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FOUR BIG QUESTIONS

Limerick Harbour Board

PORT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND OTHER ISSUES

TO-DAY, at the meeting of the Limerick Harbour Board, Mr. M. W. McGuire, B.C., Chairman, presiding, references were made to four important subjects, namely, the port development scheme, the scale of charges for electricity, the need for extending the Cemetary at Mungret, and the securing of a reduction in freightage charges from British ports.

MR. M. W. MCGUIRE, B.C., Chairman, presided at the meeting of the Limerick Harbour Board today. The other members present were—Aid. D. Bourke, T.D.; Aid. J. Carew, Messrs. A. O'Dwyer, J. P. Goodbody, James O'Keefe, T. J. Loughrey, P. Meskill, T. Walsh, J. J. Donnellan, B.C.; P. Whelan, B.C.; J. P. Frost, P. E. O'Malley.

The officials present were—Mr. T. C. Riordan, B.E. (Acting Manager); Mr. T. P. O'Sullivan, B.E., Harbour Engineer, and Capt. C. J. Hanrahan, Harbour Master.

ESB. CHARGES Mr. F. P. Herriott, secretary, Limerick Chamber of Commerce, wrote asking the Board to appoint delegates to a representative Committee to be set up under the aegis of the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the charges for electricity, the scale of charges for electricity, obtaining in Limerick and which were much higher than those applying to Dublin.

The letter added that several other local bodies had been invited to send delegates. The Minister for Local Government (Mr. M. J. Keefe) and the local Deputies were also invited to attend.

The Chairman said that the date for the holding of the meeting would be fixed to suit the convenience of all parties concerned. Messrs. A. O'Dwyer and J. P. Goodbody were appointed to represent the Board on the Committee.

FREIGHTAGE CHARGES The Chamber of Commerce wrote that the question of having the freightage charges from United Kingdom ports to Limerick reduced was under examination, and the Chamber considered that the Harbour Board might co-operate with the Chamber on this matter.

The Chairman said that some time ago a reduction in freightage charges to Limerick had been secured. Yet that scale to Limerick was still much higher than that applying to other Irish ports. In view of the negotiations that were proceeding between the Labour Court and the dockers he thought it would be advisable the outcome of these negotiations. If they were to be in a position to tell British ship owners that in the future there would be a quicker turn round of ships at Limerick they would be in a much stronger position to ask for a reduction in freightage charges.

On the proposition of Mr. Whelan, it was decided to ask the Chamber of Commerce to defer action pending the outcome of the negotiations with the dockers.

COUNTY COURTHOUSE A letter was read from the Limerick Bar Association calling attention to the proposal to expend a large sum of public money on the re-construction of the County Courthouse, and suggesting that it would be far more advisable to have a new courthouse erected.

The Chairman said that the Harbour Board was not directly concerned in this matter. Mr. Donnellan—No. The Bar Association has our sympathy in their agitation to have a new courthouse built.

Chairman—That is nice; diplomatic language (laughter). The Board took no action on the letter.

PORT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME The Chairman said that the Whole House Committee had been considering the letter from the Minister for Industry and Commerce concerning the conditions under which he was prepared to give a grant of £100,000 towards the cost of the proposed port development scheme. It was made a condition of the grant that the Board should raise the balance of the capital required, which was approximately £200,000.

This was a highly important stipulation, a stipulation that was receiving the closest attention of the Whole House Committee and of the Engineer. It was obvious that if the Board were obliged to raise a capital sum of £200,000 the co-operation of all sections of the community should be forthcoming.

class of the community. If the port was to exist at all it would have to be developed, but the point for consideration was—what expenditure was the port capable of bearing? That vital matter was receiving the close study of the Whole House Committee and, of course, many further meetings would have to be held before a final decision was reached.

