29th April, 1980

TO EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD:

Dear Member,

I desire to inform you that the next meeting of the Board will be held in the Nurses’ Home, St. Brigid’s Hospital, Ballinasloe, County Galway, at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 5th May, 1980. Agenda is as set out hereunder.

You are hereby requested to attend.

Yours sincerely,

E. Hannan
Chief Executive Officer.

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer.

2. Verification of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 8th April, 1980 – copy herewith.


5. To consider Draft Constitution for proposed Association of Health Board Members – copy herewith.


7. Recommendations from Local Health Committees
   (1) Galway Meeting of 1st February, 1980 –
       (a) “That the Western Health Board again re-examine the question of paying an allowance to persons for caring for aged or disabled relatives.”

       (b) “That this Committee ask the Western Health Board to call on the Minister for Health and Social Welfare to establish Voluntary Bodies to advise him of necessitious cases which might be excluded from benefit by Regulations governing the Granting of Social Welfare Benefits.”

........2/
7. (2) Mayo Meeting of 22nd February, 1980 -
(a) "That the Board considers an amendment to the Home Help Scheme to allow a relative to qualify for a payment where a doctor certifies that the person cared for would otherwise require institutional care."

3. Roscommon Meeting of 17th April, 1980 -
(a) "That the Roscommon Local Health Committee requests the Western Health Board to recommend to the Minister for Social Welfare that the conditions applying for payment of an allowance to a Prescribed Relative be extended to allow for payment where the relative is a daughter or daughter-in-law residing in the house with and providing full-time care and attention for the pensioner."

To consider Minutes of Meeting of Board's Standing Committee as follows:
(a) General Hospital Care - 29th February, 1980 - copy herewith.

Chief Executive Officer's Progress Report:
(a) Disposal of former Dispensary Residence at Lahardane, County Mayo, to Dr. J.V. Loftus.
(b) Request from Mr. T. Leyden, T.D., M.C.C., Castlecoote, Roscommon, for facilities to visit patients and Staff at St. Patrick's Hospital, Castlerea and St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe.
(c) Proposed Federation of County Hospital, Roscommon with Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe.
Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, who presided.


Professor J. Flynn, Mr. B. Murphy, Dr. E. O'Byrne and Mr. P. Flynn.

Messrs. E. Hannan, Chief Executive Officer; P. McDaid, S. O'Donoghue and C. Crowley, Programme Managers; L. Reidy, Administrator, St. Mary's Hospital, Castlebar and J. O'Leary, Secretary.

The Opening Prayer was recited in Irish by the Chief Executive Officer.

On the proposal of Dr. T. R. Cahill, seconded by Miss M. Byrne, resolutions of sympathy were passed with the following:

(a) Councillor M. Finn, Board Member, on the death of his mother-in-law;
(b) Alderman F. Coogan, Board Member, on the death of his wife;
(c) Professor Brian McNicholl, Consultant Paediatrician, Galway Regional Hospital, on the death of his brother;
(d) Mrs. N. Brady, Newtown, Castlebar, on the death of her sister, Miss P. Deveraux;
(e) Dr. T. Staunton, Consultant Physician, General Hospital, Castlebar, on the death of his mother;
(f) Mrs. Kathleen O'Hara, Staff Nurse, County Hospital, Roscommon, on the death of her husband; and
(g) Nurse Mauro Conway, Galway Regional Hospital, on the death of her father.

The Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of all members of the Staff and on his own behalf, associated himself with the resolutions of sympathy.

On the proposal of Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, seconded by Councillor E. Haverty, the congratulations of the Board were extended to Deputy Padraig Flynn, Board Member, on his recent appointment as Minister of State at the
Department of Transport. Deputy P. O'Toole and Councillor M. Finn associated themselves with the vote of congratulation, as did the Chief Executive Officer on behalf of all sections of the Staff and on his own behalf.

