

WEST DONEGAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Part 3—Economic, Demographic and Sociological Aspects

An Foras Talúntais



WEST DONEGAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Part 3—Economic, Demographic and Sociological Aspects

Published by An Foras Taluntais, 33 Merrion Road, Dublin 4

Price: 10/-

May 1969

FOREWORD

The continuing decline in population and the various physical, economic and social problems that beset many of our western counties have concerned people at all levels for more than a century. Various studies of the problems have been conducted from time to time, remedies have been proposed and solutions sought and different approaches have been tried. Considerable national effort and finances are being devoted in various ways in an attempt to overcome the problems but these areas are still largely underdeveloped. The economic, social and cultural well-being of the people of these areas and of the entire nation stands to benefit from any development that can be achieved. Some of the most adverse conditions obtaining in the whole western region of Ireland are those to be found in West Donegal—an area poorly endowed in physical resources and reflecting all the ills of a high rate of emigration, an adverse population structure, an underdeveloped agriculture, low income levels and several other rural problems.

Against this background, the Council of An Foras Taluntais decided that the complex situation prevailing in West Donegal should be examined and appraised in a systematic, scientific manner and, having thoroughly analysed the findings and within the context of modern knowledge and techniques, some models for the agricultural development of the area should be established.

While there was a certain background of experience and information on such problems as emigration and farm resources and income this knowledge was of a general nature, the position in this respect being akin to that for many other areas of the country. There was no precise or co-ordinated information on such matters as the nature, distribution and the best use of different types of land, on present and potential levels of productivity, on norms for grassland output and animal production, on farm incomes, on educational levels or on the social background in the local farming community.

It was felt then that the way in which we, as an agricultural research organisation, could best contribute would be through a comprehensive survey of the agricultural resources of the area. Of course, agricultural improvement is only one of the means of improving living standards in the area. No matter how well developed, agriculture can only support a proportion of the population. Development in agriculture must go along with expansion in tourism, fishing, industry and other enterprises. The findings of the survey, then, will be used not only as a basis for agricultural development but will also be correlated with those of surveys by other organisations in an effort to create an integrated programme of community and general area development.

The carrying out of a sufficiently comprehensive resource survey presented a formidable task demanding the collective efforts of people in a wide variety of disciplines covering the physical, economic and human behavioural aspects. The experience gained on methodology and organisation in the course of a previous resource survey of West Cork was of great value. The report of the present survey will go further than that of West Cork by preparing working plans or operational models, within current economic considerations which would form the basis of the future agricultural develop-

ment of West Donegal and of areas with similar problems in the West of Ireland. Surveys such as this are a prerequisite for optimum use of land resources within a framework of economic and social development. While we appreciate that the knowledge provided in the Survey Report is in certain respects incomplete, the primary objectives of the survey in providing a blueprint for the development of the land and the betterment of the people using the land have been largely achieved. It is hoped that the information provided will serve its purpose as a basis for guiding developments towards the future well-being of the entire community.

It is a pleasure to be associated with the highly merited acknowledgement given below to those within An Foras Taluntais and the many outside who co-operated with us in this project. Finally, may I commend the efforts of the Working Party who embarked on and completed this task with such dedication and enthusiasm.

T. Walsh,

Director.

PREFACE

The more pronounced rural problems in Ireland are to be found in the western counties. However, the western region is far from homogeneous in the quality of its resources and far from uniform in its rural problems. West Donegal is amongst the most poorly endowed areas in physical resources and one of the most extreme in rural problems.

In order to make a thorough, scientific and systematic appraisal of the situation in West Donegal a comprehensive resource survey was undertaken by An Foras Taluntais (The Agricultural Institute). The survey commenced in 1965 and the field investigations were generally completed by the end of 1967. A Working Party drawn from research staff of the Soils, Plant Sciences, Horticulture and Forestry, Animal Sciences, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Rural Economy Divisions of the Institute was primarily responsible for the survey. Co-operating agencies at State and local level included: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Lands, Department of Social Welfare, Roinn na Gaeltachta, Central Statistics Office, Meteorological Office, Geological Survey, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Gaeltarra Eireann, An Foras Forbartha, Co. Donegal Agricultural Advisory Services, Irish Sugar Company (Errigal Co-op.), Bord na Mona and Muintir na Tire and other non-statutory bodies. While the main onus for the operation of the resource survey has rested on the working party they in turn have been able to draw on the research resources of the Institute as a whole and to consult the State bodies and personnel engaged in the area and other outside specialists.

The procedure followed in conducting this survey was based largely on experience with a similar type survey of West Cork some years previously. Most of the findings were derived by five methods:

- (a) complete surveys in the field, *e.g.*, soils, ecology, animal diseases;
- (b) farm surveys on a random selection of different-sized farms in the area;
- (c) field experiments, *e.g.*, crop productivity—grassland, horticulture;
- (d) questionnaires to farmers, local groups and others;
- (e) use of existing knowledge on the area, *e.g.*, climatic records, population and other statistics.

With the emphasis on compiling factual information on the physical, economic and social factors of production as a basis for decision-making and planning and with the lack or inadequacy of such information on many facets, survey and experimental projects were necessary. These research procedures were aimed at getting the answers to local problems in their local environment. During the survey the need for further research, mostly of a long-term nature, into certain aspects was brought to light.

The principal aims of the survey were:

1. to provide basic, factual information in a systematic manner on the physical, human and economic resources of this underdeveloped area;
2. to ascertain to what extent and by what means the area can provide a good living for a more stable population through agricultural development.

The Resource Survey was confined to the Glenties Rural District of West Donegal.

The area comprises approximately 411 square miles (263,000 acres). The Atlantic Ocean forms the southern and western boundaries of the region. The coastline is rugged and deeply indented in places. Some islands occur off the coast; of these Aran Island is by far the biggest. The area has a number of small towns and villages, the most important being Killybegs, Glenties, Ardara and Dunglow.

The findings of the West Donegal Resource Survey are published in four parts covering broadly different aspects of the Survey findings:

Part I —Soils and Other Physical Resources.

Part II —Some Aspects of Production—Crops, Livestock and Fisheries.

Part III—Economic, Demographic and Sociological Aspects.

Part IV—Summary, Conclusions and Some Development Proposals for Agriculture.

For their co-operation and assistance in the work reported here the West Donegal Resource Survey Working Party is grateful to the County Agricultural and Horticultural Advisory Officers and in particular Mr. D. O'Donnell, C.A.O.; Rev. Fr. J. McDyer, Glencolumbkille; Mr. P. Bolger, County Development Officer, to the local school managers, to the engineering staff of the County Council, to the North-western Regional Tourism Organisation and especially Mr. E. Hoy and to the personnel of the local transport companies.

Special thanks are due to the local people and particularly to the farmers who facilitated the different surveys carried out in the area and without whose co-operation the Resource Survey would not have been possible. Here also the excellent support of the various non-statutory rural organisations in the area is acknowledged.

Grateful acknowledgment is also due to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (particularly Dr. H. Spain, Chief Inspector), to the Land Commission, Department of Lands (particularly Mr. T. O'Sullivan, Commissioner), to the Department of Social Welfare (particularly to Mr. P. McHale), to Roinn na Gaeltachta (particularly An t-Uasal S. O Raghallaigh), to the Director, Central Statistics Office and to Mr. J. Sexton of that office, to An Foras Forbartha, Gaeltarra Eireann and Bord na Mona.

The Working Party appreciates the continued interest, stimulation and guidance of the Director, Dr. T. Walsh, and the excellent collaboration of fellow research workers in An Foras Taluntais, not only those making direct contributions but also those who conducted surveys and gave help in other ways. In this regard particular thanks are due to Mr. M. Brannick, and other colleagues in the Rural Economy Division who conducted the farm surveys and to those in the same Division who processed the findings. Finally thanks are due to those who assisted in the preparation of the report and especially Mr. B. Gilsenan for his editorial work, Mr. T. Kendrick for drawings, Miss A. Davin for typing facilities and Miss O. Daly for general help.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to all those mentioned here and to others who helped.

Pierce Ryan.

Chairman, Working Party.

An Foras Taluntais,
May, 1969.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Economic Background <i>Rosemary Fennell</i>	1
Economic Structure of Agriculture <i>F. Bradley</i>	5
Marketing <i>F. Bradley</i>	18
Some Features of the Commonage System	23
Demographic Conditions <i>P. Commins</i>	25
Sociological Aspects	
General Background <i>P. Commins</i>	47
1. Sociological conditions among farm families <i>P. Commins</i>	49
2. Social services <i>Kathleen Manning</i>	66
3. Voluntary community organisations <i>Maura Rafferty</i>	83
4. General discussion and conclusion <i>P. Commins</i>	97
Industry <i>Rosemary Fennell</i>	108
Retail Distribution <i>RosemaryFennell</i>	114
Tourism <i>Rosemary Fennell</i>	120
Transport <i>Rosemary Fennell</i>	124

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

by

ROSEMARY FENNELL*

Glenties Rural District comprises 263,050 acres, of which no less than 75 % was described as 'other land' in the 1965 Agricultural Enumeration. The category 'other land' is made up of woods, plantations, grazed and barren mountain, turf bog, marsh, water, roads and other non-agricultural land. Thus, by the very nature of the terrain, agriculture represents a minor use of land in the area.

LAND USE PATTERN

Pasture is by far the largest single use to which the agricultural land is devoted; this is followed in importance by meadow. Field crops by 1965 had been reduced to 853 acres of corn, of which all but 49 acres were under oats, and 1,623 acres of root and green crops, of which 1,381 acres were devoted to potatoes (Table 1). Vegetables in 1965 showed a significant increase over 1960 and represented half the area of vegetables in County Donegal (Table 2).

Glenties has never represented an important part of total agricultural output in Donegal and its percentage contribution has been falling in both corn, and root and green crops. Glenties has a disproportionate share of 'other land' compared with the county (Table 2).

LIVESTOCK PATTERN

The livestock picture is similar in many respects to that for crops and pasture. There has been a steady decline in cattle numbers and in the proportion which Glenties represents of the Donegal total (Table 3). In the case of horses, cows and sheep 1965 produced a rise in the Glenties percentage of the county, thus running counter to the earlier returns. The position is not quite the same in terms of absolute numbers. Whereas sheep numbers have been increasing since 1960 (Table 3) horses have declined steadily as have milch cows and heifers-in-calf in the 1949-1965 period. In the same period, cattle of 1 to 2 years have likewise declined but numbers in the under one and over 2-year-old categories have fluctuated. Pig numbers are small and show major fluctuations. Poultry have declined sharply in the area.

LABOUR FORCE IN FARMING

In 1960 there were 3,978 males engaged in farm work in Glenties, a figure which declined to 3,486 in 1965 (Table 4). By far the largest proportion were family members aged 18 years and over. Family members of 14 to 18 years of age, although numerically

*Agricultural Economics and Marketing Department, Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taluntais.

TABLE 1—Land use by major categories (acres), Glenties Rural District

Year	Oats	Total corn	Potatoes	Total root and green crops	Hay	Pasture	Other land	Total crops and pasture	Vegetables	Total area
1949	4,221	4,296	3,041	3,218	11,929	245,188		n.a.	n.a.	263,050
1955	2,604	2,651	2,902	3,094	14,611	242,682		n.a.	n.a.	263,050
1960	1,045	1,113	1,786	1,927	12,455	24,869 ¹	224,362	40,402	32	264,764
1965	804	853	1,381	1,623	12,863	49,834	197,871	65,179	170	263,050

Source: Agricultural Enumeration in stated years

¹A change in the method of computing pasture area was made in 1960

TABLE 2—Glenties proportion of Donegal acreage in various categories (%)

Year	Oats	Total corn	Potatoes	Total root and green crops	Hay	Pasture	Other land	Total crops and pasture	Vegetables	Total area
1949	6.5	6.4	10.3	8.3	20.0	24.0		n.a.	n.a.	22.0
1955	4.5	4.3	11.1	9.2	25.7	23.1		n.a.	n.a.	22.0
1960	2.1	2.0	6.8	6.1	20.4	10.0	28.2	10.2	13.7	22.2
1965	2.2	1.9	6.2	6.3	20.8	15.8	26.5	14.5	50.0	22.0

Source: Derived from Agricultural Enumeration in stated years

TABLE 3—Livestock in Glenties Rural District (1949 to 1965) and its percentage share of the Donegal total

		Horses	Milch cows & heifers-in- calf	Other Cattle				Other sheep			Pigs	Poultry	
				Over 2 years	1-2 years	Under 1 year	Total cattle ¹	Breeding sheep	Over 1 year	Under 1 year			Total sheep
Glenties	1949	831	8,438	2,916	4,555	6,195	22,147	21,228	8,392	17,099	46,719	168	126,661
	1955	790	8,222	2,648	4,046	5,493	20,447	21,181	7,763	16,642	45,586	707	111,701
	1960	419	6,878	2,711	3,627	4,833	18,074	26,092	7,913	18,125	52,130	61	78,060
	1965	212	6,654	2,171	3,262	5,028	17,141	29,356	8,240	19,653	57,249	135	51,572
% of Donegal county total	1949	5.3	17.3	8.9	13.2	17.0	14.5	28.1	36.5	29.1	29.7	2.2	10.5
	1955	7.2	17.5	8.0	11.5	15.0	13.4	19.5	30.8	19.5	20.8	6.4	12.2
	1960	5.9	13.6	7.5	9.6	12.3	11.0	16.7	21.1	15.6	16.8	4.6	12.0
	1965	6.0	14.8	6.8	8.1	11.1	9.9	19.6	31.9	17.0	19.7	6.2	10.4

Source: Agricultural Enumeration in stated years
¹Including bulls

declining, represented a larger percentage of the total in 1965 than in 1960. In both years this group was proportionately about twice as important in the Glenties Rural District as in Donegal as a whole (Table 4).

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS

There has been little change in the size distribution of holdings since 1960 (Table 5). The county as a whole has a more favourable distribution of sizes than Glenties but neither is particularly good. In Donegal there has been a decline in the number of holdings in each size group except the largest (over 100 acres) whereas in Glenties there was an increase not only in the largest but also in the smallest group (1 to 15 acres). It would be more meaningful to have figures relating to farms rather than to holdings, as a farmer may have more than one holding but has only one farm. However, such figures are unfortunately not available on a rural district basis.

TABLE 4—Farm labour force in Donegal county and Glenties Rural District (1960 and 1965)

		Males 14 to 18 years			Males 18 years & over			Total
		Family members	Other		Family members	Other		
			Perm.	Temp.		Perm.	Temp.	
Glenties	1960	447	2	29	3,352	29	119	3,978
	%	11.2	0.1	0.7	84.3	0.7	3.0	100.0
	1965	438	15	57	2,826	26	124	3,486
Donegal	%	12.6	0.4	1.6	81.1	0.7	3.6	100.0
	1960	1,702	111	172	17,226	1,246	1,790	22,247
	V	7.7	0.5	0.8	77.4	5.6	8.0	100.0
	1965	1,292	81	180	15,451	1,010	1,332	19,346
	%	6.7	0.4	0.9	79.9	5.2	6.9	100.0

Source: Agricultural Enumeration in stated years.

TABLE 5—Holdings by size group in county Donegal and Glenties Rural District (1960 and 1965)

		Size (acres)					Total
		1-15	15-30	30-50	50-100	100 and over	
Glenties	1960	2,380	817	543	441	317	4,498
	%	52.9	18.2	12.1	9.8	7.0	100.0
	1965	2,414	801	483	412	346	4,456
Donegal	%	54.2	18.0	10.8	9.2	7.8	100.0
	1960	8,402	4,714	3,179	2,768	1,620	20,683
	%	40.6	22.8	15.4	13.4	7.8	100.0
	1965	8,270	4,565	3,027	2,715	1,677	20,254
	%	40.8	22.5	14.9	13.4	8.3	100.0

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF AGRICULTURE

by
FRANK BRADLEY*

INTRODUCTION

A survey of the agricultural resources of West Donegal at farm level was carried out in 1965-66. For this purpose Farm Management Accounting data were collected from 249 farms. The survey was designed to provide information regarding farm output, farm income and general structure of agriculture in the region. The survey of 12 District Electoral Divisions within the Glenties Rural District (the survey area) provided sufficient information for a detailed analytical study and basic background knowledge for an agricultural development plan for the area. The survey was concerned primarily with the production aspects of West Donegal farming, but data were also collected on the marketing arrangements in the area.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

To assess the economic factors determining the levels of farm income and farm output a survey was made of a random sample of farms in the West Donegal region. Initially 480 farmers were canvassed, but for reasons such as sickness, absence from the farm and emigration, only 249 account books were returned for analysis. Some of these account books did not provide the necessary information to calculate, among other things, the gross margins and stocking rates of the farms in question. For this reason only 234 books were used in the final study.

There are six Dispensary Districts in the Glenties Rural District and in each of these there are between three and six District Electoral Divisions. Two Divisions were selected at random from each Dispensary District giving 12 District Electoral Divisions included in the survey. Within these Divisions farms were selected at random for each of the four farm-size categories, giving a total sample of 480. The size of the sample was determined primarily by the resources available to undertake the field work, having made allowance for the expected drop-out.

Each of the selected farmers was called upon on five occasions—the first visit took place at the beginning of June, 1965 (the opening date of the survey) and the final visit was in June 1966. The intervening visits were at regular intervals.

The 12 District Electoral Divisions surveyed were divided into three different categories according to their geographic position and physical environment. It was felt that this break-down of the survey area into regions of physically similar attributes might be of significance in comparing the findings for the different size farms and in

*Agricultural Economics and Marketing Dept., Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taluntais.

relating them to the area in general. The three categories are as follows: 1) **Mountain** (Graffy, Tievescheelta, Inniskeel, Crowkeeragh, Glencolumbkille and Glenleheen); 2) **Hill** (Ardara, Maas and Killybegs) and 3) **Poor lowland** (Rutland, Maghery and Lettermacaward).

During the survey year cattle and sheep were the two main enterprises in the area. All farms kept cattle. The herd in many cases consisted of two or three cows and their offspring. Some of the heifer calves are kept as replacements while the remainder and the young bullocks are sold off the farms as small stores. The average number of bovine livestock units per farm for the mountain, hill and poor lowland areas were 4.3, 6.7 and 3.6 respectively.

Sheep, on the other hand, were not kept on every farm. The average number of breeding ewes on those farms keeping sheep, all areas and all farm sizes taken together, was 29.4 (Table 17). Livestock unit equivalents of sheep for all farm sizes were, on average, 9.3 in the mountain area, 6.5 in the hill area and 3.2 on poor lowland farms. Most ewe lambs were kept as flock replacements while wethers were usually sold off as stores. Wool output provides a high proportion of the total output from sheep, often as much as 50 %.

FARM INCOME AND OUTPUT

Income

Family farm income: Table 1 shows the average income which accrued to farming families on different size farms in the survey year. Family farm income is the reward to all the family who work on the farm for their labour, management and capital invested. It is not personal income. Included in family farm income is the value of farm produce consumed by the farm household. Any inventory changes which may have occurred during the year are taken into account in the assessment. A large positive inventory change has the effect of increasing the value of family farm income.

TABLE 1—Average annual family farm income (£) and number of farms by size category in each area (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Family farm income				Number of farms			
	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	126	112	113	116	30	24	59	113
30-50	139	139	147 ¹	139	19	13	3	35
50-100	144	178	— ¹	152	35	13	—	48
100+	160	304	— ¹	183	32	6	—	38
Average for all farms	143	154	—	138	Total 116	56	62	234

¹ Insufficient information available.

The most outstanding feature of Table 1 is the very low family income in the survey area in 1965-66. Families with over 100 acres in the hill region had a farm income of just over £300. Under present circumstances it is obvious that people in the survey area do not attain an acceptable standard of living from farming.

Cash income: Cash income is the actual receipts accruing to the farm family as the result of transactions during the year. When the family farm income is so low, a good indicator of the economic position of a farm is the cash income derived from farming. If family farm incomes and cash incomes are both very low then it is clear that farming is practiced at subsistence or near subsistence levels. Cash incomes for the area are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2—Average annual family cash income (£) according to farm size category (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain	HU	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	—19	—10	34	11
30-50	—8	15	7	2
50-100	17	20	—	17
1 0 0 +	3 1	9 0	—	4 1
Average for all farms	7	13	—	16

Farms on average had £16 cash income from farming. Cash incomes are very low from all sizes of farm. Farms of over 100 acres in the hill region had the best cash income but even here this was less than £2 per week.

Home consumption: In the survey area many farm commodities are produced primarily for home consumption. The survey showed that few farms produced eggs, poultry or milk for sale. Potatoes are grown in nearly all cases and many farms produce small quantities of oats either for the household or as feed for livestock. Farm families in the survey consumed on average about £2 worth of home produced food each week in 1965/66 (Table 3).

TABLE 3—Average annual home consumption of farm produce per farm (£) according to size category (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	100	97	107	103
30-50	105	109	128	109
50-100	100	94	—	98
100+	107	107	—	107
Average for all farms	103	100	—	104

Output

For purposes of farm management'accounts, 'gross output' is defined as total sales off the farm less total purchases by the farm plus the net inventory change and the value of farm produce consumed in the home. Account must also be taken of any remuneration for hire-work.

Gross output: Gross output of the survey farms in 1965/66 amounted on average to £222 per farm (Table 4). By any criterion this output figure is very low. Output appears to be related fairly closely to farm size. The difference in average output between the under-30 acre farms and those over 100 acres in the mountain region was £79 and for the hill region £343. Variation was small on farms of under 30 acres but it was greater on the larger farms.

TABLE A—Average annual output per farm (£) according to size category (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	188	189	172	180
30-50	211	309	189	245
50-100	213	291	—	233
100+	267	532	—	309
Average for all farms	221	277	—	222

Output from cattle: In the survey area cattle form the most important single item of farm output amounting to 49 % of the total. Generally the larger the farm the greater the output. Only the over-100-acre group in the mountain region failed to conform to the general pattern (Table 5). In the 30 to 50-acre group in the hill region some farmers had relatively high cattle outputs.

TABLE 5—Average annual cattle output per farm (£) according to size category (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	84	95	88	88
30-50	90	189	100	128
50-100	HI	190	—	132
100+	101	410	—	150
Average for all farms	98	173	—	109

Table 5 shows that in particular the smaller farms on average do not generate a viable output under present circumstances. Cattle sales in the area usually consisted of small stores, calves and old cows. This meant that prices were normally very low. The average price for all cattle sold during the survey year was approximately £37 per head. This figure may not be very representative as there was a large number of farmers selling calves and old cows for very small sums.

Output from sheep: Sheep were not raised on every farm surveyed in 1965-66. In the northern part of the region, in particular, relatively few sheep are kept. Consequently the figures for sheep output are very low (Table 6) despite the fact that this area of

Donegal is moderately well suited to sheep production. On farms with a sheep enterprise just under 21 % of output was contributed by sheep. Sheep output on the poor lowland farms under 50 acres was almost nil.

TABLE 6—Average annual sheep output per farm (£) according to size category (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Both areas
0-30	45	24	36
30-50	56	68	59
50-100	40	53	41
100+	88	25	80
Average for all farms	59	44	54

The system of sheep farming in the area is one of upland grazing. The breeding flock is maintained by keeping most ewe lambs for replacement and old ewes and wethers are usually sold off the farms. During the survey year the average price per head received for sheep sold was just over £3. In some cases receipts from wool sales were quite substantial.

Expenses: In this section expenditure of a current nature is considered, no mention is made of any money spent on capital items which in most instances was negligible. Table 7 presents a breakdown of the current expenditure incurred on the survey farms in 1965/66.

TABLE 7—Annual expenditure—direct costs and overheads (£) (1965-66)

Size (acres)	Mountain			Hill			Poor lowland			All areas		
	Direct costs	Over-heads	Total exps.	Direct costs	Over-heads	Total exps.	Direct costs	Over-heads	Total exps.	Direct costs	Over-heads	Total exps.
0-30	52	11	63	49	18	67	45	14	59	48	14	62
30-50	60	12	72	112	52	164	43	20	63	78	27	105
50-100	57	16	73	84	27	111	—	—	—	61	19	80
100+	76	31	107	133	95	228	—	—	—	85	41	126
Average for all farms	60	18	78	81	36	117				61	21	82

In West Donegal, total expenditure is divided between direct costs and overheads in a ratio of approximately 73 to 27. Direct costs refer to expenditure on items such as seeds, feeds, fertilisers, hired machinery and casual labour. Expenditure on purchased feeds on average amounted to 35% of total expenses. In many cases the hire of machinery and casual labour constituted at least 10% of total direct costs.

On the survey farms overhead costs consist almost entirely of rent and rates. The relative uniformity of expenses can be explained by the low outlay on other current items. The absolute amounts spent are so low that it could be argued that there is insufficient investment in productive inputs to generate higher output and incomes. On the other hand it may be that incomes are too low to permit the necessary investment to take place. The breaking of this self-perpetuating process is one of the major difficulties facing farming in the area.

Overheads assume a greater proportion of total costs as the size of farm increases from the 0 to 30-acre to the over 100-acre size. In the mountain region overheads constitute only 17 % of total costs on farms under 30 acres, whereas on farms over 100 acres they constitute 30% of total costs.

PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY

Gross margins

The gross margin on a farm or particular enterprise is equal to gross output minus direct costs. Any expenditure in farming which can be allocated to a particular enterprise or activity is counted as a direct cost. The remaining costs which are allocated to the entire farm, such as rent, rates and machinery costs, must be regarded as overhead expenditure.

Average gross margins for the survey farms in West Donegal are presented in Table 8. The striking feature of this table is the performance of the farms in the hill area, and more particularly of the farms over 100 acres. As noted earlier (Tables 4 and 5) cattle production is generally the largest single enterprise. A study of Table 9 shows that cattle constitute a high proportion of the farm gross margin (Table 8), being just under one-third in the mountain area and over half in the hill area.

On average, cattle and sheep generated the same gross margin in the mountain area (Table 9) and there is no definite indication as to which was the more important enterprise. Here cattle on the 0 to 30 and 50 to 100-acre farms produced a greater gross margin than sheep but sheep produced the greater gross margin on the 30 to 50 and the over 100-acre farms. On all farm sizes in the hill area the average gross margins from cattle were much greater than those from sheep.

TABLE 8—Farm gross margin 1965-66 (£)

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30J	137	139	127	132
30-50J	151	204	146	171
50-100	160	208	—	179
100+	191	399	—	224
Average for all farms	161	198	—	162

Gross margin related to direct costs

To make the figure of gross margin for each holding or enterprise more meaningful it is necessary to relate it to some factor which is common to all cases in the area. Acreage would be a useful base factor but there is considerable difficulty in arriving

TABLE 9—Cattle and sheep gross margins, 1965-66 (£)

Size (acres)	Cattle				Sheep		
	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas	Mountain	Hill	Both areas
0-30	47	59	53	52	41	21	31
30-50	42	111	63	69	52	60	54
50-100	71	122	—	87	36	47	38
100+	47	307	—	88	78	22	71
Average for all farms	53	112	53	68	53	38	50

at a satisfactory base for comparing areas of land because of the varying incidence of good soils. In West Donegal, therefore, to relate the gross margin to direct costs might be a more meaningful measure of economic efficiency.

The average gross margin for each £1 of direct farm expenditure is shown in Table 10. The ratio of gross margin to direct costs does not vary widely. The farmers in the 30 to 50-acre group in the poor lowland area had the best returns. Relative to direct expenditure the farmers on the 30 to 50-acre holdings in the hill area had a very poor return.

TABLE 10—Farm gross margin (£) per £1 direct farm expenditure, 1965-66

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.8
30-50	2.5	1.8	3.4	2.2
50-100	3.0	2.5	—	2.8
100+	2.5	3.0	—	2.6
Average for all farms	2.7	2.4	—	2.6

TABLE 11—Gross margin (£) per £1 direct expenditure on cattle production, 1965-66

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Poor lowland	All areas
0-30	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.5
30-50	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.2
50-100	1.8	1.8	—	1.7
100+	0.9	3.0	—	1.4
Average for all farms	1.2	1.9		1.6

Table 11 shows the gross margin from cattle per £1 direct expenditure on cattle production. The average returns to the hill farmers were better than to the farmers in the other areas; only the 50 to 100-acre group in the mountain area had comparable returns.

Table 12 shows that the ratio of gross margin to direct expenditure for sheep is highest in the mountain area and best of all in the 30 to 50-acre group. In the hill area there is little difference in the ratio of gross margin to direct expenditure for the four size categories.

TABLE 12—Gross margin (£) per £1 direct expenditure on sheep production 1965-66

Size (acres)	Mountain	Hill	Both areas
0-30	9.4 (29) ¹	7.9 (15)	9.2 (23)
30-50	15.6 (25)	6.4 (29)	10.2 (26)
50-100	9.5 (27)	6.9 (25)	8.7 (27)
100	8.1 (43)	6.5 (18)	8.0 (40)
Average for all farms	9.3 (32)	6.8 (22)	8.8 (29)

¹ Figures in brackets are the average number of ewes per holding in each size group.

Comparison with other farm surveys

In most farm management studies in Ireland economic efficiency of farms is measured on an adjusted acreage basis. In West Donegal the collection of information on actual farm acreage proved very difficult because farmers did not know their exact acreage. An additional problem is that many of the farmers who have commonage rights do not avail of them. Therefore, no attempt was made to adjust farm acreage in this survey. However, the findings of the survey have been examined against those of previous surveys on similar type areas in the country in order to provide some form of yardstick. For this purpose comparisons were made with data for the North-West Region from the National Farm Survey—1955/56—1957/58 (compiled by the Central Statistics Office) and for the 'Poor Land Drystock System' from the 1963/64 Farm Management Survey (An Foras Taliintais). The comparison is set out in Tables 13 and 14. All figures were reduced to the 1953 base by using agricultural output and input indices published in the Irish Statistical Bulletins. General indices and indices for specific commodity groups were used.

For the sake of convenience, the 1965/66 West Donegal Farm Survey will be referred to as 'West Donegal': the data from the National Farm Survey as 'N.F.S. 1956*' and the data from the Farm Management Survey (An Foras Taliintais) as 'F.M.S.' A major drawback in these comparisons is that the F.M.S. 1963/64 data refer to adjusted and not to actual acreage. Nevertheless the comparison is intended to present a broad picture of West Donegal farming in relation to what are considered to be comparable areas.

In the case of the N.F.S. 1956, information on the smallest size-group refers to 5 to 30-acre farms and farms greater than 200 acres were not included as the number of these was considered to be too small for inclusion in the final report by the Central

TABLE 13—Economic efficiency per farm holding—for West Donegal, N.F.S. 1956 and F.M.S. 1963/64 (£)

Farm size	Under 30 acres			30-50 acres			50-100 acres			Over 100 acres			All sizes		
	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.
Total output	155	364	273	211	529	477	201	821	787	267	1,161	1,422	192	508	593
Cattle & sheep output	107	111	186	161	182	295	149	354	544	199	492	1,070	141	181	393
Total net exps.	64	120	113	108	211	204	82	321	411	130	680	765	86	197	287
Family farm income	91	244	160	103	318	273	119	500	376	137	481	657	106	311	306
Labour units employed	0.97	1.29	0.98	1.16	1.63	1.26	1.19	1.84	1.58	1.36	2.06	1.78	1.11	1.50	1.31
Total output per labour unit	186	282	279	211	325	379	195	446	498	227	564	799	201	339	453

Source: West Donegal Farm Survey 1965/66; National Farm Survey 1956; Farm Management Survey 1963/64. All figures reduced to 1953 base (1953 = 100)

TABLE 14—Economic efficiency per farm holding for West Donegal, N.F.S. 1956 and F.M.S. 1963/64

Farm size		Under 30 acres			30-50 acres			50-100 acres			Over 100 acres			All sizes		
		WcK Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.	West Donegal	N.F.S.	F.M.S.
Total output	Mountain	162			182			184			230			191		
	Hill	163	364	273	267	529	477	163	821	787	459	1,161	1,422	153	508	593
	Poor lowland	148			163			—			—			148		
Cattle and sheep output	Mountain	111			126			130			163			136		
	Hill	103	111	186	222	182	295	210	354	544	376	492	1,070	187	181	393
	Poor lowland	76			86			—			—			90		
Total net expenses	Mountain	64			74			71			110			80		
	Hill	70	120	113	169	211	204	114	321	411	235	680	765	120	197	287
	Poor lowland	61			65			—			—			61		
Family farm income	Mountain	98			108			113			120			111		
	Hill	93	244	160	98	318	273	49	500	376	370	481	657	33	311	306
	Poor lowland	87			98			—			—			87		
Labour units employed	Mountain	1	-10		1.13			1.21			1.38			1.23		
	Hill	0.80	1.29	0.98	1.25	1.63	1.26	1.17	1.84	1.58	1.24	2.06	1.78	1.04	1.50	1.31
	Poor lowland	0.98			0.87			—			—			0.98		
Total output per labour unit	Mountain	147			158			152			167			155		
	Hill	204	282	229	214	325	379	139	446	498	370	564	799	147	339	453
	Poor lowland	151			187			—			—			151		

Source. West Donegal Farm Survey 1965/66; National Farm Survey 1956; Farm Management Survey 1963/64. All figures reduced to 1953 base (1953 = 100)

Statistics Office. In general, the size of holding was an important determinant of output and farm income. In the case of the N.F.S. 1956 and the F.M.S. 1963/64 there is a strong association between size of holding and output and income levels. Output in West Donegal on farms under 30 acres was less than half that on the corresponding holdings of the N.F.S. and just over half that on the F.M.S. farms. The disparity is even greater on the larger holdings. On the over 100-acre farms in West Donegal for instance output is less than a quarter of the N.F.S. figure and less than a fifth of the corresponding F.M.S. figure. On farms under 50 acres, cattle and sheep output in West Donegal compared fairly reasonably with the other surveys, but again for the larger farms the West Donegal performance is relatively very poor.

