

Shannon International Airport And Industrial Zone

"We feel we're on to something which will turn out to be really history-making," said Mr. Brendan O'Regan in the course of a recent question and answer interview with a representative of the Irish magazine, "Development." "For the first time in history, a manufacturer can have a modern factory in an international setting within a free airport—an airport which connects up with all the important cities of the world."

Mr. O'Regan, who is Chairman of the Shannon Free Airport Development Company, was discussing his company's revolutionary Industrial Zone near Shannon Airport. What follows is the text of the interview which begins with his assessment of the long-term outlook for Shannon as an international airport.

Q. About Shannon's future: As I'm sure you know, there's been a lot of headshaking and critical how-are-you-in-Dublin on this question. It's said that Shannon has had it. Modern jet planes will overfly the airport more and more, and you'll be left gnashing your teeth in exterior darkness, so to speak, with another few million of Irish money gone down the drain. What's your answer to this very disturbing forecast?

A. There's one very serious point in it, and I can assure you that we're deeply aware of the seriousness of it. Modern jets can fly direct to practically any airfield on the globe that's selected. They don't have to move in hops and longer. Therefore, Shannon's original advantage, in being the most westerly airport in Europe and the first and last landing place for trans-atlantic air traffic, does not apply any more—or nothing like to the same extent.

Q. But this radical change in aviation does not disturb you inordinately? A. It does, of course, but by setting up the Free Airport Development Company the Government has given us the means to turn the change to our advantage.

Q. Your problem is to make Shannon somehow, a uniquely attractive airport, with advantages and services that can't be obtained elsewhere. Is that it? A. More or less. We know of course that we can't act like sirens and attempt to entice long-distance jets to come down out of the skies just to admire the scenery here and drink Irish Coffee. But there are a great many useful things we can do.

Q. At the rate that the world's air traffic is increasing—I think it's rising at about 20% per annum for both passengers and freight—you could still count on a worthwhile demand for Shannon's facilities, could you not, even though your share of the total trans-atlantic traffic might be declining? A. Yes, Shannon has facilities which are exceptionally attractive, and it is certain always to draw a valuable share of trans-atlantic traffic. Moreover, we believe that we have a real opportunity to be the first in the field with a number of new activities which will attract traffic just as we were first in the field with Shannon's duty-free shopping centre.

Q. I'm with you all the way there—so far—but which particular activity would you consider the most important and promising? A. The picture isn't clear enough at this moment even to guess which will turn out to be the most important factor. But it is certain that the development of air-freight traffic offers us a great opportunity.

Q. That means cargoes which come in pipe aircraft and are unloaded at Shannon, and then are reloaded on to various other aircraft heading for various other destinations? A. Yes, we believe that there will be built up at the Free Airport a very big business indeed on these lines. Shannon can be made a highly effective air-freight entrepot centre. Goods which come in by bulk from East or West will be broken down here into consignments for any of the different cities on the air-routes which converge on Shannon. In fact, the bulk shipper will only need to send along his instructions. The various repackaging and forwarding services will be performed at Shannon.

Q. I see the possibilities—especially in view of the falling cost of air shipment. I think it's pretty obvious that this trend will continue, and that it's going to become economic in future to ship a much wider range of commodities by air. A. It's going to be a little more complicated than that. Jets are estimated to be four times more efficient carriers than piston aircraft. And probably by next year about half the aircraft crossing the Atlantic will be jets. They'll be able to make the journey so very much more quickly than, in order to keep them economically occupied, it will be necessary to find a big increase in cargoes for them. The factories now going up at Shannon will produce

can bring his various components together here in Shannon, without any customs complications, can produce his finished articles, and fly them out to his customers in Zurich or London or Prague with the greatest speed and all-round economy.