On the proposal of Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, seconded by Miss M. Byrne, the Board congratulated Miss Claire Doherty, Clerk/Typist, Department of Haematology, Regional Hospital, Galway, on being selected as the Irish Times Typist of the Year, 1980.

On the proposal of Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, seconded by Deputy P. J. Morley, Vice Chairman, best wishes for a speedy recovery from his illness were extended to Councillor T. McGarry, Board Member. The Chief Executive Officer associated himself with the resolution.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Board held on 3rd March, 1980, copies of which were circulated to each Member on 1st April, 1980, were adopted on the proposal of Miss M. Byrne, seconded by Mr. T. O'Baoill, and then signed by the Chairman.

The Chief Executive Officer's report, circulated to each Member on 1st April, 1980, giving particulars of increased Disabled Persons (Maintenance) Allowances, Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Allowances, Infectious Diseases (Maintenance) Allowances and Blind Welfare Allowances, was considered. The total cost of the increases in the current financial year was estimated at £613,264 (six hundred and thirteen thousand, two hundred and sixty four pounds), and would be met in full by way of additional allocation from State funds.

On the proposal of Deputy P. J. Morley, Vice Chairman, seconded by Dr. M. J. Gilvarry, the additional expenditure required to defray the increased allowances was approved. In reply to Deputy P. O'Toole, the Chief Executive Officer stated that he had received no communication from the Mayo County Manager regarding the inability of Mayo County Council to meet its Statutory demand of three hundred and fifty thousand, one hundred and seventy eight pounds for Supplementary Welfare. On the proposal of Deputy P. J. Morley, seconded by Councillor P. Concannon, it was decided to defer discussion on the matter until a communication was received from Mayo County Council, the Chief Executive Officer having referred to the local authority's obligations under Section 20 of the Social Welfare (Supplementary Welfare Allowances) Act of 1975 which came into force on 1st July, 1977.
Establishment of the Postgraduate Medical and Dental Board:

Copies of a letter dated 22nd February, 1980 and Booklets prepared by the Department of Health entitled Guide for Hospital Managements and Guide to help Patients and Visitors, and circulated to each Member on 1st April, 1980 were noted. The Chief Executive Officer stated that the Booklets were prepared following a report submitted by a Working Group appointed by the Minister for Health in December, 1977, of which Mr. C. Crowley, Programme Manager General Hospital Care was a member. The recommendations contained in the Guide for Hospital Managements would be followed as appropriate in the Board's institutions.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that a new body entitled the Postgraduate Medical and Dental Board was recently established in accordance with the provisions of the Medical Practitioners Act, 1978, having as its functions the promotion of the development of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education and Training and the co-ordination of such developments, to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the development and co-ordination of such education and training and to provide career guidance for doctors and dentists. The board replaced the former non-statutory Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education. There was provision for twenty five members on the board, twenty four of whom had been appointed. Professor C.F. McCarthy, Consultant Physician, Galway Regional Hospital, was the only representative from the West of Ireland.

On the proposal of Deputy P. J. Morley, Vice Chairman, seconded by Miss M. Byrne, Professor McCarthy was congratulated on his appointment and the Minister for Health was called upon to fill the vacancy with a representative from the West of Ireland.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that the Meeting between Officers of the Board, representatives from Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, Comhaíre na nOspideal and the Department of Health had been held in Athlone on Tuesday, 11th March, 1980 regarding the arrangements for the proposed federation between Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe and County Hospital, Roscommon. A further Meeting had been arranged for Wednesday, 9th April, 1980, between the Medical Staffs of the Board and Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, presided over by a Medical Officer from the Department of Health, to examine duty rosters for Maternity and Paediatric services in the context of the federation.

On the proposal of Councillor D. Bruen, seconded by
Councillor P. Concannon, discussion was deferred pending the outcome of the meeting. Councillor Concannon emphasised the necessity for a speedy decision arising from the increased workload at the County Hospital, Roscommon and the need to make appropriate Consultant appointments.

