

**NESC REPORT NO. 19**

**RURAL AREAS:  
SOCIAL PLANNING PROBLEMS**

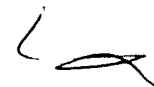
**Price: £2.50**



# **NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

***Rural Areas: Social Planning Problems***

No. 19



## NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

### CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The main task of the National Economic and Social Council shall be to provide a forum for discussion of the principles relating to the efficient development of the national economy and the achievement of social justice, and to advise the Government, through the Minister for Finance, on their application. The Council shall have regard, *inter alia*, to:

- (i) the realisation of the highest possible levels of employment at adequate reward,
- (ii) the attainment of the highest sustainable rate of economic growth,
- (iii) the fair and equitable distribution of the income and wealth of the nation,
- (iv) reasonable price stability and long-term equilibrium in the balance of payments,
- (v) the balanced development of all regions in the country, and
- (vi) the social implications of economic growth, including the need to protect the environment.

2. The Council may consider such matters either on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.

3. Members of the Government shall be entitled to attend the Council's meetings. The Council may at any time present its views to the Government, on matters within its terms of reference. Any reports which the Council may produce shall be submitted to the Government and, together with any comments which the Government may then make thereon, shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and published.

4. The membership of the Council shall comprise a Chairman appointed by the Government in consultation with the interests represented on the Council,  
*Ten* persons nominated by agricultural organisations,  
*Ten* persons nominated by the Confederation of Irish Industry and the Irish Employers' Confederation,  
*Ten* persons nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions,  
*Ten* other persons appointed by the Government, and  
*Six* persons representing Government Departments comprising one representative each from the Departments of Finance, Agriculture and Fisheries, Industry and Commerce, Labour and Local Government and one person representing the Departments of Health and Social Welfare.

Any other Government Department shall have the right of audience at Council meetings if warranted by the Council's agenda, subject to the right of the Chairman to regulate the numbers attending.

5. The term of office of members shall be for three years renewable. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the Government or by the nominating body as appropriate. Members filling casual vacancies may hold office until the expiry of the other members' current term of office and their membership shall then be renewable on the same basis as that of other members.

6. The Council shall have its own Secretariat, subject to the approval of the Minister for Finance in regard to numbers, remuneration and conditions of service.

7. The Council shall regulate its own procedure.

# NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

## *Rural Areas: Social Planning Problems*

DUBLIN:  
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased from the  
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE, G.P.O. ARCADE, DUBLIN 1  
or through any Bookseller.

Price: 45p.

(Pri. 5376)

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
MEMBERS

*Chairman:* Prof. W. J. L. Ryan

*Nominated by the Government:*

Mrs. H. Burke	Mr. A. N. O'Brien	Mr. G. A. Meagher
Prof. N. J. Gibson	Mr. P. Rock	Mr. C. H. Murray
Prof. D. Hannan	Mr. J. Walsh	Mr. T. O'Cearbhaill
Dr. K. Kennedy	Dr. T. K. Whitaker	Mr. P. O'Slatarra
Prof. P. Lynch	Mr. M. J. Barry	Mr. M. Ó Murchú
Mr. C. Mac Gabhann	Dr. B. Hensey	

*Nominated by the Confederation of Irish Industry:*

Mr. F. A. Casey	Mr. J. H. Donovan	Mr. J. H. D. Ryan
Mr. L. Connellan	Mr. R. I. Morrison	

*Nominated by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society:*

Mr. J. Buttimer	Mr. P. Kelly	Mr. P. Raftery
-----------------	--------------	----------------

*Nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions:*

Mr. A. Barr	Mr. B. G. Harkin	Mr. D. Nevin
Mr. J. Carroll	Mr. D. Larkin	Mr. R. Roberts
Mr. W. J. Fitzpatrick	Mr. D. Murphy	
Senator F. Kennedy	Mr. P. Murphy	

*Nominated by the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association:*

Mr. P. Hourigan	Mr. D. Murphy	Mr. T. J. O'Callaghan
-----------------	---------------	-----------------------

*Nominated by the Irish Employers' Confederation:*

Mr. M. Greene	Mr. A. Shiel	Mr. J. J. O'Reilly
Mr. D. J. McAuley	Mr. P. Murphy	

*Nominated by the Irish Farmers' Association:*

Mr. D. Cashman	Mr. P. Lane
Mr. S. Healy	Mr. J. Richards-Orpen

**CONTENTS**

<b>PREFACE</b>	5
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	7
<b>II. DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND</b>	10
2.1 The Rural Population	10
2.2 The Farming Population	16
<b>III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND RELATED POLICY MEASURES</b>	20
3.1 Agricultural Policies	20
3.2 Non-Agricultural Policies	29
3.3 Incomes and Levels of Living	32
<b>IV. PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Housing	38
4.3 Transport	42
4.4 Health Services	44
4.5 Education	51
4.6 Income Maintenance	56
4.7 Other Community Services	63
<b>V. SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVISION</b>	64
5.1 Particular Problems of Certain Population Categories	64
5.2 Eligibility for Social Services	66
5.3 Knowledge of Entitlements	68



## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

1. The objectives of this report are:
  - (i) To describe the changing demographic situation in rural areas and specifically in the farming population.
  - (ii) To review policy measures and changes whether agricultural or non-agricultural which have a social impact on rural areas.
  - (iii) To identify the problems and prospects of providing social services in rural areas particularly in the context of trends outlined in (i) and (ii).
  
2. Rural societies in developing nations throughout the world are undergoing change. One of the characteristic features of this change is the decline in rural population and the consequent expansion of urban areas. The effects of the selective nature of outmigration are reflected in the structure of the remaining population, viz., a residual population containing disproportionate numbers of very young and elderly persons and in extreme cases only the latter. It is therefore appropriate to identify and assess the implications of these changes for social services in the light of the population projections prepared by Walsh.\* These projections indicate a continuing decline in the agricultural population.
  
3. It may be argued that the conditions of advanced agricultural development necessarily imply a reduction in the population on the land. But if the "drift from the land" is inevitable the decline in rural population is not, provided a sufficient range of non-farm work opportunities is created in a locality. The problem in some rural areas is that decline

\*NESC Report No. 5, *Population and Employment Projections: 1971-86*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1975.

in the farm population is taking place in the context of a slow rate of growth in the non-agricultural sector. Where this occurs the decline is a composite one, not only from farming but from the rural area itself to larger urban centres and the economic justification for the provision of services, both commercial and social, becomes increasingly difficult in areas of dispersed settlement. The composite nature of decline in such areas has been summarised by Donnison.\*

"If jobs cannot be found for both men and women for a wide range of skills and classes and if local services are poor, then younger people will continue to leave the district. The local shop, school, doctor and policeman may be replaced by larger units serving bigger populations from a town easily accessible by car. Bus and rail services may deteriorate or disappear".

This process of decline is evident in many rural areas of Ireland with, for example, the closure or amalgamation of schools, police stations, milk processing plants.

4. Changes in the demographic composition, however, are influenced by policy measures whether agricultural or non-agricultural. The siting of industrial enterprises outside the major areas of industrial concentration, for example, has meant a great increase in the number of employment opportunities open to the rural community, and consequently a greater mix in the occupational structure of some rural areas. Such areas may be characterised by relatively stable populations, while areas remote from developing urban centres may retain a pattern of population decline which has persisted for decades. It is important therefore to distinguish between different types of rural areas, particularly between those adjacent to and those remote from growing urban areas. The needs of the population living in these types of areas may differ substantially, and consequently will have different implications for the provision of services. Similarly, agricultural policies have varying implications for the living standards of the farming population.

5. The problem of providing social services is one which demands a response by way of national policy. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that

\*NESC Report No. 8, *An Approach to Social Policy*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1975 p. 39.

particular areas, whether urban or rural, may require specific policy measures or an adaptation of existing policies. While this report deals with rural areas only, it is not suggested that in the provision of services these are the only areas which merit attention. Some of the problems in providing services are likely to be common to both rural and urban areas, while only the *nature* of other problems may differ.

6. This report contains an analysis of the main demographic features of, and changes occurring in, the rural and farming populations. Demographic trends, of themselves, have implications for the provision of services. In addition to the demographic changes, current policy measures which have implications for living standards in rural areas are also reviewed. The existing pattern of social service provision and the particular problems of rural areas are examined. Where possible differences in services between rural and urban are emphasised. Finally, the main policy issues emerging from the foregoing analysis are considered.



## Chapter II

### DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

#### 2.1. The Rural Population

7. There is no acceptable international definition of what constitutes "rural" or "urban". In Ireland, for census purposes, the term "urban" is applied to population centres of 1,500 inhabitants or more. Smaller towns and villages as well as open countryside constitute the aggregate rural areas. Changes in town boundaries make it difficult to compare aggregate urban and aggregate rural populations over time. The census of 1971 indicated that 52.2% of the population of the State resided in the aggregate urban areas and 47.8% in the aggregate rural areas. Comparative proportions for 1951 were 43.0% and 57.0% respectively. The trend has been, therefore, towards a greater concentration of population in urban areas.\* In general the largest urban centres have grown more rapidly. This has been taking place against the background of a proportionate and absolute decline of population in rural areas, particularly open country areas.

8. It is important to stress the dominant influence of the Dublin area in the country's demographic position and economy. If the Dublin region is excluded then the population living in rural areas in 1971 was about 70%. While accounting for less than 2% of the total land area of the State, the Dublin area nevertheless contains 29% of the total population and 40% of the non-farm working population and thus conceals the overwhelming agrarian and rural nature of the economy.

9. The pattern of decline in open country population is repeated at county level. Between 1966 and 1971 the population of the aggregate town areas of each county in the State increased, while in only ten of the twenty-six counties were increases recorded in the population of

\*In 1901, only 28.3% of the total population resided in the aggregate town areas as then defined.

the aggregate rural areas. The rural increases were mainly in the eastern counties, while in the western region the pattern of rural depopulation continued, the highest percentage decrease (7.9%) occurring in Leitrim.

10. While at a national level the distribution of population between urban and rural areas is evenly balanced at present, great divergence may be found at a regional or county level. In general, counties in the western region are characterised by relatively low proportions of their total population living in urban areas. In Leitrim, for example, only 5.3% of the population live in urban areas as compared with 62.6% in Louth (Appendix A, Table 1).

11. It is against this background of contraction in the rural population in absolute and proportionate terms that the structure of the remaining population must be examined. Many contrasts are apparent between the composition of the aggregate urban and aggregate rural populations. A number of important features are illustrated here because demographic factors have an important bearing on the kinds and incidence of need which demand a public policy response by way of social services.

12. In 1971 the proportion of single males in each age group was higher in the aggregate rural areas than in the aggregate urban areas (Appendix A, Table 2). The greatest contrast was in the young adult age groups where, for example, almost two-thirds (62.3%) of those aged 25-29 were single in rural areas as compared with two-fifths (39.0%) in urban areas. The position among females was practically reversed with very little difference in the proportions single in the young adult groups, while in each age group from 30-34 upwards the proportion in rural areas was lower than in urban areas.

13. A feature of Ireland's demographic population structure is the relatively high dependency ratio by comparison with other European countries. For every 100 persons in the working age group (15-64) there are 74 persons either under 15 or aged 65 and over, as compared with approximately 60 in most European countries. Within the State this dependency ratio is higher at 76 per 100 persons of working age in rural than in urban areas where it is 71 per 100 persons.

14. The age structure of most developing countries is characterised by relatively high proportions of the population in the older age groups.

This is due largely to the reduction in death rates during infancy, childhood and middle-age. In Ireland a further factor has contributed to this situation, i.e., the former heavy migration from the young adult age groups. During the past century persons over 65 have formed an increasing proportion of the total population. In 1841, for instance, the proportion was approximately 3%. By 1926 this figure had increased to 9.1% and has continued to rise since then, as has the absolute number of persons in this age group. By 1971 there were 329,819 persons aged 65 and over, representing 11.1% of the total population. Proportionately more elderly people live in rural areas where 13.2% of the population is 65 years or over as compared with 9.1% in urban areas. There is also considerable imbalance in the distribution of the elderly within counties, with Leitrim having the highest proportion (17.3%) and Kildare the lowest (8.2%). In general, the counties in the west of Ireland, the least urbanised region of the country, tend to have proportionately more elderly persons. Another feature of the elderly population is that in absolute and proportionate terms there has been an increase in the number of elderly persons living alone in all areas of the country (Appendix A, Table 3).

15. The female-male ratio of an area's population has important implications for marriage opportunities and, consequently, the future size and composition of population. In all age groups the female-male ratio is lower in rural areas than in urban areas (Appendix A, Table 4). The imbalance is greatest, however, in the young adult age groups. In the 20-24 age group, for example, there were 761 females per 1,000 males in rural areas as compared with 1,119 per 1,000 males, an excess of females over males, in urban areas.

16. During the 1960s the traditional pattern of decline among young adults aged 20-29 years in rural areas was reversed. Males aged 20-24 increased by 25% in the 1960s and the numbers marrying in this cohort trebled. This recent trend, according to Commins,\* indicates the beginnings of a rural population renewal in many areas and taken alongside that of the growth of non-farm employment suggests that

\*Commins, P., "Human Aspects of Change in the Rural Economy", Paper read at Conference on Current Adjustments in the Rural Economy, An Foras Talúntais, Dublin, 1974.

young people will work and marry in their own areas, given the opportunities.

17. The effects of migration and population decline are reflected in household composition in rural areas. In 1971, approximately one-quarter (25.6%) of households in the aggregate rural areas contained non-family units (households with one person only and households with two or more persons not constituting a family unit†) as compared with one-fifth (21.0%) in the aggregate urban areas (Appendix A, Table 5). Within rural areas relatively high proportions of these households are found in low-income farming areas and on the smallest farms.‡

18. Aggregate rural population figures conceal great divergent trends in rural areas. Even at regional level divergent trends between counties within a region may exist (Table 2.1). The most serious problems of

TABLE 2.1

Some demographic indicators at regional and county level, 1971  
1971 1971

*Region/ County	Percentage population change, 1966-67	Percentage of working population in agriculture	Percentage of population in aggregate town areas	Percentage of population aged 65 +	Average annual birth rate per 1,000 persons
North-east	+2.7	32.3	37.4	11.7	20.4
Cavan	-2.6	51.0	11.1	14.1	17.9
Louth	+7.8	12.9	62.6	9.2	24.5
Monaghan	+1.1	41.8	26.6	12.9	19.0
South-west	+2.9	29.3	46.6	14.3	20.1
Cork	+3.9	24.6	53.8	11.3	22.3
Kerry	-0.0	43.7	24.2	25.8	17.9

\*Regions are those used for planning purposes.

Source: Census of Population.

†A family unit is defined as, (i) man and wife (ii) man and wife with one or more children (iii) one parent and one or more children.

‡County Leitrim Resource Survey, Part III, An Foras Talúntais, Dublin, 1975 pp. 20-21; Farm Inheritance and Succession, Macra na Feirme, Dublin, 1973 pp. 19-20.

population imbalance arise in remote areas where farms are small, land is of poor quality, and the population structure contains a high proportion of households with elderly, single, widowed persons or married couples living on their own. Parts of Mayo, Donegal, Leitrim and the Kerry peninsulas have retained a pattern of migration and population decline which held for most rural areas in the 1950s.

19. Within counties which are apparently beginning to achieve relative stability of population, tremendous disparities may exist between districts depending on contiguity to developing urban centres. In county Clare, which in 1966-71 recorded an increase in population for the first time since the mid-nineteenth century, those Rural Districts lacking growth centres reveal dramatic population imbalances which are concealed in the overall county figures. By contrast, the Rural Districts of Meelick and Ennis which form the hinterland of the Limerick-Shannon-Ennis industrial complex were the only such districts to record increases in population in 1966-71 and in general have a relatively balanced population structure (Table 2.2).

20. If recent trends continue it may be expected that the absolute number of young people in the State will increase. This will occur in rural areas which are contiguous to developing urban areas. Outside of these areas, decline in the young adult age groups will continue but at a slower rate. The changing balance in settlement patterns as between urban areas, towns, villages and open countryside may also be expected to continue. Not only are urban areas growing but rural towns and villages also, and the decline in the rural population is very much concentrated in the areas outside of these centres, i.e., open countryside (Table 2.3 on page 16).

