Visitation Report of

COMMUNITY - Br Paul Keany (Supr), Peter O'Sullivan (Sub-Supr), Regis Wexted (Bursar), Malachy McDonnell, Benet Doyle - Coadjutors, Br Alonso Anaus, Cletus O'Neill, Lambert Wise. (Br S. Doyle since replaced by Br Damian Ann.

PERSONNEL - The Br Superior is sanguine and restles for progress, but cannot adapt himself to the changes that have inevitably followed from the recent war, and from the variation in policy in some respects by his succeeding superiors, from that which he knew to be in existence at his departure a few years ago. He would like to find himself in the position to take up his different activities just where he left them down. He came back to find that the team he had trained for continuing the early building policy had disbanded, that his chief skilled worker and tradesman had largely changed his viewpoint about starting work at cockcrow, that he considered beginning after breakfast to be sufficiently early, and that hours reaching even beyond daylight in the evenings were not encouraged in trade union circles. The Superior would work himself to the limit of his powers, and he tends to become disappointed with helpers who do not take the same view as his own efforts. He expects all to throw themselves wholeheartedly into whatever is being done and, though less impetuous than formerly, shows his disapproval of the slow or less active worker. He frets over the slightest evidence that any member of the community is decrying mildly or otherwise, the efforts that are being made to handle a difficult situation. He has his own idea of the men who would be ideal to get Bindoon more rapidly out of the almost desperate situation in which it finds itself financially, and because he cannot be informed regarding the reasons of the Provincial Council for not assenting to his requests, he is inclined to regard the place as not being treated with all the interest and consideration its difficulties appear to him to deserve. He returns again and again to his requests for particular Brothers for the staff, not so much from a cranky persistence as seemingly from the hope that reiterated discussion will lead to a way being found. For example, he is most anxious to establish without delay technical training for the migrant boys who are reaching the school leaving age for primary pupils, and who are too numerous to be employed for training in farming or building only; when he sees that Brothers, he knows, are capable of doing technical work, are teaching other subjects in school in some other part of the Province, he keeps presenting his pressing needs, and cannot understand the reasons for such men not being sent (on account of confidential matters into which he is not allowed, of course, to enter). He keeps wondering and worrying as to the point whether the Provincial Council fully realize the handicaps which constantly irk and distress his intense desire to press on to success as promptly as possible. I believe that his ambition is not personal, but to relieve the financial position and to bring favourable public support upon an undertaking of the Congregation. He has been vigorous and has achieved some success, but nothing like what the ideal conditions he still dreams of as existing in the past would bring about in a more marked way and in a much shorter time. Fortunately he has full public confidence and is influential with the Lotteries Commission regarding grants.
Visitation Report of BINDOON (cont'd)

The Sub-Supr is a pious wellmeaning man but lacking in system and efficiency. He is replete with sheep-lore, but he is unable to be given responsibility as he lacks good judgment and does not possess the business sense necessary for market transactions. He is full of indecision and can reverse his opinion in the one conversation with surprising facility. He is regarded in a kindly spirit in the Community for his piety and gentleness, but no one regards him as being capable of administering the sheep department. He would be useful in the leadership of some man with even less knowledge than himself in sheep matters, but he fails as the man in control. The previous Superior considers that he cost the place hundreds of pounds last year in sales mismanagement.

Br R. Westad a date Bursar is in the position he can best fill at Bindoon. He offered to go into class, but there would be no guarantee that he would persevere and some of the office work which he now attends to reasonably, especially telephonic business, would suffer through his being at a distance. He does some supervision of boys taking showers, but one never knows just how long his interest and consequent efficiency will last. In mental health he appears to be externally normal and tranquil; he has not given signs of oddity for a considerable time.

