

MEN LET GO

Public Housing Scheme

STATEMENT BY CITY MANAGER

THE City Manager (Mr. M. Macken, B.A.) gave his reasons for dismissing a number of skilled workers on the Ballynanty Housing Scheme at the meeting of the Corporation on Monday night, the Mayor (Mr. G. B. Dillon) presiding.

Mr. G. E. Russell asked the Manager if he was satisfied, in view of the great shortage of skilled workmen, that when the time came for re-employing the men who had been laid off recently from Ballynanty it would be possible to get them back again. He felt, in view of the very large building schemes which would be initiated next year, there was now a danger that the Ballynanty Scheme would be left in serious jeopardy.

DUE TO FAILING LIGHT.

Mr. C. Stenson, B.E. (City Engineer), said there was no guarantee that the men who had been laid off would be available next spring. It was owing to the failing light that it became necessary to let a number of men go, but the Corporation had made as much progress as was possible with the scheme.

Mr. P. Cusack—Letting these men go was a proper rebuff to the Minister for Local Government, who only a few days previously had appealed to skilled tradesmen to come back from England. It was a regular bombshell when it happened.

Mr. J. Connerly said a letter published in the newspapers implied that some of the men let go had only been kept on originally out of charity, although Limerick tradesmen were amongst the best in the country.

Replying, the Manager said that he first wished the Council to understand that Ballynantybeg housing project was not a relief scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to speed up the housing drive in Limerick and not primarily to absorb people into employment. The Corporation was given to understand by the Minister and by the members that they would have the same rights as any ordinary contractor, otherwise there was no point in a direct labour scheme.

WHY THEY WERE LAID OFF.

The men in question, both skilled and unskilled, were laid off because there was no work for them that could be provided with reasonable economy. It was a fact that some of them were old men, who during dry weather could be employed with reasonable efficiency. A huge number of men were employed during the summer with the idea of getting the maximum amount of work done and excellent progress was made. It was because of fine organisation that they were able to keep so many employed at the present time, and if the men discharged had been retained the time would come when the great majority would have had to be laid off until the spring.

The Manager went on to say that the cost of housing had skyrocketed, and if they were to retain men on the basis of a relief scheme the total cost would be enormous.

FIRE BRIGADE

A Bigger Staff

ACTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THE question of augmenting the staff of the City Fire Brigade was discussed at the meeting of the Corporation on Monday night, the Mayor (Mr. G. B. Dillon) presiding.

The Manager (Mr. M. Macken) said he had an application from the Chief Officer (Mr. G. O'Kelly, B.E.) asking that substantial increases be made in the personnel of the City Fire Brigade. Major Comerford, the Department's Adviser, in a report, also stated that the existing staff should be increased. Mr. O'Kelly had reported to him that the increase could not be less than three men. Such an addition to the staff would cost £1,000 per year.

Mr. Donnellan—What is the present strength of the Fire Brigade?

Manager—Sixteen men, including the Chief Officer and Second Officer.

Ald. Reidy, T.D.—What was the strength before the re-organisation of a few years ago?

ROTATIONAL SYSTEM.

Manager—Eight, but since the re-organisation there is a rotational system of duties of 24 hours on and 24 hours off. This applies to all fire brigades throughout the country.

Ald. Reidy said it was easy enough to provide extra staff, but it would be a different story next March when it came to the striking of the rates. There was a general outcry in the country against the increase in rates, and facing up to the facts of the situation, the sum of £1,000 entailed an increase of 2½d. in the £. The Council must cut its cloth according to its measure, and he proposed that the matter be deferred to the estimates.

Mr. P. Cusack seconded.

The Manager pointed out that, according to the Department's letter, the expenditure did not stop at £1,000, because it was suggested that the present Merryweather engine be replaced.

Ald. Reidy said that all recent fires had been most expeditiously dealt with, and he had seen nothing but praise for the work of the staff in the newspapers and elsewhere.

Mr. P. Whelan said if the city wanted an efficient service it must be prepared to pay for it.

Mr. P. O'Connell agreed and said the Chief Officer had gone into the matter carefully. If a disastrous fire occurred the people would ask questions as to why there was not an efficient Brigade. He proposed that the recommendations contained in the report be adopted.

Mr. Whelan seconded.

STATEMENT BY FIRE CHIEF.

Mr. G. O'Kelly, Chief Fire Officer, said that at present there was a reasonable chance of controlling fires if they were got in time. On a few occasions recently, however, another quarter of an hour would have proved very serious. There was also the risk of the loss of life, and since five firemen were required to handle the fire escape he did not think they should take the chance of losing even one life because of under-staffing. The Brigade was definitely under-staffed at the moment, as they could not spare five men for the escape equipment.

