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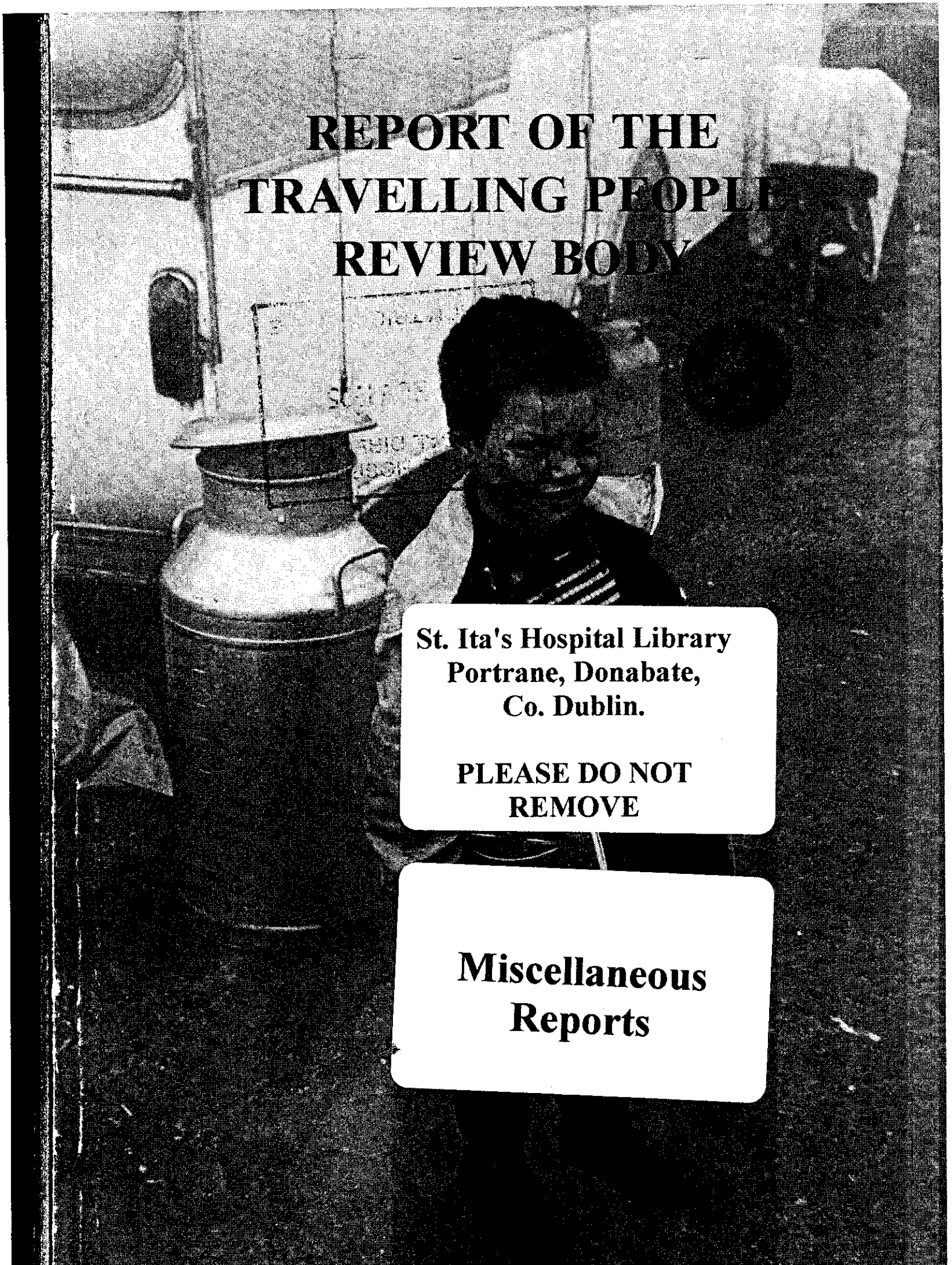

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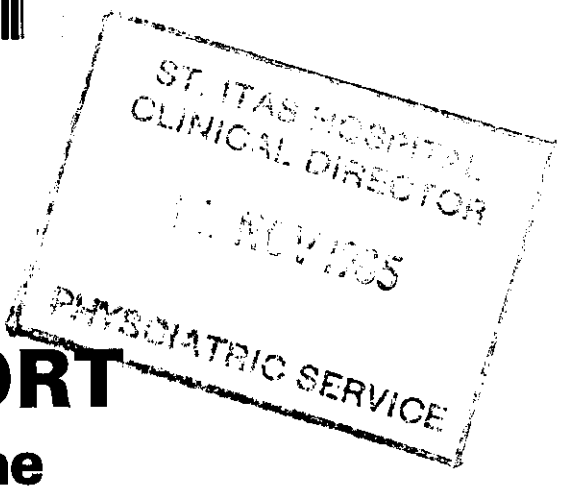

REPORT
of the
TRAVELLING PEOPLE REVIEW BODY

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR

Le ceannach díreach ón

OIFIG DHÍOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS, TEACH SUN ALLIANCE,
SRÁID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,

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*Paragraphs which contain recommendations are marked with an asterisk.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE

1. The Travelling People Review Body was established jointly by the Minister for the Environment, Mr. Ray Burke, T.D., and the Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., in January, 1981, with the following general terms of reference:—

"to review current policies and services for the travelling people and to make recommendations to improve the existing situation".

Members

2. The following were appointed members of the Review Body:—

1.	Mr. Walter MacEvilly, Chairman	Former Cork City Manager and former Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Health Board
2.	Ruth Barrington	Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Health
3.	Inspector J. F. Barry	Inspector, Garda Síochána
4.	Mr. Victor Bewley	Chairman, National Council for Travelling People, and Adviser to the Minister for the Environment
5.	Mr. Dominic Burke	Member, Society of St. Vincent de Paul
6.	Sr. Colette Dwyer	National Co-ordinator for the Education of Travelling People
7.	Mr. Frederick Donohue	Programme Manager, Community Care, Eastern Health Board
8.	Monsignor Thomas Fehily, P.P.	Vice-Chairman, National Council for Travelling People
9.	Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick	Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Labour
10.	Mr. Desmond Flanagan	Dublin Assistant City and County Manager
11.	Dr. Michael Flynn	Programme Manager, Midland Health Board
12.	Mr. Seamus Keating	County Manager, Galway

13.	Mr. Matthew Larkin	General Secretary, National Association of Tenants Organisations
14.	Miss Eileen McArdle	Assistant Principal Officer, Department of the Environment
15.	Mrs. Nell McDonagh	Traveller and Member of the National Council for Travelling People
16.	Mr. Eric McGrath	Social Worker, Dublin Committee for Travelling People
17.	Mr. Patrick Murtagh	Programme Manager, Community Care, North-Eastern Health Board
18.	Mr. Michael O'Connor	Traveller and Member of the National Council for Travelling People
19.	Mr. John O'Gorman	Project Manager, An Comhairle Oiliúna
20.	Mr. Nicholas Rice	Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education
21.	Mr. Tom Sherlock	Traveller and Member of the National Council for Travelling People
22.	Mrs. Joyce Sholdice	National Co-Ordinator for the Settlement of Travelling People
23.	Miss Catherine Vaughan	Social Worker, Dundalk Urban District Council

Mr. Bewley, Sr. Colette Dwyer, Monsignor Fehily, Dr. Flynn, Mrs. McDonagh, Mr. McGrath, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Sherlock, Mrs. Sholdice and Miss Vaughan were nominated by the National Council for Travelling People. Mr. Keating was nominated by the County and City Managers Association and Mr. Flanagan was nominated by the Dublin City and County Manager.

Mr. Donohue and Mr. Murtagh were nominated by the Chief Executive Officers of the health boards.

Mr. Paul Griffin, Executive Officer, Department of Health was appointed Secretary to the Review Body.

Inaugural Meeting

3. The inaugural meeting of the Review Body was held on Monday, 19th January, 1981, in the Conference Room, Custom House, Dublin, when the members were addressed by the two Government Ministers, Mr. Burke, Minister for the Environment and Dr. Woods, Minister

The Ministers, in explaining why the Review Body had been established, outlined some of the changes affecting the travelling community:

- ★ an increase in the number of traveller families from 1,400 in 1973 to 2,200 in 1979;
- ★ while 1,300 families are now living in houses, chalets or in caravans on authorised sites, nearly 1,000 families are still living by the side of the road;
- ★ a decline in the traditional forms of employment of travellers i.e. horse trading, agricultural labouring, metal working; more and more families rely on state assistance;
- ★ rapid urbanisation is occurring among travellers in line with the society in general;
- ★ one-third of the increase in traveller families between 1973 and 1977 took place in Dublin City and County;
- ★ a decline in infant mortality and an increase in life expectancy among travellers: the average size of a family has increased to 6.2 children in the Dublin area from 5.2 in 1960;
- ★ only half of the 6,500 children of school-going age are attending school on a regular basis.

The Ministers asked the Review Body to examine the following issues:—

- ★ the needs of travellers who wish to continue the nomadic way of life;
- ★ the desirable educational arrangements for travellers;
- ★ the training needs of travellers to equip them for employment;
- ★ the organisational arrangements to ensure that travellers are represented in decision making affecting them at local and national level;
- ★ the best way of providing health and social welfare services for travellers;
- ★ the way in which barriers of mistrust between the settled and travelling communities can be broken down and mutual respect for each others' way of life increased.

Procedure

4. During the course of the Review Body's deliberations, submissions were gratefully received from a number of individuals and organisations. Information on progress with settlement and observations on matters relating to health and welfare were sought and received from local housing authorities and health boards.

Visits were made by members of the Review Body to counties Galway, Kildare, Wicklow, Louth, Limerick (including Limerick city) and Tipperary. They met representatives of the local authorities and health boards in these areas including in some areas elected representatives. They also met staffs of schools and training centres, members of voluntary committees and travellers. In the Dublin area, members of

the City and County Manager and other senior officials. They also visited authorised sites and roadside camps of travellers in the area.

Definitions

5. Throughout this report:
"The Commission" means the Commission on Itinerancy established by the Government in June, 1960.

"The Report of the Commission" means the report of the Commission on Itinerancy published in August, 1963.

The word *"Traveller"* has the same meaning as the word "Itinerant" in the Report of the Commission.

"The Travelling People Review Body" is referred to briefly as "The Review Body".

"Transients" means those traveller families who neither have nor desire a fixed place of abode in a house or on a serviced site and who, of their own choice, constantly move from place to place, usually over a wide area, preferring a life on the road to a settled one.

"Non-Transients" means those families who desire and are awaiting a fixed place of abode in a house or on a serviced site, and who in the meantime must, through no choice of their own, move from place to place though usually within a limited area with which they have become identified.

"Annual Count" means the count of traveller families and their accommodation situation organised annually by the Department of the Environment.

CHAPTER II

THE TRAVELLER TODAY

1 Who Are Today's Travellers?

1.1 The Commission on Itinerancy which reported in August, 1963, decided that for the purposes of their consideration the best definition of *itinerant* was "a person who had no fixed place of abode and habitually wandered from place to place, but excluding travelling entertainers . . ." (p. 12 para. 4).

1.2 In the British Caravan Sites Act, 1968, gypsies are defined as meaning "persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen or of persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such".

1.3 The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by resolution (75) 13 . . . defined "nomads" as "persons who for historical reasons are accustomed to following an itinerant way of life, as well as persons of nomadic origin who experience difficulties in integrating into society for sociological, economic or similar reasons".

1.4 Definitions such as these are now inadequate in the Irish context, because sizeable numbers of travellers in this country have got a permanent place to live. They may leave such abode occasionally or seasonally but the element of habitual wandering has largely disappeared.

1.5 In considering the origins of travellers the Commission stated "as it was not essential to the consideration of the Commission's terms of reference, no special study was made of the origins of the itinerant population of this country. There appears to be little in the way of satisfactory records or direct historical reference which would enable the Commission to deal with this subject without a long period of research which would more properly be a study for trained historians". (p. 34, para. 1).

1.6 Since that time, there has been some academic debate on the question whether travellers comprise a distinct culture, an ethnic group or subculture and, particularly, a sub culture of poverty. There is as yet no agreement among researchers as to the origins of travellers or their status as a group. At Appendix A there is a list of the main works published on travellers since the Report of the Commission for the information of those who may wish to pursue the subject in depth. It was not within the terms of reference of the Review Body to resolve the issues — this is a matter for historians and

They are an identifiable group of people, identified both by themselves and by other members of the community (referred to for convenience as the "settled community") as people with their own distinctive life style, traditionally of a nomadic nature but not now habitual wanderers. They have needs, wants and values, which are different in some ways from those of the settled community. More than half of those in the group now have a place to live either in houses or on serviced sites. Some may take to the road either occasionally or seasonally. The majority of those not yet provided with accommodation desire a fixed place of abode, and many of them are, in fact, encamped in locations with reasonable permanence. However, there is still a substantial number of transient families.

1.7 The designation "traveller" is used throughout this report in place of the term "itinerant" which was used by the Commission, as the latter is unacceptable to the persons to whom it is applied. They call themselvers "travellers" or the "travelling people" and prefer to be known as such.

1.8 The term "traveller" is used here to designate membership of the identifiable group referred to and not just to make the distinction between a nomadic way of life and a more settled one. The abandonment of the nomadic way of life does not automatically entail the renunciation of the traveller ethic nor integration with the settled community. Integration, if it is to occur, is a long and complex experience.

2 Integration of Travellers with the Settled Population

2.1 The terms of reference of the Commission required it, inter alia, to consider what steps might be taken "to promote their absorption into the general community". In its recommendations on housing it states:

". . . While it is appreciated that difficulties and objections will be met in the early years from many members of the settled population, it is not considered that there is any alternative to a positive drive for housing itinerants if a permanent solution of the problem of itinerancy, based on absorption and integration, is to be achieved". (p. 62, para. 21).

2.2 The Review Body considers that in the light of experience and current knowledge the concept of absorption is unacceptable, implying as it does the swallowing up of the minority traveller group by the dominant settled community, and the subsequent loss of traveller identity. It is suggested that it is better to think in terms of integration between the traveller and the settled community. It is a long and complex process implying adjustment of attitudes towards one another, both by the traveller and by his neighbours in the settled community. As far as travellers are concerned the extent to which they will integrate with the settled community will depend on individual decisions by them and not on decisions by travellers as a body or of

with the settled community and to be indistinguishable from those long housed and settled. On the other hand, there are some who wish to continue the traveller lifestyle while adjusting to the changes in it dictated by the withering away of their former modes of livelihood and the mechanisation of their transport. Others still, and possibly the largest grouping, will be those who will tend to adopt elements of the lifestyle of the settled community and yet retain traditions peculiar to the traveller way of life. In formulating programmes to meet the needs of travellers their various attitudes and desires as far as integration is concerned must be respected.

3 The Traveller Population

3.1 Because of the absence of detailed information on travellers the Department of Health and the Department of the Environment requested the Economic and Social Research Institute (referred to throughout the report as the E.S.R.I.), during the course of the Review Body's deliberations, to carry out a census of travellers in 1981 as an extension of the Annual Count of traveller families which is usually carried out under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, and to analyse and make projections on future numbers from the data obtained.

3.2 Data from the E.S.R.I. was made available at a very late stage in the Review Body's deliberations but as most of the statistics supplied were preliminary the E.S.R.I. advised caution in their use. Accordingly, throughout the report the figures from the annual count of 1980 are mainly used. However, the Review Body made use of certain data from the E.S.R.I. census in Chapters VI and IX. It is expected that the results and conclusions drawn from the census will be published by the E.S.R.I. at a later date.

3.3 The number of traveller families in the years for which figures are available is given in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1
Growth in Number of Traveller Families

Year	*Number of Families*	*Annual percentage Increase*
1960	1,198	
1974	1,690	2.5
1975	1,790	5.9
1976	1,874	4.7
1977	1,953	4.2
1978	2,068	5.9
1979	2,293	10.9
1980	2,490	8.6

Sources: Appendix III and Appendix IV of the Report of the Commission and the Annual Counts.

3.4 The total number of persons in 1960 was 6,591 or 5.5 per family. The Annual Counts of families made by the Department of the Environment do not include a count of individuals. However, Broadsheet No. 18 published by the Economic and Social Research

(p.25). On that basis, the total traveller population in 1980 would have been 15,500. Between 1960 and 1974 the average annual increase in the number of families was 2.5 per cent. Between 1974 and 1978 the number of families increased on average by 95 a year or 5 per cent. In the following two years, the average increase was 211 or 10 per cent.

3.5 These are extraordinarily high rates of increase compared with those for the whole population. Figures from the National Censuses of Population from 1961 onwards are set out in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2
Changes in National Population

Year	*Total Population*	*Population Change percent*	*Natural Increase percent*	*Estimated net migration*
1961	2,818,341			
1966	2,884,002	+.46	1.03	—.57
1971	2,978,248	+.64	1.01	—.47
1979	3,368,217	+1.54	1.11	+.43
1981	3,440,427	+1.06	1.19	—.13

3.6 The increase in the national population, which was just over one per cent in the intercensal period from 1961 to 1971, rose to 1.19 per cent between 1979 and 1981. Adjusted for migration, the population increase was in or about one half of one per cent between 1961 and 1971, going to 1.5 per cent between 1971 and 1979, and falling back to just on one per cent between 1979 and 1981. In the year 1980 the national marriage rate was 6.5 per 1,000 population.

3.7 Precise reasons for the increase in the traveller population in comparison with the population at large cannot be given, but the following factors are significant: the early age of marriage among travellers; the rarity of spinsterhood; and the high fertility of marriage. However, these factors taken in combination could not possibly account for the total increase in traveller population which has occurred. The increase must be attributed, in a large measure, to a change in the level of emigration among travellers which was heavy in the 1950s and early 1960s and the subsequent return to this country of many families who had emigrated.

3.8 Whilst population projections for travellers are difficult, some estimates must be attempted of the future growth in numbers of families to assist in assessing needs of travellers for certain services, particularly accommodation and education. It has been noted that between 1974 and 1978 the number of families increased at a rate of just about 5 per cent a year. If it is assumed that this is the "normal" rate of increase, the number of families might increase from 2,490 in 1980 to about 3,350 in 1986 (with a total population of about 21,000). The significance of this will be discussed later in connection with long-term planning to meet the accommodation and the educational needs of travellers.

4 Location of Travellers

concentration of them in certain areas, is a matter of considerable importance. At the time the Commission reported the greater number of travellers was in the Western and South-Western counties. With the exception of Dublin, where there was a small concentration in and on the outskirts of the city, there were relatively few families in the Eastern counties. The county with the greatest number of families in both winter and summer was Galway with 142 families in December, 1960 and 135 in June, 1961. Cork came next with 103 in the winter and 87 in the summer, followed by Mayo with 84 in winter and 57 in summer. In Dublin there were 85 families in winter and only 46 in summer. The county with the lowest number was Waterford with 16 and 10 respectively. It was stated in the report that "Apart from those in or near Dublin city the encampments are seldom large and usually consist of groups not exceeding three or four caravans except on special occasions such as Puck Fair, Killorglin, the annual fair at Cahirmee, Galway and Killarney races, and similar events when large numbers of travellers gathered together" (p. 36, para. 7).

TABLE 2.3

Location of Travellers by County, Number of Families, Year

County	*Dec. 1960*	*June 1961*	*Oct. 1974*	*Oct. 1978*	*Oct. 1980*
Carlow	25	25	27	31	51
Cavan	32	16	13	21	19
Clare	35	44	44	54	66
Cork	103	87	111	128	159
Donegal	32	41	52	47	51
Dublin	85	46	387	387	573
Galway	142	135	201	224	255
Kerry	44	52	59	110	110
Kildare	20	34	25	29	42
Kilkenny	47	32	27	32	25
Laois	21	26	12	25	27
Leitrim	23	18	26	24	30
Limerick	78	51	110	135	164
Longford	25	24	25	65	69
Louth	28	26	67	88	75
Mayo	84	57	83	85	93
Meath	28	22	19	72	92
Monaghan	20	20	40	34	35
Offaly	45	33	77	67	83
Roscommon	46	26	42	42	55
Sligo	20	33	42	27	33
Tipperary	79	84	48	97	101
Waterford	16	10	21	31	45
Westmeath	46	24	50	76	85
Wexford	55	51	62	106	104
Wicklow	19	19	20	31	48
Totals	1,198	1,036	1,690	2,068	2,490

Sources: Report of the Commission and Annual Counts.

4.2 It is necessary that the foregoing situation is recalled in order that the vast change that has occurred since 1960 in the location of travellers will be understood. The number of families recorded in the

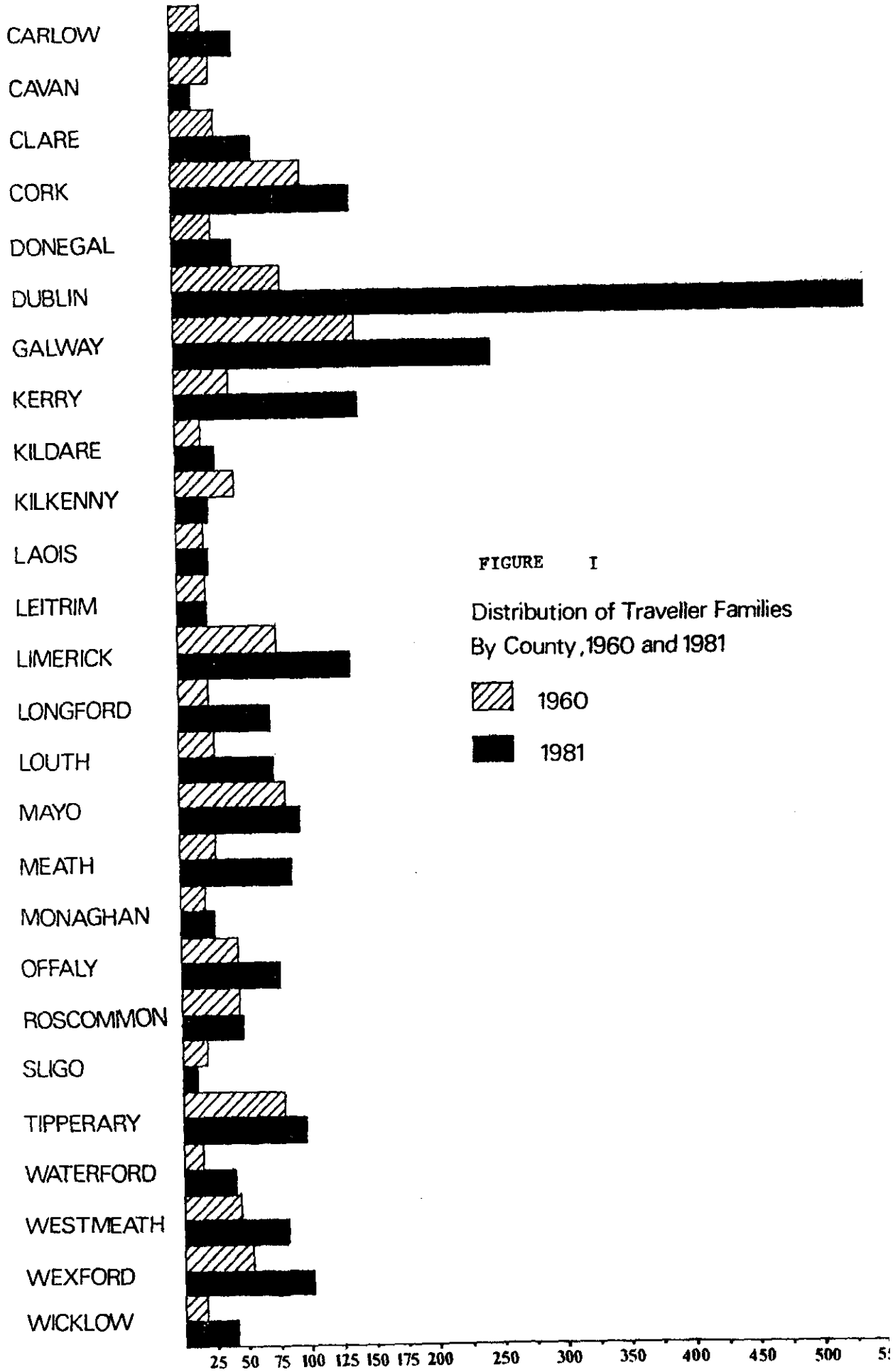


FIGURE I

Distribution of Traveller Families By County, 1960 and 1981

4.3 At the time the Commission did its work, travellers were essentially rural dwellers encamped in small numbers throughout the countryside. For many years now they are almost entirely urban dwellers. This change has been due to the universal movement from country to town and the tendency of nomadic people everywhere to drift towards the periphery of towns and cities because of the expectation of finding there something to replace their traditional forms of income.

4.4 Taking the country as a whole, the number of families more than doubled from 1,198 to 2,490 between 1961 and 1980, and it increased by almost 50% from 1,690 to 2,490 between 1974 and 1980. Because of the drift towards urban locations, this increase was not uniform either as between one county and another or within individual counties. In many counties the increase in number was less than average and this was balanced by an above average increase in certain areas, particularly Dublin, Meath, Louth, Longford, Wicklow and Kerry. The change in the distribution of traveller families between 1960 and 1981 is shown in Figure I. Of special significance is Dublin, where the number of families was 573 in 1980, having grown from 387 only two years earlier. Of the increase of over 400 families in the two years, about half occurred in the Dublin area. If traveller families were distributed by county in the same proportion as the national population Dublin would, by 1980, have some one-third of the total of 2,490 families i.e. 830. However, the large number of families actually in Dublin, compared with a mere handful there in the late 1940s and the still very small number in the early 1960s, poses an obviously serious problem of accommodation. Within individual counties, travellers are no longer scattered in small groups throughout the countryside. Those who are not in houses, or otherwise accommodated, are concentrated on the outskirts of cities, towns and villages. Generally, they are looked upon as mere trespassers without rights of any sort on road margins and other public land and occasionally on private property. Most of them are likely to be moved on from time to time and some repeatedly. The conditions under which they live are below any acceptable standard and their encampments are usually unsightly.

5. Accommodation of Travellers

5.1 In the Census carried out by the Commission in December 1960, the types of family abode of travellers were as follows:—

House	43 families
Room	13 families
Horsedrawn Caravan	674 families
Horsedrawn Caravan and Tent	64 families
Trailer Caravan	60 families
Tent	335 families
Nil	9 families

At that time the traveller family accommodated in a house was the exception. Almost all of them were on the road with various forms of transport and shelter. The trailer caravan was rare, there being only 60 in all. Nearly two-thirds had horsedrawn caravans of the then familiar barrel-top type with four wheels. There were 335 families (or 28% of the total) living in tents which are now rarely seen, but at the time of the Commission they were quite a familiar sight on country roadsides. The Commission was satisfied that, beyond all doubt, the tents used by travellers as habitual dwellings were completely unfit, unhygienic and unhealthy for the occupiers. (ps. 43 and 44).

5.2 The pattern of accommodation had changed dramatically by 1980 and was:

Living in House	957 families
Living on Serviced Site	
(i) in chalet	253 families
(ii) in trailer caravan	131 families
Living on the road-side	1,149 families
Total:	2,490 families

Source: Annual Count for 1980.

The houses in which travellers are accommodated are almost all in local authority estates, the number varying greatly from county to county. In Dublin a significantly small number of 80 are accommodated in local authority houses. Of the 253 families in chalets on serviced sites, 144 are in Dublin, 23 in Offaly, 20 in Galway and 19 in Louth and small numbers elsewhere. The 131 on authorised sites for trailer caravans are at a number of centres. Of the 1,149 families on the roadside the vast majority are in trailer caravans. There are very few in horse-drawn wagons and the tent is now uncommon.

5.3 In 1960 there were 1,142 families on the roadside (i.e. a total of 1,198 less 43 in houses and 13 in rooms). Had the number of families remained static all of them would by now be accommodated in the provision made in houses, chalets and authorised sites. This, however, has not occurred. *Notwithstanding what has been done, the number on the roadside in 1980 (1,149) is higher than it was before any special public effort was made to provide accommodation.*

6 The Livelihood of Travellers

6.1 The Commission reported that there were 3,167 travellers over the age of 14 years in 1960. Of the 769 who claimed to have a trade or craft, 600 claimed to be tin smiths, 103 to be chimney sweeps and 36 to be flower makers. Others had employment as seasonal workers, including farm labourers. Some made a living as odd-job men and as scrap dealers. However, even then the time was fast approaching when a living could not be derived from such occupations. Neither could travellers any longer rely on local farmers for the milk and vegetables

movement away from rural and into urban settings during the 1960s and 1970s.