(a) Community Care

Minutes of Meeting of Community Care Standing Committee held on 14th December, 1979, copies of which were circulated to each Member with the Agenda on 1st April, 1980, were considered, noted and recommendations therein approved on the proposal of Councillor J. Molloy, seconded by Mrs. C. Fallon.

(b) Psychiatric and Geriatric Care

Minutes of Meeting of Psychiatric and Geriatric Care Standing Committee held on 23rd January, 1980, copies of which were circulated to each Member with the Agenda on 1st April, 1980, were considered, noted and recommendations therein approved on the proposal of Mr. T. O'Baoill, seconded by Councillor E. Haverty.

The Chief Executive Officer reported as follows:

(1) No Smoking Campaign

Supplies of the "Conquest" Stop-Smoking Kit were now available and samples were distributed at the Meeting. These would also be available for distribution by the voluntary organisations, the Board's own Health Education Staff and secondary schools.

Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, congratulated the Ballintubber National School, Castlerea, County Roscommon and the Stella Maris Secondary School, Ballycastle, County Mayo, on winning first places in their categories in the National Finals of the "Smoking or Health" Art Competition, having earlier been successful in the competitions organised in the Board's area.

(2) Health and Welfare Information Booklet

A revised edition of the Health and Welfare Information Booklet dated October, 1979, prepared by a Working Group representative of the eight Health Boards was now available, and copies were circulated at the Meeting.

(3) Consultant Medical Staff as at 31st March, 1980

Particulars of Consultant Medical Staff Complements
employed by the Board as at 31st March, 1980, were
circulated with the Agenda on 1st April, 1980. The
Chief Executive Officer stated that the Vacant posts
of Consultant Anaesthetist and Consultant Radiologist
for the County Hospital, Roscommon, had not yet been
advertised by the Local Appointments Commission.
These posts had been approved in the context of the
federation of Roscommon County Hospital and
Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, but had not yet
been funded.

The following motions, notice of which had been duly
given, were considered:

(a) Proposed by Alderman M. D. Higgins and seconded by
Councillor J. Burke:

"That the Board take emergency measures to
reduce overcrowding at the Maternity Section
of Galway Regional Hospital."

In proposing the motion, Alderman Higgins stated
that he was much impressed by the quality of service
given by the nursing staff of the Maternity Department
of Galway Regional Hospital, despite gross over­crowd­
ing in the Department. Good practices were
frustrated by lack of space and adequate facilities.
When the unit was built thirty odd years ago, it
should have been possible to project the number of
births within its catchment area.

In seconding the motion, Councillor J. Burke proposed
that it be extended to provide for the incorporation
of the Grove Nursing Home, Tuam, into the system
until adequate facilities were provided in Galway.
The facilities in Tuam were used to less than 50% of
their capacity and their incorporation into the
system would enable others from North-East Galway to
convalesce there after their discharge from Galway
Regional Hospital, which, he claimed, occurred
commonly after two days' stay.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that in 1974, the
Department of Health approved of the provision of
twenty nine additional beds in the Maternity
Department of Galway Regional Hospital, as well as
out-patient, neo-natal and physiotherapy units. In
1977, approval for the additional beds was rescinded
on the basis of a decline in the number of births
projected. This decision was not accepted by the
Board, and in 1978, approval was again obtained for
the much-needed additional beds and facilities. At
its Meeting of 3rd March, 1980, the Board assigned a capital allocation of £100,000 (one hundred thousand pounds) notified by the Department of Health, to proposed extensions to the Maternity Department, Galway Regional Hospital. The final documentation in connection with the project would be ready for submission from the Board's Design Team to the Department of Health on 15th May, 1980, and the job could go to tender as soon as Departmental clearance came to hand. He expected that work on the project would commence in the Autumn of the current financial year.

The Chief Executive Officer rejected Councillor J. Burke's claim that patients were discharged prematurely from the Maternity Department. The decision to discharge a patient was taken by a Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, the average length of stay being five days. No patient in need of further hospital care was discharged. He recommended that the proposal to incorporate the Grove Nursing Home, Tuam into the system be examined by the General Hospital Care Standing Committee, having regard to its financial and staffing implications and this was agreed.

