LEITRIM'S NEED

Small Industries

by JUDE FLYNN

LACK of industry in the county is the main cause of Leitrim's economic problems. Foreign industrialists who take advantage of the present attractive opportunities offered by the Irish Government, never seem to select "Lovely Leitrim" as a base for their activities. A recent survey of the progress made by State aided industry indicates that new industrial concerns are concentrated mostly in three regions, namely, Dublin, Louth and Cork—areas which already contain approximately sixty per cent of the nation's industrial workers.

This uneven pattern of national economic development has prompted the setting up of industrial estates in favoured locations outside of Dublin and Cork. Centres selected so far have been Waterford and Galway. Through various public bodies and rural organizations appeals have been made to the Government to have an industrial estate set up at Sligo, to cater for the North-West of the country. The setting up of an estate at Sligo would have a bearing on the economy of this county.

While to date the Government has not acceded to the request, rural sociologists associated with the Muintir na Tire movement feel that, if a county like Leitrim is to maintain its existing communities, and if the value of rural living and the traditional pattern of life in the county are to be maintained, an industrial estate would not be a satisfactory solution to the problem. They do suggest that the intensifying of the Government's new Small Industries Scheme would be more favourable. They base their recommendations on the findings of the Limerick Rural Survey 1964, and on Muintir na Tire's "Saving the West" seminar report 1965.

The Limerick survey which was carried out in an area that has a general "West of Ireland" pattern of living, contains detailed information on the physical resources and of the social and economic problems of the area. To tackle the depopulation from the countryside the survey did not suggest that an industrial estate would be the immediate solution to the problem but recommended that the larger towns in the region (which would also be applicable to a county structure) be fully developed as key centres and that the small villages act as service centres or satellites to the bigger towns. Small or medium sized industries would be necessary for the full development of the towns, and these when set up could offer farmers part-time jobs—which in turn would help to establish a balanced employment structure in the district. In contrast the industrial estate would be centralizing industry on a national scale and the local communities would have no say in its administration. Workers would be drawn out of their own communities instead of the factories being brought to the workers.

Such a situation would inevitably be the death knell for many of our small towns and villages.

The Small Industries Scheme, as already mentioned, was introduced in April 1967 when the Department of Industry and Commerce set up a Special Board or section called the Small Industries Division. (The Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mr. Colley, TD, outlines fully the workings of the Small Industries Division in his article.—*Ed.*) In launching the scheme, test or "pilot" areas were selected, namely: Kilkenny/Carlow, Limerick/Clare, and Leitrim/Sligo/Roscommon. A survey was first made of each pilot area to list the number of existing small industries, so as to have their potential assessed. In this county the survey was

carried out by the then Development Team Secretary, Mr. Seamus Duke, and the many small scale enterprises he discovered, varied from articles of souvenir making to wrought-iron work.

Mr. Duke was very impressed by the great number of small scale enterprises and by the initiative and determination of the men involved, many of whom were motivated by local patriotism to give employment to the youth.

In June last year, the county's small industrialists, headed by Mr. Raymond Laird, Drumshanbo, as Chairman, and Mr. Gerry McGee, Mohill, as Secretary, formed an association called the Leitrim Manufacturers' Association, and declared their full support for the extension of the Small Industries Scheme. Association members engage in a very varied list of products, namely: jam manufacturing, plastic goods, animal feeding stuffs, and mineral waters in Drumshanbo; plastic goods, soft toys, jewellery and high-class knitwear in Carrick-on-Shannon; church furniture, joinery work in Mohill; wrought-iron work, shop-fittings, etc., in Ballinamore; knitwear, buttons, plastic goods, deck chairs and school furniture in Manorhamilton; feeding compounds in Newtowngore; church furniture in Carrigallen; butter production in Kiltoghert and Killasnett Co-Ops.; coal production in Arigna, and meat exports in Dromod.

In December, last year, the Manufacturers' Association staged an exhibition of their goods at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, The annual Dublin/Leitrim People's Association Dance was held in conjunction with the exhibition. A further exhibition of products was staged at the Dublin Spring Show in May of this year. Tourist attractions of the county were specially featured at the exhibition, with emphasis on "Lovely Leitrim," as described by Larry Cunningham. In July the most successful exhibition of all was staged. Leitrim manufacturers joined with Sligo (the number of exhibitors from Leitrim actually outnumbered those of Sligo) in displaying products at the NAIDA Headquarters, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. The goods were on display, on this occasion, for two weeks.

Since last July, at least two of Leitrim's manufacturers have extended the scope of their enterprises, under the Small Industries Scheme. This has resulted in the employment of additional workers. Others have plans for expansion and these will be put into effect in the coming year. Regarding new enterprises, it is encouraging to hear of efforts being made in both Dowra and Drumkeerin. Success will be a welcome boost to this northern part of the county. During 1969 other districts in the county should interest themselves in the matter of having small industries set up. Readers may know of some person from their own locality working abroad, who has now acquired a special skill. He should be contacted as he might be willing to apply his talent for the betterment of the old county.

It is essential to have confidence restored in the future of our county, and every co-operation must be forthcoming to those who by their efforts, industrially and otherwise, help to restore this confidence. This will lead to a renewal of the spirit of self-reliance, a spirit which urged previous Leitrim generations on to greater efforts in the past.

WHEATEN BREAD

Ingredients: ¾-lb. wheaten meal, ¼-lb. flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon bread soda, 1 teaspoon sugar, 1 dessertspoon of bacon dripping.
Butter milk to mix.