Incomes on all farm sizes in West Donegal compare very unfavourably with those in the areas of the other surveys, being about half as much or less on farms of under 30 acres and only about one-fifth of the income on farms of over 100 acres (Table 13). Taking all holding sizes together the family farm income for the N.F.S. 1956 and the F.M.S. 1963/64 are much the same. But these are nearly three times the income generated on the mountain farms and over nine times the income of the hill farms in West Donegal (Table 14).

The return to labour employed on the farms was very low in each of the three areas in West Donegal compared with the corresponding figures in the larger surveys (Table 14). Total output per labour unit was fairly comparable on all holdings in the N.F.S. 1956 and in the F.M.S. 1963/64 except for those of over 100 acres. The output per labour unit employed in West Donegal in nearly all cases was only about half the corresponding figure in the other surveys.

A comparison is made in Table 15 between the average number of livestock units of cattle and sheep carried on the different sized farms in West Donegal and the average for corresponding F.M.S. farms. Similar information for the N.F.S. 1956 was not available. The figures in brackets refer to the F.M.S. results and show much higher cattle numbers on all farms, from twice on farms under 50 acres to five times as many on the farms over 100 acres. On the other hand there was a greater number of sheep carried per farm on the smaller West Donegal farms. Taking the two stocking rates together, the F.M.S. figures are only marginally better on holdings under 30 acres, but for the larger farms, the West Donegal figures reflect the relative weakness of farming in the area.

TABLE 15—Livestock units of cattle and sheep by size of farm for West Donegal (1965/66) and F.M.S. (1963/64)

Livestock	Size of farm (acres)								
	0-30		30-50		50-100		100+		All farms
Cattle	..	3.3 (6.6) ¹	5.4 (10.9)	5.9 (17.4)	6.5 (34.1)	4.7 (13.7)			
Sheep	..	5.9 (1.5)	8.1 (3.6)	7.8 (9.4)	12.0 (26.1)	8.5 (6.8)			
Total	..	9.2 (9.4)	13.5 (16.3)	13.7 (28.8)	18.5 (61.8)	13.2 (22.1)			

figures in brackets are for F.M.S. 1963/64. Livestock units in the totals for F.M.S. include horses and other livestock.

The monetary return to each livestock unit is an important indicator of general efficiency both of production and marketing. Table 16 shows that the output per livestock unit of sheep in West Donegal is very poor. The figures for corresponding farms in the F.M.S. in most cases are at least three times as great. On the other hand, the output per livestock unit of cattle compares quite favourably with the corresponding F.M.S. figure and in the case of farms between 30 and 50 acres and those over 100 acres, the West Donegal returns slightly exceed the F.M.S. figures.

TABLE 16—Output per livestock unit of cattle and sheep (£) by size of farm—
West Donegal (1965/66) and F.M.S. (1963/64)

Livestock	Size of farm (acres)				All farms
	0-30	30-50	50-100	100+	
Cattle	27 (28) ¹	24 (23)	22 (24)	23 (19)	23 (23)
Sheep	6 (23)	7 (19)	5 (24)	7 (22)	6 (22)
Total	33 (51)	31 (42)	27 (48)	30 (41)	29 (45)

¹ Figures in brackets for F.M.S. 1963/64.

Taking the combined cattle and sheep output the Donegal farms have a monetary return of approximately two-thirds of the corresponding F.M.S. average figure. The very poor output from sheep in West Donegal is the main reason for the low performance.

Table 17 compares the performance of sheep in West Donegal in 1965/66 and a national random selection of Blackface Mountain Flocks as surveyed in 1962. No effort to allow for change in prices has been made. On all holdings over 30 acres, output per ewe compares quite favourably in West Donegal with the returns for mountain sheep in the 1962 survey. Only the under 30-acre farms in West Donegal had an average lambing percentage as low as that of the other survey but weaning percentages on both the smallest and largest farms were lower. In both surveys the contribution of wool to total sheep output amounted to 46% for farms over 100 acres in the West Donegal survey.

TABLE 17—Physical efficiency of sheep production in West Donegal (1965 66) and Blackface Mountain Flocks (1962)¹

	Size of holding (acres)				All holdings	B.F.M. 1962
	0-30	30-50	50-100	100;		
Average number of ewes	23.4	26.9	39.7	39.7	29.4	89.0
Output per ewe (£)	15	2.2	2.0	2.0	1.8	2.2
Lambing %	77	89	90	83	84	77
Weaning %	59	66	68	56	61	64
Wool as % of total sheep output	44	40	40	46	44	44

¹ Source: Sheep Survey 1962, An Foras Taliintais (unpublished).

The existing physical and economic efficiency of sheep production in West Donegal provides little hope of this enterprise contributing substantially to the economy of the area unless vast improvement is brought about. With the average number of ewes per flock under 30 and output per ewe less than £2 (Table 17) there is little scope for improving the lot of the farmer. Only in exceptional cases is sheep production a viable proposition under present practices in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

The people on the farms surveyed in West Donegal in 1965/66 received a very low income from farming. As people are the most important resource, returns to human effort must be optimised. The results of the survey show that the returns to both land and labour are very low. At present levels of efficiency, farming in West Donegal does not generate enough income generally to maintain a family at a reasonable standard of living.

Of the 234 holdings surveyed 148 or 63% had less than 50 acres. The final report of the National Farm Survey (1956) classes as subsistence a farm under 50 acres with no commercial activity. Because of the inferior natural physical resources in the area, almost all of the survey farms can be regarded as supporting only subsistence farming since very little commercial farming is carried on.

On the farms surveyed in 1965/66 home consumption of farm produce amounted to slightly less than 50% of total output. Much of the balance was made up of positive inventory changes. A more telling measure of the economic position of the families on these farms is that on average, in 1965/66, farming generated only £16 per year cash income.

Even if resources were not allocated in the best fashion in 1965/66 the results of the survey show that at present levels of efficiency the scope for improvement is limited. A change in the relative share of resources is indicated but it must be remembered that the purpose is the improvement of living conditions for the people in West Donegal. As the natural resources in the area are very poor from a farming point of view it will be necessary to achieve a level of efficiency above average in the remaining inputs. Under present circumstances the agricultural potential of the area is very weak compared with other areas in the country but West Donegal's greatest comparative advantage may lie elsewhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to many members of the staff of the Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taluntais and in particular to those who collected and extracted the information.

MARKETING

by
PRANK BRADLI Y*

INTRODUCTION

In West Donegal the farmer's production system is motivated almost as much by the needs of home consumption as by the attraction of the market. About half the total value of agricultural output of the Glenties Rural District in 1965/66 was consumed on farms compared with a fifth for Ulster (Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan) and 15 % for the State as a whole. Factors mainly responsible for the output pattern and poor marketing structure are the physical environment of the area and the absence of a large urban complex to provide a local market for the food products of the region. Consequently, the agricultural output over and above that consumed in the home is largely sold out of the region in a raw and unprocessed state.

PRODUCTION

Cattle and sheep are the principal products of the area (Table 1). Farmyard products such as milk and poultry are produced mainly for consumption on the farm, as also are potatoes, with the result that very little of these commodities reaches the market. Only cattle and sheep can be considered as commercial enterprises. Vegetables are now produced on a number of farms and are sold for processing but none of the farms in this survey had a vegetable enterprise large enough to be considered.

TABLE 1—Agricultural output of selected products, home consumption and sales (£)—Glenties Rural District (1965-66)

	Cattle	Sheep	Milk	Poultry	Potatoes	Other crops	All farms
1. Output ¹	20,594	6,764	7,422	4,078	5,398	230	44,486
2. Consumed on farms	—	—	7,382	3,590	4,643	99	15,714
3. Sales	14,231	6,576	40	398	647	131	22,023
4. 3 as % of 1 ...	69.0	97.0	0.5	10.0	14.0	57.0	50.0

Source: Farm Management Records, includes value of inventory change.

*Agricultural Economics and Marketing Dept., Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taliintais.

Production is only one of the considerations in running a farming enterprise but it is a most important one. This is especially so in the survey area where present levels of production are so low as to be a major barrier to the improvement of farm income. There was a decline in cattle numbers in the survey area between 1960 and 1965 (Table 2). Both sheep and pigs showed an increase over this period but with the very small pig numbers obtaining, the absolute increase is not very important. There was a continuing decline in tillage acreage and a sharp increase in pasture. A large share of the pasture increase shown in Table 2, however, is due to a reclassification of land which formerly belonged to the category 'other land'. The labour force employed in farming is also declining.

TABLE 2—Livestock and poultry numbers; acreage of crops and pasture, and employment situation in Glenties Rural District (1960 and 1965)

	1960	1965	% change		1960	1965	% change
Cattle ...	18,074	17,141	—5.2	Crops ...	3,040	2,476	—18.6
Sheep ...	52,130	57,249	+9.8	Pasture ...	24,869	49,834	+ 110.4
Pigs ...	61	135	+ 121.3	Other land...	224,362	197,871	—11.8
Poultry ...	78,060	51,572	—33.9	Males employed	3,978	3,486	—12.8

Source: Agricultural Enumeration in stated years.

MARKETING SURVEY

This marketing study is based on a sample survey of 258 farmers in West Donegal. The survey was carried out by questionnaire in December 1965 in conjunction with the larger resource survey. Only those farms with sales of each product greater than £25 in 1965 were considered in this study. An analysis of the results is presented below.

In the survey area the amounts to be marketed are small so marketing arrangements remain simple and straightforward. The survey indicates that this trend is not likely to change much in the near future.

Cattle

Of the six products separately identified in the survey, cattle sales are the most important. Of the 258 farmers in the survey, 163 sold cattle in 1965, the value of which exceeded £25 per farm. As can be seen from Table 3 dealers were the most important buyers, taking cattle from 144 of the 163 farmers.

Just over half of the farmers who sold cattle on the farm did so because they claimed it kept costs at a minimum and about a quarter because they liked the method of sale (Table 3). Of the 65 farmers who sold cattle to dealers at the fair 44 did so because of the better market conditions.

The type of transport used to move cattle from the farm depended basically on where the sale took place. Cattle sold on the farm were usually removed in the buyers' transport. On the other hand, if they were sold at the fair they were usually walked there from the farm; only 4 of the 77 farmers selling at the fair hired transport (Table 4). The reasons given for hiring transport were that distances to the nearest fair were considerable or that the local fair was by-passed to obtain better conditions elsewhere.

TABLE 3—Cattle sales 1965—purchaser, sales outlet and motivation

		On farm	At fair	At buyer's premises	Total
Purchaser/ sales outlet	Farmer only	3	8		11
	Dealer only	78	65		144
	^ Farmer/dealer	1	4		5
	Other	3			3
	Total	85	77	1	163
Motivation/ sales outlet	More active market	10	44	1	55
	Saves costs	44	12	—	56
	Likes method of sale	23	17	—	40
	- Non-economic motives	6	4	—	10
	No answer	2	—	—	2
Total	85	77		163	

TABLE A—Cattle sales, 1965—transport

Mode of transport from farm					
Place of sale	Walking	Buyer's transport	Hired transport	No answer	Total
On farm	10	70			85
At fair	71	2			77
At buyer's premises	—	—			
Total	81	72			163

TABLE 5—Sheep sales 1965—purchaser, sales outlet and motivation

		On farm	At fair	Total
Purchaser/ sales outlet	Farmer	4	8	12
	Dealer	23	41	64
	Total	27	49	76
Motivation/ sales outlet	' More active market	5	38	43
	Saves costs	17	1	18
	« Likes method of sale	2	8	10
	Non-economic motives	3	2	5
	Total	27	49	76

Sheep and wool

The second most important product group from the point of view of the numbers of farmers selling is sheep and wool. Seventy-six farmers in the survey sample made sales of sheep and wool during 1965. Of these, 16% sold their sheep to other farmers and 84% sold to dealers (Table 5). Irrespective of the category of buyer, sheep were sold at the fair in 64% of cases.

Sixty-three percent of farmers who sold on the farm claimed they did so because of the lower cost and 19% because it was a better market (Table 5). On the other hand, of the farmers selling at the fair, the vast majority (78%) did so because of the better market conditions prevailing and a sizeable proportion of these considered selling at the fair an attractive method.

Eighty-five percent of farmers selling on the farm used transport supplied by the buyer (Table 6). Of the farmers selling sheep at the fair 48% walked the animals there while 37% hired the necessary transport.

TABLE 6—Sheep sales, 1965—transport

Place of sale	Mode of transport from farm			Total
	Walking	Buyer's transport	Hired transport	
On farm	4	23	—	27
At fair	24	7	18	49
Total	28	30	18	76

Over three-quarters of all farmers not selling at home sold their sheep and wool at the nearest sales outlet. On the other hand, 15% did not do so because they considered the local sales point was not comparable to alternative centres which were further distant.

Knitwear, weaving and other products

Farm families producing wool products usually do so under contract to merchants or factories but more generally to merchants. Both knitting and weaving generally form secondary activities for the families in question. The buyers usually supply the raw material.

Amounts of the other products sold, mainly eggs and potatoes, are very small.

CONCLUSIONS

Apart from the sales of cattle and sheep, there is little marketing activity in the survey area. Even producers of cattle and sheep place little emphasis on gearing production to market demands, *e.g.*, having the right quality product at the right time. Milk, poultry and potatoes are produced mainly for home consumption with only a relatively small quantity remaining for sale. From the survey, it does not appear that this pattern is changing or will change radically in the near future. Much remains

to be done in the production of greater quantities of quality products for sale before any great improvement in the marketing system can be expected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The valuable assistance received from colleagues in the Rural Economy Division and the wholehearted co-operation of the farmers in the survey is gratefully acknowledged.

SOME FEATURES OF THE COMMONAGE SYSTEM*

Large areas of commonage are known to exist in the majority of the 26 counties of the Republic. The largest concentration of commonage is in the mountainous counties and especially in western regions. The precise extent and productive potential of these lands have never been assessed fully. To appraise the commonage position and the associated shareholding particulars in West Donegal, an analysis was made of Land Commission estate records. Particulars of commonages for each of the 484 townlands in the survey area were compiled (Table 1). Almost one-quarter (64,293 acres) of the total area of Glenties Rural District is held in commonages, which are mainly mountain, bog and rough grazings.

The origin of commonage in Ireland is obscure but in Brehon times commonage existed—known as the Fearan Fine—and was subject to 'collop' grazing. The collop which is still in use to measure grazing varies from place to place. In Co. Kerry, for example, a collop of sheep is six in the Dingle Peninsula, eight in the Glencar district and twelve in the Kells district. Whilst the stint of grazing is expressed by the term collop in Kerry and other southern counties it is referred to by the term 'sum*' in northern counties.

Grazing in common was inevitably an integral feature of the landlord and tenant system. Although rural landlordism was swept away by the Land Act of 1923, the fee simple interest (the ground itself) in some commonages is still owned by former landlords but the real value, the grazing, belongs to the farmers. In the majority of cases commonages were transferred in fee simple to former tenants at the dissolution of estates and without change in shareholding as the commonage formed part of the holdings.

Records in the Land Commission show that in West Donegal tenants became owners of their holdings and associated grazing grounds in the early decades of the present century. Accepted custom within each estate determined the nature of shares in commonages. In some areas commonages are held in unequal shares, the shares being originally allotted in proportion to the amount of arable land held by the tenant. In other areas they are held in equal shares. Commonages in Glenties Rural District are as yet not converted to individual enclosures under formal partition schemes.

Table 1 contains a breakdown of commonages in Glenties Rural District in terms of area and number of shareholders. The number of shareholders refers to those recorded at the time of the dissolution of estates and the actual number at present may be less than that shown. The number of shares however, has remained unaltered and shares which have been accumulated by an owner are still enumerated separately. Moreover, these statistics give no indication of the number of shareholders who are currently utilising the commonages.

Commonages of 1 acre and under have been excluded from this classification. It is also likely that commonages of 10 acres or less may not refer to grazing grounds but

*Compiled by Mr. J. Curry, Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taluntais, from information provided by the Land Commission, Department of Lands.

to other property such as gravel quarries or turf-stacking ground held in common by farmers. Alternatively, these small areas may form part of larger commonages and are enumerated separately because of physical distance.

The 64,293 acres of commonage consists of 640 separate units. The average area per commonage is therefore approximately 100 acres but wide variations occur; the largest commonage comprises 2,763 acres. Of the total, 52.5% are held by two shareholders and 70.3% by three or less shareholders. Commonages of 100 acres or less account for three-quarters of the total number but for only one-fifth of the entire commonage area. The extent of commonage can be seen in perspective when it is considered that in 1965 the total area under crops and pasture in West Donegal was 65,179 acres. The area of commonage is almost forty times as great as the area under root and green crops alone (1,623 acres).

The Land Act, 1939, gave the Land Commission basic authority to partition commonage on application; and the Land Acts 1950, 1953 and 1965 gave additional necessary authority. Surprisingly, applications from shareholders for division of commonage have not been as numerous as would be expected.

Within the past 2 years the Land Commission has introduced new policy in relation to commonages. If a commonage associated with uneconomic holdings is deemed potentially productive the Land Commission itself will be prepared to undertake the task of division as part of its rearrangement programme and where necessary erect fences and provide access, drains, water supply and so on. Where commonages are associated with large viable farms however, the Land Commission will not involve itself in development work.

The immediate problem in West Donegal is to determine the commonage which could be partitioned to advantage.

Finally, it should be noted that there are lowland commonages and mountain commonages; that commonage may be held by the shareholders as a separate entity or as part of their home farms; and that farmers may have only rights of grazing on a commonage appurtenant to their home farms, another party owning the ground or fee simple.

TABLE 1—Particulars of commonage in Glenties Rural District

No. of share- holders	Size of commonage (acres)									Total
	10 & under	11-50	51-100	101-150	151-200	201-300	301-600	601-1,000	1,000 and over	
2	119	131	36	22	11	7	10	1		337
3	34	38	16	6	9	6	4	—	—	113
4	16	14	8	4	1	1	—	—	—	44
5	4	8	2	5	1	2	1	—	—	23
6-10	6	13	8	5	4	5	4	3	—	48
11-15	4	6	9	6	1	5	2	2	4	39
16-20	—	2	2	1	—	3	2	4	—	14
21-25	1	—	1	—	—	—	2	1	—	5
26-30	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	1	4
30-	—	1	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	13
Total	184	213	83	52	28	33	27	14	6	640
Total acres!	927	5,697	5,947	6,313	4,675	7,940	11,645	10,786	10,363	64,293

Source: Irish Land Commission Estate Documents.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS

by
P. COMMINS*

INTRODUCTION

The human population of any area is one of its most important resources. Over time, a population may vary in numerical size, structure and quality. Changes in the number of persons, their spatial distribution and demographic characteristics arise from the interplay of social and economic circumstances and the population trends of the past. On the other hand, the demographic situation at any point in time will influence the expectations for social and economic development. Therefore, an adequate knowledge of the demography of an area is basic to an understanding of the current production, commercial and institutional conditions of a community, and of its developmental prospects for the future.

Furthermore, the analysis of the demographic aspects of an area has relevance also from a strictly sociological viewpoint. As well as being indicators of social conditions, population statistics are summaries of social behaviour. Migration statistics, for example, represent more than the movement of persons. There is also the transfer of social attitudes, values and ideas, and the movement itself in its volume, selectivity and direction is rooted in a complex of human motivations. Birth rates, for instance, are not merely biological phenomena but are related to aspects of social structure, particularly to the norms governing family life. Demographic variations between communities reflect differences in forms of social organisation as well as in the processes of social change.

In this resource study the demographic aspects of Glenties Rural District are considered under three main headings:

- i) trends in population size,
- ii) demographic factors in population change,
- iii) population structure.

The data used are taken largely from the Census of Population Reports, 1961 being the latest year for which complete results are available. Three volumes, giving returns from the 1966 Census have been published and these have been used where relevant. Comparisons are made between Glenties and other areas and, as a preliminary to the main analysis, the principal developments in the demographic history of the State and of Donegal county are reviewed briefly.

* Rural Sociology and Home Economics Dept., Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taliintais.

TRENDS IN POPULATION SIZE

The national population

In this country there has been a rapid decline in the total number of inhabitants for more than 100 years while other countries of Europe have shown increases. Within a century (1861-1961) the population of the 26 Counties (what is now the Republic) declined by 1.58 million (36%). Whilst the decline can be attributed to a number of underlying political, economic and social factors, the immediate cause has been the continuous high rate of emigration over the 100-year period.¹

The population had risen to 6.5 million in 1841 at a rate in line with that in other European countries.² As a result of the Great Famine of 1845-47 a long period of decline began and by 1861 the population had dropped to 4.4 million. The decline continued with diminishing intensity up to 1881, and thereafter accelerated and remained at a high, though fluctuating, level until 1926. During 1926-51 the population of the State remained relatively stable at around 3 million persons. However, there was a renewed decline in population during the 1950's with the loss being particularly severe in 1956-61 (2.8%). This was undoubtedly related to the economic difficulties of the country at that time.³

The most recent Census (1966) showed that this downward trend had been reversed. In the 1961-66 period population rose from 2.82 million to 2.88 million—an increase of 2.3%. In fact the present decade may represent another turning point for the national population size as current expectations are for a continued increase, though projections vary according to the assumptions made about the volume of emigration in the future.⁴

Rural-urban changes: Apart from the change in population numbers between 1861 and 1966, there was also a considerable shift in the distribution of population between rural and urban areas. For census purposes, urban areas are taken as towns and cities which have 1,500 or more persons, while rural areas are comprised of towns and villages below this size as well as the open countryside. Since 1861 the number of persons in the aggregate rural areas declined from 3.51 to 1.46 million, whereas the urban population increased from 0.90 to 1.42 million. Thus, rural dwellers now constitute about half the national population compared to four-fifths in 1861.

The population of County Donegal

In County Donegal population decline has been relatively high. Ten counties lost over 20% of their population between 1926 and 1966 (Appendix, Table 1); the decrease in Donegal was 28.8%. Its loss in absolute numbers was almost 44,000 persons—from 152,508 to 108,549.

Changes in Rural and Urban Districts: The more recent changes within County Donegal are set out in Table 1.

¹ See 'Reports of Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948-54. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1955.

• *Ibid.* p. 3, para. 12

³ See National Industrial and Economic Council, 'Report on Full Employment'. Stationery Office, Dublin; p. 12, 1967.

* *Ibid.* See also OECD, 'Demographic Trends 1965-80 in Western Europe and North America', OECD, Paris, 1966.

TABLE 1—Population changes within County Donegal, 1946-66

District	1946	1966	Decrease, percent (+ = increase)
<i>Rural District</i>			
Letterkenny	8,286	5,828	29.7 ¹
Glenties	24,807	18,380	25.9
Ballyshannon	6,565	4,898	25.4
Donegal	13,412	10,121	24.5
Milford	14,231	10,837	23.8
Dunfanaghy	12,887	9,909	23.1
Inishowen	27,822	21,574	22.4
Stranorlar	20,905	18,138	13.2
<i>Urban District</i>			
Bundoran	1,825	1,421	22.1
Buncrana	2,729	2,916	+ 6.9
Letterkenny	2,848	4,527	+ 59.0*

Source: Census of Population.

¹ The boundaries of Letterkenny Urban and Rural Districts were changed in 1953.

Apart from Letterkenny Rural District, where the high rate of decline during 1946-66 was accounted for by an extension in the boundaries of the Urban District in 1953, the highest rates of depopulation were recorded in Glenties and Ballyshannon Rural Districts. Each lost over one-quarter of its population between 1946 and 1966.

In the Urban Districts, population changes varied widely. The population of Bundoran Urban District declined by 22.1 % while there was a moderate increase of 6.9% in Buncrana. Again, because of boundary changes the precise trends for the Letterkenny urban area cannot be accurately assessed.

The population of Glenties Rural District

There were 18,380 persons in the Glenties Rural District in 1966. Similar to the rest of the country there has been a general decline in population during the past century or so. However, comparison between Glenties and other areas shows two distinguishing features.

Firstly, the long term decline in Glenties has not been as severe as in the remainder of County Donegal or in the aggregate rural areas of the Republic (Figure 1). If 1861 population numbers are taken as equivalent to 100, the 1966 index for Glenties is 46.0, for the rest of the county 45.7 and for the aggregate rural areas of the State 41.8 (Appendix, Table II).

Secondly, the rates of depopulation in the rest of County Donegal and in the aggregate rural areas of the State were much greater than in Glenties until 1911. However, the 1926 census and each subsequent census showed an acceleration of population loss in Glenties. The following summary of the long-term trends illustrates the differential rates of change:

	Percentage decline		
	Glenties Rural District	Rest of Donegal County	Rural areas of State ⁵
1861-1881	5.9	14.7	15.3
1881-1901	11.6	16.6	21.4
1926-1946	17.7	8.9	9.1
1946-1966	25.8	19.2	20.5

While these figures show in broad outline the worsening position of Glenties *vis-a-vis* other areas it is important to consider the various intercensal periods separately and, in particular, to see the trends of the last intercensal period (1961-66) in perspective. These were the years during which national population showed an appreciable rate of growth and there was a lessening of the rate of decline in rural areas generally. Intercensal changes for the areas being compared were expressed in terms of the average annual rise or fall in population numbers as a rate per 1,000 of

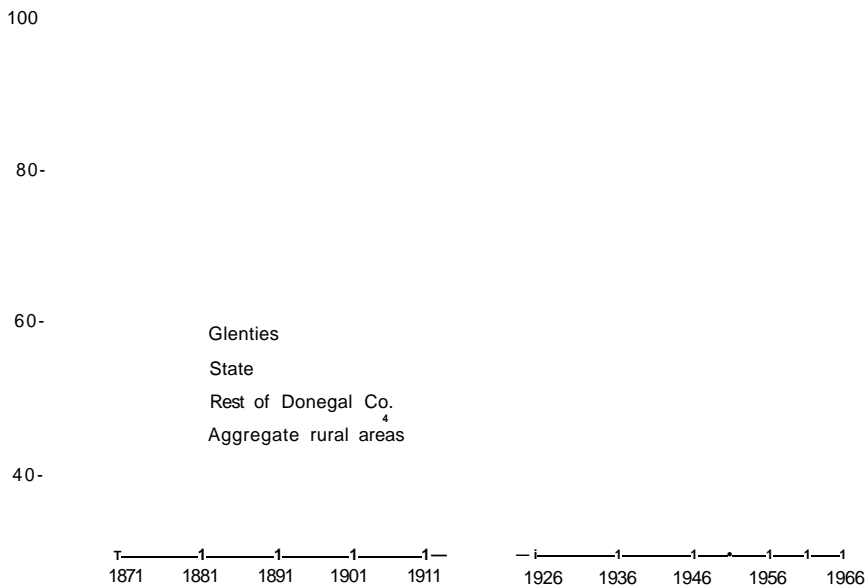


Fig. 1 - Population trends 1861-1966 {Index 1861 - 100 persons}

⁸ The population figures for the aggregate rural areas of the State, as used for this and other tabulations in this section, refer to the number of persons classified as rural at the respective census years and not to any revisions made in these numbers at subsequent censuses.

the total inhabitants of the area. This procedure eliminates the defects of percentages when used to compare change between intercensal periods of varying length.

Analysis on this basis showed that the reduction in the population of Glenties continued during 1961-66 and at an even greater rate than at any time since 1861 (Appendix, Table III). The annual average rate of loss per 1,000 people was 19.1 persons.

Dispensary Districts and District Electoral Divisions: Population trends within a Rural District may be examined by Dispensary District, or by a still smaller territorial division, the District Electoral Division. Glenties has six of the larger and twenty-seven of the smaller units.

Consideration of changes by Dispensary District was confined to the intercensal periods since 1946. Table 2 shows that the exceptionally high decline of the early sixties was not confined to any particular locality within the Rural District. Five of the Dispensary Districts, Ardara, Carrick, Doocharry, Glenties and Killybegs showed an acceleration of population loss during 1961-66 though Doocharry had its highest percentage decline in 1951-56. The percentage loss in Dunglow dropped slightly in 1961-66, but the rate of depopulation in this Dispensary District has been consistently high since 1946 at least.

TABLE 2—Percentage population decline, 1946-66 (+ = increase)

Dispensary District	Intercensal period			
	1946-51	1951-56	1956-61	1961-66
Ardara	4.9	4.2	4.0	8.2
Carrick	5.8	5.4	4.5	5.9
Doocharry	5.0	13.6	9.8	12.2
Dunglow	6.6	10.5	12.1	11.9
Glenties	2.0	4.3	6.7	10.9
Killybegs	+0.9	0.6	0.2	2.4
Total Glenties R.D.	4.8	7.3	7.5	9.1
Rest of Donegal County	3.6	7.2	6.6	3.7
Aggregate Rural Areas	6.0	6.9	5.8	4.1
State	+0.2	2.1	2.8	+2.3

Source: Census of Population.

At District Electoral Division level an even more detailed view of population decline within the Rural District can be obtained. The 27 District Electoral Divisions (D.E.D.) were ranked according to the magnitude of the percentage decline from 1946 to 1966 (Appendix, Table IV). The Divisions can be grouped as follows:

No. of D.E.D.'s	Type of change	Range
8	Very high decline	Over 33.3%
10	High decline	20-33.3%
6	Medium decline	10-20%
3	Low decline or increase	Less than 10%

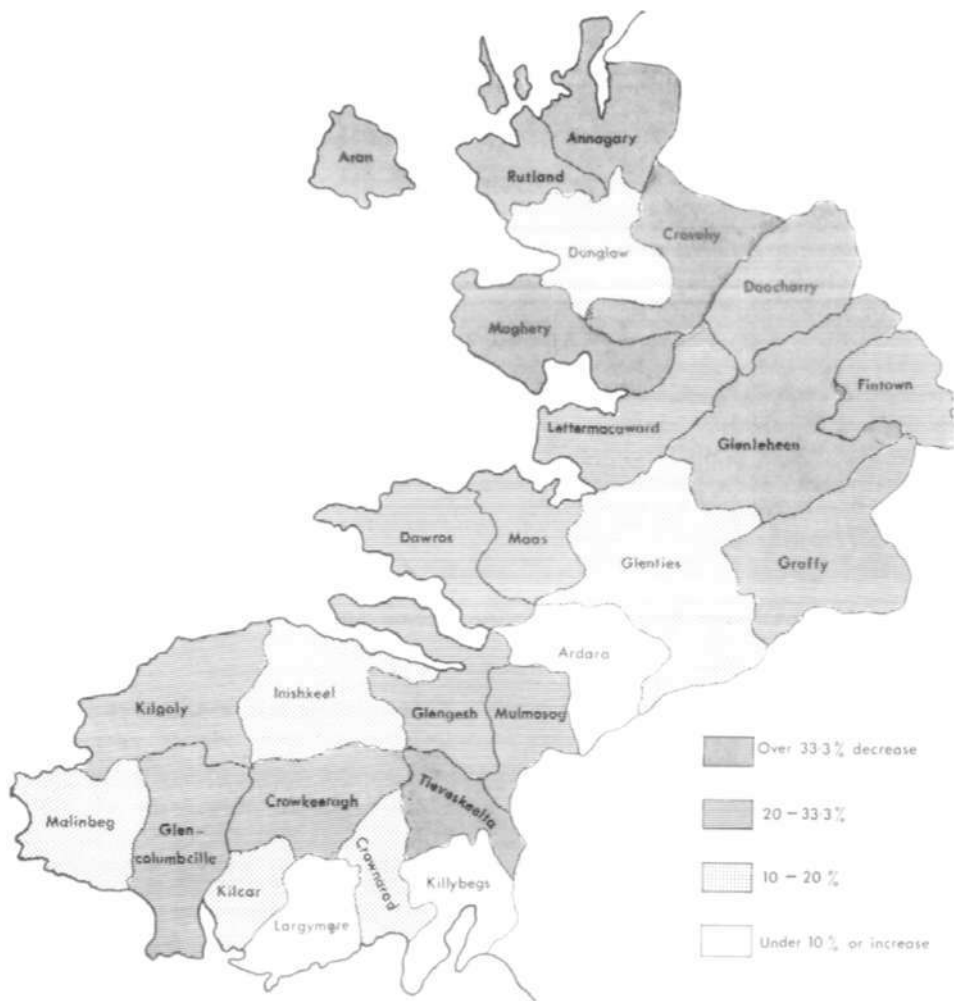


Fig. 2 - Population change in District Electoral Divisions, Glenties Rural District

Figure 2 shows that the areas of highest percentage decline are predominantly in the northern part of the Rural District. The exceptional position of Dunglow, a northern D.E.D. with a relatively low rate of decline, may be attributed to the stable population of Dunglow town and the fact that the town accounts for approximately two-thirds of the inhabitants of the D.E.D. Similarly, Ardara and Killybegs are at the lower end of the depopulation scale presumably because the towns of Ardara and Killybegs contain 47% and 68% of the population in their respective D.E.D.'s.

It is difficult to account for the distribution of population changes in any precise way, but they are undoubtedly related to general levels of prosperity. This was shown in West Donegal by using one indicator of wealth, *viz.*, rateable valuation. The four categories of D.E.D.'s were examined with respect to their rateable valuation per 100

acres. Proceeding from the group of highest to that with the lowest rate of depopulation, the valuation per 100 acres was £8.6, £9.8, £16.4 and £38.7. Using the Spearman rank correlation method, an inverse correlation coefficient of -0.525 was found between the rate of depopulation in 1946-66 and the valuation per 100 acres in 1961.