Q. I'd say that you're getting near to achieving a real success formula—especially with U.S. industrialists. Their own exceptionally high labour costs are pricing many of their goods out of export markets. If they want to stay in the export trade, and they can't cut down on their labour, the only thing for them to do will be to set up separate plants in areas where the labour and living costs are not so high. Are you getting many inquiries from the States? A. We are—but we're getting inquiries from a great many other places as well. In fact, scarcely a day passes without at least one inquiry coming in to the Development Company at Shannon or to the Industrial Development Authority in Dublin.

Q. How important is the fact that Irish-made goods receive Imperial Preference treatment on the British market? A. In some cases it's very important, but not at all so in others. Every enterprise we've had so far has had a different set of problems.

Q. On the subject of employment, it looks as if the Industrial Estate is going to need considerable manpower? A. It will. At present the airport employs 1,800 people. I think we can double that figure in a relatively short time. I stress the fact that it will be good employment. All these plants need high-quality labour. And Ireland has this—in surplus.

Q. But are they available in the neighbourhood? A. The people will come if the jobs—good jobs—are there. C.I.E. already runs an excellent bus service in and out of Shannon, to Limerick and Ennis, for employees of the airport. I don't think there will be any immediate difficulty as regards finding a satisfactory labour force but many workers' houses must be provided in the neighbourhood of the airport as well as in Limerick and Ennis. Housing for key-men in these new industries—managers, top-technicians and so on—is particularly important. Very often they must be on the job—or at least be available—night and day. To accommodate them and keep them happy we are building a number of very attractive houses on a hill only a short distance away from the Industrial Estate.

Q. I can well imagine that, as the development scheme progresses, you're going to branch out in a great many other ways? A. There's already a plan for dovetailing the services and requirements of the various industries in the Estate. We also aim to lay on piped steam from a central plant. Certainly, some of the factories will be able to provide the use of heavy equipment to others—so that, to

some extent, the Estate becomes self-contained. But it's impossible to plan ahead in detail while so much is in the melting-pot. New projects might materialise any day which would greatly alter the picture.

Q. Such as the proposal to make use of the Shannon estuary as a deep-water port for giant ships? What's your attitude to that project? A. If it takes shape, it would be a great development, and of course it would be an enormous asset to the airport area generally, but I'm afraid there's not much use considering the question academically. Not until a commercial demand arises or is created for it is there any likelihood of the scheme materialising.

Q. A final question: How do you personally visualise the future of Shannon, say, in ten years' time? What do you think the place will look like? What will be happening here? A. The changes which may take place by then can be very great if the first stage industrial zone develops in the way it's promising to, then Shannon will be virtually transformed. Properly utilised the "great leap forward" in the air can bring this country both industry and prosperity. In ten years' time Ireland may be an international centre connecting Europe and America—providing much work and opportunity for the creative abilities of Irishmen and women at home and abroad.

In Defence Of 'The Crucible'

(To Editor, "Limerick Chronicle")

Sir—Mr. Gleeson in his letter printed in your issue of Saturday, 15th December, has strongly attacked Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible," recently staged by the School of Dramatic Art. As another member of the audience, I feel it incumbent on me to reply to his criticism.

While its presentation certainly had defects, the play itself is, in my opinion, a magnificent piece of drama. To suggest, as Mr. Gleeson does, that it is a vehicle for the propagation of materialism is an arrant nonsense. Far from being immoral in its values, the play, to any discerning critic, must have a moral uplift. It is undoubtedly a strong drama, but need I recount for Mr. Gleeson's benefit, the many plays, though stark and realistic in their presentation, of the Irish and International Theatre that have a similar effect? What does Mr. Gleeson think of "Sive"?

"The Crucible" has previously been presented in Ireland by University College Galway Dramatic Society and by Barry Cassin and his company in Dublin. To my knowledge, those presentations did not excite any self-appointed guardian of Christianity to declaim in horror at the play. May I also point out that "The Crucible" was not unfavourably commented on by your own drama critic in his review of the production.

