

# LEADER

1956

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## STRONG PLEA FOR OUR INLAND WATERWAYS

(To the Editor, "Limerick Leader").

**SIR**—You are to be congratulated on your editorial in which you drew attention to the danger of the scrapping of our inland waterways. The danger is real and perhaps its implications are not generally recognised by the general public. Very little, if any, attempt has been made by the present management to improve the system. On the contrary, the usual pessimistic feeling seems to be gaining ground — why have water transport at all; it is only interfering with rail transport; the 60,000 tons carried annually by canal could just as well be carried by rail — therefore, shut down the canals. This seems to be the general course followed by rail companies when they get control of inland water transport, not only here in this country but also in some parts of England. However, the danger has been recognised in the sister island and steps have been taken to prevent it. It would seem ludicrous if it were not so tragic, that the management of a transport system, capable of such development, should be handed over to the tender mercies of a rail company that has consistently operated at a large loss over a number of years, and that, so we are informed, will probably have a loss of over £1,500,000 this year. These losses are, needless to say, met by the taxpayer.

**ON THE CONTINENT.**  
Meanwhile, as you point out, vast sums are being spent on the continent to develop waterways. One has but to see the enormous traffic at Liverpool, London, the Rhine, the Seine and in Holland, to mention but a few, to realise the possibilities of development of the carriage of goods by modern inland water transport. Instead, in Ireland it is being slowly strangled to death. No one likes to undertake the role of prophet, but as things point now, perhaps in five or ten years, we will be told the Grand Canal and the Shannon systems are "antiquated" and "uneconomic" and are to be abandoned, substitute services will, of course, be provided — by rail. Such a fate would be tragic from the national point of view—it would be a sad blow to Limerick. We like to boast here that we are a great distributing centre. How much greater would it be if our ocean borne merchandise could be discharged direct into barges and transported through the length of the country? Judged by modern standards, a comparatively modest capital outlay could make this development come true. That the development of the link between the Docks and the Canal was never carried out reflects no credit on past governments, native or otherwise.

The carriage of goods by water is generally recognised as being the cheapest form of transport; there are no expensive rails to renew, no permanent ways to be re-built, no road surfaces to be renewed and a greater tonnage per horse power can be carried.

Another war, perhaps, will force us to realise the utility of our waterways, when we may not be able to import steel for our rail-

## Cause Of Limerick Born Nun To Be Presented At Rome, Says Report

**THOUGH** no direct move has yet been made to have the Cause of a Limerick born nun introduced at Rome, it is believed in well informed circles that this will be done at an early date.

The Nun, whose Cause for Beatification and Canonisation is being discussed, is Catherine O'Neill. She was born in Limerick on 3rd May, 1818, and in due time she became co-foundress of an Order of Nuns—the Congregation of the Assumption—that is to-day known all over the world. Quite recently her Community issued a pamphlet on her life, written by the late Mrs. Helena Concannon, M.A.

Catherine O'Neill (afterwards Mother Therese Emmanuel) was a daughter of Alan Francis O'Neill, a merchant prince of Limerick, whose wife was a member of the great Howley family. With her only sister, Marion, Catherine entered the then newly-founded Congregation of the Assumption at Paris in 1839. She was one of the first members of the Order and throughout her life was Mistress of Novices. With the exception of the years 1850 and 1852, when she established a new foundation in Yorkshire, her religious life was passed in France. The most eminent spiritual directors of her time regarded Catherine O'Neill as highly favoured by God, because of her intensely spiritual and mystical life.

### FAMOUS BEAUTY.

Catherine O'Neill, authentic documents tell us, was a famous beauty with a strong partiality for dancing and all sorts of worldly interests. With her sister, she was, for a time, prominent in the most exclusive social circles of Paris. Suddenly, after attending a course of sermons, she renounced the world to become co-foundress of the Sisters of the Assumption. In her own writings — and which have been preserved in spite of her own desire to destroy them — she told of a vision she had while praying be-

fore the Blessed Sacrament: It was then that she felt herself "filled with the power of God."

### THE O'NEILL VAULT.

Though Catherine O'Neill was buried at Cannes, France, where she died in 1888, the family vault is in St. Munchin's Churchyard. It is located a few paces north-east from the north porch of the little church. The inscription is cut on the flat covering stone; on the west face is the O'Neill Coat of Arms—a severed hand with the motto "Lamh Dearg Eireann." The second half of the inscription reads: "August 10th, 1842, died Emily, wife of Alan Francis O'Neill Esq., late of Limerick, now of Liverpool, daughter of John Howley, Esq., leaving issue two daughters and one son—Mary Ann, Catherine and Joseph O'Neill." The vault is in an excellent state of preservation.

### GREAT FAMILY NAMES.

John Howley, with his sons and son-in-law (O'Neill), together with other relatives the Arthurs and Whites — gave Catholic Limerick yeoman service in the struggle against the old Orange corrupt Corporation. They created an enlightened public opinion as a solid ground work for O'Connell's Emancipation campaign. Howley was the third son in a family of five boys and two girls. A brother, Richard, after studying law, went to America and became, in time, Governor of Charleston. He had also the distinction of being elected one of the first members of Congress after the American War of Independence. Another brother, James, qualified as a medical doctor and practised in Limerick for some years, ultimately settling down in the United States.

## Parents, Watch Your Sons!

**BOYS**, as a general rule, love adventure, but in their own interest, writes a "Limerick Leader" reporter, they should be warned of the danger of using boats in fast moving waters.