CEMENT INDUSTRY Mr. Loughrey said that a good deal of publicity had been given in the Press to claims being put forward by various centres for the establishment of a third cement factory. No objection, of course, could be offered to any centre looking for a cement factory, but he thought that Limerick was very much concerned in his question. It was common knowledge that the cement factory at Mungret was planned for further extension and development and he felt that this extension should take place before a third factory was built. The two existing factories were not, as at present developed, capable of manufacturing all the cement needed, with the result that vast quantities of this product were being imported from greatly increased prices. He was of the opinion that the Board should ask the Minister for Industry and Commerce to give effect to the original plan under which the Mungret factory was to be extended.

MORE ECONOMICAL The Chairman agreed with Mr. Loughrey and expressed the view that it would be far more economical to extend an existing factory rather than build a third. It would be time enough to talk about a third extended Mungret factory was not capable of producing the full requirements of the country. The cement being produced at Mungret was as good as any manufactured in any part of the world. Again, the development of the Mungret factory had a bearing—and a very big bearing—on the export trade of the port.

Mr. A. O'Dwyer said that the former Minister for Industry and Commerce had approved of the intention to extend the Mungret Cement Factory. Why was that intention being departed from? Aid. D. Bourke, T.D., said that Mr. Lemass had approved of the proposal to have the Mungret factory extended.

Mr. O'Malley said that it would be far more economical to extend an existing factory than undertake the building of a third.

IS THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNED? Aid. Carew said that he agreed entirely with the views expressed. He would like to know if the Government was concerned in this question or if it was merely a matter for Cement, Ltd. At one time there was some mention of a dispute as to the dividends to be paid, and he had no knowledge of the matter, official or otherwise, he would like to have the position clarified.

Aid. Bourke said he understood that the building of a third factory on the extension of the Mungret factory was a Government matter. It was the intention a few years ago to have the Mungret factory extended and preparations were made to have that done. He proposed that the Minister for Industry and Commerce be asked to give effect to the original plan to have the cement factory at Mungret extended.

Aid. Carew seconded, and said that the Board should use all the influence it had in this matter. If necessary a deputation should be sent to the Minister.

MACHINERY PURCHASED TWO YEARS AGO. The Harbour Master said that two years ago Cement, Ltd., had machinery purchased in Denmark in connection with the proposed extension of Mungret. He understood that that machinery had been sold.

The Chairman said that the Board would write to the Minister urging the extension of the Mungret factory. If necessary, that letter would be supported by a deputation.

Mr. O'Dwyer—And I suggest that the Minister for Local Government be made aware of our action and

FAMOUS AUTHOR

Visit To Limerick Recalled

CARLYLE AND GAVAN DUFFY

JUST over 100 years ago Limerick had a visit from Thomas Carlyle, one of the famous men of letters of his time. This was his second visit to Ireland, but before proceeding to set out his impressions of Limerick City and its neighbourhood it is, perhaps, well to recall that Carlyle was born in Scotland in 1795 in a humble circumstance. His father was a stone mason, and literary success came to him slowly. At the time of Carlyle's second visit to Ireland he was over 50 and had met with success in his works on "The French Revolution" and on "Cromwell." His first book, "Sartor Resartus," was recognised only by two men as anything of the ordinary when it appeared in Fraser's Magazine. They were Emerson, the American Unitarian divine, and Father O'Shea of Cork. Carlyle was particularly anxious to meet the latter, which he did at the house of Denny Lane, the Young Irishman, in 1849.

CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY. For the greater part of his second visit, Carlyle was accompanied by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who first got to know him while a law student in London. Duffy remained a close friend of Carlyle up to his death in 1881 and particularly during the time Duffy was a member of Parliament at Westminster. He went to Australia with Carlyle. Carlyle's impressions of Ireland are recorded in a book entitled "My Irish Journey in 1849," which was not published until the year after his death and then against the advice of Duffy who, in "Conversations with Carlyle" (1892), described it as made up of hasty notes in which Carlyle allowed himself a licence of language which he himself would not have justified or sanctioned had he lived to see his notes in print. It is fortunate, from the historian's point of view, that these notes were published, however disjointed and otherwise unsatisfactory they are.

