was a more sceptical reaction to Paddy Doyle's story<sup>74</sup> of, amongst other things, the violence of the nuns of St Michael's Industrial School in Cappoquin. He recalled that: 'I used to hear people refer to me as one of the children from the orphanage, which was the phrase locals used to soften the brutal reality of the Industrial School in their midst.'

**3.123** The Task Force on Child Care Services 1980 refers to a most striking feature of the pre-Kennedy system of residential care as being ...'...the alarming complacency and indifference of both the general public and the various government departments and statutory bodies responsible for the welfare of children'.

### ***Concluding comment***

**3.124** Until very late in the day, the contribution made by the Oireachtas or the news media towards supervision, or even education of the public, in regard to the Schools, appears to have been negligible. Pressure groups were rare and usually ineffective. The general public was often uninformed and usually uninterested. All these pools of unknowing reinforced each other.

**3.125** A trained social worker who practiced in the 1960s informed the Commission that:

we knew that the Schools were 'institutions' with all that implied and were alert to try to avoid them or minimise a child's stay there; but on the other hand we regarded them as safe places where the child would be if not positively cherished at least 'protected from harm.

<sup>73</sup> Mercier Press, 1967.

<sup>74</sup> God Squad, p 38.

## Part 5 Family links

**3.126** The maintenance of family links was adversely affected by three issues, namely the geographical distribution of the Schools and the problem this posed for parental visits; keeping brother and sisters together; and home leave. The long-term social and psychological well-being of the children required that they keep their links with their families. This meant that siblings should as far as possible be in the same School and that resident children should be kept in touch with their families by holidays, parental visits and letters. These areas were often the subject of differences between the Department and the Schools. The Department appears to have appreciated the need for improvements but it was not sufficiently determined to overcome the opposition of the Schools to changes. The reason for this resistance was the Schools' fear that liberalisation could undermine discipline. Using a mixture of persuasion and financial incentive, the Department effected some improvements. Where there was a cost, a good deal depended on who paid for the change; usually the Department ended up paying.

### *Geographic distribution*

**3.127** The fact that so many of the Schools were located a long way from the homes of their residents made contact with families almost non-existent, except for such limited holidays at home as were permitted. In practice, sending a Dublin boy to Letterfrack could sunder the family almost completely. In very occasional cases, family circumstances were thought to be so bad that children were deliberately sent to Schools at a distance from their homes in order to remove them from their parents.

**3.128** The reason for the uneven geographic distribution of the Schools was explained in the Cussen Report:<sup>75</sup>

... on the introduction of the system most of the Local Authorities were unwilling to contribute even towards the maintenance of the children, and as the Treasury grant was insufficient for the building and equipment of such schools, their establishment was a matter of some difficulty. As a result, various Religious Orders were requested to undertake the work, and those who agreed and provided suitable premises had them certified. Certificates were, therefore, granted with little regard to the geographical distribution of the schools.

**3.129** The difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that committals were disproportionately high in Dublin.<sup>76</sup>

**3.130** As outlined in a Departmental memo in 1943, Munster had five senior Schools for boys and two junior Schools whereas Leinster had only two of each. The memo continued:

At the present time north of a line between Dublin and Galway there are no Senior Boys' Industrial Schools; the nearest south of that line is in Clonmel and after that recourse must be had to Glin and Tralee (both of which have now numbers in excess of the certified complement – as also, incidentally, have the schools in Salthill and Letterfrack), or to a cluster of schools in a limited area in the extreme southwest, namely, Greenmount, Upton and Baltimore. Only the two last-named of these are at present short of their certified numbers. They therefore become of necessity the dumping-grounds for Dublin boys who cannot be sent to Artane or Carriglea.

<sup>75</sup> At para 20.

<sup>76</sup> M Osocpa's memo of 4th April, 1951 states:

Committals from Dublin City and County amount to between 30 to 40 per cent of the total committals; yet the accommodation of the schools in the Dublin Area (Artane and Carriglea – 1090) is only 34 per cent of the total accommodation for boys (3,229) and these two schools are required, in addition to giving vacancies for the Dublin committals, to cater for practically the rest of Leinster and the counties of Cavan and Monaghan.