(b) Proposed by Alderman M. D. Higgins and seconded by Mrs. C. Fallon:

"That the Members of the Board be informed as to the average length of time between birth and fosterage of babies likely to become available for fosterage and that such measures as would ensure adequate bonding be instituted forthwith."

In proposing the motion, Alderman Higgins stated that there was a considerable body of research to show that the first years of life were of incalculable importance to the child's later development, and that many later adult problems could be traced to the early experience of the child and its mother.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that policy of the Health Board in relation to placing babies in fosterage was, in the interest of the babies concerned, to have placements made as soon as possible. A publicity campaign was carried out recently by the Board's social workers in support of this policy, as well as press advertisements, in an effort to obtain suitable foster parents. Delays in the placement of babies could be due to many reasons, for example, medical, delay of the natural mother in coming to a
decision, and difficulty, in particular cases, in obtaining suitable foster parents. The average length of time in arranging fosterage (where fostering is required) is two to three weeks, but this is sometimes exceeded, despite the best efforts of the Board's staff.

Dr. M. Clarke suggested that arrangements for fosterage might be made before the child was born.

Ms. K. Eastwood stated that there was no way of knowing if a baby required fosterage until it was born. In Castlebar General Hospital, the policy was to discharge the baby on the same day as its mother, so a decision in relation to fosterage had to be made by the mother within five days. Successful bonding between a baby and its foster parents also created problems when these babies were later placed for adoption. The natural mother was the only person who could make a decision in relation to adoption. This decision could not be made until the baby was at least six weeks old, and the mother could change her mind at any time up to two years. There was no reason to keep any child in hospital except for medical reasons. Keeping babies awaiting fosterage in hospital was an unfair burden on the nursing staff.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that every effort would continue to be made to attract additional suitable foster parents, and the Board's policy, as now operated, was not in conflict with the views expressed by the Members.

(c) Proposed by Alderman M. D. Higgins and seconded by Mrs. C. Fallon:

"That a special nursing provision be made to follow up babies born to members of the travelling community."

In introducing his motion, Alderman Higgins stated that follow-up care of babies born to members of the travelling community presented special difficulties, not unassociated with housing which was the responsibility of another authority. There were discontinuities in the service, which, he felt, was better some years ago than it was now. He knew of cases where such babies were not being provided with nappies, and gave as an example the difficulties of a mother attempting to provide one of her children with a gluten-free diet by the roadside. It would
be interesting to find out how the children of travellers up to five years of age compared with their equivalents in the settled community with regard to health.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that the Public Health Nursing service was organised in such a way that each nurse had responsibility for approximately two thousand five hundred persons. In relation to community nursing services, a very important element of that service was the monitoring and advising of mothers in relation to their infants. All nurses, district or hospital, were very aware of the special needs of the travelling community in this regard and they co-operate with the Board's other Community Care services, particularly medical, social and welfare services, and any appropriate voluntary organisations. In meeting these needs, Nurses also work closely with Social Workers appointed by the Local Authorities.

Supplies of infant food are provided and close contact is maintained with the mother by means of weekly visitation. He was not in favour of providing a special nursing provision exclusively for the travelling community, as there was already a special bias in favour of all vulnerable groups. He would arrange to draw the specific attention of Superintendent Public Health Nurses to this matter again. The District Nurses had discretion to contact the Community Welfare Officer for the provision of nappies in the same way as to deal with requirements for food, clothing, bedding, etc. The ratio of District Nurses to population had been increased significantly from 1:6,000 on the Board's establishment in April, 1971, to more than 1:2,500 at present, and he would continue to press for more funds to appoint additional district nurses.

The motion was withdrawn.

Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, made the following statement in relation to a meeting regarding Budget allocations for the current financial year, with Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., Minister for Health, on Wednesday, 2nd April, 1980 at 12 noon in the Conference Room, Department of Social Welfare, Dublin:

"Accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer, I attended a meeting with Dr. Michael Woods, T.D., Minister for Health, on 2nd April, 1980 in response
to his invitation dated 11th March, 1980. The Chairman and Chief Executive Officers of the other seven area Health Boards were also present. The meeting lasted four hours approximately, during which many matters pertaining to the Revenue Budgets of the area Health Boards and Capital Projects for the current year were discussed. It was pointed out to the Minister by each Chairman that the sum allocated was less than the minimum anticipated requirement of each Board, particularly in regard to the amount allowed for inflation. While the Minister was realistic in his responses to the views expressed by the various Chairmen, no promise was made by him of additional funds for the Revenue Budget in the current year.

In relation to Capital Finance, I raised specifically the question of the non-allocation of funds for the Swinford Project for the Mentally Handicapped, the Castlebar General Hospital Project and the new Orthopaedic Operating Theatres for Merlin Park Regional Hospital. I was assured that these projects were not abandoned but that the Capital Budget allocated by the Government for Health projects in the current year was so tight that starts could not be made on these jobs this year, and that they would be considered again for inclusion in the Capital Budget for 1981. Planning on these and other projects would proceed.

The Minister indicated that he would meet the Chairmen and the Chief Executive Officers again before the end of the current financial year."

The Chairman's report was noted, and it was decided to defer discussion until the Special Budget Meeting, due to be held at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 14th April, 1980 in the Boardroom, Merlin Park Regional Hospital.

Deputy P. J. Morley, Vice Chairman, stated that he had attended an exploratory meeting, convened by the Chairman of the South Eastern Health Board, at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday, 3rd April, 1980 at St. Brendan's Hospital, Dublin, with a view to the formation of an Association of Members of Area Health Boards. All the Health Boards were represented by one or two Members. Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, the Board's second representative, was unable to attend. A draft constitution, dealing with Members, Meetings and Executives, etc., was circulated at the Meeting and there was broad agreement with its content, subject to some slight adjustments. Copies of the draft
constitution would be circulated to each Member of the Board for consideration at the next monthly Meeting, due to be held on Monday, 5th May, 1980. Minutes of the exploratory meeting held on 3rd April, 1980 would be circulated to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of each Health Board. A further meeting was provisionally arranged for Thursday, 22nd May, 1980, by which time the Board could have decided on its policy in relation to the new association.

It was agreed to defer discussion on this matter until the draft constitution was circulated to the Members.

Before the Meeting concluded, Dr. T. R. Cahill, Chairman, seconded by Deputy P. J. Morley, Vice Chairman, thanked Miss Joan Mills, Matron, MacBrigde Home, Westport, and her staff for the arrangements made for holding the Meeting, and congratulated her on the excellent standards for the residents and appearance of the Home.

The Meeting then concluded.

SIGNED: E. HANNAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of the Western Health Board held on Monday, 5th May, 1980, at 3.00 p.m. in St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe, County Galway.

SIGNED: CHAIRMAN.
NURSES' DISPUTE - STATEMENT FOR BOARD MEETING OF 5TH MAY, 1980

On Thursday last, 1st May, 1980, members of the Board's nursing staff, i.e. members of the I.T. & G.W.U. and the P.N.A, withdrew their services at the Board's hospitals as follows:

Galway Regional Hospital,
Castlebar General Hospital,
St. Brendan's Home, Loughrea,
Swinford District Hospital,
Psychiatric Hospitals at Castlebar, Ballinasloe and Castlerea.

On Saturday, 3rd May, the I.T. & G.W.U. nursing staff members at Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway, withdrew their services.

The district nursing services in Mayo Community Care area have also been affected, where a minority of staff are on duty.

In the hospitals, serious disruption of nursing services has been caused. Outpatient clinics have been cancelled and the family doctors have been requested to send to hospital only emergency cases. The public have been asked to cooperate in this regard, and also in taking home their relatives.

