

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

JANUARY 1974

6p

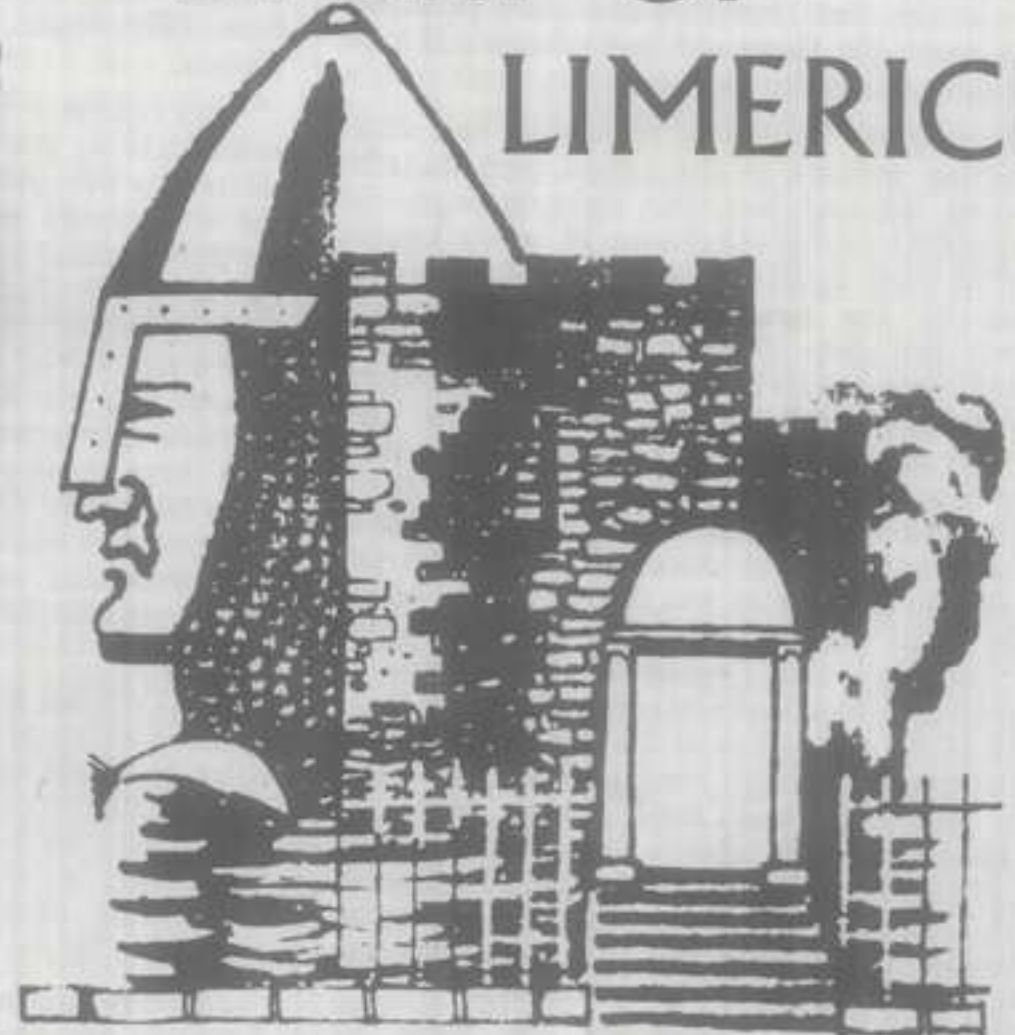
VOL. 3 NO. 1

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . .' James Connolly

The Development of Catholic Power



THE (UNWRITTEN) STORY OF LIMERICK



TALKING
SHOP



THE BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the 'Bottom Dog'—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

No. 20.

2nd MARCH, 1918.

Price 7/6

STRIKE AT DROMBANA

The workers at Drombana Creamery have gone out on strike as a protest against the non-recognition and victimisation of a member of their Society. Frank Forde, B.M., has been active as a "Scab."

A WHITE'S CHRISTMAS

In 1932 Michael Kennedy, Cratloekeel, Co. Clare, started work as a washer and greaser at the garage of A. White & Co. Ltd., Shannon Street, Limerick. He worked continuously with the company for 39 years up to May 3rd, 1971, when, because of failing health, he went on sick leave. Two months after this date, in July 1971, White's Garage was taken over by new owners. Michael Kennedy was not well enough to re-start work for the new owners at this time, but they continued payments to him under the firm's sick pay scheme and kept his job open to him for some time.

Following the change of ownership two other long-serving workers at the garage were declared redundant. Michael Kennedy claimed he should have qualified for the same terms of redundancy as the other two workers, but his application was rejected by the new owners. Though Michael Kennedy had given 39 years service to the garage and was then 67 years of age, the new owners stated that if he had been working in the firm when they took over they would have kept him on and were willing to continue his employment if he were fit.

After this, when Michael Kennedy was unable to resume work the firm discontinued its sick pay payments to him and he was forced to exist on his weekly social welfare benefit. As a member of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union he informed the Union's officials of the Limerick No. 2 Branch of his circumstances. He also took a further step in trying to secure some justice. Close to his house at Cratloekeel lived James Sexton, a well-known Limerick solicitor and a member of the firm of Holmes, O'Malley and Sexton, 57 O'Connell Street, Limerick. Kennedy got to know Sexton and frequently looked after Sexton's house and dogs when he (Sexton) went away on holidays.

Michael Kennedy discussed his claim for redundancy payment with James Sexton during one of their meetings. Sexton offered to take up the matter with the new owners of White's Garage. On March 7th, 1973, Sexton sent the following letter to the secretary of the company:

We act on behalf of Mr. Michael Kennedy of Cratloekeel, Cratloe, Co. Clare, who left your company's employment on 26th June, 1971. We are instructed that Mr. Kennedy had to leave your employment owing to illness and his doctors have informed him that he cannot now go back to work - they informed him of this at several stages throughout his illness. Since he left the employment of your company he has not had any other employment. It would appear that according to the law under Redundancy Payments Acts he is not entitled to claim redundancy money. However, he has served the company faithfully over a very long number of years and his wages were about £14.00 per week after tax and insurance had been deducted ... When he left the company he received no sum by way of compensation or even an ex gratia payment. Were he entitled to redundancy payments, we estimate that he would receive something in the region of £200.00. After all his years in service, it would not be ungracious or ungrateful on the part of his company to make him a present of a lump sum payment of a worthwhile nature to help him over the hard times in which he has fallen as a result

of having to leave his employment. We will leave the matter in the hands of your Directors pending hearing from you if you are willing to make him some payment.

The directors referred to here and the new owners of White's Garage were: W.G. Bogue (Managing), W.R. Brown (U.S.A.) Dr. T.C. McGrath and T.A. Duffy (Secretary). A week later, on March 14th, Holmes, O'Malley and Sexton received a reply from Billy Bogue, the new managing director of White's.

