

# Critics Of Shannon Airport Look Foolish, Says Mr. Sean Lemass

**MR. SEAN LEMASS**, Minister for Industry and Commerce, spoke in optimistic terms of the future of Shannon Airport when, yesterday, he formally declared open the first air pageant organised by Shannon Aero Club. He said that the critics of Shannon looked foolish. The Minister was introduced by the Mayor of Limerick (Ald. G. E. Russell, T.D.)

The Mayor said that there was no doubt it was due to Mr. Lemass's courage and foresight that Shannon was developed to its present dimensions. "A few years ago the area in which the airport is built was wasteland. We have now what has been truly called the crossroads of the world."

Mr. Lemass said that Shannon Airport is the most important commercial enterprise at any single centre in the West of Ireland, and the allocation of money for the extension of the Airport is an investment in an important commercial enterprise.

The decision taken by the Government to adapt Shannon Airport to deal with the larger and heavier civilian aircraft which will operate on Atlantic routes after 1950 is in conformity with the policy of maintaining Shannon as the sole trans-Atlantic air station in this country, and of keeping its facilities at a level which will ensure its continued development.

**SHANNON COMES FIRST.**

The Government has rejected suggestions that trans-Atlantic air operations should be diverted to Dublin, he said, and continued: "This country does not feel under any obligation to provide two airports of trans-Atlantic standard. It does not accept the view that terminal traffic would be greatly increased by a shift to Dublin."

There is, in any case, a national policy of encouraging the distribution of commercial and industrial activities throughout this island, and the decision to maintain and develop Shannon Airport is in accordance with that policy.

Shannon Airport has made its old-time detractors look foolish. Those who foretold its eventual failure are confounded by the evidence of the continued growth of activity here and its capacity to produce a revenue in excess of its operating cost.

They are confounded by the encouraging fact that an increasing number of trans-Atlantic passengers are asking their travel agents to route them on flights passing through Shannon, and by the steady and very significant growth in its terminal traffic.

**FOOLISH CRITICS.**

Those who are still pulling long faces and making gloomy forecasts about the future, will look just as foolish when the future arrives, as the Jeremiahs of the past. The allocation of money for the extension of the Airport is not just a public works grant. It is an investment in an important commercial enterprise. The expansion of revenue from higher landing charges is intended to remunerate the investment. The Government is approaching all problems relating to Airports and air services in the conviction that the skies are the highways of the future, that to an ever-increasing degree passengers and freight will take to the air, and that it is essential that this country should not fall behind in the development of facilities for air transportation. This State came into being handicapped by lack of an industrial tradition, which makes very difficult the task of industrial expansion.

**"WE HAD FEW SHIPS."**

It had few ships and only after many years was able to develop a respectable merchant shipping organisation. We had many other handicaps to economic development arising from historical cause. We had no such handicap in relation to air transport development, and the Government was determined that it would not make handicaps for it by a belated or excessively timorous approach to the task of securing for this country a place in the world's rapidly expanding air transport system.

That system would enable us to avail fully of the wider opportunities it opened up for us and to secure from it a significant contribution to the over-all need of national economic development.

**THE FUTURE OF SHANNON**

Shannon Airport is not, however, a mere collection of run-

## I.C.M.S.A. And Cheaper Butter Statement

In connection with a statement made by a representative of a retail firm before a sitting of the Fair Trade Commission, that, under certain circumstances, the price of Irish creamery butter could, within six months, be brought down below the price that obtained before the budget, Mr. John Feely, Hon. Secretary of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association, issued the following statement in Limerick on Saturday:—

"My Association has written to the Secretary of the Fair Trade Commission requesting that an opportunity be given us to reply to the statement made by Mr. Valentine J. McCarthy, Chairman, Allied Dublin Merchants, Ltd. Mr. McCarthy, according to Press reports, would seem to have ignored the fact that all creameries are guaranteed a minimum price by the Butter Marketing Committee, based on the cost of milk supplied to the creameries. This Association, the primary function of which is to protect the interests of the milk producers, cannot ignore Mr. McCarthy's statement in as much as it carries a veiled threat to upset existing economic arrangements."

