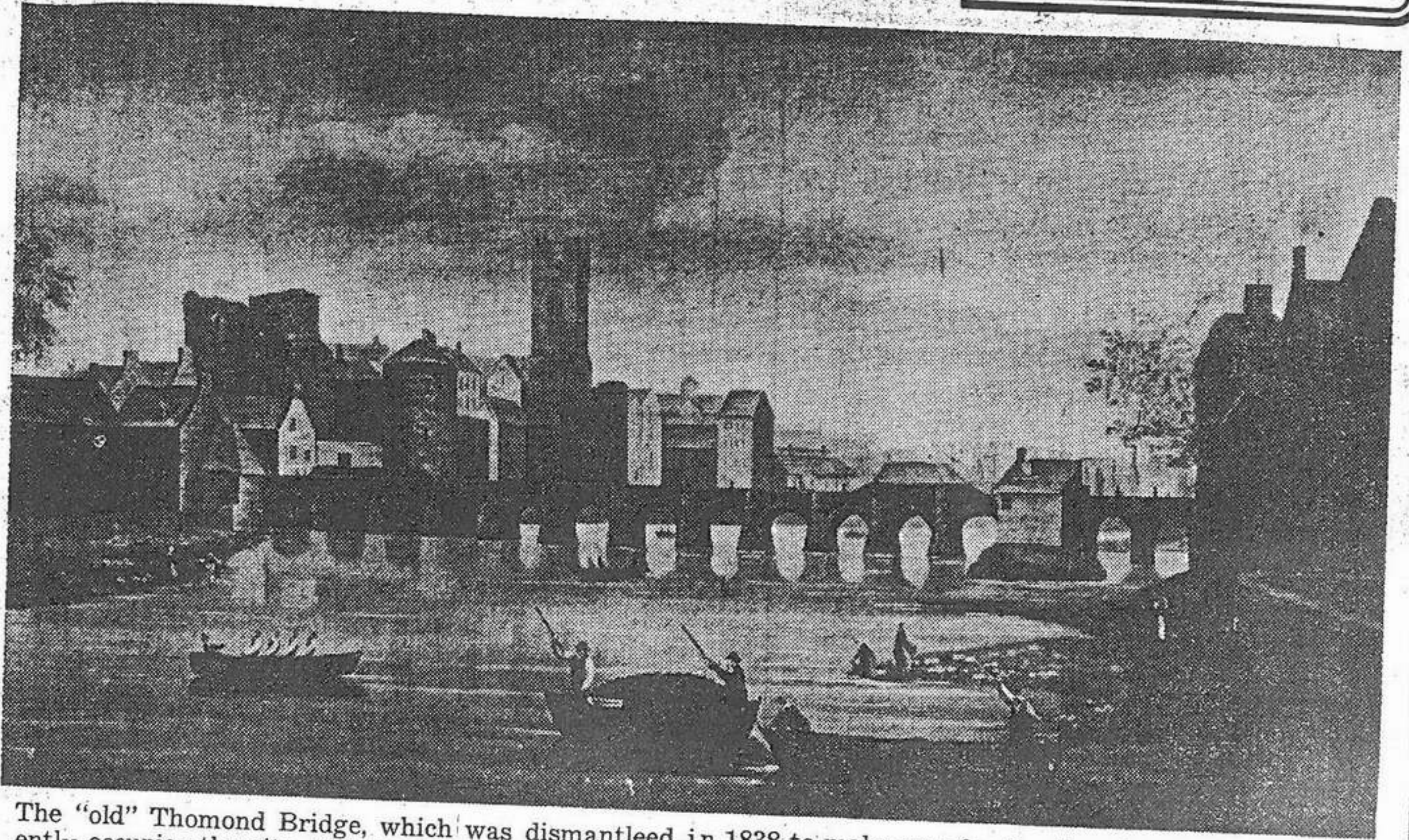


A Limerickman's Diary

Edited by PADDY MORONEY



The "old" Thomond Bridge, which was dismantled in 1838 to make way for the "new" bridge, which presently occupies the site. This is, in fact, a picture of a painting whose artist is unknown, reproduced by kind permission of the Municipal Gallery, Pery Square. This was the bridge over which Drunken Thady reputedly staggered over in the dark hours, when he met the ghostly Bishop's Lady. This bridge actually replaced an earlier one with a "myll" which stood during the sieges of 1690 and 1691.