With reference to your letter of the 7th inst. we would like to point out that this Company came under new ownership in July 1971, so Mr. Kennedy did not actually work for us at any time although we did continue payments to him under our Sick Pay Scheme and kept his job open for him for some time .. Needless to say, we agree that Mr. Kennedy is in a position of great hardship but we feel that if anyone is to give him an ex gratia payment it would be more appropriate that this should come from his long term employer, Mr. Coleman White and/or from his Union. This Company has had many heavy commitments recently in connection with change of dealerships and we therefore regret that it should not be possible for us to make any payment to Mr. Kennedy.

The Coleman White mentioned here had been the previous owner of the garage. James Sexton wrote a letter to White on behalf of Michael Kennedy on March 15th. In a reply, dated March 16th Coleman White, from his home at Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, set out his position. His letter gives an illuminating insight into his mentality and his attitude to his workers:

In reply to your (letter) of 15th March Michael Kennedy was employed by the Company not by me. His wages were determined by the management, dictated by the Trade Union. At no time was I aware of his wages or terms of employment as this was determined by the management and union, and paid by the Company's book-keeper in agreement with the auditor. I was never consulted or informed, so I am unable to say what wages were paid .. As regards his present circumstances, considerable sums in health and unemployment insurance were paid by the company and the employee (as well presumably as union dues to the trade union by the employee) whose responsibility should be invoked, or what was the point of paying these sums as insurance against ill-health and unemployment? I have not been nor am I personally involved in the conditions of employment or wages of individuals employed by the company now or heretofore.

A few weeks after writing this letter Coleman White died. On May 10, 1973, the Irish Press published a photograph of White's home, and a report headlined, House for £92,000, stated:

Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey, overlooking Killiney Bay, which was sold for £92,000 at the auction by James Adams and Sons in the firm's salesrooms, St. Stephen's Green, on Tuesday. Bidding opened at £45,000 ... The property was bought in trust by Mr. Gore Grimes, solicitor. It was owned by the late Mr. Coleman White.

Apart from the value of his house, Coleman White had secured a considerable sum of money for the sale of his garage and was widely known to have been a very wealthy man. And, at this time, Michael Kennedy, who had served him faithfully for 39 years, was existing on £6.55 per week.

Meanwhile, having been turned down in his requests for help by the old and new owners, Michael Kennedy looked around for some other way to secure his modest objective. He formally applied to the new owners for redundancy payment under provisions of the Redundancy Payment Acts, 1967 and 1971. On May 1st., 1973, the managing director, Billy Bogue, replied to Michael Kennedy:

With reference to your claim for Lump Sum Payment of Redundancy on Form R.P. 77, we wish to point out that it would not be possible for us to entertain such a Claim as the reason for termination of your employment was neither dismissal nor redundancy. Regretting that we cannot be of assistance to you.

And so Michael Kennedy was baulked once more. But this further set-back was still not enough to dissuade him from the simple, unswerving belief that he was entitled to some financial settlement after his 39 years service to the garage. But now only one final option remained open to him - an appeal to the Redundancy Appeals Tribunal. Here again, he had no easy passage. In a letter to the Tribunal, dated June 1st, 1973, Bogue opposed his appeal:

In view of the fact that this man's employment here was never actually terminated by us since he discontinued work due to illness and was not allowed to work by his doctor, it seems to me that the question of Redundancy payment should not arise and that his case, will only waste the Tribunal's time.

But Bogue's letter did not succeed in stopping the appeal. The hearing of the Redundancy Appeals Tribunal was fixed for July 6th, 1973. Before the hearing Michael Kennedy was examined by his doctor at Barrington's Hospital. Doctor R. Holmes in his report, dated June 28th, stated:

The above (Michael Kennedy) is attending my medical out-patients for treatment of hypertension and dermatitis. He also has a diabetes of palm and some arthritis of foot-joints. He is unfit for work.

The Tribunal met at the Limerick County Council Chambers on Friday, 6th July, at 10.45 a.m. The Tribunal's chairman was John Gleeson and its two members were, Frank O'Connor, former general secretary of the Brick and Stonelayers' Trade Union, and Roland Yates-Hale, the employers' nominee. Billy Bogue represented the garage owners and Tony Nolan, I.T.G.W.U. official, represented Michael Kennedy.

Tony Nolan in the course of his submission to the Tribunal, stated that Kennedy had served the garage faithfully for almost forty years and that he should have been given the option of becoming redundant, because of the condition of his health, at the time of the change of owners. He said that Michael Kennedy should have been granted the same choice as the other two long-serving workers who had received redundancy benefits. Billy Bogue presented the case on behalf of the garage owners and continued his opposition to the appeal.

In his summing up the chairman John Gleeson stated that Michael Kennedy's own solicitor, James Sexton, had already conceded that his client had no case when he admitted in his first letter to the new owners on March 7th, 1973 that "It would appear that according to the law under Redundancy Payments Acts he is not entitled to claim redundancy money". The chairman told Michael

ECHOES FROM

- THE -

BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

No. 28. 27 APRIL, 1918 Price ½p.

CONSCRIPTION OF LIFE

ALL IRELAND LABOUR CONGRESS IN DUBLIN

A BOTTOM DOG'S IMPRESSION

As we sat in the Mansion House last Saturday (1,800 B.D.'s.) one could not get away from thoughts like this:—

"God, what a world, if men in street and mart,
Felt that same kinship of the human heart,
Which makes them in the face of flame and flood,
Rise to the meaning of true Brotherhood".

From the opening cheer which sent a thrill of hope through the vast assembly, there was an indescribable something, which has never been found in a Labour Congress before. What was it? Was it not that everyone present felt that this crisis in our lives demanded sacrifice, and that in our willingness to sacrifice even life itself, for what we believed to be right, we had found the secret of life? One could not help feeling that the Labour Party in Ireland were striking a blow for freedom of conscience, that would give hope to Democracy the world over. What were the dominant notes of the congress?

1. That we as a Nation and as workers will not have conscription in any form, under any circumstances.
2. That Conscription has been, is, and always will be the strongest weapon of Capitalism for the enslavement of Labour. Experience in all countries proves this.
3. That if Conscription of Capitalists' wealth were made a condition of Conscription of the life of B.D.'s., we should never hear Conscription mentioned again.
4. That the ultimate issue of this question rests with Irish Labour and with such a united front, not only is victory possible, but that anything else is equally possible.
5. That this war is not in the interests of small Nationalities, but was begun in the interests of Capitalists, is being continued to secure them 6 per cent, and will be — if Labour does not assert itself, concluded in their interests, leaving a millstone of debt that will cripple Labour for generations to come.
6. That while every effort will be made to divide us, by setting skilled men against unskilled, married against single, even women against men, no power on Earth or in Hell can conscript any man, who has

finally settled the matter with his own conscience. "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide in the fight for Truth". Let us thank God that the opportunity comes now.

