

Limerick gas:
sworn enquiry

THE longest Local Government Sworn Inquiry up to 1944 was that into the administration of the Limerick Gas Works. It lasted thirty-five days. The shortage of gas coal during these war years and its attendant substitutes such as turf and timber were stated to be the root cause of all the trouble and there was much friction reported between the foreman and gas engineer. The proceedings were conducted by Mr. T. C. Courtney, M.E., Chief Engineering Adviser to the Ministry, who was stated to have conducted the inquiry with "consummate ability."

The inquiry, held at the Town Hall in Rutland Street, started on December 16th, 1943, and the main witnesses called were Mr. E. Banks, foreman; Mr. F. K. Thomas, gas engineer, and Mr. J. J. Berkery, city manager, who spent ten days in the witness chair. There was an extraordinary incident reported during one of the days of the inquiry when Mr. Thomas was loudly applauded from the public gallery. The inquiry lasted up to 11th February 1944. The findings of the inquiry, consisting of 60 closely typed pages, resulted in the Minister for Local Government giving an order that the city manager be removed from office but he expressed his willingness should the City Council so desire to sanction an appointment in a clerical position at a salary of £400 a year. Other recommendations from the Minister were "the removal from office of the works foreman, who however, may be offered employment in any other Corporation service other than the Gas Works, and the removal of Mr. Imbusche who also may be offered employment in some other civic position. Miss K. Moroney, a typist at the works, was to have her salary reduced as the result of the inquiry. The gas engineer, Mr. Thomas, will remain responsible for the efficient technical working and administrative direction of the undertaking."

Mr. J. Mulqueen was chief reporter for the Leader during the inquiry and said the Press had got great co-operation in their reporting of the inquiry for which he expressed thanks. The *Limerick Chronicle* had "leaked" the findings of the inquiry before it was announced at the Corporation meeting and they were taken to task by Mr. Keyes, T.D. who said that while the Corporation was always very considerate to the Press, the latter showed no reciprocity. He added: "The Press must not expect to be regarded as spoiled darlings" remarks which the *Limerick Leader* in turn took him to task, accusing him of being too general in his remarks about the Press.

The Mayor, Ald. James Reidy, T.D., said he took full responsibility for not having sent to the Press the circular convening the meeting to consider the report on the inquiry. The Leader editorially huffed: "It is quite safe to presume that an attempt was made to exclude the Press from the meeting in question, but any intended move in this direction was foiled by the unexpected publication in the *Chronicle* of a comprehensive summary of the findings on the inquiry."

Life goes on—
despite the war

DESPITE the many restrictions and scarcities of World War II, the mundane matters of life went on in Limerick City and County. The big stores like Cannock's and Todd's still had their sales and in 1942 men could buy a tweed coat for 75 shillings and raincoats for 35/-. In the early years of the war, Limerick Motors Works were still advertising Ford lorries for sale at £313.

The hunts were still meeting in 1941 and the County Limerick Hounds and Limerick Harriers advertised their places of meets.