6.2 As urban dwellers many of them took to scrap dealing, including car dismantling, which provided a lucrative income for some. A small number of others have been successful as traders. In towns, the density of housing enhanced greatly the opportunities for door-to-door begging by the women who wished to pursue the practice. But what has transformed the income position of the traveller is the availability of unemployment assistance and it would appear that the vast majority of the adult menfolk are receiving it. As a result, the conditions of dire economic poverty that formerly existed among travellers have almost disappeared. It is, at the same time, a matter of disquiet that travellers should, as a group, remain permanently dependent on unemployment assistance, apart from the young people in the training centres.

7 Health and Welfare of Travellers

7.1 The Commission reviewed various aspects of the health of travellers including conditions at birth, infant and child health, adult health, age structure, life expectancy, medical requirements, hygiene, food supply and clothing. In regard to adult health, the Commission was of the opinion that travellers generally were healthier than one would have expected of people suffering the hardship and the rigours of their way of life (p. 46). From the information available to the Commission, it appeared that among travellers infant mortality was high and life expectancy was short compared with the population in general. There is no conclusive evidence on which to decide whether or not the observations of the Commission on infant mortality and life expectancy are still true. What evidence is available, however, suggests that infant mortality rates among travellers are higher than those of the population at large and their life expectancy lower. The question is discussed in more detail in Chapter IX.

8 Education, Training and Employment

8.1 When the Commission reported, almost all travellers were completely illiterate and the numbers attending school were negligible. There were 160 travelling children on school rolls throughout the country and of these 114 were said to be regular attenders. Remarkable progress has been made in the education of travellers in the intervening years. There are now between three and four hundred children in the 3 to 5 year age group attending pre-school classes, out of a total of nearly 2,000 in that age group. There are over 3,000 children regularly attending primary schools, over 2,000 of whom are in ordinary classes and the others in special classes. Unfortunately, only about ten per cent of traveller boys and girls continue in school after the age of 12 years and the number reaching any achievement in second level education is negligible.

8.2 The great majority of teenage and adult travellers are illiterate,

condition, a system of training centres for travellers has been developed over a number of years. It is estimated that about 1,500 young travellers would benefit from the course in the centres and that about half of them have shown interest in attending. The course has a substantial educational input and provides training in industrial machining, woodwork, metal work, welding, dress-making, typing and a variety of crafts.

CHAPTER III

LOOKING FORWARD

1 Objectives

The Review Body set itself the following objectives:—

1.1 To improve the well-being of travellers so as to enable them to attain their maximum potential economically, socially and culturally. They should, as soon as possible, become self-supporting members of the community.

1.2 To provide within a relatively short number of years, a house for all traveller families who desire to be housed. Travellers who are not so accommodated cannot hope to receive an adequate education. Nor can they avail satisfactorily of services such as health and welfare which are of such significance in the life of all people. Nevertheless, the wishes of those travellers who choose to remain on the road must be respected and serviced sites must be provided to allow them to continue that form of life with such dignity and comfort as it allows.

1.3 To ensure that education and training are available to, and availed of by, children and young adult travellers to a degree sufficient in today's conditions to advance their well-being in the way envisaged. The lack of adequate education is the greatest single barrier to progress in the well being of the travellers. In formulating programmes of education and training for them, regard must be had to the travellers' traditions and way of life and these must be catered for and protected as much as possible. It must be recognised and accepted that many of the older travellers may live out their lives without adapting to change. There are probably very few travellers today, and particularly the younger people among them, who practise any of their traditional skills. There are, however, certain types of work and trading for which they display particular aptitude and in which they have achieved success. These are almost all in the area of self-employment rather than wage earning employment.

1.4 To ensure that in the provision of health care for travellers, special efforts are made to see that certain forms of care reach them, which are particularly necessary for travellers and which may not otherwise reach them because of their particular mode of life.

1.5 To ensure that the special welfare needs of travellers are adequately met.

instance by identifying the causes of this hostility and by dealing with them in the best way possible and, secondly, by a programme of public education designed to give the settled population a better understanding of travellers and their problems and to give the travellers an understanding of, and the reasons for, the settled person's attitude.

2. The Need for Review

2.1 Following consideration by the Government of the report of the Commission, a policy statement was issued by Mr. Neil T. Blaney, Minister for Local Government in October, 1964:—

"The Government have given careful consideration to the Report of the Commission on Itinerancy and have decided to take the following steps immediately to meet the main recommendations in the report:—

(a) An unpaid advisory committee to advise Government departments on measures to promote the rehabilitation and absorption of itinerants will be established by the Minister for Local Government.

(b) Encouragement will be given to the setting up of local voluntary committees which will help in the re-settlement of itinerant families and the employment of professional social workers by local authorities. The Minister for Local Government will give financial assistance to such committees and to local authorities for those purposes.

(c) Pending the solution of the difficulties associated with the housing of itinerants, local authorities will be advised to provide fully serviced camping sites for the accommodation of itinerants. State subsidy will be given to local authorities at a rate not exceeding two-thirds of the loan charges on capital costs of such sites and subsidy at the normal rate for the provision of sanitary services will be payable in respect of halting places with minimum facilities for the accommodation of small numbers of caravans.

(d) Local authorities will be exhorted to acquaint itinerants of the health services available to them, to encourage them to avail of these services as much as possible and to arrange for regular visiting of encampments by health personnel.

(e) Provision will be made for giving special educational facilities, both primary and vocational, to the children of itinerants and for the erection of special camp schools where necessary.

(f) Any difficulties which may arise in the way of payment of social welfare allowances to itinerants will, as far as possible, be eliminated. Consideration is being given by the Government to other recommendations of the Commission".

at a pace never previously experienced. The traveller has not remained unaffected by this change. Public and voluntary agencies have made a most praiseworthy contribution to improving the lot of the traveller in accommodation, in education, in income maintenance and otherwise. However, it appears that the momentum and enthusiasm which propelled the effort has tended to wane in recent years. The traveller has been receiving diminishing consideration particularly in regard to accommodation. There are still too many families living in deplorable conditions which generate the antagonism of neighbours in the settled population. This is in contrast with the steady improvement in services for other special need groups in the community.

2.3 The time has arrived for a full review of the services for travellers with a re-appraisal of past programmes and developments to assess their appropriateness for the conditions of today and the foreseeable future. Fresh approaches are necessary to give effect to the objectives set by the Review Body. In particular, there must be emphasis on those measures which will be of lasting value towards the achievement of the objectives and not just those that alleviate immediate need.

2.4 In considering the needs of a group as neglected as the travellers, it seems unkind to mention financial considerations. The Review Body does it only to acknowledge that it recognises that monies made available to improve services for them should be spent in such a way as to give the maximum long term benefit to the travellers themselves.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMES

The programmes which the Review Body has in mind to give effect to its objectives for travellers are stated in summary in the following paragraphs and are dealt with more fully and with more specific recommendations, in the chapters which follow:—

1. Every local authority should be obliged to formulate immediately and implement progressively, within a period not exceeding five years, plans to provide a house for all travellers who normally reside in or resort to its area and who wish to have such accommodation.

2. Accommodation should normally be provided in standard houses. For travellers who do not wish to live in houses, there should be an obligation on housing authorities to provide accommodation in serviced sites on which they may park their caravans.

3. Houses allocated for the accommodation of travellers should be individual houses but, occasionally, schemes of grouped houses may require to be provided to accommodate a number of near relatives or closely associated families. When such group schemes are provided, the houses are to be of full local authority size and standard. A scheme in its design, location and layout must be such as to render it indistinguishable from a scheme to accommodate any other tenants. It should be planned to facilitate integration with one another and with their neighbours in the settled community. Group schemes are to be intended as permanent accommodation for their occupants and not as intermediate type dwellings. The earlier group schemes of temporary sub-standard accommodation should not be repeated.

4. Pending the implementation of the foregoing programme by local authorities, compulsory removal of travellers from unauthorised sites should be restricted except to enable property owners to undertake development of the land.

5. Where travellers are encamped on the lands from which their removal is restricted, as suggested above, the local authority should provide them with such sanitary services as may be possible in the location, and should arrange adequate refuse collection and cleansing services for the encampment and its

6. In any locality in which there is extensive dealing in scrap, including car dismantling by travellers, the local authority should make the necessary arrangements to minimise the ugly and unsightly appearance caused by the process and its residue. It should explore with the commercial interests concerned the possibility of carrying on the scrap business on a more organised basis and without the dirt and ugliness which characterises it.

7. The Review Body considers that there is now no justification for street begging. It condemns the practice and suggests that the public should not lend encouragement to or support it.

8. Wandering horses are a danger to the public. It is recommended that legislation be strengthened to provide that horses found wandering should be impounded and, in certain circumstances, be confiscated.

9. The legal requirements to attend school should be enforced for the children of travellers who live in a house or on a serviced site or in a place from which removal is restricted. There should be special provision in the curriculum for subjects which have particular relevance to the aptitudes and life style of the traveller.

10. For a transitional period — which could be for up to ten years or longer — on a fairly extensive scale at first, but later, diminishing, special provision needs to be made for the sizeable number of children and young adults who, because of their mode of life, have been unable to avail of the schooling normally available to people of their age. These would include:

    (a) pre-school classes;
    (b) special classes in primary schools;
    (c) special classes under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committees for 12 to 15 year olds, many of whom have never attended school and of those who have attended most have left at 12 years of age;
    (d) training centres for the 15 to 25 year olds, most of whom are illiterate;
    (e) special classes for adult travellers under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committees;
    and
    (f) the development of certain small industries and craft centres in which special provision is made for the employment of an equal number of travellers and settled people. These will enable travellers to pursue gainfully various forms of employment.

11. In providing health care for travellers, health boards should, as a deliberate policy, provide special care and advice for travellers in the areas of:—

(b) the availability of the immunisation services which may not be adequately taken up by travellers because of their nomadic way of life;
(c) the treatment of handicapping conditions in children who may be neglected because of their non-attendance or irregular attendance at school;
(d) family planning;
(e) educating travellers as to the health hazards of caravans as permanent accommodation for a large family.

12. Adequate information is not available on the health of travellers. Health boards, in accordance with a national scheme to be monitored by the Department of Health, should collect data on a scientific basis regarding the health of travellers, with particular reference to such factors as neo-natal and infant mortality, fertility of marriage, life expectancy and the use by travellers of the various immunisation services.

13. Local authorities should examine ways by which they could provide a more effective social work service and a more attractive career for social workers, if necessary by coming to an arrangement with a health board to provide the service. Special provision needs to be made for traveller families with multiple social problems, especially in the Dublin area.

14. There should be a concerted programme designed to assist young married travellers and those considering marriage, which would involve a number of agencies such as church authorities, voluntary groups, health boards, the local authorities and teachers.

15. Travellers should be encouraged to obtain or to defend their legal rights as citizens through the courts, if necessary.

16. The Review Body hopes that speedy and enlightened implementation of the foregoing programme will help to remove some of the causes of present hostility shown to travellers by sections of the settled community. It is hoped too that travellers will benefit from the implementation of the programme and will react to it in a manner which, in turn, will improve understanding between themselves and their settled neighbours. There is need for a public education programme about travellers and the problems they face.

17. Machinery should be established to monitor the implementation of the programmes outlined in this report.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

1 Local Communities and Causes of Antagonism

1.1 The Commission, in dealing with the attitude of the settled population to travellers, stated on page 102, paragraph 1 of the report:

> "The attitude of most of the settled population is largely conditioned by the behaviour pattern which by experience or hearsay has come to be regarded as the norm for itinerants, viz., constant begging, petty pilfering, trespass and damage in rural areas, drunkenness, noisiness and brawling when they get together. This attitude is one of hostility, the intensity of which corresponds with the degree to which any neighbourhood has had these experiences. In some places, particularly in rural areas, the attitude is one of bitte. hostility often accompanied by fear".

1.2 The Review Body recognises that the above assessment of travellers was widely held, and in the 20 years since the report was published it has been further highlighted by the actions of many people and groups in their strenuous opposition to the implementation of measures to improve travellers' living conditions. The extent of the opposition is all too evident from press reports of discussions at meetings of local authorities and of community reaction to proposals for the allocation of house tenancies and the selection of sites for camping or chalets.

1.3 While many of the disturbing features of the travellers' lifestyle still exist, there has been an appreciable amelioration in most rural areas. However, the drift to the cities and large towns has, in many respects, transferred the problems rather than relieved them. The noisy feuding and brawling associated with fairs and other gatherings are now almost a thing of the past, but the concentration of large groups on the edge of cities and in suburbia has brought new problems virtually to the doorstep of local householders. The large numbers of caravans parked along streets, roads and recreational areas, with several hundred occupants who are obliged to exist without running water, sanitation or refuse collection, inevitably engender hostility by the dirty appearance and the accumulation of the waste and scrap of their trade. While such conditions are allowed to persist, it is inevitable that antagonism of settled people will continue. When travellers are obliged to live under such deplorable conditions, they are demeaned and are made the scapegoats for all criminal or social wrong-doing in their immediate area, whether they are involved or

1.4 The Commission's use of the phrase "regarded as the norm for itinerants" is pertinent to the subject of attitude formation. It connotes a group or herd approach, whereas travellers are *individuals* who are of Irish origin and have the same rights as other citizens of the state. The stereotyped traveller is no more a reality than the stereotyped stage Irishman. Conduct of travellers ranges through the spectrum of social and moral behaviour found in the general population, from the scrupulously honest and upright to the drunken vagabond. Regrettably, due to lack of communication between travellers and settled people, the vagabond image tends to predominate in the minds of the majority of settled people.

1.5 Travellers have been criticised for an alleged high level of drunkenness. The Review Body has been informed of two surveys, one city and one rural, which indicated that alcoholism or continuous excessive indulgence in alcohol is not widespread. The members are satisfied that there is no evidence that excessive drinking is significantly worse than, or even as great as, among the general population. The fact that travellers are obliged to consume alcohol more openly than persons with houses do, may give the appearance of a higher level of consumption. Many publicans sell drink to travellers but are not prepared to allow them to consume it on their premises.

1.6 Another feature of traveller life which causes offence is street begging. Traditionally, before the general availability of social welfare assistance, most travellers were obliged to beg to survive. Begging is less widespread today than formerly and, indeed, is disliked and disapproved of by many travellers, especially those who are living in houses. Nevertheless, it continues to be practised by some individuals and is the cause of much adverse criticism of travellers in general.

1.7 It is difficult to assess the motivating forces which lead to begging. Undoubtedly, for some it may be a necessity, especially for the families of alcoholic or maladjusted parents. Others may beg to meet debts, but the Review Body is satisfied that a significant number who beg may not have a compelling necessity for doing so. It is doubtful if more rigid enforcement of punitive measures against street begging will eradicate the practice. Its reduction to insignificant proportions may not occur until all travellers obtain basic education, followed by a higher level of gainful employment. Pending the achievement of these objectives, the general public should exercise restraint in their response to public pleading for individual alms. Monetary contributions to voluntary groups assisting travellers may be a more beneficial way of helping those in need.

1.8 As recorded later in this Report, the number of horses owned by travellers, formerly a major cause of conflict between the two sections of the community, has dwindled. In 1960/61 about two-thirds of traveller families had horse-drawn caravans but motor-drawn trailer caravans are now the norm. On being housed, the keeping of horses is usually abandoned. In the past, trespass by animals onto farmlands was the main problem, but in recent times there has been a relocation

areas are the environs of Dublin city and south county. Trespass by animals in these areas has often been accompanied by structural damage to fixtures and risks of personal injury to residents in the areas affected. The greatest problems are created by a few commercial dealers with large strings of horses, not all of whom are members of the traveller community. Difficulties are experienced in dealing with wandering horses in suburbia due to matters associated with their collection, transport, detention in and redemption from pounds. Existing legislation is inadequate for coping with the problems of impounding horses from suburbia.

1.9 Contrary to what is frequently implied, travellers are, by nature, clean in their person and when given facilities they use them. This desired state of cleanliness is unobtainable for families encamped in surroundings of mud and scrap. Experience has confirmed the prediction of the Commission that "If, however, their living standards were otherwise improved and better facilities were available to them, it is likely that, in a short time, there would be a corresponding improvement in their standards of hygiene". (p. 46, para. 21).

1.10 In the early 1970s, roadside trading became a popular occupation for many travellers and resulted in much criticism because of the despoilment of the surroundings by trade waste, and the possible physical hazards to road users. Other reasons for opposition included alleged unfair competition with local merchants. More recently, the trend is towards individual stalls in regular town markets, and house to house sales. Many of these traders are housed and travel to markets on a daily basis. At other times, especially from spring to autumn, groups of families, sometimes numbering from 20 to 40, travel to various locations throughout the country purchasing and selling. There is seldom adequate space for the ordered parking of such large numbers of caravans and their presence on road margins or in town car parks is the cause of repeated problems for local authorities and local residents.

1.11 The Review Body is satisfied that the general population of the country has very little detailed knowledge of travellers and the problems they face. Only a small number of people have more than cursory contact with travellers and fewer still are on sufficiently friendly terms to engage freely in conversation with them. This lack of contact inevitably generates unfounded fear which at times in the past has developed into frank hostility. Fear of travellers is in large measure groundless, for there is irrefutable evidence that those who settle in houses usually create no special problems. Where sites have been provided around the country, very few complaints about them have been received. This satisfactory situation confirms the members of the Review Body in the opinion that the insanitary and unsightly features of roadside encampments are an inevitable consequence of the predicament in which the travellers find themselves. Unlike most settled people, they have no back yard in which to conceal their waste, or masonry walls to contain the sounds of family bickering.

2 Improving relations between Traveller and Settled Persons

2.1 As public authorities fulfil their commitments to travellers in the form of houses and sites, the disorderly and unsightly surroundings of haphazard parking will be removed, with a consequential lessening of the affront felt by many in the neighbourhood. Criticism of travellers stems from the obvious physical conditions of deprivation which exist and a carryover from bad experiences in the past, when many were impoverished prior to the availability of regular social welfare benefits. It is magnified by fear and a lack of knowledge of the traveller and his ways, and by a tendency to *impute to the whole of the group the undesirable traits of some.* On the other hand, many of the travellers themselves fear to attempt a closer relationship with the settled community.

2.2 The Review Body has noted a gradual break-down of fear and prejudice in the areas where settlement, especially in houses, is taking place. The environmental improvement, social help and free communication which follow the allocation of houses and the provision of supervised and serviced sites bring about a change of attitudes and relationships in the vicinity of settlement. This is exemplified by an extreme case where a high wall around a group settlement site (opened in 1977) was indicative of the insistence on separation at that time by the local tenants' association. At present, the same association invites and encourages participation by the occupants of the site in recreational and other activities.

2.3 The improvement in attitudes, however, is not uniform across the country. A local continuing hostility on the part of the settled population in many areas is identified by the Review Body as the greatest factor hindering the provision of accommodation for the remaining traveller families. The issue is complex. The settled person is entitled to protection of amenity at his home or business setting. The traveller has a right to have a home or, at the very least, basic sanitary facilities at a designated site. The members find, however, that a general prejudice, which may well have good grounds where some families are concerned, operates in a way which is injurious to the rights and aspirations of other families whose presence in the community poses no threat. While the fears of the settled community may be unfounded, they are, however, genuine. They should be treated sympathetically by those who are working for the welfare of travellers.

2.4 While the extent of opposition to traveller settlement and its persistence up to the present time is a matter of regret it is, nevertheless, encouraging to record the positive contribution of local voluntary committees towards the betterment of travellers. Also, on the positive side, the Review Body is aware of a number of instances where tenants associations and individual householders welcomed travellers to their community and provided supportive help. It is noteworthy too that there is seldom opposition to the enrolment of the children of travellers in ordinary national schools throughout the

2.5 The Commission reported in paragraph 4 page 103, that the plight of the travelling people and their isolation from the community is a serious problem which has not troubled the public to any degree. The problem continues to be serious, but today public consciousness has been increasingly aroused and it is recognised that solutions must be forthcoming. Even in their own interest the settled section of the community cannot afford to ignore the great social deprivation in their midst.

2.6 Opponents of facilities for travellers must realise that they are perpetuating the undesirable environmental features of traveller existence by continuing to deny them a house or serviced site place. The solution lies in speedy provision of houses for all who need them, and authorised sites for those not desiring a house.

3 The Role of National and Local Committees

3.1 Even before the publication of the Commission's Report, many Conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Praesidia of the Legion of Mary included travellers within the scope of their activities, and they continue to do so. The Report of the Commission (p. 107, para 6) envisaged that local voluntary committees would be an essential element of a programme; that the members would interest themselves directly in the families in their area and act as a bridge between the travellers and the settled community.

3.2 It was not, however, until after 1965 that "Itinerant Settlement Committees" were formed specifically for the welfare of this underprivileged section of society. Since then, the voluntary groups have played an active role in implementing the recommendations of the Commission.

3.3 In 1965, the first Committee in Dublin was inspired by the initiative of three people — Victor Bewley, Fr. Tom Fehily and Lady Wicklow. Very soon, many other committees were formed throughout the country. They later came together to form a national association — the Irish Council for Itinerant Settlement — which has since been re-named the National Council for Travelling People. There are now about 50 local committees.

3.4 While each local committee is autonomous, and the emphasis of its work may vary slightly from one to another, according to local problems and needs, the aims are broadly the same for all:

(a) to awaken the conscience of the members of statutory bodies and their officials to an awareness of the plight of the travellers and their children;

(b) to provide the travellers in their local area with a group of friends from the settled population; who would get to know them on a basis of equality; who would understand their special problems — caused by their disadvantaged background and lack of education

(c) to keep up pressure on local authorities to provide the necessary accommodation for the families, and to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Itinerancy;

(d) to speak out publicly on behalf of travellers on occasions when their lack of education makes such support necessary;

(e) to respect the right of travellers to continue to travel, if they so wish, but in conditions that befit human dignity.

3.5 These local committees were not popular with the general public in the early days, and they are to be commended for their commitment and perseverance often in the face of misunderstanding, resistance or open hostility from many sections of society. Fortunately, this kind of antagonism has abated considerably in recent years, although the committees' plans are still frequently frustrated by prejudice and indifference on the part of settled people vis-à-vis the travellers.

3.6 According as staff of public agencies are becoming more involved with the welfare of travellers, the need for the voluntary committees to act as pressure groups is becoming less urgent. Social workers and professional personnel are now taking over much of the work which was originally left to the committees. The travellers themselves are becoming more articulate, and some of them are making a valuable contribution to the programmes designed for their welfare. More and more travellers are attending National Council meetings. Three are members of this Review Body and of the Executive Committee of the National Council for Travelling People.

3.7 For these and other reasons, some committee members are now beginning to ask if their job is done, and if the time has come for them to retire and to leave the work to the professionals. Experience would suggest, however, that there is still an important role for the local voluntary groups, and that their long experience and insight should not be lost. Their major contribution to the welfare of travellers cannot be overstressed and comparisons with the international situation would seem to underline the need for voluntary input.

3.8 The Review Body, therefore, would like to see a continuation and even an expansion of the work of the National Council and of the local voluntary committees, along the following lines:

(a) to maintain their own special relationship with the travellers, and to encourage them to participate in, and contribute to, policies concerning their welfare;

(b) to foster understanding between the travellers, statutory bodies and the public at large;

(c) to help them with their individual problems, e.g. dealing with officialdom, filling in forms and applications, adult education, help with children's homework, job opportunities, home manage-

(d) to provide general crisis intervention in cases where the authorities are unaware of the situation or are slow to take action;

(e) to maintain "watchdog" vigilance, to ensure that the travellers' basic democratic and constitutional rights are safeguarded and that discrimination be countered when it occurs.

3.9 It is envisaged that the intervention of the Body to Promote the Welfare of Travellers, recommended in Chapter XI, will provide a formal support for the voluntary groups and enable them to work more effectively.

4. Travellers and the Law

4.1 In the Report of the Commission (p. 94, para. 2) it is stated that "Itinerants as a body do not constitute a criminal element in the population and they have not a predisposition to crime. Many of the crimes which they commit are incidental to their daily life, and facilitated by its circumstances". This assessment is, in most areas, as true now as twenty years ago. The law-breaking which most frequently receives publicity is not of a serious nature. Petty theft, brawling, trespass, minor traffic offences, erection of temporary dwellings — these are the most usual and are, indeed, incidental to the kind of life they lead. It must be admitted, however, that a higher level of more serious and organised crime has been encountered among travellers in recent times. Some of those who have been left on the roadside without hope of improvement in their living conditions have been known to develop serious criminal tendencies.

4.2 Experiences of travellers in their dealings with the Garda Siochana and officials, in the past, engendered a distrust and a belief that they did not always receive fair treatment under the law. In view of the frequent involvement of travellers in former times in trespass, brawling and pilfering, but not organised crime, it was inevitable that some innocent members of the group would be subjected to investigation and questioning as suspects. In addition to these not infrequent contacts with the police as criminal suspects, they were sometimes summarily asked by the police to move-on from a camp site. Reasons for the requests were not always given, or if they were, appeared trivial to the travellers. Having to move-on because somebody in the neighbourhood did not like their presence and, especially, having to break camp under harsh weather conditions, tended to lower the travellers' trust in the impartiality of the law.

4.3 As set out earlier in this chapter, it is not reasonable to generalise from particular instances in assessing travellers' behaviour. Similar comments are appropriate to the Garda Siochana and local officials. Not all of these officers treated travellers unjustly or roughly, and there were many instances of considerate and sympathetic handling. In recent decades sympathetic understanding has become the norm and this changed approach was endorsed by the then Minister for Justice on 2nd July, 1970, when he stated in the Dáil that "The Garda Siochana are not empowered to compel itinerants to move or vacate

citizen of this country" . . . "If their activities cause offences to be committed against the law, the Gardai enforce the law fully in that respect. . . . the fact that somebody is camped beside a road is not of itself an offence".

4.4 In reference to the Sanitary Services Act, 1948, the Commission wrote:

"So far as the itinerants are concerned, the usual approach by sanitary authorities relying upon the Act is the purely negative one of prohibiting camping without providing for authorised camping places. The emphasis is on moving the itinerants out of the district rather than on the eradication of the problems associated with their camping in unsatisfactory and unsuitable places, which in effect only transfers them to another district for the time being. In the case of sanitary authorities who have not availed of the provisions of the Act the legality of the methods employed to move itinerants from place to place is open to question". (p. 53, para 5).

Despite the unequivocal Ministerial statement of 2nd July, 1970 and the above quotation from the Report of the Commission, moving on without recourse to the courts for judgement has been and is still practised, repeatedly, by many local authorities. There even have been instances of the local authority staff being accompanied by Gardai for protection in the event of a breach of the peace occurring during the course of their questionable actions.

4.5 The Review Body is hopeful that punitive action against travellers without recourse to the due process of law will end. Since 1980 recourse has been had to the courts by some travellers and local authorities to establish their rights and responsibilities but at the time of writing the courts have not ruled.

4.6 In recent years a more subtle form of harassment has been practised by certain local authorities. This takes the form of fencing off parking areas, even traditional camping sites, or digging trenches around them. Where this is not feasible, heaps of rocks, clay and rubble may be dumped and in many instances contribute significantly to the despoliation of the environment in the area. Not infrequently the dumping is done while the caravans are in situ, and continues until the occupants are so inconvenienced that they have no alternative but to vacate the area. The Review Body is very concerned that such practices should be perpetuated by the same public authorities who are assigned the duty of implementing Government policy on services for travellers which was issued in October, 1964. (see p. 16, para. 2.1).

4.7 The Review Body is pleased to record that there is no evidence of discrimination against travellers in the granting of social welfare assistance and in gaining enrolment in local primary and second level schools. In regard to the provision of accommodation, there has been steady progress in the past 20 years with 1,350 families being accommodated of which close on 1,000 families were occupying tenancies of local authority houses. These authorities deserve recognition for their

ition. However, some members of the Review Body are aware of many instances of bias against travellers in the allocation of tenancies of local authority houses. Tenancies of local authority houses are granted under the terms of Section 60 of the Housing Act, 1966, in accordance with a scheme of letting priorities adopted by each housing authority and subsequently approved by the Minister for the Environment. The Review Body is concerned about continuing infringement of the scheme of letting priorities resulting in the denial to travellers, and especially the married children of housed travellers, the same rights as other applicants for local authority housing.