Towns and villages⁶ within Glenties Rural District: Within Glenties Rural District there are 12 towns and villages with 1966 populations ranging from 87 to 1,062 persons. The total town and village population varied from 4,341 in 1956 to 4,480 in 1966. Table 3 shows that the town population remained relatively stable over this period (with an increase of 3.5% between 1956-61 and a decrease of 0.2% between 1961-56) while the remaining population of the Rural District declined steadily. This indicates the stabilising influence which towns and villages can have on the population level of a rural area, though in this case the number of townspeople in West Donegal was too small a proportion of the area's inhabitants for any gains to counterbalance the loss in the open country.

TABLE 3—Change in town and village population, 1956-66

Category of area	1956	1961	% change	1961	1966	% change
Total towns and villages	4,341	4,491	+ 3.5	4,490*	4,480	—0.2
Rest of R.D.	17,517	15,734	—10.2	15,735	13,900	—11.7
Total Glenties R.D.	21,858	20,225	—7.5	20,225	18,380	—9.1

Source: Census of Population.

¹ The town and village populations for a particular census are revised at the subsequent census because of the redrawing of boundaries. In this case the difference is negligible. For this reason also town and village populations previous to 1956 are not considered, as this would reduce comparability with later census years.

Over the period 1956-66 towns of over 500 inhabitants increased in population by 4.3% whereas towns with under 500 persons increased by 0.5%. This shows the stability and growth potential of the bigger towns in the area even during a period of exceptionally heavy depopulation from the hinterlands.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN POPULATION CHANGE

Three demographic factors are relevant in considering changes in population size—the number of births, the number of deaths and the volume of migration to and from an area. All of these may vary with time.

Over a given period, births normally exceed deaths and the excess is known as the natural increase. It is not possible to measure separately the exact numerical extent of emigration from, or immigration into, any area due to the obvious difficulties of recording population movements and distinguishing between permanent migrants and other travellers. However, the balance between these opposite streams of migration may be determined for any intercensal period by calculating the natural increase and

• Towns and villages in this context refer to the 'census towns' of the survey area *i.e.*, those clusters of twenty or more occupied houses.

combining the resultant figure with the actual rise or fall in population. Thus, if from one census to another total population in an area rises by more than the extent of the natural increase then net immigration has occurred. On the other hand, if total population does not rise by an amount equivalent to the natural increase then net emigration has taken place.

Estimating migration from Glenties Rural District

In the case of Glenties, however, even an estimate of net emigration⁷ by this method cannot be obtained because in this country births and deaths are registered where they occur, and therefore, are not related to the place of residence of the person concerned. Adjustments of birth and death numbers according to residence are not made for Rural Districts.

Nevertheless, since emigration is clearly the predominant factor affecting population change in Glenties some assessment must be made of its extent in this area. As emigration occurs mostly among persons in the young adult age groups (15-34 years), one possible way is to derive an estimate from changes in age-cohorts. By dividing the child population (0-14 years) into age groups and studying the changes in the numerical

TABLE 4—Percentage decrease in age-groups, 1946/51-66

Age group 1946/51	0-4 (1951)	0-4	5-9	10-14
Age group 1966	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
Males				
<i>Dispensary District</i>				
Ardara	25.0	70.8	70.6	69.5
Carrick	19.3	54.5	62.2	72.1
Doocharry	37.5	58.0	75.6	61.7
Dunglow	59.6	68.1	75.2	72.0
Glenties	33.1	65.1	56.8	48.9
Killybegs	8.7	41.8	47.8	45.3
Total Glenties R.D. ...	28.8	63.3	68.4	66.1
Rest of Donegal Co.	28.4	56.0	60.3	58.3
Donegal Co.	28.5	57.1	61.7	59.8
Females				
Ardara	36.7	76.7	67.6	59.8
Carrick	27.8	58.4	73.6	77.3
Doocharry	44.7	80.6	74.0	78.1
Dunglow	41.1	71.7	73.9	73.5
Glenties	25.7	53.9	67.5	56.9
Killybegs	7.4	54.5	51.9	44.3
Total Glenties R.D. ...	32.9	67.8	70.6	68.6
Rest of Donegal Co.	28.7	59.1	60.7	60.2
Donegal Co.	29.4	60.5	62.4	61.7

Source: Census of Population.

⁷ Net emigration in this context means the net movement of people from the area referred to, though not necessarily abroad.

size of these same groups over a number of years, it is possible to estimate the depletion of the numbers of young people because of emigration. Though this method does not give the yearly volume of emigration in absolute numbers it indicates the impact of emigration on the population level within the age groups mostly affected. Changes in numbers due to deaths are, of course, not taken into account, but these have a negligible influence on the younger age groups and in any case would be balanced to a great extent by immigration into the area.

This calculation was undertaken for comparative areas and the resultant figures appear in Table 4. The three youngest age groups (0-4, 5-9 and 10-14 year olds) of 1946 together with the 0-4 year old age group of 1951 were selected and the proportionate changes that had taken place in the numbers of these groups by 1966 were determined.

A number of facts emerge from Table 4:

- a) The number of females in the 15-19 age group represented a decline of almost one-third of their childhood numbers. If it is accepted that the percentage decline in the 30-34 age group represents the proportionate loss due to outward migration—as by those ages practically all permanent emigration will have taken place—then it will be seen that over two-thirds of the female children who lived in Glenties Rural District over 30 years ago are now living elsewhere.
- b) Though the proportionate loss for males is not as great especially in the younger age groups, up to two-thirds of all males eventually emigrate.
- c) The general similarity of the percentage changes in the three oldest age-groups indicates that virtually all emigrants have left the area by the age of 25.
- d) There are variations among the Dispensary Districts but, broadly speaking, those of highest emigration of females are Ar dara, Carrick, Doocharry and Dunglow where over two-thirds leave. For males the pattern is somewhat similar though not so clear-cut: Killybegs shows the lowest loss and even here over 40 % emigrate.
- e) Comparison with the rest of Donegal County shows that the relative declines are greater in Glenties and the disparity is more pronounced in the case of females.

Glenties therefore is an area of considerable emigration and population loss over recent years with consequent implications for its demographic composition and characteristics. These aspects of demographic structure are considered in the following section.

POPULATION STRUCTURE

Age composition

The economic and social vitality of a community is influenced by the age composition of its population. This composition has particular implications for the burden of dependency borne by those in the economically productive age groups, the character of the market for goods and services, social security and welfare needs and prevailing community attitudes.

The population of the Republic has been steadily ageing for more than a century. In 1861 those over the age of 45 years constituted 21.7% of the population compared with 32.1 % in 1966. The high proportion of old persons in the population is attributable partly to the fact that these are survivors from the periods when the number of births was higher than at present, and partly to the heavy emigration from the earlier adult ages.

Figure 3 shows that for Glenties there has been a contraction in the young adult age groups and a relative increase in some of the older age groups. In summary, the percentage distribution in the four main age groups in Glenties Rural District in 1920 and 1966 was as follows:

	0-14 yr	15-34 yr	35-64 yr	65 yr & over
1926	31.2	27.8	28.3	12.8
1966	27.3	20.4	36.0	16.3

The proportion of young people (0-14 years) has changed appreciably between 1926 and 1966. In absolute figures there was a decline of 4,366 people or almost one-half. There has also been a significant decline in the representation of the young adult group (15-34 years) in the population and conversely a rise in the proportions aged 35-64 and 65 and over. These trends show clearly that the population of West Donegal is an ageing one.

The latest comparative statistics on the age structure of Glenties Rural District and other areas are shown in Table 5. In 1966 the percentage of people aged 15-44 was lower at 30.4% of the total population in Glenties than in the other areas and by contrast the percentage of people in the over-45 age group was higher. It is obvious that the process of ageing has affected the West Donegal population most severely. This development is also shown by the index of ageing *i.e.*, the number of persons aged 65 and over per 100 children under 15 years old.

TABLE 5—Percentage age distribution, 1966

	Age group (years)			
	0-14	15-44	45-64	65 and over
Glenties R.D.	27.3	30.4	26.0	16.3
Rest of Donegal Co.	29.5	34.0	22.9	13.7
Aggregate Rural Areas	30.2	33.6	22.9	13.3
State	31.2	36.7	20.9	11.2

Source: Census of Population.

This index has been consistently higher for Glenties since 1926 than for Donegal county or the State. In 1966 the index figure for Glenties was 59.8 compared with 46.4 for the rest of the county and 35.9 for the State.

Dependency burden

The burden of dependency in Glenties has been persistently high. For every 100 persons of working age (15-64 years) in 1926 there were 78.4 persons of dependent ages (0-14 and over 65 years). The pattern since then has not altered very much. The dependency figure dropped from 78.4 in 1926 to 64.1 in 1936 but by 1966 it had increased almost to former proportions (Table 6). The corresponding figure for the State in 1966 was 73.7. In Glenties there has been a fluctuating but general increase in both components of the dependent age groups. In relation to every 100 persons of

working age young dependants increased in number from 42.4 to 48.4 and old dependants from 21.6 to 28.9 during 1936-66. In absolute figures the number of young people of dependent age in Glenties in 1966 was 5,015 and the number of dependants of 65 years and over was 2,999.

TABLE 6—Dependency ratio—Glenties Rural District, 1926-66

Year	Young dependants (0-14 yr)	Old dependants (65 yr & over)	Total ¹
1926	55.6	22.7	78.4
1936	42.4	21.6	64.1
1946	44.6	25.3	69.9
1951	47.7	26.3	74.0
1961	51.5	26.7	78.2
1966	48.4	28.9	77.3

Source: Census of Population

•Persons of dependent age per 100 persons of working age.

The proportion of total population over 65 years is amongst the highest in the country (Table 5). It must also be remembered that as the income level in Glenties is not very high the burden in real terms is even greater than appears from these figures.

One problem in estimating the dependency burden in this manner is that the classification of people into working age and dependent age groups does not show the actual population engaged in producing goods and providing services and consequently cannot reveal the true burden of dependency. This method however does have the advantage of being comparable over time, since age limits can be accurately defined and held constant. A second method of calculating the dependency burden is to estimate the number of dependants per 100 persons classified for census purposes as at work. This method is very useful for describing the actual position at a particular point in time but definition of the working population may vary somewhat between one census and another. On this basis it was found that in Glenties in 1961, there were 196.8 dependants (persons other than those at work) per 100 workers.⁸ The figures for the rest of Donegal and for the State were 147.3 and 154.3 respectively.

It can be seen therefore, that the age structure in Glenties is unbalanced. Three main points emerge. First, the number of persons in the 0-14 age group has declined substantially and, compared with the other areas, Glenties has a small percentage of its population in this group. The decline in the number of children is mainly a consequence of the fall in the number of females aged 15-46 years. Second, Glenties has a higher proportion of old persons than the rest of Donegal county, the aggregate rural areas or the State. So while the proportions of the Glenties population of working and dependent ages are not very different from elsewhere (Table 5) the detailed breakdown of these categories shows that older persons are over-represented in both. Third, the ratio of actual workers to dependants shows that the true burden of dependency is abnormally high in Glenties.

¹Census of Population, special tabulation by C.S.O.

Female-male ratio

The sex distribution of any population is one of its fundamental demographic features. It has important implications for various aspects of social life including opportunities for marriage, which of course will influence the number of families and consequently the size of future population.

In the national population there has been an excess of males at each census since 1911. the number of females per 1,000 males varying from 952 in 1936 to 990 in 1966.⁹ In each of the provinces the sex ratio improved between 1951 and 1966. but only in Leinster was the number of females greater than the number of males. This is partly due to the high female-male ratio in Dublin city. An excess of males is exceptional by comparison with European countries where females generally outnumber males.

In Glenties there is a deficit of females, but the distribution of population between the sexes is, surprisingly, more balanced than in the rural areas generally. Ratios of females per 1,000 males in 1966 were as follows:

Glenties Rural District	957
Rest of Donegal Co.	951
Aggregate Rural Areas	891
State	990

As already shown, however, Glenties has an older population than the other areas and because of the longer life expectation among women they are more numerous in the older age groups. But even when selected age groups are compared separately Glenties has a more balanced sex ratio than the aggregate rural areas or (except for those aged 15-29) the rest of Donegal (Table 7). It is difficult to explain this unexpected feature of West Donegal's demographic structure. It is perhaps related to the area's tradition of seasonal migration. Although the current nature and volume of this movement cannot be accurately assessed it has been customary in the past for women to remain at home on the farm during the absence of their menfolk on seasonal work in Scotland or England.¹⁰

TABLE 7—Female-male ratio by age groups, 1966

Area	Females per 1,000 males in age groups (years)				
	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65 and over
Glenties R.D.	966	858	1,003	915	1,088
Rest of Donegal Co.	977	931	963	902	998
Aggregate Rural Areas	954	809	902	837	964
State	960	960	1,008	972	1,154

Source: Census of Population.

⁹ Census of Population, 1966, Vol. I, p. xi, Table II.

¹⁰ In 1966 there was a comparatively high number of women in Glenties whose husbands were not in the Rural District at the time of the census. The ratio of married females to married males was 1,047:1,000 compared to a corresponding ratio of 1,042:1,000 in the remainder of the county and 1,018:1,000 in rural areas generally.

Even among the single population West Donegal shows a more balanced distribution of population between the sexes than in the combined rural areas of the State (Table 8). Yet for all areas males predominate to a considerable extent. This imbalance, among other factors, tends to keep marriage rates low.

TABLE 8—Single female—single male ratio by selected age groups, 1966

Area	Females per 1,000 males in age groups (years)		
	15-24	25-34	35-44
Glenties R.D.	796	507	506
Rest of Donegal Co.	858	557	517
Aggregate Rural Areas	738	423	375
State	880	616	621

Source: Census of Population.

Marital status

Particulars of marriage rates as they are usually measured are not available by Rural District but a study of the marital status of persons in certain age groups gives an indication of marriage patterns (Table 9). Despite the comparatively more balanced sex ratio of its population West Donegal has lower proportions of its population married than the rest of the county or rural areas generally. This reflects the importance of other factors, besides even distribution between the sexes, in relation to the numbers who marry. Of relevance here are social class, occupation and opportunities for social life.

The percentage single in the 55-64 age group may be taken as an indication of the proportion who have passed the normal age for marriage but who have remained single. In 1966 West Donegal had 38.4% of males and 29.5% of females in this group who were single. The national percentages were 27.6% and 24.3% respectively.

TABLE 9—Marital status by age group (years), 1966

	15-30	30-44	45-59	All ages over 15
	<i>% males married</i>			
Glenties R.D.	6.7	48.8	59.1	420
Rest of Donegal Co.	9.4	54.5	60.8	426
Aggregate Rural Areas	8.0	51.8	62.3	435
State	13.6	63.8	68.8	482
	<i>% females married</i>			
Glenties R.D.	17.1	73.6	64.4	461
Rest of Donegal Co.	20.9	73.8	67.5	472
Aggregate Rural Areas	21.7	78.2	71.2	511
State	24.4	76.7	67.6	492

Source: Census of Population.

Distribution by branch of economic activity

Census returns classify the labour force under two separate headings, *viz.*, by occupation and according to the branch of economic activity at which workers are engaged. Thus in the latter breakdown, people with different occupations may be grouped into the same branch of economic activity as for example in the case of those engaged in manufacturing industries.

The economic structure of the West Donegal working population is predominantly agricultural (Table 10) with almost three-fifths of the labour force engaged in primary industry. The corresponding proportion in the rest of the county is just less than half. On the other hand approximately one-fifth of the workers in the survey area were in manufacturing or commercial activity as compared with one-quarter in the remainder of the county.

TABLE 10—Percentage distribution of working population, 1966

Branch of economic activity	Glenties R.D.	Rest of Donegal Co.	State
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	58.7	48.2	31.3
Manufacturing	11.2	12.6	18.6
Commerce, insurance & finance	8.6	12.3	15.6
Professions	5.6	6.4	8.8
Other	15.9	20.5	25.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census of Population—special tabulation made by C.S.O.

Of West Donegal's labour force of 7,115 persons at the 1966 Census, 683 (9.6%) described themselves as 'out of work'. The percentage so classified was even higher in 1961 (12.0%) but this was undoubtedly lowered by the very high migration rates (as judged by population decline) during the period 1961-66. The 1966 unemployment rate in West Donegal although no different from Donegal as a whole was just double the State figure. However, in a poor agricultural area like West Donegal many of those returned as at work are really not fully employed.

In terms of general economic comparisons between countries and regions there is an inverse correlation between income per head and the proportion of the economically active population working on the land. The proportion of the State population in agriculture is high by international comparisons¹¹ but the West Donegal figure is exceedingly so. It highlights a major problem in the survey area *viz.*, congestion on agricultural land. The density of agricultural population in relation to farming land is one of the highest in the country and the agricultural economy is one where farm outputs are small and family incomes well below national standards.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

To summarise the main results of the analysis of the demographic situation in West Donegal the following points may be made.

¹¹ See O'Carroll, Barbara M., *Econ. Res. Series* No. 14. An Foras Taluntais, Dublin, 1964.

1. Rather surprisingly, the long-term (1861-1966) population decline in Glenties Rural District was not altogether as severe as in the rest of the county or in the rural areas of the State. In fact it is only since 1926 that the rates of depopulation in West Donegal exceeded those for the other areas.
2. Population decline is proceeding at an increasing rate. With the exception of the years 1946-51 the rate of population loss increased with each intercensal period since 1926. The decline in 1961-66 was the highest relative to the total population of the area between census years since 1861.
3. The number of persons in the Rural District in 1966 was 18,380, about one-quarter less than in 1946. In the District Electoral Divisions, population loss between 1946 and 1966 ranged from 48.0% in Glenleheen to 6.1 % in Largymore. Only Killybegs showed an increase—8.0%. Seven of the eight D.E.D's with a population loss of over 33.0% during 1946-66 were situated in the northern part of the Rural District.
4. Variations in population changes are difficult to account for but they are undoubtedly related to the resource levels in local areas. An inverse rank correlation coefficient of -0.53 was found between the percentage loss of population by D.E.D. in 1946-66 and its valuation per 100 acres.
5. In marked contrast to the general trends in the Rural District, total town and village population showed a moderate increase, rising from 4,341 persons to 4,480 persons (3.2%) in 1956-66. Towns of over 500 inhabitants showed an even greater capacity for growth, increasing by 4.3% during that decade.
6. It was not possible to measure directly the extent of emigration or even net emigration from Glenties Rural District. Nevertheless, an indication of the effect of emigration on the population level was obtained by examining the changes over time in the numerical size of selected age groups. Considerable diminution of the number of persons in childhood age groups takes place as these go into the early adult years. Over two-thirds of the children have left the area by the time they reach their 30s. In the Dispensary Districts of Carrick, Doocharry, Dunglow and Ardara the relative declines are even higher.
7. There was a strong indication that virtually all emigrants have left the area by the age of 25.
8. As a consequence of the downward trend in the number of its inhabitants, the Glenties population is structurally unbalanced. Older age groups are over-represented compared to other areas and even the population of working age (15-64 years) shows a comparatively small percentage in the more active ages (15-44 years).
9. The burden of dependency carried by the workers is excessively high. For every 100 workers in Glenties there are 197 others whereas the corresponding figures in the rest of Donegal and in the State are 147 and 154 respectively.
10. The unemployment rate (as measured by the proportion of the labour force which described itself as 'out of work' at the 1966 Census) at 9.6% is high even by our national standards. Coupled with this is the fact that almost three-fifths of those at work were engaged in agriculture where incomes are relatively low.
11. Though an excess of males characterises the population of rural areas like West Donegal the sex ratio there is more balanced than in rural areas generally. This is not solely attributable to the older population of Glenties which would give females greater representation, because the West Donegal sex ratio is more

balanced even within selected age groups. Despite the more even distribution of population between the sexes in Glenties than in other areas, higher proportions of the Glenties population remain unmarried. Of those aged 55-64 years in 1966, 38.4% of males and 29.5% of females were single.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analysis of the demographic aspects of West Donegal gives conclusive evidence of a number of demographic problems in the area. The findings must be seriously considered not only because they reveal the situation in this area of 18,000 people, but also because West Donegal is broadly representative of other districts along the western seaboard and perhaps even of isolated areas in inland counties.

The developmental prospects, economically and socially, of such places depend considerably on the population base. Numerical size is only one aspect of population resources; equally important is the distribution of persons between age groups, between workers and dependants, among various occupations, and over different types and sizes of community. All these will determine manpower potential for economic activity and also the requirements in education, housing, social amenities and services.

To state a general conclusion, there seems little hope for the stabilisation of the population level in Glenties Rural District over the next decade. The reversal of trends that have persisted since at least the middle of the last century would constitute a spectacular demographic development. The steadily increasing momentum of depopulation over the last 20 years suggests that many local areas have now a natural decrease in their inhabitants and consequently an immediate cessation of emigration would not bring about an instant rise in population. Indeed many such localities might have relatively few emigrants or potential emigrants but instead a 'residual' population for whom movement from the area by the usual migratory patterns is unlikely.

Yet taken in aggregate the population of the Glenties Rural District has within itself the capacity for replacement over the next generation. On this point one must have regard, not to the natural increase, but to the female net reproduction rate. This is a hypothetical figure but is an accepted statistical index of a population's potential for renewal. It implies that if the number of infant girls being born each year is sufficient to allow just enough to survive (at current rates of mortality) to replace the women now at the reproductive age group then the reproduction rate is unity and the population can maintain itself. This index is based on the assumption that of 1,000 infant girls born those who do not die in the interim period will possibly become mothers in the place of their birth.¹²

The estimated annual number of female births in Glenties Rural District in 1966 was obtained by taking those aged under one year at the time of the Census. The number of such persons was 156 and when current national mortality rates¹³ were applied to this figure it was estimated that it would be reduced to 144 at the end of the reproductive age span *i.e.*, at the age of 45. As the average number of females per year of age in the 15-44 age group was 89.3 and with a current female survival rate of 144 per year the net reproduction rate is therefore 1.61. Thus Glenties has a margin of

¹¹ Different forms of the reproduction rate are given in demographic textbooks. The calculation here is based on that shown in Cox, P.R., 'Demography'. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 182-183, 1959.

¹³ In 1964 the female mortality rates per 1,000 of all females in age groups 0-44 were as follows: under 5 yr, 5.82; 5-9 yr, 0.40; 10-14 yr, 0.35; 15-19 yr, 0.44; 20-24 yr, 0.56; 25-34 yr, 1.05; 35-44 yr, 2.06. See 'Report on Vital Statistics 1964*'. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1966.

1. Rather surprisingly, the long-term (1861-1966) population decline in Glenties Rural District was not altogether as severe as in the rest of the county or in the rural areas of the State. In fact it is only since 1926 that the rates of depopulation in West Donegal exceeded those for the other areas.
2. Population decline is proceeding at an increasing rate. With the exception of the years 1946-51 the rate of population loss increased with each intercensal period since 1926. The decline in 1961-66 was the highest relative to the total population of the area between census years since 1861.
3. The number of persons in the Rural District in 1966 was 18,380, about one-quarter less than in 1946. In the District Electoral Divisions, population loss between 1946 and 1966 ranged from 48.0% in Glenleheen to 6.1 % in Largymore. Only Killybegs showed an increase—8.0 %. Seven of the eight D.E.D's with a population loss of over 33.0% during 1946-66 were situated in the northern part of the Rural District.
4. Variations in population changes are difficult to account for but they are undoubtedly related to the resource levels in local areas. An inverse rank correlation coefficient of -0.53 was found between the percentage loss of population by D.E.D. in 1946-66 and its valuation per 100 acres.
5. In marked contrast to the general trends in the Rural District, total town and village population showed a moderate increase, rising from 4,341 persons to 4,480 persons (3.2%) in 1956-66. Towns of over 500 inhabitants showed an even greater capacity for growth, increasing by 4.3% during that decade.
6. It was not possible to measure directly the extent of emigration or even net emigration from Glenties Rural District. Nevertheless, an indication of the effect of emigration on the population level was obtained by examining the changes over time in the numerical size of selected age groups. Considerable diminution of the number of persons in childhood age groups takes place as these go into the early adult years. Over two-thirds of the children have left the area by the time they reach their 30s. In the Dispensary Districts of Carrick, Doocharry, Dunglow and Ardara the relative declines are even higher.
7. There was a strong indication that virtually all emigrants have left the area by the age of 25.
8. As a consequence of the downward trend in the number of its inhabitants, the Glenties population is structurally unbalanced. Older age groups are over-represented compared to other areas and even the population of working age (15-64 years) shows a comparatively small percentage in the more active ages (15-44 years).
9. The burden of dependency carried by the workers is excessively high. For every 100 workers in Glenties there are 197 others whereas the corresponding figures in the rest of Donegal and in the State are 147 and 154 respectively.
10. The unemployment rate (as measured by the proportion of the labour force which described itself as 'out of work' at the 1966 Census) at 9.6% is high even by our national standards. Coupled with this is the fact that almost three-fifths of those at work were engaged in agriculture where incomes are relatively low.
11. Though an excess of males characterises the population of rural areas like West Donegal the sex ratio there is more balanced than in rural areas generally. This is not solely attributable to the older population of Glenties which would give females greater representation, because the West Donegal sex ratio is more

balanced even within selected age groups. Despite the more even distribution of population between the sexes in Glenties than in other areas, higher proportions of the Glenties population remain unmarried. Of those aged 55-64 years in 1966, 38.4% of males and 29.5% of females were single.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analysis of the demographic aspects of West Donegal gives conclusive evidence of a number of demographic problems in the area. The findings must be seriously considered not only because they reveal the situation in this area of 18,000 people, but also because West Donegal is broadly representative of other districts along the western seaboard and perhaps even of isolated areas in inland counties.

The developmental prospects, economically and socially, of such places depend considerably on the population base. Numerical size is only one aspect of population resources; equally important is the distribution of persons between age groups, between workers and dependants, among various occupations, and over different types and sizes of community. All these will determine manpower potential for economic activity and also the requirements in education, housing, social amenities and services.

To state a general conclusion, there seems little hope for the stabilisation of the population level in Glenties Rural District over the next decade. The reversal of trends that have persisted since at least the middle of the last century would constitute a spectacular demographic development. The steadily increasing momentum of depopulation over the last 20 years suggests that many local areas have now a natural decrease in their inhabitants and consequently an immediate cessation of emigration would not bring about an instant rise in population. Indeed many such localities might have relatively few emigrants or potential emigrants but instead a 'residual' population for whom movement from the area by the usual migratory patterns is unlikely.

Yet taken in aggregate the population of the Glenties Rural District has within itself the capacity for replacement over the next generation. On this point one must have regard, not to the natural increase, but to the female net reproduction rate. This is a hypothetical figure but is an accepted statistical index of a population's potential for renewal. It implies that if the number of infant girls being born each year is sufficient to allow just enough to survive (at current rates of mortality) to replace the women now at the reproductive age group then the reproduction rate is unity and the population can maintain itself. This index is based on the assumption that of 1,000 infant girls born those who do not die in the interim period will possibly become mothers in the place of their birth.¹

The estimated annual number of female births in Glenties Rural District in 1966 was obtained by taking those aged under one year at the time of the Census. The number of such persons was 156 and when current national mortality rates¹³ were applied to this figure it was estimated that it would be reduced to 144 at the end of the reproductive age span *i.e.*, at the age of 45. As the average number of females per year of age in the 15-44 age group was 89.3 and with a current female survival rate of 144 per year the net reproduction rate is therefore 1.61. Thus Glenties has a margin of

¹ Different forms of the reproduction rate are given in demographic textbooks. The calculation here is based on that shown in Cox, P.R., 'Demography'. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 182-183, 1959.

¹³ In 1964 the female mortality rates per 1,000 of all females in age groups 0-44 were as follows: under 5 yr, 5.82; 5-9 yr, 0.40; 10-14 yr, 0.35; 15-19 yr, 0.44; 20-24 yr, 0.56; 25-34 yr, 1.05; 35-44 yr, 2.06. See 'Report on Vital Statistics 1964'. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1966.

about three-fifths over the numerical requirements theoretically needed for replacement of its present population.

Obviously, this kind of calculation ignores the crucial factor of emigration—the dominant factor affecting population levels in Glenties.¹⁴ As shown earlier, 68-70% of young women leave the area and certainly while such conditions prevail there can only be further and rapid diminution of population.

Yet with some emigration, even up to one-third of each age cohort,¹⁵ population levels could be maintained and a better structure achieved. The present imbalance in age structure would not continue. The heavy preponderance of older persons now in the area would give way to the age cohorts severely diminished by heavy migration (those currently aged 20-35) and produce a more favourably balanced age composition among the area's inhabitants.

And even if population size were to be stabilised in the aggregate, at whatever level, there is little hope that each local area will conserve its own numbers. West Donegal is by no means homogeneous in its natural resources. The analysis by District Electoral Division showed that population decline in 1946-66 varied from 6% to 48% between localities: the rate of decline can generally be related to economic resources. Furthermore, the recent (1956-66) rise in the numbers living in towns—especially in those of more than 500 inhabitants—when the area as a whole had its highest percentage population losses since 1861 indicates that Glenties and similar areas must look to the potential of the larger rural towns in considering development prospects.

Generally speaking it could be said that West Donegal has localities where the production potential is so poor as to offer little possibility of supporting viable¹⁶ communities, as people's notions of essential needs and living requirements are bound to change. Other localities, even if more favoured with physical resources, are geographically isolated and thus will find it difficult to maintain population because many of the facilities associated with present day community life will be inadequate or permanently lacking. Many localities, however, would probably fall into a third group where integrated development of available resources would permit stabilisation of population at the present level or at points not too far below it. Finally, there are those localities where better utilisation of production factors or the introduction of new economic activities would support a larger population than at present.

Recognition of the existence of these quite different localities is important in the design of any development programme. The fundamental consideration is whether development objectives should be aimed at conserving the population in all local areas or whether development resources should be allocated to the majority or even a minority of specially selected areas with consequent redistribution of population. The latter approach offers a better chance of success and an earlier realisation of development objectives. Furthermore, while essential elements of a programme of development would include general economic measures, social improvements and social welfare schemes, these would be different in kind and scale for the different areas.

At this point it might be asked what it is that is so undesirable about a declining population and whether the stabilisation of population levels in an area like West

¹⁴ The index also neglects the influence of changes in marriage rates and in the age at marriage.

¹⁵ A decline of one-third on a reproduction rate of 1.61 would still give a rate higher than unity.

¹⁶ According to one author "a local community is viable when it gives the human group a level of amenities and a pattern of social relations which satisfy the aspirations generated by comparing the local situation with that of 'reference groups'." Constandse, A. K., *Sociologia Ruralis* 2:82, 1962.

Donegal is a worthy object in itself. The analysis showed that the long term trends in Glenties were part of, and no worse than, the general movement of persons from rural areas in the State. And perhaps a much smaller Glenties population than at present would be the most appropriate in relation to the opportunities for livelihood. Any conception of what is desirable or best in this context is ultimately based on values and beliefs but without discussing these intangible questions a number of points can be made.

The positive relationship between economic growth and the decline of the labour force in agriculture (with consequent depopulation of the open countryside) is well established, particularly at national level and over the long term. It must be recognised, however, that over the short term the process has its disruptive consequences for the rural economy, especially farming, in more remote districts. Referring to the deleterious effects of the movement from agriculture a report of the International Labour Office stated the problem succinctly: "These may arise not from the change itself, but from the way in which it takes place. "How" is as important as "why"; and "how"—the short term change—may be wasteful and harmful, even if "why"—the long term adjustment—is economic and beneficial".¹⁷

The present analysis has confirmed that rural depopulation implies a selective out-flow leaving the rural area to older people. New industries may be discouraged from locating in an area with a high proportion of older and less adaptable people. Previous investment becomes redundant and even resources that could be used do not come under the control of the residual population (see next section—Sociological Aspects) but become derelict and add to the general deterioration of the physical environment. A declining population faces rising costs per head in supporting essential services and although modern transport overcomes the effects of falling population density the expense involved becomes an important item in living costs. Even if a falling population can realise higher incomes than formerly these may still be inadequate, as in an age of rising expectations comparisons are made not with any previously existing standards, but with the prevalent norms in other segments of the contemporary population. A central problem is that the 'optimum' population, as assessed by some economic yardstick, may very well be below (a) the social minimum allowing for a full social life at reasonable economic cost, or (b) the demographic minimum essential for the dynamics of population replacement to operate successfully for the maintenance of population size.¹⁸

All the discussion so far has considered West Donegal as a separate area but population problems do not necessarily have their origins or their solutions within a geographically isolated setting. Perhaps for West Donegal, its future population size, distribution and structure is more appropriately planned for in a county or regional context. Adverse demographic conditions in West Donegal or anywhere else are really only symptoms of underlying economic and social problems and can only be changed by correcting these more basic difficulties. Such problems affect all Western areas to some extent and their solution in any particular area is better attempted as part of a comprehensive regional development plan incorporating agricultural, industrial, social and social welfare policy.

Two final points may be made. The first concerns the manner in which demographic statistics are compiled and made available publicly. It is unfortunate that births and

¹⁷ International Labour Office, 'Why Labour Leaves the Land'. I.L.O., Geneva, p. 2. 1960.

¹⁸ See Cepede, M., in 'Regional Rural Development Programmes'. Report of Seminar held in Paris, October 1963. OECD, Paris, 1964.

deaths, assigned to place of residence, are not issued for Rural or Dispensary Districts as these statistics would enable researchers to make a more accurate assessment of the demographic elements in population change and their relative importance in local rural areas. It will be recalled that in the present case it was not possible to show migration trends in the usual way. Marriage registration statistics allocated to the area of residence of the groom could also be made available so as to give a more realistic indication of rural marriage rates.

Secondly, as this analysis focused mainly on current demographic conditions in West Donegal it had to leave unanswered a somewhat academic question. Why did the rate of depopulation in Glenties Rural District remain comparatively low in the last century and then accelerate to continue increasing rapidly since 1926?

