

ICK LEADER

AY, OCTOBER 25, 1950

That Matter

blem of road safety coming more and e. Most of our thors were never intended present volume of his is a special rea- h utmost care must for the avoidance of which of late have larmingly numerous. ess driver of a motor r any kind is a ser- ger, but a greater fill is the one who is and properly quali- competent to do duty wheel.

isting law in this ons deplorably lax and y irresponsible. Any- payment of ten shil- procure a licence to motor car, although e might be blind in -or partially in the be minus a leg. The mination of any kind ytical fitness and no to ability to steer a manipulate brakes. t would be difficult to ore disgraceful posi- affairs than this.

ream of traffic in our ad towns is in general the best a considerable to life and limb. Yet tential killer can join ded that he procures a which he gets without trest trouble or ques- rely on the payment of a mentioned. The fact can be charged after- in connection with any he may cause is poor ction for the victim. iver has his licence, in truth and in actual almost amounts to a to kill! It is a hor- ate of the law and calls prompt and effective

justices are very par- and quite rightly so forcing the law as to in- cover and other legal ions of the Road Traffic They can do nothing, er, to put the unqualified off the road until he or s knocked down or in- someone or done some serious harm. In plain ge, the present system ing driving licences in t of motors is such as ight expect to be devised e irresponsible patients mental hospital. One rs how it ever became v or how long more it is allowed continue.

s question, we are glad is to come up at the a Fail Ard-Fheis to be ext week in the Mansion Dublin. One of the

THE LIMERICK HOLY YEAR EXHIBITION

Relics Of Father Nicholas Sheehy (1728-1766)

PRIEST WHO SUFFERED A FELON'S DEATH

(By Mrs. FRANCES E. SHEEHY, Cherrygrove)

AMONGST the objects of interest to be seen at the forthcoming exhibition will be the portable altar and a stole used by Father Nicholas Sheehy, who suffered a felon's death at Clonmel in 1766, a victim of politico-religious hatred. It may not be generally adverted to that his family was of County Limerick origin. Dr. Madden, author of the "Lives and Times of the United Irishmen," gives only the ancestry and Limerick connection of Edmund Sheehy, who was also executed for giving evidence in favour of his cousin, Father Nicholas. The omissions in Madden's genealogical information are, however, quite understandable. Madden only supplied the information given him by the Countess of Blessington, who was descended from Edmund Sheehy, and in any event neither Dr. Madden nor the Countess was immediately concerned with the collateral branches of the Sheehy family. It is enough, however, to state here that the present writer's great-great-grandfather was the first cousin of Father Nicholas Sheehy.

CO. LIMERICK ORIGIN The County Limerick origin of the patriot priest should be of interest, I think, to Limerick men and women on the occasion of our Holy Year Exhibition. I have ventured, therefore, to give this brief biographical sketch of Father Sheehy. There are many details lacking in the records that have been preserved, but much can be pieced together from the various researches of Lecky, Madden and Father William Burke's History of Clonmel.

Nicholas Sheehy was born in 1728 in Fethard, Co. Tipperary, and educated in Louvain and later in Salamanca, where he was ordained priest in 1756. Fr. Burke's "Irish Priests in the Penal Times" contains a letter written by him about a week before his ordination, October 28th, 1756. Some records place him as having ministered first in Newcastle parish, others say on his return to Ireland he was at once appointed as pastor of Clogheen, Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, his predecessor, Father Laurence Hickey, having died very shortly after his appointment to Clogheen in August of the same year. Father Sheehy exercised his sacred ministry in this parish until his death.

CENTRE OF WHITEBOY DISTURBANCES

This locality was the centre of the Whiteboy disturbances and Protestant bigots saw in this fact a powerful weapon against the parish priest. Their first prosecution against him failed utterly but they were busily weaving a network of testimony around him as well as every Catholic of position in the whole district. It soon became evident that two courses were open to Father Sheehy, either of them perilous. He might flee the country and save himself, but this would be taken for an admission of guilt and would be used with fatal effect against those who were being prosecuted along with him. His other course was to surrender and take his trial. This again would be merely to deliver himself into the hands of his enemies, for he knew that the Tipperary High Sheriff would empanel a jury not to try, but to hang him.

A PRICE ON HIS HEAD

He was now a prescribed man with a price of £300 on his head and he did not want to imperil the lives of his friends who were willing to shelter him. On many occasions he was sheltered by the present writer's ancestor, Roger Sheehy, of Appletown, Co. Limerick. Within a fortnight after he had heard of the proclamation, he formed a plan of meeting his neighbors and vindicating his character with safety to himself and the others concerned. He offered to surrender provided his trial might take place in the Court of King's Bench in Dublin. He wrote therefore to Write, the Irish secretary of the day, that he only wanted justice and would spare the Government the reward offered in taking him by surrendering him-

Clonmel ("where he feared the power and malice of his enemies were too prevalent for justice"). On receipt of the Chief Secretary's reply, Father Sheehy waited on Cornelius O'Callaghan, of Shanbally, whose father and grandfather were Catholics. Sympathising with the priest, O'Callaghan offered him a hundred guineas and urged him to get out of the country at once. Conscious of his innocence, Father Nicholas declined this offer and was conveyed to Dublin, where the trial took place. The case for the prosecution broke down utterly and Father Sheehy was triumphantly acquitted.