21. By comparison with the EEC countries, Ireland has an extremely low density of population\* and this has implications for the delivery of services. Within the State the density of population varies considerably

\*Population per square kilometer in 1973 in each of the EEC countries was as follows: Belgium 319; Germany 249; France 95; Italy 182; Luxembourg 136; The Netherlands 329; United Kingdom 230; Ireland 43; Denmark 116.

Source: Report on the Social Situation in the Community 1974, Brussels, Luxembourg, 1975, pp. 220-221.

TABLE 2.2  
Some demographic indicators in Urban and Rural Districts of County Clare, 1971

	% Population change, 1966-71	Females per 1,000 males	Dependants per 100 persons aged 15-64	% of population aged 65 +	Change in 20-24 age group 1966-71	Persons per square mile
Urban districts:						
Ennis	+2.4	1,134	67.6	9.2	+13.7	8,149
Kilrush	-2.3	1,080	80.8	13.3	+14.3	1,296
Rural districts:						
Ballyvaughan	-5.7	934	82.5	16.1	+17.5	23
Corrofin	-3.2	856	75.7	14.9	+34.9	29
Ennis	+20.3	937	72.9	10.2	+38.8	103
Ennistymon	-6.2	875	76.0	16.6	+9.6	62
Killadysert	-3.8	881	70.4	16.1	+22.3	48
Kilrush	-7.1	896	79.4	16.3	+0.9	59
Meelick	+10.3	910	71.3	11.8	+18.7	49
Scariff	-0.1	904	78.7	16.1	+17.8	41
Tulla	-3.7	846	74.2	15.7	+8.8	38
County Clare	+1.9	923	74.8	13.7	+19.6	61

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE 2.3**

**Percentage change in population by size of place 1956-61, 1961-66, 1966-71**

Size of place (Population)	1956-61	1961-66	1966-71
Towns and Urban areas (1,500 +)	+1.0	+8.3	+7.7
Rural villages (200-1,500)	-2.0	+3.2	+8.9
Open Country (less than 200)	-6.5	-4.1	-2.2

Source: Census of Population.

by county. In 1971 there were 48 persons per square mile in Leitrim as compared with 2,395 per square mile in Dublin (Appendix A, Table 6). In general, counties in the western region have the lowest density of population. Population decline in open country areas combined with a low density population pose problems in delivering social services to a scattered farm-based rather than a village-based rural population. The implications for economies of scale are immediately obvious. The cost of providing services will become an increasingly important factor in areas outside of towns and villages.

## 2.2 The Farming Population

22. The rural population is sometimes erroneously taken as being synonymous with the farming population. In fact the farm population now constitutes about one-half of all rural dwellers. This is due to the increasing proportion of land-holders and other persons living in rural areas whose main occupation is not farming, as well as retired farmers.

23. The farming population has been characterised by persistent decline, the rate of decline varying according to farm size category and the different sections of the farming population, i.e., farmers, farmers' relatives and farm labourers. In general, the decline has been greatest among hired farm labourers, and the farm size categories which have persistently experienced the greatest losses have been the 0-15 and 15-30 acre groups. Two major components of the current decline in the farm population are the demise or retirement of elderly farmers and the drop in new entrants to farming.

24. The net losses in the farm labour force arise from deaths, retirements and change to non-farm jobs. It is estimated that deaths and retirements now account for the majority of losses rather than the traditional exit from farming to other occupations. Nationally, it is estimated that the net losses, due to the above reasons, are five times greater than the number of new entrants, the ratio being approximately 8:1 in the traditional small farm areas of the west and north-west.\* In addition, rather than entering farming and then leaving for other jobs as in the past, young persons are not going into farming in the first place but are increasingly taking up non-farm employment on leaving school.

25. Three-fifths of all farmers are on holdings of less than 50 acres. The decline in this category has accelerated in recent times so that between 1966 and 1971 the number of male farmers under 50 acres declined by 12.6% as compared with a decline of 4.8% in the period 1961-66. At the same time, male farmers with holdings over 50 acres remained remarkably stable and the corresponding figures were a decline of only 1.2% (1966-71) and an increase of 3% (1961-66). Within the under 50 acre group, however, the magnitude of the decline varied, the range being from 20.5% in the 0-15 acre category to 8.2% in the 30-50 acre category between 1966 and 1971 (Appendix A, Table 7). The majority (71.8%) of male small farmers are located in the eleven counties of the western region.† It is this area which contains some of the major physical obstacles to agricultural development, e.g., poor-soil quality and structural problems.‡

26. A striking feature of the general farming population is that it is on the smaller farms that the majority of elderly farmers are concentrated. One-quarter of male small farmers are 65 years of age or over, and more than half (53.0%) are aged 55 or over. Again, these proportions vary according to farm size category, e.g., three-fifths of farmers on holdings of 0-15 acres are aged 55 or over (Appendix A, Table 8). More than one-third of all male farmers on holdings of less than 50 acres are un-

\*Commins, *op. cit.*

†The province of Connaught together with counties Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Kerry, Clare and Longford.

‡See Scully, J. J., *Agriculture in the West of Ireland. A Study of the low farm income problem*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1971.

married and over 45 years of age (Appendix A, Table 9). It is reasonable to assume that for the majority in this latter group the likelihood of marriage is remote. It is highly probable, therefore, that a sizeable proportion of some 28,000 farms presently occupied by elderly single farmers could cease to exist as independent farm units on the death of the present occupiers. When this factor is related to the drop in new entrants into farming the implication is that in the future there will be no family continuity on a considerable number of holdings.

27. Recent trends among other members of the family farm labour force also indicate an increase in the rate of decline on farms of all sizes but particularly on small farms (Appendix A, Table 10). Between 1966 and 1971, for example, there was a decline of 43.1% among male relatives on farms of less than 50 acres as compared with a decrease of 28.5% on larger farms.

28. Together with the decline among farmers and farmers' relatives there has been a corresponding drop in the number of young people entering family farming as estimated by the number aged 15-19 in Census years.\* Between the early 1960s and the latter part of that decade there was a decrease of 45% in the number of new male entrants to farming. In absolute terms the annual average inflow of young males into family farming was 3,500 in 1961-66 as compared with less than 2,000 in 1966-71. The annual intake on farms of less than 50 acres was more than halved, from 2,000 to 950. In the latter part of the 1960s practically one-third of all male entrants moved onto farms in the 50-100 acreage alone (Appendix A, Table 11).

29. The implication of the trends outlined above is that the agricultural labour force is already predetermined to fall to a level well below the present. Projections by Walsh† indicate that by 1986 the total family farm labour force aged 15 and over will be between 137,000 and 144,300 as compared with the 1971 figure of 234,200. The representation of the

\*The reference here is to an estimate of the number beginning work on farms for the first time. There is no direct way of knowing how many of these will remain in farming or how many others will enter subsequently at a higher age.

†NESc Report No. 5, *Population and Employment Projections: 1971-86*. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975.

family labour force in the total national labour force will drop from 21% in 1971 to just over 10% in 1986.

30. The ageing of the agricultural population is also expected to continue. Whereas 19% of the family farm labour force was aged 65 and over in 1971, it is estimated that this proportion will rise to 27-28% by 1986. At the same time, the number of new entrants to farming is expected to fall even further, from almost 4,000 per annum in the years immediately prior to 1966, to approximately 1,600 per annum by 1986. The evidence regarding the actual numbers who entered farming in 1971-74 indicates that the number of new entrants fall below Walsh's estimates. This will intensify the trend towards an ageing farming population.

31. In *summary* the nature and composition of the rural population poses particular problems for the provision of social services. These problems are likely to be greatest in those areas which are remote from developing urban centres and where the cost of providing services to a declining population will become increasingly important. In remote areas with residual populations the needs of certain sections of the population, such as the elderly, or the handicapped, are also likely to be accentuated. The problems in the rural hinterlands of developing urban centres are likely to be of a different nature. Here a greater mix of occupations can be expected and this development is likely to lead to a demand for housing, schools, and increasingly to urban life styles in rural areas. The farming population will decline further not only because of the demise of elderly farmers but also because of the rapid decline of new entrants into farming. A considerable number of farm holdings will therefore become available for restructuring purposes. An equitable allocation of this land would ensure that those remaining in farming could enjoy acceptable living standards, and could eventually lead to a situation where young people would become more attracted to farming as a means of livelihood than is apparent at present.

## Chapter III

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND RELATED POLICY MEASURES

32. Superimposed on the demographic changes occurring within the rural and farm populations are a number of policy measures designed to aid the process of agricultural adjustment. Policies aimed at an acceleration of the movement out of farming are a major component of the EEC Common Agricultural Policy, while complementary policies aimed at providing the farm population with non-agricultural employment opportunities also exist. These policy measures have important implications for the living standards of the rural population and the provision of services.

#### 3.1. Agricultural Policies

33. Only in recent years has the notion of a reduced agricultural labour force achieved some acceptance in Ireland. This process is seen as an inevitable consequence of increased national economic growth. Hitherto, national policy reflected strong rural fundamentalist values, which elevated the status of family farming, emphasised the importance of the rural way of life and the desirability of maintaining a large farming population. This viewpoint is enshrined in the State's Constitution.\*

"The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing . . . that there may be established on the land in economic security as many families as in the circumstances shall be practicable".

A reduction in the farming population is seen as being beneficial for agriculture in that it should lead to an increase in farm size. This is of particular relevance in the low-income small farm areas of the western region.

\**Bunreacht na hÉireann*, Article 45 (v).

34. It is now accepted that price supports alone cannot guarantee an equitable distribution of incomes in rural areas. Instead, emphasis in policy is aimed primarily at structural reform and is embodied in three main measures, i.e., the Farm Modernisation Scheme, the Farm Retirement Scheme and the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme introduced under the aegis of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EEC. This package of schemes has given rise to unprecedented controversy and has been both criticised and defended in turn. Modifications to the schemes as introduced originally have been made. A further scheme, based on EEC Directive 161, provides additional support for agricultural education\* and establishes a socio-economic guidance service.

#### 3.1.1. Farm Modernisation Scheme

35. The philosophy behind the Farm Modernisation Scheme, introduced in Ireland in February 1974, is that aid to farmers for capital improvements and herd expansion should be given in the context of a development plan for the farm rather than for specific projects. The amount of aid is graduated according to the initial income position of the farm and the level of the income target of its development plan. Maximum levels of aid are given to farmers who can develop their farms over a period of six years to provide an income comparable to average non-agricultural earnings in the region† (*Development farmers*). Lower levels of aid are given to farmers who already earn at least the average industrial wage (*Commercial farmers*) and to farmers whose resources are not sufficient to allow them to reach a comparable income within the specified time period (*Other farmers*). This latter group will not, however, require a development plan to qualify for aid towards farm improvements.

36. In the public debate on the Modernisation Scheme attention has been focused on its implications for *Other farmers* who constitute the majority of farmers. On the basis of the classification of applications for aid received up to the end of February 1976 the breakdown by category

\*See Chapter IV.

†For 1976 there were three comparable incomes, £2,885 in County Dublin, £2,025 in the western region and £2,350 in the remainder of the country.

is *Commercial* 3.2%, *Development* 16.6% and *Other* 80.2%.\* The relatively disadvantaged position in which *Other* farmers now find themselves *vis-à-vis Development* farmers in terms of the levels and type of aid available under the scheme has been repeatedly highlighted. One of the principal criticisms made of the scheme is that the future livelihood of these farmers is so threatened that the logical outcome of this policy is that many may well be "forced off the land". This argument, however, is seen in proper perspective when it is realised that the farming population is, as has been indicated, already destined to further decline due simply to natural decrease. Furthermore, the assumptions underlying the argument is that all *Other* farmers have both a willingness and ability to avail of the maximum aids if such were available to them. It is arguable, however, that exclusions from maximum benefits available under the Farm Modernisation Scheme will not be perceived personally as a problem by a substantial proportion of *Other* farmers, particularly in view of the overall low response to the Small Farm Incentive Bonus Scheme, an attractive measure introduced in 1968 to increase incomes of farmers on holdings of less than 50 acres or with land valuations of less than £25.† Indeed, it has been conceded that despite intensive assistance in low farm income areas many farmers still cannot be helped to any worthwhile extent by any meaningful policy for agricultural development.‡

37. The Modernisation Scheme however, has certain demerits. In the first instance it discriminates against those farmers who have already shown a willingness and ability to maximise from existing resources, e.g., participants in the Small Farm (Incentive Bonus) Scheme. These and farmers of a similar disposition may now, solely because of limited resources, find themselves excluded from the optimum range of benefits if they are classified as *Other* under the Modernisation Scheme. In this context it should be noted that while the overall response to the Small Farm (Incentive Bonus) Scheme was low, some areas had a high

\*Refers to the classification of 37,625 farmers. Statistics supplied by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

†Curry, J. "Farmers' Response to Small Farm (Incentive Bonus) Scheme" *Farm and Food Research, An Foras Talúntais*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1975.

‡Scully, *op. cit.* p. 159.

response, e.g., in County Mayo almost half (47.6%) of eligible farmers participated. Yet the majority of these are likely to be classified as *Other* in the Modernisation Scheme. Whilst the aid available to them is considerably better than formerly their relative position in the farming community has disimproved. Secondly, for many farmers the target income is unattainable because of their existing farm size and limited capital resources. Even the acquisition of additional land, either with borrowed capital or through the Land Commission, would mean that the farmer would have to generate a higher income per acre in order to meet the increased capital allowances on such land. Consequently this makes the attainment of the comparable income even more difficult.\* Finally, it has also been pointed out that the Modernisation Scheme was conceived for countries with a well developed industrial and service sector where there is excess demand for labour and where the effect of the Scheme would be to reduce the number of, or even eliminate, low income farms, the excess farm labour being absorbed by the non-farm sector.† In Ireland, however, it is questionable whether growth in non-agricultural employment has ever been sufficient to match the decline in the agricultural labour force and in a period of recession the problem becomes even more acute.

### 3.1.2. Farm Retirement Scheme

38. It has already been indicated that a high proportion of elderly farmers are unmarried and with their demise a large number of farm holdings should cease to exist as independent farm units. The pattern of land distribution that emerges as a consequence of the reduction in the numbers of holdings will be of key significance for social planning. One vital component of any policy designed to maximise the number of family farm holdings is the amalgamation of uneconomic holdings into viable units. The Farm Retirement Scheme, introduced in May 1974, is designed to contribute to the release of such land, thereby speeding up the process of farm consolidation. The Farm Modernisation Scheme provides that farmers whose development plans require additional land should have priority access to land thus released.

\*Cox, P. G. "EEC Structural Policy and Irish Farming". Paper read at Conference on Current Adjustments in the Rural Economy, Dublin, 1974.

†Cox, *op. cit.*

39. The Farm Retirement Scheme provides relatively attractive financial incentives for farmers to retire from farming and surrender their holdings for land structure reform. It replaces the Life Annuity Scheme of 1967-74 which also provided an incentive to farmers to surrender their holdings. This latter scheme attracted just over 400 applicants of whom only 38 eventually participated. By comparison there were 1,505 applicants for the Farm Retirement Scheme up to 1 April 1976, i.e., more than three times the total number for the Life Annuity Scheme. Of the 969 applications processed, 650 or 66.3% have been adjudged eligible to participate. The average area involved in cases where transactions with the Land Commission have been completed is 40 acres.\*

40. The present Retirement Scheme is considerably more attractive financially to donors than the one which it replaces. Under the present scheme farmers may sell or lease (for a minimum period of 12 years) their land either to a farmer whose development plan requires the acquisition of additional land or to the Land Commission. In general, there is a limit of 45 adjusted acres of good all-purpose agricultural land or its equivalent in land of mixed quality. Where land is sold a premium of 10% of the sale price up to a maximum of £1,500 is payable to the donor and where the land is leased a premium of twice the annual lease rent up to a maximum of £3,000 is payable. In addition, farmers over 55 years of age receive an annuity, £600 for a married person and £400 for a single person.† The annuities are payable for the lifetime of the recipient and when the Scheme was introduced it was stated that the amount could be increased from time to time to keep in line with increases in the Consumer Price Index.

