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Shannon: Vital talks to-day

T.D.s HIT OUT ON ISSUES

WHILE vital talks on Shannon take place in New York to-day, two Limerick deputies made very outspoken comments on the issues: Deputy M. Herbert said: "I deprecate and deplore the strong-armed and shameful tactics of the American Government on a small nation".

Deputy O'Donnell said that any compromise would be "tantamount to a sell-out."

Deputy Herbert made his statement at a Fianna Fail cumann, during which he said:

"I deprecate and deplore the strong-armed and shameful tactics of the American Government on a small nation, and, worse still, on the poorest and most depressed region of that nation, our Western Seaboard—tactics that we in Ireland associate with Imperialism—tactics and thinking that is completely alien to traditional American attitudes towards developing nations, and especially towards Ireland.

"I should not indeed have to remind the U.S. of the major contribution made by Ireland and its people to the making and shaping of contemporary America. I condemn the ruthlessness of the American airlines who have been fairly and squarely beaten by our national airline on the North Atlantic route, despite the fact that the current air agreement is patently in the American favour. They now seek to further accentuate this imbalance, and if their request is not granted they are going to terminate Aer Lingus' rights at New York Airport. Do they not realise the disastrous consequences that this ultimatum will have on our national airline? Do they not realise that they are callously trying to impede our Government's policy in the Mid-Western Region?"

Bullying

"This bullying attitude is arousing a strong anti-American feeling which will not be in the best interests of U.S. airlines. I also deplore the mischievous and back-stabbing tactics used by T. O'Donnell, T.D., when he accused the Government of doing a private deal with the U.S. This attempt to sabotage and undermine the Government's stand on the eve of the vital Washington talks is worse than the recent decision by the self-styled National Tourist Council. But, of course, when one reflects on the shameful Fine Gael attitude to Shannon Airport one understands and realises that Mr. O'Donnell is merely living true to his party's colours.

"Does he have to be reminded of the famous prophecy of his great predecessor and champion, James Dillon, when on the 12th February, 1947, speaking on the Committee Stage of the Shannon Customs Free Bill, stated 'I do not think that rational people have any doubt that in ten years no trans-Atlantic plane would stop at Shannon, that it would be a deserted

'A MASSIVE SELL-OUT?'

In a statement issued in Limerick last night, Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D., Shadow Minister for Transport and Power, said he wanted to issue a final warning to the Government that any compromise on the landing rights issue which would allow even one U.S. carrier into Dublin would be tantamount to a sell-out of the national airline, Shannon Airport and the western tourist industry. No Irish Government in its sane senses could agree to such a massive sell-out and it was high time that the Taoiseach and the Government stopped cowering before the U.S. threats and bullying and showed some kind of determined leadership in fighting this outrageous act of aggression by the Americans.

Exhaustive

After a detailed and exhaustive study of the issues involved my assessment of the situation is that at the end of five years, the cost of admitting one U.S. carrier into Dublin would be as follows:

- The loss of at least 1,000 jobs in Shannon Airport alone.
- The loss of a further 4,000 jobs in tourism and ancillary businesses in the western half of Ireland.
- The closure of 50 per cent of all the hotels and guest houses along the west coast.
- The loss to the West of Ireland of £20m. of annual revenue.
- The loss to the national airline of at least £1m. per year.

"In the face of such disastrous consequences to the nation, the Government have only two options open to them," he said, "either to maintain the status quo or to make Shannon the air terminal for all trans-Atlantic flights."

"The Americans want the right to fly three of their major airlines into Dublin, and from there to points on the European Continent—a demand which poses a serious threat to Shannon Airport, Ireland's trans-Atlantic air terminal.

This was stated by Mr. Michael O'Gorman, chairman of the Shannon Region Action Committee, when he addressed members at a special weekend meeting at Shannon Airport to warn "everyone with an interest in the area" that this week's talks will be on a tough line—"certainly America's toughest onslaught."

"Should the Americans succeed in gaining access to Dublin as a gateway to Europe, it could bring ruin to Shannon as an international airport and as the centre of tourist and economic development in the region and would bring disaster to Irish International Airlines on their trans-Atlantic and European operations.

Ruin

"In their determination to force Ireland to grant their demands, the Americans have wielded the big stick by threatening that they will close the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York to the Irish Airline next August unless American airlines are allowed into Dublin."

Mr. O'Gorman pointed out that following their talks with the American Ambassador, Mr. John Moore, they were convinced that the present talks would spell out the future for the South-Western region of the country. The Ambassador had told them that American tourists' chief interest in flying into Dublin was to see "the Abbey Theatre and the Book of Kells," and while he told them that the opening of Dublin Airport to American airlines would bring more tourists to Ireland and would not damage Shannon in any way, there was every reason to reject the Ambassador's optimism.

There was nothing to stop the American airlines from bringing more and more tourists into Shannon, said Mr. O'Gorman, but they had not done so in the past, and there was little likelihood now that they were going to promote Ireland as a tourist resort. The American's main concern was getting into Europe through Dublin, and they were not concerned what became of Shannon or its people, because it was obvious to the

average observer that Shannon would be overflowed within a very short period.

Type

Tourists arriving on American airlines through Shannon wanted to see Ireland and they do not neglect Dublin or the Eastern Seaboard. The type of tourists referred to by the American Ambassador, said Mr. O'Gorman, were those who took the "grand tour" of Europe in the quickest possible time, taking in as many capitals as they could.

Mr. O'Gorman told the meeting that the Ambassador had made it clear to them that if the American airlines could fly into Dublin through Shannon they would not be "silly enough" to use Jumbo jets on such services. Another point made by the Ambassador, he said, was that had the Irish Government negotiated with him when requested to do so, a solution would have been found which would have been advantageous to Shannon Airport.

