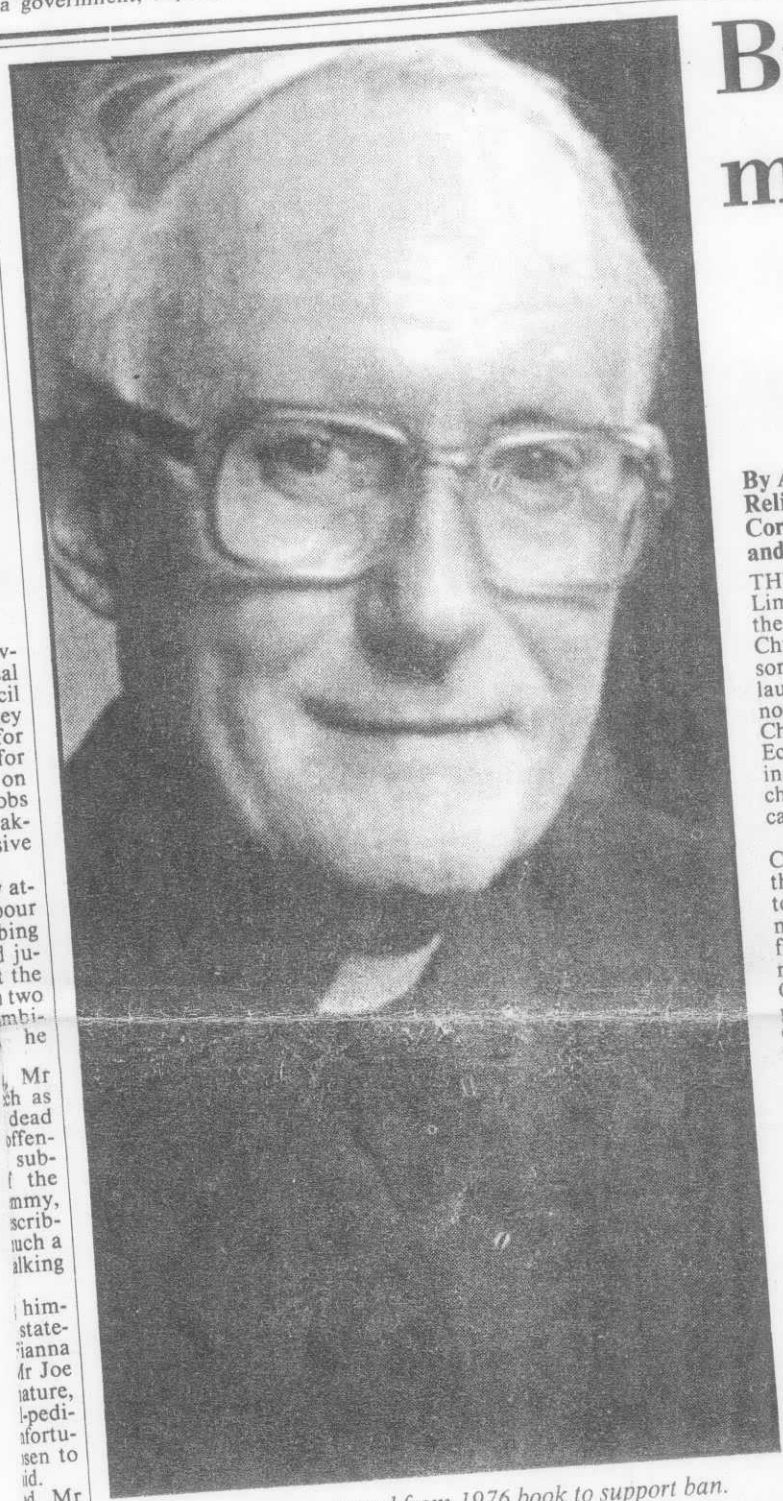
20

Mandela as a "president without a government, a president with- and the president of the ANC's Women's League.

pen again to these "peacetime heroes".

Mmabatho victory may hand ANC a million votes: page 8



Bishop Newman: quoted from 1976 book to support ban.