4.8 The desirability of having special legislation enacted to outlaw discrimination against travellers as a minority group was examined by the Review Body. It became apparent from this examination that implementation of such legislation would be fraught with many difficulties, especially in the absence of a precise legal definition of "traveller". Accordingly, the enactment of anti-discrimination laws is not sought.

*5 Recommendations

*5.1 Every effort must be made to inform the general population of the needs of travellers and their plight. Stigmatising travellers as a group should cease and they should be treated as individuals of Irish origin with the same rights as all other citizens. People should make positive efforts to become acquainted with travellers. By so doing, they will learn that travellers are victims of their environment rather than creators of it. Once travellers are given fixed accommodation, they tend to follow the pattern of their newly acquired neighbours. A realisation of these factors will help to eliminate the prejudice which is so seriously hampering travellers in their efforts to integrate with the population at large.

*5.2 The travellers, likewise, must learn to understand the anxieties of the settled community. They must realise that certain of their actions, such as brawling, street begging and allowing horses to wander, cause offence and they should take steps to eliminate the practices where they persist. Where offences are committed prosecutions should be brought. Legislation relating to wandering horses should be strengthened and provide for confiscation of the animals.

*5.3 The moving-on of travellers by local authorities without due process of law should cease forthwith, as should intimidation and physical harassment of travellers by local authority staff. A special directive on the matter should be issued by the Minister for the Environment and circulated to all local authorities.

*5.4 The Garda Siochana should ensure that local authority staff are in conformity with the law before responding to requests for their presence at the scene of actions contemplated by the local authority

*5.5 Travellers should be encouraged to obtain or to defend their constitutional and legal rights as citizens through the courts, if necessary. Assistance in these matters could come from local voluntary committees or the National Council for Travelling People.

*5.6 Non-compliance with statutes by public authorities, especially the terms of legislation governing the allocation of tenancies of local authority houses under the Housing Act, 1966, should be actively pursued in the courts by travellers.

CHAPTER VI

ACCOMMODATION

1. General

1.1 It cannot be emphasised too much that the over-riding consideration in the provision of services for travellers is that permanent accommodation should be made available for every family aspiring to it, both as a fundamental right and to ensure effective participation in social, educational and other services.

1.2 It is unwise to generalise and assume to know what are the requirements of all travellers, but an outline of different categories of traveller was adopted for the purposes of this review. On the basis of aspirations, four broad groupings are listed:

(a) Families who wish to live in a standard house among settled people.

(b) Families who wish to live in a house but situated among their own people i.e. group housing.

(c) Families who wish to remain living in a caravan in a place on which they are entitled to park, with the benefit of sanitary amenities.

(d) Families who wish to continue travelling but who would avail of authorised serviced sites on which they can remain for as long as they wish.

2 Initiation and Development of Policy towards the Accommodation of Travellers since 1964.

2.1 In October, 1964 the Minister for Local Government announced the action the Government proposed to take to implement the recommendations of the Commission. The full text of the statement is included at p. 16 para. 2.1 Chapter III of this Report. The lead role given to the Minister for Local Government emphasised the importance attached to the provision of permanent dwelling places for those travellers who wished to settle. On the subject of accommodation, the policy statement contained a number of important announcements. It recognised that local voluntary committees (then non-existent) would have a vital role to play in the settlement of travellers, and that the services of professional social workers would be essential. The Minister agreed to make funds available to local committees and to local authorities to employ social workers. Most importantly, the

local authorities to provide fully serviced sites for the accommodation of travellers. In subsequent years the levels of subsidy for serviced sites and halting places and for the employment of social workers were increased, and additional subsidies were later introduced to encourage local authorities to renovate old houses for travellers and to purchase caravans for tent-dwelling families. A special grant to help a traveller to buy a house was first made available in 1975. These financial provisions are set out in detail on table 6.1 p. 40 below.

2.2 Instead of the central body recommended by the Commission (p. 107, para. 5) "to promote the rehabilitation and absorption of itinerants" and "to examine the progress," the Government policy opted for an advisory committee. The function of this committee was to advise Government departments on measures to promote the rehabilitation of itinerants and their absorption into the community. The Advisory Committee on Itinerancy which was set up by the Minister for Local Government in May 1965 was shortlived, holding its last meeting in September, 1970. The Chairman and some members of the Committee, however, made a valuable contribution by giving impetus to the development of different aspects of policy at central and local level.

2.3 Local voluntary committees, under the leadership of the Dublin Committee, grew in strength until in May 1969 they formed a national council, now known as the National Council for Travelling People. A prominent member of the National Council, appointed in 1974 as personal Advisor to the Minister for the Environment on the settlement of travellers, provides liaison between voluntary and official bodies dealing with travellers. A national co-ordinator is employed by the National Council whose duties embrace the activities of voluntary committees and liaison with local authorities and other bodies concerned with the welfare of travellers.

2.4 No special administrative or financial arrangements were written into the policy statement for housing travellers, on the grounds that responsibility rested on the local authorities to allocate houses in their area, in accordance with their approved schemes of letting priorities and with the aid of the normal State subsidies available for housing generally. This diverged from the Commission's recommendation (p. 61, para. 18) that an overall priority should be afforded to travellers in the allocation of local authority houses. The policy statement put the emphasis on the provision of site accommodation "pending the solution of the difficulties associated with the housing of itinerants." While there were no formal changes in procedure recommended to overcome these "difficulties", there was a recognition at Government level that traveller families would, on the basis of need, have de facto priority based on the criteria of local letting schemes.

3 Approach to Settlement

3.1 It was the general hope that, in time, the majority of traveller families would abandon the nomadic life and settle in permanent accommodation. It was recognised that some families would wish to

stances to do so. For the latter, serviced sites and halts were seen as providing a place where they could park their caravans. The emphasis placed initially on the provision of sites reflected the view that sites would be essential in many areas for families continuing to travel, for those preferring group settlement and for those requiring an interim period on a site before taking on the responsibilities of a house.

3.2 Difficulties were foreseen in the area of housing as discussed in chapters VIII and IX of the report of the Commission, but the number of families housed since the 1960's testifies to the fact that these difficulties can be overcome. In particular, it was amply demonstrated in the earlier years that, contrary to expectation, many of the families could make the direct transition from roadside to house. The aim put before the local authorities, as settlement activity developed, was that the accommodation to be given should be geared to the needs of the particular families in the area, the target being to cater for all these families recorded in the latest Annual Count. In practice, implementation was geared to what was feasible, or politically possible, rather than what was required. In many areas throughout the country this led to a preference for housing and a rejection or diminution of site provision. The reverse was the case in the Dublin area, where pre-occupation with sites as the principal alternative to roadside camping was accompanied by lesser achievement in comparison with other areas. In general, it can be said that the best results were achieved where care was taken to suit the particular needs of the families. A feature which served to delay progress in settlement was a reluctance on the part of many local authorities to provide for the increasing numbers of travelling people in their areas, whether due to rapid natural increase or to other causes, e.g. economic attraction of populous urban areas.

3.3 Despite repeated restatement of policy at Ministerial level, compliance by some local authorities was marked by tardiness. A policy based on advice and financial inducements was insufficient to overcome local political and community indifference. No penalties were laid down in the event of low performance by a local authority, and no system of surveillance was introduced to ascertain whether or not travellers were given their due priority, having regard to comparative need and in accordance with approved priorities for the letting of local authority houses.

3.4 While there was only a hesitant start made by a few local authorities in the 1960s, the early 1970s witnessed a quickening of activity. The increased tempo resulted from the social consciousness of some elected representatives in different local authorities, some committed public officials, and an increasing stimulus to activity by local committees and the National Council for Travelling People. Keenly aware of the formidable obstacles facing the local authorities, successive Ministers for Local Government and for the Environment have paid tribute to local authorities for their courage and persistence in bringing projects to fruition. However, examination of the figures from the Annual Counts indicates that in recent years there has been a

3.5 A number of local authorities, in implementing their programmes, responded positively to approaches from local voluntary groups or committed individuals. Co-operation of this kind had many beneficial results for the traveller families and for the local authorities. In some cases, however, efforts to provide accommodation were thwarted by majority decisions of the elected bodies yielding to pressure and opposition from individuals, community groups or commercial and industrial interests. The members of the Review Body considered this problem at length and recognised the need for consultation. It is seen as necessary between community groups and the local authorities, and between elected members and their officials. The problem in some cases in the past was that opposing interests prevailed over the basic human rights of traveller families. Arrangements must be made in the future to ensure that this situation does not continue. Despite all efforts in the provision of accommodation to date, there are now more travellers requiring permanent accommodation than there were when the Commission reported twenty years ago. Local authorities must, therefore, reconcile the need for consultation with the need to take effective action to meet the accommodation needs of families in their areas. In particular, these authorities must ensure that where protest or opposition is unreasonable it is not allowed to frustrate the implementation of the accommodation programmes recommended in this Report.

3.6 In highlighting the extent of local opposition to travellers, the Review Body is mindful of the fact that similar attitudes were occasionally displayed over the same period in respect of shelters and hostels proposed for battered wives, deprived children, the mentally handicapped, convalescent psychiatric patients, the down-and-outs cared for by the Simon Community and accommodation for slum dwellers. In most such instances a solution was found — occasionally by compromise — in contrast to the long list of failures with proposals for the accommodation of travellers.

3.7 Some of the settlement was carried out peaceably, but as a general rule there was strong local resistance when the tenancy of a house was allocated to a traveller, or where a particular location was selected for a serviced site. The outcome of local negotiations on proposals resulted in delay, paring down and offers of temporary rather than longterm solutions. Not infrequently a proposal was abandoned or modified to such an extent that its prospects of fulfilment were damaged. Fortunately, the opposition can be balanced by a number of instances where travellers were welcomed as neighbours and helped to settle in by local tenants' associations. It is the hope of the Review Body that such goodwill will prevail throughout the country.

3.8 A marked feature of the implementation of Government policy, from the outset, was that local authorities tended to accept responsibility only for families who spend the greater part of the year in their area. They did not provide even basic sanitary facilities for families passing through, notwithstanding pressure from successive Ministers

3.9 Government policy has been set down and reiterated and funds made available to local authorities for the initiation and development of projects, but, unfortunately, the expected progress in accommodation has not been realised.

4. Progress in the Provision of Accommodation

4.1 The Report of the Commission (p. 61, para. 15) contains the comment that:

> "The immediate objective should be to provide dwellings as soon as possible for all itinerant families who desire to settle. Eventually, the example given by those who successfully settle should encourage the remainder to leave the road".

Enquiries made by the Commission revealed that in previous decades travellers had sought houses from local authorities though in very small numbers (p. 60, para. 9). From questions put to travellers, the Commission was satisfied that "an overwhelming majority were in favour of settling".

4.2 Nothing that has happened since 1963 has lessened the correctness of this assessment. The disappointments, frustrations and harassment which so many families have experienced have not dampened their ardent desire for a permanent place to live, whether house or site. Much of the motivation stems from the wish to provide a better life for themselves and education for their children.

4.3 The Review Body accepts that the majority of travellers desire accommodation of the quality of standard housing, but this desire for a permanent home does not imply that all want to lose their identity as a group.

4.4 Much has been achieved by the varied approaches to the provision of accommodation and the ability of travellers to cope with living in a standard type house has been demonstrated, repeatedly, throughout the entire country. The Annual Count of travellers for 1980 indicates that 957 families were settled in standard houses (Appendix B). A number of these families own their houses. In addition, there are 253 families in chalets or in one room 'tigeens' on serviced sites (Appendix B).

4.5 House maintenance standards and general housekeeping equal those of the communities among whom they reside; the occasional exception to the high standards of maintenance is matched by a like percentage in the general population.

4.6 While many travellers were accommodated initially in substandard houses, in chalets or on camp sites, others were allocated houses directly into new estates with a generally satisfactory outcome. An advantage of housing in a new estate has been an easier acceptance by settled neighbours, all being in the similar position of being new tenants into the estate. Chalets and prefabricated small units of the

4.7 Success has not always been achieved on the occasion of a first experience of house or site occupation. Several families left their abode after varying periods and for different reasons. These include inability to cope with financial and other commitments of settled living; claustrophobia and restlessness; loneliness; unsuitable location; subtle ostracisation or frank intimidation from neighbours. Families who stayed in the same area after vacating a house frequently re-applied for housing, and the majority stayed when re-housed.

4.8 Movement on and off sites has been more common than the vacation of houses. On sites there is the special problem of incompatible family groupings or the presence of the occasional unruly family whose adverse impact on others is accentuated by the communal layout.

4.9 While there has been steady progress, there have also been failures and the greatest failure has resulted from the relative inaction of some local authorities who were slow in implementing Government policy. There are, indeed, still a few authorities who have made no significant impact on the problem in their area. The latter seem to capitulate to opposition and community protest and tend to treat travellers as non-citizens. Local authorities finding it difficult to resolve particular situations should be encouraged to persevere with their efforts so as to diminish the effectiveness of unreasonable protest.

4.10 While there have been significant numbers of families accommodated in standard houses, chalets and sites throughout the country, the number so accommodated is merely balanced by population growth, together with returned emigrants. It is evident, therefore, that there is little overall reduction in the number requiring permanent accommodation. In 1960, there were 1,142 families recorded as being on the roadside. Since then, 1,210 have taken up residence in houses or chalets. *Nevertheless, in October 1980, there were 1,149 on the roadside, virtually the same number as 20 years ago.* The undiminished number on the roadside indicates the need for a considerable acceleration in housing travellers.

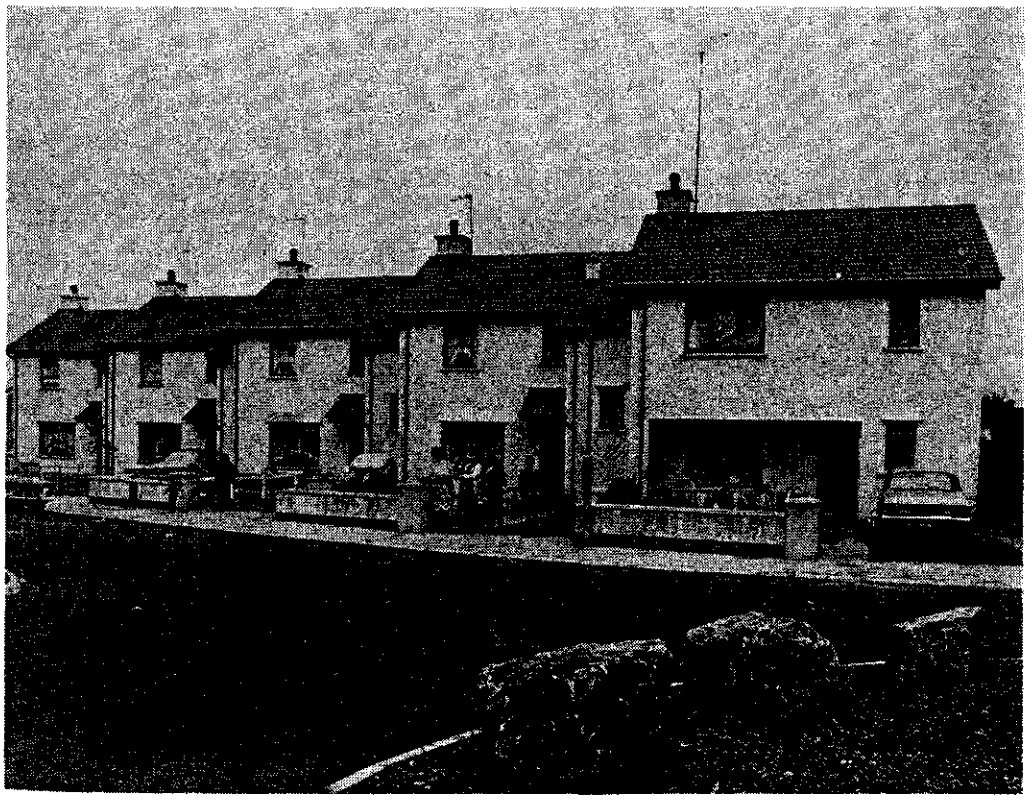
4.11 The Review Body is concerned that there continue to be so many families on the roadside. However, a wealth of experience has been gained in the past decade. It can profitably be applied to an accelerated programme of accommodation and a realistic effort by those local authorities which have accomplished little. Annual Count figures of recent years indicate that there may have been a slowing down in the rate of housing from the more satisfactory figures of the middle to late 1970s. To compensate for this slowing down of housing activity and the time-lag in commencing a realistic accommodation programme in many local authority areas, the planning and implementation of housing programmes has become an urgent necessity. The urgency is greatest in Dublin city and county where there are upwards of 400 families in need of accommodation, and also in some neighbouring counties where little has been accomplished to date in

4.12 One of the most frequently expressed comments made by members of local authorities, when asked to provide accommodation for travelling people, is that if they do too much, travellers from other countries will come "flocking in". These members are genuinely afraid that if the standard of accommodation is too good, it will attract numbers of families from other areas which will put a strain on their resources, cause trouble among the local resident travellers and generate objection from the settled community. That so many families have moved to the County Dublin area, where there are large numbers living under very harsh and uncomfortable conditions, would indicate that factors other than residential amenities attract families to cities and large urban areas. Proportionately less was done in the matter of providing accommodation by Dublin County Council and by some surrounding Councils than elsewhere in the country.

4.13 The Report of the Commission contains the following comment, (p. 37, para. 10):

> "A majority (up to 60%) of the itinerant families travel only short distances and usually over a regular local circuit covering, at the maximum, the area of two or three counties."

In the eighteen years since the Report was issued, travelling has reduced rather than increased. Travellers have become more urbanised and tend to remain in selected towns. Many of those who move, do so in reaction to being forced from their selected location, or because they have suffered inconvenience there, or for trading purposes.



Courtesy of P. J. Murray (Athlone).

4.14 They are *not* attracted to an area because of the accommodation and facilities existing therein. It has been fairly well established by now that families remain in, or move into, areas or towns for their own good reasons, but never because of the facilities offered. They are loyal to the family ties of either the husband or the wife. They like to be in familiar territory and among people they know.

4.15 The few who trade or travel widely will, of course, be required to avail of any facilities provided on an official site, but they are not likely to stay permanently in an area where they have no close relatives.

5 Finance Available from the Department of Local Government/Environment

5.1 Table 6.1 following summarises the Department's financial provisions as they developed since 1964.

TABLE 6.1
Level of Recoupment of Costs by Local Authorities from the Department of the Environment for Accommodation of Travelling People 1964-1978

	1964	1970	1973	1975	1978*
1. Serviced camping sites	66%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Halting places	50%	50%	50%	100%	100%
3. Contributions made by local authorities to voluntary groups towards accommodation for travelling families	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
4. Purchase and renovation of old house	—	100%	100%	100%	100%
5. Caravans for tent dwelling families	—	—	50%	50%	50%
6. Purchase of house by traveller	—	—	—	£250	£1,500

*This is the situation as it prevails in 1982.

5.2 With the exception of grants for standard house purchase, for the renovation of old houses and for some group housing, there was no special financial subvention for the housing of travellers. Where travellers were allocated standard houses they were normally provided as part of the local authority housing programme and subject to the usual housing subsidies.

5.3 Local authorities or voluntary committees are recouped 90 per cent of the cost of employing social workers whose work is of special significance in the accommodation programme for travellers. The employment of a National Co-ordinator by the National Council for Travelling People is similarly subsidised.

6 Accommodation Provided

(i) Standard Housing

6.1 From the 1960s onwards, a number of local authorities made good progress in single family housing by providing a house in or near the area, whether rural or urban, where the family tended mostly to camp. These were, in some cases, demountable houses and in others

renovation of old houses. At times, it suited to erect a house beside a serviced camping site and occasionally a spacious house was erected to meet the need of a large family.

6.2 By far the greatest amount of housing has been carried out in local authority housing estates, urban and rural, sometimes with little publicity, at other times attracting national attention. The traveller families are, by law, entitled to be placed according to need in the local authority system of housing. However, some local authorities adopted the practice of allocating to travellers only a percentage, arbitrarily predetermined, of the houses in new schemes. The justification claimed for this by some local authorities is that it was an attempt to achieve integration between the travellers and the other families in the scheme. Further, a few local authorities decided arbitrarily that the majority of travellers in their area were transients and, consequently, did not accept them for inclusion on their housing list. These practices, where they exist, must be discontinued. All applicants for local authority housing are entitled to full consideration and assessment under the terms of Section 60 of the Housing Act 1966 and the local scheme of letting priorities.

A further disadvantage for travellers is a requirement (in some local authority areas) to repeat their application to retain a place on the housing lists. This constitutes a stumbling block for travellers because of their mobility and widespread illiteracy and the requirement should be abolished.

6.3 In some instances, notably in Co. Westmeath, the traveller families purchased houses, first from their own resources and subsequently with a Small Dwellings Act (S.D.A.) housing loan from the local authority, in addition to the special grant. Initially, a guarantee from a local voluntary group, e.g. St. Vincent de Paul Society, was required in order to obtain the local authority loan, but this practice was abandoned as the repayment experience was good. In one case, in Co. Wexford, a traveller managed to build his own house as far as the roof stage and received considerable assistance from the local authority to complete the house.

6.4 The Commission's recommendations (Appendix C) Nos. 17 and 21, that local authorities should regularly seek out travellers so as to keep their housing applications under consideration at the appropriate times, were followed with a fair degree of commitment by some authorities, while in other cases, compliance was minimal. Little attention was paid to recommendation no. 19 that their requirements should be taken into consideration in assessing housing needs and devising programmes, but there is some evidence currently of a greater awareness of this responsibility. Recommendation no. 18, conceding an overall priority to traveller families in the allocation of houses, was not adopted by the Government as policy. The principle is acknowledged that traveller families who apply for housing should be placed in their due priority, according to need and other criteria, on

tional, economic and social reasons, the families need to be placed convenient to centres of population. Recommendation no. 24 that local authorities should retain the right of entry to houses, to remedy nuisance or misuse, generally proved unnecessary. The standard of house maintenance by travellers matches that of other tenants of local authority houses; neglect and damage to structure is rare.

6.5 The objective of Government policy was to fulfil recommendation no. 15, namely, that dwellings should be provided as soon as possible for all itinerant families who desire to settle. In spite of reiteration of the policy by successive Ministers for Local Government, there are many families, unsuccessful applicants for houses or places on serviced sites, who are still camping on the roadside without means to better their conditions and without a place to stay as of right. Nevertheless, as will be seen from the figures in Appendix B, significant progress has been made in certain counties.

6.6 The number of traveller families and their accommodation situation in December 1960 reported by the Commission was:

Families in a house or room	56
Families on the roadside	1,142

On the Annual Count taken in October 1980 it was:

Families occupying houses	957
Families in chalets (including 'tigeens')	253
Families in trailer caravans on authorised sites	131
Families still on the roadside	1,149

In spite of the 957 families housed, a comparison of families on the roadside is a commentary on the insufficient pace of activity in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1,149 families on the roadside, whether wishing to settle down or choosing to retain the travelling way of life, have no alternative but to continue to live in extreme physical and social deprivation, in conditions which impinge adversely and forcibly on the settled community. This contributes to the build-up of antipathy which prevents alleviation of those conditions. This is most noticeable and extreme in the Dublin area where the situation has deteriorated, and there has been significant regression in the conduct of those travellers compared with their rural kinsfolk.

(ii) **Serviced Sites**

6.7 The Commission's recommendation, and in keeping with it, the Government policy statement envisaged that serviced sites would provide hard standing for caravans. However, the experience on the Dublin Corporation's site at Labre Park showed that the families were prepared to vacate their caravans in favour of a dwelling unit, and such units became a customary part of site facilities. Initially, the units were pre-fabricated single-room structures with sanitary facilities, but as time went by larger units were provided and some local authorities began to erect more solid structures. For some years, two, three or

increase in State subsidy to 100% in 1970 encouraged local authorities to erect dwelling units on the sites.

6.8 It was found, however, that the interim type of dwelling unit (one-room "tigeen" and chalet) had many drawbacks. They were susceptible to damage on account of the non-durable structure of the walls, and excessive condensation occurred. These disadvantages were accentuated when the chalets were occupied by families with older children. Nevertheless, some local authorities found it expedient at times to erect the temporary structures, finding local acceptance for them where the settled community would have rejected any proposals bearing the mark of permanency.

6.9 Small pre-fabricated structures are not designed for permanent family residence but, in many areas, they were deemed to be a solution to accommodation needs rather than a stage in the transition from the roadside to a house. It was set out in page 55, paragraph 18 of the Report of the Commission "That the provision of these sites should be only the first step of stabilisation in a policy aimed at eventual housing of the families using the site".

6.10 Where camp sites were planned on the lines recommended by the Commission, though certain problems may have arisen in some areas, they proved to be of considerable value. One of the best examples of successful use of a site as a temporary stage in settlement was the 22-unit site operated by Dundalk Urban District Council. In the eleven years since it was opened, thirty-three families have been staged through it and on into standard houses.

6.11 The first serviced sites to be provided were ones with minimum facilities in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, (1966) and Rathkeale, Co. Limerick (1966). Subsequently, sites with single room dwellings and later with three roomed chalets were opened in various centres throughout the country. Some of the larger sites were provided with community/recreational halls. The principal centres with developed sites are given in Appendix F.

6.12 The Review Body considers that in view of the shortcomings of chalets as permanent accommodation, no more chalet sites should be provided.

*7. Recommendations

*7.1 At the present time, local housing authorities throughout the country are empowered by law to provide dwellings for those in need, including travellers. For reasons which have already been outlined, housing authorities in many areas have failed to carry out their full responsibility in this regard. The Review Body has considered whether or not it would be preferable to impose a statutory responsibility for the provision of accommodation on a central authority, such as the Minister for the Environment or the Body to Promote the Welfare of

On balance, it has been decided that the primary responsibility to provide the housing needs of the travellers should remain with the housing authorities, but this responsibility should be more clearly defined and provision made to ensure that it is carried out. Also, the necessary measures should be taken to ensure that local authorities fulfil their obligations to provide properly serviced sites for travellers who desire a parking place for their caravan, or who are required to wait for the tenancy of a house.

*7.2 It is of the utmost importance in designing programmes for the accommodation of traveller families that plans should be based on a thorough knowledge of the needs and wishes of the families in each locality, their state of preparedness for the different types of accommodation, and the conditions under which their settlement is likely to succeed. The choice by a family of mode of accommodation must be a free one, unfettered by any of the practices referred to in paragraph 6.2, or by any other practice of the local authority, by which it affectively limits the provision of housing accommodation for travellers.

It is recommended that in future plans for accommodation, three main approaches would be recognised and followed:
(i) standard housing
(ii) group housing
(iii) serviced sites for caravans

*8 (i) Recommendations for Standard Housing

The Review Body recommends in relation to standard housing that:—

*8.1 Traveller families who wish to be housed should be placed on the local authority's housing list. Because of their illiteracy and way of life they should be sought out regularly (at least once a year) for the purpose of recording their housing desires in the continuing revisions of these lists. Local authorities may need some extra criteria to follow in assessing their responsibility towards families, and the following are offered in this regard:

(a) the choice of the family for the area in which they wish to be housed is an essential factor;
(b) this choice might be tested by taking account of the length of time the family has already been living in the area, temporary absences being discounted;
(c) families having roots in the local authority area should automatically be accepted.
(d) the fact that a family has been previously accommodated and has left a house should not operate against a desired re-allocation of a house. There are many factors peculiar to the traveller life style which militate against success in their first housing experience.

*8.2 Letting schemes of local authorities should be structured and implemented so as to ensure that travellers are catered for. The Minister for the Environment should use his powers under the

for travellers and to ensure that the schemes are implemented. The primary responsibility under housing legislation for letting rests with the managers of housing authorities.