APPENDIX

TABLE I—Change in county population, 1926-66

County	1926	1966	Decrease per cent (+ = increase)
Leitrim ...	55,907	30,572	45.3
Cavan ...	82,452	54,022	34.5
Mayo ...	172,690	115,547	33.1
Roscommon ...	83,556	56,228	32.7
Monaghan ...	65,131	45,732	29.8
Donegal ...	152,508	108,549	28.8
Sligo ...	71,388	51,263	28.2
Longford ...	39,847	28,989	27.2
Kerry ...	149,171	112,785	24.4
Clare ...	95,064	73,597	22.6
Kilkenny ...	70,990	60,463	14.8
Laois ...	51,540	44,595	13.5
Wexford ...	95,848	83,437	12.9
Tipperary ...	141,015	122,812	12.9
Galway ...	169,366	148,340	12.4
Cork ...	365,747	339,703	7.1
Waterford ...	78,562	73,080	7.0
Westmeath ...	56,818	52,900	6.9
Carlow ...	34,476	33,593	2.6
Limerick ...	140,343	137,357	2.1
Offaly ...	52,592	51,717	1.7
Wicklow ...	57,591	60,428	+4.9
Meath ...	62,969	67,323	+6.9
Louth ...	62,739	69,519	+ 10.8
Kildare ...	58,028	66,404	+ 14.4
Dublin ...	505,654	795,047	+57.2

Source: Census of Population.

TABLE II—Index of population change, 1861-1966

Area	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1926	1936	1946	1951	1956	1961	1966
Glenties R.D.	100	95.1	94.1	85.8	83.2	82.2	75.4	69.1	62.1	59.1	54.8	50.7	46.0
Rest of Donegal Co.	100	91.3	85.3	76.7	71.2	68.7	62.0	58.1	56.5	54.7	50.7	47.4	45.7
Donegal County	100	92.0	86.8	78.2	73.2	71.0	64.2	60.0	57.4	55.4	51.4	48.0	45.7
Aggregate Rural Areas	100	90.0	84.9	74.6	66.6	63.3	57.8	54.5	52.5	49.4	45.9	43.3	41.8
State	100	92.1	87.9	78.8	73.2	71.3	67.5	67.4	67.1	67.3	65.8	64.0	65.5

Source: Census of Population.

TABLE III—Average annual decline in population (I ^increase) per 1,000 of the average population in each intercensal period since 1861

Area	1861-71	1871-81	1881-91	1891-1901	1901-11	1911-26	1926-36	1936-46	1946-51	1951-56	1956-61	1961-66
Glenties R.D.	5.1	1.0	9.3	3.0	1.2	5.8	8.7	10.7	9.8	15.2	15.5	19.1
Rest of Donegal Co.	9.0	6.8	10.7	7.5	3.5	6.9	6.5	2.8	6.6	14.9	13.6	7.5
Donegal County.	8.4	5.8	10.4	6.6	3.0	6.7	6.9	4.3	7.1	14.9	13.9	9.5
Aggregate Rural Areas	10.5	6.4	12.7	11.4	5.0	6.0	5.8	3.7	12.3	14.4	12.0	7.2
State	8.3	4.6	10.9	7.4	2.6	3.7	0.1	0.4	+0.4	4.3	5.6	+4.6

Source: Census of Population.

TABLE IV—Population change in Glenties by District Electoral Division,
1946-66

D.E.D.	1946	1966	Decrease per cent (+=increase)
Glenleheen	568	295	48.0
Doocharry	217	118	45.6
Tieveskeelta	234	129	44.8
Maghery	1,312	725	44.7
Crovehy	434	248	42.8
Aran	1,408	847	39.8
Annagary	2,801	1,725	38.4
Rutland	2,177	1,403	35.6
Graffy	702	469	33.1
Fintown	500	342	31.6
Dawros	895	616	31.1
Maas	415	297	28.4
Lettermacaward	1,125	812	27.8
Mulmosog	380	277	27.1
Kilgoly	791	605	23.5
Crowkeeragh	324	250	22.8
Glengesh	880	690	21.5
Glencolumbkille	1,049	832	20.7
Malinbeg	519	421	18.9
Glenties	1,824	1,527	16.3
Kilcar	815	693	14.9
Dunglow	1,564	1,335	14.6
Inishkeel	295	258	12.5
Crownarad	273	241	11.7
Ardara	1,270	1,146	9.8
Largymore	554	520	6.1
Killybegs	1,443	1,559	+ 8.0

Source: Census of Population.

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

General Background

by
P. COMMINS*

INTRODUCTION

Although the widespread existence of low-production farms and low-income rural families, particularly in the western region, has been known for a long time, these have become the cause of increasing concern within recent years. However, much of the public discussion has necessarily been unqualified and inconclusive because of the relatively little information available on the various dimensions of the general problem. While broad similarity in social and economic conditions can be found within regional limits, there are also notable differences between individual Rural Districts within the same region. In most cases the variation may be one of degree, such as a difference in the extent of congestion on agricultural land, but there are also areas which have singular characteristics. In the West for example, seasonal migration is a feature of Belmullet and Glenties; dairying is important in Dingle but non-existent in most other peninsular areas; inland areas have no share in the fishing industry; and Irish is the language of the home in some areas but not in others. Knowledge of the range of particular circumstances among local areas and understanding of how these are compounded in the general regional problem are essential to the formulation of improvement policies.

West Donegal represents one of the more critical types of rural area as measured by the usual indicators. In the 1965 Agricultural Enumeration, Glenties Rural District had 75 % of its area classified as non-agricultural land (*i.e.*, land exclusive of crops, hay and pasture), this being mainly bogland and grazed and barren mountain. Population density in relation to agricultural land is high—28 persons per 100 acres compared with 18 in the entire western region in 1966. Size of holding is small, almost three-quarters of the total being between 1 and 30 acres. Analysis of the demographic situation in the previous section of this report showed a rising depopulation rate and a number of adverse features in population structure.

This was the background against which social conditions in West Donegal were examined. The succeeding section will present the results of a survey of selected sociological aspects of the Glenties area with particular reference to the operation of family farms as a means of livelihood and the main constituent elements in the social environment of the community.

*Rural Sociology and Home Economics Department, Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taliintais

PURPOSE. SCOPE AND METHOD

An essential prerequisite to introducing change in any situation is a clear recognition of what has to be changed. In terms of economic and social development the more effective plans are likely to be those which are based on detailed and precise knowledge of existing conditions. Although certain social problems are commonly known to typify areas like West Donegal, these problems are not always clearly identified in the context of their local setting nor are their extent and influence adequately stated.

The general purpose of this survey, therefore, was to describe and analyse selected sociological aspects of the Glenties Rural District with a view to establishing a better understanding of the area's main social problems. It did not attempt to provide a fully inclusive study by examining the total complex of topics of sociological relevance and presenting a comprehensive picture of the area's community life. More specifically, the study was focused primarily on the family farm household and its social environment while also collecting supplementary information on salient aspects of the community's social life and organisation. There are few occupations in which the link between the living unit and the business unit is as strong as in agriculture. The domestic circumstances of the farm family household greatly influence the integration of resources for production on the farm, particularly in a small-farming economy like that of West Donegal. At the same time efficiency in working the holding ensures the satisfaction of household needs and generally makes for better family living conditions. In order to complement the physical and financial records obtained for a sample of landholders (see foregoing economics sections), the study appraised a number of sociological factors at the family farm household level which were considered to have a bearing on the operation of the holding.

Matters of direct concern to the community in general such as changes in the educational system, including the trends in participation in different educational levels (primary, secondary, *etc.*), the pattern of local participation in voluntary community organisations, aspects of social security, the extent to which domestic piped water and sanitary facilities were available were also studied.

The findings of the survey were organised under three separate headings as follows:

1. sociological conditions among farm families. The information here was obtained from field surveys involving a random sample of landholders.
2. aspects of the social services. The statistical data required under this heading were extracted from official publications and unpublished statistics obtained from various secondary sources.
3. participation in voluntary organisations. This study was undertaken and reported on in co-operation with Muintir na Tire. It was based on a field survey conducted among elected officers of local voluntary organisations.

The sociological survey report is presented in three sections corresponding to the above headings; the general discussion and conclusions are contained in a final section.

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

1. Sociological conditions among farm families

by

P. COMMINS

SAMPLE AND UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The Glenties Rural District contains six Dispensary Districts and within each of these, there are three to six District Electoral Divisions (D.E.D.). From each Dispensary District two D.E.D's were chosen at random. From the lists of occupiers of land holdings in these areas 96 names were drawn randomly in each of the five size categories: 1-15 acres; 15-29 acres; 30-49 acres; 50-99 acres and 100 and over. This gave 480 holdings or 10.7% of all the holdings over one acre in the Rural District in 1960.

The unit of analysis was, in the first instance, the farm manager or operator, that is, the person responsible for the major decisions on the farm such as planning farm operations or selling farm produce. Identification of the farm manager then made possible the study of the farm business and the social conditions in the farm household.

On many Irish holdings, the occupier or manager may not be the person with legal title to the holding nor the person listed as the occupier for local taxation purposes. Changes in management are not always accompanied by legal transfer of the farm property or by changes in occupancy, and, even if they were, it takes time for the changes to appear on official lists. Any enumeration of land owners or occupiers is, therefore, likely to be out of date at a particular time. Nevertheless, a list of occupiers of land holdings serves to locate a specific holding and the identity of the actual holder can be ascertained during an interview visit. Where the holding is being farmed, the identity of the farm manager can be established. This was the procedure adopted in this survey.

COLLECTION OF DATA

This study was carried out on a co-operative basis with the Farm Management Department of An Foras Taluntais. The conventional farm accounts investigation was used to ascertain the quantitative returns from the farm business and their value, and the sociological enquiry obtained information on the farm manager and the farm household. Previous studies in similar areas had shown that a high proportion of those selected from a list of landholders would have to be eliminated from the study where the research focused on the operation of the holding as a farm and as the primary source of income for the household.

In the present case, households were not regarded as farming households if the farm manager considered that his income from the holding was less than that obtained

from other sources. It was decided, therefore, that a preliminary interview, for which a short schedule was completed, would be used to locate each holding, ascertain who was the occupier or the farm manager, obtain some particulars of the holding and household, eliminate the non-farmers and those who farmed but did not regard themselves as depending primarily on the farm and enlist the co-operation of the remainder for subsequent interviews.

Participation in the farm management part of this joint project entailed the completion of a farm account book covering farm business transactions over one full year. Farmers were visited every 2 months to ensure accurate recording. All farm visits—seven in all to each farmer—were made by the Institute's field recording staff. During the first round of visits (in June 1965) they obtained interviews with the original sample of landholders and completed the preliminary schedule. On their fourth visit (March 1966) they introduced a more comprehensive schedule of questions on sociological aspects of the farm enterprise and domestic situation.

ANALYSIS I—PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

Of the total sample list of 480 landholders, 478 were located or their whereabouts otherwise established. The preliminary round of visits showed that 186 of those listed or 38.8 % of the total sample would not participate in the major part of the study, for various reasons to be shown presently. Table 1 shows sample numbers for each holding-size group, the totals for all groups, and the percentages which these totals would represent in the total population, *i.e.*, among all landlords. As equal sized samples were drawn from each of the five holding size categories, the sample percentage within each category was adjusted by a weighting factor which took into account the distribution of the total number of holdings over the relevant size groups. The summation of these adjusted figures over all holding sizes gives the population (as distinct from the sample) percentage for any chosen characteristic. Thus the 38.8% of the sample represents in fact 44.0% of the entire number of holdings.

TABLE 1—Particulars of landholders (non-participants)

Particulars of landholders	Size of holding (acres)					Total number	Percent of all landholders
	1-15	15-30	30-50	50-100	100+		
Emigrated	9	7	5	2	10	33	7.8
Migrated	3	3	1	2	4	13	2.9
Incapacitated	.14	13	15	4	14	60	13.5
Deceased	3	6	5	5	2	21	4.0
Other occupation	.15	10	7	5	6	43	12.0
Other	5	—	—	6	5	16	3.8
Total	.49	39	33	24	41	186	44.0
n	.96	95	95	96	96	478	
Total as % of n ...	.51	41	35	25	43	39	

Table 1 gives particulars of current or previous landholders in the case of the 186 non-participants at the time of the preliminary interview. The overall percentages

give striking evidence of acute sociological problems in the farming economy of West Donegal. Although lists of landholders are normally somewhat out-of-date Table 1 shows very high proportions of holdings which are not farmed even within the widest sense of the term. The overall percentages show that 14.7% of landholders had died or vacated the holding. An arbitrary distinction is made for present purposes between 'emigrated' which is used to mean having left the country, and 'migrated' to indicate those who have left the holdings but have not settled abroad. A further 13.5% were incapacitated because of old age or infirmity while 12.0% worked full-time at an occupation other than farming.

The figures in Table 1 must be taken in conjunction with those in Table 2 giving particulars of land use on the part of the 186 initial non-respondents. In spite of the high numbers who were unable to participate in the major part of the survey for reasons other than mere unwillingness to co-operate, comparatively few had relinquished their holding either by letting or sale. Only 3.5% of all holdings had been

TABLE 2—Particulars of land use classified by holding size (non-participants)

Particulars of land use	Size of holding (acres)					Total number	Percent of all holdings
	1-15	15-30	30-50	50-100	100+		
Let	9	10	10	3	7	39	9.0
Sold	4	—	3	6	4	17	3.5
Unused	12	14	7	5	9	47	11.4
Farmed	23	14	10	7	16	70	18.6
Other	1	1	3	3	5	13	1.9
Total	49	39	33	24	41	186	44.4
n	96	95	95	96	96	478	
Total as % of n ...	51	41	35	25	43	39	

sold, and a further 9.0% had let their land. The 11.4% where the land was considered to be unused were described variously by recorders as 'abandoned', 'derelict', 'idle'. *etc.* Although 18.6% were returned as 'farmed' this is really a consequence of the difficulty of fitting farms into categories other than let, sold or unused, and in many cases is a more than generous description of the management of the holdings concerned. Due to the variety of *ad hoc* arrangements under which vacated holdings are used it is not possible, in a few cases, to be sure whether land was let in a legal sense or farmed by a neighbour or relative on the basis of some informal agreement.

A cross tabulation showing particulars of landholders in relation to the use made of their land is shown in Appendix, Table 1. This shows that of the 46 non-respondents who emigrated or migrated. 4 had sold their holdings, 12 holdings were let while the holdings of 22 had remained unused. Of the 60 landholders regarded as physically incapacitated, 29 were no longer farming their land but only 15 of these had disposed of the holding by selling or letting. The remaining 14 holdings were unused and indeed the same could almost be said of the 26 which were classified as farmed.

Personal characteristics of landholders

Out of the total of 478 possible respondents 10 were outright refusals. Besides those 10 which were non-cooperative from the initial stage, there was a further 73 for

whom no information was made available other than particulars of the whereabouts of the landholder and how the land was being used. The remaining 395¹ landholders were analysed according to personal characteristics and household composition, and the economic characteristics of their holdings. Table 3 shows age and marital status. The percentages shown are those for the total sample to take into account the representation of the different holding size groups in the total population of landholders.

TABLE 3—Age and marital status of landholders (n=395)

Age group (years)	% of all landholders	% of all landholders single
Under 30	1.3	1.1
30-39	6.5	1.6
40-49	29.2	10.6
50-59	25.1	6.5
60-69	19.4	8.4
70 and over	18.5	5.3
Total	100.0	33.5

The western areas have an older population than the rest of the State; they have also a lower marriage rate and a higher proportion of people who remain unmarried. As an occupational group, farmers are older than other categories of workers. In 1961, 40.5% of all gainfully occupied persons in the State were over 45 years but 77.0% of farmers were over this age. The proportion was 80.0% in Donegal county. Furthermore, whereas approximately one-quarter of the nation's farmers over 45 were unmarried the corresponding fraction in Donegal was about one-third.

Considered in this light the age and marital status of the West Donegal landholders do not show any exceptional features. Approximately one-third (33.5%) were single. Those unmarried, however, were not concentrated in the lower age groups (under 50 years): about one-third of persons over 50 years old were single.

Thus on demographic grounds alone it can be said that the decline in the agricultural population in West Donegal will continue. A corollary of this is that a number of holdings will cease to be operated as separate farms. Judged from the foregoing, the re-arrangement of farm structure, particularly in regard to the re-allocation of vacated holdings, takes place too haphazardly to make the farm economy more viable, or as remunerative as possible for those who will remain in agriculture. It was shown (Table 2) that while 56 of the sample holdings were let or sold almost as many—47—lay derelict.

Characteristics of households and holdings

Household size and composition: The distribution of landholders' households in the survey area according to size is shown in Table 4.

¹ These were distributed over the acreage size groups as follows: 1-15 acres, 81; 15-30 acres, 75; 30-50 acres, 82; 50-100 acres, 82; 100+ acres, 75.

TABLE 4—Household size and composition among landholders (n=395)

No. of persons	Percent of all landholders' households	% in rural areas of State ¹
1	15.9	13.1
2	26.5	20.7
3 or 4	31.3	31.6
5 or 6	13.4	19.2
Over 6	12.9	15.4
Total	100.0	100.0

¹ See *Ir. statist. Bull.* Sept. 1966, Table 2c, p. 156.

Compared with the aggregate rural areas of the State (1961 Census) smaller households were relatively more numerous in the population surveyed. In West Donegal, households with 1 or 2 persons represented 42.4% of the total compared to 33.8% in rural areas generally; the average size of household was 3.52 and 3.96 persons respectively. The smaller household in the survey area is undoubtedly a consequence of the area's heavy population decline in recent years and the high incidence of bachelor households.

Examination of households according to age composition (Table 5) shows that slightly less than one out of three had children under 15 years whereas over half had persons over the age of 60. On average, households had less than one person under 15 years, this being lower than the national average for rural areas.² Sixteen percent of households had no person in the most active working ages, a fact which can be associated with the high proportion of unworked holdings.

TABLE 5—Age composition of landholders' households (n=395)

<i>Households with:</i>	% of all households	Average no. per household
Children under 15 years	32	0.98
Persons 15-59 years	84	1.82
Persons 60 years and over	54	0.72
All persons		3.52

When the age distribution of total persons in the survey households was compared with that of the Glenties Rural District population of 1961 and the aggregate rural

² In 1961 there were 1.24 persons under 15 years per household in the aggregate rural areas. This figure slightly overstates the true number, however, as it includes those children not living in private households.

population of the same year, the population surveyed was found to be older even though these other populations were themselves old by national standards.³

Fragmentation: The fragmentation of holdings has often been advanced as one of the structural defects in the farming economy, though its extent and implications under different farming conditions have not been fully established. In a study undertaken in the western counties⁴ it was shown that 47 % of all holdings over 5 acres were fragmented; of these, 64.5% were fragmented holdings in two parts and 8.2% in five parts or more.

In the present survey the proportion of fragmented holdings was of the same order—45%—but the degree of fragmentation was greater (Table 6): 47.2 % of fragmented holdings were composed of two parcels whereas 23.1 % had five or more parts.

TABLE 6—Distribution of fragmented holdings by number of separate parts
(n=395)

No. of parts in holding	% of total
2	47.2
3	23.7
4	6.0
5 and over	23.1
Total	100.0

Economic characteristics: At the preliminary interview respondents were also asked about the main economic characteristics of their holdings (stock carried, crops sown, etc.) as these were to be used to determine which holdings were farmed on a commercial basis. From these were selected those holdings where farming was the operator's main source of livelihood. This gave 292 respondents who were considered to be farming households.

A full account of the farm management study is given elsewhere in the report. Here a summary of the economic characteristics of 290 of those farm holdings (information was incomplete for two farms) is presented because (a) it refers to practically the total number of farmers in the survey and not just to those who eventually completed the farm management study and (b) its inclusion helps to give a more complete socio-economic picture of the farming economy of West Donegal.

Table 7 shows that on average a farm in West Donegal consists of about 7 acres of crops and pasture land, 6 cattle (cows and other cattle), 24 sheep and farm machinery valued at £10. There are variations, of course, between farm sizes though the differences

Age group	Percentage in		
	Aggregate rural areas	Glenties R.D.	Survey sample
0-14	30.6	28.8	28.0
15-59	51.3	52.8	51.4
60 and over	18.1	20.4	20.6

See Census of Population 1961, Vol. II.

* Scully, J. J., 'Western Development—The Problem in Perspective'. Paper read at the Annual Technical Conference of the Agricultural Science Association, Galway, September 1967.

are greatest in the case of sheep and farm machinery. There was relatively small variation between size groups in their acreage of crops and pasture which indicates that the bigger acreage consisted primarily of rough grazing or barren land. On the latter farms sheep numbers were highest. Only 37 % of farms had any sheep whereas virtually all had cows or other cattle. Farm machinery worth recording was non-existent on all but 36% of farms. Its average value, which is extremely low for any farming situation, would be considerably less but for the comparatively few who owned tractors.

TABLE 7—Summary of economic characteristics

Particulars of holding	Size of holding (acres)					All holdings
	1-15	15-30	30-50	50-100	100+	
n	48	56	62	67	57	290
Percent with crops and pasture:	100.0	98.2	97.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average acres	7.3	5.6	7.4	9.7	8.7	7.3
Median acres	4.4	4.9	5.5	7.0	6.0	
Percent with cattle	93.7	98.2	100.0	98.5	100.0	97.0
Average no.	4.9	4.9	8.1	9.5	8.4	5.9
Median no.	4.0	4.0	7.0	7.0	6.0	
Percent with sheep	29.1	26.8	53.2	52.3	80.7	37.0
Average no.	22.9	11.1	28.1	24.4	58.5	24.0
Median no.	0.0	0.0	8.0	35.0	54.0	
Percent with farm machinery	31.3	33.9	41.9	47.8	56.1	36.0
Average value (£)	2.9	1.3	29.2	26.8	27.6	9.9
Median value (£)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	

Use of advisory services

One further question was asked of these 292 respondents who were operating farms. As it is a good indication of the more progressive farmer they were asked how much they used the agricultural advisory service. Asked to name their local adviser, 48 % gave the name of one of the persons on the current list of advisory officers for the area.⁵ Of these, 74%, or one-third of the total number, had an adviser on their farm within the 3 years previous to the survey.

Summary of Analysis I

Summarising, therefore, we can say that this sample of landholders shows:

- 1) Many vacated and derelict holdings.
- 2) A high proportion of incapacitated persons in occupation of holdings and a comparatively old population on the land.
- 3) Many holdings which will cease to be operated as individual units because one-third of holders over 50 years were single.
- 4) A possibility that more land will become derelict with further fragmentation on the already high rate of parcelling.
- 5) Smaller than average household size.
- 6) Poor resources for farming and farming on a small or close to subsistence scale.
- 7) Incomplete use of available advisory services.

⁵ Includes both Agricultural Instructors and Parish Agricultural Advisory Agents.

ANALYSIS II—THE SECOND INTERVIEW

While the preliminary study was mainly concerned with differentiating between main groups of landholders on the basis of how land was used, the subsequent study was designed to examine sociological characteristics of the farm household and the salient factors in the social environment of farm work. It involved the completion of a more comprehensive interview schedule with the farm operators in the sample, *i.e.* those who were participating in the farm management study.

Of the 292 farmers who were recorded in the preliminary interview 41 did not co-operate in the farm management study or dropped out before the year's recording was completed. A further eight returned incomplete interview schedules. Thus the final number for which all information was available was 243 out of the 292 or 83.2%.⁶ This is a reasonably high acceptance rate in view of the amount of time and effort required from respondents to obtain all the relevant data.

The remainder of this section covers such factors as economic characteristics of the holdings, educational levels of farm operators and their families, their occupations, migratory patterns of those who have left the household, the isolation of the farm dwelling as measured by its distance from various facilities and services, the use of credit and of mass media, for the 243 farms included in this more detailed survey.

Economic characteristics

Size of farm: The distribution of the 243 respondents according to size of farm operated was as follows:

Farm size (acres)	Under 15	15-29	30-49	50-99	Over 100
Number	56	51	41	49	46

Unexpectedly, the numbers eliminated from the original sample were greater in the larger size groups though these are still over-represented in the remainder compared to their distribution in the total population. However, these figures were also influenced by the fact that some were found to be farming on holdings which differed in size from the listed acreage. The proportion of the holding cultivated was generally small; median holding size was 33 acres and median acreage for crops and hay was 4.25 acres.

Financial returns: The value of gross farm output was very low by regional or national standards, with approximately three-quarters of the total within the £100 to €300 range. The median was £192. Median family farm income was £119. These farmers thus operate at subsistence or near subsistence level, their economy characterised by little land or capital, low production, and small cash returns. Standards of living are low as the requirements of modern life cannot be obtained from the incomes of such farms. As against this, 28% of farm managers had another source of income besides farming (*e.g.*, a shop or another job) and in 40% of households there were family members who had off-farm employment. In many cases off-farm incomes were earned in poorly paid or seasonal employment and the fact remains that West Donegal is a predominantly small farm economy.

Educational levels

School attendance rates beyond the primary level are generally low in Donegal as compared with other Irish counties. Only two of the 243 respondents had any formal

• In the processing of the farm management data however a further nine were eliminated (see Economics section) as their records were not entirely adequate for the kind of analysis required.

education at post-primary level. Furthermore, only 20 farmers said that night classes in agriculture were held in their locality within the 5 years previous to the study; 18 farmers attended these classes. It is likely, however, that the actual number of such classes held was higher than can be inferred from the replies here. By reason of age or low levels of general education or because they do not perceive the need for agricultural education in their own situation, many farmers are not aware of the opportunities available. While hypothetical questions have obvious limitations, those who reported that no classes were held in their area were asked whether they would attend such classes if they were available; 60% said they would. Of the 53 farms where there was a son working on the holding only three sons had been to local classes in agriculture.

In other types of adult educational courses the record of attendance is equally low. Whereas 65 respondents said that classes were available over the previous 5 years (mainly in woodwork) only 11 had attended any of them.

Seven of the 146 farmers' wives (4.8 %) had some post-primary education. As might be expected the levels of formal education among family members were much higher. Table 8 shows the distribution according to school attended.

TABLE 8—Farmers' sons and daughters who had left school classified by type of school attended

School	Sons		Daughters	
	No.	%	No.	%
Primary only	145	77.9	100	73.5
Secondary	15	8.1	7	5.1
Vocational.	17	9.1	25	18.4
Other	9	4.9	4	3.0
Total	186	100.0	136	100.0

This classification does not distinguish between levels of education within the post-primary stage: there is no distinction made between those who terminated their post-primary education before finishing the course and those who completed the course. It does show that 22% of Sons and 26% of daughters had received some degree of post-primary education. It is a feature of the educational situation in the western counties generally that a higher percentage of girls than boys attend school beyond the primary stage.⁷

For the individual, education normally increases employment opportunities. In most rural localities, however, there is seldom a wide range of jobs available for those young people who have attained a certain level of post-primary education, and there tends to be a lower limit to the occupations which they are prepared to accept. Consequently, in a rural area like Glenties those with primary education only are likely to be proportionally more numerous in the unskilled or farming occupations.

Table 9 shows that about three-quarters (140 out of 186) of all sons of farmers were in manual, semi-skilled or farming occupations. Among those who had only

⁷ For the eight western counties (Province of Connacht and Counties Clare, Kerry and Donegal) in 1961, 41.2% of females aged 15-19 were classified as 'at school' compared with 26.4% for males. See Census of Population, Vol. V.

primary education the proportion was 87% (126 out of 145) whereas only 34% (14 out of 41) of the post-primary educated were in these occupational categories. Similarly, 37% of farmers' daughters with primary education were engaged in hotel work/domestic service or worked at home duties or craftwork. The 11 persons classified as engaged in domestic crafts were all employed full-time in knitting and could in a sense be classified as semi-skilled. Against this, only 14% (5 out of 36) of those who received post-primary education were so employed.

TABLE 9—Occupational categories of sons and daughters classified by educational level

Occupational category	Sons					Daughters				
	Primary	Sec.	Voc.	Other	Total	Primary	Sec.	Voc.	Other	Total
Farming or home duties	55	2	3		60	11	—	—	—	11
Manual	56	3	1		60					
Semi-skilled	15	—	5		20	—	—	4	—	4
Skilled	5	2	6		13					
Hotel/domestic	—	1	1		2	15				19
Crafts (domestic)						11				12
Factory	4	—	—	—	4	6				8
Shops ...	—	1	—	—	1	3				6
Clerical...	3	4	—	—	7	3				7
Nursing						3				8
Professional	—	—	—	9					4	4
Housewife						46				54
Other	3			—	6	1				2
Not known	4			—	4	1				1
Total number	145	15	17		186	100		25		136

Migration

Secondary and vocational school leavers cannot find locally the kind of career openings for which they are educated and trained. Table 10 shows that 47% (68 out of 145) of the farmers' sons who had only primary education had left Donegal County and were living either elsewhere in Ireland or abroad (including Northern Ireland).

TABLE 10—Place of residence of family members classified by educational level

Place of residence	Sons					Daughters				
	Primary	Sec.	Voc.	Other	Total	Primary	Sec.	Voc.	Other	Total
Parental home . . . . .	.69	5	5	2	81	30	1	8		39
Co. Donegal . . . . .	.8	1	—	2	11	14	—	1	—	15
Ireland ... . . . .	.7	2	4	5	18	7	2	5	1	15
U.K. ... . . . .	.54	5	7	—	66	40	4	9	3	56
Canada/U.S. . . . .	.6	2	1	—	9	8	—	1	—	9
Elsewhere . . . . .	.1	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	1
Other	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Total number . . . . .	.145	15	17	9	186	100	7	25	4	136

On the other hand 63 % (26 out of 41) of the post-primary educated were living outside their native county. Among farmers' daughters the corresponding proportions were 56% (56 out of 100) and 72% (26 out of 36) respectively. Thus while still only a minority of the younger generation have had post-primary education, this more educated group had largely become detached from its native community and its migration shows an important aspect of the social problems of the Glenties area in terms of the loss of human resources.

Even more evident is the fact that the migration of people from agriculture in West Donegal constitutes not only a loss for their community of origin but also for the State. In general, the movement is not to urban centres in the same county or even to places in the north-western region but to employment abroad. Table 10 shows that whereas more daughters than sons (71 % as against 56%) had left the parental home the majority of those who left, approximately 70% of both sexes, were living outside the State, mostly in the United Kingdom. For sons there seems little choice of career other than remaining on the holding or leaving the country unless they have post-primary education. Of the 29 farmers' sons who lived in Ireland, but away from the family home, 14 had post-primary education. Only 9 of the corresponding group of 30 daughters were educated to this level. The availability of hotel work and jobs in craft industries, both in Donegal and elsewhere in the State, where post-primary education was not absolutely necessary, seemed to curtail the migration of lesser educated women to places outside the country.

Admittedly, the numbers involved in the present analysis are small, particularly in the breakdown of those with post-primary education, and so only tentative statements about their characteristics can be made. The relationship between education, migration, availability of employment, and occupation is a subject worthy of more intensive study in a number of different rural communities.

The figures given above also include a number of seasonal migrants, mainly persons who go to Scotland or England for long periods of the year. Traditionally, seasonal migration from West Donegal was organised specially for potato harvesting in Scotland to which the active members of a household moved and often worked as a unit on a potato farm. This kind of migration has been declining in scale in recent years. Only 23 of the 243 households (just under one-tenth) had any of their members going away to work on a seasonal basis.

Degree of isolation

The very nature of farming as an occupation means that farm families live and work in some degree of physical isolation from each other, and from nucleated settlements where many of the facilities servicing rural households are centred. The rugged topography of the study area and its low density of population per acre of total area (44.7 as compared with 108.4 persons per square mile in the State in 1966) would suggest that farm households differ considerably in their degree of proximity to essential services and facilities like education, shopping and bus routes. Furthermore, isolated farm dwellers or neighbourhoods are likely to have a localistic orientation and be less integrated within a wider culture.

Measuring the isolation variable was not as straightforward as finding a measure for other variables. Respondents were asked to state the distance of the farm dwelling in miles from a selected number of commonly used facilities and services. The items used and the average mileage of respondents from each are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11—Average distance of farm households from basic facilities and services

Item	Miles	Item	Miles
Main road	0.3	General grocery	2.2
Bus service	2.6	Dispensary	3.9
Primary school . . . . .	.13	Factory	not counted
Vocational school	8.9	Parish hall	4.2
Boys' secondary school	12.0	Doctor	4.5
Girls' secondary school	12.0	Veterinary surgeon	9.7
Church	2.6	Telephone	2.1

About half of the respondents did not reply to the question about distance from a factory as there was none within their area, so this item was discarded. The remainder were subjected to item analysis⁸ to determine which were most powerful in discriminating between respondents according to their degree of isolation. On this basis two items were eliminated—the primary and vocational school. The average distance of the farm dwelling from the remaining eleven items constituted the measure of isolation. The distribution of dwellings according to average distance was:

Average distance	Number	Percent
Up to 3.5 miles	74	30.5
3.6 to 5.9 miles	91	37.4
6 miles and over	78	32.1

Thus one out of three households was situated at an average distance of 6 miles and over from eleven basic facilities and services. As there are no comparable figures for any other area, the relative position of West Donegal is not clear. Yet isolation and consequent difficulties in travelling and transportation must impose some hardships on the people of the area as only one-fifth of the households had motorised transport. For example, two facilities—grocery shopping and church services—are required by all households. A travelling shop serviced 55 households or 22.2 % of the total. Forms of transportation or means commonly used in getting to church were as follows:

	Number	Percent
Walking	72	29.6
Cycling	59	24.3
Own car	42	17.3
Taxi	41	17.3
Neighbour's car	22	9.0
Other	7	2.5

⁸ Item analysis is a means of selecting those items which form a single dimension; in this case it selects all the relevant components of the geographical isolation of farm households. For the thirteen items which were used, the distances reported by each respondent were totalled and this total taken as his score. The 61 respondents with the highest and the 61 with the lowest scores (upper and lower 25 % approx.) were identified. Each item was then taken and the average distance or score on this item computed for die two groups. These averages were compared, and the items on which differences were statistically significant were retained in constructing the scale measuring isolation.