Bishop's ban on mayor's reading not based on church ruling

By Andy Pollak, Religious Affairs Correspondent, and Arthur Quinlan

THE refusal by the Bishop of Limerick, Dr Newman, to allow the city's mayor, a member of the Church of Ireland, to read a lesson at a Mass last Sunday to launch Limerick Civic Week is not in line with the Catholic Church's revised Directory of Ecumenism, which allows readings by members of other churches "on exceptional occasions".

In a statement, the Mayor, Councillor Jan O'Sullivan, said that in the absence of a satisfactory explanation from Dr Newman as to why she was prevented from carrying out this traditional mayoral task, "Limerick City Council will have to consider its position with regard to the nature of its future participation in the Civic Week Mass".

Dr Newman yesterday issued a statement quoting from the Irish hierarchy's 1976 Directory of Ecumenism to support his decision. This said that while it was appropriate for members of other Christian denominations to join with the congregation in prayers, or even to lead some prayers, "they may not act as scripture reader or preacher at Mass". This was because "the liturgy of the word is an integral part of the total eucharistic liturgy", and the Eucharist or Mass holds a "unique place" in the Catholic Church's worship.

However, the new Directory of Ecumenism published by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity last year specifically allows bishops, "on exceptional occasions and for a just cause", to permit "a member of another church or ecclesiastical communion to take on the task of reader".

Minutes before Sunday's Mass to launch Civic Week was due to begin in St John's Cathedral, Cllr O'Sullivan was told that she would not be reading the first, Old Testament, lesson. She was waiting in the sacristy at the time, ready to join the procession of priests and dignitaries about to enter the cathedral. Dr Newman was also in the sacristy at the time, but did not speak to her.

Ms O'Sullivan, a Labour member of the council, said yesterday that she had consulted with the leaders of the political groups on the council, all of whom had supported her intention to seek an explanation from Dr Newman.

The Labour Party chairman, Alderman Jim Kemmy TD, a former mayor, called on Dr Newman to apologise to Cllr O'Sullivan for the way in which she had been treated.

On Sunday, the city manager, Mr Jack Higgins, who was due to read the second lesson, also withdrew following the message that Cllr O'Sullivan would not be reading, claiming that the decision was unfair to the mayor.

At their quarterly meeting last October, the Irish bishops asked their Episcopal Commission on Ecumenism, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Connell of Dublin, to update their directory in line with the latest instructions from Rome.

However, a leading Irish Catholic ecumenist, who asked not to be named, told *The Irish Times* yesterday that it had been informally accepted as long ago as the 1970s that a bishop had the discretion to allow a member of another church to read the lesson at Mass in exceptional circumstances, such as a mixed marriage. "The bishops have their own rule books that we don't see," he said.

He said this had not happened very often in Ireland: Archbishop Dermot Ryan of Dublin was the only member of the Hierarchy he could remember who had allowed it to happen occasionally. "It would be an important step forward for ecumenism if we could make it the norm," he added.

The former Church of Ireland Dean of Limerick, the Rev Maurice Talbot, recalled yesterday that the first woman Mayor of Limerick, Mrs Frances Condell, who was also a Church of Ireland member, had read the lesson at St John's Cathedral in 1963 in the time of Dr Newman's predecessor, Dr Henry Murphy.

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The convoy drew into an "all-round defence" formation and the Indian troops returned fire. Both the Indian and Irish escort troops opened fire with heavy

weed, but, on the eve of St Patrick's Day, the shamrock remains a lucrative business

PAGE 9

49% RISE IN EBS PROFITS

A gain of £11.8 million on the sale of Government stock helped the Educational Building Society raise its pre-tax profits by 49 per cent to £22.3 million last year

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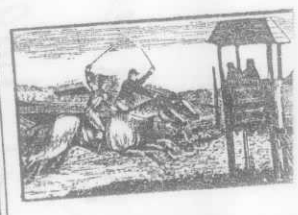
CHELTENHAM DISAPPOINTS



Yesterday was a disappointing day fo Irish runners at the Cheltenham Festiva

PAGE 16

VHI AWAITS RULING

The VHI has deferr publication of its proposed consulta list until it receiv clarification from Medical Council o ethics ruling

PAGE 3

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