*8.3 Accommodation in houses, as is current practice, should be continued in rural and urban areas, in the spirit of the following comments:

(i) There is an existing provision for the purchase and renovation of older houses by local authorities, with financial assistance at 100% of the cost. This has been found a useful method in some counties where such a house can be bought with the needs of a particular family in mind. Sometimes a local authority will need to extend the house for a large family;
(ii) The local community in rural areas tend to accept single family settlement. However, if the house is too isolated the traveller family is liable to leave because of loneliness;
(iii) In urban areas the vast majority of travellers settled have been placed in local authority housing schemes. Numerous tenants in these schemes have reacted positively in establishing the neighbourly relations necessary to permit the traveller families to mix freely and become part of the community. Experience has shown that the desired inter-communication is more readily attainable in newly built estates and it is recommended that the main thrust of housing be into new estates.

*8.4 In making allocations of tenancies, a local authority should consult with social workers and local committee members with regard to the suitability of the house or area offered to any particular family. Most traveller families require the support of some of their kinsfolk near them, although not necessarily beside them. As most traveller families will not have an affinity with the majority of the tenants of an estate prior to taking up residence, they may feel alienated or succumb to loneliness if they lack the support of other travellers within easy reach. Care must be taken in matching the size of the house to the number in the family and also in ensuring that there is a rear entrance. Flats are not suitable for travellers being housed from the roadside or from a caravan site. Compatability of families who are placed near each other or in group schemes is a prime requirement. Failure to take into account these factors has, in the past, led to families leaving houses and being deemed failures, whereas the real mistake was failure to attend to the details of selection and allocation specially required for travellers.

*8.5 Young people marrying from houses *should be dealt with as settled people* even if they have to live in trailers for some time while waiting for an allocation; a couple seeking a house where one spouse has been settled prior to marriage should be dealt with similarly. Newly-wed couples who have to occupy caravans following their marriage should be considered extra sympathetically for housing to lessen the risks of regression to a travelling way of life and

preference, but it does require that they should not be penalised for taking to a caravan even if it happens to be on an unapproved site.

*8.6 Housing of traveller families singly or in small groups throughout urban areas, including private estates and adjacent neighbourhoods, also offers prospects of successful settlement. It may usefully be followed for particular families while actively pursuing the main accommodation programme in new housing estates, public and private.

*8.7 In some areas travellers have bought houses. In addition to the loan and grant assistance available generally, a special grant may be made by a local authority to a traveller buying a house. This grant is subject, currently, to a maximum of £1,500 and the local authority is re-imbursed 100% by the State. House purchase is becoming increasingly difficult because of the continuing rise in costs which are not matched by increases in the income of the travellers. The ambition to buy one's own home is meritorious and is seen as an important and valuable element in the accommodation programme; this private enterprise should be encouraged and facilitated by a significant increase in the amount of the special grant, sufficient to bridge the widening gap between the traveller's income and the burden of loan or mortgage repayments.

*8.8 Traveller families adapting to houses are best served by accommodation in houses with solid fuel stoves; they should never be allocated centrally heated houses without provision for alternative heating.

*8.9 Families should not be penalised for leaving a house. There are many factors peculiar to the traveller life-style which militate against adaptation to radical change. Furthermore, travellers may react adversely to environmental factors with which other settled people cope more easily. The traveller tends to move away from a place of misfortune, i.e. where death of a relative has occurred. The Review Body recommends that if such a traveller re-applies for housing, he should be considered and his name replaced on the local authority housing list.

*8.10 Families in comfortable well-appointed trailer caravans frequently have sufficient capital to buy their own house, but may encounter opposition from residents in the neighbourhood of their planned purchase. Vendors on learning the identity of the purchaser may withdraw the property from sale, either of their own volition or, more commonly, because of pressure from others. The only significant difference between the affluent and the mainstream of travellers is money gained from thrift and trading expertise. They come from the same family stocks and have similar handicaps of illiteracy, social deprivation and isolation. They require the aid of statutory bodies and community workers to achieve social integration and education for their children.

not be excluded from the general scope of the accommodation programme.

*9 (ii) Recommendations for Group Housing

The Review Body makes the following recommendations in relation to group housing:

*9.1 Group housing should be designed to encourage maximum integration with settled neighbours and participation in local and national services available in the area. It should be of open site layout, capable of extension into a larger scheme of houses. An isolated or cul-de-sac type development should be avoided.

*9.2 The houses in the group schemes should be of the same standard and size as conventional local authority houses, with boundary walls, a back entrance and facility for parking a caravan. Such groups have already been provided in some centres — Ennis, six houses; Athlone, five houses; Galway, 24 houses; and a scheme of twelve houses is being erected in Navan. Other towns will, undoubtedly, need housing groups of this kind which rarely should exceed ten in number.

*9.3 For travellers who engage in the scrap trade or car dismantling, a special area should be set aside by the local authority for the purpose.

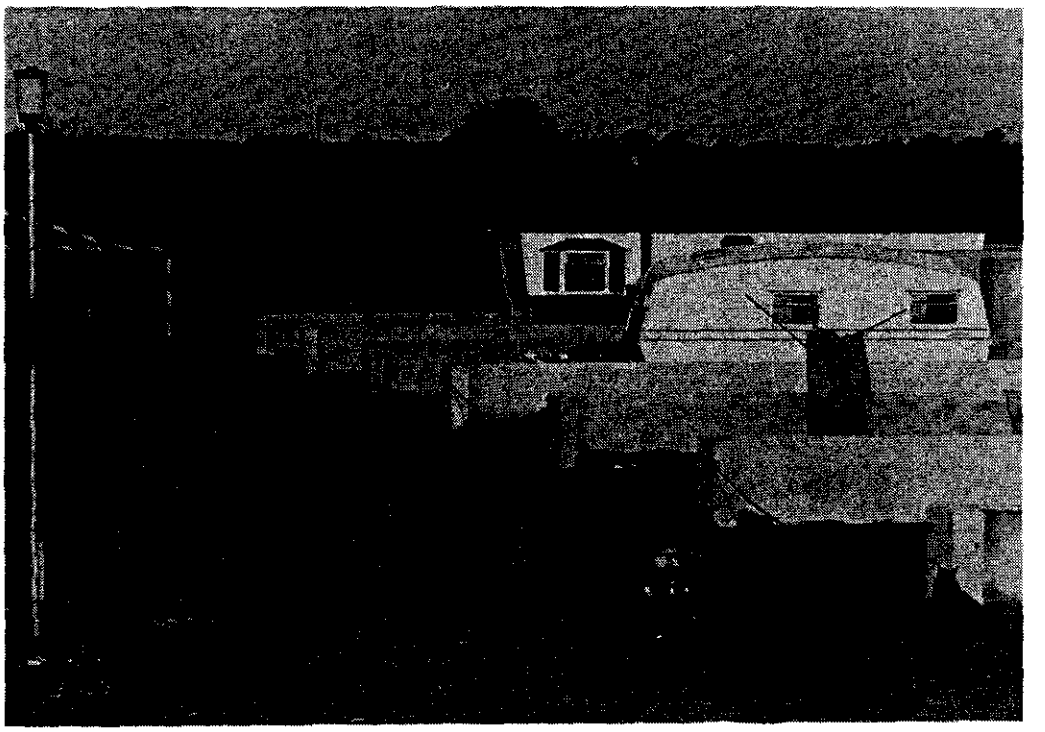
*9.4 Group housing has the advantage of permanency and avoids the expenditure on temporary structures of short life. There will also be financial saving on repairs and special caretaking which will not be required.

*10 (iii) Recommendations on Serviced Sites

The Review Body recommends the following in relation to serviced sites:—

*10.1 It is clear that with certain local exceptions the vast majority of traveller families wish to be accommodated in houses. There is, however, a considerable number whose long term accommodation needs cannot be met by housing, especially families who have spent so much of their lives on the road that the transition to housing would be too difficult for them and who wish to spend the remainder of their lives in caravan dwellings. Serviced sites for their caravans must be provided for such families as an alternative to housing. Later in this report the hardships and hazards of caravan dwelling are commented on. Conscious of these disadvantages, the Review Body considers that the provision of serviced sites should be kept to the minimum to meet the requirements of the families referred to.

*10.2 The serviced sites of the future should provide for trailers only, with individual sanitary facilities, and community services where needed. Housing legislation should provide the statutory basis enabling local authorities to provide serviced sites for traveller



Authorised Serviced Site, Roscommon.

*10.3 No family should be obliged to go on to a site or remain thereon because of inadequate provision of standard houses for travellers by a local authority.

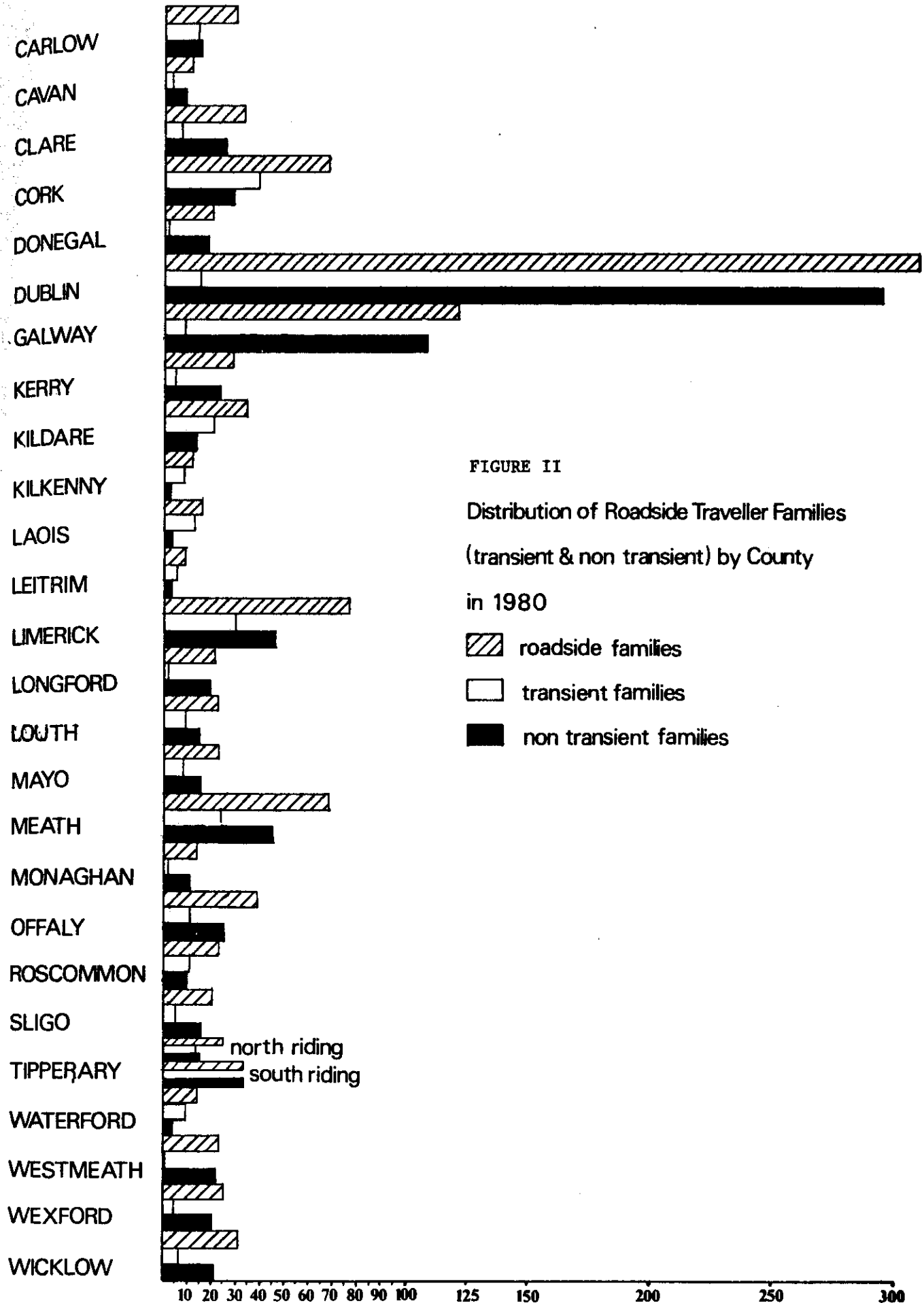
*10.4 Occasionally, notably in the major urban areas, there will be found small pockets of families who have particular alcoholic or psychological problems. The parents of these families need specialised social help and, because of diminished responsibility, their children need extra care and educational support. Because of their disruptive tendencies, they must be accommodated separately from the general body of travellers. Small individual sites would suit their needs and the problem must be tackled as a matter of urgency.

*10.5 Measures taken to provide places for families on serviced sites will be regarded as complementary to the normal housing programme of the local authority, and should be planned on the basis of assessment of need under the housing code. Legislation should be enacted to place a firm responsibility on local authorities to provide serviced sites.

11 Accommodation — The Greater Dublin Area

11.1 General

The biggest concentration of traveller families in Ireland is in the geographic county of Dublin. The census of families taken in 1960 for the Commission recorded that there were 85 families in Dublin, or slightly in excess of seven per cent of the total families counted. In 1973 the Dublin figures had risen to 313 or 21.4 per cent, and in 1980 reached 573 or 23.0 per cent. Figure I, page 10 illustrates the extra-ordinary increase in the number of traveller families in the Dublin area between 1960 and 1981. Figure II shows the number of [illegible]


CARLOW
CAVAN
CLARE
CORK
DONEGAL
DUBLIN
GALWAY
KERRY
KILDARE
KILKENNY
LAOIS
LEITRIM
LIMERICK
LONGFORD
LOUTH
MAYO
MEATH
MONAGHAN
OFFALY
ROSCOMMON
SLIGO
TIPPERARY
north riding
south riding
WATERFORD
WESTMEATH
WEXFORD
WICKLOW
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 125 150 200 250 300
FIGURE II
Distribution of Roadside Traveller Families
(transient & non transient) by County
in 1980
roadside families
transient families
non transient families

non-transient families in 1980. The figure clearly shows the scale of the problem in Dublin by comparison with other counties.

11.2 The significant increase in numbers — arising from migration and new family formation — presents the city and the surrounding county with a very serious problem of accommodation. Despite the obvious discomforts under which these families exist, there is a desire and a determination on their part to remain in Dublin.

12 Movement and Environmental Conditions

12.1 Many of the families are being moved constantly. Methods employed to move them have varied from forcible eviction by local residents to the digging of trenches around them, the erection of earthworks and the dumping of rubbish around their caravans on a regular basis. Many families are so intimidated by these actions, or by the repeated threats of 'officials' or residents, that they do not wait for formal eviction, but often move themselves to some other patch of wasteland, from which they will be yet again forced to move. The very large numbers of caravans parked on waste ground, development land and by the roadside are, to say the least, unsightly and damaging to the environment. These conditions are equally uncomfortable for the travellers and for the adjoining residents and they emphasise the need for a fresh approach to the achievement of a rapid solution.

12.2 The likely consequence of allowing this situation to continue or to increase in magnitude, is very disturbing. For the families concerned it will mean more squalor and hardship, with little or no hope of education for the children. From the general population's point of view, it will mean more despoliation of the environment with a spread of unsightly roadside camps and the attendant accumulation of refuse and rodent infestation. Overall, there is bound to be a build-up of tension and antagonism between the settled community and the

Courtesy of Derek Spiers (Report).

travellers. The patience of settled people in many areas is already at breaking point, and it cannot be too long before the travellers' passive acceptance of their wretched living conditions changes into a more aggressive attitude. The feeling of alienation can only lead to anti-social behaviour and sow the seeds of criminal activity.

12.3 It is important, however, to keep a sense of balance in viewing the Dublin situation. The problem is mainly one of numbers, and the solutions which have worked well in other parts of the country can work well in Dublin also, provided they are put into operation soon enough. It is important to note that the pull towards the Dublin area is sufficient to outweigh the gross discomforts under which so many of the families live and it will continue to do so. Consequently, as the numbers increase, delay in making adequate provision for them may be disastrous.

13 Past Achievement

13.1 The Review Body appreciates the praiseworthy efforts which have been made by the Dublin Corporation over the past fifteen years in providing for travellers. They have displayed an enlightened attitude and a willingness to tackle the problems presented by large numbers of caravans on the fringes of suburbia, together with the inevitable antagonism of the local population. Unfortunately, projects have been delayed and progress hampered by community opposition, channelled through the objections of elected representatives.

13.2 In 1967, Dublin Corporation opened their first serviced site for travellers at Labre Park, Ballyfermot, which provided for 39 families. Each family had a place to park a caravan and, in addition, had a "tigeen" consisting of a living room and a toilet. Although experience has shown that this type of facility is now inadequate, in its time it was forward thinking. The original "tigeens" at Labre Park were designed with a life expectancy of ten years and were not sufficiently durable for permanent occupation. Most have now been replaced by four-roomed bungalows and the balance will be replaced in the near future.

Labre Park was followed by sites at Finglas (30 tigeens/chalets), Holylands, Rathfarnham (15 chalets), Belcamp, Coolock (37 chalets), Clondalkin (40 chalets) and halting places for 20 families at Dunsink Lane, for 22 at Dubber Cross, and a further 22 spaces at Belcamp Lane. The capital cost of these was met by a 100% grant from the Department of the Environment. The running costs, which are substantial, are shared equally by the Corporation and the Dublin County Council. The latter authority has provided four small chalet sites each with facilities for four families and, in addition, has accommodated 45 families in standard houses. Similarly, the Corporation has provided for 56 families in standard houses (1981 figures).

13.3 The sites were established in conformity with the recommendation of the Commission and especially paragraphs 8 and 16 of Chapter VIII, which stated

ing sites should be undertaken where numbers of itinerant families habitually frequent an area and where the immediate provision of dwellings presents difficulties or where it is clear that a majority of the itinerant families in the areas would not at present accept houses".

"16. It is recognised that there are difficult problems to be faced by local authorities in connection with the provision of sites and their operation and maintenance. However, it must be faced that if houses cannot be provided in a reasonable time for those willing to take them, then there is a special problem in the neighbourhoods of urban areas because of the number of itinerant families who frequent them. If authorised camping places are not provided then these families must continue to park their caravans as and where they can for as long as they are allowed with all the dissatisfaction, annoyance and trouble that this causes them, the local residents and the local authorities".

13.4 The Commission envisaged that the sites would be places of temporary residence in the transition from the roadside to standard housing. In practice, however, this did not prove to be so and the expected progression to standard housing has not materialised to any significant degree in the Dublin area. Many of the original families, who took up residence in Labre Park in 1967, have remained on the site and wish to continue to do so — similarly with families in Finglas and Holylands. The families on the halting site at Dunsink Lane are also anxious to stay there. However, they would like a group housing scheme provided on that or on an adjacent site.

14 Evaluation of Achievements

14.1 The Review Body spent much time in consideration of the question as to why comparatively few traveller families in the Dublin area have sought tenancies in standard houses. From the annual count for 1980 (Appendix A) it will be noted that only 80 (or 14%) of the 573 Dublin families were living in standard houses. This figure is significantly less than the percentage housed in some other counties — Mayo 69%, Westmeath 67%, Wexford 63%, Kerry 54%, Galway 46%.

14.2 Unlike the rest of the country, many of the travellers camping around Dublin indicate that they do not wish to live in a local authority house. This is understandable when one considers the size of most of the Dublin local authority estates. The simple fact is that very few travellers would be courageous enough to accept a tenancy among so many settled families who, they fear, would resent their presence. While this fear of isolation and vulnerability is always a factor in a traveller's decision as to whether or not to apply for a house, it is obviously much more acute in Dublin than in smaller provincial towns. Travellers need the support of their friends and relatives as much as, or possibly more than, most people. Perhaps if two or three related families were to be offered houses in an estate at the same time, this problem might be overcome. The houses need not

14.3 Other possible reasons for the low level of interest in house tenancy in Dublin could be:—

(a) the difficulty in obtaining the necessary period of residence to qualify, in view of the fact that travellers so often have to move;
(b) because of their illiteracy, travellers often do not know how and when to apply for housing.

Dublin County Council have only recently appointed a full team of social workers. Now that they have done so, the social workers will be able to seek out those families who might be interested in housing and this may increase the numbers applying for tenancies.

14.4 The availability of sites with or without chalets has proved of considerable benefit to large numbers of families over the last 15 years. In two of the sites, however, Cara Park (Coolock), and St. Oliver's Park (Clondalkin), considerable problems leading to extensive vandalism at the latter were encountered. These had a most disturbing effect on the occupiers, many of whom left. There were also problems with County Council sites. On one site the four chalets are still occupied but are in urgent need of replacement. On another site there is only one chalet which is fit for occupation. On a third, none of the chalets are fit to live in, and the fourth had to be closed because of vandalism and squatters.

14.5 There are important lessons to be learned from these experiences:

(a) if families are to live together on one site, they must be congenial to each other;
(b) families who are disruptive should not be admitted to such sites but should be accommodated on smaller sites with compatible families;
(c) firm supervision is essential with an insistence on the site being maintained in a clean and tidy condition;
(d) squatting should not be tolerated, and a regular payment of rent/fees should be insisted upon;
(e) there should be adequate back-up services, in education and social/community work;
(f) such sites should never be used as a dumping place for families evicted from unauthorised sites.

Proper appreciation of the above observations could have reduced or avoided the problems referred to in paragraph 14.4 above.

14.6 As has already been stated, movement into standard housing in Dublin has been slow. Many families appear to have a desire for group housing which may to a large extent be for protection. This wish is apparently accentuated in larger conurbations. Family groups on the Dublin sites have demonstrated their ability to live in harmony, and have repeatedly expressed their desire to be accommodated in grouped standard houses.

*15 Recommendations

of a lasting nature is to be achieved in the accommodation of travellers in the Dublin area, there must be concerted action by the three local authorities on a variety of solutions which will operate simultaneously.

*15.2 They should ensure that traveller families are allocated tenancies of a fair share of the housing production. In 1981 a total of almost 7,500 houses were built in the Dublin area of which over 2,000 were in local authority estates. (Source: Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics — Quarter ended 31st December, 1981 issued by the Department of the Environment). An allocation in the region of 100 houses a year on average for travellers is envisaged by the Review Body as necessary for the next five years and reducing thereafter. It is considered that in the special circumstances obtaining in Dublin the approach to the housing of travellers should be as follows:—

(a) The provision of a number of small group schemes (of, say, six to ten houses in each) either as part of an estate or specially built. Where a scheme is specially built it should comply fully with local planning requirements. It should not be such as to necessitate special expenditure or caretaking or otherwise. Such a scheme would make an immediate significant impact on the accommodation problem;

(b) A fresh approach to the allocation to travellers of individual tenancies in housing estates. The present passive practice of merely responding to application from travellers for tenancies when actually received must be discontinued and replaced by the active seeking out of suitable families for accommodation in housing estates. Considerable numbers of travellers have been settled satisfactorily in this way in large housing estates elsewhere. The same can be done in Dublin but only if the will and initiative are shown to cultivate the conditions which will encourage it. Success in this way, even if only on a small scale in the beginning, would be a most welcome contribution towards the alleviation of accommodation needs.

*15.3 The chalet-type developments served the needs of the Dublin area well in the earlier phase of the accommodation programme. However, in accordance with general policy they are not being repeated. As circumstances allow chalet schemes should be redeveloped and replaced by standard type houses with a more attractive and open layout.

*15.4 Even with maximum success in providing accommodation in housing, there will still be a sizeable number of traveller families whose long term accommodation needs cannot be met by housing and who will continue in caravan dwellings. Serviced sites must be provided for such families. A scheme for the provision of the sites must be seen as just one facet of a wider programme of accommodation and welfare in liaison with the appropriate agencies. The sites should be kept small, if possible not more than 10 places in each. They should be distributed as widely as possible. They should be so designed and located as to eliminate the unattractive features which

*15.5 The car dismantling business in which a number of travellers are engaged is apparently a lucrative one and provides a service of which many in the settled community avail. The local authority should, where the need exists, provide accommodation (if need be on a commercial basis) in which the activity can be pursued in a controlled way and without the unsightly conditions which persist at present.

*15.6 As far as other traders are concerned, the authorities should consider the designation of casual trading areas for them under the Casual Trading Act, 1980. It is not known what success the operation of the Act is likely to have but the authorities should at least explore its possibilities. It is understood that the number of such traders in the Dublin area varies but at times can be as many as 40.

*16 Forward Planning and Recommendations for Term Programme

*16.1 Local authorities must avoid the concept of the problem being finite. Like housing in general, traveller settlement will be ongoing even when the backlog from previous decades is cleared. The programme of each local authority for the accommodation of travellers should be drawn up to cater for the existing and foreseeable need, taking into account the formation of new families and returned emigrants. The time scale for the implementation of the programme should not be more than five years. Where, however, the units of accommodation required in a local authority area are fifty or less, the implementation period should be scaled downwards. The Minister for the Environment should take the initiative in proposing to local authorities the preparation by them of their accommodation programmes.

*16.2 The targets set by local authorities for their area in the above manner should be submitted to the Minister. The Minister should fix a date for submission of the plans and, after examination of their adequacy, should issue approval for their immediate implementation. He should monitor progress so as to ensure early completion of planning and implementation. Failure to implement the programme should be a matter for action by the Minister using his powers under the Housing Act, 1966, or such other power as may be provided in pursuance of para. 7.1 of this Chapter.

*16.3 The urgent task is the immediate provision of accommodation for all traveller families. The Review Body recommends that it should be obligatory for each local authority to make a realistic estimate of the number of families for whom it is responsible. Provision of living accommodation should be programmed accordingly. It is not enough for housing authorities to meet the present backlog of accommodation needs among travellers. In planning they must also project demand for housing and sites due to new family formation. The needs of travellers should be included in a local authority's review of housing

The estimate should cover:—

(a) the number of families who want to live in a house in the local authority area, whether singly or in groups;
(b) the number of families who want to be accommodated on a serviced site;
(c) an approximation of the number of families whose pattern of travelling calls for site facilities in the area for recurring periods;
(d) an estimate of the rate of new family formation which may be expected, having regard to the age and numbers of children in the families and the extent of marriage with members of the general population;
(e) the number of families who have particular problems requiring separate accommodation.

*16.4 Having regard to the difficulties encountered in the past, the constantly changing situation and projections as to numbers, there will be a need for continuing assessment during the term of the programme. The Review Body recommends that a system of periodic review by the Minister be established to monitor the accommodation needs of travellers.

*16.5 Occasional problems may be expected which may not necessarily call for action by the local authority. For example, in the case of the gathering of travellers for a traditional fair, sporting event or festival, the Review Body recommends that those organising the function be held responsible for camping and ancillary facilities.

*16.6 An essential ingredient of accommodation and development programme is a recognition by all concerned that accommodation does not automatically mean integration and absorption. The traveller who so desires, must be permitted to follow his traditional life style, including trading and temporary absence from his home. The decision as to when a traveller ceases to be regarded as a traveller is a matter of evolution or personal decision.

*16.7 **TERM PROGRAMME**

During the course of our deliberations, the Review Body had no authoritative information about the choice of travellers themselves in regard to accommodation. Information extracted from the E.S.R.I. Census 1981 which became available late in our deliberations is a welcome guide in the matter.

*16.8 Table 6.2 expresses the preference for accommodation by 979 roadside families.

TABLE 6.2
Type of accommodation preferred by roadside families

Type	*Families*	*Percentage*
Standard House	648 families	66.2%
Chalet	30 families	3.1%
	678 families	69.3%
Trailer Caravan	285 families	29.1%
Barrel Wagons and Tents	16 families	1.6%

*16.9 It is interesting to set this beside other information from the E.S.R.I. regarding the length of stay of roadside travellers in their county of location at the time of the Census:

TABLE 6.3
Length of stay on present site for families on the roadside

	Roadside families	
Length of stay	*Number*	*Percentage*
Less than 1 month	112	11.9
1 to 6 months	167	16.4
7 to 12 months	52	5.1
13 to 18 months	20	2.0
19 to 24 months	46	4.5
25 months or longer	614	60.1
	1,021	100.0

*16.10 The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that more than two-thirds of the roadside families prefer housing as a mode of accommodation. This is in line with the percentage of families who have stayed in a county with reasonable permanence. Less than one-third prefer caravan living and this again corresponds to the percentage with short stays in any one county. The indication is that many of those expressing preference for caravans are families constantly on the move or at least are not disposed to taking up a permanent place to live.

*16.11 The families preferring caravan accommodation are not evenly distributed throughout the country. They are in the main concentrated in the vicinity of the larger urban areas — Dublin and the counties surrounding it (Meath, Wicklow and Kildare), Cork, Galway, Waterford and Limerick.