A special word of praise to the Railway Workers who, despite the efforts of their English officials to get them to temporise, remained true to the best interests of Irish Labour. They are not (especially after the magnificent full stop on Tuesday) going to be taken in by a doubting Thomas or any "Rimmer" machine for registering decisions of a wait and see order from London. The sooner they select for a Leader a man instead of a machine the sooner they will begin to progress in due proportion to their strength.

LIMERICK'S FULL STOP AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

Congratulations to all concerned on Limerick's magnificent response to the appeal of the special Labour Congress for a full day's stoppage of work as an effective protest against Conscription. Twelve midnight on Monday saw the commencement and from that till 12 midnight on Tuesday there was nothing doing, even in the Banks. Tuesday proved the power of Labour; everything was held up — no gas, no cars on the streets, no drink for the thirsty or food for the Restaurant frequenters. Labour has found its feet at last and now that it knows its strength let us hope it will use it to the full not alone to beat the conscription ideas of the capitalists but also to remedy the money class. Tuesday's splendid Parade, comprising close on 10,000 Trade Unionists, was an eye-opener to many. The huge demonstration in Bank Place was of immense proportions and Labour's attitude towards conscription was put explicitly by Rev. Fr. Hennessy, O.S.A., Mr. J. Cronin, President, Trades Council, Mr. M.G. O'Connor, I.T.W.U., Mr. J. Keyes, N.U.R., Mr. Daly, I.D.A., and Mr. R.P. O'Connor, B.C.

SHOPS big and small were shut with two noticeable exceptions, Barry, Butcher, Upper William Street, and O'Brien's Henry Street. Two workers distinguished themselves by working, John Crowe (Rawki) and M. Frawles (Bangsha) sandmen who could do as the other sandmen did and remain idle.

Conscription has two powerful champions in "Madame" Alexander of McBirney's and Mrs. Kidd, the shopkeeper's wife, both foreign importations. "Madame" came to McBirney's as a Corset Specialist and now she attends to the wants of an invalid in the McBirney House. Looking on at

the Tuesday Procession she called the processionists all cowards, and later, when some Scottish Soldiers passed, she boasted that these were the lads who would make short work of the "cowards" ... Workers who support them by dealing in their shops are only tightening round their own necks the chains that enslave them.

DROMBANNA CREAMERY and its Auxiliary at Kilonan worked as usual on Tuesday. The Corn Mill was also working. But what could one expect from scabs who are mean and despicable enough to take the jobs of men who are on strike fighting in a just cause. All the creameries in the neighbourhood were closed. Hats off to the men concerned! We are certain the owners suffered no loss. Paddy Lynn's third effort to obtain a cheese-maker has failed, the last one engaged wiring that she could not come. Cheese it, Paddy! Very few ladies are of the same type as Annie Toomey. Our special reporter will have something special to report on the Drombanna Front next week.

WHITE'S CHRISTMAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Kennedy that he sympathised with him in his condition but that the Tribunal could do nothing to help him. He stated that the Tribunal would issue its report in due course.

The Tribunal's report was issued on July 25th, It stated:

It is a pre-requisite that in order to qualify for a redundancy payment an employee must be dismissed by reason of redundancy. The appellant was not dismissed but was forced to give up his job because of ill-health. We take the view that his contract of employment came to an end by frustration when it became clear that his performance of work was no longer possible and that it would be unreal to suppose that there was any real likelihood of a return to his former job. Accordingly we must dismiss this appeal.

With this decision Michael Kennedy had come "by frustration" to the end of his long road. Since this verdict no-one has attempted to re-open or publicise his case. The new owners of the garage, Bogue, McGrath and Duffy are all wealthy businessmen with financial interests in a number of local companies. Duffy also has the reputation in religious quarters for being a "charitable" man. However, neither Duffy nor any of his colleagues has shown the slightest shred of charity or justice in dealing with Michael Kennedy.

On the other hand, the beneficiaries under the will of Coleman White, the former owner of the garage, are his nephews, James White, the well-known Dublin art curator, Paddy White, grocer, and James White, veterinary surgeon, both of Tulla, Co. Clare.

And while the many and varied interests of these people continue to flourish, Michael Kennedy lives out the last days of his life at Cratlockeel. His pain-wracked body, his fingers and hands twisted from 39 years pressure on a grease-gun, are his sole but permanent reminders of his 39 years work at White's Garage. And, at a time when Irish employers are increasingly paying lip-service to the concepts of industrial democracy, pension and welfare schemes, etc., this is one worker's story of capitalist treatment in Limerick in 1974.

A BOOK FROM THE PAST

THE DEVELOPMENT OF**CATHOLIC
POWER**

The last decade has been a traumatic one for the Catholic Church in Southern Ireland. The change in economic policy by Southern Irish capitalism from protectionism to free trade and the attempts to bring Irish society into the mainstream of the modern world have posed a fundamental challenge for the Church.

After the establishment of the state the Church became the unrivalled arbiter on a whole range of social policies which in other countries are decided by normal political and democratic means. The Catholic bishops here have always claimed, and been accorded, the power of veto over all social legislation. The rural-based, introverted society of small producers provided the ideal situation for the Church to maintain and strengthen its position.

Faced with a growing movement for the separation of Church and state and with demands for changes in contraception and divorce laws, the Church has shown itself to be unable to explain or deal with the changes. Having lost the initiative, the Church's strategy appears to be one of hanging on grimly to its social power in the face of modern economic conditions. The latest statement of the Irish bishops in opposing the proposed changes in the contraception laws is an example of this attitude.

The fact that a number of books have recently been published in which the history and nature of the relationship between church and state in Southern Ireland have been examined is an indication of the changed situation. But when the movement towards a totally Catholic system of legislation and administration was developing no significant opposition to it was mounted in the South by the political parties, the Protestant Churches, the trade unions or even by individual authors.

Among the relatively few books opposing the rise of Catholic social power were two works by Michael J.T. McCarthy, *Five Years in Ireland 1895-1900* and *Priests and People in Ireland*, published a year later in 1902. In *Five Years in Ireland*, McCarthy sets the scene on the all-pervasive influence of the priests on Irish life (Page 30):

There is in fact, no phase of social and economic life in Ireland in which by way of promotion or obstruction, the priests do not interfere, from the starting of a branch of the United Irish League to the Agricultural Co-operation Society, to the holding of a local concert.

McCarthy devotes a considerable deal of space to the consideration of the control of education by the Catholic Church. Dealing with the attitude of the bishops to national teachers he quotes an episcopal declaration at Maynooth, on June 26th, 1896, (Page 59):

The Bishops, and the Bishops alone, are, by divine right, the guides and counsellors of the Catholic National Teachers of Ireland, in relation to all questions in which the religious interests of their flocks are concerned; and they feel confident that the Teachers will listen to those words of friendly warning in that spirit of docility and obedience which has hitherto characterised the National Teachers of Ireland.

