lot of food. But we have our vegetables, of course. And we kill our own sheep. And we go fishing."

"And we buy twenty-four loaves of bread a week," says the voice at his elbow.

"This is one family that is never hungry," chimes in a third voice - that of a visiting English cousin, on holiday with wife and five children (Where do they all fit?)

Loneliness is not something that Joe is ever likely to suffer from. But can there be time for any single activity unrelated to family pressures?

"I'm a member of the Mayo IPA," he says. "Secretary, actually, of the organisation which promotes division of commonage and tree-planting. Then one time?, he goes on, "I used to ride in all the flapper meetings in Connemara". He still keeps two horses, it transpires, and the children all ride, going off in pairs on day-long treks.

He is also involved in promoting tourism in the area and has acted as a local tour guide, being very knowledgeable about ancient history. Some of this knowledge has been handed down by tradition, continued on page 11