Surprising is the high proportion who availed of taxis, or depended on the co-operation of their neighbours—over one-quarter of the total. Of the 184 households who used bus services for general travel, 83 % said they were unsatisfactory. There was however no attempt made in the interview schedule to explore the main cause of this dissatisfaction.

Mass media and information services

The mass media and agricultural advisory services have an important function in providing knowledge and comment on farming matters. While exposure to the various information sources cannot be equated with their usage, an awareness of the main communications media and their availability are prerequisites for the potential user. A number of tabulations are presented in the Appendix showing the degree of contact which the sample of farmers had with the various information sources. The content of these tabulations is summarised here.

Amongst the most widely read newspapers in this country are the provincial weeklies. In 1961, a nationwide readership survey estimated that 81 % of the adult population read some provincial weekly newspaper, while 79% of farmers did so.⁹ In the present sample the corresponding proportion was 86 %. While both of the provincial papers circulating in the area carry regular articles and features of agricultural interest, only 78% (163 out of 208) of those reading the papers said that they read this section. Thus one-third of those interviewed were not in touch with the most regular and easily available source of farming knowledge and information.

Readership of a farming paper was much lower than this. Only 12% (30 out of 243) said they obtained a farming paper regularly, though a further 16% said they read a farming paper occasionally. The circulation of newspapers, magazines and journals dealing almost exclusively with matters of general agricultural interest and specifically with farm management practices has increased in recent years. Viewed against this trend it can be said that the extent of readership of farming papers in the survey areas is extremely low (without knowing how well they are read) and must surely be related to the low levels of education and the small scale of farming operations.

Although its precise influence is difficult to estimate, the radio has been probably the most important single medium of communication in breaking down the comparative isolation of rural communities. In the future, however, television may well become a more effective medium in this respect, and a more powerful means of entertainment, information and education. One-fifth of households in the survey had no radio, these being mainly the households with older people or bachelors. Of the farmers with radios, 62% (120 out of 195) listened to farming programmes. One hundred and seven farmers in the sample either had a television set of their own or their neighbour had one, and 58% of these (or one-quarter of total sample) viewed farming programmes.

Some statistics on the farmer's contact with the agricultural advisory services have already been given in respect of the original 292 farmers who were considered suitable for the main survey. The figures for the 243 farmers remaining in the survey are similar *i.e.*, 47 % could name one of the local advisers and 32 % had an adviser visit his farm in the 3 years prior to the survey. These data may be taken alongside the fact that 37% (89 out of 243) reported that they had a soil test carried out in their farms. All these returns indicate that the advisory services are not widely known, nor is their use as intensive as it might be.

⁹ S. H. Benson, Ltd., and Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., 'Readership in Ireland', Associated Irish Newspapers, Dublin, 1961.

Use of credit

The use of credit can play a significant role in developing a business and the volume of borrowing for agricultural purposes is steadily increasing. Only one-quarter of the farmers interviewed had used credit for farm production over a 10-year period. The majority of these borrowed from their local merchant or a co-operative and used their loan to purchase fertilisers. From this, it can be inferred that much of the credit obtained was not borrowed on a long-term basis nor used in conjunction with a detailed farm plan but rather on the basis of a time extension (from Spring to Autumn) for payment of fertilisers. There may have been more in fact who operated in this way but who did not consider it to be worth recording as using credit for productive purposes.

Reasons given for not using credit were varied and not always specific. More than half of the replies represented in some way an aversion to debt or a fear that they would never be able to make repayments. A further one-fifth said they would not get credit and almost the same proportion thought that their farm was too small or 'too poor*' to warrant borrowing money. Clearly, many farms in a subsistence farm economy cannot afford to risk indebtedness since their cash returns are so low. Besides, a traditional pattern of small-scale farming generates little experience in using money or in the more complex managerial effort which productive investment would require.

Summary

Summarising the findings in respect of the 243 farmers we can say that:

- 1) Outputs from farming are low (median family farm income for one year was £119) but about half of the households had family members working off the farm.
- 2) There is little or no formal education beyond the compulsory stage among farmers. Even the participation in adult education courses is low.
- 3) Proportionately more farmers' daughters than sons left the parental home, and the majority of these who had left home (70 % of both sexes) had gone abroad. Where farmers' sons were educated beyond the primary level it increased their chances of working in Ireland. The same was not true for girls where the primary educated could get employment at home as readily as the post-primary educated.
- 4) One-third of the sample of farmers lived an average of 6 miles or more from 11 basic community facilities or services and about one-quarter depended on hired transport or neighbour's co-operation for essential travel.
- 5) Two-thirds of the sample read a weekly article of agricultural interest in their local paper but farming papers were not widely read.
- 6) Sixty-two percent listened to radio programmes on farming while one-quarter watched farming programmes on television.
- 7) Little use is made of credit in farming other than short-term credit obtained from a merchant or co-op. and mostly for the purchase of fertilisers. Generally there was a strong aversion to borrowing money on a long term basis.

APPENDIX

TABLE I—Particulars of 186 landholders in Glenties Rural District classified according to particulars of the holding

Particulars of holder	Particulars of land use					Total
	Let	Sold	Unused	Farmed	Other	
Emigrated	10	2	17	4		33
Migrated	2	2	5	2	2	13
Incapacitated	13	2	14	26	5	60
Deceased	6	4	8	—	3	21
Other job	8	5	3	26	1	43
Other	—	2	—	12	2	16
Total	39	17	47	70	13	186

TABLE II—Readership of a local newspaper among 243 farmers in Glenties Rural District

	Number	Percent
Yes	208	85.6
No	35	14.4

TABLE III—Readers of local newspaper «who regularly read its agricultural article

	Number	Percent
Yes	163	78.4
No	45	21.6

TABLE IV—Readership of a farming paper among 243 farmers in Glenties Rural District

	No. who read	Percent
Regularly	30	12.4
Occasionally	38	15.6
Never	175	72.0

TABLE V—Radio ownership and listening among 243 farmers in Glenties Rural District

	Radio in home		Listen to farm programmes		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Yes	195	80.2	Yes	120	61.5
No	48	19.8	No	75	38.5

TABLE VI—Television viewing among 243 farmers in Glenties Rural District

	T.V. in own home or in neighbour's home		View farm programmes		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Yes	107	44.0	Yes	62	57.9
No	136	56.0	No	45	42.1

TABLE VII—Contact with Agricultural Advisory Service among 243 farmers in Glenties Rural District

	Farmer could name Advisory Officer in his area		Adviser visited farm in past 3 years		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Yes	113	46.5	Yes	78	32.1
No	130	53.5	No	165	67.9

TABLE VIII—Borrowing over a 10-year period among 62 farmers in Glenties Rural District

Source of credit	Number who borrowed	Percent
Merchant	36	58.1
Co-operative	12	19.4
Bank	4	6.5
Hire-purchase	3	4.8
Agricultural Credit Corporation	2	3.2
Other source	5	8.1

TABLE IX—Use of credit by 62 farmers in Glenties Rural District

Purpose for which credit was used	Number using	Percent
Stocking land	3	4.8
Land reclamation	0	—
Purchase of land ...	1	1.6
Farm buildings	0	—
Purchase of fertilisers	44	71.0
Purchase of machinery ..	3	4.8
Fencing	1	1.6
Other	10	16.1

TABLE X—Reasons given by 181 farmers in Glenties Rural District for not using credit

Reason	Number	Percent
Farm or land too poor ...	32	17.7
Too risky.	16	8.8
Preferred to be independent	22	12.2
Interest rates too high ...	12	6.6
Uncertainty of markets	10	5.5
Would be unable to repay	38	21.0
Would not get credit	36	19.9
No reason given	15	8.3

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

2. Social services

by

KATHLEEN MANNING*

INTRODUCTION

Sociological conditions among a sample of farm families are more meaningfully described when shown against the background of social organisation and change in their particular environment. Numerous aspects of community life are relevant from this standpoint; the number of people in an area and their characteristics, community services and facilities in education, housing, health, transportation and communication, recreation, voluntary organisation, and the more qualitative elements of social life such as community values and traditions.

Some selection was therefore inevitable for this study. A number of topics were chosen having regard to the information available and their relevance to an area resource survey. Population has already been considered and participation in voluntary social organisations is the subject of a following section. This section examines three topics which, broadly speaking, could be classified as social services. Education is examined with particular reference to the numbers participating in each branch of the educational system and the employment of school-leavers. The education of its members is a crucial task for any community and the development of all sectors of the economy is closely linked to the educational system. Aspects of social security are considered because in a small farming area like Glenties many people depend on income supports. Besides, consideration of this matter reveals the extent of the unemployment problem in the survey area. Also included in this section is a review of housing and sanitary facilities, both important items in contributing to domestic living conditions and community satisfaction.

EDUCATION

Introduction

Education, in the broad sense, has a number of distinct functions. From a sociological viewpoint its central purpose is the development of certain personal attributes which are prerequisite for the special roles that individuals have to fill in society.¹ Society's progress is closely linked with the general level of knowledge and skills and the orderly assimilation of new ideas and techniques into patterns of life. This in turn demands that individuals fill their various roles with competence and education is a means of acquiring this competence.

*Rural Sociology and Home Economics Department, Rural Economy Division, An Foras Taliintais
¹ See Bertrand, A. L., (ed.), 'Rural Sociology', McGraw-Hill, New York, p. 223, 1958.

Some aspects of educational structure in Glenties Rural District are examined here against the background of trends in County Donegal generally. This includes a brief account of the number of pupils and teachers, pupil-teacher ratio, size of schools, destination and occupational choices of school leavers in Glenties Rural District. Data were obtained from two main sources:

- a) the annual reports of the Department of Education.
- b) completed questionnaires which were originally prepared and used by the Donegal County Development Team in a study of the educational situation in the county. The team circulated questionnaires to all primary, secondary and vocational schools during the summer of 1966.

Educational trends in Donegal county

Since 1951 two distinct trends are discernible in education in Donegal county. Firstly, there has been a decline in the number of primary schools and pupils, and secondly, there has been a marked increase in the number of pupils attending secondary and vocational schools. Primary schools have decreased from 374 in 1951 to 347 in 1966 while the pupil numbers have dropped from 21,754 to 18,803 (13.6%) in the same period.² Statistics of secondary school attenders in Donegal county were not readily available, but the number of secondary school pupils whose homes were situated in the county increased from 880 to 2,337 (165%) in the period 1951-66. During the same interval the number of vocational school pupils increased from 506 to 1,911 pupils—a percentage increase of 277.6%. This reflects the general upward trend in the numbers participating in post-primary education for the past number of years. Between 1951-66 the numbers of secondary school and vocational school pupils in the State were approximately doubled in each case, while the number of primary school pupils increased by almost one-eighth.²

Glenties Rural District

The decline in the number of primary school pupils in Glenties was 10.5 % between 1958-66, which was slightly lower than the decline (13.3%) in the rest of Donegal county (Table 1).

TABLE 1—Primary school pupils, 1958-66

Area	1958	1966	Percent decrease
Glenties R.D.	3,598	3,216	10.5
Rest of Donegal County	17,627	15,176	13.3

More up-to-date figures were available for secondary and vocational schools in Glenties Rural District. The two secondary schools in the Rural District had 169 pupils in total in 1968, an increase of 48% over the previous decade while the 462 pupils in the three vocational schools in 1968 represented an increase of 147% since 1958.

Based on figures taken from Reports of the Department of Education.

Pupils per school: Compared with the rest of the county there was a higher percentage of pupils in the smaller schools in Glenties Rural District both in 1958 and in 1966. In 1966 almost one-half of all primary school children in Glenties were in schools of under 50 pupils, compared with just under one-third in the rest of the county (Table 2). In line with the decline in the numbers attending primary schools there is the trend towards the smaller sized primary school.

TABLE 2—Percentage of pupils in different size school groups. 1966

Area		School size (no. of pupils)		
		1-49	50-99	100+
Glenties R.D. . . . . .	.1958	35.9	33.1	31.0
	1966	47.8	21.8	30.4
Rest of Donegal County. . . . .	.1958	23.5	30.6	45.9
	1966	33.1	28.5	38.4

Source: Data supplied by Donegal County Development Team.

Teacher distribution: In 1966, 87.5 % of all primary schools in Glenties were either one- or two-teacher schools, and these contained 78.0 % of all teachers. The corresponding figures for the rest of Donegal county were 80.5 % and 64.0%. There are only two primary schools in Glenties Rural District with four teachers and none with more than this number. In the State in 1966, 65% of all primary schools were either one- or two-teacher schools and these contained 37% of all primary teachers.³

Pupil-teacher ratio: The number of pupils per teacher in Glenties Rural District in 1966 was 24.4 which was slightly lower than the figure for the rest of the county (Table 3). This was due to the more favourable ratio in Glenties in the one- and

TABLE 3—Pupil-teacher ratio. 1966

No. of teachers per school	Pupils per teacher	
	Glenties R.D.	Rest of Donegal Co.
1	17.4	18.0
2	20.7	22.9
3	38.4	32.9
4	44.1	38.7
Over 4	—	41.6
Total all schools	24.4	27.3

Source: Data supplied by Donegal County Development Team.

³ An Roinn Oideachais, *Tuarascail 1965-66*, Tables 5(a), 5(b), pp. 11-12.

two-teacher schools. But the Glenties ratio, however, varied quite considerably in the different school-size groups—from 17.4 in the one-teacher schools to 44.1 in the four-teacher schools. This latter figure is rather high, but a similar pattern was discernible in the rest of the county. But the apparently favourable ratio in the one- and two-teacher schools is weakened by the fact that the teacher has a range of pupils (in grades and abilities) under his tuition at the same time.

These data show the significance of the small school in the educational system in Glenties: Donegal is a county with a very high number of small one- or two-teacher schools. The trend towards smaller schools, evident during 1958-66 will continue in West Donegal in the face of further decline in population. This development has educational implications which are not the concern of this report but the pattern of change in the primary school system has been described for its sociological relevance. The decline of the local school is perhaps the most illustrative example of the way in which important social institutions in a rural community are affected by population decline.

School leavers

Primary school: Information was obtained from teachers about the destination of primary school leavers in the 1964-66 period. Table 4 shows the destination of 1,344 primary school pupils (707 males and 637 females) over these 3 years.

TABLE 4—Destination of primary school leavers—Glenties Rural District, 1964-66

Destination	Male %	Female %	Total %
Secondary school ...	24.0	27.5	25.7
Vocational school ...	31.1	32.8	31.9
At home	33.8	29.7	31.8
Migrated	11.0	10.0	10.6

Source: Data supplied by Donegal County Development Team.

It must be understood that figures on the destination of school leavers are necessarily of a second hand nature. Teachers were asked where their pupils who left school in the years 1964, 1965 and 1966 had gone, and the resulting statistics were compiled from these completed questionnaires. A higher percentage of girls (60.3%) had gone for further education than boys (55.1%). This could perhaps be due to two factors. Firstly, more widespread post-primary school facilities exist for girls than boys. Secondly, it would appear that there is a traditional belief in rural areas that post-primary education is of more importance for girls than for boys. This could perhaps form an interesting hypothesis for further study in rural areas.

Teachers were also asked how many of those pupils leaving primary school in 1967 intended to go on for further education. Although the figures provided do not constitute conclusive evidence of the number who actually went for post-primary education in 1967 it is obvious that the percentage of pupils who were leaving school in 1966-67 and who were possible post-primary candidates was very high both in Glenties Rural District and in the rest of the county (Table 5).

TABLE 5—Primary school leavers, 1967

	Glenties R. D.			Rest of Donegal County		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Number school leavers 1967	338	310	648	1,582	1,563	3,145
Possible post-primary education	214	235	449	1,015	1,171	2,186
% possible post-primary education	63.3	75.8	69.2	64.0	74.9	69.5

Source: Data supplied by Donegal County Development Team.

Post-primary school: Information was also sought about the destination of secondary and vocational school leavers in 1964-66. Teachers in secondary and vocational schools were asked where pupils who left school in these years had gone. Due to the incomplete nature of the information obtained it was not possible to make any clear statements on destination of secondary school leavers, but the number in question was small—about 20 per year. It was evident from the replies of the secondary school teachers that a large proportion of these school leavers emigrated each year. Actual numbers were given for only one school, and in the other school the teacher said that most of the pupils emigrated each year. More information however was available about the destination of vocational school leavers (Table 6).

TABLE 6—Destination of pupils who left vocational schools in Glenties Rural District, 1964-66

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Higher education	3	1.9	20	10.2	23	6.5
Farming	7	4.5			7	2.0
Industry—trade ...	22	14.1	10	5.1	32	9.1
Industry—office ...			20	10.2	20	5.7
Hotel industry ...	10	6.4	42	21.3	52	14.7
Fishing	12	7.7			12	3.4
State bodies	18	11.5	2	1.0	20	5.7
Local authority ...			3	1.5	3	0.8
Civil service			34	17.3	52	14.7
Emigrated	18	11.5	23	11.7	44	12.5
Unemployed	21	13.5	18	9.1	33	9.3
Temporary employment	15	9.6	25	12.7	55	15.6
Others	30	19.3				
Total	156	100.0	197	100.0	353	100.0

Source: Data supplied by Donegal County Development Team.

A number of interesting points emerge from Table 6. Firstly, the number going into farming was very low. Secondly, a high percentage of school leavers (21.3% of females and 6.4% of males) entered the hotel industry in 1964-66, although it was not clear from the information available whether this work was of a permanent or seasonal nature. Thirdly, a relatively high percentage of the total emigrated. However, it must be pointed out in this regard that there was some variation in the percentage of school-leavers who emigrated over the 3 years 1964, 1965 and 1966. A higher percentage who had left school in 1964 and 1965 had emigrated than in 1966. By contrast the percentage unemployed in the years 1964 and 1965 was lower than in 1966. This suggests that school leavers remain at home for a few years after school looking for a suitable job, and then if they are unsuccessful, emigrate.

An obvious difficulty in West Donegal is lack of employment for young people leaving school. Here it may be opportune to try a simple hypothetical exercise in order to get some estimate of the magnitude of the problem involved in absorbing all school-leavers into the local economy. In 1966 Glenties Rural District had 1,840 children between the ages of 10 and 15, or 368 per single year of age in this age group. This is a fair estimate of the average number of entrants to the labour market each year as although a proportion of school leavers, probably upwards of two-thirds, go to post-primary schools each year, others will be leaving post-primary schools and looking for employment. The numbers retiring from jobs are difficult to estimate but may be put roughly at 116 due to age¹ and 70 due to marriage (assuming an annual marriage rate of 4 per 1,000 population). Many of the older people will of course leave occupations which will not provide vacancies for new entrants (*e.g.*, in farming) but as against these there will be other vacancies in the labour force due to the migration of people from existing jobs. In any case a rough estimate of the employment needed would be 175-200 jobs per year without even considering the sizeable number of unemployed people (as will be shown in the next section). Even if it is unrealistic to try to absorb all school leavers locally it would take a net provision of 200 jobs per year for 5 years to absorb unemployment. Yet the 1966 Census showed that the working population declined by 34 per year since 1961 in Glenties Rural District.

Summary conclusions

Certain points emerge from this brief description of education in Glenties Rural District and Donegal county.

1. The numbers of pupils attending primary schools in both Glenties and the rest of the county has declined steadily since 1951. This decline is due to the long term general decline and structural change in population but may also be due in part to a tendency to leave primary school at earlier ages.
2. A considerable increase in participation in post-primary education is evident despite declining population. Secondary and vocational school attendance has increased dramatically in the period 1951-66. Of course, the previously low participation in post-primary education enhanced the significance of the increase.
3. It is clear from this section that the smaller primary schools are on the increase. The adequacy of facilities in the smaller schools is a matter for discussion by educationalists but in other countries and already in Ireland decline in pupil

⁴ In 1966 there were 488 males aged 60-64 in Glenties R.D. or 98 per year of age in this age group. Of the 481 females of the same age group, 18.7 % or 90 were assumed to be in the labour force. (This was the proportion of females of the 55-64 age group who were gainfully occupied in Co. Donegal in 1961). Thus 18 females and 98 males were assumed to leave the Glenties labour force each year due to age.

numbers has resulted in the amalgamation of school areas. Due to the particular topography of this region (Donegal county and more specifically Glenties Rural District), closure and amalgamation of smaller schools, even if transport were provided, might give rise to problems not encountered in other areas, such as longer hours of absence from home.

4. Finally, it is evident from the information obtained about school leavers that low numbers are going into farming and high numbers are emigrating. This trend will continue unless there is a substantial increase in employment suitable for school leavers.

SOME ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Introduction

In this country the State social security services concerned mainly with income-maintenance fall into two broad categories: social insurance and social assistance. Social insurance services are contributory in that beneficiaries and their employers contribute, along with the State, to the cost of these services. Non-manual employees under a salary limit of £1,200 per year (subject to certain exceptions) and manual employees without wage limit are compulsorily insured from age 16 to 70 years. Benefits are not subject to a means test, the fundamental condition for benefit being the payment of contributions while in insurable employment.

Social assistance services, on the other hand, are non-contributory being financed by the State almost entirely from general taxation without direct contribution by the beneficiaries. For entitlement to benefit the means of an applicant must not exceed a certain limit (except in case of childrens' allowances).

This section will examine two aspects of social security in West Donegal: unemployment benefit (a social insurance service) and unemployment assistance (a social assistance service). Firstly, a brief review of the operation of these schemes and some changes recently introduced will be useful in understanding the statistical data presented.

The live register and recent legislation

All claimants to unemployment benefit and all applicants for unemployment assistance (the 'dole') must register at local offices throughout the State. The total number so registered at one of these offices together with others (*e.g.* those seeking employment but not entitled to any benefits or those working but wishing to change jobs) constitute the 'live register' for that office.

The number of applicants for unemployment assistance includes many small farmers and landholders. Generally these people are not unemployed in the usual sense; they are more properly described as 'underemployed'. Unemployment assistance in their case is a supplement to the income from their holdings, rather than a substitute for wages or salaries. Until 1966 the means of smallholders for unemployment assistance purposes were calculated with reference to number and type of stock carried and type of crops grown. Since 1966 income from land is, in the main, assessed on the basis of a flat figure of £20 per annum for each £1 valuation (excluding buildings).⁵

⁵ Based on the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1965. The Act, however, provides for transitional arrangements (lasting up to 5 years) to enable existing applicants to have their means assessed on the old basis, if this is to their advantage.

With the change in legislation came a revision of the manner in which unemployment statistics were compiled.⁶ The current situation is that instead of all social assistance recipients being aggregated into a heterogeneous group as was the case prior to 1966, two groups are now distinguishable in the official statistics: those who are truly 'out of work' and those who are 'underemployed' on smallholdings.

The data presented here refer to these two groups of unemployment assistance recipients and also to those claiming unemployment benefit.

L Unemployment benefit

Unemployment benefit is payable to an insured person for any day for which he is unemployed. Normally no payment is made for the first 3 days in a period of unemployment. A claimant must be under 70 years of age and must be capable of, and available for, work if this should become available. Unemployment benefit is paid only for a specified period of time after which the applicant must requalify for further benefits unless he is over 65 years and has a minimum of 156 contributions. Under this scheme cash benefits are made available. These vary according to the number of dependants.⁷

There are eight local employment offices in County Donegal. Of these the offices at Dunglow and Killybegs are situated in the Glenties Rural District. In assessing the number of claimants for unemployment benefit it must be understood that those registered at these two offices need not correspond to the number living in Glenties Rural District. A more accurate record of claimants from this region is obtainable by using registration data which list claimants by the District Electoral Division in which they are resident. These statistics are given in Table 7 and refer to male claimants in January 1967. Female claimants were not listed by District Electoral Division, but they are relatively few in number.

TABLE 7—Male claimants to unemployment benefit, January, 1967

Area of residence	Number	Percent
Glenties R.D.	325	15.5
Rest of Donegal County	1,766	84.5
Total Donegal County ...	2,091	100.0

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

This table shows that only 15.5% of all unemployment benefit claimants in Donegal were living in Glenties Rural District. This low number indicates perhaps the lack of insurable and non-agricultural employment in the Glenties region. Of all males between the ages of 15 and 70 years⁸ in Glenties Rural District, the number receiving

• For a full description of this revision and the reasons for it see *Irish Statistical Bulletin*, December 1965, pp. 278-9.

⁷ The current rate (January 1968) varies from 45s. per week for a single claimant under 18 years of age to £7 4s. 6d. per week for an adult claimant with a wife and four children, (13s. per week is paid for the first two children, and 8s. per week is paid for each further child in excess of the first two children).

⁸ Latest statistics available on age classification were taken from Census of Population, 1966, Vol. II.

unemployment benefit was only 5.5%. The proportion receiving unemployment assistance (male) was more than double this.

Claimants to unemployment benefit were also classified according to the number and class of their dependants (Table 8) to give a more complete picture of their background. In this case the information available refers only to those registered at the two local offices at Dunglow and Killybegs but it does give a reasonably reliable indication of the dependency burden of the unemployment benefit claimants in Glenties Rural District.

TABLE 8—Number and class of dependants of unemployment benefit claimants, January 1967

Area of registration	Class of claimant ¹				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Glenties R. D. offices	216	89	153	2	460
Rest of Donegal County.	937	293	657	5	1,892
Total Donegal County	1,153	382	810	7	2,352

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

¹ Class of claimant: 1 = claimant without dependant
 2=claimant with adult dependant
 3=claimant with adult dependant and child dependant
 4=claimant with child dependant

Table 8 shows that 47% of unemployment benefit claimants in the Glenties region had no dependants, and a further 19% had only one adult dependant. Stated in other words approximately two-thirds of all claimants had no children as dependants. A similar situation will be noted in the figures for unemployment assistance.

Unemployment assistance

An unemployed person who wishes to obtain unemployment assistance must be the holder of a qualification certificate. The main conditions for the receipt of this certificate are: that the applicant has been resident in the State at any time for a continuous period of at least 6 months, that he or she is between the ages of 18 and 70, and that he or she satisfies a means test. There is no time limit for drawing unemployment assistance provided all requirements continue to be fulfilled.

The rates of benefit vary as between urban and non-urban areas, and according to the means of the applicant and the number of his dependants.⁹

In January 1967 there were 695 male applicants for unemployment assistance living in Glenties Rural District. This represents more than double the number receiving unemployment benefit (Table 7) and almost one-quarter of all unemployment assistance applicants in Donegal county (Table 9). This constitutes a comparatively high

* In non-urban areas the current maximum rates (January 1968) vary from 38s. per week for a person without a dependant, to £5 4s. 6d. for a claimant with a wife and four children.

proportion of the total county figure, as the male population in Glenties Rural District in 1966 accounted for just over one-sixth of the total county population.

TABLE 9—Male applicants for unemployment assistance, January 1967

Area of residence	Number	Percent
Glenties R.D.	695	24.7
Rest of Donegal County	2,124	75.3
Total Donegal County ...	2,819	100.0

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

Information was also obtained about the number and class of dependants supported by these applicants for unemployment assistance (Table 10). Again the figures are taken from the returns of the two local employment offices of Dunglow and Killybegs, but as in the case of unemployment benefit, they are likely to represent the situation in the Glenties Rural District.

TABLE 10—Number and class of dependants of unemployment assistance applicants, January 1967

Area of registration	Class of applicants ¹				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Glenties R.D. offices	611	78	252	4	945
Rest of Donegal County.	987	157	596	26	1,766
Total Donegal County	1,598	235	848	30	2,711

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

¹ See Table 8.

Table 10 shows that almost two-thirds of all unemployment assistance applicants (611 out of 945) in the Glenties region had no dependants, while only 26.6% had one adult and one or more child dependants. In the rest of the county only about one-half of applicants were without dependants. It appears from these figures that the majority of the people on the 'dole' in West Donegal were unmarried. No information was available about the age of these applicants.

Smallholders' assistance

Since the beginning of 1966, smallholders receiving unemployment assistance have been treated as a separate group. Figures available refer to male residents, and show that in January 1967 there were 734 smallholders receiving this payment in Glenties Rural District (Table 11). This represents 30.2% of all smallholders in Donegal county receiving this benefit. It must be understood that this is an area of smallholdings;

one-quarter of all smallholdings (under 15 acres) in Donegal county, are in the Glenties Rural District.

TABLE 11—Smallholders' assistance—male applicants, January 1967

Area of residence	Number	Percent
Glenties R.D.	734	30.2
Rest of Donegal County	1,692	69.8
Total Donegal County ...	2,426	100.0

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

Information was also obtained about the dependants of the smallholders in the Glenties region (Table 12). These figures were taken from the returns of the offices at Dunglow and Killybegs. Again it is important to note that 64.2 %, of these smallholders had either no dependants or just one adult dependant, compared with 51.2% in similar circumstances in the rest of the county.

TABLE 12—Number and class of dependants of smallholders' assistance applicants, January 1967

Area of registration	Class of applicant ¹				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Glenties R.D. offices	340	227	310	6	883
Rest of Donegal County	482	302	740	6	1,530
Total Donegal County	822	529	1,050	12	2,413

Source: Special tabulations supplied by Central Statistics Office.

¹ See Table 8.

Estimated expenditure

The estimated national expenditure on unemployment benefit and assistance in the year 1967-68 was £10.25 millions.¹⁰ Despite frequent criticism of the operation of these social security schemes in rural areas and especially with regard to the amounts of money paid to rural communities little factual information on this latter question is available. Figures relating to the amount of expenditure on unemployment benefit and unemployment assistance (including smallholders' assistance) for a sample week in 1968 were obtained from the Department of Social Welfare. These figures in Table 13 refer to the monies disbursed by the eight local employment offices in Donegal county for the week ending April 19, 1968. The offices at Dunglow and Killybegs are taken as representative of the Glenties area.

¹⁰ See Estimates for Public Services, year ending March 31, 1969, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1968.

TABLE 13—Estimated expenditure (£) on unemployment benefit and unemployment and smallholders' assistance, week ending April 19, 1968

Area	Unemployment benefit	Unemployment assistance	Smallholders' assistance	Total
Glenties	2,451	2,406	2,263	7,120
Rest of Donegal County	7,580	4,443	4,263	16,286
Donegal County.	10,031	6,849	6,526	23,406

Source: Special tabulations supplied by the Department of Social Welfare.

Table 13 gives a reasonable indication of the estimated weekly cash outlay on unemployment payments in the Glenties area. Prior to 1967 the figures on the Live Register (and hence the money paid) were affected by the operation of two Employment Period Orders which excluded certain persons from unemployment assistance for specified periods of the year. As the orders were abolished in 1967 recipients have been able to draw their weekly payments throughout the year and so the April figure for expenditure in Table 13 may be taken as a reasonable estimate of the weekly average throughout 1968. Therefore, going on these figures, the estimated yearly expenditure on these forms of social welfare in the Glenties region amounts to approximately £370,240, with the yearly total in Donegal county approximately £1.2 millions.

Summary conclusions

Certain points emerge from this section dealing with unemployment benefit and unemployment assistance:

1. In January 1967 the number of males receiving unemployment benefit for Glenties Rural District was 325, or 15.5% of the county total. This relatively small proportion may be due to the lack of insurable non-agricultural employment, even on a temporary basis, in the area. It certainly does not mean that the numbers unemployed in the area are low, as substantial numbers receive unemployment assistance.
2. Almost one-quarter (24.7 % or 695 persons) of all male unemployment assistance applicants in Donegal county and 30.2% (734 persons) of smallholders' in receipt of unemployment assistance were resident in the Glenties region. These numbers would appear to be rather high, but they do show substantial unemployment and the importance of the 'dole' in the economic structure of this region. Even excluding the smallholders, approximately 1,000 persons were unemployed in January 1967 which is about 300 more than reported out of work in the 1966 Census.
3. The percentage of applicants for unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, and smallholders' assistance, who had either no dependant or only one adult dependant was very high being 66.0°, 72.8% and 64.2°, respectively.
4. Statistics regarding the age of the applicants for these benefits were not available for the Glenties Rural District. However, regional figures show that in the towns and urban areas of the eight western counties (province of Connacht and counties Kerry, Clare and Donegal) in September 1967, over half (52.8 %) of all applicants for unemployment assistance (the 'dole') were over 40 years of age. Only 29.8%

were under 30 years of age.¹¹ Since the population of Glenties Rural District is an ageing one¹² and in the light of the above figures, it may be assumed that at least half, but more probably around 60% of unemployment assistance applicants in this region are over 40 years of age.

6. It is generally held that the payment of unemployment assistance is an inhibiting factor to progressive agriculture in the Glenties region. However, the findings here do not corroborate this belief. A high percentage of 'dole' applicants in the Glenties Rural District, have either no dependants or only one adult dependant, and the majority would appear to be over 40 years of age. Consequently, there is not any great incentive to work hard on their holdings as they have no heirs to their land, or to seek employment in other activities.
7. Expenditure on unemployment benefit and unemployment assistance from the West Donegal local employment offices amounted to just over £7,000 in a typical week in 1968.

HOUSING AND DOMESTIC AMENITIES

Satisfactory housing conditions and household amenities are essential requirements for good living standards as well as being fundamental to hygiene and health. Any development of employment opportunities in West Donegal or any improvement in agricultural incomes must be accompanied by measures to ensure good houses, water supplies and sanitary facilities, if full benefits of modern living are to accrue to this area. The position at present leaves a great deal to be desired especially in the rural areas where the poor supply of modern domestic conveniences imposes drudgery and discomfort in the home.

