

£100 million exporting plant in County Limerick will provide 800 permanent jobs

IT'S OFFICIAL

2,000 will be employed at the peak of construction, company discloses

LEADER SPECIAL

A £100 MILLION industry providing 800 permanent jobs is to be built on Aghinish Island near Foynes, it was officially announced this Thursday evening.

The news follows months of speculation. Alcan Aluminium Limited of Canada—Alcan for short—disclosed that, with the approval of the Government and subject to the granting of planning permission by the Limerick County Council, an 800,000 metric ton per annum alumina plant will be constructed.

And 200 houses are to be erected in the area by the National Building Agency for workers.

The plant—expected to be operational by 1978—will extract the alumina from imported bauxite and the alumina will in turn be exported to aluminium reduction plants in Norway, Sweden and elsewhere.

THE OWNERS

The plant will be constructed for, and operated by, Alcan Ireland Limited, a subsidiary of Alcan, which has already been incorporated in Ireland.

Under present plans, Alcan Ireland Limited will be owned to the extent of 70% by the Alcan Group and a corresponding portion of the alumina will go to Alcan aluminium plants.

Within the Alcan group shareholding, 10 per cent of the total project is reserved for Alcan Aluminium (U.K.) Limited, who plan to take up such shareholding.

The remaining 30% of the equity has been reserved for two other aluminium producing companies which are affiliates of Alcan—A. S. Ardal og Sunddal Verk of Norway (20%) and Granges Essem AB of Sweden (10%).

The Industrial Development Authority will make available financial grants and other normal assistance towards the establishment of the project and Alcan Ireland will benefit from export tax relief.

EMPLOYMENT

Alcan stated at a Press conference at the Limerick Inn this Thursday evening:

● **"DURING THE construction period, 1974 until early 1978, employment will be created for an average of 1,200 people. At the peak of construction, 2,000 people will be required. Once the plant is operational, in 1978, it will provide some 800 new permanent industrial jobs with a payroll of well over £1 million.**

"The new payrolls and local purchases will create other business opportunities and service industries to the benefit of the whole area.

● **"THE PRINCIPAL raw material, bauxite, will be imported and the entire resulting output of alumina will be exported to world markets. The value of exports of alumina should exceed by more than £15 million the estimated cost of imported raw material, thus making a valuable contribution to Ireland's trade balance of payments.**

"Basic materials, other than bauxite, which are



MR. RICHARD F. DONAHOE, who has been named managing director of Alcan Ireland Limited, having recently vacated his post as vice-president of Aluminium Company of Canada Ltd., Montreal, Alcan Aluminium Limited's largest subsidiary. He was born in Boston in 1918.

MR. REGINALD STANGER, O.T., who has been named technical manager for Alcan Ireland, having recently vacated his post as technical manager for Alcan Ltd., Montreal, Alcan Aluminium Limited's largest subsidiary. He was born in London in 1918.

not obtainable in Ireland—e.g., caustic soda and oil—will be purchased on world markets on competitive terms.

● **"IRELAND WILL not have to provide any natural resource material for the project, but will tribute ancillary products to the extent that they become available and economic.**

"It is expected that other new service industries and specialities will be stimulated in the area and elsewhere in Ireland.

● **"WHILE SOME expatriate experts will be required initially, the recruitment of employees and construction staff will be done in Ireland as far as possible. Opportunities for job advancement will be created for Irish men and women.**