*16.12 The estimated accommodation needs of travellers over the next five years are shown in Table 6.4. The figures are based on an annual estimated growth of 50 families in the Dublin area and 75 families in the remainder of the country. Families who do not wish to be accommodated in houses or on serviced sites will require individual solutions. Many of the families to be housed in the course of the programme will be the married children of families settled in houses.

TABLE 6.4
Estimated Accommodation Needs of Travellers 1982 to 1987

	Census of families 1981	*Requirements for current needs*		*To meet expected increase in number of families*		*Total Requirements*	
		*Houses**	*Places on sites*	*Houses**	*Places on sites*	*Houses**	*Places on sites*
Greater Dublin area	420	280	140	175	75	455	215
Remainder of Country	670	550	120	375	nil	925	120
Total for the whole Country	1,090	830	260	550	75	1,380	335

The Programme envisages an annual house provision of about 275 (about 90 a year in Dublin and about 185 a year for the rest of the country). This is quite a small contribution to such a serious problem in relation to total building in the country in 1981 of 28,917 houses of which 7,351 were in Dublin. It included 5,657 local authority houses of which 2,166 were in Dublin. (Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics, Quarter ended 31st December 1981 issued by the Department of the Environment).

*17 General Recommendations

*17.1 *Ministerial Responsibility*

Continued inaction on the part of a local authority as regards travellers, in the provision of accommodation and in the operation of a scheme of letting priorities under the housing code, or in the provision of sites where needed, would be matters for investigation by the Minister for the Environment. Should the Minister's investigation reveal that the local authority has been in default the Review Body recommends that the Minister should not hesitate to use the sanctions open to him to rectify the situation.

*17.2 *Public Information*

The Review Body recommends that local authorities develop more fully a public information role in relation to the fulfilment of their responsibilities and the promotion of plans for accommodation. This would have a three-pronged direction — towards the local community, towards the elected members and towards their own staff. The professional social workers should be prominent in this service. The Health Education Bureau could also be involved.

*17.3 *Official Commitment*

The success of the accommodation programme in all areas requires the full and unequivocal commitment of all senior staff, management, administrative, engineering and medical in both local authorities and health boards. To achieve this, seminars and conferences should be organised periodically on a national or regional basis, thus enabling the officials to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the subject and to appreciate the consequence of failure to deal with it as a matter of urgency. Topics for discussion at such conferences could include exchange of experience in difficulties encountered and overcome; the conduct of negotiations with residents' and tenants' associations; the matter of presentation of proposals; — all of which would be of the greatest assistance to elected representatives and local staff.

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TRAVELLERS

1 Points from the Report of the Commission on Itinerancy

1.1 In the Report of the Commission particular stress was placed on the extreme educational deprivation of the travelling people. Sentences such as the following exemplify the position which existed at that time:—

(a) "Almost all itinerants are completely illiterate" (p. 64 para. 1);

(b) "From enquiries made by the Department of Education there were, in November, 1960, only 160 itinerant children on the school rolls throughout the country, of whom 114 were said to be regular attenders" (p. 64 para. 2);

(c) "It is clear that almost no itinerant children attend school" (p. 64 para. 2).

1.2 The Commission made a number of recommendations some of which will be referred to later in this chapter but two general recommendations are included here because of the continued educational deprivation of a large number of traveller children.

(a) "It is urgently necessary, both as a means of providing opportunities for a better way of life and of promoting their absorption into the settled community, to make such arrangements which . . . may be practicable to ensure that as many itinerant children as possible may from now on receive an adequate elementary education". (p. 67 para. 13).

(b) "The progress of the teaching or tuition of these children should be treated as a matter for special concern by the Department of Education". (p. 67 para. 15).

2 Progress since the Commission reported

2.1 The Review Body fully endorses the recommendations of the Commission on the need for adequate education for all travellers. Education offers the greatest hope for their progress, but all educational programmes depend for their success on the provision of stable living conditions. It is a fact, amply demonstrated in the past 20 years, that the vast majority of travellers desire a permanent place to live.

2.2 Since the Commission reported, there has been a marked change

attending school regularly in 1961, there has been steady progress to an enrolment of over 3,500 in 1981. The significant improvement in recent years is a reflection of the efforts of many individuals and bodies, both public and voluntary, to help the travellers. The desire of most traveller parents to obtain at least basic education for their children is also clearly evident.

2.3 It is estimated, however, that the attendance figures represent only about half the children of school going age, and of those who attend regularly very few remain after reaching the age of 12 years. The majority of the non-attenders of primary school age are in families without stable living conditions who may be frequently disturbed from their roadside camping area.

2.4 It has been found that even those children who attend school regularly seldom obtain maximum educational benefit without additional help. The late age of school entry of many, and the disadvantaged background from which they come, indicate the need for a great deal of supplementary teaching and encouragement. Even those who begin at a young age are not well fitted to join the normal school stream.

2.5 In order to overcome the above handicaps, many special approaches were developed, for example, a special school for travellers was established at St. Kieran's, Bray. In other areas pre-school classes were opened either in camp sites or as additional units attached to local schools or as seperate units, sometimes with assistance from the area health board. Many special classes were organised in ordinary schools with the appointment of additional teachers. Some of these classes were exclusively for travellers, while others catered jointly for travellers and settled children.

2.6 Progress to second level education is rare. Only about ten per cent of those who finish primary school continue to attend school and most of these drop out after one or two years. It has been recognised that curricula may need to be broadened to embrace subjects more attractive to travellers in order to sustain their interest and attendance.

2.7 Prospects for regular employment are minimal because of lack of adequate basic education. In an effort to compensate for this deficiency special training centres were established in several towns in recent years, fifteen of which are now in operation. An increasing number of trainees from these centres are obtaining gainful employment but many experience unsettling situations in the work environment because of their disadvantaged background.

2.8 Generally, there is little improvement in the educational status of adults, of whom about 90 per cent are illiterate. In a number of areas, voluntary committees have held adult literacy classes, with limited success, and more recently some travellers have received tuition through the adult literacy programmes of various Vocational

3 Department of Education Policy on the Education of Travellers

3.1 The Government policy statement issued in 1964 had the following reference to education:—

"(e) Provision will be made for giving special educational facilities, both primary and vocational, to the children of itinerants and for the erection of special camp schools where necessary".

The Department of Education followed this statement in 1970 with a booklet entitled *The Education of Itinerant Children*. This gave in broad outline departmental policy on the education of traveller children. The policy then enunciated has evolved during the ensuing decade.

3.2 The special responsibilities of the Department for the education of travellers include:

(a) ensuring that every school throughout the country gives traveller children the same rights of admission as all other children;

(b) employing, where a number of traveller children with special needs are located in an area, extra teaching staff to cater specifically for their needs;

(c) providing teachers for traveller children of pre-school age, where needs have been identified and premises are available, so as to compensate for the deficiencies of their background and prepare them for normal schooling;

(d) providing, where premises are available, through the Vocational Education Committees (V.E.Cs.), special classes for traveller children between the ages of 12 and 15 years, who cannot attend ordinary classes in Vocational or Secondary Schools;

(e) supplying through the V.E.Cs. the equipment, and defraying the cost of teachers and overheads, for training centres for young travellers who are educationally unfitted to attend ordinary training courses;

(f) providing a pilot visiting teacher service in Dublin and Galway.

4 Co-ordination

4.1 In 1974, the post of National Co-ordinator for the Education of Travellers was created. The work, which is funded mainly by the Department of Education, embraces visiting all schools throughout the country with traveller pupils and having discussions with teachers, school inspectors, children and parents. The main objective is to ensure that as many traveller children as possible throughout the country can avail of education. The Co-ordinator works closely with those officials in the Department of Education who have special responsibility for the education of travellers.

4.2 The Co-ordinator keeps in touch with social workers, voluntary

(a) pre-school classes for children under six years of age;

(b) extra teachers for special classes in national schools;

(c) special classes for traveller children in the 12 to 15 year age group;

(d) training centres for adolescent travellers.

4.3 A number of periodic reports have been written and published by the National Co-ordinator. (see Appendix A).

5 Educational Aspirations and Goals

5.1 The over-riding goal of any education programme for travellers must be to help them to develop their full potential, to break the cycle of illiteracy in which they are trapped, and to enable them to become, as soon as possible, self-reliant and self-supporting members of society. The ultimate goal desired by the Review Body is that every traveller child will, as accommodation conditions improve, be educated to the level of his/her ability and aptitude.

5.2 All travellers do not regard full integration with the settled community as a desirable goal, and for those who do not, their right to retain their own identity and traditions must be respected, and educational provision geared to these legitimate aspirations. Integration with the settled community, where this is not desired by the travellers, should not be the determining factor in decisions regarding their education.

5.3 On the above basis the educational aspirations and needs of travellers may be placed in three broad categories:—

(a) those travellers who want full integration with the settled community in housing, normally want their children to be fully integrated into the ordinary school system, even though many of them realise that their children, for one reason or another, need extra help;

(b) those who want to be settled, but grouped with their own people, sometimes want their children to receive fully integrated education; other parents prefer their children to attend special classes or a special school;

(c) families who are transient, need very special facilities to enable them to receive any education.

5.4 In seeking to achieve the above goals, certain objectives must be borne in mind:

(a) to compensate young travellers for their deprived social status by making educational facilities available to them;

(b) to help them to discover and attain their own educational aspirations;

(c) to give them freedom to make a real choice about their future way

(d) to provide them with the tools of learning, literacy and numeracy, so that they may use their talents for their own benefit and that of society;

(e) to allay their fears of the settled community and help to give them self-confidence and self-respect.

5.5 Special measures will be needed to ensure that the present population of school-age children attend school and this chapter sets out what is required from the educational system if this is to be achieved. The long term goal of public policy must be to prevent situations arising whereby special educational measures of a remedial nature are necessary for traveller children. While aiming at this ideal, the traveller identity and way of life must be respected.

6 Educational Implications of Environment

6.1 The environment from which traveller children and young people come affects profoundly their educational potential. Almost all travellers suffer from a number of disadvantages which militate against smooth progress in later learning.

6.2 Socially, they are probably the most deprived group of people in the country. As a group they have been consistently rejected by society and treated as outcasts.

6.3 Lack of stability in many families affects, often very seriously, the basic security of the child, which is essential to good learning. It also adversely affects regularity of school attendance.

6.4 The absence of permanent accommodation renders school attendance virtually impossible for upwards of 1,000 families, based on the Annual Count for 1980, with an estimated three to four thousand children of school going age.

6.5 The large average size of families means that many children get the minimum of stimulus from their parents. Indeed, it is not uncommon for infants and young children to be left in the care of siblings only a few years their senior. In addition, the almost universal illiteracy of parents limits their contribution to a child's vocabulary and academic development. There is no prospect of parental help with homework.

6.6 Many children are physically deprived because of the hazardous nature of their existence with an increased risk of accidents. Others may be retarded because of nutritional deficiency in early life, although such may be less common now than formerly, due to the availability of regular Unemployment Assistance and Children's Allowances.

7 Present Educational Provisions

to give precise figures on the ages of traveller children and teenagers but the following figures are reasonably accurate:

(a) The Economic and Social Research Institute in 1979 working on a percentage basis from a Dublin sample survey, came up with a figure of 7,560 traveller children, of whom 5,400 were between four and fourteen years of age;

(b) Another Dublin survey made in 1980 showed 1,749 children of school age in the Greater Dublin area, with 672 attending school;

(c) Figures compiled by the National Co-ordinator for Education for the whole country over the last seven years have shown a total number of between 8,500 and 9,000 children, of whom between 6,500 and 7,000 are of school age. She is of the opinion that there could be anything up to 1,000 more children of transient families whom she has never been able to account for accurately. The National Co-ordinator for Education reported in January, 1981 that records showed 3,322 traveller children attending school regularly in 1980.

7.2 For the purpose of determining the need for education and training facilities, the following figures may be assumed for each educational category:

Pre-School:	(3-5 years):	1,500 to 2,000 children
Primary:	(6-11 years):	4,000 children
Post-Primary:	(12-15 years):	2,000 adolescents
Training Centre:	(15-25 years):	1,500-2,000 young adults

Pre-School Classes

7.3 Because of the social deprivation of traveller children referred to in Section 6 of this chapter, early education is of paramount importance. The young traveller child needs love, security, consistent treatment by adults, even before the most basic progress can be made in acquiring an adequate vocabulary, in socialising and in learning through play. It is almost impossible for a traveller child starting in an ordinary infants' class, even at four years of age, to be able to keep up with his/her peers. They nearly all need at least a year in a pre-school if they are not to remain in need of remedial education throughout their school years. The role of parents in the education of pre-school children should be recognised and their participation in the pre-schools encouraged. The present provision for one tenth of the children in this age-group needs to be increased as soon as possible, to cater for all who are able to avail of pre-school education. There are at present 30 pre-school classes for traveller children, catering for about 300 of the 1,500 to 2,000 children who are between 3 and 5 years of age.

Primary Education

7.4 More than 2,000 of those attending primary schools in 1981 were enrolled in ordinary classes. Some, the regular attenders from the more supportive homes, made good progress in these classes, bearing

"All the available information indicates that itinerant children are no less intelligent than the average child in the settled community and the opinion of teachers with experience of such pupils is that they are no less apt than the ordinary children. If these children attended school with reasonable regularity and had reasonably normal home conditions, there is no reason why they should not make satisfactory progress through the various school grades." (p. 65 para. 9).

Unfortunately, a majority of traveller children do not come from 'reasonably normal home conditions', and many of them do not attend 'with reasonable regularity'. Consequently, nearly all are in need of remedial teaching and many of them require more help than the ordinary national school can provide.

Special Schools

7.5 Appreciating the continuing need of so many for special teaching, a school exclusively for traveller children was established in 1970 at St. Kieran's, Bray, Co. Wicklow. This school has provided a valuable educational service for the children of families in the south county Dublin and Bray areas, most of whom are still without stable living conditions. In 1976, a training centre, as described in section 13, was opened in the grounds of St. Kieran's school and in 1978 a post-primary section was added to the school. Another special school was provided at Labre Park, Ballyfermot, Dublin when it was opened for 39 families in 1968. There are pre-schools on a number of camp sites throughout the country. The need for additional special schools must be considered for any areas where large numbers of families are congregated under adverse living conditions.

Special Classes

7.6 If a traveller child is to make satisfactory progress in an ordinary national school class, certain conditions are essential:

(a) an accepting and tolerant attitude on the part of teachers and pupils;

(b) supplementary education to compensate for the deprivation of the background from which the child comes;

(c) contact with the parents so that the teachers may know what are the particular home problems of the child;

(d) a greater effort to help the traveller child to integrate with the community outside the school.

7.7 It is still all too common to find young travellers who are enjoying the benefits of integration and acceptance in school, so isolated in the out-of-school situation that it sometimes seems as though education was adding to their sense of rejection by society.

7.8 Where satisfactory conditions prevail, traveller children are happy, well integrated and make good progress. Nevertheless, it has to be said that many teachers of traveller children attending ordinary classes in national schools are not happy about the progress they are

catch up in an ordinary class of 30 or 40 children. Nearly all traveller children have to attend the remedial classes. Many of them leave national school without ever acquiring more than basic literacy.

7.9 In the last few years throughout the country more than 70 special classes have been established in which an ever-increasing number of traveller children are benefiting from a type of education geared to their needs. The high rate of attendance in these classes is evidence of their acceptability and teachers comment on the vastly improved standard of attendance when a special class is established in a school.

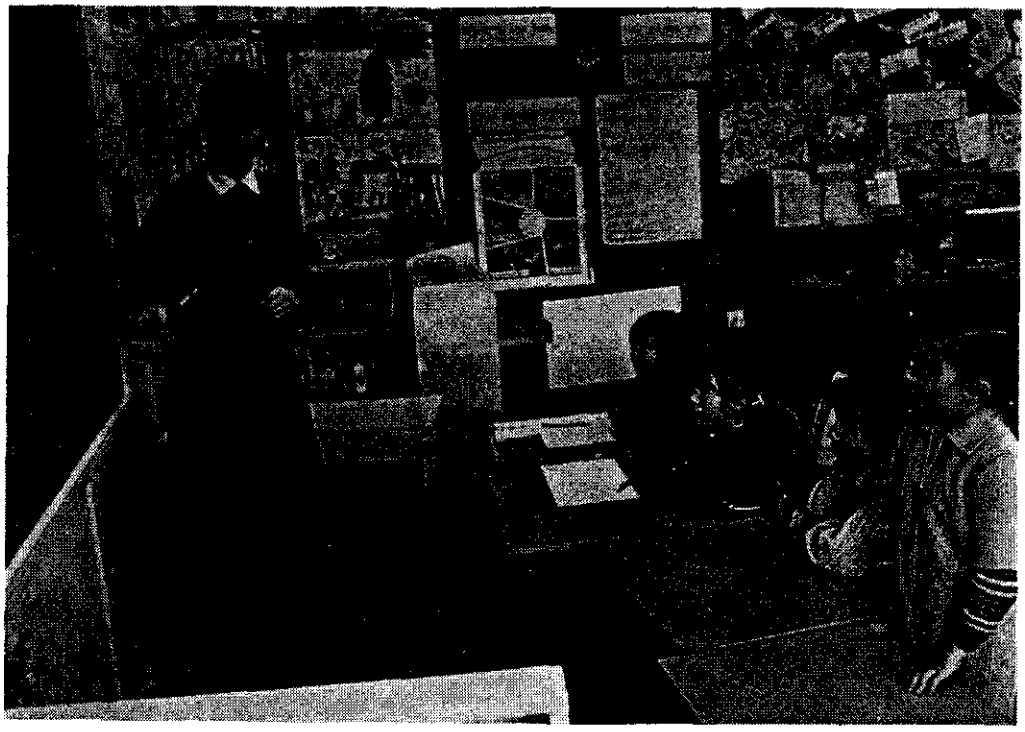
7.10 A special class in the sense used here involves the appointment of an extra teacher to the staff of a school attended by a number of traveller children who require special help. These teachers operate in one of three ways. Some teachers keep the traveller children for the entire school day, because they cannot make progress in the ordinary classes. Others use partial integration, with the children joining the ordinary classes for subjects like Physical Education, Art, Music, Religion. A third method is to withdraw the traveller children (like settled children who have particular learning problems) from ordinary classes for a specified time each day. No one way of using an extra teacher is better than any other. The wishes of the parents, the needs of the children and the judgement of the teachers should determine what is best in each individual case.

7.11 Special classes have the following main advantages:

(a) a teacher/pupil ratio of one to 12 or 15;

(b) teachers selected for their special interest in travellers;

(c) freedom for the teacher to plan a curriculum which meets the needs and fits the culture of traveller children;



Classroom scene

(d) the children feel more at ease and unthreatened in the understanding and caring atmosphere created by the teachers who have the opportunity to build up the self-confidence of the children.

7.12 In view of the deprivation of many of the children, there is need for child care assistants in pre-schools and, indeed, in some special classes. They provide the back-up services for the children, helping them with problems of hygiene, preparing a meal for them when necessary and keeping in touch with their families, especially where there are school attendance problems. Many more child care assistants are needed to provide the essential welfare back-up services in pre-school classes, special classes and day care centres. The present involvement of the health boards in this area should be continued and extended.

7.13 In dealing with special schools the Commission recommended as follows:—

"Because of the necessity to promote hygiene as a practice as well as a subject it is recommended that . . . the specially provided school buildings should include wash hand basins and shower-baths with adequate arrangements for hot water supplies". (p. 68, para 17).

Experience since the establishment of special schools and special classes confirms the continuing need for such facilities.

7.14 The Review Body considers that special classes have an important contribution to make to the education of traveller children, many of whom suffer from the educational disadvantages listed above. However, special classes should be seen as an interim measure rather than as a permanent feature of traveller education.

Children with unusual needs

7.15 While almost all traveller children have certain special educational needs which must be catered for, there is a group of traveller children, referred to in Chapter X of this Report, whose educational needs are even more special than those described earlier in this section. These children come mainly from families with serious alcoholic problems often involving both parents, and they have been regarded in the past as 'school refusers' — children for whom little could be done in terms of education or training. For those children, the kind of day care centres outlined in Chapter IX of this Report must be provided wherever the need arises. Their provision should be combined with continued exploration of an educational programme best suited to their needs and most likely to attract their attendance. Day care centres are needed in most of the larger cities, and particularly in Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

7.16 Where large numbers of families are still without any facilities for stable residence, as in Wicklow and parts of County Dublin, there

7.17 For those families who choose to continue to travel, the possibility of mobile teachers and camp schools will have to be explored if their children are to have any chance of receiving even the most basic education.

Post-Primary Education

7.18 The Commission stated that:

"The itinerants' lack of elementary education makes it virtually impossible for them to avail of the present system of vocational education". (p. 65, para. 5).

The present position is that only about ten per cent of traveller children remain on at school after the age of 12 years, if they remain even as long as that, which many do not. The needs of children in the 12 to 15 year age group (some 2,000 in all) are urgent because at least fifty per cent of them have never attended school at all, and the majority of them (and their parents) see no purpose in attending school after the age of 12 years. It must be recognised that in the traveller community parents normally regard their children as adults at the age of 12 years.

7.19 The Review Body holds that, particularly where regular school attendance has not been the norm, special provision must be made to ensure that traveller children between the ages of 12 and 15 years attend, or continue to attend school. Many of the children in this age-group are at present in grave danger of becoming delinquent and the main problem is to persuade them that education has something worthwhile to offer them — more worthwhile than the freedom of their lives outside school.

7.20 The Vocational Schools have from time to time made considerable efforts to accommodate these children in their ordinary classes, but only a few have remained long enough to benefit. Ways of meeting the needs of those over 12 years of age are currently being explored, and a number of vocational type classes, financed by the Vocational Education Committees, have been started with an attractive programme of work. An increasing measure of success is being achieved. The activity in these classes has to be very flexible, but 50% of the school day is spent in work which aims to remedy literacy and numeracy inadequacies and to provide as much general education as is practicable. The remainder of the day is spent in practical work — crafts, sewing, cookery, simple woodwork etc. — together with a substantial input of sporting activities which has proved to be one of the best means both of attracting the young travellers to these classes and of achieving integration with the settled community.

7.21 The Review Body considers that the provision of additional education facilities for traveller children between the ages of 12 and 15 years is a matter of extreme urgency.

Curricula

7.22 The Association of Teachers of the Travelling People (ATTP)

founded in 1972, and with a current membership of over 300, of whom 220 are teachers of travellers in ordinary schools and special classes, is at present working with the Department of Education on a Curriculum Committee to plan a primary school curriculum for traveller children in special classes. A sub-committee of the ATTP is working on curriculum content for the 12 to 15 years age-group.

8 School Attendance

8.1 The biggest single obstacle to progress in the whole field of education for travellers is the non attendance of 50% of traveller children of school-age, and the irregular attendance of many of those who are actually enrolled in school. The reasons for this are many and varied and include: lack of stable accommodation; lack of running water and sanitary facilities; lack of transport; lack of will on the part of some parents to make the necessary efforts to get their children to school regularly and punctually; the antagonism of the settled community; the leaving of the decision as to whether or not to attend school to the children themselves. The majority of travellers want their children to be educated but, in many parents, the desire is not strong enough to overcome obstacles such as those listed above. Others lack an appreciation of the importance of punctual and regular attendance. The end result of this is that even existing facilities are not always fully utilised.

8.2 Over the last decade, considerable efforts have been made by teachers, social workers, members of local committees, certain members of the Garda Siochana and others to enable parents to overcome the problems which militate against regular school attendance. The measure of their success can be seen in the increase of regular school attenders in the traveller community from 114 in 1961 to nearly 3,500 in 1980. Nevertheless, the Review Body regards the present position as far from satisfactory, and considers that a radical improvement in the situation is a top priority. While it is essential that the present concerted efforts of teachers, social workers and committee members to achieve better school attendance be continued, some more effective method must be devised to ensure the attendance of traveller children at school.

Visiting Teachers

8.3 The most effective means so far tried of improving school attendance for traveller children has been the pilot project operating in Galway city since October, 1980. This involved the appointment by the Department of Education of a visiting teacher to work with families, teachers and social workers in the whole area of traveller education. In addition to her teaching work, she co-operates with other teachers who have travellers in their classes; visits the families whose children are not attending school regularly; organises help with homework for the children and facilitates in every way possible maximum school attendance. A visiting teacher was also appointed in Dublin in 1981 and there is need for many more such appointments if the drive to improve school attendance is to have any chance of success.

Homework

8.4 One of the most important duties of the visiting teacher is to organise homework facilities for traveller children and in Galway, where there is a visiting teacher, more than 30 teachers and university students have been recruited by her to provide an extensive homework service in the various camp sites in the evenings.

Even children from the general population living in crowded conditions in housing estates where, in many cases, only one room is heated in the evenings, have very serious difficulties with homework. These are intensified for traveller children, particularly for those living in trailer caravans, by the fact that the majority of traveller parents are illiterate, and so unable to help their children with homework. It is for this reason, among others, that the Review Body has recommended the establishment of a visiting teacher service throughout the country, wherever numbers of traveller children call for it. Voluntary committees who are also engaged in providing help with homework should be encouraged to continue and extend this service, as well as to continue their efforts to help traveller parents to achieve some level of literacy and numeracy as recommended in para. 12.18 of this Chapter. Vocational Education Committees must also be involved in this provision (see para. 10.4).

Child Care Authority

8.5 It is proposed in the report of the Task Force on Child Care Services (p. 122, para. 9.1.11) that "the functions at present performed by school attendance officers and gardai in relation to the problems of school children should be transferred to the Child Care Authority and that these functions should be enlarged to ensure close links between all schools and the C.C.A. so that children experiencing difficulties which become identified at school can immediately receive attention". The Review Body would welcome this kind of service for traveller children when the recommended Child Care Authority is established. In the interim period, while expanding existing services, it advocates the immediate appointment of more visiting teachers.

9 Youth and Community Services

9.1 Youth and community services are as important for young travellers as they are for all other young people. The fact that as a group they are often so isolated and rejected, makes their need even more urgent. A good youth and community service for travellers would help to develop their self-esteem, and open for them opportunities and new dimensions in the areas of sport, recreation and social activities.

9.2 Such a service cannot be developed without the help and support of good youth and community workers. While Dublin Corporation employs three such workers with travellers and has a clear policy and programme in this matter, it is important that a Youth and Community Development Programme be devised and implemented

nationally. Like all successful Community Development Programmes, it should build on the travellers' strengths and actively involve both the travellers and the settled community.

9.3 Provision of such services requires that those involved recognise and respect the values and needs of the traveller community and the logical outcome of that recognition and respect would be a high level of involvement by travellers in providing these services. It has already been found to be true that very good community workers can come from within the ranks of the travellers themselves.

9.4 In June, 1981 young travellers from nine different parts of the country came together for a week-end leadership course in Co. Wicklow, which resulted in the setting up of a *Young Traveller's Forum*. They have been holding regional meetings since and assembled again in May, 1982 for a national meeting. They are discussing together their aspirations and hopes for the future and becoming an exceedingly articulate group of young people (some sixty in all) who will, doubtless, in the future be their own spokesmen and spokeswomen on all that concerns traveller welfare.

10 Adult Education

10.1 In any report on the educational needs of travelling people, consideration must be given to the adults, who are virtually all illiterate and innumerate. Education programmes designed for adult travellers must be relevant to their needs and desires and be flexible.

10.2 Informal education and leisure activities are more acceptable to older travellers than formal classes. Leisure activities would include the organisation of facilities enabling traditional traveller activities, whether oral, musical, craft or sporting to be pursued. It would be important for the travellers themselves to be involved in the organisation and running of these activities with the members of the settled community acting in a supportive role when needed. Maximum use should be made of television programmes and audio-visual aids.

10.3 Literacy and numeracy courses have already proved important to many adult travellers and should be widely available. They would concentrate, in the first place, on functional literacy and numeracy. Very real difficulties are experienced by adult travellers in carrying out every-day tasks such as shopping, reading signs and numbers and completing official forms. Enabling travellers to get to know food brand names and identify the prices of shop items would be a most useful step forward. The aim of further courses would be to enable adult travellers to gain a practical knowledge of such subjects as child care, home management, dietetics, vehicle maintenance etc.