41. The Farm Retirement Scheme provides a suitable framework for structural reform in Irish farming. A recent modification to the Scheme‡ whereby resident landholders with no other source of earned income who have let their land in any of the five years prior to application, and formerly excluded, may now participate provided their land has been let for valid social and economic reasons. Despite a considerable

\*Statistics supplied by EEC Division, Department of Lands.

†For further details regarding Scheme see Appendix B.

‡November, 1975.

increase in the Consumer Price Index since the introduction of the scheme the amount of the annuity has not been raised.\* In the same period social welfare payments have increased considerably, e.g., the maximum weekly old-age non-contributory pension for a single person has increased from £6.15 to £10.25 between April 1974 and April 1976, a percentage increase of 66.6%. The relatively advantaged position of the annuity, *vis-à-vis* the old age pension, has therefore been eroded. It is important to note here that persons in receipt of non-contributory old age pensions are automatically entitled to a number of other benefits i.e., medical card, electricity allowance, free television licence and subsidised butter. A farmer therefore who is in receipt of a non-contributory old-age pension and joins the Retirement Scheme may lose automatic access to these benefits and the weekly pension will also be lower. Persons in receipt of unemployment assistance or widow's non-contributory pensions, and who participate in the Scheme may also lose eligibility for these benefits, depending on family circumstances and the amount and value of land surrendered. Some participants may also become liable for income tax.† Whilst the interest alone on capital invested from the sale of land would itself, in some cases, offset loss of benefits, and while the returns on income obtained from leasing together with the annuity would exceed the old-age pension contribution, it is the drop in the weekly pension which, irrespective of the investment effects of capital realised on participating in the Retirement Scheme, may be *perceived* by some farmers as an obstacle to surrendering their land. Furthermore, farmers may view land as an appreciating asset whereas capital derived from sale of the land might be a depreciating asset. Other factors may also militate against up-take of the scheme such as independence, the attachment to land or the status which ownership of land confers in rural areas. For some farmers these may be more highly valued than any financial considerations.

42. It would be wrong to assume that the Farm Retirement Scheme is

\*Between May 1974 and February 1976 the Consumer Price Index increased by 36.2%. The question of raising the annuity is under active consideration at present.

†For a discussion of the effects on welfare recipients of participating in the scheme see Cox, P. G., "Directive 72/160/EEC and the Irish Government's New Voluntary Retirement Scheme for farmers"; Paper read at meeting of Agricultural Economics Society of Ireland, December, 1975.



the panacea for structural problems in Irish agriculture. Whilst the number of applications to enter the Scheme are certainly encouraging, particularly in relation to the previous retirement scheme operated by the Land Commission, the amounts of land which will be released constitute a small proportion of the land potentially available for restructuring purposes. From the 1971 Census of Population it is estimated that if landholders eligible on the basis of age and acreage to avail of maximum benefits under the Scheme (farmers aged 55 and over with holdings of less than 45 adjusted acres together with widows irrespective of farm size) participated, then a *minimum* of just over  $\frac{1}{2}$  million acres and a *maximum* of 2 million acres would be released for farm restructuring (Appendix B). By contrast, if all of the 1,505 present applicants were to participate and had an average farm size of 40 acres, then the amount of land made available would only constitute 10% of the potential *minimum* acreage or 3% of the potential *maximum* acreage. In any case, it has already been noted in Chapter II that a considerable acreage of land will become available due to the demise of elderly heirless farmers.

43. While the Farm Retirement Scheme is unlikely to have a great impact on structural problems it, nonetheless, constitutes an acceptable mechanism whereby elderly or incapacitated landholders may derive maximum benefit from surrendering their land should they wish to do so. If the annuity were raised and some compromise reached between the benefits derived from the scheme and loss of social welfare benefits, the scheme could, possibly, be made more attractive. It should be stressed that participants in the scheme are allowed to keep a few acres as well as the dwelling house and this enables retired farmers to continue to live in the rural community.

### 3.1.3. Disadvantaged Areas Scheme

44. While the rationalisation of agriculture is the basic aim of the Farm Modernisation Scheme and the Farm Retirement Scheme other considerations are also taken into account and are exemplified in the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme. This Scheme was introduced in Ireland in 1975. The areas covered by this scheme are the province of Connaught, counties Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Longford, Clare, Kerry, West Cork

and certain hill areas elsewhere in the country which are normally associated with mountain sheep production. Aids to farmers in these areas include extra investment grants under the Farm Modernisation Scheme for *Development* farmers and improved grants for land improvement works for smaller farmers. Within these areas certain districts are classified as being severely handicapped, where farmers will be entitled to livestock headage payments up to a maximum of £300 at present.\* These headage premiums are intended as an income supplement designed to compensate farmers for the income limitations which the physical conditions of the land impose on them. The objective of the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme is to encourage farmers to remain in these areas in order to ensure the continuation of farming, the maintenance of a reasonable level of population and the preservation of the countryside.

### 3.1.4. Socio-Economic Guidance Scheme

45. EEC Directive 161 provides for schemes of vocational training and socio-economic guidance for the farming population.† The aims of the socio-economic guidance scheme are:

- (i) to inform generally the agricultural population as to the possibilities open to them for improving their socio-economic position;
- (ii) to study and examine individual cases with a view to adjustment to changing conditions;
- (iii) to refer persons interested in changes of policy on their farms to the appropriate branch of the advisory service;
- (iv) to give those concerned information and advice on the following matters:
  - continuation of an occupation in agriculture
  - choice of an occupation outside agriculture
  - retirement from all occupational activity;

\*The areas where livestock headage premiums are payable include counties Donegal, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim together with a number of districts in counties Cavan, Monaghan, Longford, Roscommon, Galway, Clare, Kerry and Cork.

†The vocational training scheme is discussed in Chapter 4.

- (v) to inform those concerned as to the opportunities existing for persons engaged in agriculture to receive further training and as to prospects for their children in agriculture and in other occupations;
- (vi) to direct interested persons, according to the decisions contemplated or taken by such persons, to the competent specialised services.

46. This socio-economic guidance involves the training of agricultural advisory personnel in socio-economic advisory work as well as project work including surveys of socio-economic needs of the agricultural population, development of case studies, development and assessment of pilot work projects. When fully operational the scheme should meet an essential need in rural areas. Its impact on certain aspects of agriculture is likely to be considerable. One area of particular relevance is that of farm transfer and succession, the legal elements of which were not previously catered for by the advisory service. Given the tendency among farmers to hold onto land until an advanced age\* the socio-economic advisers will have a key role to play in facilitating earlier transfers. In rural areas characterised by weak farm structures and low farm incomes, and in areas where large segments of the farming population were not previously in contact with the agricultural advisory service, the socio-economic adviser can fulfil an important function.

### 3.1.5. General

47. While the package of EEC farm schemes offer a range of choices, it may also be said that contradictory aims are apparent between these various schemes. On the one hand, farmers are offered an incentive to leave farming while on the other, they are encouraged by means of subsidies, in those areas with greatest farm structural problems, to remain. This duality of purpose, evident if not as openly formulated in Irish policy prior to entry into the EEC, reflects the difficulty of attaining a proper balance between land resources and labour, particularly in small farm areas. The achievement of satisfactory farm incomes in low income areas requires radical changes in farm structure which inevitably entail a reduction in farm population and possibly rural population. In this

\*See *Farm Inheritance and Succession in Ireland*, *op. cit.*

instance what develops is a conflict between economic and social considerations. Achieving some equilibrium between the two has proved difficult, not least politically. In practice, the process of structural reform and of population decline have been allowed to evolve in a slow and haphazard manner, but with agricultural restructuring lagging well behind depopulation and likely to do so even more as the rate of decline accelerates on small farms.

### 3.2. Non-Agricultural Policies

48. It has already been noted that a reduction in the agricultural labour force is recognised as being consistent with economic growth. A reduction in the farming population, however, does not necessarily conflict with the stated objective of maintaining the rural population. The Third Programme for Economic and Social Development states that:

"With the development of industry (including small industry) through growth centres, more tourism and the application of local and regional development plans, a better balance between agricultural and non-agricultural activities will enable present levels of population to be maintained in many rural areas."\*

49. It has long been advanced that the creation of off-farm employment opportunities can substantially alleviate, if not entirely solve, the problem of low incomes and under-employment in rural areas. It is also seen as one of the principal means of reducing the flow of migrants to urbanised areas and of contributing to a more stable rural population. The development of industry and other employment is recognised as one of the basic economic requirements in these areas and consequently specific policy measures aimed at decentralisation of industry have been introduced in several countries within recent decades. In Ireland, a policy of decentralisation was introduced in the 1950s and measures introduced then were aimed at encouraging industrial development in the underdeveloped areas of the western region by means of favourable financial grants. †

\**Third Programme, Economic and Social Development 1969-72*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1969.

†See NESC Report No. 4, *Regional Policy in Ireland: A Review*, Stationery Office Dublin, 1974.

### 3.2.1. Part-time Farming

50. One of the major expected effects of rural industrialisation on the farm family is the increased opportunity of obtaining incomes from a non-farm source and consequently a lessening of the dependence on agriculture as a sole source of income. A growth in the pattern of part-time farming may therefore be expected. From the Farm Management Survey of An Foras Talúntais it is estimated that 40,000 or 22% of the 180,000 farmers in the State are engaged in part-time farming, i.e., have an occupational source of income outside of their own farm. More than four-fifths (82.7%) of these part-time farmers are on holdings of less than 50 acres and three-fifths (60.0%) are on holdings of less than 30 acres.

51. Only in recent years has the system of part-time farming gained some official recognition in Ireland. Hitherto, the predominance of rural fundamentalist values underlying policy since the foundation of the State, implied that farmers should be enabled to obtain a livelihood solely from the land. Nonetheless, the system of part-time farming is sometimes viewed as contributing to an inefficient use of land and also a means of tying up land which could be used more profitably if released for restructuring purposes. Furthermore, EEC farm policies do not take much cognisance of part-time farming as a component in agricultural adjustment.

52. It has been established that part-time farmers generate a lower level of productivity per acre than full-time farmers, whereas there is little difference in labour productivity. Where the head of the household has an off-farm job, however, productivity will not be lower, provided there is one full labour unit on the farm.\* A study undertaken in two rural communities of the western region concluded, albeit from small samples, that because of considerable labour substitution and farm investment from increased income the taking up of an off-farm job by farmers did not, in general, result in reduction in farm output.† It appears

\*See Hickey, B. "Developments in the Structure and Level of Regional Agricultural Production". Paper read at Conference on Rural Development in a Regional Context, An Foras Talúntais, Dublin, November 1975.

†Lucey, D. I. F., and Kaldor, D. R. *Rural Industrialisation: The Impact of Industrialisation on two Rural Communities in Western Ireland*. Dublin, 1969.

that in this argument there is considerable room for differences of opinion arising out of the definitions of part-time farming adopted, and the type of farming enterprise engaged in, and is an area where further research is obviously required.

53. Preoccupation with farm productivity on part-time farms however, tends to ignore other important related issues such as the reasons for taking up off-farm employment and the consequences for the household and the community. Here it is important to distinguish between what may be termed "voluntary" and "involuntary" part-time farming. Part-time farmers may, on the one hand, include those for whom the off-farm income is marginal to total income or whose main source of income is other than farming e.g., professional persons who purchase land for investment purposes. On the other hand, it would appear that small farmers have valid personal, family and economic incentives to take up an off-farm job. The decision to seek off-farm employment is frequently associated with particular stages of the family life cycle especially when there are children of school-going or pre-school age.\* At this stage, competition between the farm and household for funds is probably greater than at any other time. For many farmers, therefore, taking up off-farm employment may in fact be only a temporary measure to meet increased financial demands associated with the family or even a response to locally available, but often temporary, employment, e.g., road repairs.

54. For farmers, the immediate effect of assuming an off-farm job is that total income is increased. But perhaps the greatest benefit of non-agricultural employment to some farmers is not so much the additional income as the regularity with which it is received. It is very likely that when comparing sources of income the farmer perceives that the level of his farm income cannot be as satisfactorily guaranteed as the off-farm income. Off-farm employment enables a farmer to attain higher levels of living, to live in the rural community and thereby contribute to and help maintain levels of services in that community. This is particularly relevant in rural areas which have experienced severe population losses,

\*Curry, J. "Effects of non-farm employment in rural areas". *Farm and Food Research*, An Foras Talúntais, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1972.

and in this context it has already been noted that maintenance of population levels in such areas is the basic objective of the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme.

55. Off-farm employment opportunities alone, however, are not the panacea for underemployment and low-income problems in rural areas. Certain selectivity factors appear to operate in the recruitment of farmers to non-farm employment favouring those who have achieved relatively high educational levels, the young and married. Outside of those who engage in part-time farming, and those who already derive an adequate income from farming, are others who because of certain socio-demographic characteristics are unlikely to benefit by either agricultural or non-agricultural developments.

### 3.3. Incomes and Levels of Living

56. Mention has already been made of the heterogeneity of the rural population. The heterogeneity of the farming population needs to be adverted to also. Considerable differences exist between farmers not only in terms of farm size, soil quality or demographic characteristics, but also in terms of incomes and levels of living. The level and distribution of incomes in the farming community have implications for the provision of services, e.g., income maintenance services and eligibility for health services.

57. In 1973 the average family farm income per farm was £1,492 and in 1974 this figure dropped to £1,152. There are considerable regional variations in family farm income, however, with incomes in Connaught and Ulster being considerably lower than in the other provinces (Table 3.1). Family farm income also varies by farm size and as farm size increases so does income (Table 3.2). It is important to note that family farm income does not take account of income earned off the farm or social welfare payments. In 1974 almost two-thirds of farms had family farm incomes of less than £1,000. The proportion of farms under this income varied from approximately four-fifths in Connaught and Ulster to slightly less than half in Munster (Appendix C, Table 1).

58. By comparison with incomes in other sectors the levels of farm incomes are relatively low. In 1974 the average industrial wage was

just over £1,800\* while the average income per labour unit per farm was £810 or only 45% of that in industry. In this comparison of incomes it is important to stress that farm income is the return to *labour* and farm investments after farm expenditure and depreciation are charged against total farm receipts with adjustments for inventory changes.

**TABLE 3.1**

**Average family farm income per farm by province, 1973, 1974**

	1973	1974
	(£)	(£)
Connaught	860	672
Leinster	1,809	1,449
Munster	2,200	1,662
Ulster	802	635
STATE	1,492	1,152

*Source:* Farm Management Survey 1973 and 1974, An Foras Talúntais.

**TABLE 3.2**

**Average family farm income per farm by farm size, 1973, 1974**

Size (acres)	1973	1974
	(£)	(£)
5-15	350	274
15-30	604	515
30-50	1,224	991
50-100	2,172	1,575
100-200	3,950	3,095
200 +	5,722	4,269
TOTAL	1,492	1,152

*Source:* Farm Management Survey, 1973 and 1974, An Foras Talúntais.

\**Review of 1974 and Present Outlook*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975, p. 45.

59. Low farm incomes are associated with sub-standard living conditions and this is especially evident in the western counties. The most recent figures available concerning household conditions and amenities on farms are for 1972. These indicate that approximately two-thirds of farm households in the West and North Western regions did not have a motor car and just over half lacked piped water supply in their dwellings (Table 3.3). In these same regions the scattered settlement pattern is further aggravated by the fact that very few of the farm dwellings have a telephone. By contrast, in the better farming and more densely populated regions in the east of the country a much higher proportion of farm dwellings had piped water supply and motor car ownership was more widespread.

**TABLE 3.3**  
**Percentage of farm households lacking certain amenities by region\*, 1972**

Region	Motor Car	Telephone	Piped Water	Flush Toilets
East	28.6	65.9	25.8	33.5
North East	59.2	92.6	48.2	56.3
South West	36.3	87.0	32.9	49.6
South East	26.4	77.8	30.8	49.7
Mid West	44.3	85.2	39.5	52.5
Midlands	47.9	92.3	50.2	56.9
West	64.5	97.1	53.4	56.1
North West	68.4	93.8	51.1	56.5
State	51.6	88.1	49.6	52.9

\*Regions are those used for planning purposes with the exception of Donegal which is incorporated in the North West region.