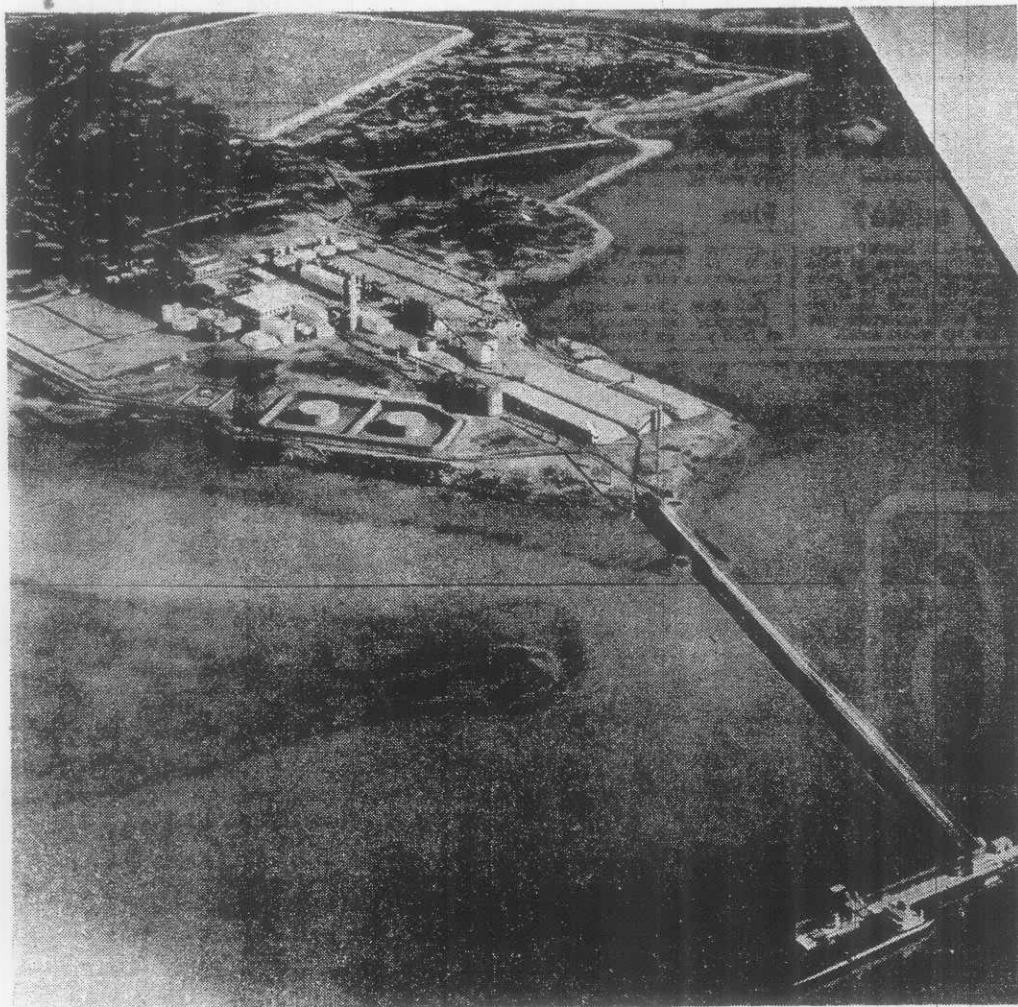
"A training programme to teach new industrial skills will be conducted through the co-op. body ANCO. The Irish Industrial training authority will train Irish engineers in existing plants and provide experienced engineers from Canada and other areas to assist in the plant start-up and the training of Irish personnel.

● **"THE PLANT to be built is an alumina extraction plant, not a smelter which is an entirely different process when the alumina is reduced to metal, aluminium in other countries.**

"The new alumina plant will not be a source of air or water pollution. The design of the plant will incorporate the most advanced equipment and techniques for the control of dust and other emissions.

"With its wide experience of alumina reduction Alcan expects to satisfy any reasonable environmental standards that will be set by the national and local authorities in the interest of the general public.

"Additional efforts will be made to protect fowl and other wildlife and the advice of biologists and other consultants will be sought at all stages.



A scale model of Alcan's proposed alumina plant on Aghinish Island showing port facilities and the plant area.

THE COUNTRYSIDE: POLLUTION CONTROLS

ALCAN this Thursday evening listed the environmental controls planned for their new plant.

The principal effluent from an alumina plant is the bauxite residue which is commonly called "red mud." Approximately 64 tons of mud are produced for each ton of alumina.

Red mud is composed mainly of the oxides of iron, silicon, titanium and compounds of calcium. It is a finely divided substance which has been carefully washed.

It is proposed to impound the mud within a dyked area or "mud pond." The mud will be pumped to the pond as a slurry, and after it has settled part of the solution is returned to process.

When the pond is full, say in 30 years, it will be allowed to consolidate and eventually will be covered with top soil and planted to pasture. At that time, another pond would be created.

Discharge

Due to its location and the surrounding dykes, it is not expected that the red mud pond will be much visible except from the air. Depending on rainfall and the quantity of run-off, it may be necessary to discharge some water from the pond into the Shannon.