THE VISIT TO LIMERICK. To return to his visit to Limerick, the visit through which the train passed from Limerick Junction is described as green and commonplace. Duffy was waiting for Carlyle on the platform at Limerick Station and accompanied him to Cruise's Hotel. For some strange reason streets did not impress him, and the river is described as not very beautiful. Amongst his callers at the hotel was Richard Bourke, then a Poor Law Inspector. They had met in London and on Bourke's invitation Carlyle went to Thornfields, Lisnagry, the home of Bourke's father, Major General Sir Richard Bourke, to which he proceeded along a road which he described as a broad open road with some miserable little peat carts on it, and nearly nothing else. One of Carlyle's minor disappointments was his inability to purchase a given type for which Limerick was once famous.

Thornfields had been laid out by Major General Sir Richard Bourke, who after a distinguished career as a soldier in Spain and elsewhere became Governor of New South Wales. He returned to spend the last 20 odd years of his life in Thornfields.

A FINE OLD SOLDIER. Sir Richard Bourke is described as a fine old soldierly lean, clean face harked with sandy hair and bullet marks, inextinguishably lively grey, hard eyes, head snow white and low voice, who bought the place 30 years previously and a black bog then, planted with a few wood, neat walks and fields flourishing. Carlyle's visits to nearby places included one to Lord Clare's place where Sir Richard drove him where the gardens and the green lawns impressed him.

Another visit was to Scotchman Mealls farm (I fancy Raheen House) where good crops are produced provided you keep the ditches scoured. All this region is described as consisting of a single street. Carlyle commended on the bareness of the Clare Hills. The same is true to-day—A country, as he says, that might all be very beautiful, if it were not so bare, gnarled and craggy. The slate quarries at Killaloe are also referred to.

JOHN MITCHELL'S PROSE STYLE. John Mitchell is popularly believed to have imbibed his fine prose style on Carlyle's writings, but when it comes to describing the countryside or towns visited, Mitchell is much superior and if Carlyle's book on his 1849 visit has

ANOTHER EIGHT?

Corporation And Co. Council

BOUNDARY EXTENSION SCHEME

THERE may be one more battle between the Limerick County Council and the Corporation over the extension of the city boundary. This time the fight may be over the amount the Corporation has to pay the County Council as compensation for the amount of property transferred to the city under the Boundary Extension Act, when that comes into force in a few weeks time.

This was told to the Council last Saturday by its solicitor, Mr. Roger O'Sullivan. The Council had before its meeting a copy of the Provisional Order of the Minister for Local Government.

Mr. O'Sullivan said that the Boundary Extension Bill now before the Dail was on the same lines as the Provisional Order. There was little use in arguing any more about the amount of property to be taken into the city. The Council should now concentrate on the main point in the Order—the amount of compensation the Council should be paid by the Corporation.

VERY MUCH OPEN The financial end of the thing is still very much open, Mr. O'Sullivan said. "The Council will have a claim against the Corporation for such losses as they will suffer by the reduction of their area. When that claim is made there may be disagreement between the two bodies. It is more than likely that there will be disagreement. Then we will have further arbitration between the Council and the Corporation. At the moment it would be premature to mention what the claim may be."

Mr. O'Sullivan then said that the Provisional Order provided certain reliefs to such county ratepayers as would be taken into the city. These reliefs would ensure that county ratepayers taken into the city would not have to meet the full impact of city rates all at once. The increase to the city level of rates would come gradually, fractionally, until at the end of the year all the new citizens of the Borough as a result of the extension, would be paying the full city rate.

Mr. D. J. Madden, T.D.—In view of the fact that the county will be suffering considerably this year from the loss by us to the city of some of its rateable property, what machinery will be set up, and when, to recover these losses?

LAW VEILY SOON Mr. O'Sullivan—The Bill will very likely be in force before the beginning of the new financial year. Our officials will then go into our books and figures and find out what loss we are likely to suffer. We shall then make a claim against the Corporation, and if they don't agree to pay it we shall apply for arbitration to settle the matter.

Mr. Madden—That should be done expeditiously, as soon as the Bill is law.