But there was one part of the island where the bishops' writ of "docility and obedience" did not run. Describing the differences between the Southern Catholic population and the Northern Protestant community, McCarthy writes, (Pages 65, 66, 67, 68, 69):

Industrial and social Ireland must be geographically divided into two parts. The first part is the North-Eastern triangle ... It is inhabited by a population who hold the tenets of the various Churches of the Reformation, Protestant, Presbyterian ... There the linen industry and ship-building, for which Ireland has become justly renowned, are carried on ... the atmosphere of the whole area is as decidedly Protestant as the atmosphere of Cork is Catholic. The second part of the two, into which I have divided the country, is the Rest of Ireland, which is seven times as large as the Northern Triangle. In the Rest of Ireland, there is no social or industrial progress to record. The man who would say of it, that it was "progressing and prospering", or that "its work-people were fully employed" ... would be set down as a madman. It is in this seven-eighths of Ireland that the growing and great organisation of the Catholic "Church", with all its ramifications, has taken root ... In the North-Eastern Triangle of Ireland, you find the Irishman in whose mind "this world" is the predominant fact ... In the rest of the country, you have the Irishman for whom "the next world" is the predominant fact ... In North-East, the great buildings are the factories ... In the rest of Ireland, the great buildings are the churches, the convents, and the monasteries.

The ideal of the rest of Ireland is given in a quote from a sermon preached by Dr. Clancy, Bishop of Elphin at Athlone, on September 30th, 1895, (Page 71):

The spirit of the world as our Lord has foretold to his Apostles, was ever antagonistic to the Church, and every priest on ordination entered into a life-long fight against that spirit ...

McCarthy states (Page 177) that the order of the day regarding burials was as follows: "High Mass, high money; low Mass, low money; no Mass, no money". He goes on to give an account of a burial of a poor peasant, whose relatives could not afford to pay for the attendance of a priest at the funeral (Page 187):

There is no sight so sad, I think, as the burial of an Irish Catholic peasant, whose friends cannot afford to pay for the priest's attendance at the funeral. Many and many a time, in the part of Ireland where I was born, attending one of such funerals, my father's labourers or their wives, have the tears welled up into my eyes; when, at length,

the last shovelful of earth had rattled into the grave, and the last sod had been well and truly banked - and there was no more to do! No word of consolation, no hopeful mention of the Resurrection and the Life to come - in which they so realistically believe - from lips that would command respect ... Oh, by much-wronged fellow-countrymen ... why are you thus made to suffer ... Your priests, our priests, if one of their own number dies, will attend his interment in shoals; will celebrate his Month's Mind as a religious festival, and even his Anniversary, with High Mass and other ceremonials.

The role of the Catholic Church in education is examined in a more detailed way in further chapters.

To-day all the superior male Catholic schools are managed by priests, either secular or regular; and all the Superior Female Schools are managed by various Orders of Nuns. (Page 269).

The primary education of Catholics is equally in the hands and grasp of Religion. The Catholic National Teachers are now trained, before getting their appointments, in Clerical Training Schools ... They are imbued with the spirit of submission to the clergy. After their appointment, the Catholic Teachers are completely in the power of the Parish Priest, who is always the manager of the school, and who can dismiss them at three months notice.

McCarthy criticises the undemocratic nature of the Catholic Church and put forward some of his own ideas to reform its structure:

The priest is not an earner. It is the layman who must pay for the Cathedrals, the Churches, the Convents, the Monasteries, the Schools, and the costly ceremonials. The priests obtrude themselves and religion into worldly matters which have nothing whatever to say to religion; which are, on the contrary, invariably injured by that obtrusion. They resent being excluded from participation and dictation in every movement for their worldly advancement set foot by the Irish Catholic laymen. Yet the systematically and Contemptuously exclude the Catholic layman from all share in the temporal affairs of his Church, affairs in which he has an incontestable right to intervene, inasmuch as it is he who pays for everything ... We have seen that the Protestant laity have a predominant voice in the selection of their parish minister. (Pages 318, 319).

McCarthy continues on his theme with more democratic suggestions:

I have long believed that there should be a Parochial Committee of laymen in every Catholic parish, in which the Church Property and funds should be vested; that the Committee should be elected by the parishioners, the humblest head of a family attending the church to have a vote; and the maintenance of the Church, the parochial house, and the voluntary schools should be the care of this Committee ... (Page 324).

These Parochial Committees in all the parishes of a diocese, in conjunction with all the clergymen of that diocese, and voting by orders, should have the power of appointing the Bishop of the Diocese, or of selecting three names for the Pope's approval ... (Page 330).

The author, who claimed that "there is always distress and beggary where there is excessive religiosity" (Page 381), examines what he terms the "priestly greed for money".

The inordinate greed for money which Irish priests develop as they grow older, forms the basis of one of the most frequently heard complaints amongst the Catholic laity. There is also a corresponding lack of not only generosity, but of even common, everyday charity, which is yearly becoming more pronounced amongst the Irish priests. (Page 325).

Citing a few examples, including an old parish priest in a country district who left £20,000 or £30,000 at his death, McCarthy continues:

Love of money will be the ruin of the Irish priesthood, if the present system is suffered to continue. The present system of collecting money at "Stations", for instance, and at Christmas and Easter, is most degrading to the character of the priests, and equally so to the character of the laity. Then, again, the system of levying enormous fees for marriages is a most unlucky one. I have known cases where the priest refused to celebrate a marriage among people of the tenant-farmer class until he received £50! The haggling about "paying the priest" at christenings, marriages, deaths, and at every stage of one's life, is one of the most unpleasant, most debasing features of life in Catholic Ireland (Page 326).

Dealing with the efforts of the clergy to retain their power over the people through the use of

religious and supernatural influences the author makes the valid comment: "Those religious and supernatural influences must always fail in the long run in a country where the Reformed Religions exist side by side with Catholicity". (Page 332).

Examining the campaign for an "exclusively Catholic University in Ireland, McCarthy writes (Page 399):

The Belfast people ... do not constitute a tribunal of final appeal on the question of a Catholic University or No Catholic University. They have nothing special to do with the case at all. It does not effect them. But it would be asking them to play the part of hypocrites - and they are not hypocrites - to ask them to give their assent beforehand, and, thereby, their encouragement, to any attempt to rivet more firmly upon the country in which they live, the chains of papal domination, from which they themselves have been freed by their own exertions.