Before discharge, the pond waters will be diluted with large volumes of sea water, which will instantly neutralise the residual alkalinity.

The plant will consume large quantities of heavy fuel oil for steam generation and treatment of the alumina.

It is expected that the fuel will contain between 2-4% sulphur which will escape to the atmosphere as sulphur dioxide when the oil is burned. To prevent the sulphur oxides being a nuisance, it is customary for consumers of large quantities of fuel oil, such as power generating stations, to use high chimneys and disperse the gases over a large area.

This procedure will be followed for the Irish alumina plant.

Alumina dust

Modern high efficiency electrostatic and mechanical dust collection equipment will be installed to minimise any dust nuisance from either handling, including loading and unloading of ships, or the alumina treatment stages.

Efforts will also be made to protect the wet lands on the island where water fowl now nest. Alcan is commissioning a base-line ecological study in the region of Aghinish and will utilize the services of foremost Irish experts in the fields of wildlife, botany and marine life. This study will be continuing and will provide an excellent opportunity for assessment of the ecological

impact of a major industrial plant on the Shannon estuary. The prime purpose is, to minimise this impact.

A well-designed alumina plant, even of the size proposed for Aghinish, is stated to be not a source of air or water pollution. Its emissions and effluents are controlled by the modern techniques which will be employed by Alcan Ireland.

The most advanced equipment for controlling dust and any other emissions will be incorporated in the design of the plant.

Noise

The alumina process is continuous. Some noise will be heard when in the immediate vicinity of the grinding mills, pumps and large fans. However, the closest community to the plant site is Foynes, almost three miles away.

Alumina plants have a typical but not unpleasant odour which might be noticeable within a few hundred yards. The prevailing breeze is from the southwest, away from the land.

Alcan's declared intention is to implement the reasonable standards with which it has long experience to ensure that the ecological impact of the alumina plant should be minimal.

Alumina is aluminium oxide (Al₂O₃), a clean, odourless white powder, resembling table salt, which is extracted from bauxite by chemical means. Later in reduction plants in other countries, an electrolytic process, using large quantities of electric power, reduces the



MR. RISTEARD MAC SIACUIS, chairman of Foynes Development Association. See story in columns 5 and 6.

alumina to aluminium metal. Alumina is the half-way point between bauxite ore and aluminium.

Bauxite

Bauxite is a plentiful commodity, generally found in tropical or sub-tropical countries, and mined by open-pit methods. It may be as soft as clay and earth, or hard and rock-like.

It is usually pink or red in colour, due to the presence of iron in oxide. The other main "impurity" is silica.

The content of alumina in bauxite may range from 40 to 60 per cent by weight. Depending on the type and grade, between four and six tons of bauxite are required to produce two tons of alumina, which, in turn, yield one ton of aluminium metal.

Here's to Alcan, says Philip the publican sitting on 'goldmine'

BY JIMMY WOLFE

ONE MAN WHO has every reason to be smiling this week is Mr. Philip Fennessy, who has a pub just down the road from where the new Alcan complex is to be constructed.

And, what's more, it is the only one in the area.

"I bought it over four years ago for £3,500," Mr. Fennessy told me this week.

When the construction work at Aghinish gets into full swing there will be over 2,000 thirsty men passing his front door every day.

Value

"I couldn't put a value on the place at the moment, but

I suppose this will mean that its value will appreciate substantially," he added.

"At the moment I am doing all right, but this could bring about a huge improvement in business," predicted Mr. Fennessy.

His pub, which is known as Corbett's, is one of the few thatched public houses in the county.

When I visited him during the week we also met two young Ballyhahill men, who were on their way home from work in Ferencik—see the picture at the foot of the page.

The younger man, well-meaning 20-year-old Mr. Joe Herbert and Mr. Con O'Brien, told me that they had not made the daily trip into Limerick for work any more.

"I would take a job there if I got it, and I intend applying for one," said Joe.

"We both have cars and we take turns every second week to drive in and out to work."

This has been going on for the past year.

His colleague, Con, said he would also apply for a job at Alcan.

"It is the greatest thing to have hit this part of the country—anything that can give employment is welcome," he said.

Mr. Risteard Mac Siacuis, chairman of Foynes Development Association, told me that anything which gives so much employment and development in an area must be welcomed.

"It would appear that there will be a distribution of population rather than a concentration in any one spot," he said.