Br Lalachy Mc Donnell is as devoted as always to his work, and is valuable re the welfare of the migrant children except in class, where his weakness as a teacher—his reputation of long standing—shows itself. I was pleased to find that Br Lalachy, who possesses a name for sustained piety over the years, was pronounced in his praise of the Superior’s attitude re keeping of the details of the Rule. He stated that he had joined the Community with the idea picked up en route, that the Superior’s spiritual administration would be lacking in exactness, but that he had found the contrary, and that an admiration for the interpretation of the religious life in the Community under the Superior’s direction had replaced his anticipations of probable irregularities. Br Lalachy has a real comprehension of the spirit of self-sacrifice called for in the discharge of the training and moral safeguarding of the migrant children.

Br Benet Doyle has a good religious attitude but his heart is not in his present work; he would much prefer the less responsible routine of the ordinary dayschool. He carries out his appointed duties but is not a volunteer, when a sudden filling a gap arises. He will need occasional encouragement and exhortation to help him to a more self-sacrificing point of view. He is a capable schoolman and has powers of discipline that are fully sufficient. As his classes show a tendency to decrease on account of the pupils reaching the legal school leaving age, he is thinking in terms of outside occupation while at Bindoon.

Br Alonzo Angus is a coadjutor of mature age whose health is showing signs of failing; he has been advised by the doctor to give up heavy work if he wishes to avoid becoming a cot case or invalid in a chair in the course of some years. His mechanical knowledge and its practical application will be of advantage theoretically, but he cannot now bring it outside of the workshop. He supervises the dairying which is carried on as regards manual work by the migrants. Br Salvius Marques had to be rowed from Clontarf to make it possible to plough and seed after the arrival of the delayed rain; it was inadvisable to ask Br Alonzo to drive the tractor for hours each day. Bindoon does not depend on its crops as chief revenue producers, but reserve-feed for the sheep must exist in haystacks of oats. hay or disaster is practically invited in the dry season. Br A
Visitation Report of

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is slow in movement and in speech with a suggestion of ponderous utterance but he does his best as far as his physical powers now allow him.

Br Cletus O'Neill has proved himself a very useful man in his knowledge of electrical devices and handy machine repairs in general, but the strain of driving the heavy truck over a hundred miles each time to Pert and back, twice or more frequently each week, has produced strain upon his nervous system which has given rise to great uneasiness as to his safe return from each trip. He is a quiet, uncomplaining worker who is never without a job upon which he eneavours himself busily but undemonstratively. He is the type of man who works so silently that his value is not fully realised until he has been transferred. *Br. Matthew O’Dwyer* is now in charge.

Br Lambert Wise is an active, physically strong young man who is willing to carry out the duties allotted to him cheerfully, but the Superior cannot get out of his head an opinion he formed of Br Lambert when he was at the stage of being a big boy among the boys, and still fears his judgment regarding familiarity. His services are devoted principally to repairing and erecting fences which got into a bad state during recent years through mismanagement and lack of repairing materials. Until this fencing problem is fully dealt with, no real success in sheep management can be reasonably anticipated. Br Lambert was given very definite and serious advice during the Visitation regarding correct attitude and demeanour towards the boys. He is a useful man who may yet take over the sheep when the fencing is done thoroughly (since replaced by Br. Melchior).

Br Salvius Marques has been supplementing the efforts of the Community showing evidence of special usefulness, but he cannot at present be spared altogether from Clontarf. He would fit in well at Bindeen were Clontarf can be otherwise catered for in the future.