Source: Frawley, J. "Rural Development in a Regional Context: A Sociological Appraisal"; Paper read at Conference on Rural Development in a Regional Context, An Foras Talúntais, Dublin 1975.

60. Several studies of rural communities in Ireland have indicated that, even in relatively prosperous farming areas, many individuals have living standards which fall seriously short of the standards enjoyed by the average individual or family in the community generally.\*

\*See Clifford, D., "The Poor in Town and Country", *Social Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1; Sheehan, M., *The Meaning of Poverty*, The Council for Social Welfare, Dublin, 1974.

## Chapter IV

### PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES

#### 4.1. Introduction

61. Population decline in rural areas raises some fundamental questions on the future viability of these areas. One view held is that they be allowed to decline further; that provision of service be restricted to certain parts of the area only; that since many of them are not economically viable in any case, no attempt should be made to improve upon their social viability except at a relatively low cost; that population be allowed to decline thus creating neutral areas which while not contributing to the national economy would equally make no demands on it. In support of this view it could be argued that in Ireland many rural areas are in fact over-populated in relation to limited local resources and opportunities available, or that in some instances former population levels were due as much to historical reasons as to the self-sufficiency of the indigenous economy. It has also been argued by Thomas\* that the subsidiation of remote thinly populated areas is already excessive and that the cost of providing and maintaining services in rural areas is greater than in urban areas. He states that:

"This situation would seem to be inevitable, since if services are to be provided at all, there is an irreducible minimum provision which must be maintained, and economies of size become impossible when the size involves population numbers which could be adequately serviced by one police officer, or doctor, or teacher but which occupy such a large terrain that such an arrangement becomes physically impossible".

\*Thomas, J. G. "Population changes and the Provision of Services" in Ashton, J., and Long, N. H., *The Remoter Rural Areas of Britain*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1972.

Another dimension to be taken into consideration is the continuing process of urbanisation which implies further concentration of services and consequently a distribution of resources in favour of urban areas.

62. A contrasting viewpoint is largely based on an acceptance of either the necessity or desirability of eliminating inequalities in our society and of achieving social justice. It is accepted that in the long-term the problems of many rural areas can only be overcome by radical structural reform. The immediate concern, however, is to improve the lot of those living in such areas by an adaptation of existing social services to meet both the changing and special needs and problems of that section of society. In most countries, Government programmes for dealing with urban-rural inequalities are, according to Donnison,\* less well developed and often less successful than those dealing with other forms of inequalities, e.g., social stratification.

63. It is evident from trends outlined earlier in Chapter II and III of this report that major changes will occur in rural areas over the next decade or so. The precise pace and impact of these changes have yet to be determined. Nevertheless, some attempt must be made to ensure that the social services will be able to cope with these changes as they develop. The term "social services" is difficult to define but the types of provisions which are generally referred to as social services include Income Maintenance, Health Services, Education, Housing and Personal Social Services. To these may be added Transport Services since it is now acknowledged that such a service in many rural areas no longer constitutes a commercially viable proposition but rather a social service. For purposes of this discussion the social services can be broadly divided into two categories:

- (i) *Infra-structural services*—housing and transport;
- (ii) *Caring services*—health, education, income, maintenance, personal social services.

64. Only the more relevant aspects of policy measures and problems in the provision of each of these services will be considered in this and

\*NESC Report No. 8. *An Approach to Social Policy*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975, pp. 39-41.

the following chapter. This is not to deny that other aspects of these services merit attention but they are beyond the scope of a report of this nature. The personal social services, both statutory and voluntary, will not be treated separately but will be considered mainly in relation to the community care programme in the health services.

65. The planning and provision of both infra-structural and caring services in rural areas pose problems which exist at present and which may be exacerbated in the future if sufficient cognisance is not taken of them.

- (i) There are, as pointed out previously, significant demographic differences within and between rural areas. Thus the system of delivery of services suitable for one may be quite different to that necessary for another.
- (ii) Economies of scale are not possible to the same extent as they are in urban areas. This makes the provision of services to rural communities more expensive, and may have an effect on the standard of services. While services may be maintained their quality may deteriorate.
- (iii) The changing structure of the population creates some difficulties concerning the type of services to be provided. According to Walsh's projections the age-structure of the population in 1986 is likely to be very different from that of 1971. At present, for example, the number of old people in the rural population is still very high, both in relative and absolute terms. While the absolute number of old people will remain high, the proportion of them in the total population may fall, particularly if any significant proportion of young people remain living in rural areas. Thus, while social planning in some rural areas may have to focus in the short-term on the special needs of old people, this might have to change in a relatively short period to concentrate on services for young people and their families. Population projections by Walsh indicate the possibility of a doubling in the numbers of young married couples between 1971 and 1986.
- (iv) Account will also have to be taken of the effect on population of other policies—regional and industrial policies, for example.

This is a clear illustration of the inextricable link that should exist between social and economic planning.

- (v) Ease of access to services is a problem which is likely to be much greater in rural areas than in urban areas. In high density urban areas it is conceivable that most people have reasonably easy access to any services they may require. In rural areas, however, where services may have been centralised for economic reasons, access to them becomes more difficult. Even where free travel facilities are available the bus services may not be adequate. Social services must, therefore, be planned in such a way as to ensure that rural people have sufficient access to them. The effect of closing isolated police stations, dispensaries, schools and the centralisation of other services is to shift the cost of transport from the providers of the services on to the recipient who is often not in a position to pay. It seems reasonable to assume that the cost of some services will bear more heavily on individuals in areas of declining population than in areas of stable or growing populations.
- (vi) Many social services developed in response to the special problems created by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. There still exists the danger that in planning services attention may be focused primarily on the urban dimension while the problems of rural areas may receive low priority if not be ignored completely.
- (vii) The needs of special groups in rural areas must be recognised, particularly the elderly and handicapped. This is not to suggest that cognisance should not also be taken of the needs of such groups in urban areas. It is the distinct nature of the problems associated with these groups in rural areas that is of concern here.\*

#### 4.2. Housing

66. Housing quality is a valuable indicator of social conditions in a community. In general, the quality of housing may be measured by reference to

\*The needs of the elderly and handicapped in rural areas will be considered in Chapter V.

- (i) *structure*—of which age is an indicator;
- (ii) *use*—density of persons per room;
- (iii) *amenities*—the presence or absence of piped water, sanitary facilities and electricity.

If measured by these criteria the quality of housing in rural areas is less adequate than in urban areas.

67. Over half of dwellings in the aggregate rural areas were built before 1919 as compared with less than one-third in urban areas.

TABLE 4.1

Percentage of dwellings in the aggregate urban and rural areas by age of dwelling, 1971

Period Built	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Prior to 1919	31.0	58.0
1919-40	21.0	19.0
1941-60	26.0	14.0
1961-71	22.0	9.0

Source: Census of Population.

This high proportion of dwellings in rural areas built prior to the establishment of the State suggests that obsolescence will take its toll. The very existence of an Essential Repairs Scheme\* under which substandard rural dwellings may be repaired instead of being replaced, emphasises the need for extensive reconstruction of dwellings in rural areas. In the period from 31 March 1967 to 31 December 1975 a total of 6,331 Essential Repairs Grants were paid, and 60% of these were in Connaught.\*\*

\*The Scheme was intended principally for those living in remote rural areas where a continuing need for new dwellings was not anticipated.

\*\*Statistics supplied by Department of Local Government.

68. The proportion of overcrowded dwellings, defined as two or more persons per room, has declined substantially since the foundation of the State. By 1971 approximately one in every fourteen dwellings in both the aggregate urban and rural areas were overcrowded by the above definition. The nature of overcrowding in high density urban areas, however, is more often associated with serious social problems than is the case in rural areas.

**TABLE 4.2**

**Percentage of population in aggregate urban and rural areas living in dwellings containing more than two persons per room, 1926-71**

Year	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
1926	31.3	25.5
1946	21.4	14.3
1966	10.8	11.1
1971	7.8	7.2

Source: Census of Population.

69. Despite a vast improvement during the 1960s in the provision of basic household amenities such as water supply, sanitary facilities and electricity, the 1971 Census of Population still revealed a considerable disparity between rural and urban areas.

**TABLE 4.3**

**Percentage of dwellings in aggregate urban and rural areas lacking certain domestic amenities, 1971**

Amenity	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Piped water supply	0.7	42.0
Sanitary facilities	0.5	38.7
Electricity	0.4	10.0

Source: Census of Population.

Approximately two-fifths of rural dwellings lack both piped water supply and sanitary facilities as compared with less than one per cent of dwellings in urban areas in 1971. That the disparity was not as pro-

nounced regarding electricity supply, is due in large part to the State efforts in promoting rural electrification.

70. There has undoubtedly been a continuing improvement in housing conditions in rural areas since the Census of 1971. In the absence of a Census in 1976 however, the exact extent of this improvement will not be clear for a considerable time. Department of Local Government statistics indicate that there were 52,800 grant-aided piped water installations in the period from April 1971 to December 1975, the vast majority of these being in rural areas. Accordingly, the Department of Local Government estimate that the proportion of rural housing stock without a piped water supply is approximately one-fifth at present as compared with two-fifths in 1971.

71. The nature of the problem facing rural areas in achieving housing standards comparable to those in urban areas has been succinctly expressed by Commins:\*

"The nature of settlement precludes the provision of dwellings and domestic amenities on a scheme basis as in urban areas. While population is declining, its composition and age structure are such that it needs more dwellings per head than in areas where there is a growing population of family groups. Existing dwellings are often structurally unfit or lacking in essential amenities, yet investment in new housing or reconstruction runs the risk of becoming redundant with further depopulation."

The fact that State and Local Authority aids for building and reconstruction are pitched at a higher level for farmers and rural dwellers especially in Gaeltacht areas is, in some part, a compensation for existing disparities in housing conditions and may eventually lead to a more equitable housing situation between urban and rural areas.

72. Further housing planning for rural areas needs to cater not only for the relatively high proportion of elderly persons but also for an increasing proportion of young families in some areas. There will be a need for better planning of housing in towns and villages which fall

\*Commins, P. "Rural Housing" *Farm and Food Research*, An Foras Talúntais, Dublin, March-April 1970.



within the labour catchment areas of industrial centres and also for better housing for the farming community. Two basic factors are likely to become increasingly relevant in the future. Firstly, an increasing proportion of the rural population will be engaged in occupations other than farming. Secondly, the expectations of the farming community regarding housing quality may be expected to rise.

73. While there is a tendency towards settlement of the rural population in larger centres of population it is also possible that if suitable housing were available people would remain in smaller settlements and commute to work in larger towns. This is borne out by the success of the Rural Housing Organisation, established in the mid-west region in 1972, with the objective of repopulating villages through the construction of new dwellings. By November 1975, 154 houses were completed in ten centres while additional schemes were either planned or under construction in ten other centres.\*

#### 4.3. Transport

74. By comparison with other EEC countries Ireland has the lowest number of motor cars per 1,000 population.† For those living and working in dispersed rural settlements there will be a continuing need for an adequate public transport system. As car ownership increases the dependence on public transport may be expected to decline but it is likely that there will always be a sizeable population who will want to travel to urban centres for shopping or other services. Lack of access to transport facilities may heighten the degree of isolation in sparsely populated areas.

75. The Census of Population (1971) indicated that more than half (57.2%) of those residing in the aggregate rural areas travelled five or more miles to work while more than one quarter (27.7%) travelled ten miles or more. For the majority (63.0%) the means of transport was a motor car and approximately one tenth (11.1%) used public transport (Table 4.4). As distance to work increased an increasing proportion

\*Bohan, H. "Rural Housing Organisation: Checking the Decline of Village Communities", *Irish Times Supplement* on the Mid-west Region, 9 December, 1975.

†*Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Community*, op. cit. pp. 252-3.

TABLE 4.4

Percentage distribution of persons living in the aggregate rural areas classified by means of transport and distance travelled, 1971

Distance (miles)	Means of Transport						Other Means	100.0
	Bus/Train	Motor Car	Motor Lorry or Van	Motor Cycle	Cycle	Other Means		
Up to 2	3.9	51.5	1.8	5.2	37.3	0.3	100.0	
3-4	8.0	55.3	1.9	6.5	28.0	0.3	100.0	
5-9	13.0	65.2	2.4	7.3	11.9	0.2	100.0	
10-14	15.7	72.0	3.1	5.6	2.5	0.1	100.0	
15-29	17.6	75.5	3.4	3.1	0.4	0.1	100.0	
30 and Over	12.7	82.1	3.8	1.5	0.0	0.2	100.0	
Not Stated	10.5	55.5	4.9	6.0	22.6	0.5	100.0	
Total	11.1	63.0	2.6	5.8	17.1	0.2	100.0	

Source: Census of Population.

used the motor car. Households without access to motor cars are likely to be those which contain unmarried persons or elderly married or widowed persons.\* Ironically, the situation can arise in some rural areas where elderly persons who are entitled to free travel are unable to regularly avail themselves of the facility, either because the public transport system is inadequate or because they reside at a considerable distance from the main thoroughfares.

76. More than any other service that of transport best illustrates the difficulty of social provision in rural areas. The real problem is one of changing population densities. The cost of providing an under-utilised service is perhaps more apparent in transport than in other services. Nevertheless, in the organisation of transport facilities in rural areas there is a need for greater flexibility than is the case in urban areas in order that the best service be provided for the greatest number.

#### 4.4. Health Services

77. There is a continuing trend towards the centralisation of health service facilities and personnel. Developments in medical technology, the dictates of economics and the increasing proportion of the population in urban areas have compounded this trend. In the absence of careful planning, therefore, it is possible that there may be a deterioration in the quality of health services in rural areas.

##### 4.4.1 Community Care Services

78. The traditional pattern of health services in Ireland placed great emphasis on institutional care. The policy in recent years, however, has been to emphasise community rather than hospital services. The Community Care Programme of Health Boards stresses the need to provide and develop services in the community as opposed to within an institutional setting. The basic reasoning behind this is that it is justified on social as well as economic grounds and that an efficient community care health service will reduce the demand for hospital beds. In introducing the estimate for his Department in 1975, Mr. Corish, Minister for Health, stated†

\*Clifford, D., *op. cit.* p. 79.

†*Parliamentary Debates*, Dáil Éireann, Vol. 281, No. 1, 1975.

"My objective is to bring about a shift in resources in favour of community services, in the belief that this will lead to a better health service overall."

The importance of developing an efficient community care service in rural areas, especially those located at considerable distances from a hospital, cannot be emphasised sufficiently.

79. A feature of the Community Care Programme is the grouping of all medical care welfare services, both preventive and curative, that are provided outside of hospitals. A single management has the responsibility for drawing up a programme to meet the essential needs of the community. Formerly, these services were administered separately and frequently operated in isolation from each other. Under the Community Care Programme the emphasis is on the overall needs of the community, rather than on the needs of an individual service. A wide range of services are provided under the programme. These may be divided into two broad areas:

- (i) *Primary Medical and para-medical services*, which include services provided by general practitioners, public health nurses, dentists, ophthalmologists, treatment of infectious diseases, vaccination, immunisation and other preventive services.
- (ii) *Personal social services and community welfare services* which include services provided by social workers, home helps, meals-on-wheels organisers and staff in day-care nurseries.

80. It is within this framework that the General Medical Service with its choice-of-doctor scheme operates. The choice-of-doctor scheme came into effect in 1972 and replaced the Poor Law dispensary system which had been in existence since 1851. One of the merits of the dispensary system was that in each area of the country, no matter how remote, a doctor was available to cater for the needs of the low income sections of the community. Its principal demerits, however, were acknowledged to be the segregation of the population by place of treatment and that public patients had no choice of doctor.\* Under the

\**The Future of the Health Services*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1966.

present scheme both medical card holders (together with their dependants) and fee-paying patients are treated in the same place, and eligible patients may choose a doctor of their choice from a panel. In many rural areas, however, there is effectively no choice of doctor and many medical card holders and their dependants live at a considerable distance from their doctor. In 1974, two-fifths (40.6%) of eligible patients in the Western Health Board Area lived more than five miles from their doctor as compared with 5.0% in the Eastern Health Board area (Table 4.5). In general, the western and north western areas are those most disadvantaged in terms of distance from doctor. Furthermore, the number of persons per general practitioner varies considerably by Health Board area, the range being from 1,601 in the Midland Health Board area to 2,527 in the North Western Health Board area (Table 4.5).