Mr. J. J. McNamara—Will the fact that who are taken into the city have to pay the full city rate when the ten years are up? Chairman J. W. Cauty—No. They don't have to pay the full rate on agricultural lands. The Fair Green will be exempted, too, because we got such an assurance from the late Minister for Local Government.

The Chairman said they should ask the Minister to make provision for the Council officials—rate collectors; public assistance officials and sanitary inspectors—who would be affected by the extension.

Mr. O'Sullivan—That is provided for in the Provisional Order, and I feel sure it will also be in the Act. The matter was not further discussed.

VACANCY FILLED

CO. VOCATIONAL BODY

Unanimously, Limerick Co. Council on Saturday appointed Very Rev. Canon Martin, P.P., Croom, to replace the late Very Rev. J. Canon Walsh on the County Limerick Vocational Education Committee. Canon Martin's appointment was proposed by Mr. J. W. Cauty and seconded by Mr. J. J. McNamara. The Chairman (Mr. J. W. Cauty) said he wanted it made quite plain that the Council should not make this appointment a precedent. It did not follow that the successor in the parish of a deceased clerical member of the Committee should automatically be his successor on the Committee.

Mr. T. O'Connell said they should

TOWN TOPICS

TERRIBLE STATE.

A CONSIDERABLE time ago the public were given to understand that the ancient cemetery at Mungret was to get a general cleaning-up. A mistake must have been made somewhere, for the cemetery is still in a shocking condition. The whole place bears traces of accumulated neglect. Vaults have fallen into ruin and decay, paths, if they ever existed, are overgrown with briars and brushwood, tombstones are scattered about in all directions, while the boundary walls have collapsed at different points. Indeed, to make a long story short, the cemetery, one of the most ancient and historic in Ireland, is a disgrace to all concerned.

HISTORIC SPOT.

Antiquarians and others interested in the distant past take special pleasure in exploring the monastic ruins of Mungret. It is well said that a place with a history is not dead, and, surely, few spots can claim to be more closely identified with the glorious part played by Ireland in the battle for Christianity than Mungret. The Abbey of Mungret, according to the Four Masters and the Annals of Clonmacnois, was founded by St. Nessan before Columba had established his celebrated monastery in Iona. Nessan is, of course, the Patron Saint of the Parish of Mungret. His Feast Day is observed each year on 25th July.

SIX CHURCHES.

The Abbey of Mungret consisted of six churches, the ruins of which are to be seen to this day. Nessan, who was appointed Abbot by St. Patrick, was to become one of the leaders of the early Church in Ireland. Mungret was not only a centre of piety but of learning as well, and the story of the "wise women of Mungret" is indicative of its fame in the fifteenth century. But, alas, the hand of the despoiler was soon to raze the Abbey to the ground. It was frequently pillaged by the Danes, who eventually destroyed all the monastic buildings by fire. But beyond the fact that the Commissioners for Public Works have declared the ruins to be National Monuments nobody seems to bother any more about Mungret's ancient greatness.

SHORTER HOURS.

The Union looking after the interests of chemists' assistants is carrying on negotiations with a view to having Limerick pharmacies closed at 7 p.m. instead of 8 p.m. It is understood that considerable progress has been made with these talks and that a general agreement is not far off. It is true that a limited number of employers are not disposed to the earlier closing, but there is a feeling that the will of the majority will prevail. Some years ago—in the good old days, moryah—chemists' shops remained open until 11 p.m.; so did the smaller drapery houses. And is any one the worse off by the abolition of these slave conditions?

THE DRAMA.

Next month the Playhouse will, to use the hackneyed and, perhaps, inappropriate phrase, be a hive of industry. It will be in use from 1st March right up to 28th, and during that period Thespians from various centres will grace its boards. The month will open with productions by the College Players' School of Dramatic Art, and from 12th to 28th the Playhouse will be taken over by Feile Luimnighe. By the way, a correspondent who has a flair for the stage, writes to say that the present Playhouse must not be confused with the theatre that stood in the 18th century in Playhouse Lane, off Gerald Griffin Street, and in which actors and actresses of world-wide fame appeared, including David Garrick and Mrs. Crowell.

TO THE POINT!