## Limerick Gaelic League And The County Council

The following statement for publication has been supplied to us by Limerick County Committee of the Gaelic League:—

The Limerick Co. Committee of the Gaelic League at its monthly meeting recently, passed a resolution expressing strong disappointment at the action of the Limerick Co. Council in discontinuing the use of Irish in its markings on recently required lorries and other vehicles. For many years past, the resolution pointed out, Limerick County Council lorries bore the marking "Comhairle Condae Luimnui uimhir . . ." It was very much to be regretted, when so many private individuals and firms were beginning to make use of Irish, that a public body like the Limerick County Council should take a retrograde step as to have its vehicles now marked solely in English "Limerick County Council, No. . . ." in place of having them marked exclusively in Irish as had been done for so long in the past.

ways and traffic controlling arrangements. It is a place where men and women work to service air transport users. The future of Shannon is not just a matter of lengthening and strengthening runways, or adding new facilities. It is primarily a matter of improving the service which it gives to people who use it, and that is a responsibility of all those engaged in providing that service. So long as we can guarantee efficient, reliable, and courteous service at Shannon Airport, there need be no doubts about its continual growth.

The future of Shannon is indeed largely in the hands of those who make their livelihoods here. It is their loyalty to the Airport, their concern for its reputation for efficiency, and their determination that it will not be allowed to fall behind in its standard of service which will guarantee its future.

## U.S. TOURIST AGENTS AT CITY RECEPTIONS

THERE had been a 100 per cent. increase in United States tourist traffic to Ireland in the past three years and by 1960 there would be at least 14 million U.S. tourists to Europe, said Mr. John D. Dilger, Irish representative of Air France at a farewell dinner to 30 American travel agents in Cruise's Hotel, Limerick, on Saturday evening.

Travel agents from all parts of the U.S. had been flown to Ireland in Air France's inaugural flight to Shannon and had been conducted on a "familiarisation" tour of Ireland by Bord Failte. The agents were also guests at a cocktail reception given by Shannon Travel Ltd. before flying from Shannon to Paris.

Mr. Dilger said the value placed on the tourist industry could be realised by the amount of money poured into Shannon Airport.

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATION**

Mr. John Moloney, Managing Director, Shannon Travel Ltd., said so far as hotels were concerned they were doing their utmost to extend the accommodation available in the peak season.

He did not think the hotel problem was any more acute in this country than in other European countries and there should not be any inferiority complex about it. The increase in tourist travel in the next few years would be tremendous and they should prepare for it.

### SHANNON AIRPORT—A GATEWAY

Ald. G. E. Russell, T.D., Mayor of Limerick, said they should refuse for all time the belief that Shannon Airport was just a refuelling station on the trans-Atlantic air routes. Shannon was the gateway not only to the many tourist attractions in the area around it but to the whole country and the logical centre of trans-Atlantic tourist development.

"We may not have made the advances in the material sense that richer countries have made but we can boast of having preserved some of the more essential or spiritual qualities not so much in evidence in other parts of the world," said the Mayor.

American tourists who come to Ireland would find an old-world country with a friendly, hospitable and courteous people speaking the same language.

"I do not believe in selling anything on the basis of sentiment," declared Ald. Russell, "but I am sure you will agree that in Ireland we have something worth offering on its own merit."

### WOULD LIKE TO SEE PEOPLE'S HOMES

Miss Jasmine McGee, Texas, said American tourists would like to see more of the life of the people. As well as seeing the beauties of the landscape they would like to see the beauties of the people's own homes and gardens. One of the memories the agents would take home with them was of the "wonderful pink-cheeked Irish children."