Housing

Basic information on housing conditions is available in the reports of the 1946 and 1961 Census of Population. Such information was not available from the 1966 Census at the time of the survey. The standard of housing in the country generally has improved considerably as can be inferred from the decline in the numbers of one-roomed dwellings, in the average size of household and in the percentage of the population living in overcrowded conditions.

Age of dwellings: In the census returns on housing, the main unit of classification is not the house but the dwelling.¹³ The distinction is important because a house may comprise one or more dwellings, the latter being a room or set of rooms occupied by a household.

The length of time a dwellinghouse has been built is one factor determining its condition though of itself age is not very informative about the housing situation in any area. It is likely however that many of the houses built over 100 years ago in poor farming areas like West Donegal are now unsuitable dwellings by modern living

¹¹ Special tabulations—Central Statistics Office.

¹⁴ See section on 'Demographic Conditions'.

¹³ For Census purposes, a dwelling is defined as a room or set of rooms occupied by a private household. A private household is taken to be a group of persons occupying the whole or part of a private dwelling house or flat and sharing the principal meals and making common provision for basic living needs.

standards and are not easily reconstructed or altered. Table 14 shows that houses in Glenties Rural District are older than those of other areas although the differences in this regard are not considerable. As in rural areas generally, one-quarter of dwellings are over 100 years old. A relatively high proportion of dwellings in Glenties were built during 1860-1918, some of this building probably due to the activity of the Congested Districts Board in the latter part of this period. By contrast the rate of building activity since the war years has declined in West Donegal in comparison with other areas.

TABLE 14—Percentage distribution of dwellings in 1961 according to period in which built

Area	Prior to 1860	1860 to 1918	1919 to 1945	1946 and later	Total no. of dwellings
Glenties R.D.	26.2 ¹	45.6	16.2	11.6	5,124
Rest of Donegal County	27.1	43.5	15.3	13.5	22,335
County Donegal	26.9	43.9	15.5	13.2	27,459
Aggregate Rural Areas	28.5	38.5	20.4	12.0	374,971
State	23.7	34.2	22.9	18.5	676,402

Source: Census of Population 1961, Vol. VI, Tables 22a, 22c and 23, pp. 120-131.

¹ Percentages do not add up to 100 as in a few cases age of dwelling was not stated.

Size of dwelling and household: The average size of household in the State has fallen steadily over the past 40 years: in 1961 it was 3.97 persons. This decline in household size is apparent in both town and rural areas, though rural households are generally smaller.

Table 15 shows that the average size of household in Glenties is comparatively small—3.86 persons. This is undoubtedly a consequence of the area's heavy outward migration and the declining number of young families.

It is also shown, however, that the average size of dwelling in Glenties is smaller than usual. The net result then in terms of housing conditions is that Glenties Rural District has a rather higher number of persons per room (1.06) than is found generally

TABLE 15—Size of dwelling and household, 1961

Area	Persons per household	Rooms per dwelling	Persons per room
Glenties R.D.	3.86	3.63	1.06
Rest of Donegal County	4.07	4.05	1.00
County Donegal	4.03	3.98	1.02
Aggregate Rural Areas	3.96	4.35	0.91
State	3.97	4.42	0.90

Source: Census of Population 1961, Vol. VI, Tables 3 and 12, p. 3 and pp. 69-77.

in the county or in the State. In fact County Donegal had the highest number of persons per room (1.02) of all counties in 1961. Of the Rural Districts in the State only three, Belmullet (Mayo), Dunfanaghy and Inishowen (Donegal) had higher densities of persons per room than Glenties.

As these figures are averages they do not give any indication of actual over-crowded housing conditions. This can only be obtained by finding out what percentage of the population live in various housing densities. The housing density of the population in this context is the average number of persons per room in the dwelling in which they live. In 1961, one-eighth of the population in the western counties lived in households where on average there were more than two persons per room. This is the census definition of over-crowding. Percentage over-crowding for the rural areas of Donegal was 19.0%, the highest in the State. Separate breakdowns for Rural Districts were not available but it is likely that Glenties had at least an equitable share of this over-crowding considering its high average number of persons per room (Table 15).

Thus there is an anomalous situation where despite the relatively small average household in Glenties Rural District (Table 15), serious overcrowding exists for a high proportion of the population, because of the smaller size of dwelling.

Piped water and sanitary facilities

One of the great deficiencies in the provision of amenities and services in rural areas is the high proportion of dwellings which lack piped water and sanitary facilities (Table 16).

TABLE 16—Percentage distribution of households by water supply, 1961

Area	Total households	Tap inside	Tap outside	Private piped	Other source	Tap shared	Fixed bath	Hot water
Glenties R. D. ...	5,124	14.8	3.3	9.1	72.8	0.5	11.9	12.4
Rest of Donegal Co.	22,335	21.0	3.6	8.0	67.4	0.6	16.3	17.8
County Donegal ...	27,459	19.9	3.5	8.2	68.4	0.6	15.5	16.8
Aggregate Rural Areas	374,971	10.0	2.5	12.5	75.0	0.3	11.9	12.2
State	676,402	43.8	6.2	7.2	42.8	2.8	33.2	33.5

Source: Census of Population 1961, Vol. VI, Tables 25c, 26, pp. 135-144.

Of the rural areas in the State only 25.1 % of dwellings had some form of piped water supply. In Glenties the proportion was 27.2% and of these less than half or approximately 12% of all dwellings had hot water and fixed bath. The rurality of the Glenties area as well as its scattered population and difficult topography is reflected in the fact that a higher percentage of dwellings than in the rest of the country have a private piped supply.

A normal adjunct to provision of piped water is the installation of sanitary facilities. Yet while 23.9 % of households in West Donegal had piped water inside their dwellings, only 18.7% had a flush lavatory (Table 17) and 12.4% had installed hot water (Table 16). Where water is on tap but no sewerage system exists the problem of waste disposal becomes difficult.

TABLE 17—Percentage distribution of households according to sanitary facilities, 1961

Area	Total no. of dwellings	Sanitary facilities					
		Flush lavatory	Chemical closet	Dry closet	No special facilities	Sanitary facilities shared	Indoor lavatory or closet
Glenties R.D.	5,124	18.7	4.8	27.0	49.5	0.9	17.6
Rest of Donegal County	22,335	27.7	2.7	26.7	42.9	1.1	22.9
County Donegal	27,459	26.0	3.1	26.7	44.2	1.1	21.9
Aggregate Rural Areas ...	374,971	19.4	3.1	15.6	61.9	0.8	16.8
State	676,402	53.5	1.9	9.6	35.0	5.3	42.7

Source: Census of Population, 1961, Vol. VI, Tables 28c, 29, pp. 148-157.

The interdependence of both hot and cold water supply together with sanitary facilities in contributing to domestic comfort and convenience seems to be insufficiently understood. Almost half of all Glenties dwellings had no special sanitary facilities. At the same time it can be seen (Tables 16 and 17) that West Donegal in terms of provision of piped water and sanitary facilities was better than the aggregate rural areas of the State. The more favourable position in West Donegal is undoubtedly related to some degree to the greater availability of grants and improvement schemes in the Gaeltacht areas.

Electricity

As far as provision of electricity is concerned, Donegal is not as well supplied as most other counties (Table 18). In the Glenties area, however, the proportion of dwellings with electricity, 72%, was well up to that in rural areas generally.

TABLE 18—Percentage distribution of dwellings by electricity supply, 1961

	Dwellings	Percent with electricity
Glenties R.D.	5,124	72.0
Rest of Donegal County	22,335	66.5
County Donegal	27,459	67.5
Aggregate Rural Areas ...	374,971	71.2
State	676,402	83.0

Source: Census of Population, 1961, Vol. VI, Tables 22c, 23, pp. 122-131.

Summary conclusions

The data on housing and domestic amenities indicate that West Donegal compares favourably with rural areas of the country generally. The possible exception is that of over-crowded dwellings where County Donegal and the Glenties Rural District have a

somewhat higher proportion of people living in dwellings with more than two persons per room. Size of household in West Donegal is small but so is the size of dwelling and this gives a high average density of persons per room. With regard to amenities generally the overall position in rural areas is so poor that the relatively favourable position of the survey area means very little in real terms. The provision of these facilities must be rapidly expanded if living standards and household comforts are to be improved and if tourism and farmhouse holidays are to have their rightful place in the development of the area. An important need is the realisation that maximum comfort in the home cannot be obtained from merely installing a cold water tap but by having adequate supply of hot and cold water, together with full sanitary facilities.

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

3. Voluntary community organisations

by
MAURA RAFFERTY*

INTRODUCTION

For many years Irish rural communities have accepted voluntary group action as a means of achieving economic and social betterment. Yet little is known about the general structure of voluntary organisations or about their relationship to the social situations in which they must function. The study of voluntary community organisations in Glenties Rural District was undertaken as an attempt to provide information on this question.

The study had relevance also to the particular objectives of a resource survey. It is based upon a set of premises embodied in the philosophy of Muintir na Tire and also implicit in the principles adopted by other organisations concerned with community development. These are that:

1. People are a most vital resource in any community.
2. A community will have needs which it will seek to fulfill through organised voluntary group action.
3. Voluntary organisations as units in themselves are valuable resources in that they provide opportunities through which persons can contribute to their community's development.
4. Programmes of economic, social and educational content often require an infrastructure by which their benefits can more effectively reach the individual, and voluntary organisations can provide such facilities.

METHODOLOGY

The study aimed at full coverage of all organisations in the Glenties Rural District. In this effort a possibility of error arose from the fact that there was no general register which could provide a reliable means of locating organisations in the area. Incomplete coverage with regard to organisations no longer functioning was expected as this information depended on the memory of those interviewed.

Two-hundred-and-two organisations were located in the survey area. A questionnaire was completed for each one of these. The information was obtained by personal interviews with leaders or other key informants of each organisation. All the interviews were carried out by the same interviewer who resided in the area until the field work was finished. This ensured consistency in the manner in which the interview schedule was introduced to respondents.

*Muintir na Tire, Tipperary. This is a revision of an original report submitted by Miss Rafferty. It was revised and prepared for publication by P. Commins, An Foras Talintais.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The 202 voluntary organisations were located in 19 different centres (Appendix, Table I), eleven of these being towns or villages and the remainder being open country locations. At the time of the study 39 organisations out of the total of 202 were inactive. The number of organisations in individual centres varied though the variation was not related to the size of the centre's population. Killybegs town, for example, with 1,000 persons had 22 active organisations while Ardara with 543 people had 31. This variation is probably affected by the way in which centres are situated in relation to each other and also by the size of their adjacent populations.

On the basis of expressed aim and function, organisations were classified into six categories: sports (including recreational); religious; social work-service-charitable; cultural, including any recreation groups not included in the sports category; community development, and occupational or professional organisations (Table 1). A list of organisation types by broad category is given in Appendix, Table II.

TABLE 1—Categories of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Category	Total		Active		Inactive	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sports ...	31	15.3	22	10.9	9	4.5
Religious	40	19.8	38	18.8	2	1.0
Social ...	36	17.8	26	12.9	10	4.9
Cultural	25	12.4	16	7.9	9	4.5
Comm. Devel.	38	18.8	32	15.9	6	2.9
Occupational	32	15.9	29	14.4	3	1.5
Total	202	100.0	163	80.8	39	19.3

There was some variation in the way active organisations were distributed among categories. Cultural, sports and social service groups were least represented but this was due to the high percentages of these types of organisations (29%—36%) which had ceased to function. By contrast, religious groups were most numerous and only 5% had become inactive.

Reasons for inactivity were sought and replies indicated that 13 ceased because of lack of interest on the part of the community, six because of emigration, five because of lack of leadership, four had no facilities for activities, four became inactive because of internal conflict or conflict outside the organisation. No reason could be given for a further seven.

Initial organisation

Information was sought about the original organisers and initiators of the organisations located. This was considered important as an indication of how local voluntary action is seen by community members as a means of fulfilling felt needs by their own efforts rather than waiting for the impetus to come from outside the community.

A large majority (77%) of all organisations were initiated locally. Local residents, excluding clergy, had organised 60% of groups, clergy organised 17% and another 16% were initiated from county or national level. There were 7% of organisations whose founders were unknown.

Active and inactive groups did not differ as regards their original initiators except in one respect—none of the organisations begun by local clergy was inactive. This may be due to the presence of a leader in the community with full concern for community affairs and who carries out some of his work through the organisational structure. It is probably also related to the type of needs which organisations founded by the clergy are attempting to fulfill.

An examination of the years of origin of the 202 voluntary organisations showed that one-third were initiated between 1960 and 1966. In fact, all community development activity began after 1940. This trend, together with the fact that most organisations were initiated by local residents, reflects an increasing awareness of the possibilities of community action and advancement through voluntary groupings in the area.

The remainder of this section is confined to discussion of the active organisations.

Internal structure

The majority of active organisations (62.2%) had a formal constitution though there was wide variation between categories. Practically all occupational groups, but only one-quarter of cultural organisations had their own constitution.

Many of the organisations lacking a formal constitution did in fact have some formal working structure. This was indicated by the fact that 88% of groups had at least one member functioning in an executive capacity. Only 19 had no executive position of any kind, while 51 had a full executive committee (chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer). Organisations concerned with community development had the most complete type of executive structure.

Affiliation

Fifty-five of the 163 active organisations were affiliated to units of the larger organisation at county level. The majority of these (46) sent representatives to county unit meetings, organisations in community development having the greatest degree of affiliation in this respect. A total of 93 groups were affiliated to the national organisation, 74 of these being affiliated directly and the remainder through the county structure. At this level, occupational groups had the strongest affiliation.

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

In the active organisations there was a total of 14,594 *members* representing almost four-fifths of the 1966 population of the survey area. The actual number of *individuals* involved, however, is impossible to estimate but is probably much smaller than the total membership as individuals may be members of several organisations.

The breakdown of membership numbers by category (Table 2) shows that almost half (47.6%) of all membership belongs to organisations based on occupational interests. Average membership per organisation varied widely between categories and even within categories. Committee-type groups, for example, such as fund-raising organisations, could function with a few active members and might even be hindered by high membership rates.

Age of members

Each organisation in the study gave an estimate of the average age of its members; consequently this is only an indication of the age groups being served by voluntary organisations. The great majority of organisations seemed to cater for the older adult

TABLE 2—Membership of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Category	No. of organisations	Total members	% total members	Avg no. members
Sports	22	1,092	7.4	50
Religious	38	3,966	27.3	104
Social	26	671	4.6	26
Cultural	16	437	3.0	27
Comm. Devel.	32	1,479	10.1	46
Occupational	29	6,949	47.6	239
Total	163	14,594	100.0	90

age groups (Table 3) except in the case of sports groups and, to a lesser extent, the religious organisations.

TABLE 3—Distribution of voluntary organisations by estimated average age of membership in Glenties Rural District

Category	No. of organisations		<16 yr		16-29 yr		>29 years	
	No. of organisations	No. of members	Org.	Mem.	Org.	Mem.	Org.	Mem.
Sports	22	1,092	—	—	18	1,030	4	62
Religious	38	3,966	2	32	15	1,740	21	2,194
Social	26	671	3	59	6	254	17	358
Cultural	16	437	1	12	3	43	12	382
Comm. Devel.	32	1,479	3	105	3	115	26	1,259
Occupational	29	6,949	—	—	6	400	23	6,549
Total	163	14,594	9	208	51	3,582	103	10,804
Percentage	100	100	5.5	1.41	31.3	24.54	63.2	74.03

Male/female representation

With the exception of 18 groups, the majority of which were religious or social service organisations, all catered for exclusively male membership or for membership of both sexes (Table 4). A comparatively high number were open to male members only—more than three times the number which were exclusively female. There were no exclusively female sports or cultural organisations; most sports groups were male and most cultural groups mixed. Generally then, though 54% of organisations were open to mixed membership the area of choice is more limited for women in all categories except in case of religious groups.

Also, representation of the sexes in the executive committees of organisations shows preponderance of male leadership. Of the 436 persons occupying executive positions, 346 (79 %) were male. Females in executive positions were concentrated in the religious, social service and community development type organisations but in no category did females hold a majority of committee membership.

TABLE 4—Distribution of voluntary organisations according to type of membership in Glenties Rural District

Category	No.	Male membership only	Female membership only	Mixed membership
Sports	22	15	—	7
Religious	38	6	10	22
Social	26	12	1	13
Cultural	16	4	—	12
Comm. Devel.	32	8	6	18
Occupational	29	12	1	16
Total	163	57	18	88
Percentage	100	35	11	54

This could reflect a number of features of social life in the survey area; the patriarchal nature of rural society where social roles of the sexes are clearly differentiated and tend to confine women to their domestic obligations, a lack of initiative among women in organising and supporting voluntary groups, or the preference of women in the area for organisations of mixed, rather than exclusively female, memberships. It must be remembered too that males outnumber females in the adult population.

Occupational composition of organisations

Occupational composition of organisations was calculated on the basis of the occupation of the majority of the members in each group. Table 5 shows the distribution of organisations on this basis.

TABLE 5—Distribution of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District according to occupations of majority of members

Occupation	Sports	Religious	Social	Cultural	Comm. Devel.	Occup ational	Total	
							No.	%
Business and Professions	5	6	7	2	9	6	35	21.5
Labourers: Factory and Farm	10	4	3	4	1	12	34	20.8
Farmers	1	8	3	5	6	7	30	18.4
Students	—	5	5	3	3	—	16	9.8
Housewives	—	8	2	—	4	1	15	9.2
Mixed Occup	2	2	4	1	4	—	13	8.0
Fishermen	2	1	1	—	3	3	10	6.1
Clerks	1	3	—	—	—	—	4	2.5
No Answer	1	1	1	1	2	—	6	3.7
Total	22	38	26	16	32	29	163	100.0

There is apparently a discrepancy between the distribution of occupational groupings in the West Donegal population and their representation in the voluntary organisa-

tions of the area. Less than one-fifth were composed mainly of farmers, the most numerous occupational category in the area, while in over one-fifth of voluntary groups business and professional people were in the majority. Within categories, distribution of organisations by occupation of the majority of members was fairly even. Labourers, however, predominated in sports and occupational groups while housewives were found mainly in religious and community development organisations.

Educational levels

An accurate description of the educational standards of all organisation members would necessitate a much more intensive study than the present one. Educational levels were sought, therefore, only for committee members (Table 6).

TABLE 6—Educational levels of committee members in voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District.

Category	No. committee members	Educational level			
		University	Secondary	Technical	Primary
Sports	65	11	15	5	34
Religious	95	23	17	15	40
Social	71	13	14	9	35
Cultural	33	10	9	2	12
Comm. Devel.	107	28	34	21	24
Occupational	65	18	7	6	34
Total	436	103	96	58	179
Percentage	100	23.6	22.0	13.3	41.1

While the educational levels of the survey population are not precisely known it is likely that those with post-primary education are more than proportionately represented in the organisational leadership of the area.

TABLE 7—Attendance rates at meetings of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Category	Total membership	Average number per organisation	Average attendance	Avg attendance as % of avg number
Sports	1,092	50	18	36.2
Religious	3,966	104	29	27.9
Social	671	26	16	61.5
Cultural	437	27	18	66.7
Comm. Devel.	1,479	46	20	43.5
Occupational	6,949	239	23	9.6

A [tendance at meetings

Attendance rates are a good measure of member interest, participation, and of organisation vigour in general. An important fact in regard to the organisations studied was that average attendance rates in absolute numbers varied little (16-29 depending on category) with the size of the organisation (Table 7). This would indicate that organisations operate with a certain working nucleus irrespective of their size. It may also be true that the higher percentage attendance rates in social service and cultural organisations are due to the fact that they attract only small numbers but these are people genuinely interested and self-convinced about the aims and activities of such groups.

Potential membership

Questions were asked about potential membership of organisations in order to get an indication of how groups viewed their membership in relation to the community rather than an accurate assessment of possible membership. A majority (71 %) of organisations felt that membership could be increased within the present population. Religious, social service, and community development groups considered that double the present membership rates were possible, indicating a general desire to involve as many of the community as possible. Cultural organisations with low membership rates, did not aspire to great increases in membership, probably because these tend to service special-interest groups rather than the whole community. Occupational organisations had very little expectations of potential increase in membership but, clearly, their numbers were already quite high, possibly accounting for most of the eligible membership. In other cases where potential membership was considered low or non-existent, this was usually in the organisations confined to specific aims and those with a committee type structure only.

ACTION PATTERNS OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Meeting places

Consideration was given to meeting places of organisations to get an indication of facilities available and also of the position which organisations occupied in the life of the community. For example, organisations with permanent club-rooms, premises or other centres of their own would more likely occupy stable positions in the spectrum of community life.

TABLE 8—Meeting places of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Meeting place	Sports	Religious	Social	Cultural	Comm. Devel.	Occupational	Total	
							No.	%
Parish hall	13	9	9	8	8	7	54	33.1
Hotel	5	—	5	1	11	4	26	15.9
School	—	9	6	2	5	2	24	14.7
Church and Rectory	—	19	1	1	1	—	22	13.5
Organisation premises	2	—	4	2	2	7	17	10.5
Members' homes	—	—	1	1	1	6	9	5.6
Other	2	1	—	1	4	3	11	6.7
Total	22	38	26	16	32	29	163	100.0

Generally, four types of centres were used for meeting purposes: parish halls, hotels, church or church premises and schools. Small numbers of organisations held their meetings either in organisation premises (*e.g.*, co-operative organisations) or in members' homes. In the main, therefore, organisations have a definite meeting place with which they can be identified though perhaps hotel rooms, while providing a regular facility, may be least adequate in this regard.

Frequency of meetings

There was considerable variation in frequency of meetings (Table 9). Comparatively few of the occupational or community development organisations held meetings more often than once a month and each of these categories had a relatively high number of groups who met at irregular intervals. Surprisingly, a considerable proportion of social service groups also met on an irregular basis.

TABLE 9—Frequency of general meetings of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Categories	No. of orgs.	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	2-6 months	Annually	Irregular
Sports	22	7	4	5	—	3	3
Religious	38	14	3	15	3	2	1
Social	26	6	2	4	3	3	8
Cultural	16	6	—	4	2	—	4
Comm. Devel. .	32	3	3	13	4	1	8
Occupational .	29	1	1	6	7	4	10
Total	163	37	13	47	19	13	34
Percentage	100	22.8	7.9	28.8	11.7	7.9	20.9

In regard to meetings of executive committees the general tendency among organisations was to hold meetings every month or otherwise at irregular intervals. Religious groups, however, had about one-third of their committees meeting weekly. Only five committees out of 144 did not hold meetings.

Organisations which held irregular meetings either of committee members or of all members did so mainly because of the seasonality of their activities or because they were concerned with specific projects and so only met when the need arose.

Activities of organisations

Because of the high number and wide variety of projects in the different organisations, it was considered best to study the activity of each category of organisation separately. The different types of group action are described in summary form here, the detailed listing of quantity and type of project involved being given in Appendix, Table III. The description given here does not indicate the quality of projects nor the efficiency with which they are carried out but it does serve to show the needs of the community as perceived by the voluntary organisations and the efforts made to satisfy those needs.

Sports organisations were involved not only in the general promotion of sports activities but in developing facilities and amenities and also in fund-raising. Likewise, religious groups concerned themselves not just with devotional practice but with

additional projects of various kinds such as church maintenance and renovation, charitable and social work like caring for the aged and the destitute, and recreational activities like youth work, and social functions. Thus in many cases the work of religious organisations, though motivated by religious principles was not merely devotional but overlapped with the type of activity primarily catered for by other kinds of groups.

Organisations engaged in social work or service were geared towards provision of recreational facilities, as in the running of youth clubs, as well as providing services such as civil defence or emergency medical aid. Fund-raising was also important, this sometimes being an end in itself as far as the local community was concerned as monies collected were channelled towards the help of national organisations such as the Mentally Handicapped Childrens* Association.

Cultural organisations had projects on hand dealing with provision of recreational facilities and the promotion of choir groups, bands, music competitions, drama and adult education. In many cases the activities of these organisations provided a direct means of raising funds, as in dramatic society productions.

Community development organisations attempt to improve the economic and social well-being of the whole community. At the time of the study a total of 105 projects had been carried out or were in progress. They fell into four main groups: (1) Economic developments such as establishment of co-operatives, purchase of machinery for small industries, improvement of farm livestock, development of fishing and development of markets for area products. (2) Provision of public amenities and services such as public telephones, car parks, piped water schemes. These often involved making representations to local bodies or Government Departments. (3) Area improvement schemes such as Tidy Towns campaigns, tree planting, provision of public seating, developing tourist amenities and care of cemeteries. (4) Social service activities including development of tourism through preparation and distribution of literature and promotion of recreational functions; projects in educational development such as provision of school transport, running adult education courses, or promoting existing schemes.

The majority of membership of occupational organisations was concentrated in co-operative societies: these accounted for 5,420 members or shareholders out of 6,949 members in this category. Projects and activities differed according to the aims and functions of the organisations concerned. Two distinct groupings could be identified: those which tended to limit their activities to the betterment of working conditions and attaining increases in incomes for their members and the co-operative organisations which were multi-purpose and concerned themselves not alone with co-operative production, buying and marketing but also with projects of area improvement.

Thus there was a considerable degree of overlap between organisations in the type and content of activities undertaken. Table 10 shows the overall trend of voluntary group action.

Community improvement projects were the most important single type of activity and there was some work of this kind in organisations of all categories. Recreational and social activities, fund-raising and direct economic developments were roughly equally important. The importance of fund-raising is clearly shown, being necessary for all categories except occupational groups which had shareholders or membership contributions. Educational and cultural activities accounted for a relatively low proportion of voluntary group effort.

There were eight projects reported as unsuccessful, mainly attributable to lack of member interest. This number is surprisingly low and may be due to a tendency to

TABLE 10—Activities in all voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Activity	No. of projects	% of total
Community Improvements	69	22.3
Recreational and Social Activities ...	43	13.9
Fund-raising	43	13.9
Direct Economic Developments	37	12.0
Sports Activities	28	9.0
Charitable and Social Work	21	6.8
Church Work	16	5.2
Improvement of Working Conditions	15	4.9
Educational Work	15	4.9
Cultural Activities	14	4.5
Others, not listed	8	2.6
Total	309	100.0

forget or conceal those activities which were abandoned. There may also be a hesitancy on the part of voluntary groups to avoid attempting risky projects and to adhere to those where success seemed guaranteed. It is more likely however that this low figure testifies to the rarity of failure when a group of people get together and commit themselves to doing something which they could hardly achieve working as individuals.

SUMMARY

1. There was a very wide range of voluntary organisation types in the West Donegal area and their activities spread over an immense variety of social action.
2. Of the 202 voluntary groups located in the area, 39 were inactive. Most organisations (60% of the total) were initiated by local residents (excluding clergy who organised 17 % of groups).
3. The predominance of organisations initiated locally alongside the fact that almost one-third of groups were organised in the period 1960-66 shows that there is increasing awareness of the usefulness of group action in satisfying community needs.
4. Most active groups had a formal constitution but even where this was not the case organisations tended to have some degree of formality in their structures, usually by having at least one person holding an executive position.
5. Total membership of active organisations was 14,600. This was equivalent to the population over 14 years but there is probably extensive duplication of membership. Nevertheless, it seems that voluntary organisation is extensive enough to be within reach of each adult in the area.
6. Though the information obtained on the personal attributes of organisation members was very general it does suggest that:
 - (a) professional and business people have more representation in organisations than in the population while the opposite is true for farmers.
 - (b) The majority catered to older adults.
 - (c) Women had not the same range of choice as men and housewives were in the majority in only 9 % of organisations.
 - (d) The majority of committee members had post-primary education, which is probably not true of the population as a whole.

7. Attendance at meetings varied relatively little (16-29 persons on the average) irrespective of the size of the groups. On the other hand there was considerable variation in the frequency with which meetings were held.
8. While organisations differed in regard to their primary aims and functions, there was considerable overlap in the kinds of projects and activities undertaken. However, the total of 309 projects on hands between all groups consisted mainly of community improvements, recreational and social activities, fund-raising and economic development work.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that each centre of population in West Donegal had some voluntary organisation indicating that communities, regardless of size, have needs which they will seek to satisfy through voluntary group action. In many ways the variety of those needs determines the structure, membership rates, action patterns and continuity or otherwise of organisations. Some tentative conclusions on the relationship of community needs to organisational structure can be drawn from this study.

Religious and occupational groups are similar in that they serve needs which are constant and felt by the total community or by large sections of it. The existence of occupations ensures a constant need for occupational organisations even though the personnel of their membership may change frequently. Secondly, religious and occupational groups do not demand a considerable amount of participant activity from their members over and above attendance at meetings. An active minority or single leader may be sufficient to keep the group functioning.

Cultural and sports organisations, on the other hand, serve needs which arise from the specific interests of individuals rather than whole or large sections of communities. Strongly dependent on the individual contribution, these develop as meeting points where individuals can share common interests in a group setting. Membership of these organisations would tend to be smaller than those in other categories, but as the main activity is carried out at meetings, attendance will be relatively high. Yet, since they are heavily dependent on member interest and participation they have little guarantee of continuity and tend to become inactive with declining interest or membership.

Community development and social organisations develop as a result of the interests of individual community members but they seek to cater not so much for these individual interests as for needs which members perceive to exist in the community in general. While social organisations taken in total try to alleviate community problems, each type of social organisation tends to specialise in its activities. Continuity depends strongly on continued interest and awareness on the part of members. In community development groups a minority of the population may have to work in a situation where they attempt to bring about improvement for a majority who may not even be aware that the need for such improvements exists. These groups are therefore the most vulnerable to decline. Furthermore, and in common with social organisations, relatively little of the activity is carried on at meetings, which are used mainly for planning and decision making. These groups undertake their functions mainly outside of meeting rooms and so are more demanding in time and effort than other categories of voluntary organisations.

APPENDIX

TABLE I—Locations of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

Area	Pop. 1966	No. of orgs.	No. active	No. inactive
Annagary	157	8	8	—
Aranmore	—	6	5	1
Ardara	543	39	31	8
Beal an Atha Mhoir	—	1	1	—
Burtonport	243	6	4	2
Carrick	183	14	7	7
Dunglow	878	18	14	4
Edenfagh	—	2	2	—
Fintown	—	1	1	—
Gweebarra	—	1	1	—
Glencolumbkille	92	15	15	—
Glenties	744	31	26	5
Kilcar	229	12	10	2
Killybegs	1,062	29	22	7
Kincasslagh	87	4	3	1
Lettermacaward	—	2	1	1
Meenacross	—	4	4	—
Narin-Portnoo	136	7	6	1
The Rosses	—	2	2	—
Total		202	163	39

TABLE II—Type of voluntary organisations in Glenties Rural District

1. *Sports*

- Billiard clubs
- Committees for the promotion of sports activities
- Gaelic Athletic Association
- Golf clubs
- Handball clubs
- Physical training clubs
- Soccer clubs
- Tennis clubs

2. *Religious*

- Choirs
- Legion of Mary
- Pioneer Total Abstinence Association
- St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Sodalities

3. *Social work/service*

- Ancient Order of Hibernians
- Charitable committees
- Civil Defence
- Fire Brigade
- Forsa Cosanta Aitiuil
- Red Cross
- Youth clubs

TABLE III (contd.)

<i>Religious organisations</i>			
Church activities	16	28.1	13
Charitable and social work	16	28.1	10
Recreational activity ...	12	21.0	8
Fund-raising	8	14.0	8
Area improvements ...	5	8.8	4
None	—	—	12
Total	57	100.0	
<i>Social Work/Service organisations</i>			
Provision of recreation facilities	15	38.4	10
Fund-raising	12	30.8	9
Community services	6	15.4	5
Educational work	6	15.4	3
None	—	—	6
Total	39	100.0	
<i>Cultural organisations</i>			
General cultural activities	10	52.6	5
Promotion and production of drama	4	21.1	3
Fund-raising	3	15.8	3
Educational activities	2	10.5	2
None	—	—	3
Total	19	100.0	
<i>Community Development organisations</i>			
Economic development	20	19.0	
Provision of public amenities and services	19	18.1	
Area improvement schemes	18	17.2	
Social activities	14	13.3	
Development of tourism	8	7.6	
Fund-raising	8	7.6	
Educational developments	7	6.7	
Charitable	5	4.8	
Individual projects (not listed)	6	5.7	
Total	105	100.0	
<i>Occupational organisations</i>			
Improving working conditions	15	32.6	14
Co-op production and marketing	10	21.8	5
Community improvements ...	10	21.8	5
Co-operative buying	7	15.0	5
Community services	2	4.4	2
Others	2	4.4	2
Total	46	100.0	33

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

4. General discussion and conclusion

by
P. COMMINS

This report has assembled information from diverse sources on (a) a number of sociological aspects of the family farming economy in West Donegal and (b) some of the salient characteristics of the social environment in this area. It shows that the sociological problems of the area do not stem from any single set of circumstances but are rooted in a complex of interrelated though analytically distinct conditions. While this study has in no sense been exhaustive, the main constituent elements in the total problematic situation have been identified and measured to some extent. The resultant picture is a profile of a rural area of 18,000 persons where in the aggregate, conditions of economic and social life fall short of the standards obtaining elsewhere in the same county and in the country generally. The various findings in the study can now be brought together and discussed under separate headings, each heading corresponding to a main dimension of the overall problem.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

It is axiomatic to state that if a rural community of an area as extensive as West Donegal is to maintain itself and have a sound social structure in the context of the contemporary society then it must have an adequate economic base coupled with the means to exploit it. Agriculture is the occupation of approximately three-fifths of the working population, yet over 3 out of every 4 acres are classified as non-agricultural land. Holdings are small (over 70% were under 30 acres in 1965) and most have only a few acres of arable land. Consequently farming is on a small scale, giving low levels of output and low farming incomes. The majority are really outside the realm of commercial agriculture and even their opportunities to move into commercial farming are limited.