ARRESTED ON TRUMPETED CHARGE

His triumphant acquittal, however, did not place him beyond the vengeance of his enemies in Clonmel. In the Court of King's Bench, Dublin, just when he thought that he was once more a free man, he was arrested on a charge of being an accessory to the murder of John Bridge, a former Whiteboy who had turned King's evidence. Seven years after his alleged murder, Bridge was found alive and well in Newfoundland, and in complete ignorance of the frightful interpretation which had been put upon his disappearance. Life and limb were forfeited to the King in spite of the promises made him by the Chief Secretary and Lords Justices in Dublin was now delivered to his fate. He was brought on horseback to Clonmel for his "trial." The "witnesses" produced against him were the same three persons of infamous life and character whose evidence had been discredited in Dublin during the first trial in the Court of King's Bench. According to Lecky, "the trial appears to have been one of the most scandalous ever known in Ireland."

AUTHENTIC WITNESS ALSO

Father Sheehy's principal witness for the defence, a Mr. Keating, of Tubrid, who was a man of respectability and fortune and whose evidence proved that Father Sheehy was in his own house at the time of the alleged murder of John Bridge, was himself arrested in Court on the false testimony of a person who was a stage manager of Father Sheehy's "trial." The exculpatory evidence of Mr. Keating on Father Sheehy's behalf was, of course, rejected in view of the trumped up charge of another murder laid to Mr. Keating's own account. There was no longer any attempt to conceal the shameful travesty of legal proceedings. The jury, which was composed of Cromwellian "gentry", found the priest guilty and he was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. The "trial" of Father Sheehy lasted a matter of five hours, on the 13th March, 1766. He was hanged and beheaded on the following Saturday, the 15th. On the scaffold he was attended by his friend Father Doyle, the parish priest of Ardinnan. His grave in Shandraghan churchyard is visited still with reverence while the names and places of his persecutors are but things of the past.

GRAVE HONOURED LIKE THAT OF A SAINT.

Let us hear Lecky: "The grave of Sheehy was honoured like that of a saint. A Sheehy jury became a proverbial expression in Ireland for scandalous partiality." One and all his jury came to an evil end. They never proceeded really to try him for the murder of John Bridge. The conflicting testimony of their own suborned "witnesses" writes off any belief they had in Father Sheehy's guilt. According to the late Father W. Burke, the issue to be tried "was a wider and more passionate one. John Hampden was not more the representative of English resistance to despotism than Nicholas Sheehy the champion of a persecuted and an oppressed people. For this he was hanged and for this the hearts of the people have gone out to him." In our next issue, Friday 27th, Rev. Father Taheny, O.S.A., will contribute an article on the exhibition. (Continued from p. 5)

CITY COUNCIL

Scheme Of Works

NEW ROAD FOR SWIMMING POOL

THE MAYOR (Mr. Kevin Bradshaw) presided at the meeting of the City Council on Monday night. The other members present were: Ald. J. Reidy, T.D.; Ald. J. Carew, Councillors P. J. Doherty, Richard B. Malley, Solicitor; Sean Walsh, N.T.; J. J. Conroy, Kevin O'Sullivan, C. P. Kieve, N.T.; J. Finnan, J. Cunneen, Frank Glasgow, P. O'Connell, Stephen Coughlan.

Mr. Macken, B.A., City Manager; Mr. G. J. Killen, Assistant Town Clerk; Mr. C. Stenson, B.E., City Surveyor; Mr. T. Dundon, Law Agent; and Dr. R. Harney, S.M.O.H., were the officials in attendance.

The City Surveyor submitted his scheme (already published) showing how he proposed to use the relief grant of £16,200.

Mr. O'Malley said that he objected to the construction of a new road at a cost of £3,200 to the swimming pool. Councillor Walsh, he said, could be spent to greater advantage on other works.

Ald. Reidy said that the making of the road to the swimming pool would be a great amenity.

The Manager said that by the making of the road the land running by the swimming pool would be developed in accordance with a long-term plan.

On a division, it was decided by 9 votes to 5 to proceed with the making of the road.

Replying to Mr. Donnellan and Mr. Cunneen, the Manager said that special works would be carried out at Ballyisorn and in Pennywell.

The Manager told Mr. Walsh that minor repairs would be carried out to the passage leading to Wembley Hall, now used as the kitchen of the Penny Dinners' Committee.