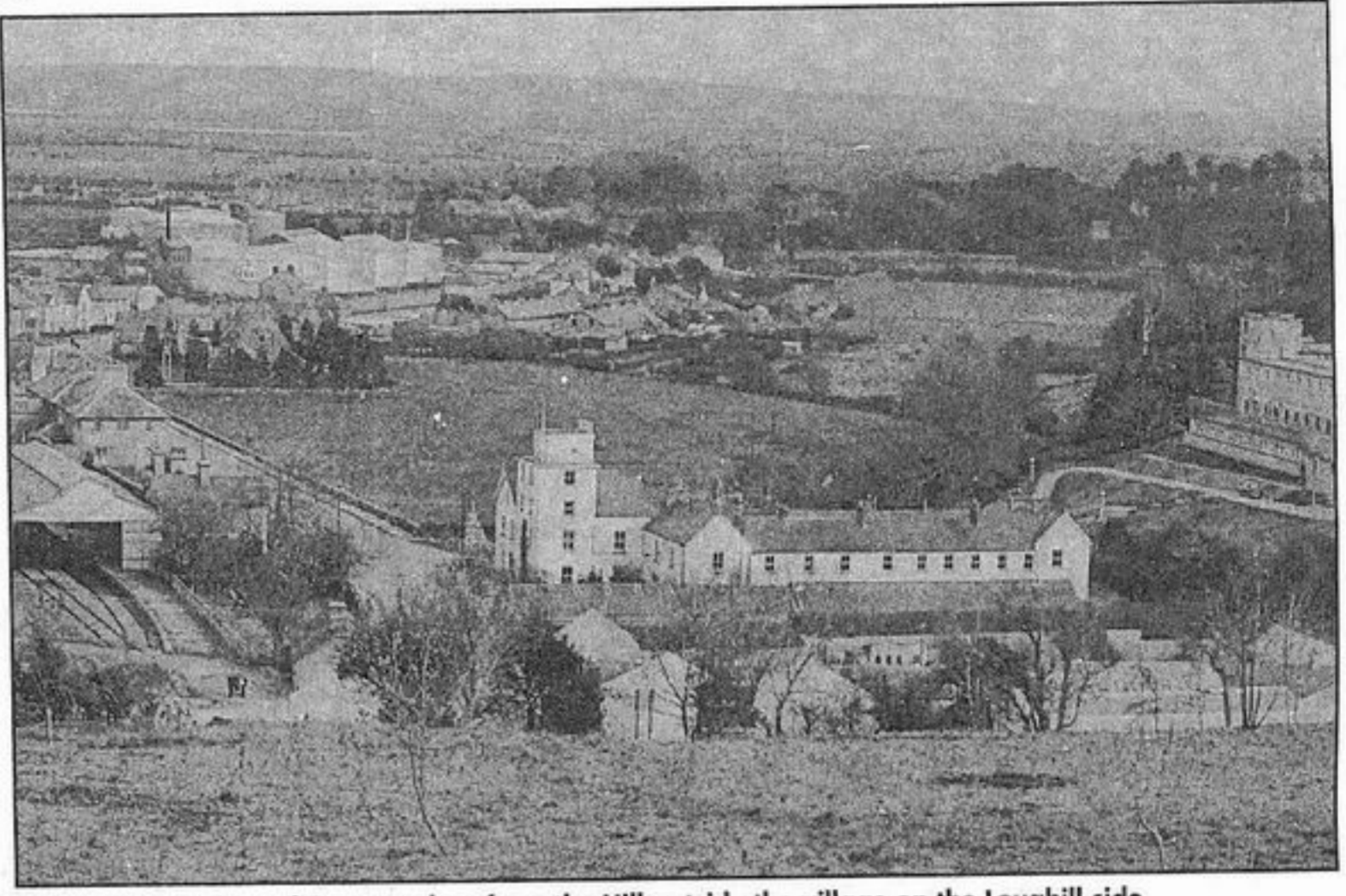
The Savoy was showing what was to become one of the great all-time classic films, Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane" and the Coliseum was showing Gary Cooper in "North-West Mounted Police." Butter (just before rationing) could be had at the market for 1s. 6d. lb., henn eggs 1s. 10d. doz. Chickens 10s to 14s a pair. Potatoes 6d. to 11d. per stone. Hay 50s. to 70s. per ton and calves from 35s. to 100s. each.

Boundary extension was on the City Council's mind even back in the war years and a meeting of the Clare County Council condemned the move to have the city boundary extended as far as Parteen. The chairman of the Clare Council, Mr. Sean Brady, said the move would result in a huge loss of rates revenue for the county. He stated: "We (the council) should be prepared to oppose the proposal by every means in our power. He was satisfied that by doing so they would be acting in accordance with the unanimous wish of Clare people."

The Killaloe cor. reported towards the end of the war that a Mrs. Wolfe, Bridgetown, received a nice windfall when she received the first portion of the "O'Dea Millions" received after seven years of litigation. The huge sum did not create any excitement as the family lived frugally and were snug and comfortable at all times.

The war did not detract from the Faith of the people and the new church at Janesboro was dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Peace in December, 1942. Rev. J. Gorey C.Ss.R. delivered what was described as "an inspiring sermon."

The death of Sir Charles Barrington Bart.,



A magnificent view of Foynes taken from the Hill outside the village on the Lough side

formerly of Glenstal Castle, took place in Botley, Hampshire, at the advanced age of 95. Before leaving for England in 1923, he offered the castle and demesne to the Irish Government but the offer was declined due to the cost of upkeep. He then sold the property to the late Right Rev. Monsignor Ryan who presented it to the Belgian Benedictine Fathers. He was one of the best of landlords and had a huge interest in the welfare of Barrington's Hospital, which his family founded, and it was this that bound him to Limerick during those years when he went to live in England. It was said he had the distinction of introducing Rugby Football to Ireland.