To the casual observer, judging agriculture in West Donegal by commercial standards, it must be difficult to understand how a farming community could obtain a livelihood from such meagre resources. Other factors must be considered. Commonage is extensive though it is impossible to say how it is used. Numerous farming households have incomes from non-farm occupations; approximately half of the 243 in this study had such incomes.¹ An undetermined proportion of households could also rely on public assistance or emigrants' remittances. Furthermore, as long as material aspirations are low and the demands for consumer goods are limited, then the popula-

¹ In 13% of cases there were one or more persons with full-time occupations other than farming, 31 % had one or more persons with part-time occupations and 7% had persons with both full-time and part-time occupations.

tion on these holdings is likely to be adjusted to its economic circumstances. Yet, with these factors taken into account, life on many of these holdings can be little more than a constant struggle for existence, even within the context of the community's own standards. With the lessening of geographical and social isolation due to greater mobility, better education, and the growing influence of mass media, the people of West Donegal are increasingly subject to the social changes affecting rural society in general. They are certainly aware of the alternative possibilities to living and working in their own area. The rising momentum of population decline in recent years testifies to the diminishing capacity of the area's resources to maintain population at the standard of living which people have come to expect.

FARM STRUCTURE

Although holding size is small in Glenties and population decline has been rapid, there is still a considerable degree of structural stability at the individual holding or farm level. One-fifth of holdings were let or abandoned and the many *ad hoc* arrangements for the letting of vacated land could hardly be conducive to more productive use. Admittedly, no information was obtained in this study on the quality of vacated or unused land but it is likely that marginal land is the first to be abandoned. Excessive fragmentation is another weakness in farm structure though parcelling of land in itself is only one aspect of fragmentation. The extent of the problem depends on land use, size of separate plots and distances between them. Further fragmentation is likely as many of the smaller holdings will cease to be operated as separate farm units. Some of these may also be abandoned. Others will be amalgamated under new ownerships, through the open market, by inheritance, or through the action of the Land Commission. While this will increase the acreage farmed by individuals, it will not necessarily result in the consolidation of farm units. Neither will it ensure that, as far as possible, available land resources are accessible to those with enterprise, capital and knowledge.

In a traditional farming economy like that of West Donegal, land is viewed not merely as a factor of production but very much as a piece of property with symbolic value and towards which there is sentimental attachment. This is shown in one way by the poor response nationally to the Land Commission's Life Annuity Scheme.² The life annuities available to farmers who sell their lands are probably in most instances greater than the farm income obtained but are not sufficient to compensate for the status that land ownership confers in a rural community. The reluctance to relinquish land in cases of age, physical incapacity or migration, or the abandonment of land without making provision for its use means that amalgamation and enlargement are slow and consolidation occurs haphazardly. At official level the powers available to bring about structural change are extensive, including the compulsory acquisition of land, but these are invoked sparingly in deference to the rights of private property owners. Certainly economic considerations are not the only ones relevant to rationalisation of farm structure. Yet it seems in West Donegal that the obligations of private property owners or occupiers might be undertaken more seriously in view of the general land needs of the community in that area.

* This scheme was introduced in January 1967 (under Section 6 of the Land Act, 1965). It aimed at the purchase of 15,000 farms owned by elderly or disabled farmers in the State. By the end of 1968 only 339 applications had been received and 11 transactions completed. (Source: Department of Lands).

QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF THE POPULATION

Age

The West Donegal population is an aged one by comparison with rural areas generally. Among the sample of 478 landholders, almost two-thirds were more than 50 years old and of this age group one-third was single. In farming as in other occupations age has an important influence on working and management efficiency. While it could be expected that the younger farmers are more energetic in operating their holdings, the limitations of land and capital are probably such overriding factors on many farms in West Donegal that a younger population than at present would not of itself be more productive. The present sample showed that 13.5 % were not farming their holdings due to old age, physical disability and ill-health. There is no reason to believe that younger occupants would farm these holdings either, as they are the kind of uneconomic holding which younger people are most likely to leave in face of poor prospects.

With depopulation occurring in the young age groups (15-29 years) there is a loss of income and support to the community coupled with the fact that it does not benefit directly from the investment it has made in rearing and educating those who leave. The aged on the other hand constitute an increasing percentage of the community with the result that heavier financial burdens are imposed on the declining working population. This trend was highlighted in the population changes of 1961-66 which showed a loss of 1,845 people in Glenties Rural District but virtually no change in the number over 65 years.³ The problem of dependency becomes more acute where incomes are low and even though these may be supplemented by emigrants' remittances and social welfare payments, the level of living remains depressed.

In view of the changing age structure of the West Donegal population and particularly of the personal and domestic characteristics of the landholders in this survey, it is relevant to ask whether these features of demographic and social structure have given rise to social welfare and medical care problems.⁴ Should there be more cognisance taken of the needs of the aged, for example, as a distinct group in the community? Certainly, a high percentage of persons, landholders especially, must fall outside the scope of agricultural or any other developmental policy. There are numbers of farms or small businesses where there is no relative to continue the occupancy. In the present study 16 % of households had nobody in the age group 15-59 years. There are domestic circumstances which do not allow adequate care of the elderly while in an area like Donegal, social and physical isolation may be an added problem. It may also happen in the case of older members of the agricultural community that the high premium put on land possession, whether for personal security or social status, may give rise to problems not usually associated with retiral from other occupations. These may take the form of reluctance to relinquish land or business, to avail of institutional care, or to live elsewhere from the family home. It may also be worth questioning whether the traditionally strong family ties and kinship obligations in rural areas are any longer sufficient to ensure economic and emotional security for the aged.

³ There was a decline from 3,027 to 2,999 persons.

⁴ Some information on this point has been presented by M. P. Spellman, "Mental Illness in Roscommon Women during Spring 1967" in *Journal of the Irish Medical Association*, Vol. 61, pp. 94-96.

Education

Levels of formal education among the older generation in the study were extremely low. In Donegal as a whole the participation rate in post-primary education has for long lagged behind that of the rest of the country.⁵ The county has numerous townlands and villages many of which are removed from centres of population where post-primary education facilities are likely to be located. The difficulties of topography are accentuated in the Glenties area. Moreover, it has been the practice of parents in many rural areas like Glenties to endeavour to provide further education for those of their families who were to take up occupations outside agriculture whereas such education was thought to be unnecessary for those who were to remain on the family farm. Only seven out of 156 boys who left the area's three vocational schools in 1964-66 were employed in farming.⁶

The field study showed that, expectedly, educational levels were higher among the younger generation in West Donegal while the review of educational statistics indicated that enrolments in post-primary courses were increasing rapidly in recent years. Recent changes, providing for free post-primary education and free school transport, have minimised the disadvantages of low incomes and geographical isolation. The raising of the compulsory school-leaving age to 15 years (proposed for 1970) will also tend to increase the numbers coming into post-primary education.

These developments make it all the more important to ensure that youth are directed to educational courses suited to their aptitudes and abilities, and that both they and their parents have realistic information about the career opportunities available. The returns obtained from vocational schools showed that there was a tendency for school-leavers to remain at home in part-time or casual employment or without any job and then to emigrate after 2 or 3 years. A comprehensive system of educational and vocational guidance⁷ would eliminate some of the wastage of human resources inherent in this pattern of employment and migration.

There was also tentative evidence in the field study to show that post-primary education increased the chances of boys in Glenties in securing employment in this country although not in their own county. The same did not appear to be true for girls as. compared with boys, the incidence of emigration from the State was somewhat higher among those girls who had education beyond primary level. This may be applicable only in Glenties or Donegal where employment available in the hotel and craft (knitting) industries does not demand a high level of education. The analysis of the employment patterns of vocational school leavers further showed that 17.3% of girls had emigrated as against 11.5% of boys.⁸

A combination of limited educational facilities and the tendency for the better educated to leave the area has left the residual population poorly equipped in terms of

⁵ See for example *Investment in Education*, The Stationery Office, Dublin, pp. 154-160.

⁶ More recent information about the destinations of school leavers was obtained from the area's three vocational schools. In 1966-67 and 1967-68, 111 boys had left these schools of whom 13 went into farming. There may be more farmers' sons taking post-primary education in recent years but having regard to the information obtained in earlier years, it is likely that some of these will not remain in farming.

⁷ The term 'guidance' in this context has a number of different connotations in the literature and hence its functions are variously defined. In its broadest sense it is directed towards the development of the full potential of the individual. For a brief summary of the literature see J. F. Fulton "Practical Issues and problems in Education", *Christus Rex*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1969), pp. 36-37.

⁸ Of the 112 girls who left the area's three vocational schools in 1966-67 and 1967-68, 19 had left the State by February 1969 whereas the corresponding figures for boys were 16 out of 111.

formal education. Adult education courses can to a certain extent compensate for the lack of formal education and they are important sources of practical advice and instruction. Evening classes in a wide range of subjects in permanent and temporary centres are a regular feature in the schemes of the vocational authorities, yet the record of participation on the part of households in the survey was low. It is difficult to account for this as well as for the inadequate use of the advisory service though both are undoubtedly linked with levels of basic education. In the case of the latter, however, the problem of maintaining a full staff with limited turnover is a formidable difficulty in the administration of the service in County Donegal.

MIGRATION

Migration is a well established feature of West Donegal. It reflects the area's basic problem in the imbalance between population numbers and the opportunities to earn a livelihood at the standards desired. Seasonal migration, particularly to potato harvesting in Scotland, is an old tradition in the area and was perhaps the stabilising influence on the population level until recent years when its importance diminished. Permanent migration is now predominant and changes in age cohorts indicate that two out of every three children eventually leave the area.

Discussions on rural migration, especially in agricultural countries, have often been emotionally laden and based on confusing arguments. In this country, the ideal of the family farm and a land policy aimed at improving farm structure with minimal consequential disturbance of the population⁹ are not always seen to be in harmony with the conditions required for the greatest efficiency in the farming industry. Such phrases as 'the flight from the land' and 'the rural exodus' or 'disappearing villages' are often used with the same meaning¹⁰ and clearly imply that the depopulation of the countryside is to be deplored. National policy accepts, however, that the agricultural population will continue to decline and that further migration from farms is inevitable. The question is now one of maintaining a rural population and current thinking in regional planning sees this as possible through zonal development.¹¹ This approach even questions the wisdom of maintaining population in all rural areas even though this could be done with some migration.

On this basis it is difficult to see how migration from West Donegal can be terminated anywhere in the near future. Subsistence agriculture employs the majority of workers and apart from the difficulties of creating the kind of employment structure to absorb the outflow of people from farms, the desirability of this effort itself could perhaps be questioned on consideration of the development possibilities of, say, the whole north-western region. Ideally, the aim should be to give workers leaving agriculture a possibility of remaining in their home community. However, practical considerations in rural development now demand that people see their communities, in their size and

• See P. J. O'Leary and T. O'Sullivan, "Land Reform in Ireland", *Christus Rex*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1967), pp. 52-59.

¹⁰ While all counties in the State had declines in the agricultural labour force in 1961-66 three counties, Dublin (—9%), Louth (—11%) and Meath (—12%) showed increases in population in both open county areas and rural towns and villages. See P. Commins, "Recent Population Changes Analysed by Community Size", *Irish Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology*, Vol. 1 No. 2, (1968), pp. 195-206.

¹¹ For a summary see J. Newman, *New Dimensions in Regional Planning*, An Foras Forbartha, Dublin, 1967.

geographical limits, not as local areas but areas of common interest where size is governed by basically similar needs and the possibility for achieving common objectives. This is particularly desirable when the maintenance of the rural population is a community need to be fulfilled by the provision of industry or other off-farm employment. However necessary an industry in any local area and granted that special cases can be made for some areas, the siting and development of each employment opportunity must have regard to its place in a more comprehensive plan. Migration and depopulation will thus be consciously accepted by some local areas knowing that limited resources cannot be dispersed to make minimal provision for all.

Whatever the future prospects, West Donegal is currently losing on two accounts. It is neither a component area in a region which has a comprehensive development policy and therefore the possibility of rationalising its emigration movement, nor has it the internal resources or the input of external assistance to occupy all its potential workers. Thus the present migration has little of the advantages usually advanced in connection with movement of persons from agriculture and other rural employment. Firstly, it is selective in terms of age and, as was shown in the survey, in terms of education. Secondly, its volume is so relatively high that it generates a kind of 'escape mentality' resulting in turn in migration even from situations where economic prospects are reasonable. Thirdly, whereas the previous migration and particularly seasonal migration left the economic and social system on a reasonably sound basis, the current movement is disrupting the potential for agricultural and non-agricultural production, land use patterns, and community and social organisation. Fourthly, the merits of a migration from agriculture presuppose that the resources are available for use by the remainder but resources seem to have considerable inertia. Finally, emigration is largely to employment outside the country.

HOUSING CONDITIONS, AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Any efforts to improve economic welfare in West Donegal would be incomplete unless there was also a considerable amount of reconstruction and re-equipment of dwelling houses. Over one-quarter of dwellings are more than a century old. While the quality of housing is not determined directly by age most of these old dwellings must now be in a state of disrepair. Judged on observation many are either unsuitable for reconstruction at reasonable cost or are structurally impossible to recondition at all. Of the rural areas in the State, housing in the Donegal area has the highest incidence of overcrowding.

An area like West Donegal is confronted with particular housing problems. While on the one hand a declining population and a low or falling marriage rate may lessen the demand for new dwellings, there will at the same time be a need for a greater ratio of separate dwellings per 1,000 persons in an ageing rural population. To provide new housing is to run the risk of having redundant investment in the future, especially in the remote areas, while existing dwellings are often badly fitted for habitation or are lacking in the conveniences essential to modern living accommodation. Assuming the area's 5,000 dwellings are becoming obsolete at the rate of 1.0% per annum¹² the housing needs alone on this score would be 50 dwellings per year without considering the backlog of unfit dwellings. Yet these needs must be balanced against the inevitability of further decline in population. Perhaps, semi-permanent structures or chalet type accommodation would be most suitable for housing needs in this kind of situation.

¹² See "Housing—Progress and Prospects", Stationery Office, Dublin, p. 23, 1964.

Inseparable from the provision of satisfactory housing conditions is the provision of piped water supplies, sanitary facilities and electricity. Living standards are continually rising and so are the demands for these essentials. The low level of provision in this regard in the West Donegal area cannot be disassociated from the area's low marriage rate and the high proportion of farms managed by bachelors.

The present rate of installation of water and sewerage systems appears to be much too slow in view of the leeway to be made up. In 1961, roughly 4,000 out of West Donegal's 5,000 dwellings did not have these facilities. Yet the average annual number of grants paid for water and sewerage installation in 1964-1967 *in the whole county* was 376, while the average annual number of new dwellings built in the county in those years was 252.¹³ In Glenties Rural District an average of 38 houses were built and 34 water and sewerage installations carried out annually in 1964-68.¹⁴ This total of 72 water and sewerage installations per year was approximately only 2% of the number without these facilities. Even with a likelihood of a decline in the number of dwellings in the area it will take many years to equip each house with these amenities at the current rate of progress.

DEPENDENCY ON SOCIAL WELFARE

From time to time, there is criticism of the unemployment assistance scheme ('the dole'). The general contention in this regard is that the payment of public money to able bodied persons without requiring any work to be done in return is economically and socially undesirable, and that the expenditure on this scheme would be put to better use if incorporated into some plan aimed at increased farm production or some other development effort. In 1963 an Inter-Departmental Committee stated that "the present basis of qualification for unemployment assistance often acts as a disincentive to smallholders in western areas and that fear of losing the dole makes them unwilling to avail of opportunities of increasing their income unless the opportunity offered practically guarantees a higher cash benefit than the dole".¹⁵ Since the calculation of means of smallholders in the western counties can now be made with reference to valuation of land this argument has no longer the same strength. As holdings of equal valuation can now be considered as yielding the same means for social assistance purposes, irrespective of how they are actually worked, smallholders need not be penalised as a result of increasing farm output and thus can participate in the schemes available to raise the productive capacity of their holdings. Yet there is still a situation where public money is paid out to maintain people while holdings remain neglected or buildings are left unrepaired, because there are those who, for one reason or another, lack the initiative or ability to work their holdings fully. Perhaps many of these might be more appropriately catered for by the life annuity scheme than by social assistance.

On the other hand when one considers the economic and social circumstances of the western areas, the scheme undoubtedly serves a real need in this region. Whereas the payment of unemployment assistance to persons in the better off areas means, in most cases, a loss of normal earnings, the same payments in a poor agricultural area represent an increase on the meagre family income derived from near subsistence

¹³ Source: Department of Local Government. Data refer to 12 months beginning 1st April.

¹⁴ Source: Donegal County Council.

¹⁵ *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Problems of Small Western Farms*, Stationery Office, Dublin 1963, para. 67. See also Fr. J. McDyer, "The Dole" in *Rural Ireland*, 1964, p. 94.

farming. At the same time it is true that payments over a prolonged period can induce a situation where the benefits come to be regarded almost as a right even by the second generation.

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which beneficiaries under the scheme are disinclined to take up work. There is little reliable evidence on this point and all the plausible beliefs or opinions offered are not necessarily true or correct. The statistics compiled officially are not sufficiently comprehensive. It would be desirable, for instance, to know the ages, economic and household circumstances of all those who come under the unemployment and smallholders' assistance schemes. It was shown that of those registered for unemployment assistance and smallholders* assistance, more than one-half (52%) had no dependant and more than two-thirds (68%) had no dependant or only one dependant. It was also inferred from the age particulars of persons on social assistance in urban areas in the western counties that the majority on social assistance in the Glenties region (probably up to 60%) are over 40 years of age.

While this information is obviously limited it is sufficient to suggest that a substantial proportion of those on 'the dole' are in the older and less active age groups and have minimum responsibilities as far as supporting dependants is concerned. It is likely that this group has little incentive to maximise earnings, quite apart from any deficiencies in the application of these schemes. It is doubtful whether they would constitute an ideal labour pool for industrial employment on the grounds of age alone. It appears therefore that many of the claims for unemployment assistance must be accepted as part of a considerable social welfare problem in the Donegal and other western areas. The reasons for this are amply documented in the present study. As far as the remainder are concerned it would be expected that, given adequate employment opportunities or reasonable possibilities of expanding their holdings, they would no longer be content to depend on social security payments. Contrary to much of popular opinion the assistance rates are relatively low (*e.g.*, for one adult without any dependants the weekly maximum in rural areas is 38s.¹⁶), and are not more attractive than what would be obtained from good employment or productive farming. Discussing this kind of question in 1964. P. R. Kaim-Caudle wrote: "It may be that some unemployed are work-shy and some people who claim to be ill are malingerers . . . However experience in the U.K. and E.E.C. countries in the post-war period has shown fairly conclusively that abuse of social security benefits is much rarer than was feared by some people in those countries and is still often suspected in Ireland".¹⁷

VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The involvement of local initiative and participation is one of the important principles of rural development in other countries. This applies not only to under-developed areas but to economically advanced areas where government influence and control range increasingly over many spheres of human welfare, and where decision making becomes more centralised.

At first glance, the striking features of voluntary organisational structure in West Donegal are the suprisingly large number of organised groups, the numerical extent

¹⁶"This figure relates to January 1968. The current (April 1969) maximum rural rates vary from 45s. 6d. for a person without a dependant to £6 9s. 6d. for a person with a wife and four children.

¹⁷P. R. Kaim-Caudle, *Social Security in Ireland and Western Europe*, Econ. Soc. Res. Inst. Paper 20, 1964, p. 21.

of their membership, and the variety of their primary aims and functions. There is apparently a realisation of the efficacy of group effort in alleviating individual problems and contributing to general community welfare. Without being able to evaluate the quality of this organisational structure, it can be said that the existence of large numbers of people committed to voluntary work is in itself an important resource. Each member brings into the group situation, the skills, talents, knowledge and understanding of community needs, which he has as an individual. In this way the disparate resources of the community are organised and scarce resources are being utilised to the full. This was evident in the survey area where the executive committees of the different organisations brought together, in a working situation, members of the public with widely different educational standards including a high proportion of university graduates.

The voluntary organisational structure provides a framework for effective two-way communications between local communities and government or other formal organisations. There is, for example a ready medium through which development agencies can quickly get an understanding of local problems and an assessment of needs. On the other hand, working through voluntary organisations provides an opportunity for external agencies to overcome practical difficulties like getting local communities to modify unrealistic demands, to understand the rationale for proposed changes, or to alter community attitudes to a level more sympathetic to policy objectives. Yet it is doubtful if voluntary organisations in the survey area are as effective as they might be for these kinds of roles. Considerable overlapping and duplication of activities between groups suggest that communication between voluntary organisations themselves could be improved. Better co-ordination might enable groups to undertake projects within the context of overall plans where resources could be pooled and supported by external aid and advice. Duplication of membership, though not occurring frequently at executive committee level, must be quite extensive in the general membership. While this may enhance informal communication between groups, the multiplicity of organisations may mean that too many organise the same people while some segments of the population remain unrepresented. All rural organisations might consider the desirability of an up-to-date national register of their executive personnel and activities as a step towards smoothing the channels of communication between themselves and with statutory bodies.

CONCLUSION

All these problems are interrelated. Poor physical resources mean low outputs, low buying power and a low level of capital for investment. Low levels of living and inadequate provision of amenities and services induce heavy outward migration which is selective in terms of age and education. A residual population inhibits the development of economic resources and the re-organisation of social life. Whatever improvements are being made in absolute terms, comparison with the rest of the county and with rural areas generally shows that the self-perpetuating cycle of public problems continues. This is obvious from the fact that almost three-quarters of a century after the formation of the Congested Districts' Board, the economic and social conditions of areas like West Donegal constitute one of the major national problems.

Resource development involves full evaluation of existing situations, specification of alternative proposals, clarification of development goals and their priorities, the selection of a programme of action and the means for its implementation. This survey

has taken the first step. Under many headings there are really no alternatives as far as development is concerned; so many matters are a question of absolute necessity. There is no alternative, for example, to higher education levels both in formal or basic education and in informal or adult education. A tremendous improvement in agricultural knowledge and training on the part of farmers is needed if farming is to realise its potential in the area. Though not badly supplied with domestic amenities in comparison with rural areas generally there is a considerable backlog of work to be done in the provision of piped water, sanitation and electricity. For this the incentives available are probably adequate; what is more likely lacking is an awareness on the part of householders of the advantage of modern conveniences in the home and a knowledge of the existing schemes. Availability in principle does not always ensure availability in practice.

Where alternative lines of action are open decisions must be made according to choice or order of priority. A basic requirement for a viable agriculture is a change in farm structure involving amalgamation and consolidation. This would mean a much smaller agricultural population unless farming was based on intensive lines of production. Whatever the pattern of production, a commercial agriculture in this area would demand a far greater input of capital and managerial effort than is the case at present. Against this the prospects of part-time farming on a permanent basis allied with the possibilities of much more employment in off-farm activities may be more attractive for West Donegal than a policy of rationalisation of farm structure which created larger but still relatively poor holdings. Where the settlement pattern must serve not only agriculture, but increasingly tourism and recreational activities, farm viability may not be the most realistic objective. Moreover, total development potential must be examined in its regional and national context. For one thing, if West Donegal is to break from its cycle of problems its production and social organisation must be radically altered. The economic costs of doing this have to be set against the social desirability of this aim and against the opportunity cost of depriving other regions of the investment involved.

Policies must also distinguish between long term rehabilitation objectives involving elimination of basic causes of problems on the one hand and social welfare objectives entailing the more immediate alleviation of current hardships. The measures taken in either case must be directed to well-defined needs, be they of a commercial agriculture, a tourist industry, or a social welfare programme. It is necessary, for example, to have a reasonably precise concept of what would constitute a viable farm in this area and of the factors required to achieve it. From another standpoint, policies must be oriented to the needs of different types of families, social groups, and areas.

All of these considerations raise a basic problem, that of identifying the social values in our society. These values, being subjective standards by which people judge what is desirable, influence both the selection of policy aims and the means of attaining them. Thus development is not an end in itself and before development goals can be established a most fundamental question must be asked: 'What kind of community do we want in West Donegal?' Some prospects must be accepted as inevitable such as a smaller population in agriculture; others, such as a better endowment of natural resources, are impossible. But there are areas of preference and the policy maker or planner must have some guiding image of the situation which development efforts are to achieve.

Researchers can help clarify alternatives available or the possible ordering of priorities but they have no special prerogative in deciding what the choice should be. They can provide the basis for value judgments but cannot assume the responsibility

of value decisions. These are properly a community responsibility exercised in an enlightened manner through democratic political action and participation in policy formulation. Researchers, however, would hope that their study of the problems might provide an adequate and reliable appraisal of the existing situation, and a means of stimulating more informed public debate and action towards change. Such is the expectation in this case.

INDUSTRY

by
ROSEMARY FENNII *

INTRODUCTION

The basic concern of economic development plans is to provide lasting improvements in living standards in an area. To achieve this end an increase in the basic income of the people is the usual first requisite but it may also be necessary to improve such facilities as communication services, to provide better educational opportunities, or to develop housing, water and sanitation programmes. But fundamental to any development is the creation of stable employment suited to the needs of the locality. This may involve the provision of more employment opportunities and the diversification of industry, or the reform of existing work methods to obtain greater productivity and competitiveness.

The lack of diversification of employment is often a major drawback to economic progress in an underdeveloped area. Frequently, there is virtually total reliance on one form of economic activity. Here the immediate requirement of alternative sources of employment locally is obvious enough but the difficulty is that the base from which growth can evolve is very small. For instance, in an area relying largely on agriculture, it may be thought desirable to introduce manufacturing industry but there will be few persons locally with the necessary basic skills and little scope for training workers. If the area is subject to heavy long-term out-migration, the young adult population may be small and not inclined to seek employment locally.

Further problems can arise with transport and other communications which may, perhaps, be adequate for the current state of development but which may prove totally insufficient to cope with any large-scale increase in economic activity. Commercial enterprises cannot thrive unless supported by a sizeable community of sufficient wealth and sophistication to avail of the services provided. Outlying regions are at a disadvantage in attracting manufacturing industries due to the distance from suppliers and potential markets.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE SURVEY AREA

The difficulties outlined above are the type which militate against increasing income in Glenties Rural District through the diversification of employment opportunities. Table 1 demonstrates that it is a region of limited industrial character. Agriculture, forestry and fishing combined form the largest single industrial category. Of a total of 6,432 persons at work in 1966, no less than 58.7% were classified under this heading.

*Agricultural Economics and Marketing Department, Rural Economy Division, An Ojras Tallin tais.

Understandably, the proportion varied markedly with sex, with 66% of the men and just under 30% of the women in this census group. Reliance on agriculture, forestry and fishing as sources of employment is higher in Glenties than in the remainder of Donegal, where in 1966 the proportion of all workers in agriculture was 48.7 %.

The second largest source of employment in the survey area is manufacturing industry but this sector provides work for only 11 % of the total employed (in the case of women at work it is 20%). Some of the more prominent industries will be discussed separately later in this section. Commerce, insurance and finance is the third biggest group, providing employment for 8.6% of those at work. The remaining categories together equal 21.5% of the total: individually each of these groups is quite small with the exception of the 'professions' and 'other industries' which each employ about 17% of total women employed. A reason for the size of these groups is the number of nurses and nuns under 'professions' and the inclusion of 'personal service'¹ under 'other industries'.

TABLE 1—Persons at work by industrial group, and those out of work—Gleneties Rural District, 1966

Industrial group	Total persons		Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3,776	58.7	3,383	66.1	393	29.9
Mining, quarrying and turf	73	1.1	73	1.4	—	—
Manufacturing industries	717	11.1	451	8.8	266	20.2
Building and construction	318	4.9	316	6.2	2	0.2
Electricity, gas and water	27	0.4	25	0.5	2	0.2
Commerce, insurance and finance ..	552	8.6	405	7.9	147	11.2
Transport and communication	188	2.9	147	2.9	41	3.1
Public administration and defence	113	1.8	100	2.0	13	1.0
Professions	362	5.6	135	2.6	227	17.3
Other industries	306	4.8	83	1.6	223	17.0
Total at work	6,432	100.0	5,118	100.0	1,314	100.0
Total out of work	1,304		914		390	

Source: Census of Population 1966, unpublished figures.

It is useful to examine the changes which occurred in the various industrial groups between 1961 and 1966. Table 2 gives the number employed by category for 1961 together with the percentage change over the 5-year period to 1966. Apart from a very small decline of 1.1 % in transport and communications, the agricultural group was the only one to show a fall (—11.4%). However, there were some differences by sex: the number of men in transport and communication and in the professional group declined, while women increased in both groups: in manufacturing industry the reverse took place with a decline in women offset by an increase in men employed. The decrease of women in manufacturing is particularly regrettable, as it greatly reduces employment possibilities for women in the area and militates further against the achievement of a more balanced population structure.

¹ Includes private domestic help, hotels, hairdressing, etc.

TABLE 2—Persons at work 1961, with percentage change 1961-1966—Glenties Rural District

Industrial group	Total persons		Male		Female	
	Number 1961	% change 1961-66	Number 1961	% change 1961-66	Number 1961	% change 1961-66
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4,262	—11.4	3,791	—10.8	471	—16.6
Mining, quarrying and turf	62	+ 17.7	62	+ 17.7	—	—
Manufacturing industries	711	+ 0.8	406	+ 11.1	305	—12.8
Building and construction	308	+ 3.2	306	+ 3.3	2	—
Electricity, gas and water	16	+ 68.8	16	+ 56.3	—	—
Commerce, insurance and finance	542	+ 1.9	401	+ 1.0	141	+ 4.3
Transport and communication	190	— 1.1	160	— 8.1	30	+ 36.7
Public administration and defence	97	+ 16.5	86	+ 16.3	11	+ 18.1
Professions	362	—	138	— 2.2	224	+ 1.3
Other industries	264	+ 15.9	55	+ 50.9	209	+ 6.7
Total at work	6,814	— 5.6	5,421	— 5.6	1,393	— 5.7

Source: Census of Population 1961, 1966, unpublished data.

In less developed parts of the State, local authority employment has always offered an extra source of income for farm workers and small farmers. Glenties is no exception. Indeed, when one considers the large number of unemployed (Table 1) it is easy to realise that there is scope for part-time and temporary employment. During the year 1967/68 a total of 338 men were employed on local authority works and minor employment schemes. The expenditure involved totalled £115,478. The number employed is surprisingly high and indeed represents an increase of nearly 103 on the previous year but it must be remembered that the work is of an unskilled nature, somewhat sporadic and of short duration.

SOME MAJOR INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS

Gaeltarra Eireann

The largest single employer in the survey area is Gaeltarra Eireann, a semi-State manufacturing concern, which has a number of factories and collection centres for outside piece-work in (or on the borders of) Glenties Rural District. In 1968 over 300 were employed in the factories and about 150 on outdoor work, *i.e.* in the workers' own homes.

Tweed is by far the most important enterprise with handweaving concerns at Kilcar, Ardara and Glencolumbkille. There are also factories at Crolly (clothes for toys made in Spiddal) and at Annagary (fibre-glass products). Bruckless, famous for its lace, is the major centre for outdoor work. Like Crolly, it is on the borders of the survey area and although not all the workers come from the Glenties Rural District, probably a high proportion do. The collection centre at Bruckless handles all embroidery, while handknit centres are at Glencolumbkille, Carrick, Teelin, Keadue and Rannafast.

Total earnings both in factories and from outdoor work reached £176,880 in 1967/68 (Table 3). It should be remembered that outdoor workers rarely give their full time to these occupations, but treat them as supplements to other sources of income.

TABLE 3—Employment and earnings in Gaeltarra Eireann, Glenties, 1967/68

Centre	Indoor				Outdoor		
	Male	Female	Total	Earnings £	Centre	Total ¹	Earnings £
Kilcar.	132	46	178	107,541	Bruckless	107	16,753*
Ardara	38	—	38	15,600	Carrick/Teelin	10	1,991
Glencolumbkille	24	4	28	11,440	Glencolumbkille	11	2,327
Crolly.	3	49	52	12,158	Keadue	16	1,560
Annagary	13	1	14	6,811	Rannafast	7	700
Bruckless	—	23	23	—			
Total	210	123	333	153,550		151	23,331

Source: Gaeltarra Fireann, private communication.

¹ Outdoor workers are all women; includes earnings for indoor staff as well.

Bord na Mona

One bog in Donegal is under development by Bord na Mona in their fuel programme. It is situated near Glenties town and comprises an area of about 900 acres. Output consists of sod peat and production in recent years has been around 15,000 tons each year.

Permanent employment at the bog is not very great and was greatly reduced between 1963 and 1968 (Table 4). During the peak of the harvesting season, over 100 are employed, but this too represents a decline on earlier years. The peak figure is always variable, depending on weather conditions between April and September. Generally, in the west the harvesting season is shorter than in the midlands, due to less favourable cutting and drying conditions. Wage and salary payments have continued to rise, despite the fall in employment (Table 4).