**TABLE 4.5**

**Percentage of medical card population living more than 5 miles from their doctor in 1974 and number of persons per general practitioner in 1975, by Health Board area**

Health Board	Percentage of patients living more than 5 miles from doctor*	Number of persons per G.P.†
Eastern	5.0	1,880
Midland	29.9	1,601
Mid Western	27.1	2,193
North Eastern	30.5	1,980
North Western	36.2	2,527
South Eastern	24.6	2,040
Southern	32.6	2,090
Western	40.6	2,001
Total	26.7	2,080

Sources: \*Report of the General Medical Service (Payments) Board, December 1972-74.

†Department of Health estimates 1975.

81. A continuing problem is likely to be that of attracting general practitioners to work in remote rural areas. The disadvantages, both professional and social, of working in these and other rural areas have

already been highlighted\* and serious consideration must be given to solving this problem. Otherwise, the quality or availability of general practitioner services for persons in rural areas may deteriorate. It should be noted that Health Boards may pay a rural practice allowance (£839 at present) to doctors who live and practice in a centre with a population of less than 500 and where there is not a town with a population of 1,500 or more within a three mile radius of that centre. Provision is also made for variation in the form of practice payment where this is considered necessary, in extremely remote areas such as the islands, and some mainland districts which require special consideration.

82. In the low farm income areas and least urbanised counties the proportion of the population covered by medical cards is relatively high, e.g., in Mayo the proportion is over two-thirds (69.1%) as compared with one third (31.1%) in Wicklow (Appendix D, Table 1). Farmers, farm labourers and their dependants account for almost one-fifth (19.6%) of the total medical card population, the range being from 3.3% in the Eastern Health Board area to 42.3% in the North Western Health Board area.†

83. It is desirable that the feasibility of using more public health nurses, social workers and home helps to deal with medical, social and psychological problems be examined. The strengthening of the public health nursing service alone could have beneficial effects in rural areas. The Report of the Working Group on Public Health Nurses recommended that the number of nurses be increased from the present number of approximately 800 to 1,152, giving a national nurse-population ratio of 1:2,616.‡ The lowest ratios were recommended for some western counties (e.g., Leitrim 1:2,233, Donegal 1:2,315) where,

\*See *The General Practitioner in Ireland*. Report of the Consultative Council on General Medical Practice, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1974, pp. 40-42.

†Medical Card Survey, Department of Health, 1974.

‡The actual increase recommended is based on the assumption that another main recommendation of the Report be implemented, i.e., that the full range of public health nursing service should be available to all in the community irrespective of income.

(Source: Survey of Workload of Public Health Nurses: Report of Working Group appointed by the Minister for Health, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975.)

because of the scattered nature of settlement, travel may account for a relatively high proportion of the public health nurse's time. The importance of developing a public health nursing service, particularly in areas where the doctor-patient ratio is high, has been emphasised by Wynn\*

“. . . any shortage of doctors in the community is obviously aggravated by the much greater shortage of public health nurses. Much work that might be done by nurses, including much home visiting is manifestly not done or is done by doctors”.

84. Social work services and home help services are integral features of the community care programme and are only in the initial stage of development in Ireland at present. The increasing importance being attached to the role of social workers in the community is reflected in the increase in the number of approved posts for social workers in health board areas from 68 in 1972 to 190 in 1975.† The home help service enables health boards in co-operation with voluntary agencies to provide domiciliary services for families in stress situations, for the elderly, especially those living alone, and for others in need of domiciliary care. The primary objective of the scheme is to assist and encourage persons who can remain in their own homes to do so, rather than seek institutional care. The need for such a service is emphasised by the increase in the number of both full-time and part-time home helps and of families/individuals benefiting from the scheme (Appendix D, Table 2).

85. In the context of community care services it is important to note the growth and development of social service councils during the past decade. They exist primarily to co-ordinate the activities of voluntary bodies providing social work services in a specific area. The number of activities engaged in vary from area to area depending on the needs in particular communities. One of the earliest and best known of these councils is the Kilkenny Social Service Council which has a number of sub-centres operating in rural areas.‡ The continuing rise in the number

\*Wynn, M. "Services for the Family". Social Studies, Vol. 2, No. 6, 1973, p. 620.

†Department of Health Statistics.

‡*The First Decade 1963-73, Kilkenny Voluntary Social Services, 1973.*

of such councils indicates the extent to which they have been found effective in filling gaps in existing services.

86. In the child health services a considerable disparity exists between areas in the provision of developmental examinations. Developmental paediatric clinics in which pre-school scheduled examinations take place have been confined in the main to towns with populations of 5,000 or over. In counties Roscommon and Leitrim there are no developmental paediatric clinics.

#### 4.4.2. General Hospital Services

87. The Irish hospital system was examined by the Consultative Council on the General Hospital Services which published its findings and recommendations (the Fitzgerald Report) in 1968.\* Of its many recommendations perhaps one of the more relevant in this context was that relating to the development of a hierarchical hospital structure from Regional Hospitals to District Nursing Homes and Community Health Centres. In effect the report recommended that small hospitals were no longer capable of adequately meeting public needs and that some should be downgraded and others built up into acute care General Hospitals with 300 beds and serving the needs of a population of at least 120,000. The basic principles underlying this recommendation were the provision of better hospital care to the patient and the economies of scale involved. In the location of General and Regional Hospitals it was envisaged that only the remote coastal areas in the west of the country would be more than sixty miles from a major hospital.

88. The General Hospital Development Plan issued by the Minister for Health in October 1975 differed substantially from the Fitzgerald Report. The major difference between the plans was the number of acute care hospitals which should be established. In reference to the Fitzgerald Report the Minister for Health stated:

“. . . while from the medical point of view, the recommendations were logical, it became clear in subsequent years that the detailed

\**Outline of the Future Hospital System, Report of the Consultative Council on the General Hospital Services, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1968.*

concept as set out did not have sufficient regard to the practical needs and wishes of the people."

The principle underlying the General Hospital Development Plan is that acute care hospitals be located so as to ensure that the population served would be within a radius of 30 miles of the hospital centre. The implementation of this plan is more socially desirable for persons living in rural areas where access to hospitals both for treatment and for visitation purposes is important.

#### 4.4.3. Special Hospital Services

89. The Special Hospitals Programme of Health Boards covers services for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped. Of particular relevance in the field of psychiatric illness in rural areas is the necessity to combat isolation particularly among those living alone. There is evidence to suggest that isolation and loneliness are associated with certain forms of psychiatric illness.\* The selective nature of migration in the past has also contributed to the relatively high hospitalised nature of psychiatric illness. Given the extremely low density of population in certain rural areas, the imbalanced age-sex structure and the high proportion of households with one or two persons only, the at-risk population (from a psychiatric viewpoint) is likely to be high in rural areas remote from urban centres.

90. In 1971 more than four-fifths (82.2%) of patients in psychiatric hospitals were unmarried and almost one-third (30.4%) were aged 65 and over. The highest rate per 100,000 persons by social group was among *Other Agricultural Occupations and Fishermen*† where the rate was 1,771.7. The hospitalised rate of psychiatric illness is highest in the western counties, the rate in the Western Health Board area being more than twice that in the Eastern Health Board area (Table 4.5). The

\*See Spellman, M. P., "Mental Illness in Roscommon women during Spring 1967" *Journal Ir. Med. Ass.*, Vol. 61, No. 94, 1968.

†This group does not include farmers but includes agricultural labourers, grounds-men and gardeners, labourers, other agricultural workers, foresters and forestry labourers and fishermen. (*Census of Population, 1971, Vol. IV*).

TABLE 4.5

Number of psychiatric patients and rates per 100,000 persons by Health Board area, 1971

Health Board	Number	Rate per 100,000 persons
Eastern	3,916	424.7
Midland	1,165	653.7
Mid Western	1,815	685.4
North Eastern	1,445	610.7
North Western	1,305	685.4
South Eastern	1,969	616.1
Southern	2,001	442.2
Western	2,922	912.7

Source: O'Hare, A. and Walsh, D., *The Irish Psychiatric Hospital Census 1971*, Medico-Social Research Board, Dublin, 1974.

increasing involvement of public health nurses, social workers and home helps in rural communities is likely to have a considerable impact on the admission rate to psychiatric hospitals.

91. The community psychiatric nurses and the Mental Health Association have important functions to play in community services for the mentally ill. Community psychiatric nurses liaise between general practitioners and psychiatric hospitals, are trained in community work and their main role is to ensure that as far as possible persons continue to live in the community. The Mental Health Association has contributed significantly, at national and local level, not only to a greater understanding in the community of the nature and causes of mental illness but also to a positive rehabilitation of the mentally ill.

#### 4.5. Education

##### 4.5.1. First Level Education

92. Historically, the rural population in Ireland was well served by a network of schools at the primary level. The density of population in the

19th century ensured the viability of such schools. With decline in population, however, the closure of small schools became inevitable. The trend still continues and has been accelerated in recent years. The *Investment in Education* Report indicated that on a cost-effectiveness basis the small one and two-teacher schools were inefficient.\* Following the publication of this report a large scale rationalisation of primary schools was begun. Apart from declining population two further factors aided the process of amalgamation. Firstly, the introduction of the Free Transport Scheme for primary school pupils facilitated closures. Secondly, the emphasis on new methods and new activities, e.g., arts and crafts, the use of audio-visual aids, in the new curriculum, which was introduced in 1970–71 necessitated the pursuance of the policy of amalgamating small schools, since the provision of a wide range of new facilities could only be justified in large schools. Between 1967 and 1974 the number of one- and two-teacher schools declined by almost half, from 2,932 to 1,564.† It can be assumed that the majority of these small schools were located in rural areas. The amalgamation process is a continuing one as declining populations in some rural areas reduce three-teacher schools to two-teacher status and renders them vulnerable to closure.

93. The rationalisation of rural primary schools raise some important questions as to the degree to which rural schooling should be centralised in order to provide adequate staffing, sufficient teaching aids and an enriched curriculum. If inequality exists in rural education it arises from the large number of small and dispersed units as opposed to larger, more concentrated units in urban areas. The assumption is that education in larger urban units is in some ways superior to that in small rural schools. But it is becoming increasingly evident that some of the greatest problems are being experienced in large urban primary schools where, for example, the pupil teacher ratio is high and overcrowded classrooms exist. The NESC report on Expenditure in Education recommended that the highest priority in educational expenditure should be given to improving the pupil-teacher ratios.‡ The opposition to school closures

\**Investment in Education*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1964, pp. 225–264.

†An Roinn Oideachais, Tuarascáil, 1968/69—1971/72; 1972/73—1973/74.

‡NESC Report No. 12, *Educational Expenditure in Ireland*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1976.

in some rural areas is a reflection of the value of the school to the local community. Furthermore, apart from a more favourable pupil-teacher ratio small rural schools may have considerable advantages over urban schools, e.g., the value of a contiguous rich environment. In Scandinavian countries there has been a reversal of policy in regard to schooling in rural areas and the present emphasis is on encouraging the building of small schools in remote rural areas as part of an integrated plan for revitalising rural communities.\* In these countries cost-effectiveness is no longer assumed to be one of the more important objectives in education.

94. In view of the evidence of population renewal in some rural areas perhaps it is opportune to re-examine the policy of rationalisation of small rural primary schools. Furthermore, the cost of transporting pupils to larger schools has undoubtedly risen considerably since the introduction of free transport in 1967. In rural areas which have begun to exemplify population stability or growth the cost of maintaining existing schools may be offset to some extent by a saving in transport costs consequent on the closure of such schools.

#### 4.5.2. Second Level Education

95. One of the features of the development of post-primary schools has been the regional imbalances in the location of post-primary schools, especially the privately-owned secondary schools. Since State aid for capital purposes in secondary schools was not available until the mid 1960s, and since student fees constituted an essential element of finance, the tendency was to locate schools in urban areas with a good population base. The *Investment in Education* Report indicated that there were great inequalities, based on social group and geographical location, in the participation of children in post-primary education at all levels.

96. These inequalities had been adverted to even prior to the publication of the report. In 1973 the Minister for Education acknowledged

\*Findlay, I. R., "Inequality in Education in the Sparsely Populated Rural Areas" Paper read at Annual Meeting of the Comparative Education Society of Europe, London, 1975.

that certain areas of the country had neither a secondary school nor a vocational school within easy daily reach of potential pupils, and indicated that the solution could only be found in the establishment of completely State-aided post-primary schools. These were to be comprehensive schools. The Minister stated:\*

"My plan is for the provision by the State of a number of new post-primary schools to cater for particular regions. While this involves important and perhaps fundamental principles, the considerations which gave rise to it in my mind are, I may say, at least as much social as educational. In that regard it has been well said recently that educational, social and economic needs, so far from conflicting, actually add force to each other."

The first four locations chosen for comprehensive schools were areas which lacked post-primary facilities, i.e., Shannon (Co. Clare), Carraroe (Co. Galway), Cootehill (Co. Cavan) and Glenties (Co. Donegal). In 1974-75 there were 14 Comprehensive Schools in the State and 8 of these were located in rural areas.†

97. The introduction of the free post-primary education scheme and the free transport scheme in 1967-68 facilitated the participation of rural pupils in post-primary education. By 1974 almost 80,000 pupils or one-third of all pupils in second level education were being conveyed to post-primary schools under the free transport scheme as compared with 63,785 in 1969.

#### 4.5.3. Education and the Farming Population

98. Since the farming population will form a significant proportion of people living in rural areas for the foreseeable future it is necessary that on-going education and training be provided for farmers and their families. The dictates of modern agriculture require constant renewal of farming skills and there is a continuing need for greater emphasis on proficiency schemes and farm apprenticeship schemes. This topic has

\*Policy Statement on Post-Primary Education by P. H. Hillery, Minister for Education, 1963.

†Department of Education, *Liosta de Mheanscoileanna Aitheanta, 1974/75*. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975, p. 17.

already been discussed at length in the NESC Report No. 6, which states, *inter alia*,

"In our view the importance of agriculture to the economic and social development of the country requires that adequate training should be provided for farmers and their families and employees. We believe that strenuous efforts should be made to attract greater numbers of young people, whose future lies in farming, to attend agricultural colleges and to participate in apprenticeship training".\*

The necessity for a unified national advisory, education and research authority to co-ordinate the activities of the various agencies involved in agricultural development, research and training has been acknowledged by the Government in a recent White Paper.†

99. Under EEC Directive 161‡ a scheme of vocational training for persons engaged in agriculture is to be provided. The purpose of the scheme is to enable those engaged in farming to acquire new agricultural skills, or to improve upon existing skills. The training courses provided under the Scheme are of two types:

- (i) *Basic Training* consisting of a minimum of 100 hours instruction in the general, technical and economic aspects supported by practical training. This course is designed primarily for persons aged 23 to 30 years who are experienced in farming, who have had no previous formal basic training and who are specifically identified and selected by the Agricultural Advisory Service. In addition to the age criterion persons selected are those who are potential participants in farm modernisation programmes.
- (ii) *Advanced Training* consisting of courses devoted to special aspects of agriculture including full-time courses at agricultural and horticultural colleges having a minimum duration of 800

\*NESC Report No. 6, *Comments on the OECD Report on Manpower Policy in Ireland*. Stationery Office, Dublin 1975, p. 14.

†*A National Agricultural Advisory, Education and Research Authority*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1975.

‡Council Directive of 17 April 1972 concerning the provision of socio-economic guidance for and acquisition of occupational skills by persons engaged in agriculture (72/161/EEC).

hours. It also includes a trainee farmer scheme designed to equip prospective heirs of modernising farmers with the skills necessary to take over the major enterprise on the farm.