OBSERVANCE)-The Rule is well observed; the Superior had taken on the thrice meals for the boys before the Sisters and their assistants came when the kitchen and the washing up was in the hands of the boys. I arranged for him to be present at the last meal with the Brothers so that he could preside personally at the religious exercises, which immediately follow; before, he had completed his exercises after the boys’ night prayers. A constant alertness is necessary re supervision lest morality may suffer or discipline revert to the unsatisfactory standards at first displayed by the new arrivals. The children individually are pleasing in demeanour but the mob complex came very easily to the top in the initial stages of getting acquainted. Some of the smallest children have been removed to Castledare to bring them together with those of their own age and class standing, and to improve the application of the teaching power available. Insufficient preparation had been made at Bindeen in supplying school furniture before the coming of the children so that the first visits of inspectors resulted in unfavourable regrets. In school attire the boys on the average reasonably neat, but they are allowed so little time in the morning for dressing and washing that the lack of hair combing and brushing gives them a most unkempt and untidy appearance. There is some lack of care or system on the part of Brothers taking the boys in groups for different occupations after school in regard to insisting on the change from school to working clothes; as a consequence the neatness of the school outfit disappears and an appearance of neglect is established. The night supervision of study has been simplified by placing all in one room.
Visitation Report of BINDOON (contd)

The supervision of the working boys outside of working hours is an additional duty which has not been fully solved, as they are by themselves for a period immediately following the last meal of the day. They could assemble and read in the school room next to the school boys at night study until Br Lambert is ready after religious exercises to take them for other recreation. The more quiet and effective alertness there is during showers and changing clothing, the more likely is immoral act to be checked in advance. Long intervals between parts of the moving pictures should not be set out in darkness, as the boys are closely seated it should be easy to switch on the lights until the operator is prepared to proceed. There should be an effective check of boys possibly absent from prayers or pictures; more system would enable the Brother in charge at the time to note a vacant place and so discover a boy or two absent for doubtful reasons. Boys should not be allowed to make up a Brother’s bedroom. The personal tidiness of members of the Community is insufficient arrival at meals and departure therefrom will doubtless depend on extent on duties, but loyalty to regularity should prevent each from setting his own convenience merely. There is much litter about immediate surroundings of the main buildings which ought to be systematically handled; appeals to Brothers to call the nearest boy to remove a bit of rubbish does not produce much consistent result; seemingly their eyes have become accustomed to it and there is always the type who will regard such concerted action as not likely to continue, so they abstain from even beginning; some seem to feel that any move outside their own stereotyped duties is for the next man; initiative is not the commonest characteristic and the man who takes on additional effort is quietly regarded as foolish or desirous of currying favour with authority. This is not a prevalent idea, but it makes its presence felt when a less enthusiastic member of the staff feels he will have listeners, willing or unwilling, at recreation. Adverse criticism and slowing down of effort appeal to some intellects as evidence of penetration. "Why is the use of this particular change or improvement? Things will soon be back to the same old usual? You can’t tell me." It is not the safest to leave the discharge of necessary duties to the initiative of the more naturally passed-by. "Wouldn’t you think that going out with the cart he should have noticed that the kitchen woodheap needed replenishing?" The speaker would have noticed the deficiency, and supposes that all minds would work in the same way. A more definite understanding is required. Friction and reproach are to be eliminated. The willing and thoughtful will find himself overloaded and the canny customer goes on with his comparatively limited efforts.

Definite planning with the willing assistance of experts will be needed to make the farming operations, including the dairying and sheep development, a full success. Some of the advice given in the past has been recognised by every evidences complying with it, so that friendly and generous cooperators may decrease in fervour. A ride round the property shows many fences in disrepair, as already noted, and gates between paddock non-existent or ineffective; it does not seem to have occurred to any one that the construction of sliprails, failing or waiting for a better gate equipment, would be efficient and a work calling for less skilled knowledge. We cannot expect to impress such advisers favourably while disrepair is in evidence and disabling intelligent and fully effective management. The removal of the poison plant on part of the property has not been faced
Visitation Report of Bindacon (contd)

Part 2.

The preceding part of this Report was written some months ago but was purposely left incomplete owing to the fluid or unstable conditions governing the development of the situation. As Visitor I did not wish my authority to cease with my first lengthy visit to the farm, and announced that the Visitation would not be completed until a later date. My operations in the Communities around the suburbs of Perth enabled me to pay a series of short visits to Bindacon to note procedures and to enquire or commend what was being done. No changes came about within that period, Dr Lambert D. Stare being interchanged with Dr Matthias Brack and Dr Benedict Boyle with Dr Daniel Allen.