**3.131** The Department was concerned about this problem.<sup>77</sup> One way that it could use to ease the problem was in making transfer orders from junior to senior boys' schools when boys were aged 10 years, on which occasion the Department could select Schools close to Dublin. In addition, there might be exceptional transfers, at other ages, including transfers to Dublin on emotional grounds.

**3.132** An example of the way in which the Department could sometimes operate is shown in an internal Departmental memo of 18th September 1963. It was noted that 'St George's Limerick was a good school and that its Resident Manager has in a recent phone call, sharply rebuked the Department for its lack of interest in the school and its problems. The memo continues:

Dr McCabe has been asked to call on the Inspector of the ISPC Limerick with a view to channelling more committals to St George's School and on the closing of Summerhill, Athlone next December, New Ross and Waterford should be kept in mind when arranging the transfer of the children if the addresses and family backgrounds permit this course.

**3.133** In 1954, when the Christian Brothers announced that all offenders were to be sent to the School in Letterfrack, District Justice McCarthy requested that the proposed schools for offenders be located in a place less isolated than Letterfrack (eg Tralee or Glin) as he felt that Letterfrack would not be the most suitable place for the rehabilitation of boys from Dublin City. However, this aspect of the district justice's complaint fell on stony ground. Br O'hAnluan of the Christian Brothers replied that they had fully considered the question and that they had decided on Letterfrack.

**3.134** Naturally few of the resident's families had cars and consequently a visit by them was effectively impossible, unless public transport was available. As an example of the limitations of this: although only 50 miles from Dublin, Daingean was even in 1966, served by a single daily bus from Dublin. A further restriction, according to Michael Viney, was that parents were allowed to visit Daingean only on the first Sunday of the month

**3.135** If a Dublin boy's family wished to visit him at Letterfrack it would be difficult to do so and return by public transport on the same day. It was said that, to facilitate such contact, the Manager was good enough to drive pupils to the nearest railway town, 50 miles away, so as to avoid the necessity of a two-day journey.<sup>78</sup>

**3.136** More generally, the School authorities do not appear to have encouraged family visits.

**3.137** In her evidence to the Commission, Sr Úna O'Neill of the Religious Sisters of Charity observed that there was

nothing in place to give the impression that the visits of the parents to the children was a high priority ... I found no evidence of any expression of priority in terms of making sure that parents could visit their children.

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<sup>77</sup> The Department shared the Managers assessment that many schools were 'in danger of becoming uneconomic' and accepted that as a consequence 'the chances of modernising' these schools became 'increasingly remote'. One solution considered was the closure of the least economic schools and the transfer of their children to more viable schools, but it was accepted that it would be *unfair to put children beyond the reach of those parents and relatives who visit them*. See, too, letter of 19th March 1954, letter from Christian Brothers (A OhAulain) announcing closure of Carriglea and suggesting that distribution of former Carriglea residents should be sensitive to the location of their homes.

<sup>78</sup> A similar practice was to be reported in the case of a previous manager by the Tuairim Report (1966) 22 *Some of Our Children*: See, like effect O'Connor (1963); Kennedy, para 6.22; McQuaid (1971)]

### ***Parents' travel expenses***

- 3.138** A constructive development came in 1971 by way of Circular No 30/71 providing for free travel for parents visiting their children in a school. If they were medical card holders, both parents were allowed the expenses of up to four visits per year.
- 3.139** The operation of the scheme was delegated to School Managers and was extended gradually during the 1970s, culminating in a 1979 Circular broadening the free travel initiative to brothers and sisters.

### ***Keeping brothers and sisters together***

- 3.140** There are reports of siblings who were at the same school seeing each other only by accident or finding out later that the two had been at the same school at the same time. Here the school authorities must have known and failed to put the two in communication.
- 3.141** Internal memoranda show that the Department was aware of the danger of siblings losing contact with each other and attempted to do something about it:<sup>79</sup>

It is the settled policy of this Department to do everything possible to maintain and encourage family ties where it is in the children's interest to do so. The selection of a school is a matter for the committing justice in the first instance but the Department subsequently does all in its power to arrange transfers, as far as possible, to schools near the children's homes, and to have members of the same family detained in the same school. Unfortunately, these post-committal adjustments are not always possible and, in any case, only touch the fringe of the problem.