The grateful thanks of every intelligent playgoer in Limerick is due to the School of Dramatic Art for their enterprise in staging such a play, and may we confidently hope that its parent body, The College Players, will stage in the near future another of playwright Miller's fine plays.

Yours Sincerely,
ALPHONSUS RYAN
11 Davis Street,
26th December.

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'The Crucible'

(To Editor, "Limerick Chronicle")

Dear Sir—Mr. Ryan's defence of "The Crucible," printed in your issue of the 29th instant, will hardly work up a demand in Limerick for a re-presentation of this play. Your correspondent's concedes: "its presentation certainly had defects." Let me say at once I am in wholehearted agreement with Mr. Ryan. Mr. Ryan is on shakier ground when he announces: "the play itself is, in my opinion, a magnificent piece of drama." I should suggest that if it is a magnificent piece of drama, it might have had a longer run. The Directors of the College Players will undoubtedly assign reasons why "The Crucible" was not retained.

Mr. Ryan continues: "To suggest, as Mr. Gleeson does, that it is a vehicle for the propagation of materialism is an arrant nonsense." I recommend Mr. Ryan to re-read my letter. I said: "What may pass in materialistic England or America is not necessarily worthy to be presented by the Juvenile Section of the College Players." But several distinctions apart, let us hear more of this defence so gallantly made by Mr. Ryan: "Far from being immoral in its values, the play to any discerning critic must have a moral uplift." This latter sentence fits in badly with his charge against any self-appointed guardian of Christianity. Mr. Ryan has just proclaimed himself such a guardian.

Mr. Ryan asks me what I think of "Sive." The question is wholly irrelevant. I have not the time at this stage to discuss this melodrama. It is enough to say it did not contain the blasphemous line "God is dead," which had to be dropped from "The Crucible."

I will not ask you, Mr. Editor, to give me the permission to insert any other highly objectionable lines. We have had quite enough of the stark and realistic in this play. Perhaps I belong to a more old-fashioned age when a vulgar line or an obscene expression was considered out of place in the presence of women theatregoers. Mr. Ryan, or any self-appointed arbiter of drama or culture, will not convince me to the contrary.

The cult of the ugly is ubiquitous to-day, whether in drama, music or the other fine arts. Yet, the duff-coated young intendant of to-day, who mocks at the good and sets a premium on the bizarre or revolting, cuts as pathetic a figure as his elder brother of the last generation who fondly thought that a goster-board and a pair of trousers strapped under his hump were an infallible claim to a hearing on all artistic matters.

I hardly think that Limerick folk will be complimented on being told by Mr. Ryan that this play has been produced by the University College Galway Dramatic Society. Limerick is a much larger city than Galway and, presumably, does not have to wait for a lead from a place which is not half its size.

Mr. Ryan wants to hear more about Arthur Miller's play. May he besides myself will be on the lookout to see whether the College Players will not decide in the end that discretion is the better part of valour.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for publication,
Yours sincerely,
WILLIE W. GLEESON.

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New Archbishop Of Cashel

The Pope has appointed the Very Rev. Dr. Thomas Morris, Vice-President of St. Patrick's College, Thurles, to be Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, in succession to the late Most Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Finane.

The Archbishop-elect was born on September 16th, 1914, in Kilkennybeg, Kilkenny, Co. Tipperary, and was educated at Christian Brothers' Schools, Thurles, and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. He was ordained in 1939 and studied at Maynooth, where he obtained his Doctorate of Divinity. He taught at the Benedictine Priory, Clonast, and was appointed Professor of Philosophy and later of Dogmatic Theology in St. Patrick's College, Thurles in 1942. Two years ago he was appointed Vice-President of the college.

No Holiday Pay For Footballer

Tim Lyons, the Kerry footballer, who is an agricultural instructor with the County Kerry Committee of Agriculture, is not to be paid for the 21 days' special leave granted to him to travel with the Kerry team to the U.S. for the St. Brendan Cup final.

The Department says that the Minister cannot sanction the Committee's proposal to pay Mr. Lyons

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