10.4 The Vocational Education Committees should take responsibility for the provision of adult educational facilities for travellers.

11 Teacher Training

11.1 In order to cater adequately for the needs of their pupils, it has been found that teachers of traveller children require more insight into the childrens' particular needs. Such teachers should have, in addition to their ordinary teacher training, as much knowledge as possible of the cultural, social, historical and educational background of travellers. They must be able to work in close harmony with the parents and with other professional and voluntary personnel working with travellers. They should have considerable expertise in special and remedial educational techniques.

11.2 Courses in initial teacher training already include instruction in teaching methods and forms of classroom organisation which promote effective learning. It will be increasingly important in future that this should cover the variety of learning and behaviour patterns which are likely to be found in many travellers.

11.3 It is considered advisable that teachers who take up the education of travellers as their chosen work should acquire some experience of teaching settled children in ordinary schools and classes before they commence their special work with traveller children. In this way they would acquire some understanding of the practical steps which are necessary for meeting a child's special needs in the matter of modification of classroom techniques.

11.4 Students in Colleges of Education should have the opportunity in their initial training to take an option which would enable them to pursue their interest in the special needs of traveller children in more depth than is possible at present.

In-Service Training

11.5 In-service courses for principals and staff of schools attended by travellers should be provided, in order to help these teachers to understand better the needs of the children in their care. In-service courses for teachers of special classes for traveller children are very important and much sought after by the teachers. These courses, while giving a broad view of modern educational thinking and practice, should concentrate on the special area of disadvantage (social and environmental, emotional and behavioural problems, speech and language disorders) of traveller children. They should also help teachers to develop skills and techniques which will enable them to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs and abilities of the traveller children.

11.6 The child care assistants referred to in para 7.12 of this chapter who play such a vital part in providing the care and non-teaching services in the school environment, should be adequately prepared for their work. The preparation should take into account the varied services which they are called upon to perform — social, educational and first aid. Courses should be of an essentially practical nature

*12 Recommendations

*12.1 Principles underlying the recommendations

In making recommendations, the Review Body has been motivated by four principles:—

(a) in improved opportunities for education, training and employment lie the main hope for a better way of life for travellers in the long term;

(b) the Travelling People have a right to preserve, if they so wish, their traditional culture and way of life;

(c) there has to be positive discrimination in their favour if they are to overcome the social problems caused by the disadvantaged background from which they come;

(d) special educational measures are necessary for traveller children, but the long term aim is to enable travellers to avail of normal school facilities.

General Recommendations

*12.2 The implementation of the programme of accommodation recommended in this Report to enable all children of travellers to attend school regularly.

*12.3 The acceptance of the need for flexibility in all areas of education and training for travellers.

*12.4 The acceptance of the right of the traveller parent to place his/her child in an ordinary class even when a special class exists and vice versa.

Education

*12.5 The setting up by the Department of Education, of many more pre-school classes to meet the needs of traveller children under the age of six years.

*12.6 Where special circumstances demand, the provision of special schools and day care centres, providing education suited to the background and aspirations of traveller children.

*12.7 The provision of the necessary equipment and washing facilities in schools with pre-school classes and special classes.

*12.8 The employment of more child care assistants to provide the essential non teaching and welfare services in pre-school classes, special classes and day care centres and the provision of training by the relevant Departments and authorities for these child care assistants.

*12.9 The employment of extra teachers in schools with a large

*12.10 The provision of adequate transport facilities for traveller children, as lack of transport is often a major factor in non-attendance at school.

*12.11 A concentration of efforts to ensure that all traveller children attend school, preferably from pre-school age but certainly between the statutory ages of 6 and 15 years.

*12.12 The appointment of many more visiting teachers, particularly in the larger cities and urgently in Dublin. Their efforts must be supported by those with statutory powers in the area of school attendance — the School Attendance Officers in Cork, Dublin, Waterford and Dun Laoghaire, and the Garda Siochana throughout the rest of the country.

*12.13 The provision of mobile teachers or camp schools for the really transient families.

*12.14 The provision, as a matter of extreme urgency, of special educational and vocational facilities for traveller children between the ages of 12 and 15 years, who cannot or will not attend ordinary post-primary schools.

*12.15 The continued exploration of a more relevant curriculum for traveller children, particularly in the 12 to 15 year age group.

Youth and Community Work

*12.16 The provision of adequate finance by the relevant Departments and organisations for the youth and sports activities of young travellers, and the appointment of more youth and community workers.

Adult Education

*12.17 The provision by the Vocational Education Committees of suitable programmes and courses for adult travellers.

*12.18 The Review Body urges that immediate steps be taken to ensure that young married couples be given every possible help with literacy and numeracy problems; with home-management and child care; and with the kind of counselling which will help them to appreciate the necessity of regular schooling for their children.

Teacher Training

*12.19 The introduction into initial teacher training courses of a special education element which would give the student teacher an awareness of the needs of travellers, as well as knowledge of their culture and social heritage.

*12.20 The opportunity for students in Colleges of Education to take an option which would enable them to pursue their interest in the special needs of traveller children in more depth than is possible at present.

*12.21 The provision of in-service courses for teachers of traveller children and for principal teachers and staff of schools attended by large numbers of travellers.

13 Training for Employment

13.1 The great majority of teenage and young adult travellers are illiterate, innumerate and untrained in any skills which would enable them to avail of existing training facilities or to obtain regular employment. In an effort to alleviate this regrettable situation, the first training centre for young travellers was set up in Ennis in 1974. Since then, a further fourteen centres have been established in different parts of the country. In every case the initiative in setting up these centres was taken up by the local committee working for travellers but from 1976 onwards the Vocational Education Committees and the Industrial Training Authority (AnCO) became involved. There has also been substantial funding from the European Social Fund. The V.E.Cs pay teacher/instructor salaries and AnCO pays the trainees' allowances and training grants. Even with the official funding, substantial contributions from voluntary bodies have always been necessary.

13.2 There are over 1,500 young travellers in the 15-25 age-group and at least half of these have expressed willingness to attend training courses. The majority of these young people have not attended primary school regularly, so the training course provided must have a significant educational dimension. The fifteen existing training centres, if fully developed, could provide places for about 350 young travellers, male and female. However, at present only ten of the fifteen have been able to make provision for both boys and girls, owing to the difficulty of getting finance for the provision of premises.

Training Course Content

13.3 The courses provided in these centres include training in industrial machining, dressmaking, typing, woodwork, metalwork, welding and a wide variety of crafts. Different centres provide more specialist courses as well, often of local relevance, such as upholstery, copperwork, building construction, car maintenance and repair, hairdressing, ceramics, embroidery etc. Literacy, numeracy and other life skills are also imparted reflecting the educational dimension mentioned in para. 13.2 of this chapter.

Need for Flexibility

13.4 The overall objective of the training courses is to supplement the educational deficiencies of the young traveller and to prepare him or her to take up gainful employment or avail of further more advanced training at the end of the course. However, as the recipients of this training are so socially and educationally deprived, a flexible programme is necessary in the training centres, which will offset this

the centres should have a considerable understanding of the problems and difficulties of the young traveller, while insisting on reasonable discipline.

13.5 It is unrealistic to expect the majority of young travellers to be able, at the outset, to work a disciplined forty hour week, when they have little notion of time and are unaccustomed to following a rigid timetable. Equally, a more flexible attitude must be adopted towards absenteeism, although it is accepted as reasonable that there be a reduction in allowances for avoidable absenteeism, in order to instill an awareness of the need for time keeping and discipline.

13.6 There should not be a fixed period for the duration of the course. The need for an extended course in individual cases should be determined by the local management committee, with the advice of the director of the centre. The courses should have a variable format and should provide for extra-curricular activities. Provision ought to be made to facilitate participation in sport and leisure activities.

13.7 Flexibility is called for with regard to the age of admission and the educational standard of travellers coming into the centres. Bearing in mind that the majority of young travellers have little or no formal education, it would be desirable to allow entry to the course at 15 years of age.

13.8 The National Association of Training Centres (NATC), a voluntary organisation representative of the Traveller Training Centre Managements, is concerned that the most disadvantaged should receive training as well as the more fortunate. The association believes, indeed, that there should be positive discrimination in favour

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of the more disadvantaged. In these circumstances, there may be difficulties in maintaining the standards required by AnCO for their programmes in these special training centres.

Achievements

13.9 Since 1975, 606 young travellers have been trained in these training centres. At the conclusion of their training 249 of those trained obtained employment of whom 128 were girls and 121 were boys.

The Involvement of AnCO — The Industrial Training Authority

13.10 AnCO's contribution to the development of the training centres has been significant both from a viewpoint of resources and, indeed, personal commitment. Difficulties have arisen, however, as AnCO is essentially an industrial training agency and must, therefore, have due regard for the discipline and standards required by industry. Its responsibilities derive from the activities it is assigned in the Industrial Training Act, 1967 and the standards applied must have regard to the objectives for industrial employment set out in that Act. AnCO has indicated that in its involvement in the training centres for travellers it has sought to apply these standards flexibly, but the greater flexibility and educational dimension called for in paras. 13.4 to 13.8 above would inhibit greater or continuing AnCO involvement. Nevertheless, the Review Body would expect AnCO to continue its involvement by contributing its training expertise to the proposed Central Co-ordinating Committee (see para. 13.13 below) and by administering the payment of trainee allowances from Youth Employment Agency funds. The allowances payable to trainees are regarded as a necessary source of income and without them the majority of trainees would not be able to attend the centres.

The Department of Education

13.11 While the objective of these special training centres is to prepare for employment, it is recognised that the need for centres arises primarily from the educational deprivation of the young traveller. As soon as primary and secondary education are availed of by the majority of traveller children, these special training centres should cease to be necessary. For this reason the Review Body considers that the Department of Education, with its responsibility for providing education and its experience in vocational education and training programmes, is the appropriate Department to which state responsibility for the training programme for travellers should be assigned. If the Department of Education, through the local Vocational Education Committees, assumes this responsibility it would continue its current involvement in the centres, and provide for teachers'/instructors' salaries, premises, equipment and materials.

Youth Employment Agency

13.12 As the aims of the training programme for travellers, while having an educational input, are primarily directed at providing training for employment for these disadvantaged young people, the programme should attract the support of the new Youth Employment Agency, established in March, 1982. Indeed, the new Agency should be the source of the special funding necessary to finance all aspects of the programme. It has become clear over the last six years that just as education provides the most important contribution to the future welfare and happiness of traveller children, so the training centres offer the most significant opportunity so far conceived to provide for the social, economic and other aspirations of the traveller community. Ultimately they should enhance the prospects and potential of the young travellers who are going to be the parents of the next generation. If this opportunity is not made available to as many as possible, another generation of young travellers is going to assume the responsibilities of citizenship and parenthood illiterate, innumerate and without any training in the basic skills necessary for employment. The detrimental effect of parental unemployment on the future educational development of traveller children cannot be overstressed.

Courtesy of Irish Independent Newspapers Ltd.

Young Travellers' Welding in Training Centre.

Co-ordination at National Level

13.13 The training centres have suffered severely in the past from lack of co-ordination of planning and funding at national level. The Review Body proposes the establishment of a Central Co-ordinating Committee to determine policy at national level, undertake long-term planning and co-ordinate applications for Youth Employment Agency and European Social Fund support. Government funding of the

training programme has been matched in the past by European Social Fund assistance and this could be expected to continue. The Central Committee, representative of all the official agencies and Departments as well as the voluntary organisations involved, would be assisted by similarly representative local management committees responsible for the day-to-day running of each centre. This representative structure would help preserve the valuable inputs made in this area already and would ensure an orderly co-ordination of effort leading to a more effective overall programme.

Future Plans

13.14 Plans have been prepared to develop the fifteen existing centres so that they can provide for both boys and girls. In fifteen other locations, urgent need for training facilities for travellers has been identified. When these needs are met, there will be 30 centres which will provide for an enrolment of more than 700 young travellers. This number may diminish with the passage of time. It is envisaged that not more than 30 centres will be needed in the foreseeable future although a flexible attitude would have to be adopted in this, as in all other programmes for travellers.

Training for Older Travellers

13.15 It will be noticeable that to date the existing training centres have catered primarily for young travellers. Concern to break the traditional cycle of illiteracy and innumeracy has tended to focus all effort on the young travellers. The Review Body considers that steps should now be taken to provide suitable training facilities for older travellers. The participation of adult travellers in training programmes could contribute significantly to the improvement of traveller attitudes to education, training and employment in general. A successful programme in this field could greatly enhance the commitment of traveller parents to the pursuit of these activities for their children.

13.16 The development of a suitable adult training programme will be a most difficult task. It will require in depth study of adult traveller aptitudes, attitudes and aspirations. To this end the Review Body recommends that a feasibility study on the introduction of special provisions for adult travellers should be undertaken as soon as possible. The proposed Central Co-ordinating Committee (para. 13.13) should commission such a study. On completion of the study, further consideration could be given to the steps necessary for the implementation of the findings.

*14 Summary of Recommendations

*14.1 The extension of present training centre facilities to provide education and training opportunities for at least 700 young travellers in different parts of the country. This will ensure that the present teenagers, who are the next generation of parents, will not have to face

innumerate and lacking any of the necessary skills to enable them to earn a living and become self-supporting.

*14.2 The acceptance of the need for flexibility in all training programmes.

*14.3 Overall responsibility for the training programme for travellers to be assigned to the Department of Education.

*14.4 The establishment of a Central Co-ordinating Committee to determine training policy at national level, to undertake long-term planning and to co-ordinate applications for Youth Employment Agency and European Social Fund support. The Central Committee to be assisted by local management committees.

*14.5 The allocation of adequate finance from the Youth Employment Agency for all aspects of the training programme for travellers.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPLOYMENT FOR TRAVELLERS

1 Present Employment Pattern

1.1 The vast majority of the travelling people are untrained, unskilled and unemployed. They have, traditionally, been attracted to self-employed activities as these have fitted in best with their travelling way of life. As stated in the report of the Commission, the employment experience of travelling people drew heavily on the redundant skills of the self-employed tinsmiths. A recent survey of some areas shows that the few who are employed are engaged in unskilled or domestic work and, in general, have worked for less than five years.

1.2 Some travellers still work in a self-employed capacity, although their traditional occupations are in decline. Many of those who are self-employed are profitably engaged in trading and in door to door sales but there is anxiety that their freedom to trade may be hampered by over restrictive application of the terms of the Casual Trading Act, 1980. Traditionally, many have been involved in scrap collection. Many also engage in casual seasonal employment, often in family groups, but opportunities for seasonal work are lessening. In some areas there is a tradition of army service and it provides an excellent employment opportunity for certain travellers.

1.3 The Review Body considers that any major improvement in the employment circumstances of travellers is dependent on two key considerations. First, the social, environmental and educational disadvantages of the traveller will have to be overcome.

Secondly, improvement in the overall national employment situation is a necessary factor in achieving a significant level of employment among travellers. It is unlikely that more than a few unemployed travellers could hope to secure jobs ahead of the many other unemployed persons, even when the travellers have been able to overcome their relative disadvantage.

1.4 The recommendations for education and training set out in Chapter VII represent the greatest contribution which can be made to further the employment prospects of travellers. Nevertheless, additional measures must be taken to overcome their handicap and promote employment for them. For example certain pressures, such as difficulties in leading a disciplined working life and fears of, and isolation from, the settled community, militate against travellers securing employment on the open market. They are discouraged

prejudiced treatment from their settled colleagues. While the removal of prejudice is a long-term goal, a more immediate one is the filling of a need for employment conditions that take account of the personality, talents and abilities of travellers.

1.5 The traditional self-employed occupations of travellers should be encouraged. Even though many of the skills involved belong to another era, consideration should be given to the adaptation of such skills for use in modern light industrial employment or in craft and souvenir work. The self-employed traveller provides the community with some valuable services and the community should facilitate the continued provision of such services. The provision, by local authorities or businesses, of adequate space and appropriate facilities for scrap dealing or trading is recommended as a worthwhile approach to accommodating travellers in pursuing their livelihood. Such facilities must be so arranged that they are not environmentally damaging or unsightly. Facilities such as small sheds close to the travellers' accommodation would overcome this problem where light scrap is involved, but it would be undesirable to accommodate heavier scrap business, such as car dismantling, next to travellers' accommodation. Local authority disposal services for abandoned scrap and commercial scrap facilities should be used to the full.

2 Special Employment Schemes for Travellers

2.1 With upwards of 2,000 travellers in the 15 to 25 year age group, it is essential that their employment opportunities be improved radically and rapidly. These opportunities must be spread over as broad a field of employment as is possible. An experimental approach to employment is currently being developed on a pilot basis organised from St. Kieran's Training Centre, south county Dublin. Travellers are given real work experience to fit them for regular employment. The establishment of an industrial centre with a number of small units, together with some craft workshops, is expected to create employment and training opportunities for a number of travellers, working side by side with members of the settled community. The project has received substantial help from the Industrial Development Authority (I.D.A.) and the Bank of Ireland, and seeks further support from the Youth Employment Agency. A site has been generously provided for the project by Dublin County Council on one of its industrial estates.

2.2 This approach involves industrialists and craftsmen availing of the potential of travellers. While over half of the workforce will, hopefully, be from the traveller community, a proportion of settled people will also be employed. The industrialist or craftsman will operate his business on a normal profit-making basis. He will be expected, nevertheless, to appreciate and make allowances for the problem regular employment poses for travellers and provide the necessary encouragement and understanding while not neglecting discipline. Workers from the settled community will gain worthwhile employment and, hopefully, a better understanding of travellers.

as well as making a significant contribution to the project. Their talents and enthusiastic commitment and loyalty will help to generate the type of success so necessary to give the traveller a sense of achievement and self-esteem. This success will generate further opportunities for other travellers. A note on the development of this pilot project is set out in Appendix D. Similar projects have been launched in Galway and Carlow and others are planned for Cork, Limerick and other towns.

2.3 The employment programme run by the Dublin Committee for Travelling People at Exchange House is another approach to employing travellers. Since June, 1980 this programme has been providing a variety of employment for young travellers between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Some of them, after the initial basic training, are enabled to procure house maintenance work, including some painting and decorating jobs. Other young travellers make furniture such as built-in presses, fire surrounds and wardrobes and sell them from their workshop at Exchange House. A number of young persons from these projects have been employed to work full time on the Dublin Corporation site at St. Oliver's Park, Clondalkin repairing the chalets and maintaining the site.

2.4 The Dublin Committee's programme also provides opportunities for employment in car maintenance and copper work. On the premises at Exchange House there is a small garage where an instructor and three young travellers are fully employed servicing and repairing and occasionally purchasing old cars for resale. The copper work activities allow the young travellers to practise craft skills.

2.5 The thrust of these projects is to provide employment which is self supporting and commercially geared, even if within a sheltered workshop environment. This is of considerable value in adapting disadvantaged young people to employment. It is a programme which combines training experience, employment and its rewards, in a relatively short time. It also enables the travellers to develop relationships in a team situation. The development of further projects within the programme and indeed the expansion of the programme elsewhere in Dublin and beyond is recommended. The focus of these programmes on young disadvantaged persons makes them eminently suitable for the support of the Youth Employment Agency.

3 Other Employment Measures

3.1 In addition to the opportunities offered by these schemes the Review Body is of the opinion that there are other ways in which the employment situation of travellers might be improved. For example, the facilities of the National Manpower Service which are already available to, though not necessarily utilised by, the travelling people might be given more emphasis. The Review Body would like to see an officer given responsibility within each region of the National Manpower Service for the provision of a specialist placement service for travellers, and that full use be made of occupational guidance and counselling facilities where appropriate.

3.2 Furthermore, the Review Body considers that certain schemes already in operation under the aegis of the National Manpower Service could be adapted to the needs of travellers. A special version of the Work Experience Programme, geared towards employment within the educational capabilities of travellers, should be considered. The temporary nature of such a scheme for travellers should facilitate more employer interest. A scheme similar to the Employment Incentive Scheme of the National Manpower Service might also be considered as an inducement to potential employers. The premium or allowance payable under such schemes might be higher than normal where it is considered necessary to promote a greater willingness among employers to recruit travellers. A precedent for such supplementary inducements have been established in the Dublin Inner City Employment Programme which seeks to promote the employment of unemployed inner city residents.

3.3 Travellers should also be considered for suitable public service employments. Some travellers have, in the past, secured casual employment with public agencies such as Bord na Mona, the Forestry Service and the Office of Public Works. Even allowing for change in the type of employment available from these bodies there may still be some jobs for which travellers are suited, an example being the provision of public services for themselves. In education, travellers could assist teachers in pre-schools or special classes by attending to the welfare needs of the children involved.

3.4 Such special funding as may be necessary to provide employment for travellers may, to a large extent, be offset by savings to the State from social welfare payments. Since the Commission reported the availability of the social security system to travellers has greatly improved. Despite the widespread use of the system by the travelling community, officials dealing with the service have indicated that travellers do not abuse the system any more than any other group of users.

*4 Recommendations

*4.1 Adequate facilities should be provided to allow self-employed travellers to pursue their chosen livelihood. Local authorities in conjunction with commercial interests should provide facilities to accommodate travellers engaged in the scrap business, ensuring that such activities do not contribute to environmental damage or despoliation.

*4.2 Local authorities should also facilitate the trading and marketing activities of travellers by designating a number of approved markets in their areas, in keeping with the licensing provision of the Casual Trading Act, 1980.

*4.3 State assistance should be given to agencies engaged in the development and promotion of traditional skills of travellers.

*4.4 The State should provide funding, over and above that normally provided for small industry development, for the St. Kieran's Pilot Project [illegible]

Travelling People's Employment Programme and other similar schemes. This will ensure that the full potential of each scheme is met.

*4.5 The regular employment schemes and services of the National Manpower Service and other agencies should be adapted to provide for the particular employment needs of the travelling people.

*4.6 Public service agencies should identify suitable employment opportunities for travellers and offer employment to any travellers who are available for regular work.

CHAPTER IX

THE HEALTH OF TRAVELLERS

1 The Health of Travellers in 1963

1.1 The Commission dealt with a number of issues affecting the health and welfare of travellers in Chapter VII of its Report. It was particularly concerned with the possible hazards to health of dwelling in horse-drawn caravans and canvas tents. In 1961, 56% of families lived in horse drawn caravans with tents and 38% lived in tents alone. Only 1% of families in that year lived in houses.

1.2 The Commission found that travellers were generally healthier than one would expect from the rigours and hardships of their lives. A survey of the incidence of a number of illnesses among travellers was inconclusive, although bronchitis and pneumonia were commonly reported. The Commission was satisfied that the incidence of tuberculosis was not higher than among the settled population and that of mental illness was probably lower. (ps. 46-47, paras. 22-25).

1.3 The Commission found that the nomadic way of life made it difficult for travellers to avail of the full range of health services then available, e.g. ante-natal and maternity care, child health services and protective immunisation. They recommended that travellers be visited in their encampments by health personnel to make them aware of the health services available and to encourage immunisation and proper ante-natal care (p.51, para 42).

1.4 The Commission found little evidence that roadside encampments were a danger to public health or constituted a nuisance within the meaning of public health and sanitary legislation. "Exceptions are some sites in city areas which itinerants had been allowed to occupy for long periods and which were found to require de-ratting". (p. 50, para. 40).

1.5 Two aspects of traveller health were the subject of special comment by the Commission namely, low life expectancy and high infant mortality:

(a) Life expectancy

"The progressive reduction in the number of itinerants in the higher age groups is remarkable. While the 1956 census figures for the State indicated that 50 per cent of the settled population was over 30 years of age, and that the spread in each age group over 30 was relatively even, only 23 per cent of itinerants were over the age of 30, and the numbers in the higher age-groups fell rapidly".

". . . it is reasonable to assume that a high death rate in the middle age groups is a factor of importance". (p. 50, para. 37).

The Commission attributed the earlier age at death of travellers and the extent of respiratory disease to the rigours of their way of life. (p. 46, para. 23).

Details of the Commission's figures on age structure are given at Table 9.6.

(b) Infant mortality
The Commission concluded that 'the mortality of infants in the first year of life is much higher than the national average'. (p. 47, para. 26).

It found that the majority of infant deaths were due to respiratory disease associated with harsh living conditions. (p. 47, para. 28).

2 The Health Status of Travellers Today—Vital Statistics

2.1 In addition to information from the 1981 Census, this chapter of the Report draws on information contained in M. Dempsey and R. C. Geary, *The Irish Itinerants: Some Demographic, Economic and Educational Aspects* published as an Economic and Social Research Institute Broadsheet no. 18 in May, 1979.

Reference is also made to two local studies, carried out on behalf of the Review Body, which are used to illustrate a point or where no other information exists.

2.2 Accommodation

The standard of accommodation for most travellers has improved since 1963. By 1981 46% of traveller families were living in houses or chalets. The remaining 54% were living in trailer caravans, of which a small number — 4% — were living in barrel wagons, huts or tents. The numbers housed, and the decline in the use of huts and tents, represents a dramatic improvement on the situation which prevailed in 1963. However, more than 1,000 families are living by the roadside in trailer caravans in conditions of over-crowding and dampness and lacking basic sanitary facilities. The health hazards of large families living in caravans on a permanent basis are discussed below.

2.3 Fertility

There is a very high level of fertility among travellers. Almost all travellers marry. They marry at a young age and they have a large number of children. The overall picture is similar to that recorded by the Commission in 1963. Information from the 1981 Census suggests that, in respect of age at marriage change may be occurring. Table 9.1 shows that in 1981, 55% of women age 19 were single, suggesting that many traveller women are postponing marriage until their early twenties.

2.4 The high proportion of married traveller women (a) aged 15-44 and (b) with young children aged 0-4, compared with the national population is shown in Table 9.2

TABLE 9.1
1981 Census of Traveller Families: Marital Status of Female Travellers Aged 15-24: Numbers and Percentage Distribution

Age	*Single*	*Married*	*Widowed*	*Total*
15	204	0	0	204
	100.0%	—	—	100.0%
16	183	5	0	188
	97.3%	2.7%	-	100.0%
17	145	32	0	177
	81.9%	18.1%	—	100.0%
18	112	37	1	150
	74.7%	24.7%	0.7%	100.0%
19	72	57	2	131
	55.0%	43.5%	1.5%	100.0%
20	52	60	1	113
	46.0%	53.1%	0.9%	100.0%
21	34	80	1	115
	29.6%	69.6%	0.9%	100.0%
22	27	89	6	122
	22.1%	73.0%	4.9%	100.0%
23	20	71	5	96
	20.0%	74.0%	5.2%	100.0%
24	19	92	3	114
	16.7%	80.7%	2.6%	100.0%

Source: 1981 Census of Travellers.

TABLE 9.2
Comparison of fertility among travellers and general population

	Dublin Travellers 1977	*All Travellers 1981*	*National population 1979*
1. Married women aged 15-44 as % of all married women	82%	74.8%	58%
2. Married women aged 15-44 as % of all women	75%	61.5%	54%
3. Children aged 0-4 per:			
(a) women aged 15-44	1.07	1.05	0.51
(b) married women aged 15-44	1.44	1.71	0.94

Sources: Dempsey and Geary (1979); E.S.R.I. Census of Travellers, 1981; National Census 1979.

2.5 The annual number of births to travellers is not known but the 1981 Census recorded 1,507 in the age group 0-2. It may be assumed that there are not less than 500 live births to traveller women annually. Based on this assumption, Table 9.3 compares births per 1,000 travellers with birth rates for the national population to illustrate the very different birth patterns among travellers.

TABLE 9.3
Comparison of births per 1,000 population, travellers and national population

	Live births to travellers	*National population 1979*
Births per 1,000 population	35.3	21.5*
Births per 1,000 married women aged 15-44	333.3	188.7**

*All Births **Legitimate Births
Sources: 1981 Census of Travellers and Vital Statistics.

2.6 The number of live births to married traveller women at different ages is shown in Table 9.4. Of the women aged 49 and over who could be said to have completed their family, 55% had 10 or more live births; 54% of the women aged 40 to 49 and 30% of those aged 30 to 39 had 10 or more live births, demonstrating just how large many traveller families are. The general picture can be illustrated by the fertility of families in and around Mullingar which were studied in January, 1981. Local records and enquiries established that of 38 traveller families, the majority of whom lived in standard houses:

(a) 21 families with child bearing completed had an average of 9.8 surviving children;

(b) 17 families married 8 years or longer and still fertile, had an average of 8.1 surviving children.

