

Last ditch to save Gas Works

DESPITE indications from officials of the Department of Energy of a complete veto on subsidies to the Limerick Gas Company, Limerick Corporation remain defiant that they will not accept the closure of 100 year old company.

The Department several months back stated that all subsidies to the company would cease and that there appeared to be no option but to close the Company on October 1st next.

At a recent press briefing it was disclosed by the Chairman of Limerick Gas sub-committee, Mr. Frank Leddin, that a full discussion had taken place on the matter and three resolutions were passed.

The first of these stated that no irrevocable decision with regard to the closure of the Limerick Gas Company be taken by the Corporation until the intentions of the Minister had been announced and until a deputation from the City Council had met with Departmental officials.

Secondly the Limerick Council have requested that the provision of a £500,000 subsidy be forthcoming from the Government.

And lastly that the Corporation request the Minister for the Environment to give Limerick City Council access to the Local Loans Fund to

assist the Gas Company.

At the request of Energy a further meeting with the City Manager and officials was called for the 22nd of May last, the full report of which has yet to be discussed by the Gas Sub-Committee.

Frank Leddin made it quite clear that unless a quick solution to the problem was arrived at soon over 20,000 people in the Limerick area would be seriously affected.

He added that at the moment hospitals in the area were very much dependant on gas

as an alternative source of energy. Cllr. Leddin also pointed out that all local authority houses were solely dependant on gas for heating and cooking.

PIPES

Plans to introduce pipelines from Cork supplying Limerick with the necessary gas were also discussed at the briefing.

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The City Manager Mr. T.P. McDermott, disclosed that such a system was definitely feasible but that the initial capital needed to implement the plan was enormous. He stated that they had been in touch with the British Gas Company who suggested that the plan could cost in the region of approximately £20m. for 20 miles of piping. That is £1m. for every mile of piping.

NATURAL GAS

The City Manager also pointed out that while natural gas was the only long term solution, that in the short term gas company would have to continue with the reforming of Naphtha Oil. However, it was

stressed that it would be absolutely essential, if the company is to survive, that an extension of the present gas subsidy on the price to the consumer be made available by the Department of Energy. An alternative to this was that the Department would subsidise the Feedstock to the Company and make it available at a price that would allow the economic manufacture of the Town's Gas.

The Departments officials were also made aware of the extremely high prices which the Gas Company were being

forced to pay for Naphtha. Limerick Gas works are paying £220 a tonne while other counties such as Belfast and Dublin are paying in the region of £180 a tonne. The City Manager made it clear that this difference was a direct result of the late arrival of Limerick into the Maphtha Gas scheme.

Cllr. Leddin said that without a doubt it was this increase in the price of Naphtha that was the main cause of the situation in which the Gas Company now finds itself.

He produced figures which showed that the price of Naphtha had soared from 198.00 per tonne in 1979 to £221.00 in May 1980. That was approximately a 126% increase in twelve months.

DEAF SCHOOL GETS SANCTION

by Anne Flaherty

Limerick's School for the Deaf has now been officially sanctioned by the D. Tom Brennan, "117" some subst.



Laurence Hogan, Kincora Park came first in the 1,500m under 16 at the Southill annual community sports held at the Crescent RFC grounds, Rathbane. (W-17).

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