Tuition, travel, board and maintenance on residential courses and mid-day meals at day sessions are free to participants. In 1975-76 (the first year of the Scheme) 33 agricultural courses are being conducted in 24 counties.\*

100. This scheme for agricultural training is an important adjunct to the educational service already provided by the Agricultural Advisory Service such as Winter Farm Schools, lectures and demonstrations.

#### 4.6 Income Maintenance

101. Income maintenance measures operated by the Department of Social Welfare, with some exceptions, do not discriminate by place of residence or occupation between different sections of the community. Consequently persons living in rural areas have the same entitlement to benefit as those in urban areas provided the necessary qualifications are fulfilled.

102. In general, income maintenance measures fall broadly into two categories, i.e., social insurance and social assistance. The payment of *social insurance* benefit is essentially conditional on the recipient having a minimum number of insurance contributions (insurance stamps) paid or credited and the rate of payment will vary according to number of contributions made and the number of the recipient's dependants. Social insurance benefit applies only to employees. The essential qualification for *social assistance* is that the recipient satisfies a means test. Social assistance applies to former employees whose social insurance benefits have expired or to persons who have not been in insurable employment.

103. Since income maintenance measures for the unemployed are inherently the most controversial of any cash payments it is pertinent to describe and comment on these measures in so far as they affect the

farming population. In the case of farmers and farmers' relatives unemployment insurance benefit is payable to those who have worked at an off-farm job for a period which enables them to receive benefit once they become unemployed. In this category would be farmers who have off-farm seasonal jobs as well as those unemployed following a period of full-time more permanent work. Recent figures\* indicate that 1,517 farmers and 1,286 other farm family members are in receipt of *unemployment benefit*. They account for 4.6% of the total number of persons in receipt of unemployment benefit.

104. A further 10,218 members of the family farm labour force are in receipt of *unemployment assistance*, representing 20.8% of all unemployment assistance recipients. In all, farmers and farmers' relatives account for 11.3% of the 115,677 currently (26/3/1976) on the Live Register of unemployed.

##### 4.6.1. "Farmers' Dole"

105. One category excluded from the Live Register are those in receipt of *Smallholders Assistance*, commonly referred to as "farmers' dole". The Smallholders Assistance Scheme is a rather unique Irish social security measure in that it is the only assistance scheme where eligibility is not determined on the basis of actual income. Instead a notional income per £1 land valuation is used. The scheme is an extension of Unemployment Assistance which was introduced in 1933 and was the first unemployment measure to cater for farmers. Apart from qualifying for assistance on the basis of a means test those eligible for unemployment assistance had to be capable of work, available for and genuinely seeking suitable employment. Since the amount payable under unemployment assistance was subject to a means test it followed that the lower a farmer's income, as well as the higher the number of his dependants, the more he received in unemployment assistance. It was therefore justifiably argued that receipt of unemployment assistance payments was a disincentive to increasing farm income since to do so would automatically lead to a reduction in payments. The Report of an Interdepartmental Committee on the Problems of Small Western Farms acknowledged the difficulties involved in devising a system which would

\* Statistics supplied by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

\* Number on Live Register on 26 March 1976.



not have unfortunate side effects but recommended that "*some more flexible method of assessing means which would have an incentive rather than a disincentive effect should be devised*".\*

106. In view of the mounting criticisms of the existing system the Smallholders Assistance Scheme was introduced in 1966 but confined to the western region.† Under this scheme the farmers means were based on a notional income of £20 per £1 land valuation. The consequence of the scheme was that a farmer could maximise his income without fear of losing eligibility for assistance or of his assistance being reduced.‡ Between 1966 and 1974 the annual average number of applications for Smallholders Assistance increased from 6,958 to 24,180. The main reason for the increase in numbers was that the notional income of £20 per £1 valuation remained fixed since 1966 while the rates of payment were increasing annually. With each increase, an additional number of farmers became eligible for Smallholders Assistance. In 1974, for example, an unmarried male farmer with a land valuation of £16 would not have been entitled to any assistance since his weekly notional income would have exceeded the maximum weekly rate of assistance. By October 1975 he would be entitled to a weekly payment of £1.60. The inevitable consequence of a fixed notional income was that farmers with relative large holdings could become eligible for assistance provided they had a number of children.

107. Under the changes announced in the January Budget there will be three notional incomes, varying according to valuation, from April 1976. For farmers with holdings under £15 valuation the notional income will remain at £20 per £1 land valuation. On holdings between £15 and £20 valuation the notional income will be increased to £30 while on

\**Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on the Problems of Small Western Farms*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1962, p. 32.

†Only farmers in the province of Connaught, counties Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Longford, Kerry, Clare and the congested parts of West Cork and West Limerick, are eligible for Smallholders Assistance.

‡With the exception of a few farm enterprises (e.g., large-scale pig production, market gardening) farmers' eligibility is determined by notional rather than actual income. In these cases, however, means from sources other than farming such as bank deposits are also taken into consideration, the yearly value of investments being calculated at 5% on the first £400 and 10% on the remainder.

holdings in excess of £20 valuation the notional income will be £40 per £1 land valuation. Furthermore, increases of 10% in maximum assistance payments will only apply to those on valuations under £15. The immediate effects of these changes will be:

- (i) to reduce the number of farmers currently drawing Smallholders Assistance;
- (ii) to reduce weekly payments for farmers with valuations between £15 and £20 and to disqualify all single men in this category;
- (iii) to reduce substantially the weekly payments of farmers with holdings over £20 valuation and who formerly were in receipt of Smallholders Assistance.

Many farmers with relatively high valuations and a large number of children will no longer qualify for assistance.

108. The above changes will have the effect of ensuring that those with lowest notional incomes (in the under £15 valuation category) will still continue to benefit fully from the scheme while those with relatively high valuations and consequently, relatively high or potentially high incomes, will either be excluded from the scheme or have considerably reduced payments. Thus some of the major real or perceived inequities of the Scheme have been eliminated.

109. Criticisms of the farmers' dole are basically centred on the principle of paying assistance to farmers and also on the way in which smallholders become eligible for assistance. Taxpayers and the urban unemployed may, with some justification, regard it as inequitable that certain self-employed farmers (with usable assets and a farm income) should also be entitled to unemployment assistance. The comparison is heightened when the numbers of urban unemployed are comparatively high as at present. From an agricultural viewpoint it is still argued that the dole remains a disincentive to increase farm income and, in general, that it has a demoralising effect on recipients making them increasingly dependent on State support. Some of these arguments are considered here.

110. In theory, payment of Smallholders Assistance need not and should not be a disincentive to improve farm income. Nonetheless, it is

conceivable that some smallholders, conditioned as they were for a period of over thirty years, to equate low-incomes from farming with receipt of State assistance, may still prefer to maintain the visible signs of need, for fear of being penalised. In other words, despite the change in the assessment of means in 1966 some farmers may be unwilling to maximise farm income, for to do so would be an ostentatious display uncharacteristic of welfare recipients. Ironically, those farmers who do improve their farm income would outwardly appear to be the least deserving in the public mind and are the object of most of the popular criticisms levelled at "well-to-do" farmers collecting dole.

111. While there is no disincentive to improve farm income there is a definite disincentive to acquire additional land. For farmers in receipt of Smallholders Assistance the acquisition of extra land means that their total valuation is increased and consequently would lead to an automatic reduction if not a complete loss of dole payments. This applies particularly to farmers whose present land valuations are less than £15, for once this figure is exceeded entitlement to dole is greatly affected. A married farmer with four dependant children and a land valuation of £14 is entitled to £19.20 per week in dole at present. If this farmer were to acquire an additional 20 acres with a valuation of £10 then his total land valuation would amount to £24 and his weekly dole payment would fall from £19.20 to £3.80 per week.

112. To equate receipt of Smallholders Assistance with inefficiency in farming is too facile. Such a conclusion is only possible when the role of welfare payments has been examined in depth and this is clearly a difficult research task. It is very probable that in many cases dole money is used to a purposeful extent on the farm or in the household, rather than, as is popularly assumed on less tangible benefits. Unfortunately it is the "squandering" of such money which attracts notoriety.

113. Similarly it is equally facile to assume that a complete withdrawal of farmers' dole, as is sometimes advocated, would inevitably lead to greater productivity on farms. Many farmers, particularly elderly farmers, currently in receipt of Smallholders Assistance either lack the necessary incentive to improve their income or are unlikely to be suitable for employment outside agriculture. In these circumstances the withdrawal of regular weekly payments could result in hardship.

114. It is sometimes contended that the dole has contributed to the demoralisation of recipients. This is seen to be exemplified in their negative attitude to work and in the case of small farmers is perceived to be reflected in the neglected state of their holdings. There is undoubtedly some merit in this argument but can it be taken that conditions of this kind are the direct consequence solely of the "dole"? Scientifically this would be an untenable conclusion. The available evidence is largely impressionistic and the cause-effect relationship is too readily assumed. To contend that the "dole" is the sole barrier to development is to ignore other inhibiting factors such as low levels of skill or adverse farm structure in the western region. It is also conceivable that in some rural areas, attempts to cope with a harsh physical environment, poor resources and isolation may, over time, be contributing factors in the demoralisation process. Research has indicated that apathy is a characteristic and universal element of traditional rural communities.\* In the case of low-income farmers limited aspirations may be satisfied by "dole" rather than extra productivity and consequently, land may be under-utilised. But here again the direct cause-effect relationship cannot be assumed, for to do so would be to ignore other important factors such as varying capacity and ability for work among individuals, age or condition of health.

115. Eligibility for Smallholders Assistance is based on a land valuation system introduced in the mid-19th century and as such does not allow for sufficient differentiation between real and assumed need. Changes in the productive capacity of the land through drainage or reclamation do not necessarily alter the valuation of the land.† Consequently, inequities may arise between farms of similar valuation but contrasting productive ability and may also lead to a situation where farmers with relatively high incomes are entitled to assistance because of an outmoded valuation system.

116. It has already been noted in Chapter III that in western areas family farm incomes are low not only in relation to farm incomes in other areas but also in relation to non-agricultural incomes. In these circumstances income maintenance serves a real need for many low-

\*Rogers, E. M., *Modernisation among Peasants*, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, New York, 1972.

†Valuation as a basis for eligibility is discussed in Part V.

income farmers. While the *principle* of guaranteeing a minimum level of income to all members of society is generally accepted reservations are frequently expressed in the case of self-employed farmers. Much of this stems from the method by which some farmers qualify for assistance. The inequalities which arise due to an out-dated land valuation system and which need to be remedied should not detract from the principle of supplementing incomes, even those of self-employed farmers. Instead of viewing Smallholders Assistance as a form of unemployment assistance it is more realistic to regard it as an income supplement, as a compensatory measure for farmers living in inherently disadvantaged regions of the country, where farm incomes have traditionally lagged behind those in other areas.

#### 4.6.2. Female Landholders and the Dole

117. It is worth noting that unmarried female landholders are not entitled to Smallholders Assistance. The reason underlying the exclusion of women without dependants from assistance originally was that in rural areas many would in theory be seeking employment but in practice unlikely to obtain employment and would consequently impose an undue burden on the scheme.\* It is at least arguable that the same is true of many male farmers currently in receipt of Smallholders Assistance. Far from imposing a burden on the scheme the numbers of single female farmers who would qualify for assistance on a notional basis in the western region following recent changes in the Smallholders Assistance scheme is estimated to be approximately 500.†

#### 4.6.3. Farmers and Insurance

118. Farmers, in common with other self-employed persons, are not covered by social insurance. This means, for example, that in the event of illness, accident or retirement they are not entitled to State provisions available to employees.‡ Ironically, insured farm workers qualify for

\*Farley, D., *Social Insurance and Social Assistance in Ireland*, Institute of Public Administration, 1964, p. 52.

†Widows and married women with dependants are eligible for other forms of assistance, while in 1974 a scheme of assistance for single women aged 58 and over was introduced.

‡The self-employed with incomes under £1,600 and farmers under £60 valuation have limited eligibility for health services and are liable for a health contribution of £15 per annum.

benefits while their employers do not. In the interests of equity alone social security schemes embracing the farm population are necessary. Farmers are exposed to the contingencies which are common to all members of society, e.g., old age, sickness or invalidity. Furthermore, there are risks and hazards associated with farming such as crop failure or fodder shortage arising from climatic changes or fluctuations in agricultural prices and consequently in farm incomes. While the insecurity arising from these risks may be peculiar to the farming population the need for social protection is no less important than it is in the non-farm sector. In countries where farmers are insured for occupational accidents their claims to benefit are high relative to other occupations.\* The Department of Social Welfare are at present examining the feasibility of drawing up a social insurance scheme for the self-employed.

#### 4.7. Other Community Services

119. Apart from the basic services which provide shelter and education and which cater for health and welfare needs, there are a number of other services which are needed in order to ensure reasonable standards of living for people living in rural communities. Community centres which provide not only the services referred to above but also leisure and cultural facilities are of vital importance in maintaining the fabric of rural life. These need not and probably should not be supported entirely by the State but local communities should be given greater assistance and encouragement in developing these themselves. The changing structure of the population in some rural areas may give rise to a demand for services hitherto provided in large urban areas only. The increase in young married couples (both those involved in farming and other activities) and the increase in the number of children may merit the provision of services such as playgrounds or day nurseries. While it will not be possible to organise such facilities on the same basis as in larger urban areas it may be possible to encourage their development on a smaller scale.

\*Kaim-Caudle, P. R., *Comparative Social Policy and Social Security: A Ten Country Study*, London, 1973, p. 68.

## Chapter V

### SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVISION

#### 5.1. Particular Problems of Certain Population Categories

##### 5.1.1. The Elderly

120. The elderly are acknowledged to be one of the most vulnerable groups in society. It has already been noted that in rural areas there is a higher proportion of elderly persons in the population than in urban areas and that the absolute number of elderly persons is likely to remain high. Since the needs of the elderly may be catered for by a variety of services it is appropriate that they be examined separately.

121. The emphasis in health services for the elderly in recent years has in common with health services generally, been on community rather than institutional care where possible. The Care of the Aged Report\* states:

"It is generally accepted that it is better and probably much cheaper to help the aged live at home than to provide for them in hospitals and institutions".

In pursuance of this policy it is obvious that income maintenance, adequate food supply and satisfactory diet, suitable housing, companionship and efficient health services are important factors in maintaining the elderly in the community. The inadequate provision for these needs may contribute to the committal of elderly persons to institutional care.

122. The high proportion of elderly persons living alone in rural areas suggests that the problems associated with old age may be accentuated

\**The Care of the Aged*: Report of an Inter-Departmental Committee, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1968, p. 49.

and compounded by isolation. The introduction of a home help service in the Community Care Programme of Health Boards is a significant development and could be of inestimable value to the elderly, particularly those living alone. Despite the difficulties involved in operating such a scheme in rural areas its development to the fullest extent possible would have beneficial effects. The home help service is a means by which isolation can be broken down, enables the elderly to live in familiar surroundings, and may lead to the prevention of institutionalisation. In some urban areas a range of services are provided by voluntary organisations either alone or in conjunction with statutory bodies. These include laundry service, the provision of furniture, bedding and clothing, and meals-on-wheels. The scattered nature of population in some rural areas, however, presents special difficulties in supplying services of this kind.

123. An important factor related to needs of the elderly is that of housing. There are several State and local authority measures aimed at improving housing conditions of the elderly, e.g., essential repairs scheme, provision of demountable dwellings, and grants to philanthropic organisations towards the repair, reconstruction or construction of dwellings. A number of housing projects for the elderly have been initiated by organisations such as the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. In Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim, for example, a commendable project involving the construction of fourteen dwellings and a community centre for the elderly was established by the Society.

##### 5.1.2. The Handicapped

124. Persons suffering from handicap have been defined as those with:

"Any limitation, congenital or acquired, of a person's physical or mental ability which affects his daily activity and work by reducing his social contribution, his vocational employment prospects or his ability to use public services".\*

Services for the handicapped include medical care, occupational training, rehabilitation and employment and are provided by statutory

\**Training and Employing the Handicapped*, Report of a Working Party established by the Minister for Health, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1975, p. 12.

and voluntary bodies. For certain forms of handicap, e.g., mental handicap, the main services are provided by voluntary bodies.