2.7 Family Size

Family size here refers to the average number of adults and children in each family unit. The results of the 1981 Census show that families in standard housing had 7.1 members and those living by the roadside 5.6 members (see Table 9.5). The nearest equivalent for purposes of comparison with the national population is average numbers per household which in 1971 was 3.69 for the Republic.

2.8 Age Structure

A breakdown of the age structure of all travellers and of travellers living by the roadside is given in Table 9.6. It shows that an extra-

TABLE 9.4
Number of children born live to all women married or ever married: percentage distribution by age.
Age of women (married or widowed)

Number of Children	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 and over
0	44.6%	10.9%	1.4%	3.8%	2.1%	3.2%
1	38.5	22.2	6.4	2.4	2.1	1.5
2	15.4	28.9	10.4	1.6	0.9	2.3
3	1.5	19.1	12.2	4.2	2.4	3.5
4	0.0	9.4	17.1	6.4	4.2	2.6
5	0.0	5.4	17.4	8.0	9.3	3.5
6	0.0	2.7	15.4	8.9	6.3	4.4
7	0.0	1.2	9.3	12.9	6.6	7.3
8	0.0	0.2	6.7	10.4	6.0	7.9
9	0.0	0.0	3.2	11.3	6.3	9.6
10	0.0	0.0	0.3	8.2	8.4	6.1
11	0.0	0.0	0.3	8.0	7.2	8.2
12	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	9.6	9.4
13	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	5.7	5.6
14	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	6.0	5.6
15	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	4.5	6.7
16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	3.6	5.3
17	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.7	2.6
18	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	3.6	1.5
19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.9
20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.2
21	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9
22	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	130	404	345	425	333	342

*Information on 200 women was not available.
Source: 1981 Census of Travellers

ordinarily high proportion of travellers — 78% — are in the age range 0-25. In the national population the proportion in the same age group is just under 50%, a figure which is itself very high by the standards of other western European countries. Table 9.6 also compares the age structure of travellers in 1981 with that in 1961 to show that an increased proportion of travellers are now in the younger age groups. A further point of interest on this table is the higher proportion of 0-4 year olds in families on the roadside compared to all travellers — 24.7% as against 19.8%. This may reflect the practice among recently married travellers of leaving the family house and taking to the road in the absence of separate permanent accommodation.

TABLE 9.5
1981 Census of Traveller Families: size of households by type of accommodation

	Type of accommodation							
No. of Persons	*Standard House*	*%*	*Chalet*	*%*	*Trailer on Serviced Site*	*%*	*Roadside*	*%*
1	27	3.1	16	8.9	25	15.3	64	6.1
2	65	10.4	34	27.9	20	27.6	133	18.8
3	63	17.5	15	36.3	21	40.5	144	32.6
4	87	27.4	15	44.7	20	52.8	139	45.8
5	89	37.4	6	48.0	14	61.3	109	56.3
6	93	48.0	15	56.4	15	70.6	97	65.5
7	98	59.0	14	64.2	9	76.1	84	73.5
8	73	67.3	21	76.0	15	85.3	69	80.1
9	67	74.9	11	82.1	8	90.2	57	85.6
10	58	81.4	10	87.7	5	93.3	54	90.7
11	50	87.1	10	93.3	3	95.1	30	93.6
12	35	91.1	4	95.5	4	97.4	29	96.4
13	30	94.5	5	98.3	3	99.4	15	97.8
14	23	97.1	1	98.9	0	99.4	11	98.9
15	6	97.7	2	100.0	0	99.4	4	99.2
16	9	98.8	0	100.0	0	99.4	5	99.7
17	6	99.4	0	100.0	0	99.4	1	99.8
18	4	99.9	0	100.0	1	100.0	0	99.8
19	1	100.0	0	100.0	0	100.0	2	100.0
Total size known	884	100.0%	179	100.0%	163	100.0%	1047	100.0%
Size not known	50		13		11		85	
Total known	934		192		174		1132	
Average number of persons	7.1		5.8		5.0		5.6	

2.9 Mortality

The preceding table indicates the very different age structure of travellers to that of the national population. A striking feature is the small numbers in the over 50 age group and the sharp decline from age 50 upwards. No comprehensive study has been undertaken to discover the reason for the small number of travellers in the older age group. What information was available to the Review Body suggested that travellers as a group continue to have:

(a) a much lower life expectancy than the population as a whole; and that

(b) the proportion of infant and child deaths to all traveller deaths is very high.

2.10 One further aspect of traveller deaths which emerges from a local study of 48 deaths in the greater Dublin area for the years 1977-1979 is the number of unnatural or violent deaths, i.e. by accidents, poisonings, etc. Of the travellers included in the study, one in four died unnatural deaths. Only one in twenty of total deaths in Ireland in 1980 were so classified.

TABLE 9.6
Percentage Distribution of National and Traveller Population by Age Group

Age Group	*Census of Travellers 1961* %	*National Population 1979* %	*National Census of Travellers 1981* %	*Families on Roadside 1981* %
0-4 years	53.0	10.2	19.8	24.7
5-9		10.4 (30.6)	18.6 (55.1)	18.7 (56.9)
10-14		10.0	16.7	13.5
15-19	24.0	9.4	12.7	10.9
20-24		7.9 (24.4)	8.4 (27.1)	9.8 (27.7)
25-29		7.1	6.0	7.0
30-39	10.0	11.8	7.2	7.1
40-49	6.3	9.3	5.2	4.4
50-59	3.8	9.1	3.0	2.4
60-69	2.9	8.1	1.6	1.0
70 and over		6.8 (14.9)	0.9 (2.5)	0.6 (1.6)
	100.0%	100.1%	100.1%	100.1%

Sources: Census of Travellers 1981; Report of the Commission; National Census 1979.

2.11 Conclusions

The above information suggests the following conclusions:

(i) The level of fertility among travellers is extremely high, as shown by the proportion of married women of child-bearing age, the number of children per family and the estimated number of live births per thousand travellers. There may be an increasing tendency among traveller girls to postpone marriage until their early twenties;

(ii) The age profile of travellers is exceptionally young, even more so than at the time of the Commission's Report in 1963;

(iii) It appears that life expectancy for travellers as a group is considerably shorter than for the population as a whole;

(iv) There would seem to be a high level of avoidable deaths among infants and children;

(v) Just over half of all traveller families are living in trailer caravans (and in a small number of cases, barrel wagons, huts and tents), often in overcrowded and insanitary conditions.

2.12 General Health

In March 1980 and May 1981 health boards were asked to supply details to the Department of Health about health problems of travellers. In their replies the health boards listed the following conditions, which are ranked below in order of frequency mentioned:

Respiratory conditions
Gastro enteritis and gastric disorders
Alcohol-related conditions
Skin conditions
Infestations
Dental problems

(Information available to the Review Body suggests that speech and hearing defects are also a problem amongst some traveller children). The health boards suggested that much ill health among travellers is due to over-crowded accommodation and that early marriage and large families are common features of their way of life. Breast-feeding is not being used to full advantage, and where children are being bottle fed, it is difficult to ensure high standards of hygiene without proper sanitary facilities. Because of the frequency of birth, infants are often left in the care of older siblings. These factors may explain the high incidence of gastro enteritis noted amongst the children.

2.13 Whilst most travellers are aware of the health services to which they are entitled, health board staff mentioned some factors which militate against their use of services. Travellers traditionally have a mistrust of officials and institutions. Combined with low levels of literacy, this means that the normal method of delivering health care, e.g. by appointment, visits to health centres and surgeries may not be appropriate to them. There is also the problem of ensuring continuity of treatment if the family is moving around.

2.14 Health boards were requested to outline the efforts made in each area to ensure that travellers receive primary health care. They are entitled to the normal health services available to the settled community and delivered by community care personnel. The boards reported that most travellers have medical cards entitling them to free health services, and in some areas uptake is good. All agreed that the public health nurse has an essential role to play in ante-natal and post-natal care, in visiting infants and in general child welfare. Some boards drew attention to the fact that because so many of these children do not attend school or attend irregularly, they may miss out on school health examinations and treatment of potentially handicapping conditions.

2.15 Health boards were also asked to supply details of any special programmes for health education of travellers and for training staff to work with them. There were, at the time of the replies, no special education programmes. The public health nurse is considered to have the greatest contribution to make to health education. There are no special training schemes for staff, although a number of boards facilitate staff to attend seminars and meetings about travellers.

2.16 It is clear from the health board replies that a great deal of ill health among travellers is associated with the over crowded caravans and insanitary conditions in which many families live. Table 9.5 above shows that in 1981 there were over 500 families of six and more persons living in trailer caravans. The provision of serviced sites with

electricity points, water and toilet facilities for each parking place as recommended earlier in this Report, will remove some of the worst aspects of roadside camping. However, the Review Body is satisfied that even the best appointed caravan is not suited as permanent accommodation for a large family, particularly in the Irish climate. By the standards of 1963, it was a major step forward to accommodate families in trailer caravans instead of the huts and tents which were so prevalent then. But the trailer caravan must in turn be judged by the standard of accommodation acceptable to the community in the 1980s. The over-crowding, lack of proper sleeping accommodation, poor ventilation, and condensation associated with a large number of people living permanently in a caravan are unacceptable by today's standards. In the opinion of the Review Body they pose a continuing hazard to the health of the occupants. The Review Body accepts that many travellers wish to continue to live in caravans but it must point out the danger to health, particularly to that of the children, associated with this form of accommodation.

2.17 From the information supplied by the health boards, it would seem that travellers make good use of the health services when it is a question of acute illness or confinement. But where conditions requiring repeated visits and appointments are concerned, e.g. developmental problems in a child, ante-natal care, mental illness, dental care, the families tend not to take full advantage of the services available.

2.18 From information available to the Review Body, members are aware that an increasing number of traveller women wish to limit the size of their family. Under the Family Planning Act (1980) health boards are obliged to provide a family planning service. Health boards need to review their arrangements to ensure that travellers have a family planning service that is sensitive to their way of life. Travellers are unlikely to attend counselling sessions open to the whole community. There is need for the development of family planning programmes especially for travellers in community centres or specially convened in a travellers' home.

*3 Recommendations

*3.1 The following principles should be emphasised in the provision of health services for travellers:

(a) travellers, whether settled or on the road, are entitled to the same level of health care enjoyed by the population at large;
(b) an element of positive discrimination by health boards will be needed towards travellers because of the adverse conditions in which many of them live;
(c) particular emphasis must be given to the health of mothers and young children because of the size of many families and the extent of deprivation among them;
(d) health service personnel must work in close co-operation with the statutory bodies responsible for accommodation, education and employment;
(e) existing arrangements for the delivery of services need to be

*3.2 In line with the above the Review Body makes the following recommendations to improve health services for travellers:

*3.3 Health boards should ensure that travellers, and mothers and children in particular, receive the health services they need e.g. the role of the public health nurse in delivering services should be strengthened with particular emphasis on follow-up services.

*3.4 Health boards should inform travellers with large families, who wish to continue to live in caravans, of the health dangers associated with this form of accommodation.

*3.5 Health boards should ensure that travellers can avail of a family planning service which is sensitive to their way of life.

*3.6 The Department of Health and the health boards should ensure that information is regularly collected on the health status of travellers; there is an urgent need to establish the reasons for apparent low life expectancy of travellers and the number of infant and child deaths.

*3.7 Health boards and local authorities should ensure that there is a co-ordinated effort to improve the environment in which the families live — to provide accommodation, to keep serviced sites and roadside camping sites clean and to control rodents.

CHAPTER X

INCOME MAINTENANCE AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1 Income Maintenance

1.1 The Review Body is satisfied that the vast majority of traveller families are in receipt of unemployment assistance, and that it is probably the single most important source of income for most families. This is very different from the picture described by the Commission in 1963 when it reported:

> "Although eligible for unemployment assistance the procedure which requires attendance at regular intervals at a particular centre probably creates a very difficult problem for the itinerant who is, either voluntarily or involuntarily, moving from place to place". (p. 75, para. 19).

As a result of the recommendations of the Commission, the Department of Social Welfare changed the rules for claiming unemployment assistance, so that eligible travellers could claim assistance in the employment exchange which was convenient to them. As a safeguard against double claiming on different days, it is the practice in some areas to require travellers to sign for assistance on the same day. In the experience of members of the Review Body, travellers are aware of the benefits to which they are entitled and are not slow to claim them.

1.2 While few travellers could be described as wealthy, the income from unemployment assistance and children's allowance has contributed towards the alleviation of the absolute poverty apparent among travellers in the early 1960s. It is a cause of concern, however, that as a group they should be so dependent on this form of income maintenance. The level of unemployment assistance corresponds to the take home pay of those in low paid employments, and there can be little financial incentive for travellers to seek such employment, even if available.

Table 10.1 gives details of the current level of unemployment assistance and children's allowances.

2 Social Work Services

2.1 The report of the Commission referred to the contribution which trained welfare workers could make to the welfare of travellers and recommended their employment for this purpose. In the statement of

authorities would be empowered to employ professional social workers to increase the effectiveness of a programme of accommodation. The task of the social workers so employed was to identify the accommodation needs of traveller families, to advise local authorities on meeting these needs, to liaise with voluntary bodies involved with travellers, to help families to adjust to living in a house or chalet, and in general to help the travellers to avail of the various statutory services.

TABLE 10.1
Rates of Unemployment Assistance and Children's Allowances, April 1982

	**Weekly Rate of unemployment assistance*	*Childrens' Allowances (calculated per week)*
	£	£
Person with no children	26.25	—
Person with adult dependent	45.20	—
Person with adult dependent and child	51.75	2.59
Person with adult dependent and 2 children	59.20	5.18
Person with adult dependent and 3 children	65.00	7.77
Person with adult dependent and 4 children	70.80	10.36
Person with adult dependent and 5 children	76.60	12.95
Person with adult dependent and 6 children	81.25	16.98
Person with adult dependent and 7 children	85.90	21.01
Person with adult dependent and 8 children	90.55	25.04
Person with adult dependent and 9 children	95.20	29.07
Person with adult dependent and 10 children	99.85	33.10

*urban area.

2.2 In June 1982 there were 41 social workers employed specifically to work with travellers (Appendix E). The majority are employed by local authorities but in six counties the social workers for travellers are employed by the health boards and seconded to the local authorities, by arrangement with the health board (Appendix E). Following the establishment of the eight regional health boards in 1971, an increasing number of social workers were employed by the boards to provide assistance to people with personal and social problems, with a special emphasis on children and families. In addition to social workers, there were four youth and community workers in the Dublin area, three of them worked for Dublin Corporation and the fourth for the Eastern Health Board.

2.3 The Review Body considers that social workers make a significant contribution towards the accommodation and general welfare of travellers in the following areas:—

(a) getting to know families and their relationships, their needs and their preference for accommodation;
(b) advising local authorities on the best means of meeting the accommodation needs of travellers and recommending which family should be allocated a house or site place;
(c) helping families to settle in accommodation, and to set down roots in the community;
(d) ensuring that agencies responsible for the accommodation,

the needs of the families and of shortcomings in the services available;
(e) providing a casework service to those with personal and social problems;
(f) encouraging travellers to avail of education facilities for their children;
(g) liaising with voluntary committees active on behalf of travellers;
(h) acting as advocates for travellers to sort out problems with officialdom.

2.4 The evidence available to the Review Body suggets that, while there is a satisfactory social work service in some areas, the service is not generally as effective as it ought to be, due to an unclear definition of roles and lack of co-ordination with other local services. The social work service available in certain local authority areas is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons:—
(a) employment of inexperienced persons holding only a basic degree;
(b) lack of opportunity to obtain professional qualifications;
(c) working in isolation and without professional support or supervision;
(d) isolation from the administrative structure of their employing authority;
(e) lack of appreciation by officers of the employing authority of the role of the social worker and the limits on the tasks he/she can or should undertake;
(f) absence of access by the social workers to the decision makers concerning accommodation;
(g) inadequate basic office facilities and clerical support;
(h) excessive workload because of inadequate number of social workers employed by the local authorities.

2.5 In highlighting the difficulties under which many social workers have to function, the Review Body does not wish to detract in any way from their performance and achievements. This comment applies equally to present incumbents of posts and to those who have left local authority employment. Repeatedly, throughout the deliberations of the Review Body, and especially during field visits, the essential role of the social worker has been demonstrated. Where there was unity of objectives and easy co-operation among local authority staff much was achieved in accommodating travellers, particularly in standard houses. Social workers have also contributed much towards overcoming prejudice in the local community and gaining acceptance of travellers. If the services of social workers can be so profitably and successfully used in some local authority areas, there would appear to be no reason why the same should not apply in all areas. A prerequisite for success is a commitment by the local authority to provide travellers with permanent accommodation followed by the proper utilisation of the professional skills of social workers.

2.6 The special social work required by travellers and traditionally provided by local authorities overlaps the responsibility of health boards. The health boards are the largest employers of social workers and have developed a supervisory and career structure for them. Few

local authorities are of a size to offer social workers an attractive career structure with adequate supervision and promotion opportunities. The Review Body considers that the social work service for travellers should be so organised as to attract the most able and experienced social workers. It recommends that where local authorities are in a position to provide these employment conditions, they should continue to recruit and employ their own social workers. If not, they should come to an arrangement with the local health board to provide the service, on a secondment basis if necessary. The Review Body considers that it is primarily a matter to be resolved by the local authorities and health boards concerned.

3 Travellers with Special Needs

3.1 A small minority of traveller families have multiple social problems, mainly associated with alcoholism. However, there is no evidence that the incidence of alcoholism among travellers is any higher than among the settled community. In fact, the contrary may be the case. The problems of traveller families where one or both parents are alcoholics are serious and all too obvious to the settled population. It is not generally understood that these families are just as isolated from the rest of the traveller community, who regard them as undesirable neighbours and their children unsuitable marriage partners. They are not willingly accepted by other travellers onto existing sites or hard stands.

3.2 While there are families with problems related to alcohol throughout the country, the majority of such families are in the Dublin area. The Dublin Committee for Travelling People has identified 33 such families with about 200 children. Given the number of children in these families and the level of disturbance amongst them, there is an urgent need to take action which will prevent the perpetuation of the cycle of deprivation. Many children of alcoholic parents lack adequate care and supervision. In Dublin city centre, a number engage in street begging and petty crime. Some are emotionally and psychologically disturbed and in recent years glue-sniffing has become a major problem among a small group.

3.3 A number of facilities for these children have been developed in recent years in the Dublin area under the aegis of the Dublin Committee for Travelling People. Because the children cannot benefit from normal schooling, two special day care centres in the city centre were opened, combining special education and care facilities. These were classified as special schools — one of which has since been closed and the children integrated into local schools. Trudder House in Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, provides residential care for teenage boys and a hostel in Ontario Terrace, Rathmines caters for an average of 10 young girls and boys. In 1980 a former presbytery at Lower Exchange Street was made available by the Catholic Archdiocese to the Dublin Committee for Travelling People. The Department of Health, through the Eastern Health Board, made money available for the development of a major resource centre at Exchange

3.4 Overnight accommodation, meals, classes in motor maintenance, woodwork, painting, decorating and cooking are provided in the centre. The staff includes teachers, youth workers and child care workers. The Review Body is convinced that the day care centre and resource centre, with the back-up support of some residential accommodation, are the most appropriate ways of helping traveller children with special problems. There is a need in the Dublin area for more day care centres and hostel accommodation for teenage girls.

3.5 While the problems of these children are far from being resolved, the range of facilities now provided marks a major step forward and there is a general agreement as to their value in providing the children with an alternative to life on the streets. The goal in working with the children is to compensate them for the care and education of which they have been deprived and to help them to develop as stable mature adults.

3.6 Despite the many encouraging developments, this goal is being frustrated in the Dublin area by the lack of suitable accommodation for the families of the children. These families require special consideration and their first and foremost need is for proper and adequate sites on which to live. These sites should be small, with room for no more than three or four families, and located within the city. The advantages of such sites are:—

(a) ease of collection of children who attend school, day care centres or the resource centre;
(b) the small number of families on each site tending to reduce drinking and brawling;
(c) easier access to individuals and families by social workers and counsellors;
(d) easier exercise of parental control over children as families stabilise.

3.7 The Review Body cannot stress too much the urgency of helping these families and breaking the cycle of deprivation. If something is not done quickly, the problem may become intractable. A few years ago there were only four such families in Dublin. Now there are 33 families with about 200 children. If these children are not helped before they start their own families, the problem may get out of control. Although few in number, these families tend to give all travellers a bad name. Progress on the programme of accommodation will be slower if the most offensive aspects of these families lives are not improved.

3.8 The situation in Dublin is not helped by the overlapping of responsibility for the welfare of travellers between the different local authorities and between these authorities and the Eastern Health Board. The lack of clearly agreed responsibilities has led to conflict in the past, and a review of the situation by the authorities concerned is needed.

4 Child Care

The effects of [illegible] alcoholism and changes in women's

role have contributed to the breakdown of some traveller families. This has resulted in traveller children coming under the care of health boards with pressure to place them in residential care. The Review Body considers that residential care designed for children from the settled community may not always suit the needs of the traveller child. The Review Body is aware that of 12 problem families in Dublin in 1976, both parents in seven families had been reared in residential care.

4.2 There is as yet no tradition of fostering among travellers. Greater efforts should be made to encourage traveller parents to foster abandoned or neglected traveller children. The need is all the greater because of the problems associated with fostering older traveller children with foster parents from the general population. Such children may grow up unsure of their identity and find it difficult to integrate with travellers or the wider community. The fostering of traveller babies on a short term basis with "settled" foster parents has proved more successful and should be encouraged whenever infants are taken into care.

4.3 Where, as a last resort, children have to be placed in residential care, every effort should be made to maintain the child's traveller identity through contact with family and friends. Whenever possible, family groups should be cared for together.

4.4 There has been a practice among some travellers of leaving a child who may be sickly or weak in a hospital or home for the winter or until the child is older. In view of the adverse conditions in which the family may live, the management may readily agree to this. However, the child will suffer emotionally when separated from parents for such a long time and for this reason such practices should be discouraged.

5 Improving the Self-Respect of Travellers

5.1 Travellers' dealings with the settled population are, on the whole, characterised by a lack of self-esteem and confidence. The experience of many has taught them to be suspicious of settled people and their official representatives.

5.2 Travellers, unlike many other groups sharing a common interest in this country, are not organised to defend their interests or promote their way of life. Lack of education has handicapped many when looking for jobs, or in their dealings with statutory bodies. The absence of basic facilities, such as electricity and adequate sanitary facilities, makes it difficult for them to maintain their appearance. Added to these factors is the general level of prejudice and intolerance by many settled people in the community. They are often refused service in public houses, hotels and restaurants and access to cinemas. They may be refused jobs or houses for the simple reason that they are travellers. Anti-social behaviour on the part of one traveller is imputed by settled people to all travellers. Many people have a stereotyped image of their 'being all the same' which is at odds with even the briefest acquaintance with travellers and their way of life. There is a great lack of knowledge about travellers in general

5.3 The Review Body is aware of the work which has been done on behalf of travellers by voluntary committees since the early 1960s. But much still needs to be done to improve the self-image and confidence of the traveller, particularly among the most deprived families, and to remove discrimination against them. Community workers and youth workers can help travellers to help themselves, and can mobilise the resources of the community at large in the interest of travellers and their integration.

5.4 The Council of Europe in its Resolution of 1975 concerning nomads made the following recommendations designed to improve the position of groups such as travellers throughout Europe:

"1. All necessary measures within the framework of national legislation should be taken to stop any form of discrimination against nomads.
2. The prejudices which form the basis of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour against nomads should be countered by, inter alia, giving the settled population better information about the origins, way of life, living conditions and aspirations of nomads.
3. The participation of nomads in the preparation and the implementation of measures concerning them should be encouraged and practised under conditions laid down by national legislation.
4. The cultural heritage and identity of nomads should be safeguarded.
5. Appropriate measures should be taken in order to avoid as far as possible a situation whereby nomads way of life would result in preventing them from enjoying the rights and protection and from fulfilling the obligations relevant to the present resolution: in particular the possibility of establishing an effective system in practical contact with nomads, to the extent required to fulfil the objects of the present resolution might be investigated."

"Action on behalf of nomads should be such to give them the opportunity to integrate into the educational, cultural, professional and recreational organisations open to the general population".

and in Resolution (75) 13 the council further recommends that

"the training of persons from nomadic families as social workers should be encouraged".

5.5 The Review Body considers that, whenever possible, travellers should be given an opportunity to train as workers with their own people if they so wish, e.g. as social and community workers, child care assistants or teacher aids. From the experience of the last few years in the special schools, the pre-schools, the two day care centres and resource centre in Dublin, where travellers are employed as instructors and child care assistants, the Review Body is convinced of the value of travellers being employed to work with their own people.

a disturbed child in a day care centre or hostel if there is a traveller on the staff. The experience of traveller and settled persons working together must be beneficial to both.

5.6 Where facilities are provided for travellers, they should be encouraged as far as possible to take responsibility for those facilities. Each site should have its own committee which would manage the site on an agency basis for the local authority and would include travellers, representatives of the local authority, the voluntary committee, the local community and possibly the clergy. A primary function of the committee would be maintenance. It should be possible to establish a pilot scheme in one area to test how such a committee would function and to draw up guidelines for other areas. Travellers settled in standard houses should be encouraged to join the residents' association if one exists.

5.7 The clergy have an important contribution to make to the well-being and morale of travellers. A parish priest for travellers has been appointed in the Dublin area and a number of chaplains work with them elsewhere in the country. Such special arrangements could be repeated where existing parochial structures do not satisfy travellers' needs. As the lack of knowledge of travellers and their way of life is likely to be as high amongst the clergy as amongst the population at large, the church authorities might consider providing special training courses and literature for the benefit of those most likely to come into contact with them.

*6 Recommendations

The Review Body makes the following recommendations to improve personal social services for travellers:

*6.1 Local authorities should review the most effective deployment of social work resources and personnel.

*6.2 Local authorities, which cannot offer a career structure to attract and keep able and experienced social workers should come to an arrangement with the area health board to provide the service, by secondment if necessary.

*6.3 Social workers should be regularly consulted on the formulation and implementation of an accommodation programme.

*6.4 Because of the number of families and the many responsible authorities in the greater Dublin area, the local authorities and the Eastern Health Board should agree their respective responsibilities for the welfare of travellers.

*6.5 Where numbers warrant it staff, particularly social workers, should be assigned to work specially with travellers.

*6.6 Small sites for the most disadvantaged traveller families in the greater Dublin area should be provided as a matter of urgency

Additional day care facilities and a hostel for teenage girls are required.

*6.7 The National Council for Travelling People should encourage the formation of local traveller liaison committees, where they do not exist already, which would be composed of travellers and interested settled people. These groups would act in an advisory role to local authorities and health boards, and as pressure groups for the protection of travellers rights.

*6.8 Greater opportunities should be given to travellers to train as workers with their own people, e.g. as community workers, child care assistants and teachers' aids.

*6.9 Each site for travellers should have its own committee responsible for all aspects of the site and be representative of travellers, the local authority, the local community and the clergy.

*6.10 Greater attention needs to be given by church authorities to the pastoral needs of travellers and to educating the clergy about travellers and their way of life.

CHAPTER XI

BODY TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF TRAVELLERS

1 Need

1.1 The Review Body considers that there is need for a corporate body which would promote the general welfare of travellers. Responsibility for the services to travellers lies with at least six different Government Departments and, in addition, a number of other state agencies including local authorities and health boards. There is a role for a single body which would look at the total needs of travellers without detracting from the responsibility of any of the separate official agencies involved. The Review Body is of the opinion that the responsibility for services to travellers must remain with the bodies which have a statutory duty to provide such services, but that this responsibility should be underwritten by introducing a specialist body with a primary interest in services for travellers.

1.2 The main role of the proposed body would be to accelerate and smooth the progress towards the resolution of problems faced and posed by travellers. This role would involve ensuring co-ordination of services for travellers and pressing the agencies responsible to maintain the level of commitment necessary to overcome obstacles and resistance to effective implementation of policies. The severity of the problems encountered by travelling people and, indeed, by settled communities in dealing with travellers, can easily be lost sight of by agencies whose responsibilities range over wider and more general problems. Consequently, services for travellers can be regarded, perhaps, as peripheral. The absence of sufficient commitment and application in the past to the implementation of policy to the full, dictates the need for a special body to promote the welfare of travellers.