As a result of their tour they felt there were many things that might be done at little cost to improve Irish tourist amenities.

Mr. Brendan O'Regan, Catering Comptroller, Shannon Airport, and director of Bord Failte, presided.

Following the dinner the agents had a "fault-finding" conference with Bord Failte officials.

Messrs. D. Morley, Chairman, Shannon Travel Ltd.; J. O'Keefe, director, and R. Sadler, tour manager, were also present at the farewell functions.

The agents were accompanied on their six day tour by Mr. J. McSweeney, Conventions Officer, Bord Failte, and Mr. Carl O. Raimert, Agency Manager, Air France, New York.

## School Girl Injured In City Accident

While returning home from St. Vincent de Paul's School, Henry Street, Limerick, this afternoon 7-year-old Dolores Mulqueen, of Ballinacurra Weston, was accidentally knocked down by a motor car while crossing the road near the Municipal Technical Institute and sustained severe injuries to her legs.

She was removed to Limerick Regional Hospital.

## THIRTY-EIGHT MEN REMANDED

The 38 men arrested in Glencree, Co. Wicklow, yesterday morning at 4 o'clock to-day appeared

# Visitors From Parts Watch Air Pageant

SHANNON Airport was the thousands of visitors who transport to attend the first ever airport. Brilliant sunshine favoured the pageant which was officially opened at 2.30 p. Minister for Industry and Commerce

Among the estimated crowd of 30,000 to watch the pageant was the Mayor (Ald. G. E. Russell) and the Mayoress and a number of journalists from Belfast.

From 12 o'clock onwards a constant stream of cars blackened the road to the Airport and local buses made many trips to and from Shannon. Specially chartered buses brought visitors from Counties Cork, Clare, Kerry and Tipperary. All the way along the route, Gardaí were on duty to control the huge volume of traffic, which, at times, was at a crawling pace.

Outside the enclosure at the grounds, thousands basked in brilliant sunshine and leisurely watched the displays by over thirty aircraft. Many amongst the large attendance were viewing the Airport for the first time and, against a background of colour, glittering planes and picturesque surroundings, they must have gone away impressed.

### DISPLAYS.

Displays were given by Limerick and Dublin Gliding Clubs and if the majority of events were on the usual lines, there were one or two spectacular feats to compensate. Chief amongst these was the breathtaking exhibition given by the 40-year-old French parachutist, M. Vincent, who did the trapeze act while balanced from a swing rope flying from the plane, which was more than 500 feet up.

At 3.30 all eyes were turned heavenwards as two Air Corps Vampire Jets roared in from Baldonnell, at a speed of 500 m.p.h. A feature of the displays given by these speed-merchants was their amazing climbing power when flying even at low levels.

Towards late afternoon, early-home-goers missed the treble parachute drop, which proved a highlight of the day.

Away from the roaring engines there was plenty to keep the visitors occupied. Nine international airlines and the Shannon duty-free shop staged a colourful and interesting exhibition in a specially erected marquee. Much interest, particularly by the lady-folk, was

## WAS ON WRONG SIDE

"One does not have to know the road to drive with safety," commented Justice Hurley at Ennis Court when he imposed a fine of 40/- on Myles Sweeney, Mafk St., Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, for failing to keep to the left edge of the road at Clarecastle, Co. Clare, on March 18th.

Sergt. R. Cody said defendant, who was coming from Limerick to Ennis, was completely on his wrong side and if there was a car coming against him he would have a poor hope of avoiding an accident.

## ARTIFICIAL RAIN

Artificial rain may be able to increase Israel's rainfall by 15 per cent, it was reported to 70 professional and amateur meteorologists at their second annual conference at Lydda airport, Israel.

## NO LICENCE

James Cahir, Ballyduff, Barefield, was at Ennis Court fined 10/- for not having a driving licence. A similar fine was imposed on defendant for not having a warning instrument on his van.

# Justice Pays To Clare La Spir