- 3.142** Transfer orders were sometimes made by the Department in order to keep a family in the same School. Lunney<sup>80</sup> writes after a study of entry registers in Sisters of Mercy Schools for the period 1869-1950, that:

the admission registers of the Schools indicate that the Managers had a policy of keeping sisters together even if some had to be admitted in excess of the certified limit. For instance, the manager of Goldenbridge School in Dublin often arranged for the transfer of a child from St George's Industrial School in Limerick to Goldenbridge so that she could be with her younger sister.

- 3.143** The probability is that practice and attitudes varied from one school or from one Manager to another.

### ***Going home for the holidays***

- 3.144** Home leave was a matter for the School authorities to arrange in accordance with rules laid down by the Department. The maximum home leave allowed each year was seven days, until 1935 when it was extended to 14 days. Following a recommendation in the Cussen Report<sup>81</sup> the maximum period was extended, in 1944, to 21 days, and then to 31 days, in 1948.
- 3.145** Generally, the Schools opposed leave.<sup>82</sup> A letter from the Resident Managers Association to the Department of Education of 7th June 1949, responding to a proposal, which was not adopted, to

<sup>79</sup> Department document Ref No 63/1937. See, to rather similar effect 7th June 1937 internal Departmental memo and letter from Mr Whelan to Deputy Secretary of Department, 14th September 1937 (116/37 DEI P0036).

<sup>80</sup> At p 79.

<sup>81</sup> At para 77.

<sup>82</sup> The Manager had to make a return to the Department annually, giving: the name of each child, the periods of leave, and the total number of days' leave taken since above the limit of 31 days, the capitation grants would be affected.



extend home leave to six weeks, stated that 37 of the 44 Schools who replied were opposed to the increase:

It was pointed out that when the children return from Home Leave there is always a marked disimprovement in manners and conduct; they are often very discontented. All this is highly detrimental to the general spirit of the School, and it takes the children quite a long time to settle down again to the ordinary routine.

Numbers of them return ill fed and sickly, in an unkempt condition, with clothes in a filthy condition. It takes weeks to get rid of the vermin. Sometimes their language is vile.

Industrial School children generally belong to the poorest families and the home conditions are often most unsuitable and undesirable... A high percentage of these children are illegitimate and the mothers are not just what they should be; others have been the victims of circumstances getting into trouble because parents or guardians failed to exercise proper control... It was also said that children who could with safety be allowed six weeks Home Leave should not be in any Industrial School; they should be discharged to their homes and not allowed to be living on public money.

**3.146** This debate concerned only the maximum leave permitted, which was rather theoretical, since each Manager had discretion to allow home leave up to the maximum specified by the Department. As regards how much leave was actually granted, in a Departmental minute of 11th April 1949 it was stated:

An analysis of the Home Leave Returns for 1948, has been made and it has been ascertained that, of the 10 Senior Boys Industrial Schools, only one (Tralee) allowed all the boys who were given holidays, leave for the full period (31 days). Of the remaining five Christian Brothers Schools – Artane gave a maximum of 21 days, Carriglea 21, Letterfrack, 21 (1 boy, 29 days) Salthill, 28 and Glin, 28. In the other Senior Boys Schools, the maximum period allowed was Baltimore, 18 days (1 boy 20); Clonmel, 30; Greenmount, 26; and Upton, 29. In Upton 46 boys got 21 days, 52, 29 days and 20, 8 days.

**3.147** Of the 35 girls' schools, 10 allowed some of the children sent home on holidays the full period (31 days). The other children in these and the remaining Industrial Schools for girls were sent home for an average per child of about 22 days.