125. While all handicapped persons are disadvantaged the nature of disadvantage for those living in rural areas may be further accentuated by isolation. It is conceivable that medical care for the handicapped in rural areas is of a high quality simply because they are likely to be easily identified in the community and consequently, may be more readily brought to the attention of medical personnel. Access, in terms of distance, to community workshops, training centres and places of employment does not pose a serious problem for some urban handicapped persons. The rehabilitation of the rural handicapped, however, may be greatly influenced by the individual's willingness and/or ability to live away from home if the distance involved is considerable. In some areas where transport facilities are feasible the *cost* of daily transporting handicapped persons living in sparsely populated areas to rehabilitation centres may be prohibitive.

## 5.2. Eligibility for Social Services

126. In the case of the non-farming population eligibility for a range of social services is determined by a means test. Determining farmers' income for purposes of eligibility, however, is much more difficult. For some services an assessment of farmers' actual income is undertaken (Unemployment Assistance, Non-Contributory Old-Age Pension), for others a notional income based on land valuation is applied (Smallholders Assistance), while for a third group of services land valuation itself is used (housing grants, *limited eligibility* for health services).

127. The resulting pattern is one of chaos with different assessments being used for different services. Not unnaturally this situation leads not only to confusion among farmers but also to anomalies. In the case of Smallholders Assistance three notional incomes (£20, £30 and £40) are used in assessing eligibility (see Chapter IV). But is it realistic to assume that there is a £10 per £1 valuation difference between farms with valuation of £14 and those with valuations of £15 or a difference of £20 per £1 valuation between a £14 valuation holding and a £20 valuation holding? Farmers under £60 valuation have *limited eligibility* under the health services and because of this are liable for a health

contribution (£15 per annum at present). But if a notional income of £40 were applied in their case it would mean that farmers with valuations over £40 would be ineligible since the income limit for self-employed persons is £1,600!\*

128. Adopting a notional income based on land valuation is an administratively less complex method of assessing farmers' income. In addition, it does not constitute a brake on initiative and allows the farmer to maximise his resources.† The problem is, however, of adopting a notional income which is not unrealistic by comparison with actual farm income. For some farmers the notional income may represent a figure well below their actual income while for others it may be in excess of actual income.‡ Furthermore, incomes in farming may fluctuate considerably from year to year and this makes it even more difficult to establish a realistic figure. It is also questionable whether one notional income should be used for eligibility for social services (and for income tax purposes) because of differences in farm incomes between farm size categories and farm enterprises.

129. Even if equitable and meaningful notional income(s) were established anomalous situations could still arise as long as the notional figure is related to land valuations. The Poor Law Valuation was introduced in the mid-19th century and it has been shown to have serious defects in reflecting soil suitability and productivity.\*\* Another

\*The main categories with limited eligibility for health services are:

- (i) insured manual employees;
- (ii) insured non-manual employees with income under £2,250 p.a.;
- (iii) self-employed persons with incomes under £1,600 p.a.;
- (iv) farmers with valuations under £60.

(The Minister for Health has announced his intention of increasing the limits mentioned under (ii) and (iii) above to £3,000 p.a.)

†For a discussion of notional and actual incomes in relation to farm taxation see NESR Report No. 15, *The Taxation of Farming Profits*, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1976.

‡In relation to the notional incomes used in the assessment of farmers' eligibility for Smallholders Assistance the disparity between notional income and actual income is exemplified by the fact that in 1974 an estimated 17.7% of farms in the western region had family farm incomes of less than £20 per £1 land valuation while 19.2% had £100 or more per £1 land valuation (see Appendix E, Table 1).

\*\*Frawley, J., "The Poor Law Valuation as a basis for welfare administration and local taxation". *Ir. Jour. Agric. Econ. Rur. Sociol.*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1972-73.

factor leading to anomalies is that changes in the productive capacity of land through drainage or reclamation do not alter the valuation of the land. The necessity for a reform of the system has also been acknowledged.\*

### 5.3. Knowledge of Entitlements

130. The increasingly complex nature of eligibility for services and of services themselves, especially those operated by the Department of Social Welfare, inevitably means that certain groups in society are at a disadvantage when applying for entitlements.† Titmuss has indicated that unmet and unexpressed needs are likely to be those of the poor, the badly educated, the old, all of whom should be entitled to benefits, but often due to fear, ignorance or difficulties in using services fail to claim their rights.‡ It is appreciated that those living in remote rural areas may be at a particular disadvantage regarding knowledge of entitlements.

131. Within recent years a number of positive steps have been taken to ensure that persons eligible for services have a knowledge of their entitlements and rights. Muintir na Tíre established a community advisory centre in Carlow in 1970 and since then several such centres have been opened. More recently, community information centres have been registered under the National Social Service Council. The establishment of information centres marks an important development in the provision of an essential community service. All of these centres, however, are located in urban areas where a number of voluntary and statutory bodies already operate. It is important that methods of extending such a service to rural areas located at a considerable distance from urban areas be examined. Muintir na Tíre operates such a scheme through Information Officers located in rural areas but in contact with information centres in urban areas. This scheme is already functioning successfully in counties Wexford, Laois, Carlow, Kildare and Kilkenny.

\**Local Finance and Taxation*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1972, p. 12.

†One of the four schemes being undertaken by the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty is a Welfare Rights Project which will examine the reasons why people do not avail themselves of the social benefits they are entitled to and will develop ways of enabling them to improve their situation.

‡Titmuss, R. M., *Commitment to Welfare*, Allen and Unwin, London 1968, p. 66.

## Chapter VI

### POLICY AND PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

#### 6.1. Introduction

132. The preceding chapters of this report have presented an analysis of policy measures and problems in the provision of social services in Ireland. This analysis was provided against the background of the more salient trends in the demography of rural areas and also of the major socio-economic policy developments impinging on the rural economy.

133. The objectives of this final chapter are:

- (i) to synthesise the foregoing information in terms of the main policy issues that are considered to emerge;
- (ii) to raise, however tentatively, a number of other matters that require consideration in future planning.

#### 6.2. Demographic Developments and Considerations

134. There has been a demographic transformation at national level during the past decade. The increase in the numbers of persons under 14, of young adults, of married persons, of the elderly and projections by Walsh which indicate that these trends will continue, have important implications for social planning on a national scale. In general, the lack of social planning has led to a lag between the supply of services and demographic developments. Consideration is currently being given to the implication of population projections for the major areas of social provision—health, housing, education—by the National Economic and Social Council. Attention needs to be focused not only on areas of population growth but also on areas of decline.

135. In Chapter II of this report it was evident that not only have urban areas of 1,500 persons or more indicated a capacity for growth

but so also have rural towns and villages. This capacity for growth needs to be augmented by positive planning especially in the provision of housing. The activities of the Rural Housing Organisation in the Mid West Region has illustrated how small rural villages can be revitalised. While some rural areas lack certain social facilities others have services which are under-utilised, e.g., schools. The effect of supporting those elements would ease, if only temporarily, the growing problems of overcrowding in large urban areas.

136. Projections indicate a continuing national increase in population which is also likely to be reflected in the stability of regional, county or national rural populations. Yet, there will still be many rural areas where population will continue to decline. In the justifiable anxiety to plan for the needs of a growing population, a danger exists that the problems of declining rural communities may receive low priority. While the problems of such areas may differ fundamentally from those of other areas they are no less deserving of attention. In particular, cognisance ought to be taken of the problems of the elderly regarding housing and medical services.

### **6.3. The Wider Policy Context of Social Service Provision**

137. Social policy measures and provision of social services for rural areas are only part of a comprehensive set of interventions by the State in respect of its citizens. To the individual citizen these may seem a bewildering confusion especially if anomalies, duplication or discrepancies exist in the implementation of measures from various agencies.

138. In the area of agricultural adjustment social policies or policies with a "social" content may be implemented as aids or facilitators of economic objectives like improving farm structure, e.g., farm retirement scheme or the scheme of socio-economic guidance. Social and economic policies may have conflicting consequences or may, in certain circumstances, negate each other. Economic policies which provide incentives for farmers (Farm Retirement Scheme) may be negated by social policies aimed at a retention of the status quo (Disadvantaged Areas Scheme). This points to the need for greater complementarity between economic and social policy and a clearer

specification of objectives. Furthermore, at an individual level there is a need to integrate policies with existing social security measures or other social services. An example of the lack of integration is the confusion which farmers perceive to be associated with benefits to be derived from the farm retirement scheme and apparent loss of social assistance benefits.

139. At a wider European level structural reform measures in agriculture operate almost independently of regional or social policies. The EEC Social Action programme is effectively a manpower measure ill-suited to the welfare problems of declining rural communities. It has been noted that:

"EEC policies have a certain in-built inflexibility in face of national needs and socio-economic changes over time. The welfare and human problems of rural areas, being the outcome of major structural changes in modern economies, might have as much claim on the EEC Social Fund as the labour market problems of industrial sectors".\*

140. Industrialisation may be an effective instrument in solving problems in low income rural areas. Frequently, however, it is conceived as solving manpower problems only with insufficient attention being paid to the implications for social provision. There is a need, for example, to integrate rural housing plans with rural industrialisation activities.

### **6.4. Integration of Farm and Rural Population into Modern State**

141. In many respects policy measures have tended to differentiate between sectors of the economy and sections of the population. The rural population and more specifically the farming population have frequently either received preferential treatment or have been accorded low priority in policy measures. Consequently, situations arise where urban and rural populations make unfavourable comparisons between their respective positions. While it is accepted that in the short-term different problems require different solutions, it is also recognised that in

\*Commins, P., "Socio-Economic Adjustments to Rural Depopulation". Paper read at Regional Studies Association Conference on Planning for Areas of Population Decline, Durham, 1975.

the long-term the objective of social policy is to achieve the orderly integration of rural and farming populations into the position where they have the same rights and obligations as other citizens of the State.

142. In this context social welfare schemes are designed to cater for certain contingencies in life that are common to all persons in need. In view of existing provisions in other European countries there is a strong argument in favour of extending State insurance to cover the self-employed and farmers. In line with this it should be said that if State aid is to be extended to farmers then, in common with other citizens, they also have an obligation to contribute their fair share. The *principle* of extending income tax to a greater number of farmers is justifiable. In so far as farmers are increasingly provided for from public funds then those who can should also contribute to the welfare of others and thus bring about a more equitable distribution of resources within the agricultural population itself.

#### **6.5. Role of Voluntary Organisations**

143. Voluntary agencies, whether religious or lay, have a long tradition of service in Ireland. The inestimable value of the work they do and the variety of functions they serve in the provision of social services need to be positively encouraged and supported. Examples have been given in this report of some of the commendable activities being undertaken by voluntary or community organisations in certain rural areas. In the provision of services existing organisations should be utilised and supported where possible. On the other hand, leadership deficiencies in some declining rural communities need to be remedied by more active support from statutory organisations.

144. In general, a more integrated approach to the delivery of social services, whether by voluntary or statutory organisations, at a local level should be encouraged. The fragmentary and piecemeal approach to the delivery of services can lead to an unnecessary duplication of effort and resources or the overlooking of particular needs.

#### **6.6. Research and Evaluation**

145. In economic policy a number of indicators are constantly used to monitor changes. There also exists a need to develop a reliable set of

social indicators in social policy areas. Policy changes, whether economic or social need to be constantly evaluated in respect of meeting their declared objectives or for unintended consequences. There is a need, for example, to monitor EEC schemes which affect the farming population. Finally, while the need for research and planning at a national or regional level is accepted there also exists a need for research at local level to monitor changes as they occur and to indicate directions for new policies.



## APPENDIX A

### TABLE A.1

**Percentage of population living in aggregate town areas in each county, 1971**

	10-20%	20-30%	30-40%	40-50%	50% and over
Less than 10%					
Leitrim 5.3					
	Cavan 11.1 Roscommon 13.3 Donegal 13.7 Mayo 16.1 Longford 17.0 Meath 19.0	Kilkenny 22.1 Clare 23.3 Kerry 24.2 Laoighis 26.3 Monaghan 26.6 Sligo 28.8 Galway 29.1	Wexford 32.6 Offaly 33.5 Kildare 34.6 Tipperary 36.2 Westmeath 38.4	Carlow 42.1 Wicklow 46.6 Limerick 47.6	Cork 53.8 Waterford 55.5 Louth 62.6 Dublin 96.5

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.2**

**Percentage of single persons in each age group in aggregate town and aggregate rural areas, 1971**

Age Group	Males	
	Town Areas	Rural Areas
	15-19	99.3
20-24	79.8	90.4
25-29	39.0	62.3
30-34	21.8	45.7
35-39	18.7	40.9
40-44	18.4	39.6
45-54	18.0	36.4
55-64	18.3	33.1
65 and over	22.0	29.5
<b>Total 15 and over</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>50.6</b>

Age Group	Females	
	Town Areas	Rural Areas
	15-19	97.7
20-24	68.5	69.6
25-29	30.6	32.1
30-34	19.7	18.9
35-39	17.9	16.0
40-44	19.5	15.7
45-54	21.4	16.2
55-64	25.0	19.1
65 and over	28.9	21.5
<b>Total 15 and over</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>33.7</b>

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.3**

**Number and percentage of persons aged 65 and over living alone in each Province and County, 1966 and 1971**

	1966		1971	
	Number	%	Number	%
<b>LEINSTER</b>	<b>16,087</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>20,111</b>	<b>14.3</b>
Carlow	372	10.0	436	11.7
Dublin	8,603	13.1	11,076	15.4
Kildare	565	10.2	724	12.3
Kilkenny	731	10.1	896	12.5
Laois	509	9.7	610	11.7
Longford	459	12.0	556	14.9
Louth	795	12.0	937	13.5
Meath	851	12.1	952	13.0
Offaly	606	10.9	712	12.7
Westmeath	710	11.2	849	13.3
Wexford	1,100	11.1	1,363	13.3
Wicklow	786	12.4	1,000	14.7
<b>MUNSTER</b>	<b>10,306</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>12,778</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Clare	987	9.3	1,188	11.5
Cork	3,999	10.2	4,949	12.5
Kerry	1,289	8.5	1,686	11.2
Limerick	1,539	10.7	1,858	12.8
Tipperary (NR)	643	9.9	777	11.8
Tipperary (SR)	849	10.7	1,062	13.1
Waterford	1,000	11.6	1,258	14.4
<b>CONNACHT</b>	<b>5,410</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>6,382</b>	<b>11.3</b>
Galway	1,391	7.3	1,715	9.0
Leitrim	572	11.1	691	14.1
Mayo	1,679	9.5	1,946	11.5
Roscommon	940	10.6	1,073	12.7
Sligo	828	11.3	957	13.2
<b>ULSTER</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>13.2</b>
Cavan	865	11.4	1,051	14.1
Donegal	1,654	10.8	1,912	12.2
Monaghan	702	12.0	875	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,024</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>43,109</b>	<b>13.1</b>

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.4**  
**Females per 1,000 males in each age group in the aggregate town and aggregate rural areas 1971**

Age Group	Town Areas	Rural Areas
0-4	950	951
5-9	961	955
10-14	972	953
15-19	1,037	876
20-24	1,119	761
25-29	1,080	833
30-34	1,047	869
35-44	1,077	889
45-54	1,141	885
55-64	1,200	818
65-74	1,420	944
75 and over	1,863	1,034
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>896</b>

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.5**  
**Percentage distribution of households by household composition in aggregate urban and rural areas, 1971**

Household Composition	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
<i>Non-family units:</i>		
One person	13.1	15.3
Two or more persons, not a family unit	7.9	10.3
<i>Family units:</i>		
Man and wife	10.6	9.3
Man, wife and children*	45.7	34.4
Man, wife, children and other persons	7.7	11.3
Man, wife and other persons	2.2	2.9
One parent and children	7.8	9.8
One parent, children and other persons	2.0	2.7
More than one family unit	3.0	4.0
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Children refers to those of any age.

