

B/43(1)

MEMO RE BEDFORD ROW HOSPITAL LIMERICK

Bedford Row Hospital, Limerick is in existence since 1812. It was originally a charitable institution which catered for the poor of Limerick, and was maintained on voluntary subscriptions. The running of the Hospital has always been in the hands of a Management Committee of ladies and members of the medical staff.

With the advent of the Irish Hospital Sweepstake, funds became available to the Hospital from that source so that after some years the financial position of the Hospital became sound. The Hospital was in receipt of an annual grant from the Limerick Corporation up to 1956. A site was purchased at Belfield Park and plans were drawn up by the Management Committee for the erection of a new and larger Maternity Hospital. The war years then intervened and all building was at a standstill. When hostilities ceased the Management Committee pressed on again with their plans to build at Belfield. The plans were vetoed time and again by the Department of Health. In 1949 the Minister of Health announced plans for the building of the Regional Maternity Hospital for Limerick. The Corporation of Limerick were instructed to compulsorily acquire the site at Belfield from the Management Committee of Bedford Row Hospital. This they did so that the Regional Maternity Hospital now stands on the ground on which the Management Committee of Bedford Row Hospital had intended to build.

The annual deficit of most Voluntary Hospitals is paid with Irish Hospital Sweep funds by the Hospitals Commission. When the building of the Regional Maternity Hospital commenced the Hospitals Commission excluded Bedford Row Hospital from receipt of any further aid. The corporation withdrew their grant in 1956. Pressure was thus put on to close the Hospital.

10 However, by using its resources to the best effect and by providing private accommodation the Hospital has kept open. Many renovations have been carried out and all up to date equipment is available. The number of admissions has increased annually since 1960. Eleven practising doctors can use the facilities offered by the Hospital. The Hospital employs a Matron and Five nurses, one lady secretary and 3 domestics. The amount of business given to purveyors and business firms in the town is considerable.

The Hospital has been badly treated in the past. The Management Committee now appeals to the Hospitals Commission to reconsider their decision to exclude the Hospital from receiving funds, so that the nursing and domestic staff can be paid proper salaries, more free beds can be made available, and the future of the Hospital as a Voluntary Maternity Hospital be made secure.



PS/42(2)

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