Towards the end of his book McCarthy concludes with some advice to the Catholic laity, and his words have a topical ring:

I have endeavoured to lay my finger on the cause of the pusillanimity in the Irish body politic, which is as injurious to the entire United Kingdom as it is to the Rest of Ireland. It is the interest of us all that the inhabitants of that portion of Ireland should stand erect and be the free men and women which the laws of Ireland to-day allow them to be. It is nobody's interest that they should continue poor and timid and ignorant; except, apparently, the

interest of that Power which has grown rich and fat upon the poverty, timidity, and ignorance of these poor people ... Why should they any longer suffer themselves to be bamboozled into remaining in poverty, fear, ignorance and isolation, by the threat held over them, that if they so mix with their Christians, they will endanger the "heritage of the Faith", and run the risk of being damned for all eternity? ... Let them cast out fear from their breasts ... For, when Catholic Bishops or Priests outstep their jurisdiction, as they have done and do, and will do again, no man is bound to obey them. They are but mortals; they are in Ireland, for the most part, men who have no experience of the world - except, perhaps, in the art of accumulating, or, at all events, of garnering money ...

These words fell on stony soil. McCarthy, a Catholic and a Unionist, won few supporters among Irish Catholics, and for over sixty years that "Power" remained supreme. But with the collapse of its economic basis in protectionism, the inevitable move towards economic integration with Britain began in the late fifties. Before long, British cultural influences increasingly began to permeate Irish society. Soon the movement for the separation of Church and state, and for changes in the contraception and divorce laws gathered impetus. The Catholic Church, with its ideology and structure rooted in the old order, has been unable to cope with the new situation, and has already suffered a marked decline in its influence. And, seventy-three years after its publication, Michael McCarthy's book, "Five Years in Ireland", is certain to attract attention as a work which attempted to chart this inevitable course.

THE LAW AND THE PRESS

The traditional "understanding" between the local journalists and the Gardaí is in serious danger of being ruptured, as a directive from Garda Headquarters in Dublin has clamped down on the "unofficial" co-operation.

The first place where this new policy was noticed was in the City Court where reporters from the LIMERICK LEADER and the LIMERICK WEEKLY ECHO faced a stone-like resistance from the newly arrived Inspector Michael Leahy.

Later the reason for Leahy's silence, and for his refusal to hand over files to the reporters became known; he had been complained to Garda Headquarters in Dublin by some local person.

The position up to now has been that the Gardaí have given files to the reporters to copy out the information. These files contain the record of the defendant, the statements, and a list of previous convictions.

Insp. Leahy was no different. He arrived some months ago, and immediately began to co-operate with the local reporters. However, as this co-operation increased, the relationship between one solicitor and the Gardaí took on visible signs of disintegration. There were many court clashes between solicitor, Gordon Hayes, and the Gardaí.

Regarded by many as a "loner" in Limerick's legal world, Hayes did not make many friends by his continuous exposing of hardship suffered by his clients. He refused to "play ball" and so fit into the nice, cosy system of co-operation.

It is hardly surprising then, that Hayes himself refused to hand over files to reporters. Technically, any statement, or information contained in a file is confidential and should not be handed over to anyone except the solicitor or the Garda Inspector.

However, in Limerick, the Garda Inspector always gave the file to the reporters after the case. Now this arrangement has been threatened, and at the City Court recently, it was a different Insp. Leahy who politely refused to give the files to reporters.

He was immediately tackled by the reporters and only then he revealed the complaint made against him to Garda Headquarters. So now another old tradition bites the dust and the confidential information on people coming before the court remains confidential.

That, however, is not to say that the journalists are contemplating no action. At present there are only a few journalists involved and they firmly believe, rightly or wrongly, that solicitor Gordon Hayes "fingered" them because of his desire to see the proper administration of justice.

The dilemma in which the journalists find themselves, is that they cannot prove who complained to Garda Headoffice, and so prevented Insp. Leahy from giving them the files. It is obvious that it had to be someone with a knowledge of court procedure, and Hayes seemed to be the natural choice.

The Irish people are regularly informed about how lucky we all are to be living in a country with a "free" press. The myth of a "free" press has long been used as a cover for the suppression of unpalatable facts and the distortion of the truth. All too often the "freedom" of the press in Limerick has meant the freedom for local journalists to collaborate with the privileged, the police and the politicians in propping up the present system and in making life easier for themselves.

Limerick journalists have a well-earned reputation for not rocking the boat, and the latest move by the Gardaí will hardly result in a national confrontation. What seems possible is that the reporters and the Gardaí will find an alternative method of collecting information and no-one will be any wiser. However, if the same person who complained to Dublin should discover the trick, it will be interesting to see the outcome. Meanwhile, the "loss" of the police files is one "freedom" we can all do without.

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LIMERICK SOCIALIST,
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THE (UNWRITTEN) STORY OF LIMERICK

Doctor Robert Wyse Jackson's book, "The Story of Limerick", is a disappointment. When the news became known that the author was writing a history of Limerick, many people expected the new book to take up where Lenihan's "History" left off in 1865. But this did not happen. Dr. Wyse Jackson's slight book devotes only twelve of its 112 pages (pages 96 to 107) to the post-famine period (1850) to the present time.

Notwithstanding this fact, the blurb on the back cover of the book makes an ambitious claim:

... Robert Wyse Jackson traces the development of a vital evolving community. He tells of the growth of peacetime occupations, trade and commerce, art and education, travel and communication ... It is enlivened with anecdote, enriched with comment and balanced with the criticism of a man who knows and loves the city well. The history and people of Limerick live for the reader through the memories and knowledge of the author.

The author, of course, does none of these things. The reader will search in vain for any reference to many important events in Limerick's history; criticism of any kind is remarkable for its non-existence; no attempt is made to explain or analyse the forces and personalities in the city's economic, political, religious and social development. In short, the work does not merit its claim to a "history"; it is merely a painless skim over the surface of Limerick's history. As such, the book probably provided an evening of light reading for some local people over the Christmas period and not much more.

Some of the most interesting parts of the book are those where the author provides details of the wages and living conditions of the workers. We learn (page 65) that in 1776-78 the population of the city was "a densely packed 32,000". Domestic servants were paid at the following rates:

A Footman ... four to six guineas annually.
A Professed woman cook ... six guineas.
A House maid ... three pounds.
A Kitchen maid ... two pounds.
A Butler ... ten to twelve pounds.

A visitor to Limerick in 1805, Sir John Carr, recorded that "the old city reminded him of the warrens of lanes in Rouen". Dr. Wyse Jackson then goes on to describe the living conditions of workers in the last century (Page 70):

The inhumanity of the Georgian world was terrifying. People were almost incomprehensively brutal. The insensitivity and inhumanity was not confined to the wilful inflicting of pain; it showed also in the almost absolute neglect of poverty, illness and starvation. In spite of a few individual charitable efforts to relieve a tiny part of the horror, it was widespread in the cities. The repulsive picture ... is not one confined to the mud-deep lanes, cellars and garrets of old Limerick only ...

