

# 9. Sheriff Quinn to gallop on

MAYOR John Quinn has decided to continue a precedent set by his immediate predecessor, Alderman Jim Kemmy.

He proposes to wear the historic Sheriff's chain in preference to the cumbersome mayoral one.

There will be exceptions — specifically when he feels that the solemnity of an occasion demands the wearing of the full regalia.

He said that he would normally wear the formal mayoral chain only on an occasion when it would also be appropriate to appear in full civic robes.

Alderman Kemmy, as mayor, recovered one of the smaller sheriff's chains from the display case at the city museum in which it had lain for some years. It is far less elaborate than the massive mayoral chain, but has its own distinctive elegance and proportion. Mr Kemmy wore the full chain just once — minutes before he relinquished office on Monday July 13, and then for a for-the-record photocall only, and at the request of this newspaper.

Previous mayors, when not wishing to use the full chain, had relied upon wearing an even less impressive chain of 51 small plain flat gold links, with a hook at the end. This 'chain' is nothing more than a device, to be hung round the neck, which allowed the enormous full

mayoral chain to be hitched up at the front to avoid it draping along the ground or tripping up the first citizen.

The use of the Sheriff's chain was a compromise arrived at by Alderman Kemmy and now endorsed by Mayor Quinn.

Both Mr Kemmy and Mr Quinn agree that some previous occupants of the mayoral office had diminished the dignity of the formal chain by gross over-use. Mayor Quinn said that some of his predecessors-

hardy mayors have hazarded the expense in recent times.

The chairman of the County Council also has a chain, a simple, light device, with an enamelled representation of the county coat of arms on the suspended medallion. It was commissioned and sponsored by a bank in the late 1970s.

It is not designed to be added to until the present links have all been inscribed with the name of

now.

The latest piece of civic regalia, a gold brooch with the arms of the city blazoned on it, is worn since 1979 by the wife of the sitting mayor.

At present it is worn to formal functions by Mrs Kay Quinn, the Lady Mayoress. It was presented to the Corporation on the occasion of his retirement from City Council, by Mr Ted Russell, who had commissioned the hand-crafted piece on his own initiative and at his own expense.

It was first worn by the then Lady Mayor Mrs Helen Byrne. It remains to be seen to what use it will be put two years from now, when Limerick will have its third woman mayor, Cllr Jan O'Sullivan.

## By MARTIN BYRNES

"practically slept in the blessed thing".

The civic office of Sheriff was abolished by the Saorstát Éireann government upon the foundation of the State. There had been Sheriffs of Limerick, off and on, since 1197 AD, and in continual succession since 1322.

The practice of having two sheriffs was discontinued in 1841. The present sheriff chains were purchased in or about 1820, together with the present full mayoral chain. There appears to have been no official civic regalia before that.

The full mayoral chain has 81 links of which 68 have been added by various mayors down the years. Being gold, only rich or fol-

the incumbent. And, as Pat Ryan and the late Liam Hickey each served multiple terms, that will be quite a number of years from