The Labour Court is meeting again at 6.00 p.m. today, I understand, to consider this matter. I appeal to all the Board's nursing staff to return forthwith to normal duty and allow the industrial relations machinery to operate.

Signed:  E. Hannan,
Chief Executive Officer.
5th May, 1980
TO: EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD

29th April, 1980


Dear Member,

I enclose the Public Analyst's Report on the Services provided by his department for this Board for the last financial year ended 31st December, 1979.

It will be noted that there has been a considerable increase in the number of tests carried out in the Board's area on food samples, following the assignment of a Health Inspector in a full-time capacity to these specific duties.

The Public Analyst will be in attendance at our Meeting to answer any queries on his report.

Yours sincerely,

E. Hannan,
Chief Executive Officer.
I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report for 1979 for this Department which provides analytical services for the Western Health Board, North Western Health Board and the Mid-Western Health Board areas.

During the year a total of 11,468 samples of all kinds were tested, made up as follows:

- Food/Drugs: 2436
- Water/Effluents: 3567
- Air Pollution: 2798
- Miscellaneous: 2667

The samples are further classified in Table I below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Health Board</th>
<th>Food/Drugs</th>
<th>Water/Effluents</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway Corporation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Western Health Board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tipperary</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Western Health Board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midland Health Board</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offaly</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Table above contains some samples which were received from the Midland Health Board, South Eastern Health Board and Southern Health Board in the first three months of the year before the rearrangement of the areas was finalised.

The number of samples taken by health inspectors under the Food, Drugs & Health Acts per 1000 population, is given in Table 2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Food/Drugs</th>
<th>Water/Effluents</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GALWAY</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAYO</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSCOMMON</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN HEALTH BOARD</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH TIPPERARY</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLARE</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMERICK</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONEGAL</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEITRIM</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIGO</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOOD SAMPLING:

The number of food samples taken in 1979 in the three Health Board areas served by the Laboratory shows a 56% increase over 1978. The increase was made on this work in 1979 and it is hoped that it will continue in the coming years.
is due mainly to the introduction of food sampling plans in the Western Health Board area and North Tipperary. In the Western Health Board a health inspector was appointed to implement the plan throughout the three Counties and the success of this appointment can be seen in the increase in food sampling during the year. In 1978 the number of samples taken was 465 whereas in 1979 it was 1157 of which 698 were taken by the new appointee. In North Tipperary a similar plan was operated very successfully and its success has prompted the introduction of programmed sampling in Clare, Limerick and the three Counties of the North Western Health Board for 1980.

The basic objectives of the food sampling plan are:-

(a) To ensure that Food Legislation is enforced throughout the Region.
(b) To improve food sampling.
(c) To avoid duplication.
(d) To ensure that a wide variety of foods are sampled and that those which are likely to be adulterated receive special attention.
(e) To ensure that samples are taken in an ordered fashion to facilitate the work in the Laboratory.
(f) To assist in the compilation of statistical data for food composition and the levels of food additives and contaminants in the diet.

A good start has been made on this work in 1979 and it is hoped that it will be extended throughout the Region in the coming year. A tribute must be paid to the Programme Managers, Community Care, the Directors of Community Care/Medical Officers of Health and Health Inspectors without whose co-operation the development and implementation of these plans would not have been possible.

UNSATISFACTORY FOOD.

The overall percentage of unsatisfactory samples was 36% (134) for milk and 1.6% (29) for other foods. A total of 8 Certificates was issued in respect of infringements of the milk (Percentage of Milk fat and Milk solids) Regulations 1936 and one Certificate for minced meat which contained preservatives in contravention of the Health (Preservatives in Food) Regulations 1973. A summary of the unsatisfactory samples is given below.
WESTERN HEALTH BOARD.

A sample of flour was found to be infested with live mites.

A sample of ice cream was deficient in fat.

69 samples of milk were deficient in either fat or non-fatty-solids.

A sample of Dried Milk contained a small beetle.