The author tells how "an objective observer", Henry D. Inglis, "penetrated the back streets of old

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Limerick in 1836, and wrote soberly and powerfully about what he saw there". Inglis went "uninvited and quite at random" into forty houses and saw hundreds of people as a cross section. He recorded:

I spent a day in visiting those parts of the city where the greatest destitution and misery were said to exist ... I will not speak of the filth of the place; that could not be exceeded in places meant to be its receptacles ... Let the worst be imagined and it will not be beyond the truth. It at least three-fourths of the hovels which I entered there was no furniture of any description save an iron pot - no table, no chair, no bench, no bedstead; two or three little bundles of straw with perhaps one or two scanty and ragged mats, were rolled up in the corners unless where these beds were found occupied.

At this point Dr. Wyse Jackson declares: "There is no point in paraphrasing his account; it is so vivid that the original can not be bettered":

The inmates were some of them old crooked and diseased; some young but emaciated and surrounded by starving children; some were sitting on the damp ground, some standing, and many of them were unable to rise from their little straw heaps. In scarcely one hovel could I find even a potato. In one which I entered I noticed a small opening leading into an inner room. I lighted a bit of paper at the embers of a turf which lay in the chimney and looked in. It was a cellar about twelve feet square; two bundles of straw lay in two corners; on one sat a bed-ridden woman; on another lay two naked children - literally naked with a torn rag of some kind thrown over them both. But I saw worse even than this. In a cellar which I entered, and which was almost quite dark and slippery with damp I found a man sitting on a little sawdust. He was naked; he had not even a shirt. A filthy and ragged mat was round him; this man was a living skeleton; the bones all but protruded through this skin; he was literally starving.

One would, perhaps, have expected Dr. Wyse Jackson to be more detailed and knowledgeable about Limerick's literary tradition. He writes (Page 44):

... it will be difficult for us to say that we ever produced a notably great writer in the English language ... we never brought forth a Swift or a Goldsmith, a Sheridan or a Shaw, a Synge or a Wilde, an O'Casey or a Behan.

Kate O'Brien is briefly, but correctly, identified as Limerick's greatest living novelist. The author, however, makes no effort to interpret the bourgeois, religion-dominated life of the Limerick of her writings. Michael Hogan, the Bard of Thomond, is curtly dismissed as "the scurrilous Michael Hogan" (page 95), again without any attempt to explain the Bard's background or his dedicated life-long struggle to earn his living as a poet.

Dr. Wyse Jackson documents the interesting fact that at the outbreak of the First World War about 1,250 Irish Volunteers in Limerick joined the British forces leaving only 250 in the city (Page 97).

As the book nears its end the story takes on a banal tone. Describing the visit of John F. Kennedy to Limerick, the author writes (Page 106):

And I can never forget the joyous atmosphere at the racecourse on that day, when the helicopter came down and President Kennedy stepped out. I recall his warm-hearted mingling with the people and his carefree quality as he set foot on Irish soil, his transparent affection for those who had come to meet him.

The author continues his whimsical reminiscence with a plug for his friend Mrs. Fanny Condell:

Nor can I forget the charming speech he made about little nations, and the brilliant address of welcome given by our first woman Mayor, Mrs.

Frances Condell. The President was to say later that it was the finest speech he had heard in Europe.

Dr. Wyse Jackson modestly refrains from mentioning his own hand in writing Fanny's high-blown oration.

The second-hand, hackneyed nature of the book is freely admitted by the author himself when he writes in his Foreword: "I owe nearly everything in this history to others". In this matter he certainly did not follow the "attractive account of the vocation of a historian" quoted from John Ferrar's *History of Limerick*:

The honest desire of rescuing our history from oblivion, of transmitting remarkable events to posterity, supports the historian in his undertaking, renders him superior to every difficulty, and repays the toil of reading and collating a number of manuscripts and old books.

During his term as Bishop of Limerick Dr. Wyse Jackson made a valuable and genial contribution to the impoverished cultural life of the city. As a writer and artist he showed his affection for the things in Limerick where his interests lay. It is to be regretted therefore that his departure from the city was not marked by a more worthy literary effort. The fact that the freedom of his retirement and the availability of time, money and facilities have not enabled him to produce a more detailed and penetrating work shows his limitations as a historian.

Dr. Wyse Jackson - no more than successive Catholic bishops - had little or no contact with the Limerick working class and never displayed any special concern for the interests of this class. The fact that early in his career as a clergyman he served in a parish in Salford, near Manchester, in England (the setting for Walter Greenwood's well-known book, *Love On The Dole*), did not, apparently, give him any new awareness of working class life. This lack of awareness is clearly evident throughout his book. Today when poverty and social problems continue to exist in many shapes and forms, all Dr. Wyse Jackson can offer is a word of gratitude and a pious, unrealistic hope.

.. today we are grateful for the social services, recently co-ordinated under the inspiration of Bishop Henry Murphy. May social benefaction for all in need develop as the State and City progress towards even greater maturity.

But Dr. Wyse Jackson's main shortcoming as a historian is his reluctance to call a spade a spade. Like most other Southern Irish Protestants he is too timid and careful about certain delicate areas of our society. Nowhere, for instance, will the reader find any reference to contraception, divorce or the drastic effect of the Catholic Church's *Ne Temere* decree on the Protestant population in Limerick and in Southern Ireland generally. Also among the discreet omissions from the book are (i) the controversy between Bishop O'Dwyer, the Christian Brothers, the Nuns and the "Limerick Leader" at Bruff at the turn of this century, (ii) the anti-Jewish pogrom in 1904, (iii) the campaign against Dr. Long by the Redemptorists, also at the turn of the century, (iv) the "Good Literature Crusade" (1910), and (v) the various activities of the "largest Confraternity in the world". Politics and politicians, apart from Donogh O'Malley, are also ignored, as is the effect of the economic change to free trade on the character of Limerick life.

A reader of this book will find no clues to the fact that some of the most vile and violent demonstrations of Irish religious fanaticism surfaced in Limerick in the past century.

The definitive history of Limerick still remains to be written. The best that can be said about Dr. Wyse Jackson's castrated "Story" is that it supplies some useful notes for students and future history writers.

In search of . . .

The world knows me not, and I know not the
world that perhaps may know me —
(Ossian — J.F. O'Donnell).

by Jim Kemmy

PART EIGHT

A SOUTHWARK SELECTION

The first news of O'Donnell's death reached Ireland through the columns of "The Nation". In its edition of May 9th, 1874, this paper reported:

As we go to press the painful and lamentable intelligence reaches us that the brilliant poet and literateur, the warmhearted, genial, and patriotic John F. O'Donnell, breathed his last at his residence in London. Words fail to express our grief at this sad event, which takes from ourselves a valued friend and constant contributor, and from Ireland one of the most loving and gifted of her sons. His loss is truly a national one. His beautiful poems... have long been ranked among the dearest literary treasures of the Irish race.