Cultural needs in these

times were provided by such as the Boherbouy Band who played regularly during the early war years in the People's Park and amongst their selections advertised were pieces by Bach, Gounod, Auber, etc. Conductor was D. McCormack, B.M. And it was the great era of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in the Lyric Theatre presented by the pupils of C.B.S. Sexton Street. Prof. King-Griffin waxed lyrical on a performance on the "Yeomen of the Guard" of which he said "I would carry away with me many pleasant memories of many delectable moments when I sat enraptured by the beautiful voices of the boys."

All through the war Mary Harding in her syndicated column gave use-

ful household hints during those frugal times. "Do not throw away your old net or lace curtains. Wash out the starch in them and you may use them for a host of domestic ways including boiling fish."

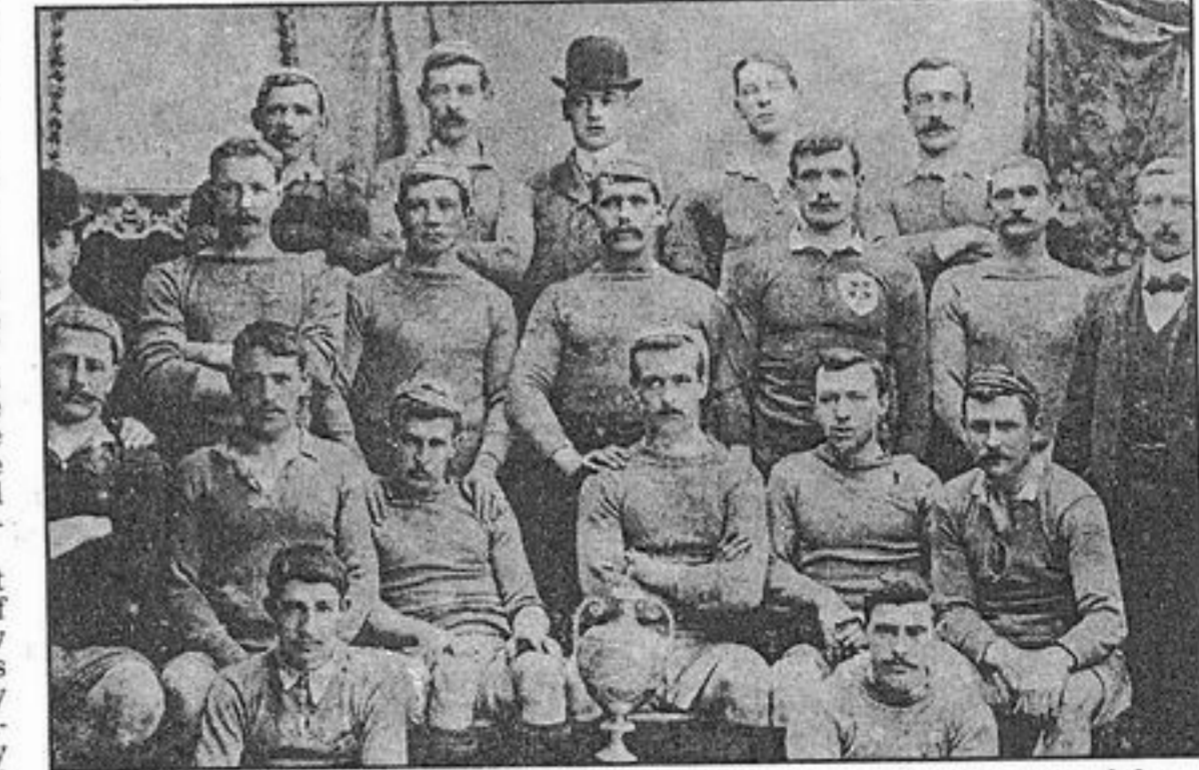
She also gave the odd piece of medical advice such as the healing powers of salt.

"A pinch of salt on the tongue, followed by a glass of cold water, will cure sick headaches, and a shallow teaspoonful dissolved in a cupful of hot water will relieve indigestion and dyspepsia; salt hardens the gums and whitens the teeth; by using very fine dry salt, as one would snuff for colds, hay fever may be relieved."