In that connection there is a danger that Foynes will not develop as much on account of the extreme difficulty in getting in or out of the area in winter or near Foynes," he added.



Mr. Joe Herbert and Mr. Con O'Brien with Mr. Philip Fennessy, whose pub could soar in value as a result of Alcan's decision to come to County Limerick. Picture: DERMOT LYNCH

Why we chose the island: company explains

The new plant will be on the northern portion of Aghinish Island on the South bank of the Shannon, some 20 miles downstream of Limerick and about three miles from Foynes.

Outgoing ships will ply the river to a new pier at the plant site about one ship per week inbound with bauxite and one smaller alumina ship outbound each week.

Near the plant and to the west of it will be a well-dyked area which will retain bauxite residues remaining after the alumina content has been extracted.

Bauxite residues are non-toxic and because of the colour imparted by the iron content, are referred to as "red mud." This will be allowed to consolidate over the years and can eventually be covered with soil and seeded.

Financing

Financing the project will be through equity contributions and borrowing from Alcan and its partners, I.D.A. grants, equipment financing, bank loans and other long term sources of capital in Europe.

The location of the alumina plant in Ireland was selected by Alcan after long study by experts and after consideration of alternative sites in other countries.

It was chosen with the co-operation and encouragement of the Industrial Development Authority and of Shannon Free Airport Development Company.

In its negotiations, Alcan has met the conditions laid down by the various Irish authorities who in turn it is stated, have been most co-operative and helpful to Alcan.

Factors influencing the decision in favour of Ireland include:

● **EMINENT suitability of the Aghinish site providing deep water facilities, rock foundations for the plant, and a suitable containment area for the bauxite residues.**

● **LOGISTICAL factors which permit bauxite to be imported economically from West Africa and other sources adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean and the opportunity for the resultant alumina to be distributed economically by ship to smelters located at tide-water in Northern Europe.**

● **IRELAND'S membership in the European Economic Community which affords the opportunity to export the alumina to other EEC member states at preferential rates.**

● **AVAILABILITY of land and**

● **POLITICAL stability in**

Ireland and the investment incentives offered by the Government for the construction of major projects.

"By employing a major proportion of the existing Irish labour force, ready to be trained in investment in the country in a number of important new industries, Alcan is contributing to the economic development of Ireland."

"For many years now, Ireland has a surplus of labour and other Irish workers."

Alcan is a subsidiary of the Alcan Group, a multinational company with operations in many countries.

Alcan is a public company listed on the New York Stock Exchange and has a long history of successful operations in the aluminium industry.

Alcan's operations in Ireland are part of a larger strategy to expand its production capacity and to serve the European market.

Alcan's investment in Ireland is expected to create thousands of jobs and to stimulate the local economy.

Alcan's commitment to Ireland is a testament to the company's belief in the potential of the island and its people.

Alcan's decision to build the alumina plant in Ireland is a landmark event in the country's industrial history.

Alcan's presence in Ireland will undoubtedly lead to further investment and development in the region.

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CORPORATION OF LIMERICK

EXAMINATION FOR CLERK TYPIST

The Corporation will hold an open competitive examination for Clerk Typists.

Application forms and full particulars from the City Manager and Town Clerk, City Hall, Limerick.

Annual Salary: £1,073 x £97 £1,140 x £52 £1,296 x £47 £1,290 x £41 £1,431 x £37 £1,505.

Applications must reach the City Manager and Town Clerk, City Hall, Limerick, not later than 4.00 p.m. on Friday, March 8, 1974. (116c)

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Goods of: NORA BRIDGMAN, late of St. Joseph's, Pallasgreen, County Limerick, Spinster, Deceased.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 49 of the Succession Act, 1965, that all persons claiming to be creditors or otherwise to have any claim or demand against the estate of the above-named deceased, who died on the 16th day of March, 1973, and to whose Will a Grant of Probate issued forth of the District Registry at Limerick on the 8th day of November, 1973, to the executor therein named, are hereby required to furnish particulars in writing of such claims or demands to the undersigned Solicitors for the Executor on or before the 15th day of March, 1974, after which date the estate and assets of the deceased will be distributed having regard only to such claims of which notice shall have been received.

Dated this 4th day of February, 1974.

JOHN F. COSGREAVE & SONS
Solicitors, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
(116c)