TABLE 4—Bord na Mona operations at Glenties bog, 1963/64-1967/68

	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68
Production (tons).	17,394	16,600	15,550	14,826	15,101
Employment peak.	137	162	144	143	104
Employment permanent.	40	30	30	22	19
Wages and salaries (£).	42,000	46,650	46,900	45,987	50,106

Source: Bord na Mona, private communication.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Apart from the efforts to promote industry which originate in the County Development Team and local development associations, there are two governmental media for encouraging industries, namely Gaeltarra Eireann and An Foras Tionscal. The former is empowered to make grants to enterprises in the Gaeltacht areas under a 1965 Act (Acht um tionscal na Gaeltachta). The grants awarded may not exceed £2,000 and may not be given to firms which have already received grants from An Foras Tionscal. Gaeltarra Eireann can also provide advice to small enterprises on such subjects as production, marketing methods and account-keeping.

So far, grants have been made by Gaeltarra Eireann to nine firms within the Glenties Rural District, and the products involved are very diverse. Three firms (in Kilcar, Keadue and Doochary) make concrete products; one in Glencolumbkille makes jewellery; there is printing in CroUy, clothing in Meenacross, a laundry in Dunglow, wooden ware in Meenbanid and boat-building on Arranmore. Employment in these enterprises currently stands at about 30, and three firms are already moving to larger premises to allow for expansion of production.

West Donegal has also benefited from the introduction of the grants assistance given by An Foras Tionscal to developing regions under the various Undeveloped Areas Acts. The first of these Acts was passed in 1952 but it was not until 1955/56 that any firm in Glenties received a grant. Between then and 1967/68 nine firms received grants. The total amount approved was over £150,000 of which £126,546 was paid by March 1968. The products for which these grants were given ranged from carpets and fishmeal in Killybegs to processed vegetables in Carrick, knitwear in Glencolumbkille, and fish processing in Burtonport and Kincasslagh.

NEED FOR FURTHER EMPLOYMENT SOURCES

The employment position in the survey area is not good. Between 1961 and 1966, there was a decline of 382 in the number at work and the unemployed rose by 375. While total population over the same period declined by 9.1 % the work force fell by 5.6 %. The biggest single cause of both decreases was, of course, the decline in the farming population. It is quite clear that gains in other sectors will have to improve dramatically before any impression can be made on the overall employment position. A most serious feature has been the decline in the number of women employed in manufacturing industry. If population stability in West Donegal is to be achieved it is essential to maintain at a reasonable level the number of young women in the community. In 1966, only 48.8% of the total population were female, and between the ages of 0 and 34 years in only one group (5-9) did females outnumber males.

It is to be expected that any increase in employment must come in manufacturing and service industries rather than in agriculture. If the findings of Baker (1) which were reached by analysing county data are also valid on a rural district basis, this development will be of advantage to Glenties. Baker states that 'the creation of new jobs in non-agricultural activities will have a greater effect on total county employment than would the retention of a similar number of jobs in agriculture'. The reason for this is that where one finds a high proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, many of the holdings are sub-economic or at best only marginal. This results in a low income per head, especially cash income, which in turn inhibits the growth of industries catering for the requirements of the region.

The superiority of non-agricultural employment as a stimulus to further development is not confined to manufacturing alone but extends to other autonomous² sectors such as tourism, administration and social services. If this hypothesis is correct it could have important repercussions in an area such as Glenties, where there is a comparatively strong service sector and little manufacturing. Services can often be developed more quickly and yield faster results in terms of income and employment than the creation of a manufacturing sector virtually from scratch.

As Baker comments 'the criterion in location policy should be the degree to which an autonomous² activity is 'footloose*', that is, how little it would suffer from being sited in other than its ideal location. Such a criterion should be applied impartially to all forms of autonomous activity, whether the enterprise in question is a textile factory, a Central Government Department, or a large hospital' (1).

An important consideration to be borne in mind in the creation of new employment opportunities is that the employment on offer is of a kind to attract, permanently, the local young people. Occupational and income aspirations are increasing continually and this must be taken into account when industrial or service developments are undertaken.

In County Cavan, for instance, it was found by Hannan (2) that 'the occupational and income aspirations of today's youth far outstrip the capacity of the community to satisfy. These aspirations are, in fact, very similar to those found in highly urban areas. An economic reorganisation of the community aimed at reducing population loss would have to take into consideration this wide gap between the aspiration of potential young "replacements" to the system and the current structure of occupational opportunities available locally'. Hannan found that the types of occupations to which young people aspired were non-manual and skilled, while those with little appeal were farming and unskilled manual work. In particular, girls had very high occupational aspirations.

There is little reason to believe that young adults in West Donegal would respond differently to those in Cavan. If they are to be enticed to remain in the area it will be necessary to provide remunerative and attractive employment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author's thanks are due to the Central Statistics Office, Dublin and particularly to Mr. J. F. Knaggs; to the County Development Officer, Mr. P. Bolger; to the Assistant County Engineers at Dunglow and Killybegs and to Gaeltarra Eireann and Bord na Mona for information kindly provided.

References

1. Baker, T. J., "Regional Employment Patterns in the Republic of Ireland", Paper No. 32. Economic and Social Research Institute, 1966.
2. Hannan, D., "The Migration Decisions of Irish Rural Adolescents: their Causes and Structures" Economic and Social Research Institute Seminar, 1968.

² Autonomous, as used here, signifies those activities which are undertaken irrespective of whether there is an increase in economic activity in a region or not. This is either because they serve commercial interests outside the area or because their level is dictated by national standards which apply universally.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTION

by
ROSEMARY FENNELL

INTRODUCTION

The advantages to a locality of having its manufacturing industry based on local raw materials is well known but manufacturing can be successfully undertaken even where other sectors of the local economy are relatively underdeveloped. This is not so in retail distribution however, which depends so largely on the prosperity of the local people for its progress.

Many of the problems which face the small farmer in underdeveloped rural areas are similar to those facing the small shopkeeper or publican. These small businesses, often run by poorly paid family labour, have found it increasingly difficult to compete with those who have the capital and expertise to invest in expansion and modernisation of their businesses. Shops in a small town or village do not compete merely with others in the locality, but also with shops in larger towns nearby. The growth in car ownership means that people can more easily by-pass their village shop and drive to a large centre where they feel they have greater variety of merchandise often at lower prices. Another source of competition for the local shopkeeper is the travelling shop which is so attractive to families living in isolated areas.

RETAIL SITUATION IN THE SURVEY AREA

In recent years the distributive sector has begun to make considerable changes in its organisation. The country shopkeeper, although perhaps slower to innovate than his city equivalent, is also reorganising, sometimes aided by one of the trading groups or RGDATA. The retailing sector in West Donegal is at a level of trading that provides little scope or incentive for development or innovation requiring capital on any extensive scale.

As shown in the section on 'Industry' the census group 'commerce, insurance and finance' is the third largest source of employment in the survey area. Within this category retailing is by far the largest item. A Census of Distribution was taken in 1966 from which a detailed breakdown of retailing can be made. The census, it should be stressed, was not complete as there were some non-respondents but on a national level those who did participate represented 75% of shops and around 80% of total retail sales. The coverage in Glenties is likely to have been somewhat similar so that the figures here quoted are an accurate indicator of the level of economic activity in retailing.

In the Glenties Rural District respondent establishments numbered 202 (Table 1) and almost half of these were food shops which is a higher proportion than elsewhere in the county. On the other hand, the category 'other non-food' is very much more important elsewhere in Donegal than in Glenties.

TABLE 1—Number of respondent retail establishments, 1966

Type of business	Glenties		Rest of Donegal	
	Number	%	Number	%
Food shops	99	49.1	388	40.6
Grocery and public house	13	6.4	59	6.2
Public house, wines and spirits	42	20.8	182	19.1
Tobacco, sweets, newspapers	12	5.9	94	9.8
Clothing and footwear ...	13	6.4	78	8.2
Other non-food	23	11.4	154	16.1
Total retail	202	100.0	955	100.0

Source: Census of Distribution 1966, unpublished data.

In 1966 Glenties Rural District contained 16.9% of the total population of County Donegal. On the basis of its share of the county population, the survey area has a higher proportion of shops and lower sales, gross margin, wages and numbers employed than its population warrants (Table 2). It should be borne in mind, however, that this area may need more shops due to the scattered distribution of the population. The lower sales are related to a number of factors but principally to the general income levels in the area, which are below those in the rest of the county and to the disproportionate number of shops.

A further means of measuring the survey area's retail activity is to compare the average shop with that in the rest of the county, using the same measures (sales, gross margins, etc.) as in Table 2. The results are shown in Table 3. The overall impression is one of a lower level of business, fewer sales per shop, a lower gross margin and fewer at work (although the differences in employment are not as marked as the other categories). In some types of business the Glenties returns are appreciably below the rest of Donegal. For instance, in the group comprising 'public houses, wines and spirits' sales are much lower. This is also true of the 'tobacco, sweets and newspapers' group, and the 'other non-food' category, where the difference is especially large.

When wages and salaries are subtracted from the gross margin¹ it is clear that little remains to remunerate the owner and any others who work in the business but do not draw a regular salary from it. Likewise there is little return for capital invested and little to meet current expenses, maintenance and so forth. The similarity of circumstances between the local shopkeeper and the small farmer in the area is quite apparent from these returns.

There are four further measures to be considered (Table 4) which are gross margin as a percentage of sales, and per person engaged; sales per head of population, and sales per person engaged in retailing.

Gross margin as a proportion of sales, in some categories of shop in the survey area, is quite similar to the rest of Donegal. The greatest disparity is in 'clothing and footwear' where the Glenties ratio is 4.4% lower than that in the rest of Donegal. On the other hand, the gross margin/sales ratio in the 'other non-food' shops is higher in Glenties than elsewhere in the county. The reason for this is not clear, as in every

¹ Gross margin is defined as sales less purchases adjusted for changes in stock.

TABLE 2—Glenties retailing as a percentage of Donegal county

Type of business	Number of establishments	Total sales	Gross margin	Total wages & salaries	Total no. of persons engaged	Total no. of full time persons	Total no. of employees	Total no. of full time employees
Food shops	20.3	19.7	18.7	24.5	21.1	20.6	24.3	24.1
Grocery and public house	18.1	18.1	16.1	16.1	18.8	17.8	16.0	15.9
Public house, wines and spirits	18.8	11.9	11.0	4.3	14.8	13.2	5.2	4.7
Tobacco, sweets and newspapers	11.3	5.7	5.4	4.1	9.1	10.0	4.3	6.1
Clothing and footwear	14.3	10.6	8.8	4.5	11.4	9.7	7.5	6.6
Other non-food	13.0	6.1	6.8	4.8	8.3	7.2	5.1	4.4
Total retail	17.5	13.1	11.9	10.7	15.2	14.3	11.9	11.8

Source: Derived from Census of Distribution 1966, unpublished data.

TABLE 3—Average returns per shop, Glenties and rest of Donegal, 1966

Business	Total sales, £	Gross margin, £	Salaries and wages, £	Total persons engaged	Total engaged fulltime	Total no. of employees	Total full time employees
				Glinties			
Food shops	7,011	1,049	362	2.3	2.0	1.0	0.9
Grocery and public house ...	9,401	1,364	397	3.1	2.5	1.3	1.1
Public house, wines and spirits	2,606	569	48	1.8	1.1	0.2	0.1
Tobacco, sweets and newspapers	1,823	292	42	1.3	1.2	0.2	0.2
Clothing and footwear	7,889	1,519	240	2.5	2.0	1.0	0.8
Other non-food	7,489	1,709	492	2.5	1.9	1.1	0.9
Total retail	6,052	1,030	287	2.2	1.8	0.8	0.7
				Rest of Donegal			
Food shops	7,311	1,160	285	2.2	1.9	0.8	0.7
Grocery and public house ...	9,351	1,563	457	2.9	2.6	1.5	1.3
Public house, wines and spirits	4,456	1,059	251	2.4	1.7	0.9	0.5
Tobacco, sweets and newspapers	3,839	649	125	1.7	1.3	0.5	0.3
Clothing and footwear	11,112	2,635	858	3.3	3.1	2.1	2.0
Other non-food	17,270	3,482	1,456	4.1	3.7	3.0	2.8
Total retail	8,467	1,610	509	2.6	2.2	1.3	1.1

Source: Derived from Census of Distribution 1966, unpublished data.

TABLE 4—Gross margin and sales in Glenties and the rest of Donegal, 1966

Type of business	Glenties				Rest of Donegal			
	Gross margin		Sales per		Gross margin		Sales per	
	as % of sales	per person engaged £	head of population £	head engaged £	as % of sales	per person engaged £	head of population £	head engaged £
Food shops	15.0	463	37.8	3,098	15.9	538	31.5	3,389
Grocery and public house	14.5	443	6.6	3,055	16.7	533	6.1	3,189
Public house, wines and spirits	21.8	314	6.0	1,440	23.8	441	9.0	1,860
Tobacco, sweets and newspapers	16.0	219	1.2	1,367	16.9	382	4.0	2,256
Clothing and footwear	19.3	599	5.6	3,108	23.7	803	9.6	3,386
Other non-food	22.8	690	9.4	3,022	20.2	854	29.5	4,235
Total retail	17.0	466	66.5	2,741	19.0	618	89.7	3,248

Source: Derived from Census of Distribution 1966, unpublished data.

other respect this category is of greater significance and has higher returns outside Glenties.

Sales per head of population are very low (Table 4). Food shops are the only group to have a fairly high figure. This group and 'grocery combined with public house' are the only two in which sales per head of population are higher than elsewhere in Donegal. Sales per person engaged in retailing on average work out at no more than £53 per week: the highest figure is £59 in food shops and the lowest no more than £26 per week in tobacconists. The average sales per person per week is about £63 in the rest of the county. With sales so low it is hardly surprising to find very low gross margins per person engaged in retailing in the survey area, and on most counts the position is worse than in County Donegal generally, where it is also far from favourable.

There are a considerable number of persons involved in retailing in the survey area but the Census of Distribution clearly demonstrates that they are not making a very good living. There is no hope of improvement in this sector with the present population structure and spending capacity of the local people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Greatful acknowledgement is due to the Central Statistics Office, Dublin and particularly to Mr. J. Sexton for information kindly provided.

TOURISM

by
ROSEMARY FENNELL

BACKGROUND

Donegal has long been a holiday centre with a wide variety of attractions and tourism provides an important share of local income. Since the regionalisation of tourism in 1963, Donegal has been grouped with Sligo and Leitrim for purposes of tourist promotion. The first tasks which the North-Western Regional Tourism Organisation set itself were: the provision of information offices, the improvement of accommodation, the provision of additional registered accommodation and an appraisal of the tourism potential of the region. No attempt is being made to promote one area rather than another, so West Donegal has an equal chance with neighbouring parts to develop its tourist potential.

So far, the Regional Organisation has three information offices in the Glenties area. These are at Ardara, Dunglow and Glencolumbkille. The number of enquiries handled each season from 1965-1968 and the extent to which the room reservation service was utilised are given in Table 1. The increase in demand for the services of the Ardara office is indicative of the importance and success of this side of the promotion effort

TABLE 1—Tourist information and room reservation service, Glenties 1965-1968

	Summary of callers			Bednights booked		
	Ardara	Dunglow ¹	Glencolumbkille ¹	Ardara	Dunglow	Glencolumbkille
1965	478			105		
1966	1,354			217		
1967	3,672	—	5,450	603		15
1968	10,502	5,749	8,142	1,447	287	71

Source: North-Western Regional Tourism Organisation Annual Report 1968.

¹ The offices at Glencolumbkille and Dunglow were not opened until 1967 and 1968 respectively.

An Foras Forbartha study 'Planning for Amenity and Tourism' (1) contains much of the background information necessary to appraise tourism potential and provides a good basis for future developments in the county. In the amenity study, attention is drawn to the general lack of good statistical data on several aspects of tourism, especially numbers and type of visitor, the length of stay, expenditure, and on the extent of accommodation, particularly where it is unregistered. These shortcomings make it difficult to quantify the advantages that would accrue to the county—and even

more so to a region within the county—from tourist expansion. The efforts of the regional tourist organisation, especially in the registration of supplementary accommodation, should prove a great help.

TOURISM POTENTIAL IN SURVEY AREA

The amenity study clearly shows that West Donegal has some first class sea-trout rivers, where salmon fishing is also good. It has a considerable number of brown trout lakes, especially in the north of the area, where there are also facilities for sheltered inshore fishing. Some of the coastal waters are suitable for water sports. The amenity survey lists two tracts of moorland as suitable for game hunting. Hill walking and pony-trekking could also be developed. There is an attractive and accessible coastline, with spectacular cliffs in some places and good beaches in others.

To utilise these basic natural resources to the full, services such as accommodation, sanitation and suitable roads must be provided. The road network in West Donegal is adequate for a considerable increase in volume of traffic as currently the roads are not used to full capacity. Extension of sanitation services would be very beneficial to the tourist trade, especially in the case of supplementary accommodation in private houses. For instance, a water scheme for the Glenties/Ardara area has gone into operation. This serves more than 300 houses in the two towns, as well as nearly 300 houses in the adjacent rural areas. Schemes like this open up the possibility for more households to augment their income by participating in the tourist trade.

The provision of more accommodation of various types is a particular requirement in the survey area. This can be seen clearly from the amenity study of An Foras Forbartha which shows that three regions of Donegal (Southwest, Glenties and the Rosses¹) do not receive as many visitors as other parts of the county (Figure 1). An important reason for this is the insufficient amount of over-night accommodation.

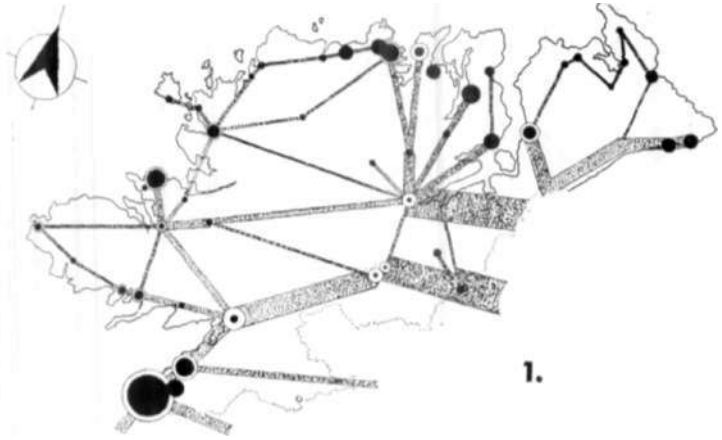
In 1968, there were no Grade A and only two Grade B hotels (with a total of 40 rooms) in the area. Besides these, there were two B/C (52 rooms); four C (64 rooms), and one Grade D establishment. Guesthouses were more numerous: there was one Grade A, five B and six C giving a total of 114 rooms.

It is difficult to know exactly how much supplementary accommodation there is as not all of it has been inspected by Bord Failte for inclusion in the official guide. However, 19 houses with 69 bedrooms in total were listed in 1968, together with two farm-houses registered as catering for visitors. There is one youth hostel in the area (at Carrick) and four caravan sites with a total of 124 licensed caravans. Most of the supplementary accommodation is concentrated in a few clearly-defined places like Narin-Portnoo and Killybegs.

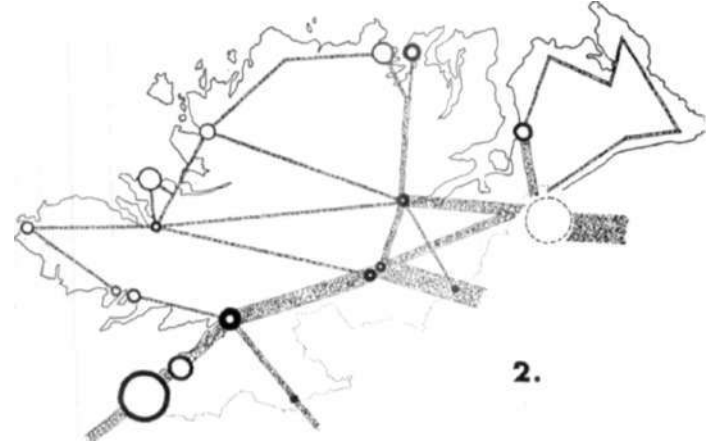
It is quite clear from Figure I that West Donegal has fewer visitors, be they holiday-makers, tourists or day visitors, than other parts of the county. Many visitors enter the county from Derry or by other points along the eastern border and travel to Sligo and south via the main through-roads without branching off to visit West Donegal. The task is to counteract this inclination by the provision of more and better facilities to lure the tourist. One suggestion along these lines which appeared in the amenity study was that Killybegs be developed for tourism on the basis of the existing fishing industry, through the provision of a fisheries museum, aquarium, hotel and sea-food restaurant, and a new harbour road.

¹ These three areas are roughly equivalent to Glenties Rural District.

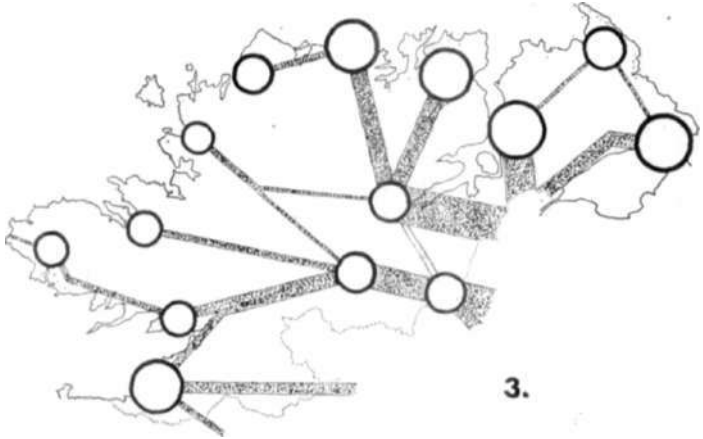
Fig. 1—Distribution of visitors



1.



2.



3.

1. HOLIDAYMAKERS

9 Places where Holidaymakers use all the night-accommodation

(9) Places \bullet \bullet pari of the accommodation (black shows their use)

Weight of Holidaymakers traffic on main roads

2. TOURISTS

○ Places where Tourists use part of night accommodation (black shows their use)

Weight of touring traffic

3. DAY VISITORS

○ Proportionate numbers of Day Visitors in each part of the county

Weight of Day Visiting traffic

SCALE.

5 miles

HOLIDAYS IN THE GAELTACHT

Some areas of West Donegal have another form of tourism sometimes overlooked—namely the Gaeltacht holiday. Most often the visitors are school-children coming to improve their Irish, but adults also take such educational holidays though to a lesser extent. One important long-term advantage of this type of holiday is that if the children enjoy their stay in the locality, there is a good chance that they will return as adults, thus extending the number of Irish people visiting Donegal.

Within the survey area there are seven Irish colleges providing courses for school-children during July and August. In the past 3 years, 2,500 children per year attended courses each of which lasted for 24 days. Although these courses are available for a short time only, they do provide a considerable supplement to local income. The children live with local families who are paid by the college for keeping them (in round figures at least £33,000). Besides this, the children spend about £3 per head pocket money (£7,500) and the teachers, it is estimated, spend perhaps another £5,000 in the area.

Roinn na Gaeltachta have a new scheme to encourage Irish-speaking families to improve their houses and to keep visitors. It is a once-for-all grant of £200 and already there have been over 400 applicants in the Donegal Gaeltacht, of whom about 100 are from the survey area.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is due to Mr. E. Hoy, North Western Regional Tourism Organisation; to An Foras Forbartha; to An t-Uasal S. (3 Raghallaigh. Roinn na Gaeltachta and to Mr. P. Bolger, County Development Officer, for information kindly provided.

Reference

1. Planning for Amenity and Tourism; An Foras Forbartha, Prepared for Planning Seminar, June, 1966.

TRANSPORT

by
ROSEMARY FINMI I

BACKGROUND

It is difficult to provide the survey area with an adequate transport system because it is widespread and thinly populated. Its extent can be gauged from the fact that it has nearly 600 miles of roads under the care of the county council. Main roads comprise 112 miles, all of which are surfaced. The remainder are county roads of which less than 200 miles are still to be surfaced. The density of population to be served is less than 45 persons per square mile.

Donegal is unusual in its transport arrangements. It is among the few counties with no railway and instead is served by no less than three bus companies operating scheduled services. These are the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company in the north and north-west; the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee (which is associated with CLE.) in the south and southwest; and CLE. itself which operates long distance buses as far as Letterkenny. All these companies operate both passenger and freight services.

As Glenties is such an extensive rural district it is serviced by both the Lough Swilly and the C.D.R. Companies. However, their routes do not overlap. The most northerly point on the C.D.R. route system is Fintown,¹ while the most southerly point on the Lough Swilly route is Dunglow. One great disadvantage in this arrangement is that it is not feasible to get from south-west to north-west Donegal by bus. It is obvious that the transport system caters for east-west rather than north-south contact, which is reasonable considering that the major county towns of Donegal, Ballybofey and Letterkenny are in the eastern part of the county. Normally scheduled services operate 6 days per week, although in the southwest in summer buses to Portnoo² operate on Sundays.

LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY COMPANY

As Dunglow is the southernmost point on the Lough Swilly route this company provides public transport in roughly three District Electoral Divisions in Glenties Rural District—Annagary. Rutland and Dunglow. Table 1 outlines the services available.

¹ Formerly there was a service from Glenties town to Dunglow but this has been discontinued.

*Data on bus schedules are taken from the September, 1968 timetables of the Lough Swilly and C.D.R. companies.

TABLE 1—Bus services in northern part of Glenties Rural District

Service	Route via	Frequency	Return
Deny/Dunglow	Letterkenny Dunfanaghy	2 daily	Yes
Derry/Dunglow	Annagary Ramelton Milford Crolly Loughanure	1 daily	Yes
Bunbeg/Dunglow	Annagary Burtonport	1 daily	No
Dunglow/Gweedore	Loughanure Crolly	1 daily	No
Dunglow/Falcarragh	Loughanure Bloody Foreland	2 daily	Yes

Source: L.L.S.R. timetable, September, 1968.

It is not practical to show fares on these routes in any great detail but a few figures will illustrate the general level. In Table 2 single and return fares to Letterkenny and Derry are shown from five points in the north of Glenties.

TABLE 2—Bus fares (shillings/pence) from stated points to Letterkenny and Derry

	Letterkenny		Derry	
	Single	Return	Single	Return
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Crolly Bridge	13 0	21 0	19 5	32 1
Annagary P.O.	13 11	22 3	20 9	32 1
Kincasslagh	15 4	24 1	21 9	32 10
Dunglow	15 5	25 5	22 0	33 0
Loughanure	13 11	22 3	20 9	30 11

Source: L.L.S.R. fares at 5/2/1968.

Besides its regular bus services the Lough Swilly Company runs sightseeing tours to various resorts during the summer. As these start in Derry most are limited to areas in northern Donegal, especially around Inishowen. However, one tour is organised annually from Derry to Burtonport, Dunglow and The Rosses via Bloody Foreland. In 1968, it was operated on four occasions.

Freight is carried both on buses and by regular lorry services. Parcels can be sent on buses and for small lots this is probably the best method of delivery. Freight rates are necessarily involved and it is only possible to give an outline of the charges. There are two different types of scale, namely tonnage rates (divided into 3 classes) and a

rate for small goods not exceeding 5 cwt. Examples of these rates are given below based on the mileage from Letterkenny to Dunglow and from Derry to Dunglow (assuming that the shorter route via Fintown is taken).

TABLE 3—Freight rates—Letterkenny/Dunglow, Derry/Dunglow

Distance not exceeding	Charges per ton (shillings/pence)			Sample charges for smaller lots (shillings/pence)												
	Class A		Class B		Class C		361b	841b	1 cwt	3 cwt	5 cwt					
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.				
35 miles	59	10	74	7	113	6	5	10	6	7	8	2	19	4	29	6
55 miles	85	2	108	6	136	3	7	3	8	3	10	4	22	11	35	4

Source: L.L.S.R. scale of charges, 1968.

A includes coal, stone, sand, road tar in drums, turnips, etc., minimum load 2 tons.

B includes artificial manures, common brick, loose cured herrings in barrels, maize, flour, sugar, cement, wheat, oats, mill offals, potatoes, hay and straw machine pressed (min. 2 tons).

C traffic not included under A and B.

COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAY JOINT COMMITTEE

In the southern part of the survey area the C.D.R. bus routes cover a considerably greater area than the Lough Swilly Company does in the northern end. Many of the services connect at Ballybofey for Strabane and from there to Derry, Belfast or Dublin. For the sake of simplicity it is intended here to deal only with services operating within the Glenties Rural District, and those to Ballybofey and Donegal town. Table 4 indicates the services which are available.

As with the Lough Swilly Company the C.D.R. also carries parcel freight by bus. For certain commodities the charges made are irrespective of the distance involved; for instance, no matter where the delivery point along the route a 7-lb carton of day-

TABLE 4—Bus services in south-west Donegal

Service	Frequency	Return
Killybegs/Ballybofey	2 daily	1 returns daily and both return on Wednesday
	2 Saturday (extra)	Yes
Portnoo/Ballybofey	1 daily	Yes
Glenties/Ballybofey	1 Friday	Yes
	1 Saturday	Yes ¹
Ballybofey/Fintown	1 daily ¹	Yes ¹
Donegal/Portnoo	1 daily	Yes
Killybegs/Glencolumbkille ²	3 daily	All return except 1 of the Saturday buses.

Source: C.D.R. timetable, September, 1968.

¹ During school periods only.

² On Saturdays one bus continues to Malinmore and two buses come from Malinmore to Killybegs.

old chicks costs 3 shillings, while a package of 3 cartons of chicks, so long as total weight does not exceed 21 lb, costs 7 shillings. A similar arrangement of charges by weight not distance operates for bacon, sausages, lard or substitutes, butter, cream and cheese: a consignment weighing 1 stone costs 2s. 9d., 2 stones, 5s. 3d. and \ cwt, 10 shillings. On the other hand, general merchandise carried by bus is charged on a mileage as well as a weight basis. The minimum charge for a distance up to 50 miles, say Ballybofey to Carrick. for a parcel weighing 1 stone would be 4s. 9d., 2 stones 7s. 9d. and \ cwt 13s. 3d.

COST OF LONG DISTANCE TRANSPORT

So far the only freight charges discussed have been local ones, but obviously long distance rates are of considerable importance to an outlying area like West Donegal. It is not always possible to get actual charges to local delivery points which are directly comparable with other parts of the State but the figures quoted here (Tables 5 and 6) at least give some indication of the position.

One of the major items imported into the survey area of interest in agriculture is feedingstuffs and the cost of these will influence costs of farm production. The prices quoted in Table 5 are for November 1968 and are retail prices per cwt. Of course for large lots special terms may be negotiated which would reduce transport costs. Letterkenny is the only town in Donegal for which a quotation is given and therefore is only a guide to costs in Donegal generally. For the sake of simplicity in Table 5 only those centres throughout the country with the greatest deviation from the Letterkenny quotation are shown.

TABLE 5—Costs of feedingstuffs at selected centres, November 1968 (shillings/pence per cwt)

Commodity	Letterkenny		Other highest	Other lowest
	s.	d.		
Crushed oats	34	0	Mallow +21-	Cork —61-
Barley meal	36	3	none ¹	Mallow —7/3
Maize meal	40	6	Castlebar +1/6	Cork —31-
Maize flaked	45	0	Castlebar +2/-	Cork —5/6
Bran	32	6	none	Dungarvan \ — 3 / - Macroom /
Pollard	32	0	none	Dundalk —3/6
Linseed cake/meal	57	0	Kilkenny +3/-	Dungarvan —9/-
Cottonseed cake/meal	48	0	none	Macroom —10/6
Soya bean meal	50	0	Kilkenny +5/-	Mallow \ — 2 / - Cork /
Meat and bone meal	50	0	none	Castlebar —10/-
Pig fattening meal	37	9	Castlebar +1/3	Mallow —3/9
Sow and weaner meal	40	3	Castlebar ^1+2/3 Athlone J	Mallow \ — 3 / - Killeshandra J
Calf meal	41	0	Athlone +4/-	Mallow —3/-
Dairy meal	37	6	Castlebar +3/6	Mallow —3/6
Layers' mash	39	0	Castlebar \ + 3 / - Kilkee J	Cork —2/6

Source: Farm Bulletin, Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries, December, 1968.

¹ In those quotations where the word 'none' appears the highest quotation was in fact Letterkenny itself.

Although the figures quoted (Table 5) must only be interpreted in a general manner since there are frequent fluctuations in price and size of purchase affects the costs, nevertheless, it is quite clear that Letterkenny is consistently among the higher cost centres in the country. This makes the position in outlying areas in Donegal even worse as, for instance, much of Glenties Rural District lies 30 miles and more from Letterkenny and the extra transport and other charges add further to the cost of feeding-stuffs. As discussed in the 'Livestock Farming' section of Part II of this report, this factor is a major deterrent to pig raising in the survey area.

Another measure of long-distance freight charges is taken from the merchandise rates for delivery from the Dublin North Wall goods depot of CLE. Tonnage rates are quoted for three delivery points in Glenties Rural District and the cost of delivery from the set-down point in the rural district to the individual farm, shop or factory is additional to these charges.

TABLE 6—Merchandise freight rates from Dublin North Wall to West Donegal

Local depot	Charge-able milage	Rates ¹ per ton (shillings/pence) for class									
		2		3		4		5		6	
		s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d
Fintown	178	107	0	126	0	186	7	223	6	271	5
Glenties	186	109	7	129	0	192	3	230	2	279	2
Killybegs	198	113	2	133	6	199	11	239	7	290	11

Source: CLE. merchandise rates, January, 1969.

¹ Through rates do not cover such products as empty fish boxes, artificial manure, agricultural machinery, timber, clay or concrete pipes.

It is obvious then that the costs involved in getting materials and products in and out of the survey area are higher generally than in most other parts of the country. This results in higher costs of both production and marketing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is due to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Co.; the County Donegal Railway Co., and to Mr. P. Bolger, County Development Officer, for information kindly provided.