BOY'S DEATH

Inquest Opened

ADJOURNMENT GRANTED

THE tragic death at Ballycummin, Mungret, on last Saturday evening of Thomas Henry Foster (16½), 60 Henry Street, Limerick, was the subject of an inquest which was opened by Dr. R. M. Clery, Coroner for East Limerick, in Barrington's Hospital on Monday evening.

Only formal evidence was given, and the inquest was adjourned on the application of Supt. J. J. Cooney, who conducted the proceedings.

Mr. M. J. K. Dore, solr., Newcastle West, appeared for the next of kin of the deceased.

The first witness was Thomas W. Foster, father of the deceased boy. He said his son was 16½ years old. He saw his son at about 2 p.m. on Saturday, 26th November, when he was then in his usual good health. He said he was going out cycling.

VERY HEALTHY BOY.

Superintendent—Was he in good physical health?—He was a very healthy boy.

Continuing, witness said that at about 7 p.m. on the evening in question a Guard called to his house, and as a result witness went to Ballycummin, where he saw the body of his son lying on the road. He later saw the body in the mortuary at Barrington's Hospital and identified it.

Superintendent—How long was your son cycling?—Since he was about seven years.

Was it his own bicycle he was using on this occasion?—Yes.

How long had he got it?—Only a matter of months. It was a new bicycle.

Dr. Anthony J. Keane, House Surgeon, Barrington's Hospital, stated that when deceased was admitted on Saturday night he was dead. He performed a post-mortem examination on November 27th and found on superficial examination of the head and neck there were multiple abrasions on both sides of the face and forehead. There was a lacerated wound 2 inches in length over the right frontal skull bone.

Further examination disclosed multiple fractures of the right frontal bone, some of which were compound. There were compound fractures of the jaw bone. Death, in his opinion, was due to shock and haemorrhage, caused by laceration of the brain and multiple fractures of the skull. Death was instantaneous.

Supt. Cooney—Would the injuries be consistent with being struck by a car?—Yes.

ADJOURNED.

Supt. Cooney then said he did not propose to offer any further evidence. A man had been charged with causing the death of the deceased, and he was applying for an adjournment.

The Coroner granted the adjournment, and said he wished to sympathise with the father and mother of the deceased. The case was a very sad one.

The foreman and jury, with Supt. Cooney, joined in the expression of sympathy.

The Coroner also expressed appreciation of the action of Mr. Dore in removing the remains to the hospital.

ROAD REPAIRS

Motions Before Co. Council

MATTERS REFERRED TO ENGINEER

MR. P. T. McCARTHY had nine motions for repairs to roads in his area before Limerick Co. Council's fortnightly meeting on Saturday.

Mr. McCarthy's motions asked the Council to sanction expenditure for repairing roads at Mountmahon, Knocknasna, Knockbrack, Athea, Beenaneasbuig, Secongias, Priest's Caves, all in the Abbeyfeale district. He also required that the road from Knocknasna-Cratloe road to the Abbeyfeale-Athea road, passing by the footbridge over the Oolagh River, be declared a public road, and that the footbridge at Knocknasna be replaced by a road bridge.

When the motions came before the Council—they were contained in the third item on the agenda—Mr. McCarthy was not present.

CHAIRMAN'S SUGGESTION.

The Chairman (Mr. J. W. Canty) suggested that all the motions be referred to the County Engineer.

Mr. J. J. McNamara—It is ridiculous to have one member coming in here before one meeting with nine motions.

Chairman—Every road in the parish and everyone near it must be included here.

Mr. J. Mackey said that every county road in Limerick had been neglected for years. It was time something was done about them. It is very hard to blame Mr. McCarthy. Mr. McNamara is getting up here meeting after meeting suggesting that county roads should be repaired. Sure we all know the water tables on our county roads were not cleaned for five years.

Chairman—Indeed, they must have been cleaned this very year. They were cleaned in my area any way.

Mr. Mackey—Not in mine. It isn't fair for any member to criticise Mr. McCarthy. He is doing his duty. The people are in a very bad humour at the moment about the way the county roads are kept.

Chairman—We will leave all these notices of motion to the County Engineer.

COONAGH AND KNOCKEA ROADS.

Mr. P. Clohessy said that while on the subject of roads he should mention the condition of two, one at Coonagh and one at Knockea. The Coonagh road was half done and abandoned.

The Engineer (Mr. M. G. Aherne) said he would look into the condition of both roads.

Mr. McCarthy arrived at this stage and moved his motions. He said that doctors and priests had broken their car springs on all the roads mentioned.

Mr. Mackey—Yerra is it for the priests and doctors you are out now? In that case, I withdraw what I said in your favour earlier on (laughter).

After some further discussion, it was unanimously decided to refer

HIDES SHORTAGE