I could say that Bindacon is climbing the hill but will not be free from its present pressing difficulties until time allows the opportunity of gradual improvement. Building of schools is proceeding and the repairing of the essential fences has gone speedily on. It attempts to bring about more efficient management in the farming section have not yet met with real success. A change of policy re the development of cattle breeding, apart from the requirements of the dairy herd, has resulted in the disposal of almost all the Aberdeen cattle which were purchased by a recent Superior. Information available points to the conclusion that this district is not suitable for cattle though a definitely good country for sheep. The securing of an appreciable revenue would seem from all evidence available, to depend on increase of the flock, which is at present on the small side owing to the high price of replacements; it is expected that the price will fall when feed becomes scarce and larger holdings will have to reduce their numbers. The animal census at the beginning of August was as follows: 16 acres, 100,000 sheep, 448 rams, 58 Aberdeen cows, 82 bullocks, 3 calves, 59 dairy cows, 53 dairy calves, 10 horses, 13 pigs; 17. There were many more pigs but the lack of fences allowed them to become a nuisance; they were transferred to Castledare and gradually sold for the advantage of Bindacon. 335 rams brought a good price—£529-2-10.

Since the beginning of the year about a dozen very small boys have been sent to Castledare where better grading for school purposes proved possible; and six or eight post-primary pupils have been promoted to Tardun to begin secondary studies. Any of these latter who show sufficient talent and who prefer not to adopt a farming life, will later have the opportunity of continuing on to leaving certificates at our boarding college at Geraldton where some Tardun boys of an earlier migration group are studying for this examination this year. The number of boys in residence (school and out-of-school boys) at Bindacon is 70. A tendency is showing itself in the expressed wishes of the Brothers to exclude Australian boys from each of these institutions on the plea that they could affect the migrant boys adversely re deportment and general discipline, and possibly worse; the answer to this is better training and disciplinary methods at Clontarf, the chief centre at present for Australian orphans or neglected children. The making of management easier for the Brothers
should not be the determining factor in preventing our own boys from benefiting by the complete scheme equally with children from overseas. Those who object to Australian boys stop short of any constructive plan for their future.

FINANCE:

The financial position at the end of October was as follows:-

General Account £2178-16-9 and Building Account £1509-13-7 Total £3688-10-4. Cheques not presented amounted to £217. The Lotteries Commission granted £3000 and other monies banked subsequently amounted to £113-4-9. The Overdraft at the end of October was £792-5-2.

Other liabilities are:- Strathfield Loan (1945) £3000 - Visitation Dues (old account) £511-10-also Dues for 1946 £310 and 1947 £314 — by reduction the Visitation indebtedness now stands at £319-13-6.

Loan from St Vincent's Orphanage, S. Melb. £500. Owing to Castledare for Loans £800 and £350 and engine £114-9-1 = £1264-9-1. Owing to Clon tarff £324-8-2 and to Tardun £1500 plus £282 debt met on behalf of Bindoon £4 £282.

Money due to firms amounted in the middle of the year to:-

Elder Smith (including interest) £692-12-8 and Wastlerian Farmers (including interest) £2076-8-4. These accounts do not remain un-reduced but contra accounts are subtracted from time to time from sales carried out on behalf of Bindoon. To Ahern's Ltd the total owing was £2325-7-1. Amounts owing to various tradespeople were £8. I have not been supplied with details as to reduction of these accounts since July. The sale of lambs and now of the wool would reduce the amount owing to the stock firms. An approximation of the total liabilities would be £14,000. Grants made by the Lotteries Commission are for building estimates usually, but if the Superior is able with his team of boys to reduce the cost an ordinary builder would charge no objection is made to the amount saved being applied to other necessities of the establishment. Lottery amounts have been generated during the year and a privately collected sum of £2000 was handed to the Superior by well wishers at a function held at Bindoon under the Acting Premier as chairman. 

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