Drunken Thady and the Bishop's Lady

BEFORE the year of Ninety-Eight
Decided Ireland's wayward fate,
When laws of death and transportation
Were served like banquets, thro' the nation;
There lived and died in Limerick City
A dame of fame—oh! what a pity
That dames of fame should live and die
And never learn for what or why.
'Tis true she lived, 'tis true she died—
'Tis true she was a Bishop's bride.
She lived like most ungodly ladies—
Spending the Reverend Lordship's treasure,
Chasing the world's evil pleasure.
She died—her action were recorded—
Whether in heaven or hell rewarded.
We know not, but her time was given
Without a thought of hell or

One of the most enduring legends about Limerick is that of "Drunken Thady and the Bishop's Lady," which was set to verse by Michael Hogan, known as the Bard of Thomond. He died in 1899. The story is one of ghostly old Thomondgate, where the Bard himself was born, and of how a drunken "local" was converted to the ways of righteousness by an encounter with the feared "Bishop's Lady" on Thomond Bridge. Reproduced here is an abridged version of the Bard's tale. It is given in response to a number of requests and, although appropriate to a Christmas fireside, is not out of place in this harsh time of year.

door.
But e're his drunken pranks
went further
The host and he had milla
murder;
The window panes he broke
entire,
The bottles flew about the fire,
The liquor on the hearth
threaten'd more;
The sky was starless, moonless
all
Above the silent world's white
pall;
The driving sleet-shower hiss'd
aloud,
The distant forest roared and
howled.

than air;
Her grasp press'd on L'm cold
as steel.
He saw the form, but could not
feel.
He tried not, tho' his brain
was dizzy,
To kiss her, as he kissed Miss
Lizzy,
But pray'd to heaven for help
sincere—
The first time e'er he said a
prayer.

'T WAS vain — the spirit in
her fury,
To do her work was in a hurry;
And rising with a whirlwind's
strength,
Hurled him o'er the battlement.
Splash went poor Thady in the
torrent,
And roll'd along the rapid
current,
Towards Curragour's mad roar-
ing fall
The billows tossed him like a
ball.

world's evil

her action were
orded—
cher in heaven or hell
rewarded
know not, but her time was
given
without a thought of hell or
heaven.

* * *

BUT earth, the home of her
affection,
ould not depart her recollec-
tion;
she returned to flash and
shine,
but never more to dance or
dine.
The story of her insurrection
flew out in many a queer
direction;
Each night she moved with airy
feet
From Thomond Bridge to Castle
Street.
And those that stayed out past
eleven
Would want a special guard
from heaven
To shield them with a holy
wand
From the mad terrors of her
hand.
She knocked two drunken sol-
diers dead,
Two more with batter'd fore-
heads fled;
She broke the sentry-box
staves
And dashed the fragments in
the waves.
She pitched her Reverend Lord
downstairs
And burned the house about his
ears.
No pugilist in Limerick town
Could knock a man so quickly
down
Or deal an active blow so ready
To floor one, as the Bishop's
Lady.
And, thus, the ghost appear'd
and vanish'd
Until her Ladyship was
banished
By Father Power, whom things
of evil
Dreaded, as mortals dread the
devil.

* * *

BUT ere the Priest removed
the Lady
There lived a chap called
Drunken Thady
In Thomondgate, of social joys,
The birthplace of the devil's
boys.
He believed in God right firm
and well,
But served no heaven and
feared no hell;
A sermon on hell's pains may
start him,
It may convince but not convert
him.
He knew his failing, and his
fault
Lay in the tempting drop of
malt;
And every day his vice went
further
And as he drank his heart grew
harder.
The jail received him forty
times
For midnight rows and drunken
crimes;
He failed his wife and thumped
his brother
And burn'd the bed about his
mother;
The Guard was called out to
arrest him.
Across the quarry lock they
chased him;
Thade knew the scanty passage
well
And headlong his pursuers fell
Into the stagnant, miry brook.
Like birds in birdlime sudden
stuck.

* * *

ALL day long he drank poteen
at Hayes'
And pitched the King and law
to blazes;
He knocked his master on the
floor
And kissed Miss Lizzie at the

door.
But ere his drunken pranks
went further
The host and he had milla
murder;
The window panes he broke
entire,
The bottles flew about the fire,
The liquor on the hearth
increasing
Caught fire and set the chimney
blazing.
But to our story of this queer
boy,
Thady, the drunken, devil-may-
care boy.

