

CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTION

MAYOR'S VIS

THE organising of pig production on co-operative lines in Counties Limerick and Clare producing top quality pigs as a solution to the present bacon crisis in Limerick has been placed before the Minister for Agriculture by Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D.

He said that the first essential for a viable bacon industry in Limerick was an adequate supply of top quality pigs and this, in turn, could only be assured by making pig production economically attractive to farmers in Limerick and the hinterland.

Mr. O'Donnell, in presenting his scheme to the Minister, said that in view of the present difficulties experienced by one of Limerick's oldest industries, Messrs. Matterns, and in the interests of the future of the bacon industry as a whole in the Limerick area, he was putting it forward.

TRAGEDY

"It will be readily appreciated that Limerick enjoys an international reputation as the premier Irish bacon curing centre, and the quality of its products is well known at home and abroad," he said. "It would be nothing short of an economic tragedy if this major industry was allowed to collapse and such a collapse would have disastrous repercussions in Limerick City and its surrounding countryside.

"The first essential for a viable bacon industry in Limerick is an adequate supply of top-quality pigs, and this in turn can only be assured by making pig production economically attractive to the farmers in the Limerick hinterland. I propose, therefore, that immediate action be taken to launch a vigorous campaign to encourage pig production in Counties Limerick and Clare," he continued.

CONFERENCE

"In view of the apparent success of co-operative pig production in certain areas of this country, it is suggested that the possibility of organising pig production on co-operative lines in Counties Limerick and Clare, should be explored. Towards this end, the Department of Agriculture should immediately hold a conference with the I.A.O.S., the Pigs and Bacon Commission, the Dairy Disposals Co. and the Limerick Bacon Factories and the farmers' organisations, Limerick and Clare.

"The Limerick bacon industries can be saved and the livelihood of several hundred workers can be safeguarded provided the Government takes steps to encourage pig production, by making it profitable for the farmers of Limerick and Clare," he concluded.

ASSURED

In a special press statement, Deputy T. O'Donnell said that it was time to face facts if we want to preserve our traditional Limerick industries. The future

of the bacon industry in Limerick can be assured if, and only if, the Government takes immediate action to increase pig production in the Limerick area. The Department of Agriculture, the Pigs and Bacon Commission, the I.A.O.S. and the Dairy Disposal Company, together with the bacon factories and the farmers' organisations could provide the solution to the whole problem provided the Government and the Minister for Agriculture is prepared to offer the necessary facilities and incentives.

PROPOSAL

Deputy O'Donnell said that his proposal to the Minister was perfectly feasible and he would use every means at his disposal to have it implemented. He said that his proposal for a major co-operative pig producing enterprise in Limerick and Clare would in practice entail the erection of a number of large pig fattening stations in the area. The farmer members of the Co-Op. would keep sows and rear bonhams until about 10 weeks old. The bonhams would then be transferred to the local fattening station for finishing.

DEPUTY SUSPENDED

In the Dail yesterday, Ald. Stephen Coughlan, T.D., was suspended for disobedience to the Chair during Question Time. The Deputy refused to sit down when asked by the Ceann Comhairle.

Earlier, Deputy Coughlan had questioned the Minister for Agriculture on the position of the bacon industry in Limerick in relation to the discussions which had taken place between the Pigs and Bacon Commission, the Bacon Curers' Association and An Bord Grain to allow free-imported grain for rationing at a subsidised price that would make it economical for farmers to produce pigs.

When the Minister did not reply, the Ceann Comhairle called the next question, but Deputy Coughlan demanded an answer to his question and when he persisted he was told by the Ceann Comhairle to resume his seat. He refused to do so until he got an answer to his question. He was then suspended and left the house saying that he was doing so under protest and that he was trying to save the Bacon industry whatever politics the Minister was playing at.



The mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Vincent York on the first stage of a three week visit. He will spend three weeks visiting the attend St. Patrick's Day celebration Manager, Aer Lingus, Limerick, bids V. Feeney, as he boards Aer Lingus/U.S.

**WANTED--
A NEW
INDUSTRIA
LEADED**

CAMOUFLAGE

farmers Association is nearing an end. The announcement that the members of the N.F.A. have been in constant touch with the Government at Ministerial level during the past few days means that there has been a change from the hard yielding attitude which the farmers adopted, and which made it impossible for the Government to take steps to meet them without appearing to have bowed before a storm, and in effect to have abrogated its authority. It is clear that the N.F.A. has demonstrated that it is an organisation of considerable power, and that it can act with complete solidarity when called upon to do so. With the exception of the affair on January 9 last, which had best be forgotten, all the agitations conducted by the Association have been within the law. The commodity strike is a case in point, and it has been fully effective since it resulted in bringing all markets and markets to a standstill—a state of affairs in an agricultural country such as ours, which must result in heavy losses, not alone to the purchasers but to the suppliers who are, of course, the farmers.

In a dispute of this kind in which a very substantial body pits itself against the Government, the first reaction is that the rule of law and order must be upheld. An Taoiseach, in his speech in the Dail on Tuesday, made that perfectly clear, but at the same time he repeated his assurance that the Government has at all times been willing to meet the N.F.A. and to deal sympathetically with penalised members if the Association gives an undertaking not to pursue action contrary to law. One result of this attitude is that it has made it easier to form the essential contact without which the dispute cannot be settled, and it does seem that the end of a difficult and potentially dangerous situation is in sight. Most people would be relieved to learn that the imprisoned farmers have been released, and that the enforcement of the law against some 200 others who were fined for road obstruction will not be proceeded with. It is certain that nothing of the kind will ever occur again, and, therefore, it is in the interests of all sides that this particular episode be forgotten.

That there is a break in the clouds seems to be indicated by the statement issued by the N.F.A. last night, in which the National Executive expressed appreciation of the Taoiseach's attitude. The statement went on to say that the Association has always sought to bring about a situation in which real progress for farmers can result from direct negotiation with the Government, and that it had never any desire to adopt aggressive methods as an end in themselves. It had done so only reluctantly and then only when all efforts at negotiation had failed. It is with this climate of opinion in mind that hopes for a quick ending of the existing dispute have arisen. The N.F.A. will have to suspend its campaign in order to meet the Government, and the Government will have to give ground in the rather implacable attitude it has adopted all along the line. What cannot be overlooked is that the Taoiseach