Gallantry
FOLLOWING the tragic drowning of James Johnsson Ruddock (11) Corbally House, in the nearby Shannon in June, 1941, the coroner commended the gallantry of the deceased's sister, Alda, and her brother, Edward, for their attempts to save their brother. "There was no doubt but the boy (Edward) was responsible for saving his sister after she had originally rescued him," he said.

New Park
A BEAUTIFUL addition to the city's amenities is the Clare Street Park, which was formally opened to the public in 1948. The park was designed by City Engineer Charles Stenson, who arranged that its main gateway should be a replica of that of the People's Park. The entire park, with its pleasant atmosphere, created to a great extent by its shelter belt of black Italian poplars, and its nicely laid out flower beds, is a credit to its designer and a happy and unusual feature is that, so far, there has been no evidence of vandalism. The area was formerly a dumping ground.

Pa Healy
THE city's greatest sportsman, Pa Healy, died in 1948. One of the best forwards of his day, he won several Munster Senior cup medals with Garryowen and was capped ten times for his country. He was also a champion oarsman with Shannon R.C. and was amateur heavyweight boxing champion of Ireland.



A Garryowen Munster Senior Cup winning team pictured at the turn of the century with the legendary Pa Healy (the gent with the shamrock on his jersey), who died in 1948

MILLENNIUM
BRIEFS . . .

New McCormack: Christopher Lynch
REPORTS in the *Leader* through the war years hailed Rathkeale born Christopher Lynch as the natural successor to the great John McCormack. In 1943 when he sang in Dublin the "Irish Independent" critic, Harold R. White said "the most promising Irish tenor in years, and definitely a young man with a future, must have been the judgment of the great majority of the audience who heard the young Limerick tenor."

C.Y.M.S.
THERE was great celebrations in the city's St.

Mary's parish in 1949 for the centenary of the founding of the Catholic Young Mens Society. Founder was Dean O'Brien, who served in the parish and started the movement in No. 46 Athlunkard Street. A plaque was placed on the wall and a ciborium presented to Fr. Lee, P.P., for the parish, from the Society. Bonfires blazed in the parish that night in celebration.

First
MICHAEL J. Keyes, (Labour) became the first ever TD for Limerick to become a cabinet minister in 1949 and received a big welcome on his arrival in Limerick.

No university:
Dr. O'Rahilly

AT a special meeting convened by the Executive Committee of the Limerick County Council on December 11, 1946, and held at the offices, for the purpose of discussing Limerick's claim for a Constituent College of the National University. Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, president of University College, Cork, was the main speaker. He strongly opposed the project as it would involve the amendment of the Charter and such procedure would have eventually very serious repercussions on the autonomy of not

quences as regards the liberties that were bequeathed to the University Authorities in the existing Charter. Not alone would the project be strenuously opposed by the Authorities of the University College, Cork, but the Senate and other Universities would be very determined in their opposition to the proposal, since it would involve the amendment of the Charter.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided, having regard to Professor O'Rahilly's observations, and review of the position,

THE record rains of August 1946 put the harvest in great jeopardy and with imports of wheat and other foodstuffs still negligible the situation was extremely serious. For once, the city and county was united as volunteers from the city, in their hundreds, plus the army, were taken out by army lorries and buses to assist in saving what remained of the wheat harvest. Volunteers registered in the offices of the Co. Limerick Committee of Agriculture in O'Connell Street.

"City Workers in

Many firms in the city sent their workers out to help in the harvest, Ranks, not surprisingly being to the forefront and it was stated by the firm that the workers would get their normal pay. Cannock's, also, said they would release some of their workforce and several other city firms said likewise.

The harvest crusade was dealt a severe blow when on Saturday September 23, a heavy downpour which swept across the south of the country, inundated the lands, and 700 volunteers from the city who were to be

they reached their destination put paid to all plans of harvesting.

The *Leader* report said their disappointment was great as they returned home saddened as they were imbued with the one desire to give all the assistance possible, even though they were labouring in far stranger surroundings. It was their golden wish that next Thursday (shops half-day) or Saturday afternoon (factory half-day) or Sunday, would be favourable as for most of them these were the only periods in which they could answer the nation's call.

the Limerick Corporation had not convened a meeting, if only as a gesture of sympathy to the County Limerick farmers. Other cities had done so but he was glad that the Limerick Chamber of Commerce and Employers Federation had taken action to assist in the crisis."

Troubles
THE Troubles were recalled in 1941 when a column "20 Years Ago" mentioned that the shop and home of Michael Hartney, were blown up in Davis Street. His