Hawking

The Ambassador claimed that he had gone from Minister to Minister "hawking" proposals that would compensate for the right to fly into Dublin Airport, but he had failed to make any progress. As far as he was concerned, the axe had fallen. The Irish Government had to deal with the American Government in Washington, and he could guarantee nothing.

In reply to a straight question, said Mr. O'Gorman, the Ambassador said that he did not think the threat to close New York to Irish International Airlines would be removed before or during the talks. There had been plenty of time for the Irish authorities to consider it.

Advantage

Mr. Bernard Carrig, a member of the action committee, told the meeting that he had reminded the Ambassador that for 25 years the American airlines had used Shannon Airport to gain access to Europe and it

was, in fact, he said, through Shannon that they had set up their European routes much to their advantage. Mr. Carrig said that he had told the Ambassador also that American airlines had not properly availed of the ten years' advantage that they held over Irish International Airlines and now because of the Irish success story, they wanted to cripple it to the detriment of the Irish nation.

Serious

Committee member Mr. Vincent McHugh pointed out that the whole question dealing with the air rights had now become a serious national issue in Ireland and one that could have an effect on Irish-American relations. He had made it clear to the Ambassador that the Irish Government had to negotiate under a threat and in his view this was not negotiation but intimidation and if Ireland suffered, the American Government would not have to deal with the Irish Government but with the Irish people, who never had been amenable to accepting any conditions under threat.

Mr. McHugh said that he told the Ambassador that Ireland was being "clobbered" in the northern part of their own country by one imperialist power, and now they had the threat of being "clobbered" by an American imperialist crunch—a threat that would evoke a strong reaction from the people of this country.

Disturbed

In impressing upon the meeting that they would have to continue to fight on with every determination, Mr. O'Gorman stated that when they met the Minister during the week they told him that they were disturbed by the lack of involvement in such a vital issue by the Shannon Free Airport Development Company. Mr. O'Gorman added that he was happy to note from the Minister's statement in the Dail on Thursday that a representative of S.F.A.D.C.O. would be sent to Washington as an observer who would be available for consultation.

Fires and flooding in Limerick

DURING A week-end of fires and flooding, Limerick Fire Brigade was kept going almost non-stop. As a result of one fire, a mother and seven children were left homeless.

This occurred at the Cross Roads, Rosbrien, on Sunday night when an itinerant caravan and its contents were destroyed by fire.

Subsequently, Mrs. Marshall and her seven children were brought to St. Camillus Hospital to be cared for there. The Fire Brigade were quickly on the scene but could do little as the fire had taken a firm grip.

On Sunday evening a car driven by Mr. Shattery, Cappamore, was completely burnt out at Dromkeen. Both Limerick Fire Brigade and the Brigade from Cappamore were at the scene.

Limerick and Rathkeale Brigades combined to deal with a chimney fire at the residence of Mr. Shier, in Adare at midnight on Saturday.

There was also considerable flooding throughout the area and low lying land is still inundated.

The Brigade was called to the Limerick-Dublin Road at Groody where the road had to be pumped clear to make it possible for traffic.

The Corporation Water and Sewerage Department was also on near continuous duty throughout the week-end, as a result of the tremendous downpour which went on all day Saturday.

The St. Mary's Park area, especially one end of St. Munchin Street, was particularly badly hit. One resident said that they were provided with their own private swimming pool in record time.

Hyde Road, Rosbrien and the North Circular Roads were other districts which suffered, although all over the city Corporation staff were on the go clearing blocked gullies.

Warning on bogus calls

A stern warning to anybody who makes bogus telephone calls to essential services that jail penalties will be imposed was given by Justice M. de Burca at Limerick City Court.

John Cahill, 18 St. Laurence's Park, Garryowen, Limerick, was jailed for seven days after Inspector Con McGrath had told the Court that on the night of August 10 Cahill had phoned Limerick Fire Brigade and asked them to go to a city hotel where Sean Bourke, a resident, was supposed to have broken his leg.

Inspector McGrath said that earlier Cahill and a juvenile had approached Bourke for money and were annoyed because he had failed to give them some.

Mr. Gordon Hayes, solr., for Cahill, said that Bourke was noted for his charity, but on this occasion had seen fit to refuse to give money to his client, who had confessed to making the bogus call. He submitted that had Cahill not done so it would have been a very difficult matter to detect.

Justice de Burca said that any fool or any blackguard, or even any child, could pick up a telephone and ring an essential service and cause terrible inconvenience and possibly do more damage.

Having warned that all people who come before him for doing such things will go to jail, he imposed a seven days' penalty on Cahill.

Sgt. Sean Flanagan

The death occurred suddenly at the Regional Hospital on Saturday of Sgt. Sean Flanagan, 52 Shanabouley Rd. Ballynanty Beg, Limerick.

The deceased was attached to the 2nd Field Supply and Transport Corps. He is survived by

DEATH

FLANAGAN—November 20, 1971 (suddenly), at Regional Hospital, Sean, 52 Shanabouley Road, Ballynanty Beg, Sgt. 2nd Field Supply & Transport Corps. Deeply regretted by his loving wife, sons, daughters, brothers and sister, relatives and friends. R.I.P. Remains will be removed at 7 o'clock (Monday) evening to St. Munchin's Church, Requiem Mass tomorrow (Tuesday) at 11 o'clock. Funeral immediately afterwards to Mount St. Laurence Cemetery. (c)

Grand Christmas choral concert

Arrangements are being finalised for the Grand Christmas Choral Concert, to be held in St. Michael's Church, Denmark Street, Limerick (by kind per-