**3.148** Approximately 2,600 children out of an average number of nearly 6,300 children, or about 41 percent under detention, were allowed home on holidays at all during 1948. The reasons why a great number of children were not sent on holidays were given as: 1) unsuitable parents or relatives; 2) unsuitable homes; 3) no parents or relatives; 4) no homes to which they could be sent; 5) inability or unwillingness of parents or relatives to take charge of the children even for a holiday.

**3.149** In 1960, in an internal departmental survey, it was reported that one-third of detained children were given home leave each year for a period not exceeding 31 days.

### ***Licensing***

**3.150** Apart from early discharge by the Minister, there were other ways in which a resident might leave a School early. Theoretically, the most promising of these was release by the Manager on licence under section 67 of the 1908 Act (as amended by section 13 of the 1941 Act).<sup>83</sup> This provision

<sup>83</sup> As early as 1929, it was noted in a Department of Education memo (Misc /56) that while the numbers of committals to Industrial and Reformatory Schools was somewhat higher than in Saorstát Éireann, the actual numbers in the schools was less because the British school managers were making 'more and more use of their power of 'licensing' the children'.



allowed the Manager of either type of school to 'licence out' a child or young person to live with a named 'trustworthy and respectable person'. Thus a gradual assimilation of the child into society could have been effected.

**3.151** But at no period does licensing appear to have been given a fair trial. Barnes notes<sup>84</sup> that in 1884 the Aberdare Commission [into reformatory and Industrial Schools in Britain and Ireland] found that managers were not using the licensing system extensively enough. Nearly a century later, Kennedy<sup>85</sup> found that only 32 out of 2,476 children had been licensed, and commented:

the licensing system is being used only in very rare cases. This may in some instances be due to the difficulties which managers experience in contacting, without the aid of an aftercare service, suitable persons to accept the child or it may be due to a reluctance to release a child and suffer a reduction in the capitation fee payable to a school. Whatever the reason, it is obviously regrettable that the licensing system is not used more extensively.

## Part 6 Changes

### *Proposed new school*

**3.152** Throughout the 1940s, the total boys' Schools' population ranged around 3,000 and during the period 1942-44 it exceeded 3,100. The total authorised accommodation capacity for boys' Schools was 3,380. The result was that the senior boys' Schools were overcrowded and there were protests from justices and Gardai, in open court, that the Children Act had become unworkable owing to lack of accommodation. In addition, it was assumed that after World War II had ended conditions as regards juvenile delinquency and poverty that had followed World War I would be replicated, which would have meant a further increase in demand for places.

**3.153** To meet the increased demand, the Department's view was that a new School of capacity 200-250 was necessary. A contrary view was expressed by Managers of provincial Schools to the effect that the establishment of the proposed School would affect their financial viability and perhaps make it impossible for some of them to continue.<sup>86</sup> Because so many of the children or young persons came from Dublin, it was thought appropriate to locate the new School so that it would be accessible to Dublin.

**3.154** The Department wrote to Br Quinlan, Provincial of the Christian Brothers.<sup>87</sup>

At the moment there are over 250 senior boys from Dublin City and County in country industrial schools, and about 23 boys in the junior schools (all of the latter are situated outside the Dublin area). Many of the latter boys are due for removal to senior schools in the near future, and a large proportion of them may be regarded as having a claim to vacancies in Artane and Carriglea by reason of the fact that they already have brothers there and that their parents or relatives live in the Dublin areas. Owing to the distribution of the other industrial schools for boys it would be most convenient if the new school was situated to the north rather than the south of Dublin city, as it could thus absorb committals from the counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath etc, as well as Dublin.

**3.155** As regards which Order would provide the School, Archbishop Mc Quaid proposed the Christian Brothers; but this offer was conditional on the State providing capital assistance. It was therefore

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<sup>84</sup> At pp 79-80.

<sup>85</sup> Table 14.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from M O'S to Assistant Secretary, 4th April 1951. It was also noted earlier that unless committals continued to increase, it was likely that Baltimore would have to close. In fact, Baltimore closed in 1950.