* * *

T WAS Christmas Eve—the
gale was high—
The snow-clouds swept along the
sky,
The flakey drift was whirling
down
Like flying feathers thro' the
town.
In every pane the Christmas
light
Gave welcome to the Holy
Night;
In every house the holly green
Around the wreathed walls was
seen;
The Christmas blocks of oak
entire
Blazed, hiss'd and crackled in
the fire,
And sounds of joy from every
dwelling
Upon the snowy blast came
swelling.
The flying week, now past and
gone,
Saw Thady earn two pounds one
And, like a pirate frigate
cruising,
Steered to the crowded city,
boozing.
The sweet-toned bells of Mary's
tower
Proclaimed the Saviour's natal
hour;
The homeward tread of parting
feet
Died on the echo of the street,
For Johnny Connell, the dreaded
man,
With his wild, raking Garry-
owen clan
Cleared the streets and smash'd
each lamp
And made the watchmen all
decamp.

* * *

A T half-past-one the town was
silent,
Except a row raised in the
Island.
Where Thady—foc to sober
thinking—
With comrade lads sat gaily
drinking.
A table and a pack of cards
Stood in the midst of four
blackguards,
Who, with bumper-draught
elated,
Dash'd down their trumps and
swore and cheated.
The draughts came foaming
from the barrel,
The sport soon ended in a
quarrel:
Jack flung a pint at Tom O'Hara
And Thady levell'd Billy Mara;
The cards flew round in every
quarter,
The earthen floor was drunk
with porter.
The landlord ran to call the
Watch,
With oaths half English and
half Scotch
The Watch came to the scene
of battle
Proclaiming peace with sound-
ing wattle;
The combatants were soon
arrested—
But Thady got off unmolested.

* * *

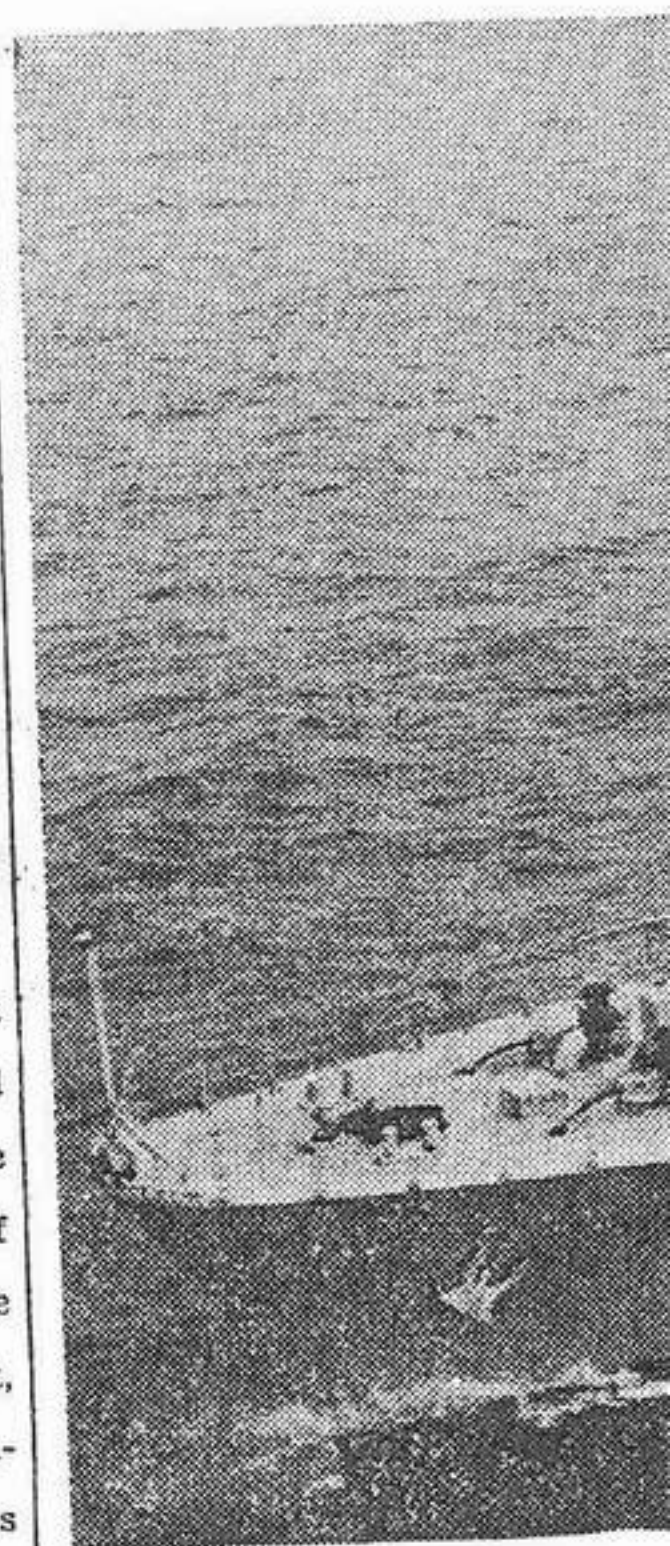
THE night was stormy, cold
and late,
No human form was in the
street;
The virgin snow lay on the
ghways
A choked up alleys, lanes and
by-ways.
The North still pour'd its frigid
store.
The clouds looked black and