Dirty milk bottles continue to be a problem as shown by the following substances found:

- 6 contained general dirt adhering to the bottom of the bottles.
- One contained 17g. of sand/cement.
- 2 contained vegetable matter.
- 2 contained black mouldy organic matter.

An objectionable odour in two samples was found to be due to charring of the carton during heat sealing.

MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD.

A sample of Pancakes had some mixed herbs embedded in the dough.

A tin of shrimps had dried vegetable matter in it.

A tin of fruit cocktail showed considerable evidence of blackening and corrosion.

A sample of Bread had discoloured organic matter.

A sample of Ice Cream was deficient in fat.

22 Samples of milk were deficient in either fat or non-fatty-solids.

NORTH-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD.

Brown iron stains were found on the inside of a carton of milk.

A sample of "Coca Cola" was found to contain a sediment consisting of mould.

A sample of sugar contained many specks of gritty material and small slivers of wood.

6 samples of "Minced Meat" had Sulphur Dioxide in contravention of the Health (Preservatives in Food) Regulations 1973.

A sample of "Pork Sausage Meat" contained excess Sulphur Dioxide.

4 samples of "Ice Cream" were deficient in fat.

17 samples of milk were deficient in either fat or non-fatty-solids.
6 Samples of milk were deficient in either fat or non-fatty-solids.

COMPLAINT FOOD SAMPLES FROM THE PUBLIC.

A sample of milk contained a dead rodent.
A sample of milk was found to be deficient in non-fatty-solids.
A sample of milk had added water.
A sample of milk had pieces of decayed vegetable matter.
A "Jelly Tot" sweet had a piece of wood 1.5 cm embedded in one side.
An orange had a black mould.
A sample of "liquid" had mould.
A sample of whiskey contained Caustic Soda.
A sample of Butter had a portion of the surface covered with mould.

ANTIBIOTICS IN MILK.

89 samples of bulked milk from the Galway area were examined for the presence of antibiotics of which 56 gave positive results in the range 0.005 to 0.01 International Units per millilitre. These results are well below the guideline limit of 0.05 International Units per millilitre set by the Department of Health. Nevertheless, the high number of positive values in bulked milk show that all suppliers may not be allowing sufficient time to elapse between final treatment and delivery to the Dairy.

STORES REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

The number of specimens examined on behalf of Galway Hospital Stores was made up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausages</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudding</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flakemeal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuits</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 3567

8 samples of milk were found to be deficient in fat or non-fatty-solids.
Two samples of milk contained some dirt suspended in the milk.
One sample of milk contained a piece of glass.
A sample of canned grapefruit contained insect larvae.

A sample of sausages had a low meat content.

Mould was found in a sample of bread.

**WATER/EFFLUENTS.**

During the year a total of 3567 water/effluent samples were submitted for chemical analysis by Local Authorities, Mining Companies, Engineering Consultants and Private Individuals. This work involved the chemical analysis of existing and new sources of supply for potability and suitability for industrial use, the examination of fluoridated supplies for fluoride in accordance with the terms of the Health (Fluoridation of Water Supplies) Act 1960.

Samples of sewage effluents, industrial discharges and river waters were examined on behalf of the Local Authorities to check the efficiency of treatment plants and to assess the quality of receiving waters. Specific cases of pollution of river water were examined on behalf of Boards of Conservators and members of the staff attended Court as expert witnesses to give evidence on the work done. A breakdown of the samples tested is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boards of Conservators</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Consultants</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killala Bay Monitoring</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3567</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DRUG ANALYSIS.**

The drug testing scheme on behalf of the National Drugs Advisory Board (NDAB) was continued during the year. A total of 236 samples were submitted for analysis under the agreement signed between the NDAB and the Western Health Board on 13th May, 1976. The purpose of these tests are:

(A) To establish, in respect of products for which applications for product authorisations to market have been granted, that they comply with the Chemistry and Pharmacy Specifications submitted by the applicant companies.