<sup>87</sup> 11th August, 1943. See also Daly, p 78 (see Report of Department of Education 1929-30, p 109).

politely turned down because the Presentation Brothers had offered to provide the School out of its own resources.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, an arrangement was made with them to acquire land (160 acres to allow for the farm) and construct an appropriate building for a School in Celbridge, County Kildare, 30 miles from Dublin. The total cost was £150,000, towards which the Department paid a grant of £40,000.

- 3.156** In fact, the boys' Schools' population peaked in 1946-47 and then started to decline steadily with the result that Celbridge School never opened and the building was eventually used, as St Raphael's, by the St John of God's Order, to teach skills to children with intellectual disabilities.

### *Size and organisation*

- 3.157** There was little in the field of fundamental change. One of the few considerations of structural change is the following brief statement by T O'Raiheartaigh, Secretary of the Department of Education, on 15th March 1967 in an internal memo:

One line of approach to the problem of the Industrial Schools is the provision of a Prevention Centre. The importance of the Prevention Centre will lie not only in the turning back the youngsters from their first steps in delinquency and the caring for innocent youngsters from broken homes, but also in that it will reduce considerably the number of children who will be committed to industrial schools.

This raises the question of the second line of approach. It is that the industrial schools will in future have to devote themselves more to rehabilitation type of work. This will mean that they will have to organise the children into smaller groups and so have to employ a much larger staff of skilled personnel. The children will, learn by doing (as Senator Quinlan mentioned in the Seanad debate on 'Investment in Education').

The maximum number in any institution should not exceed 250. The only school which accommodates more than 250 is Artane. The question of breaking up that school into smaller schools was recommended by the Commission of Inquiry 1934-36 but nothing came if it mainly due to the opposition of the conductors and the extra huge expenditure involved. I consider that in fact 250 is altogether too big a number for a school and that 50-100 would be the ideal number.

### *Closure*

- 3.158** The Schools' population peaked in the late 1940s and then there was a steady decline through the 1950s, which accelerated in the 1960s. In the light of the figures, the Department of Education noted, as early as 1951, that since 1945 there had been an average of 250 vacancies in the boys' Schools.<sup>89</sup>

- 3.159** Despite the obvious trend it took a long time for the Department to realise that the reduction in the Schools' population was irreversible and consequently that certain of the Schools should close. The Christian Brothers discussed the possibility in 1954 at a Christian Brothers' Managers

<sup>88</sup> Minister T O'Deirg to Archbishop. McQuaid letters, 15th August, 23rd September 1944.

<sup>89</sup> On 4th April 1951, M O'S of Department wrote to the Assistant Secretary:

Since 1945 there have on an average been 250 vacancies in the Boys' Schools which tends to show that (i) the existing Industrial School accommodation for Senior Boys is adequate for the present conditions of comparatively full employment occasioned by the continuance of international tension and (2) with the improvement in the Social Welfare Services and general conditions (including housing) it is anticipated that less children will be committed to Industrial Schools on the grounds of poverty than heretofore. It must be remembered, however, that the incidence of the causes which leads to committals (unhappy marriages, poverty, illness or deaths of one or both parents, lack of control etc) is unpredictable and makes accurate forecasts of the number of committals very difficult.

Meeting,<sup>90</sup> and the Department of Finance had read the figures accurately at least as early as 1955. In that year the subject was tentatively mentioned by the Secretary of the Department of Education in negotiations with representatives of the Schools. In a letter to the Minister of Finance on 21st January 1965, the Minister for Education noted ruefully that Finance had been urging closures for years and then continued:

Naturally your main concern is economy while mine is the upbringing of children. Certain aspects of the matter of transferring children to other schools have to be carefully considered. Many children have god-parents in their school localities and quite a number of children attend schools, national, secondary and vocational outside the industrial school. It may not be possible to accommodate such children suitably if transferred to another district.

**3.160** As of 1950, there were 50 Industrial Schools. In the 1950s four senior boys' Schools closed – Baltimore (1950); Killybegs (1950); Carriglea (1954); and Greenmount, Cork (1959)<sup>91</sup> and one girls' School: Sligo (1958). In the case of each of the boys' schools, there were particular reasons that were at least as significant as the general trend. The only closure before 1964 was Birr, Offaly (1963). But during 1964-70, 17 more Schools – more than a third of them – closed including the senior boys Schools at Upton, Glin and Clonmel, in each case with the full agreement of the Orders concerned. By the time of the Kennedy Report, in 1970, a total of 29 Schools remained.