The sky was starless, moonless
all
Above the silent world's white
pall;
The driving sleet-shower hiss'd
aloud,
The distant forest roar'd and
bowed,
But Thady felt no hail nor
sleet,
As home he reel'd through Castle
Street.
The whistling squall was beat-
ing on
The battered towers of old King
John,
Which guarded once, in war-like
state,
The hostile pass of Thomond-
gate.
The blinding showers, like silver
balls,
Rattled against the ancient walls
As if determined to subdue
What William's guns had fail'd
to do.
Old Munchin's trees, from roots
to heads,
Were rocking in their church-
yard beds;
The hoary tombs were wrapt in
snow,
The angry Shannon roar'd be-
low.
Thade reel'd along in slow
rotation,
The greatest man in Erin's
nation;
Now darting forward like a pike,
With upraised fist in act to
strike,
And half to stand or fall in-
clined.
Now wheeling backward with
the wind;
Now sidelong, 'mid the pelting
showers,
He stumbled near the tall round
towers.
With nodding head and zig-zag
feet
He gained the centre of the
street.
And, giddy as a summer midge,
Went staggering towards old
Thomond Bridge,
Whose fourteen arches braved
so clever
Six hundred years the rapid
river,
And seem'd, in sooth, a noble
picture
Of ancient Irish architecture.

* * *

NOW Thady ne'er indulged a
thought
How Limerick's heroes fell or
fought,
This night he was in no position
For scripture, history or tradi-
tion.
His thoughts were on the Bis-
hop's Lady—
The first tall arch was crossed
already—
He paused upon the haunted
ground,
The barrier of her midnight
round.
Along the bridge-way, dark and
narrow,
He peep'd—while terror drove
its arrow,
Cold as the keen blast of
October,
Thro' all his frame and made
him sober.
Awhile he stood, in doubt,
suspended.
Still to push forward he in-
tended;
When, lo! just as his fears
released him,
Up came the angry ghost and
seized him!
He saw her face, grim, large
and pale,
Her red eyes sparkled thro' her
veil;
Her scarlet cloak—half im-
material—
Flew wild around her person
aerial.
With oaths, he tried to grasp
her form;
'Twas easier far to catch a
storm.
Before his eyes she held him
there.
His hands held nothing more

torrent.
And roll'd along the rapid
current,
Towards Curragour's mad roar-
ing fall
The billows tossed him like a
ball.
And who dare say that saw him
sinking,
But 'twas his last sad round of
drinking?
Yet, no—against the river's
might
He made a long and gallant
fight;
The stream in which he learned
to swim
Shall be no watery grave to
him.
Near, and more near, he heard
the roar
Of rock-imposed Curragour,
Whose boiling torrent's head-
long sway
How'd like a tiger for his
prey.
Above the fall, he spied,
afloat,
Some object like an Anchor'd
boat.
To this, with furious grasp, he
clung,
And from the tide his limbs
unslung.
Half-frozen in the stern he lay
Until the holy light of day
Brought forth some kind as-
sisting hand
To row poor Thady to the
Strand.
'Mid gazing crowds he left the
shore,
Grew sober, and got drunk no
more!
And in the whole wide parish
round
A better Christian was not
found!
He loved his God, and served
his neighbour,
And earn'd his bread by honest
labour.



The L.E. Emer, the latest fish-
ery protection vessel to be
built at Cork for the Naval
Service, the commanding offi-
cer of the service, Captain
Peter Kavanagh, inspected the
Naval Reserve unit in Lim-
rick City, this week.
In an interview, Capt. Kava-
agh said that the Naval Ser-
vice was not just undergoing
an expansion, but an "explor-
ation" in numbers of personnel.
This year, for example, the
Service will recruit about 80
personnel to swell the 600