Answering Ald. Carew, the Manager said that he would take up with the E.S.B. the question of extending the electricity service to the four houses in the bazaar off Ballinacra.

On the recommendation of Mr. Coughlan, the Manager said that he would take steps to provide parking stations for the hackney motor cars operating in the city.

Mr. Coughlan said that phone kiosks, with external bells attached, should be erected at the hackney stands.

Manager—I will take that up with the G.P.O.

The Council decided to take no action on a recommendation from the Chamber of Commerce to have a by-law framed to regulate hackney charges, as no evidence was forthcoming to show that the scale of charges in operation had been exceeded.

On the suggestion of the Mayor, it was decided to request the hackney owners to have their scale of charges displayed in their cars, hotels and other suitable places.

MISSING SCIENTIST

HOME AT HARWELL

SEARCHED

When police officers arrived to-day in the home at Abingdon, Berks, of Professor Pontecorvo, the missing British scientist, they found that the curtains had been pulled down, the first indication to fellow workers that the home was being entered by Internal Security Officers of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment for some weeks back.

The house is situated at the Harwell Atomic Research Station on a Council housing estate. To-day, the police remained in the house for almost an hour and left carrying a suit case. Letters which had been sent by the Professor while he was on holidays, were gone from the letter-box this morning.

Certain documents were also taken away last night by the Security Officers.

BISHOP'S APPEAL

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The Bishop of Limerick, Most Rev. Dg. O'Neill, presided this evening at a public meeting in the Chamber of Commerce to inaugurate the heading "Dollar Income" in a recent issue of your paper. As one associated for many years with the travel business, I have always recognised the desirability of attracting tourists to our country and at conferences and in deputations have frequently stressed that point of view. When many years

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CITY MANAGER EXPL

Differential Rent Cr

THE PROBLEM OF THE POOR FAMILY

"THERE was, in fact, no such thing as differential rents," said the City Manager (Mr. Macken) at the meeting of the Corporation on Monday night, when a deputation of the tenants of the curra Weston housing scheme addressed the Council.

Mr. Macken said that, in order to take care of the families, a sliding scale of rents was proposed. The maximum rent was fixed at £1 per week and the minimum rent at 11/-.

The higher rent was for the larger families and the lower rent had to be subsidised by the Corporation.

At the meeting of the City Council on Monday night, the Mayor (Mr. Kevin Bradshaw) presided.

A deputation attended from the Ballinacra Weston Housing Scheme on the question of differential rents.

The Spokesmen—Messrs. Patrick Sweeney and John Hogan—said that the big majority of the tenants did not want differential rents, but a fixed rent of 13/6d per week. By a big majority, the tenants had rejected the Manager's differential scheme, which provided for a maximum rent of £1 and a minimum rent of 11/-.

The Manager said that he did not want to force differential rents on anyone. In any case, there was no such thing as differential rents in fact. What was being done was to pay a rent to meet the loan charges given a linear rent.

If the Ballinacra Weston tenants wanted a flat rent they could have it, but that rent would not be fixed by them. The flat rent for Ballinacra Weston was 18/- per week and if the tenants wanted it that way they could have it.

Mr. Hogan—No.

A SLIDING SCALE. The tenants went into these houses at a flat rent of 18/- and if you are prepared to pay that, well and good, but you cannot fix your own rent. We are faced with the problem of the family who cannot afford to pay 18/- and are these families to be left in squalor because they cannot pay this rent? That is our problem. To solve this difficulty a sliding scale of rents was recommended according to family group incomes. The economic rent, after deducting the State grant of £660, is 18/-, but we put forward a sliding scale below 18/- down to 11/-, so that poor families might get a house. The rates of course, will subsidise these lower rents. The rates are already contributing 3/6 in the £ to subsidise rents, but the rates cannot subsidise rents for everyone.

"UNDEMOCRATIC." Mr. Finnan said that it was undemocratic to make one person pay part of the rent of another person, more especially if the person having the lower rent had got on with it by making false representations as to the family income.

The Manager said that in an isolated case a tenant may have got a reduction under false pretences, but the exceptional case should not react on the person who was in genuine distress. There was no question of making one person pay for another. The person paying the higher rent was merely paying an economic rent—the rent to cover loan and maintenance charges. The person who was paying less than the economic rent was a charge on the rates.

FAIR AND EQUITABLE. Ald. Reidy, T.D., said that the differential system was fair and equitable.

Mr. Keates said that the principle should be good for the greater.

Mr. O'Connell said effort should be made to have valuations placed on houses reduced. Some houses were valued while a terrace of houses and premises valued at 18 lbs. was valued at 18 lbs.

Mr. O'Connell said housing should be subsidised. Minister at cost made a national contribution.

Mr. Coughlan said opposed to differential cause the system to promote dishonesty and bad feeling as a result.

Manager—I am sorry to hear that you are not satisfied with the present system. I am sure that you will be able to do so in the future.

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