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# Leader

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TRICIA FEEHILY

**Gas Company, threatened with closure less immediate Government aid is forthcoming, when Deputy Jim Kemmy heads a local Minister for Energy, Mr. Michael O'Leary.**

seriousness of the situation for seventy workers, thirty anaesthetists, who expressed sympathy and agreed to meet a

development made, and this is expected this year. The total investment necessary for the expansion of the Limerick gas network has been estimated at £1.4 million. But a supply of natural gas to Limerick would also enable the gas company to reduce the price to a competitive level with oil, and to enhance its reputation, as the future instability of oil becomes apparent.

# MOVE OPEN NON AIRLINE

letter, Mr. O'Connor asked the Minister to have the matter re-examined with a view, if possible, to having the permission previously refused granted.

That letter also stated that the Chamber of Commerce could not see how the provision of the service would disadvantage the Airport or the region. The letter added that "continued refusal to grant such permission would be regarded locally in a most unfavourable light".

## Conversation

The former Minister did not in fact reply to that letter, but in the course of a casual conversation with Mr. O'Connor

## Big game 'spurs' interest among the fans

THE visit of English FA Cup holders, Tottenham Hotspur, to Thomond Park on Monday has generated an amount of interest both locally and nationally, and indications are that the game will be watched by a crowd in excess of 11,000.

To mark the occasion, Limerick United have launched a special souvenir programme costing 50p.

## First

It went on sale at local newsagents this Friday and can also be purchased at Thomond Park on the day of the match. It was printed by the Limerick Leader Ltd.

"Spurs have requested 1,500 copies and orders are being received daily at the Markets Field.

Interest in the game is such that all stand tickets were sold out within hours of going on sale.

According to the club, there is a brisk demand for ground tickets, which are priced at £3 each and £1 for members.

# Limerick printer's Gift of Ink

BY PATRICIA FEEHILY

LIMERICK printer, Michael Curtin, who had his first novel, "The Self-Made Man", published last year by Andre Deutsch, is now awaiting its arrival in Penguin Paperback, and also looking forward to his second novel, "The Replay", due on the book shelves in September.

Described by Robert Nye in the "Scotsman" as "Flan O'Brien without the booze," Michael has shown a rare new writing talent which is bound to make a big impact on the Irish literary scene.

"The Replay" is not, the dust jacket warns, about football, although the design by Stonecastle Graphics shows a striped stocking, booted leg, about to kick.

It is all about honour and success and affection, in which a ramshackle collection of small town characters hold up a tattered banner for unfashionable virtues, and show how to live with unliveable dreams.



Author: Michael Curtin

## Unassuming

Michael himself is modest and unassuming, and the remarkable success of his first novels with such big publishing names as Deutsch and Penguin leave him untouched.

He has been a printer for ten years and before that worked at an assortment of jobs as an exile in London, experiences which no doubt taught him a lot about life.

He won first prize in 1972 jointly with another Limerick writer, Paddy Lysaght, at Listowel Writers' Week, and has had several short stories published since then in the "New Writing Page" in the Irish Press.

"Although he brushes aside his wonderful success and obvious talents, he says that he intends to keep on writing.

Described by the "Irish Times" as having an "almost lunatic sense of humour," he was woven "The Replay" around a twenty stone taxi driver, an out of work docker and a TV star. The hero, however, is a Primary School teacher, who, 15 years before the story starts, was spiritual leader to a gang of dedicated drinkers and layabouts.

The re-assembling of an old football team and how old loyalties and ties of friendship battle with extremes of unfitness give great scope for this Limerick man's great sense of humour.

"The Replay" is Michael's second novel, but there is no doubt at all but that Limerick is adding another great name to its literary history.

## City joins

# Clare show to feature exhibition

AN APPEAL to Limerick people to visit the forthcoming Clare Show and Industries Fair has been made by the Chairman of the Society, Mr. Pat Quinn, of Clarecastle. Small industry products from Limerick city and county are to be featured for the first time this year at an exhibition in the newly constructed indoor arena.

"In recent years there has been a distinct involvement with the industrial and commercial scene", commented Mr. Quinn, whose family have a proud tradition in show jumping circles. From Claremount, Clarecastle, Mr. Quinn is in his first year as chairman, and presides over the opening of the new £100,000 indoor arena.

"One exhibition area of 4,000 square feet will be solely devoted this year to the small industry manufacturing sector", said Mr. Quinn. "In addition a new Exhibition Centre with an enclosed area of 20,000 square feet will combine both service and manufacturing firms from all over

the region". "The Show Society and Shannon Development, organisers of the exhibition, are confident that this feature of the event will have national significance", he added.

## Progress

"We see it as identifying the Show and County Clare in a permanent way with intensive industrial progress and development", he commented.

Recalling the history of the Clare Show, Mr. Quinn said that the membership in 1905 reflected the changing times. "There was a mix of the old ascendancy and the new emerging modern state. Indeed the offices of President and Vice-President was Major Studdert, a member of a long established landlord family in Clare".

Coinciding with the holding of this year's show will be the formal opening of the new indoor arena. Together with drainage and reclamation work, both projects have cost in the region of £100,000, and at present fund raising ventures are underway to pay off the remainder of the debt.

# Tourism slump measured at £5m.

BY TOM BROWNE

CLARE Tourist Revenue, estimated last year to be about £25 million, could drop by about £5 million according to reliable tourism sources.

And while Shannonside feels that overall tourist figures will be something the same as last year, some hotel and guesthouse owners have expressed contrasting opinions—stating that there is a big drop off in business.

And of course the big contributor to the tourist business in previous years—the English visitor—is as hard to find on the Clare tourist routes as the proverbial needle in the haystack.

## Drop

It is estimated that at least 300,000 visitors spent one bednight in the county in 1980, and some tourism sources expect a considerable drop in this figure this year.

However, Mr. Sean Browne, Shannonside general manager, is confident that the county will break even.

"Clare," he said, "has done better than other counties along the West coast."

While admitting that it was a disappointing season in some ways, he points out that the home holiday campaign which the board aided in advertising to the amount of £15,000, has done particularly well—in fact far better than last year.

He added that the American trade was also doing well.

Mrs. Dilly Griffey of Crusheen, National Secretary of the Irish Farmers' Guesthouse Owners' Association, which has 353 members, said: "There's a big fall off in English visitors. Without them our tourist trade might as well close down. There have been many cancellations, and some guesthouses have been badly hit."

## Vaughan

Mr. Michael Vaughan, chairman of the Lahinch Development Association, and former President of Shannonside, while happy with the performance of his own hotel, "which is having an exceptionally good year," admitted that tourism in the county has received a big set back by the troubles in the North.

"A good year for English visitors in my own business," said Mr. Vaughan, "but not many of the ordinary English visitors around."

He said that business had been very poor in Lahinch in the early months, mainly because of the bad weather.