Method: Sift all dry ingredients, rub in bacon fat, make a well in centre, add enough butter milk to make a stiff dough. Turn on to a floured board, knead lightly, form into a round cake. Make a cross on top and bake in a pot oven for forty minutes (with coals on top of lid of oven.) As our grandparents made it.

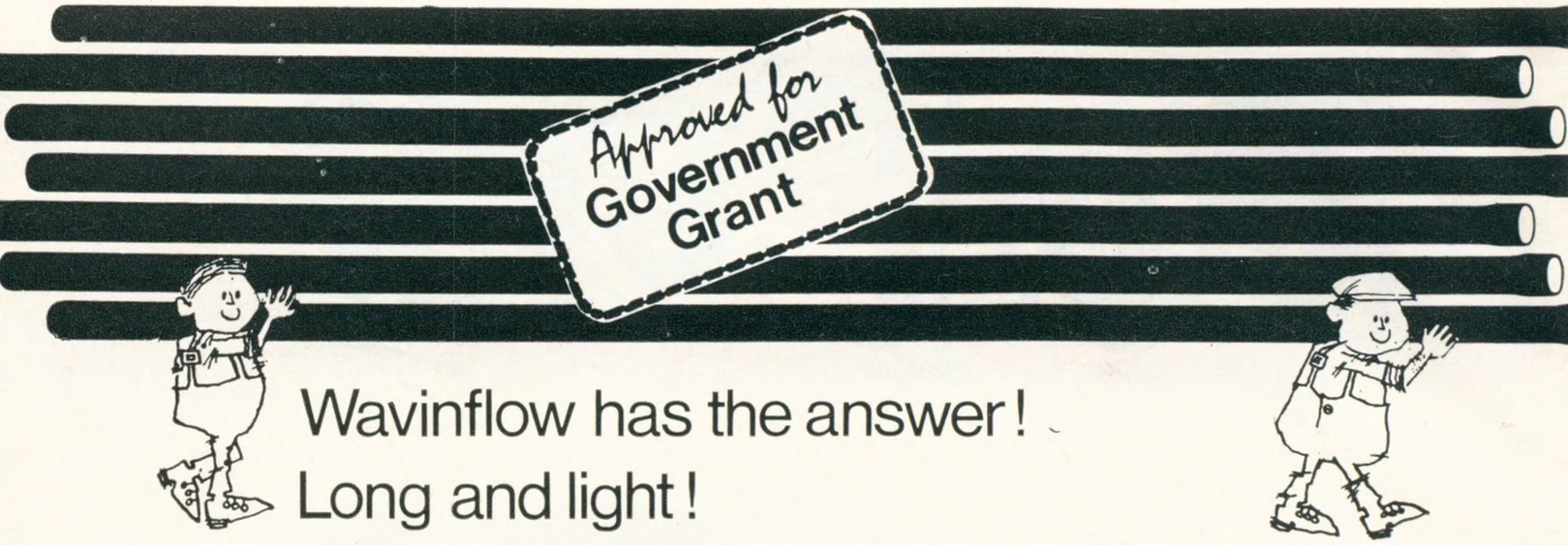
Bo Peep

fruit-happy Marmalade & Jams!



Manufactured by C.S.Laird. Ltd., Drumshanbo. Co. Leitrim.

Easier farm drainage?



Wavinflow has the answer!
Long and light!

Breakage Eliminated

Virtually unbreakable. Losses normally experienced in loading, unloading, stringing out and laying are eliminated.

Better Flow

Straighter lines and better joints result in better flow. Unaffected by acids or alkaline salts—suitable for any soil.

Greater Lengths

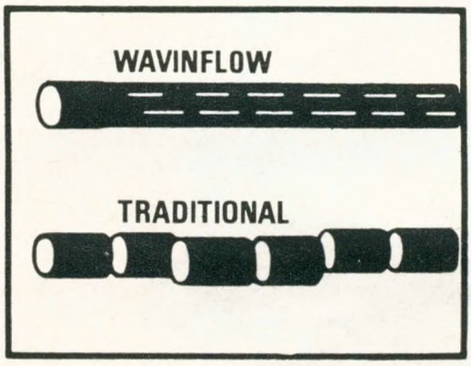
Supplied in 20 ft. lengths, Wavinflow can be laid very quickly. A joint only every 20 feet—but a real joint!

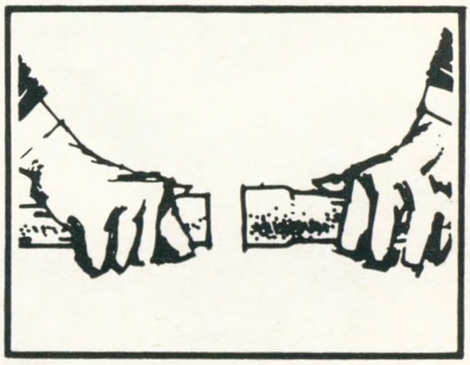
Ease of Jointing

A simple push-fit joint—but really effective for hand or machine laying.

Extreme Lightness

200 feet under one arm! 25,000 feet in one load! Less fatigue. Less labour. Less damage to soil structure.







Wavinflow 50: 2″ diam.

Wavinflow 70: 2¾″ diam.

Wavinflow

Slotted P.V.C. Land Drainage Pipes · Wavin Pipes Ltd., Balbriggan, Co. Dublin. Telephone 212260.

Contact your Local Stockist

MITCHELLS OF MANORHAMILTON.