

WORKING NOTES

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FACTS AND ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

THE NEW CMRS PROGRAMME: PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The imaginative proposal for job creation proposed last year by the Council of Major Religious Superiors (now renamed the Conference of Religious of Ireland) has finally seen the light of day, and first indications are that the pilot programme will be fully subscribed to. The pilot programme is running only in seven selected areas, viz. Waterford City, Co. Laois, part of South Tipperary, Co. Kerry, the Islands, Blanchardstown, and Finglas. This stretches the resources of the Conference of Religious to the limit, and any extension of the programme will depend on more direct involvement by the Department of Enterprise and Employment.

The basic idea behind the programme is that participants work a number of hours at the 'rate for the job' to give an amount equal to what they would earn in Community Employment. For instance someone with an adult dependent might work sixteen hours at a 'going rate' of £7 and hour to earn an entitlement of £110.70. The most hours that need to be worked on the programme is 19.5. Once the required number of hours has been worked participants are free to take up another part-time job for the remainder of the week. All participants will retain secondary social welfare benefits. Employees will not have to pay PRSI (J rate), with sponsors paying 0.5%. Tax payable will depend on circumstances. Participants may stay on the programme for up to three years. Education and training of participants in an essential requirement of the programme. The programme can be used only to carry out work not being done, or only partly being done, so that there is no question of people

already in jobs being displaced. It cannot be used in the private sector.

The following are some of those eligible:

- Persons of any age who have been receiving Unemployment Benefit of over one year;
- All people over 21 receiving Unemployment Assistance;
- All adult dependents of people over 21 on the live register, if the person and the dependent exchange places on the programme;
- most lone parents.

Applications currently being processed include Production and Stage Work for a Dramatic Society, a Wind Energy Project, Teachers Assistants, Home Nursing, Sports Coaching, a Support Group for terminally ill teenagers, Working with Choirs, and Development Education in relation to the environment. Appropriate 'rates for the jobs' are being worked out with the help of the relevant trade unions.

Congratulations to Sean Healy, Brigid Reynolds and their colleagues for the imagination, persistence and stamina they displayed in getting this project off the drawing board!

For further information contact: Project Manager,
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