On the following week the *Munster News*, the Limerick paper on which O'Donnell began his journalistic career, carried a brief one paragraph account of the poet's funeral. In its next issue of May 16th., *The Nation* carried a longer appreciation of O'Donnell and his work. This article was written by the paper's "own correspondent" in his *London Letter* column and is a final, generous tribute from one journalist to a dead colleague:

The sad fact, which I telegraphed to you last week in time to be announced in the Nation — the death of Mr. John F. O'Donnell — has, I doubt not, evoked deep regret throughout Ireland. No more gifted and versatile child of genius has Irish national literature known in our generation. The poetry of "Caviare" and "Monkton West" in the pages of the Nation, always sparkling and beautiful, now aglow with fire and passion, anon full of tenderest pathos and finest feeling, and yet again brimful of richest humour and keen satire, will entitle his name to a high place amongst the Poets of our Land. Yet this was but a part, and perhaps but a small part, of his literary labours. He was indefatigable in every department of literature; he sometimes contributed leaders to political journals of the first rank; wrote squibs and satires for the comic publications; stories of fiction for the serials; reviews for the magazines; and London correspondence for American and Irish papers. Yet it was still the story of Oliver Goldsmith, and life was a scene of endless drudgery for him. Lately, however, a flood of sunshine brightened his pathway; comparative ease and independence was assured to him by his appointment to a reasonably good position in the service of one of the Colonies... He lived, however, barely a few months to enjoy this calm and comfort, after a life of often hardship and always anxiety in the struggle to provide bread for the little ones of home. He was taken... suddenly ill a fortnight ago, and died on Wednesday week of internal tumour, which must have often caused him agony, but of which he was never known to complain... On Saturday we laid him in his grave at Kensal Green; a faithful band of literary friends and fellow-countrymen being by. And, now, what of his little ones... A committee has been formed to raise some little provision for the children of "Caviare".

John Francis O'Donnell

A list of subscriptions, published in *The Nation* on May 23rd., showed that a total of £61 had been collected in the fund for O'Donnell's widow and family. This list was headed by a £10 donation from Lord O'Hagan, the man who had secured for O'Donnell his last job at the office of the Agent General for New Zealand.

Further tributes to O'Donnell, in the form of poems and letters, also appeared in *The Nation*. One poem by "R.J." titled, *Dirge — J.F. O'D.*, and published on June 20th, 1874, contained these verses:

*Summer shines, and from the blooming meadows
Soft-winged winds delicious fragrance bring,
Yet sorrow still the beauteous land o'er shadows,
And, though the skies are bright and glad birds sing,*

*Fair Erin, drooping, seeks her lonely bowers,
And sighing o'er the harp her minstrel bore,
Around it twines a wreath of funeral flowers,
For, all unstrung, its tones are heard no more.
And all unmindful of the summer's splendour
She sadly listens to the funeral chime,
For, voiceless now, his song, so sweetly tender,
Hushed in the grave is silenced for all time.*

*Yes, when for him life's joyous light shone
brightest
It suddenly went out in spectral gloom —
When, freed from care, the poet's dreams were
lightest,
Relentless Death consigned him to the tomb.*

In 1887, thirteen years after O'Donnell's death, journalist Michael MacDonagh, one of the Athlunkard Street, Limerick, family of reporters, visited the poet's grave. He later wrote a series of articles for the *Dublin Evening Telegraph*. These articles, titled, *Irish Graves in England*, were later published in pamphlet form. In the course of his article on O'Donnell, Michael MacDonagh wrote:

Before the reader peruses this sketch I ask him to look first at the drawing of a grave which accompanies it. Mark the stone at head of the grave. It is small and mean, half of it has sunk into the earth, and on it no name can be traced. The stone is composed of sand, and the outer quoting which bore the inscription has been almost completely eaten away by the ravages of comparatively few years. It is difficult to believe all at once that in this grave, in a strange land, neglected, obscure, and now unrecognisable, lie the remains of John Francis O'Donnell — one of Ireland's greatest poets of this latter half of the nineteenth century... Surely the name and fame of "Caviare" and "Monkton West" (the noms-de-plume under which O'Donnell contributed most of his national poems to the national Press) are written not in decaying sandstone, but in the hearts of his country women and men. Shall we, then, allow his grave to remain thus obscured and thus neglected?

When Michael MacDonagh commenced his series of articles John T. Kelly, secretary of the Southwark Irish Literary club wrote to him expressing the hope that O'Donnell's grave would not be forgotten. MacDonagh replied that it was the

sight of O'Donnell's neglected grave which first gave him the idea for the series. Kelly called a meeting of the Southwark Club for the immediate purpose of putting O'Donnell's grave in order and for the greater task of organising a suitable memorial to the poet. A committee was formed, and an appeal prepared, printed and circulated. John T. Kelly acted as the committee's secretary; Michael MacDonagh as its treasurer and F.A. O'Keefe, Mayor of Limerick, as one of its members.

The form of memorial chosen and the work of the committee in bringing the project to fruition have been described by Richard Dowling:

On Mr. Kelly fell the weight of the undertaking. He not only acted as secretary to the committee, but also as literary executor to the poet. Mr. John H. O'Donnell, son of the poet, placed at Mr. Kelly's disposal a collection of his father's verses cut from magazines and newspapers. For months Mr. Kelly devoted the scanty leisure of his days to the object he had at heart. He ransacked the British Museum, transcribed hundreds of poems and entered into correspondence with people who could give him copies of verses, or supply information on the subject of his research.

And so the memorial took shape, and thus the day of the posthumous realisation of one of O'Donnell's unfulfilled ambitions — the publication of a general selection of his poems — drew closer. Richard Dowling in his sympathetic Introduction to this selection describes his final part in the birth of the book:

As soon as all the trouble was over, and the pleasant part appeared in sight, Mr. Kelly placed his memoranda, and proofs of the book all completed, in my hands, asking me to write a few pages of introductory matter. I demurred, on the grounds that other members of the committee were infinitely better qualified for the work, and possessed higher claims upon the privilege; that I had not made O'Donnell's acquaintance until a few years before his death; and that I had no new sources of information to draw on beyond a bundle of O'Donnell's letters. Mr. Kelly still urged me, and I, being only too willing, in the end consented.

The book, *Poems*, was published in London at the beginning of 1891. The selection consists of 77 poems — less than a third of the then available material — divided between general poems and poetry relating to Ireland. The publication itself matched the quality of O'Donnell's best work. A review of the book in *The Irish Monthly*, in its edition of February, 1891, stated:

The publishers have only erred in the excess of the care they have bestowed on the exquisite typography, binding, and gilding of this edition, which is so elegant that we are astonished it can be offered to the general public at so small a price as five shillings.

"Poems" offers a fairly representative cross-section of the poet's work. The book contains many of his best efforts as well as examples of his less successful work. Despite the uneven nature of the selection, however, this long out-of-print book represents the summation by the poet's friends of a lifetime's literary labour. It is possible, therefore, on the strength — and weaknesses — of this book to measure O'Donnell's rating as a poet.