1.3 The body envisaged should have as its main objective the promotion of the welfare of travellers by working towards the elimination of discrimination against them; ensuring proper co-ordination of government programmes to assist them; assessing and reporting on the implementation of such programmes; advising on the needs for programmes and promoting appreciation of the rights and obligations of both traveller and settled people. It should, ultimately, work towards the achievement of a situation where the disadvantages of the travelling people no longer exist to any great extent and where the

2 Functions

2.1 In order to achieve this, the body should have the following functions:—

(a) to advise any Minister of the Government or any state agency on matters relating to the accommodation, education and welfare of travellers in general or in specific cases;
(b) to establish the extent of discrimination against travellers and make recommendations on their legal protection;
(c) to carry out a review, on its own initiative or on request from the Taoiseach or any Minister, of legislation, policy or administrative practice which is impeding the elimination of discrimination against travellers;
(d) to provide an information service to travellers and the public on the legal rights and entitlements of both traveller and settled people;
(e) to undertake or assist others in undertaking programmes of public education about travellers, and programmes for informing travellers of their rights and obligations and the rights, obligations and concerns of settled people;
(f) to promote research on aspects of traveller life-styles, traditions and trends in the social, political, cultural and other fields;
(g) to contribute to progressive voluntary efforts in the field of traveller welfare where no official agency has a clear responsibility to do so;
(h) to promote the development and maintenance of traveller representative forums and traveller community activities;
(i) to issue an annual report to the Taoiseach for presentation to, and debate in, the Houses of the Oireachtas;
(j) to refer individual cases to the proposed ombudsman where grievances occur in the administration of services for travellers.

2.2 The latter two functions set out in the foregoing could prove particularly worthwhile in the opinion of the Review Body. The annual report envisaged would incorporate an assessment of services and developments affecting traveller communities, based on annual returns from all the official agencies and departments involved in providing such services and such other sources as are considered reliable. The report would recommend where greater progress is necessary, highlighting such urgent matters as are deserving of widespread public consideration and swift solution.

2.3 The Review Body has opted to recommend use of the proposed ombudsman service to investigate and resolve individual grievances arising in the administration of services for travellers, as such a service will have a broad area of competence ranging over widely differing public services. The body being proposed to promote traveller welfare should be in a good position to refer grievance cases and cases of discrimination to the ombudsman. However, as the ombudsman service is not yet operational, the Review Body considers that an early review should be made of the operations of the ombudsman, after the commencement of the service, to determine whether or not a specialist ombudsman's service, or other appellate systems for dealing with

traveller grievances, is warranted. The Review Body is satisfied that the body proposed by it in this chapter could undertake this review as it is within its proposed functions to investigate, advise and recommend on policy matters relating to traveller welfare.

2.4 Structure

The proposed body should be set up under statute with the power to hold land, borrow money, sue and be sued and appoint staff. It should consist of about twelve members, including some travellers nominated by recognised traveller representative forums. Other members should represent the main statutory bodies responsible for services for travellers, voluntary organisations and the public interests. The body should be set up under the aegis of the Taoiseach to give emphasis to its concern for all aspects of travellers' welfare. The body must be adequately funded and should have a modestly staffed secretariat, including a chief executive and appropriate specialist personnel to carry out its functions. It should be able to commission research or employ consultants for specific purposes.

*3 Recommendations

*3.1 The Review Body recommends the establishment of a corporate body with the following objectives:—

(a) to promote the welfare of travellers;
(b) to work towards the elimination of discrimination against travellers;
(c) to monitor and assess the effectiveness of programmes to assist travellers, recommending further action as necessary;
(d) to operate a referral system to the ombudsman or other appropriate statutory agency for the redress of individual or group grievances or discrimination;
(e) to ensure a co-ordinated approach to traveller services by government agencies responsible;
(f) to promote a greater appreciation between traveller and settled people of each others rights and concerns.

APPRECIATION

The Review Body expresses its thanks to the Secretary, Paul Griffin. He provided us with the secretarial and organisational support without which it would have been impossible to complete our task. Despite the heavy demands we placed upon him during the last two years, he always resolved our difficulties quickly and courteously. We are very grateful for his hard work and commitment.

RESERVATION BY WALTER MacEVILLY

THE CORPORATE BODY RECOMMENDED TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF TRAVELLERS

On a purely personal basis, I make this reservation on the corporate body recommended to promote the welfare of travellers. On general principle I am opposed to the proliferation of bureaucratic undertakings. Further, bodies of the kind proposed and lacking in any real power or authority are usually ineffective, and their roles can be in conflict with those of existing statutory authorities having clear duties and responsibilities.

In any event, I consider the proposed body to be unnecessary. In basic practical terms the primary problem now existing in relation to travellers is that of providing accommodation for some 1,300 families in caravans on the roadside. When looked at in its totality it seems very large. However, a different picture emerges when the distribution of it throughout the country is looked at. Galway with over 100 roadside families has a particular problem because it is a county that always had exceptionally large numbers of travellers. Dublin, with over 400 families, has a problem for quite different reasons, namely the unprecedented influx of travellers to its area over a number of years. As far as the remainder of the country is concerned the problem within each county is, in fact, quite small. The distribution of travellers is as follows:—

Number of Roadside Families	*Number of Counties*
From 1-10	3
From 11-20	5
From 20-30	10
From 30-40	8
Over 40	2

Considering the successful manner in which local authorities have undertaken responsibilities of greater complexity, it is a reflection on them to suggest that the establishment of a corporate body is necessary to monitor in some way the implementation of a programme to accommodate the travellers in their areas. The local authorities had considerable achievement in this work but there was evident slackening off in a number of areas for some years.

A rather unfortunate aspect of what has been taking place is that because of lack of provision for housing for them, married children of travellers long settled in houses are now taking to caravan living and starting another cycle of life on the road.

I agree that basic to services for the improvement of the lot of travellers is a programme of accommodation at national level and the adequate monitoring of it. The responsibility for this must rest primarily with the Minister for the Environment who is publicly accountable for it. The policy of the Minister over the years of generous subsidy to local authorities for certain projects coupled with encouragement and exhortation has not been sufficient to produce an effective overall programme of accommodation to meet present and anticipated future needs, the preparation of plans to meet them, the implementation of these plans, the monitoring of their progress, and when necessary the taking of action to correct them. Expectation that the proposed monitoring body will make good this deficiency is misplaced. Worse still, reliance on such a monitoring body can create dangerous complacency. The remedy lies in a fresh approach to the problem by the Minister and his Department.

COMMENTS AND RESERVATIONS BY RUTH BARRINGTON

1 I feel that our Report does not sufficiently emphasise the risks to the lives and health of traveller children arising from poor living conditions. There is very little quantitative information about the health of traveller children but two studies published in the last ten years in the Irish Medical Journal give cause for concern.

> The first (1) surveyed 92 traveller infants in a Galway hospital and found that 72 of these showed a significant fall in brain size and body weight between twelve and fifty-one weeks after birth, compared to normal patterns of infant development. The researchers considered that this failure to thrive was due to poor nutrition, particularly the low rate of breast feeding, accompanied by frequent episodes of infective diarrhoea.
>
> The second study (2) found that in a group of 108 traveller children aged between 2-13 years examined in Dublin, there was a consistent deficit in both height and weight at all ages when compared with a sample from the Dublin population.

These studies suggest that traveller children experience considerable physical disadvantages which could affect their health and abilities in later life. There is an urgent need for detailed research as we recommend on page 95 a) to establish the actual rate of infant and child mortality, the extent of physical undevelopment among children and the life expectancy of travellers and b) to pinpoint the reasons for any deviation from the standards of health enjoyed by the population as a whole. This kind of information is essential if health board programmes to improve the health of travellers are to be effective and secondly, to provide a yardstick by which progress can be judged.

2. I agree with the Chairman's reservations about the monitoring body proposed in Chapter XI of our Report. The responsibility for implementing our most important recommendations clearly lies with the Ministers for the Environment and Education and their Departments. The creation of a monitoring body on the lines proposed could obscure this responsibility.

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1. L. Carroll et al., 'Retarded Brain Growth in Irish Itinerants', *Journal of the Irish Medical Association,* January 26, 1974. Vol. 67, No. 2, 33-36.
2. Therese Creedon et al., 'Growth and Development in Travelling Families', *ibid.* October 25, 1975, Vol. 68, No. 19, 473-477.

3. The recommendation in paragraph 8.5 of Chapter VI is confused and misleading. It is not enough to say that:—

"Young people marrying from houses *should be dealt with as settled people* even if they have to live in trailers for some time while waiting for an allocation. (of a house). . ."

as with few exceptions, 'settled people' do not take to the roads in a caravan at marriage. It is obvious that traveller families who do take to the road should not be penalised under housing authority letting schemes but I feel we should have gone further in our recommendations to ensure that they are housed as early as possible.

In the context of the housing programme which we recommend, it is essential that young families are offered housing at the earliest possible opportunity but particularly before their children reach school going age. The shorter the period on the road, the greater is the success with housing. The children benefit by being able to attend their local school from the beginning and the need for compensating education is reduced.

4. I regret that greater use was not made in our Report of the information on travellers provided by the Economic and Social Research Institute from the Census of Travellers undertaken in November/December 1981.

RESERVATION BY EILEEN McARDLE

BODY TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF TRAVELLERS

I agree with the conclusion in the Report that there is a role for a single body which would look at the total needs of travellers without detracting from the responsibility of any of the separate official agencies presently obliged to provide statutory services. I have reservations, however, about the format of the proposed body. To my mind, a corporate body comprising 12 members with a secretariat employing its own specialist staff would be over elaborate and unwieldy for its purpose.

A variety of ways come to mind for arrangements to carry out the range of functions intended. My preference would be to incorporate the focal point for all aspects of traveller welfare into the structure of a National Agency such as that recommended by the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty in their Final Report*, with functions in relation to the whole field of poverty and social deprivation and their underlying causes. Failing that, a small liaison committee with official and voluntary representation, under an independent Chairman, could be effective; or the possibility of a formal official status and function for the voluntary National Council for Travelling People could be explored in consultation with that Council. These and other possible alternatives to a special corporate body could be considered.

Signed:

Walter MacEvilly, (Chairman)

Ruth Barrington

J. F. Barry

Victor Bewley

Dominic Burke

Colette Dwyer

Frederick Donohue

Thomas Fehily

Brian Fitzpatrick

Desmond Flanagan

Michael Flynn

Seamus Keating

Paul Griffin
Secretary

Matthew Larkin

Eileen McArdle

Nell McDonagh

Eric McGrath

Patrick Murtagh

Michael O'Connor

John O'Gorman

Nicholas Rice

Tom Sherlock

Joyce Sholdice

Catherine Vaughan

Date: 14/2/83

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Select Bibliography on Irish Travellers.

Appendix B

Annual Counts of Travellers for years 1978, 1979 and 1980 by type of accommodation occupied.

Appendix C

Extract from Report of Commission on Itinerancy, 1963—Chapter 9, Pages 61, 62 and 63. Recommendations on Housing.

Appendix D

Pilot Employment Project, St. Kieran's Enterprises (Sandyford, Co. Dublin).

Appendix E

Social Workers Employed to Work with Travellers by County at June, 1982.

Appendix F

Sites developed by Local Authorities for Traveller Families.

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APPENDIX B

ANNUAL COUNTS OF TRAVELLER FAMILIES

County — Type of Accommodation	*Standard Housing*			*Chalets on Serviced Sites*			*Trailers on Authorised Sites*			*Roadside*			*TOTAL*			*Transients*			*Traders*	
	'78	*'79*	*'80*	*'78*	*'79*	*'80*	*'78*	*'79*	*'80*	*'78*	*'79*	*'80*	*'78*	*'79*	*'80*	*'78*	*'79*	*'80*	*'79*	*'80*
Carlow	17	19	18	3	3	3	—	—	—	11	20	30	31	42	51	5	8	14	—	—
Cavan	3	5	5	2	2	2	—	—	—	16	17	12	21	24	19	3	10	3	—	—
Clare	10	17	19	14	10	9	4	6	5	26	26	33	54	59	66	6	2	7	4	7
Cork (City)	41	42	45	5	7	3	—	—	—	11	19	35	57	68	83	5	9	23	—	—
Cork (County)	37	40	40	—	1	1	3	2	2	28	33	33	71	76	76	7	16	16	—	—
Donegal	16	17	21	8	6	8	2	4	2	21	26	20	47	53	51	2	11	2	—	—
Dublin	68	80	80	120	144	141	1	20	42	198	210	310	387	454	573	—	15	15	17	—
Galway (City)	41	45	45	4	4	2	16	11	9	13	20	19	74	84	75	6	8	6	—	—
Galway (County)	48	55	73	16	16	15	—	—	—	86	87	92	150	158	180	—	1	3	22	34
Kerry	54	57	59	2	3	3	10	12	10	38	37	28	110	111	110	25	16	4	5	—
Kildare	8	8	6	2	2	2	—	—	—	19	34	34	29	44	42	10	14	21	14	42
Kilkenny	10	13	10	5	3	2	—	2	1	17	17	12	32	35	25	15	13	9	—	—
Laois	5	7	9	—	2	2	—	—	—	20	25	16	25	34	27	13	17	13	5	—
Leitrim	11	15	14	—	—	—	—	—	8	13	6	8	24	21	30	7	4	5	—	—
Limerick (City)	28	26	26	2	1	7	12	7	10	20	15	33	62	49	76	11	15	18	8	—
Limerick (County)	37	42	39	5	2	—	2	12	5	29	31	44	73	88	88	3	11	12	—	—
Longford	29	31	32	8	8	8	—	—	7	28	35	22	65	74	69	5	2	2	—	—
Louth	32	32	31	14	19	20	—	—	1	42	41	23	88	92	75	27	15	8	—	—
Mayo	55	56	64	—	—	—	5	3	5	25	32	24	85	91	93	—	—	7	—	3
Meath	19	21	23	4	3	—	—	—	—	49	45	69	72	69	92	15	11	24	—	—
Monaghan	11	19	19	5	1	—	—	3	3	18	13	13	34	36	35	2	3	2	—	—
Offaly	24	27	27	14	23	17	—	—	—	29	21	39	67	71	83	6	3	12	—	—
Roscommon	16	16	20	2	1	—	10	11	12	14	18	23	42	46	55	4	4	12	—	—
Sligo	14	12	11	—	—	—	—	5	1	13	9	21	27	26	33	7	4	5	3	1
Tipperary NR	23	28	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	38	20	26	61	48	51	28	13	12	—	—
Tipperary SR	11	15	16	—	1	—	—	—	—	25	36	34	36	52	50	13	14	—	2	—
Waterford (City)	20	22	23	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	8	9	23	30	32	1	4	6	—	—
Waterford (County)	1	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	9	6	8	16	13	2	4	4	—	—
Westmeath	48	55	57	8	3	4	—	—	—	20	42	24	76	100	85	—	23	1	10	—
Wexford	48	50	66	6	4	4	2	6	8	50	26	26	106	86	104	27	4	5	—	—
Wicklow	10	16	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	40	31	31	56	48	4	8	8	—	—
Totals	805	902	957	250	269	253	67	104	131	946	1018	1149	2068	2293	2490	259	282	279	90	87

Source: Annual Counts of Traveller Families.

APPENDIX C

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITINERANCY

Recommendations on Housing — Chapter 9

15. The immediate objective should be to provide dwellings as soon as possible for all itinerant families who desire to settle. Eventually the example given by those who successfully settle should encourage the remainder to leave the road.

16. In so far as the number of dwellings which each local authority might fairly be called upon to provide for itinerant families is concerned, the Commission are not in a position to recommend hard and fast rules, but in the absence of any other measure of assessment it is suggested that reference might be had to the figures obtaining from the expressed preferences of the families themselves on the date of the first census as set out in Appendix XXXIX.

17. Local authorities should be asked as a first step to list at regular intervals the itinerant families in their area and have them contacted whenever vacancies arise in their housing estates so that applications from them can be considered on the merits for the vacancies so arising.

18. As itinerant families are living in totally unfit and overcrowded conditions, applications from itinerant families for housing should be given priority and, if required, new legislation for this purpose should be considered.

19. The requirements of itinerant families regularly in their area should be taken into consideration by housing authorities in assessing housing needs and devising housing programmes.

20. It would be undesirable that dwellings for itinerant families should be isolated from those of the rest of the community. They should for educational, economic and social reasons be convenient to community centres.

21. Itinerants should be sought out regularly for the purpose of ascertaining their housing desires, as their illiteracy and way of life makes it very difficult for them to be aware of housing vacancies or to make application for them. While it is appreciated that difficulties and objections will be met in the early years from many members of the settled population, it is not considered that there is any alternative to a

positive drive for housing itinerants if a permanent solution of the problem of itinerancy, based on absorption and integration, is to be achieved.

22. Housing authorities should recognise that itinerant families to whom they let dwellings will have difficulty in adapting themselves to the new way of life. Regular contact should be maintained with each family housed so as to take whatever steps are necessary to assist in the integration process. It is not improbable that some itinerants will not occupy for the whole year the dwellings which have been allotted to them and the tolerance of the housing authority in the early years in overlooking absences for short spells would assist in their eventual absorption.

23. Housing authorities dealing with problems which arise in connection with itinerant tenants should not permit themselves to be easily discouraged by the difficulties they will certainly experience in the early years. The problems that local authorities will have to face in this task should not be insuperably greater than those so successfully faced by many local authorities in slum clearance.

24. Letting agreements between local authorities and itinerant tenants should include provision giving the local authority a right of entry to abate all nuisances created or permitted by the tenants on the property let and to prevent any other misuse of the premises internally or externally.

25. So far as may be feasible in built-up areas or group housing schemes, tenants who were itinerants should not be housed together in groups of more than two or three families. Itinerant families, while not completely isolated from other itinerant families, should be free from any feeling that they are being placed in a reservation. At the same time the other tenants should not feel that they cannot cope with the number of itinerants settled down among them or feel oppressed by their numbers.

In other cases care should be taken not to place itinerants in houses in remote or out of the way places. These houses should be situated close to villages or other groupings of dwellings provided under the Housing (or Labourers) Acts.

26. The Commission have considered but rejected, a suggestion that substandard dwellings should either be built, reconstructed or otherwise provided for itinerants for a probationary period. Collections of such substandard dwellings would quickly degenerate into shanty towns and create new and greater problems. Singly or collectively, the deliberate provision of substandard dwellings for itinerants would stigmatise those persons as inferior beings and could only widen the gap already existing between them and the settled population.

Source: Chapter IX, Pages 61 to 63 of Report of the Commission on Itinerancy.

APPENDIX D

ST. KIERAN'S ENTERPRISE CENTRE
Sandyford Industrial Estate, Co. Dublin

St. Kieran's Enterprise Centre is a pilot scheme in a national programme for the employment of travelling people.

It is a private trust, which is erecting 16,000 sq. ft. of industrial space in Sandyford Industrial Estate. It will be subdivided into six units which will be leased to employers who will employ travellers or used by the Centre itself.

The project has been developed by a *Management Committee* composed of representatives of the travelling people, the Industrial Development Authority, the Bank of Ireland and of professionals.

Features of the Project:

i It will *provide 80 jobs* when it is in full operation.

ii These jobs are *productive longterm jobs* in commercially viable and growing enterprises. A continuing subsidy will not be required.

iii At least 50% of these jobs will be for young *travellers* (aged 18-25), who are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Ireland.

iv There will be training opportunities as well as facilities for general education provided, for all the workers involved.

v The Centre will be a place where young travellers and settled people will work alongside each other under normal commercial working conditions.

vi It is intended that the Centre will be a showpiece and demonstration unit for employers who wish to hire travellers. It will be an invaluable *cornerstone of a placement campaign* in the future.

vii The Centre will *add to the infrastructure of the economy* as it is aimed especially at young people starting off in industry for themselves. Promoters are expected to grow within the Centre and to move out into bigger units eventually, freeing the space for new projects and providing new employment.

viii The Centre will also be running a professional advisory service for a national programme of employment for the travelling people. Already, two projects in Carlow and Galway have been initiated by the St. Kieran's Enterprise Centre, to provide 14 new jobs. *The Centre provides the management dynamic in the job creation programme.*

Incentives

Suitable projects will be induced into the Centre with a package of

i A subsidised rental, that will be much more competitive than the normal market rates.
ii Access to small factory units, which are currently in short supply and are most suitable to entrepreneurs starting off.
iii Training grants, that take into account the special needs of the travellers.
iv Secretarial and book-keeping services, provided at competitive rates.
v Management support and monitoring, vital for young business people starting off for the first time.

These incentives will be offered in addition to the normal I.D.A. incentives for small industries.

Finance

Current Budget: By 1984, the Project will be financially self-sufficient, with income rentals, management charges, service charges, and I.D.A. feasibility grants for project research.

Finance for Commercial Projects: Private promoters induced into the Centre will finance their projects in the normal fashion through grants, own funds and bank loans.

The business co-operatives started by the Centre will require a capital injection from the Centre itself. A total of £22,750 would be needed for the Galway, Carlow and Metal Shelving Projects.

APPENDIX E

SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING WITH TRAVELLERS AS AT 1/6/1982

	Local Authorities	Health Board	Total
Carlow		1*	1
Cavan		1	1
Clare			—
Cork — Corporation	1		—
— Co. Council	3*		4
Donegal		2*	2
Dublin — Corporation	5		—
— Co. Council	3		8
Galway — Corporation	2		—
— Co. Council	3		5
Kerry		1	1
Kildare	1*		1
Kilkenny	1		1
Laois			—
Leitrim	1		1
Limerick — Corporation	1		—
— Co. Council	2		3
Longford		1	1
Louth — Dundalk U.D.C.	1		1
— Drogheda Corporation			—
Mayo	2		2
Meath	1		1
Monaghan	1		1
Offaly	1		1
Roscommon	1		1
Sligo	1		1
Tipperary N.R.	1		1
Tipperary S.R.		1	1
Waterford — City			—
— County			—
Westmeath			—
Wexford	1		1
Wicklow	1		1
Total	34	7	41

*Part-time or where social workers deal with other people or only deal with the travellers as the need arises.

APPENDIX F

SITE FACILITIES FOR TRAVELLERS 1966-1982

Location	*Year*	*Facilities*	*Present Position*
Newbridge, Kildare Co. Council	1966	Hard standing for 4 caravans, sanitary block, covered store and paddock for animals.	Site replaced by 2 five-roomed dwellings (1976).
Rathkeale, Limerick, Co. Council	1966	Hard standing for 14 caravans and communal sanitary block	Proposal to develop a new site with hard standing for 8 caravans beside the existing site. Existing site to be used for travellers in the area from October to April.
Labre Park, Ballyfermot, Dublin Corporation	1968	Hard standing for 39 caravans with one-roomed dwellings alongside community hall, school and caretakers.	A phased replacement of the structures by four-roomed dwellings is in progress (20 replaced to date).
Mahon, Blackrock, Cork Corporation	1968	Hard standing for 6 caravans. Communal toilet block. Site was too isolated and was abandoned.	Site has been refurbished and is being used by travellers again due to the fact that it is now less isolated as a result of city extension and development.
Loughrea, Galway Co. Council	1968	Hard standing for 8 caravans with two-roomed dwellings alongside, communal sanitary facilities and paddock for animals.	Site now comprises 9 self-contained four-roomed dwellings.
Rahoon, Rockbarton, Newcastle and Tuam Road, Galway Corporation	1969	4 sites for 17 families in all provided in 1969. These were of a temporary nature and comprised hard stands and chemical-type toilets.	Caravans parked on unofficial sites at Rahoon, Newcastle and Tuam Road. No caravans at Rockbarton.
Avila Park, Finglas, Dublin Corporation	1969	20 one-roomed dwellings and a community centre.	Structures to be demolished shortly and replaced by bungalows.
Fair Green, Dundalk U.D.C.	1970	22 one-roomed dwellings. Community Centre added in 1975.	18 dwellings left on site. Proposal to replace them with 12 two, three and four bedroomed houses.
Miltown-Grove, Shinrone, Offaly Co. Council.	1971	12 one-roomed dwellings with communal sanitary block. Community centre.	Dwellings being replaced by bungalows. First stage: erection of 7 bungalows is in progress.

APPENDIX F

SITE FACILITIES FOR TRAVELLERS 1966-1982—continued

Location	*Year*	*Facilities*	*Present Position*
Dromgoold, Enniscorthy, Wexford, Co. Council.	1971	6 two-roomed dwellings.	2 demolished. Council intends to phase out the remainder.
Abbeyfeale, Limerick Co. Council	1971	6 two-roomed dwellings.	Converted into 6 six-roomed houses in 1975 being part of a local authority housing development.
Clonlong and Rhebogue, Limerick Corporation	1971	Hard standing on each site for 4 caravans.	Replaced by 4 bungalows at Rhebogue and 3 at Clonlong in 1980.
Gortakeegan, Monaghan Co. Council	1971/75	11 three-roomed dwellings with small community centre.	Now being converted to a halting site for families passing through.
Doughiska, Galway County Council	1972	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Unchanged.
Tuam Road, Galway, Galway Corporation	1972	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Vacated and vandalised. Demolished by Corporation.
Rathbraughan, Sligo Co. Council	1972	4 three-roomed dwellings and communal sanitary block.	Dwellings abandoned. Two used for work training of travellers at present.
Alexandereid, Navan, Meath Co. Council	1972	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Recently replaced by two standard houses.
Nangor Road, Clondalkin, Dublin Co. Council	1973	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Site closed with the opening of site at Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin in 1979.
Cara Park, Coolock, Dublin Corporation	1973	37 four-roomed dwellings and a community centre.	Unchanged.
Ballinasloe, Ballinasloe U.D.C.	1973	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Unchanged.
Ballyogan, Carrickmines, Dublin Co. Council	1973	4 three-roomed dwellings.	Due for replacement but conversion into a major parking site has been considered.
Kilbarry, Ballybeg, Waterford Corporation	1973	1 one-bedroomed dwelling, 3 four-roomed dwellings and 2 five-roomed dwellings erected with temporary planning permission (5 years).	Site closed and buildings dismantled in 1979. Families given local authority houses.
Gaurus, Ennis, Clare Co. Council	1974	4 three-roomed dwellings.	For replacement by 4 bungalows.

Ashline, Ennis, Clare Co. Council.	1974	4 three-roomed dwellings.	2 dwellings left on site.
Watery Road, Ennis, Clare Co. Council	1974	6 three-roomed dwellings.	5 dwellings left on site.
Ballyvolane Road, Cork, Cork Corporation	1974	6 four-roomed dwellings.	Demolished by the Corporation. Families given local authority houses.
Model Farm Road, Cork, Cork Corporation	1974	6 four-roomed dwellings.	Vacated and vandalised. Site closed by the Corporation.
Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin Co. Council	1974	4 three-roomed dwellings.	For replacement by 4 bungalows in 1982.
Strokestown Road, Longford, Longford U.D.C.	1974	4 four-roomed dwellings.	Now comprises 8 four-roomed dwellings.
Kilbogget, Cabinteely, Dublin Co. Council	1975	4 four-roomed dwellings.	For replacement by 4 bungalows in 1982.
Holylands, Rathfarnham, Dublin Corporation	1976	15 four-roomed dwellings.	Unchanged.
Cement Road, Drogheda, Drogheda U.D.C.	1977	6 four-roomed dwellings.	4 occupied. 1 in need of repair. 1 vacant.
Black Ash, Cork (S) Co. Council	1978	Hard standing for 6 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Two more units to be added.
Ballyfree, Sligo Co. Council	1978	Hard standing for 8 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.
Dubber Cross, Dublin Corporation	1979	Hard standing for 21 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.
Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin Corporation	1979	40 four-roomed dwellings.	Vacated and vandalised. Currently under restoration.
Dunsink Lane, Dublin Corporation	1980	Hard standing for 20 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.
Strokestown Road, Longford U.D.C.	1980	Hard standing for 12 caravans with sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.
Cara Park, Coolock, Dublin Corporation	1981	Hard standing for 20 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.
Killerney, Roscommon, Co. Council	1982	Hard standing for 16 caravans. Individual sanitary facilities.	Unchanged.