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.6**  
Number of persons per square mile by County, 1971

Less than 50	50-75	75-100	100-200	200 +
Leitrim 48	Mayo 53 Roscommon 56 Donegal 58 Clare 61 Kerry 62 Galway 65 Offaly 67 Laoighis 68 Longford 70 Tipperary (NR) 71 Cavan 72 Sligo 73	Kilkenny 77 Meath 79 Tipperary (SR) 79 Westmeath 79 Wicklow 85 Monaghan 93 Wexford 95 Carlow 99	Waterford 109 Kildare 110 Limerick 135 Cork 123	Louth 237 Dublin 2,395

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.7**  
Percentage change in farmers by farm size category, 1961-1971

Acres	Males			Number in 1971
	1961-66	1966-71	1961-71	
0-15	-5.4	-20.5	-24.9	18,311
15-30	-9.5	-13.2	-21.5	36,103
30-50	+0.1	-8.2	-8.1	43,072
	-4.8	-12.6	-16.8	97,486
50-100	+5.5	-2.1	+3.3	42,933
100-200	-0.7	+1.5	+0.8	17,152
200 +	-6.7	-2.0	-8.6	4,280
	+3.0	-1.2	+1.8	64,365
Area not stated	+5.5	+48.4	+56.6	1,129
Total	-2.5	-2.1	-10.1	162,980

Acres	Females			Number in 1971
	1961-66	1966-71	1961-71	
0-15	-16.3	-20.7	-33.7	4,051
15-30	-23.3	-18.3	-37.3	4,820
30-50	-21.3	-19.1	-36.3	4,148
	-20.7	-19.3	-35.9	13,019
50-100	-17.9	-21.4	-35.5	3,620
100-200	-25.3	-17.7	-38.5	1,536
200 +	-23.3	-23.1	-41.1	399
	-25.0	-20.6	-36.8	5,555
	+25.0	+62.2	+102.8	73
Total	-20.5	-19.5	-36.0	18,647

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.8**

**Percentage distribution of male farmers by farm size category and age group, 1971**

Acres	Age Group						Total
	< 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	
0-15	2.2	5.1	11.8	20.3	29.2	31.4	100.0
15-30	1.9	6.1	13.8	22.7	28.1	27.4	100.0
30-50	1.9	8.0	17.1	25.3	25.7	21.9	100.0
	2.0	6.8	14.9	23.4	27.3	25.7	100.0
50-100	1.9	9.4	19.9	26.1	24.1	18.5	100.0
100 +	2.1	9.8	20.9	26.1	23.5	17.6	100.0
	1.9	9.6	20.2	26.1	23.9	18.2	100.0
Area not stated	4.1	11.9	16.6	21.7	22.7	23.0	100.0
Total	2.0	7.9	17.0	24.5	25.9	22.7	100.0

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.9**

**Percentage of unmarried male farmers in each age group by farm size category, 1971**

Acres	Age Group						Total
	< 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	
0-15	2.1	3.2	6.1	9.5	11.2	10.3	42.2
15-30	1.8	3.7	6.7	9.7	10.2	8.1	40.2
30-50	1.8	4.4	7.3	9.2	7.5	5.5	35.6
	1.9	3.9	6.9	9.4	9.2	7.4	38.6
50-100	1.8	4.5	6.7	7.5	5.8	4.1	30.3
100 +	1.9	3.6	5.3	5.7	4.6	3.6	24.8
	1.8	4.2	6.2	6.9	5.4	3.9	28.5
Area not stated	3.4	5.8	8.5	12.7	9.7	11.0	50.9
Total	1.9	4.0	6.6	8.4	7.7	6.1	34.7

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.10**

**Percentage change in farmers' relatives by farm size category, 1961-71**

Acres	Males			
	1961-66	1966-71	1961-71	Number in 1971
0-15	-29.7	-53.8	-67.6	3,220
15-30	-31.7	-43.7	-61.6	7,724
30-50	-22.3	-38.7	-52.4	11,567
	-27.1	-43.1	-58.5	22,511
50-100	-15.5	-30.8	-41.6	15,155
100-200	-19.6	-23.6	-38.5	7,437
200 +	-23.3	-27.6	-44.5	1,723
	-17.3	-28.5	-41.0	24,315
Area not stated	+81.3	-43.8	+1.9	163
Total	-16.9	-28.7	-40.7	46,989

Acres	Females			
	1961-66	1966-71	1961-71	Number in 1971
0-15	-26.8	-43.7	-58.8	526
15-30	-32.3	-37.2	-57.5	1,076
30-50	-26.3	-37.6	-54.0	1,452
	-28.5	-38.6	-56.2	3,054
50-100	-20.2	-34.0	-47.4	1,831
100-200	-21.5	-30.4	-45.4	859
200 +	-35.6	-26.6	-52.7	174
	-21.7	-32.5	-47.1	2,864
Area not stated	+88.9	-68.2	-22.2	14
Total	-25.3	-36.0	-52.2	5,932

Source: Census of Population.

**TABLE A.11**

**Average annual inflow of new male entrants\* into family farming and percentage distribution by farm size category, 1961-66 and 1966-71**

Acres	1961-66		1966-71	
	Average Annual Inflow	%	Average Annual Inflow	%
0-15	384	11.0	154	8.1
15-30	700	20.1	325	17.1
30-50	895	25.7	457	24.0
	1,979	56.8	936	49.2
50-100	952	27.4	603	31.6
100 +	540	15.5	361	19.0
	1,492	42.9	964	50.6
Area not stated	8	0.3	6	0.2
Total	3,479	100.0	1,906	100.0

\*Those aged 15-19 in 1966 and 1971.

Source: Census of Population.

## APPENDIX B

### Farm Retirement Scheme

The Farm Retirement Scheme operated by the Department of Lands enables farmers who are either unable to continue farming or who wish to retire from active farming to retire with the help of special financial aids. The main features of the scheme are:

- (i) *Eligible participants.* Farmers whose main occupation is farming i.e., those who have owned or occupied and worked the holding for at least five years prior to making an application for participation in the scheme. In the case of a widow, farming must have become her main occupation through the death of her husband and either she or she and her deceased husband between them must have worked in agriculture on the holding for at least the five years prior to her application.
- (ii) *Size of Holding.* There is a limit of 45 adjusted acres (45 acres of good all-purpose agricultural land or the equivalent in land of mixed quality) on the size of holding which can qualify. This limit may be exceeded in certain circumstances by the Land Commission e.g., where land is required to meet the needs of development farmers in a locality and where no suitable land under 45 acres is available. There is no limit where the holding is owned by a widow or by a disabled farmer.
- (iii) *Conditions to be Satisfied.* In order to qualify for the benefits of the scheme an applicant must sell his/her holding or lease it for a minimum period of twelve years to a farmer(s) whose approved development plan under the Farm Modernisation Scheme provides for the acquisition of additional land. The sale or lease will be subject to the prior approval of the Land Commission. Alternatively, the owner may sell the holding directly to the Land Commission.

- (iv) *Financial Incentives.* These will vary depending on whether the applicant is under or over 55 years of age. For those under 55 years of age a premium of 10% of the purchase price subject to a maximum of £1,500 or twice the annual lease rent subject to a maximum of £3,000 is payable. Those over 55 years of age receive the same premium and in addition receive a life annuity of £600 for a married applicant and £400 for a single person, widow or widower. Where a married applicant in receipt of an annuity dies, the surviving spouse will be entitled to an annuity of £400.

### Estimated Land Available

It is possible to make some estimates of the amount of land potentially available through the Retirement Scheme. These estimates are based on the number, age and marital status of farmers in the 1971 Census of Population. Two estimates are given here:

- (i) amount of land held by all farmers eligible to obtain maximum benefits under the scheme i.e., male farmers aged 55 and over and with holdings of less than 50 acres, widows on all farm sizes and other female farmers aged 55 and over with holdings under 50 acres. This would constitute the likely maximum amount of land to be surrendered under the scheme and is estimated to be over 2 million acres (Table B.1.).
- (ii) a more realistic minimum estimate is based on the assumption that only unmarried male and female farmers over 55 years of age would participate. To this is added only half the amount of land held by widows on farms of less than 50 acres. In this estimate all married farmers both male and female are excluded because of the possibility of them having direct heirs to the land and only a proportion of land held by widows is included for the same reason. An estimated half million acres is involved here (Table B.2).

**TABLE B.1**

**Estimated maximum acreage of land held in 1971 by farmers eligible to obtain full benefits from Retirement Scheme**

Acreage	Number in 1971	Estimated average acreage per farm*	Estimated total acreage
<i>Male farmers aged 55 and over</i>			
0-15	11,105	10.8	119,934
15-30	20,034	22.2	444,755
30-50	20,508	39.3	805,964
			1,370,653
<i>Widows</i>			
0-15	2,574	10.8	27,799
15-30	3,126	22.2	69,397
30-50	2,730	39.3	107,289
50-100	2,436	69.4	169,058
100-200	1,088	137.5	149,600
200+	270	303.8	82,026
			605,169
<i>Married and single female farmers aged 55 and over</i>			
0-15	1,023	10.8	11,048
15-30	1,104	22.2	24,509
30-50	888	39.3	34,898
			70,455
			2,046,277

\*Average acreage in each farm size category obtained from Farm Management Survey, An Foras Talúntais.

**TABLE B.2**

**Amount of land held by single farmers (male and female) aged 55 and over or holdings of less than 50 acres in 1971 together with half of land held by widows on farms of less than 50 acres**

Acreage	Number in 1971	Estimated average acreage per farm*	Estimated total acreage
<i>Single male farmers aged 55 and over</i>			
0-15	3,925	10.8	42,390
15-30	6,603	22.2	146,587
30-50	5,590	39.3	219,687
			408,664
<i>Single female farmers aged 55 and over</i>			
0-15	878	10.8	9,482
15-30	903	22.2	20,047
30-50	699	39.3	27,471
			57,000
<i>Half of land held by widows with less than 50 acres</i>			
			102,243
			567,907

\*Average acreage in each farm size category obtained from Farm Management Survey, An Foras Talúntais.



## APPENDIX C

TABLE C.1

Distribution of farms by family farm income per farm in each Province, 1974

Income (£)	Connaught	Leinster	Munster	Ulster	State
Less than £0	5.5	5.7	3.0	15.3	6.0
£0-249	17.4	18.8	10.0	27.4	16.8
£250-499	23.0	12.6	14.0	13.0	16.6
£500-999	35.5	18.9	21.2	25.1	25.7
£1,000-1,999	14.3	21.8	23.2	14.4	18.8
£2,000-2,999	3.4	8.8	13.0	3.1	7.5
£3,000-3,999	0.8	4.2	6.4	1.1	3.3
£4,000-4,999	0.2	3.7	3.8	0.0	2.1
£5,000 +	0.0	5.5	5.7	0.5	3.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Farm Management Survey (1974), An Foras Talúntais.

## APPENDIX D

TABLE D.1

Percentage of the population covered by medical cards in each Health Board area and county, December 1975\*

<b>Eastern</b> .. .. .	22.3	<b>North Western</b> .. .. .	60.4
Dublin .. .. .	20.9	Donegal .. .. .	65.1
Wicklow .. .. .	31.1	Leitrim .. .. .	57.7
Kildare .. .. .	29.8	Sligo .. .. .	51.7
<b>Midland</b> .. .. .	45.1	<b>South Eastern</b> .. .. .	41.8
Longford .. .. .	52.9	Carlow .. .. .	48.8
Westmeath .. .. .	42.6	Kilkenny .. .. .	41.5
Offaly .. .. .	45.5	Tipperary (SR) .. .. .	42.7
Laois .. .. .	42.9	Waterford .. .. .	35.4
		Wexford .. .. .	44.3
<b>Mid Western</b> .. .. .	37.0	<b>Southern</b> .. .. .	36.7
Clare .. .. .	37.8	Cork .. .. .	32.6
Limerick .. .. .	38.4	Kerry .. .. .	49.9
Tipperary (NR) .. .. .	32.3		
		<b>Western</b> .. .. .	61.3
<b>North Eastern</b> .. .. .	42.5	Galway .. .. .	57.4
Cavan .. .. .	51.6	Mayo .. .. .	69.1
Louth .. .. .	33.9	Roscommon .. .. .	56.5
Meath .. .. .	39.3		
Monaghan .. .. .	52.3	<b>Total</b> .. .. .	37.2

\*Number of persons covered by medical cards on 31/12/1975 and percentages are based on population figures from Census of 1971.

Source: Census of Population, 1971, Department of Health Statistics, 1976.

**TABLE D.2**

**Number of home helps, organisers and beneficiaries in the Home Help Service, 31/3/1974 and 31/12/1975**

	31/3/1974	31/12/1974
<b>Home helps</b>		
(i) Number employed by Health Boards		
Full-time	25	45
Part-time	1,979	3,105
(ii) Number employed by Voluntary Agencies		
Full-time	31	52
Part-time	1,009	1,532
<b>Organisers</b>		
Number employed by Voluntary Agencies		
Full-time	7	18
Part-time	16	14
<b>Beneficiaries</b>		
(i) Families in stress situations	303	305
(ii) Elderly	2,924	4,675
(iii) Others*	452	583

\*Mainly the chronically ill, mentally retarded, blind and ex-hospital cases.  
 Source: Department of Health Statistics.

**APPENDIX E**

**TABLE E.1**

**Estimated percentage distribution for selected categories of Family Farm Income per £1 Poor Law Valuation by farm size in Western Counties, 1974**

Acres	FFI per £1 P.L.V.										=>	100	
	<5	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-100	100-1000			
5-10	27.8	.0	5.5	11.1	.0	11.1	11.1	.0	11.1	.0	11.1	22.2	100.0
10-15	11.1	.0	11.1	5.5	11.1	5.5	5.5	11.1	16.7	11.1	5.5	22.2	100.0
15-30	6.7	1.9	5.8	10.6	12.5	12.5	8.7	5.8	19.2	11.3	5.8	16.3	100.0
30-50	5.6	2.8	5.8	11.3	15.5	10.6	8.4	9.9	11.3	11.6	9.9	19.0	100.0
50-100	6.1	2.3	6.9	8.5	13.8	16.7	5.4	10.8	11.5	11.1	8.3	21.5	100.0
100-150	2.8	2.8	5.6	16.7	16.7	16.7	11.1	8.3	11.1	11.1	8.3	100.0	100.0
150-200	5.5	.0	16.6	.0	11.1	.0	5.5	5.5	16.6	16.6	38.9	100.0	100.0
200-300	7.6	15.3	7.6	7.6	15.3	7.6	.0	.0	7.6	7.6	30.8	100.0	100.0
300 +	.0	.0	25.0	.0	.0	.0	16.6	25.0	16.6	16.6	16.6	100.0	100.0
All Farm Sizes	9.1	1.9	6.7	9.9	11.9	11.1	8.1	7.6	14.6	19.2	14.6	100.0	100.0

Source: Farm Management Survey, An Foras Talúntais.

## NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1. Report on the economy in 1973 and the prospects for 1974	April 1974
2. Comments on Capital Taxation Proposals	July 1974
3. The Economy in 1974 and Outlook for 1975	Nov. 1974
4. Regional Policy in Ireland: A Review	Jan. 1975
5. Population and Employment Projections: 1971-86	Feb. 1975
6. Comments on the OECD Report on Manpower Policy in Ireland	July 1975
7. Jobs and Living Standards: Projections and Implications	June 1975
8. An Approach to Social Policy	June 1975
9. Report on Inflation	June 1975
10. Causes and effects of inflation in Ireland	Oct. 1975
11. Income Distribution: A Preliminary Report	Sept. 1975
12. Educational Expenditure in Ireland	Jan. 1976
13. Economy in 1975 and Prospects for 1976	Oct. 1975
14. Population Projections 1971-86: The Implications for Social Planning—Dwelling Needs	Feb. 1976
15. The Taxation of Farming Profits	Feb. 1976
16. Some Aspects of Finance for Owner-Occupied Housing	June 1976
17. Statistics for Social Policy	
18. Population Projections 1971-86: The Implications for Education	

№ 115779. 2,000. 6/76. Cah. III. (6877). Spl.