**3.161** To a large extent, the closures happened because the Orders wished them. On 23rd May 1966, the Managers Association wrote to the Department:

At their meeting on last Friday there was a consensus of opinion amongst the Resident Manager that most of the Schools will be forced to close.

If the present system is not acceptable to the public or the Government the Managers are prepared to close the schools next year, because they feel that the strain of working under present-day conditions is too acute to be continued.

<sup>90</sup> The Christian Brothers Managers Meeting of 12th January 1954 states:

The question of the desirability of closing, for economic reasons, one of our Industrial Schools was discussed in detail and at length. It was mentioned that the Presentation Brothers were seriously considering the closing of Greenmount. [this actually occurred only in 1959] It was mentioned that His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin had expressed his preference for the smaller rather than the larger type of school. The Committee were of opinion that one of the schools should be closed but that the final decision should be left to the Provincial Council. Minutes of 28th April 1956 stated that: 'it would be well, at least in order to shake up the Department, to propose that two of the Institutions (sic) should be closed.'

<sup>91</sup> The St Joseph's Industrial School, Greenmount Cork annals for February 1959 record:

The decline in the number of boys being committed to Industrial Schools had become very marked in recent years. The certified capacity of the school was 235 but at this time there were only 131 boys in the school. The meagre grant from the Government of 45/- per boy per week (only comparatively recently increased from 30/-) which had to cover food, clothing maintenance, provision of staff, other than the teachers in the class-room, etc made it very impractical to run the school efficiently. The second Juniorate at Passage West had its serious setbacks too. These two factors influenced the Higher Superiors to make the decision to close St Joseph's as an Industrial School and made the building available as a Juniorate instead of St Teresa's, Passage.

However Keogh (p 183) writes:

There is another explanation for the decline in the numbers of the boys being sent to the school. According to Fr Good: 'there were rumours after the events of 1955, the Church held an inquiry into allegations that two members of the Greenmount Community were involved in an abusive relationship with a number of boys.] Fr Good (Chaplain to Greenmount 1955-70) writes to the Commission on December 29, 2005) that Bishop Lucey had asked the sisters in Passage to ignore government transfer orders and keep the boys to their sixteenth birthday. They did so successfully, and the boys went to secondary or technical schools in Passage.' Interview with Fr James Good, History Department, UCC Cork, December 2000. I have yet to seek confirmation of this view from the Sisters of Mercy.

Sr Bernadette was in charge of the Boy's Junior Industrial School, Passage West, Co Cork (recently deceased). Sr Bernadette told me that Bishop Lucey had come to her and directed her to tear up all transfers of boys from her school to Greenmount and Upton. These Government transfers took effect on the child's tenth birthday. (providing them with the secondary/technical education) until their release from Industrial School care at age 16. This effectively closed both Greenmount and Upton in a relatively short time.

**3.162** There may have been some element of bluff about this letter since the Managers were always overtly or covertly in negotiation with the Department and by 1966 were genuinely anxious to know the Department's views. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the Schools would have expressly raised such a fundamental issue as closure unless they believed that matters had reached a crisis. In 1968, the Manager of Artane visited the Minister to warn him that the Christian Brothers had decided to close Artane, though this did not in fact occur until 1969.

**3.163** The timing of the closures coincided with the doubling in demand for secondary school places that followed on the abolition of secondary schools fees. This was announced by the Minister for Education, Donough O'Malley, in 1966 and came into effect in August 1967. As a result, enrolment in day secondary schools rose from 148,000 in 1966-67 to 239,000 in 1974-75.<sup>92</sup> This meant that the Orders had a ready use for the former Industrial School premises and staff.

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<sup>92</sup> J Coolahan *Irish Education: history and structure* (IPA, 1981), pp 194-95.