It must be accepted that much of O'Donnell's work, especially his nationalist poetry, has not stood up to the test of time. But all his poems do not merit the fate of oblivion, and a new selection of his work could ensure that his best poems are made available to a wider audience. Perhaps this year, the centenary of his death, it could be usefully suggested that the time for a re-assessment of the poetry of John Francis O'Donnell is long over-due.

(To be concluded).

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TALKING SHOP

THE GREAT C.I.E. (CONTRACEPTIVES IN ERIN) TRAIN TALK

The time: 8.20 a.m. on a January morning during the fuel crisis.

The place: Limerick Railway Station.

The men: Tom O'Donnell, Steve Coughlan, Des O'Malley and Mick Herbert.

O'Malley and Herbert are already seated in the train and are joined, after short intervals, by Coughlan and O'Donnell. The train journey to Dublin begins.

Coughlan: You're a right gobshite if you think that. My votes are in South Hill, the Island Field and in the Confraternity and not at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party. Anyway, I don't want to see those French letters floating around Limerick. They tell me it's like washing your feet with your socks on. But, like Coca Cola, I prefer the real thing.

O'Malley: Oh, I heard all that before. Whether you like it or not, Steve, the day is not far off when you'll see them on display in the front window of Dermot Foley's chemist shop in O'Connell Street.

Coughlan: That wouldn't surprise me. Foley would sell his mother for a bob. Anyway, I hear he's selling the Frenchies already under the counter. But O'Malley's attitude doesn't surprise me in the least; he's in favour of contraception because of his wife's attitude.

O'Malley: Keep my wife out of it. I suppose Peggy would hardly look down her nose at one of them. Anyway, the matter is purely of academic interest to both of you at this stage.

O'Donnell: Keep it clean now, Des. But isn't Steve right? Don't I remember reading an interview with your wife on the front page of the Limerick Weekly Echo after the Pope issued *Humanae Vitae*. She came out very strongly in favour of contraception then.

O'Malley: You're not too far out there. I'll have to admit that she's all in favour of it, and, after four kids in quick succession, I can't say that I blame her. To make matters worse, she won't let me near her these days. And, what's more, she says she'll never sleep with me again if I don't vote for Mary Robinson's Bill.

Coughlan: You are in a bad way, O'Malley. 'Tis easily known why you're in such filthy humour these days. Well, that's one thing, Tom, can be grateful for. That part of things shouldn't worry him.

O'Malley: I don't know all about that. Tom is a bit of a dark horse in his own way. And you'd never know, with his Mercedes and his Ministerial status he might chance a stray bit on one of his trips up the West.

Herbert: Leave Tom alone; can't you see he's blushing? I haven't made up my own mind, but I'll

probably vote against it. If they got hold of those French letter things out around my way in Cappamore and Fedamore, they might think they were balloons and start blowing them up. The next thing we'd find the roads of Co. Limerick polluted with them. We'd be in a right state then.

O'Malley (tongue-in-cheek): Ah, I don't know. I think you're inclined to over-react and to get emotional, Mick. After all, we have the makings of a first-class expanding industry here. Apart from the rubbers, what about the coils, loops, diaphragms and the jelly?

Coughlan: You dirty, randy old bastard. The Corporation sewerage men were right. They told me they find more French letters blocking the sewers in Corbally than in any other part of Limerick.

O'Donnell: Hold it! There's Kingsbridge. We'll say no more about it for now. But Dessy and Backbencher Healy are right. The day of Durex politics has arrived, whether we like it or not. Come on, we'll economise a bit further and save another few bob. We'll share a taxi to the Dail.

Coughlan: Well Tom, what happened to the old Mercedes this morning?

O'Donnell: It's like this, Steve, I suppose I could have travelled up in the Merk alright but, after all, we Ministers must go through the motions of showing a good example to the ordinary punters. What would you say Dessie?

O'Malley: I don't know about a good example, but this train trick should be good for your public image in East Limerick. It will help to show that Tom the Minister is travelling like the ordinary Joe Soap.

Herbert: That's right, Tom is no slouch when it comes to looking after his image in Limerick.

Coughlan (thoughtfully): To mix with kings and still keep the common touch, as Paddy Devlin might say ... That's what politics is all about.

O'Malley (wishfully): The common touch (sigh) ...

Coughlan: That's your problem, Des, you'll never have the common touch.

O'Malley (sharply): That'll do you, Coughlan, your trouble is that your touch is a bit too common ..

Herbert: Take it easy, boys, keep the politics out of it. Anyway we won't have to worry about an election for a long time yet. Let's change the subject.

Coughlan (cheerfully): Any news about the new bishop, Tom?

O'Donnell: I didn't hear much. You're nearly as wise as I am, I did hear, though, that Fr. Ambrose and that Newman chap are well in the running.

Herbert: What about Bishop Eamonn?

O'Malley: Casey is ambitious enough alright. Limerick would be a bigger and brighter scene for

him to operate in. And, besides, Limerick would be that much nearer to the Montrose television cameras.

Coughlan: Sour grapes! But I agree with you that Eamonn is fond of a bit of publicity, but still and all he's a lively, go-ahead fellow.

O'Donnell: But the Cardinal might put a damper on him. I heard that Conway is not all that happy about some of Eamonn's publicity stunts.

O'Malley: Tom could be right. It all depends ultimately on which of them is well enough in with the Cardinal.

Herbert: It certainly won't worry me who gets the job; I'll play ball with any of them. I'm more worried, though, about Mary Robinson's contraceptive bill reaching the Dail.

Coughlan: That's a tricky one right enough. We'll all have to watch our p's and q's there. This could be political dynamite, especially for us in Limerick. How do you feel about it, Tom?

O'Donnell: To tell you the truth I don't like it one little bit. The farmers and their wives out my way are nearly all against it, and so are a lot of the priests.

O'Malley: All of us are badly caught with this one. I'm lucky I am not still the Minister for Justice when this one is going through.

Herbert: Why, do you think it's going to be carried?

O'Malley: Of course, I do. But if you don't believe me ask Tom. He knows that most of the Cabinet are in favour of a change in the law.

Coughlan: Is that true?

O'Donnell: I see Des is getting his information from a reliable source. And he's right too. Garret, Conor Cruise, Paddy Cooney, Corish, Declan, O'Leary, Justin, and even Richie, have all come out in support of it.

Herbert: But what about Liam? I hear he doesn't fancy it at all.

O'Malley: Liam will have to go along with the crowd when the crunch comes. And the Northern thing is going to bring the crunch before very long.

Herbert: But we're not too bad in Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. We will have a free vote on the matter, but contraception is official Labour Party policy. You'll be under the whip, Steve, and you'll have to vote for it whether you like it or not.

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