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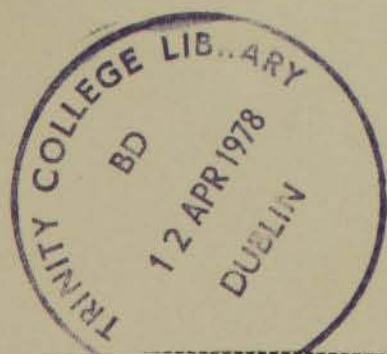
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THE RISE OF THE  
IRISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

1888 - 1907.

The rise of the Irish labour movement,  
which is entirely my own work, has not been  
submitted for a degree at any other university.  
Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Ph. D. in the University of Dublin,  
Trinity College, March 1961.

*Approved by the Board*



J. W. Boyle,  
M. A., B. Litt., (1942).

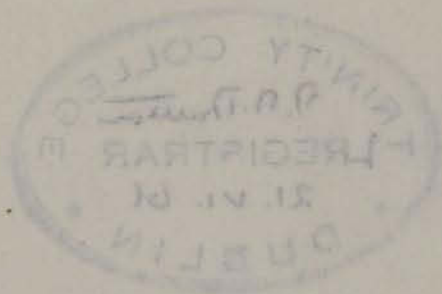


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THESIS  
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This thesis, "The rise of the Irish labour movement, 1888 - 1907," which is entirely my own work, has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree of any other university.

In particular assistance was obtained by obtaining microfilms, photostats and inter-library loans, indicating possible sources, or giving me ready access to the resources of their libraries.

J. W. Boyle.

To Mr Ruairi Roberts and Mr Donal Kevin of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (formerly the Irish Trade Union Congress), I am indebted for permission to have microfilms made of Irish reports and for assistance in locating other materials. A large number of the reports have been supplied to me by the courtesy of Mr William O'Keefe. The assistance of the Dublin and Dublin trade councils, Miss Betty Strainly and Mr Collins, and their committees, particularly in taking the councils' minute books on microfilm, was also granted me by the Belfast branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers and the minutes of the managing committee of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.





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Owing to the kindness of their authors I have had the

For lending me original letters to her father, and his collection of pamphlets, leaflets and cuttings from newspapers and periodicals, I am deeply indebted to Miss Morna E. Crawford, daughter of the late Robert Lindsay Crawford. I have also to thank for loans or gifts of union histories, pamphlets, election addresses, periodicals and miscellaneous materials, the late Mrs Margaret McCoubrey, the officials of the Belfast branch of the Typographical Association, Mr D.W. Bleakley M.P., Mr Andrew Boyd, Mr William Boyd, Mr R.H. Campbell, Mr F.C. Carson, Mr T.R. Johnson, the late Robert McClung and Mr William O'Brien. I am especially grateful to Mr Carson, who was unwearying in his search for material and for surviving members of the early Belfast labour movement. Mrs Kathleen T. McCloy was kind enough to supply information, accompanied by witty reminiscences of her own, from records in the British Museum and the British Library of Political and Economic Science.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A.S.C.& J.	Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.
A.S.E.	Amalgamated Society of Engineers.
A.S.R.S.	Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.
A.S.T.	Amalgamated Society of Tailors.
<u>B.E.T.</u>	<u>Belfast Evening Telegraph.</u>
<u>B.N.-L.</u>	<u>Belfast News-Letter.</u>
B.T.C.	Belfast trades council.
B.T.U.C.	[British] Trades Union Congress.
Clarkson	J.D.Clarkson, <u>Labour and nationalism in Ireland.</u>
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of national biography.</u>
D.T.C.	Dublin trades council.
D.T.P.S.	Dublin Typographical Provident Society.
<u>F.J.</u>	<u>Freeman's Journal.</u>
<u>I.H.S.</u>	<u>I-rish Historical Studies.</u>
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party.
<u>I.N.</u>	<u>Irish News.</u>
I.T.U.C.	Irish Trades Union Congress.
L.E.A.	Labour Electoral Association.
L.R.C.	Labour Representation Committee.
<u>M.N.</u>	[Belfast] <u>Morning News.</u>
N.U.D.L.	National Union of Dock Labourers.
N.A.U.L.	National Amalgamated Union of Labour.

N.L.I. National Library of Ireland.

Stat. Soc. Ire., Jn. Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland.

T.A. Typographical Association.

# I R E L A N D   T O W A R D S   T H E   C L O S E   O F

## T H E   N I N E T E E N T H   C E N T U R Y

the nineteenth century...  
creation of a...  
ful attempt...  
British body...  
until 1885; a...  
in 1894, when...  
first conference...  
British Trade...  
the beginnings...  
the model to...  
procedure, and...  
have an equal...  
had to work...  
of this chapter...  
an outline of...  
of Ireland at...  
closing years...

## I. COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

The prominence of such Irishmen as John Doherty, Bronterre O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor in the British trade union and radical movements of the first half of the nineteenth century seemed to promise the early creation of an Irish trade union centre. An unsuccessful attempt was made in 1864, but the formation of the British body four years later postponed further efforts until 1888; a viable organisation was finally created in 1894, when the Irish Trades Union Congress held its first conference. Impressed by the success of the British Trade's Union Congress, the Irish leaders from the beginnings in the eighteen-eighties considered it the model to imitate in objectives, organisation and procedure, and hoped that their own organisation would have an equal success. But the conditions in which it had to work were radically different; it is the purpose of this chapter to describe these conditions by giving an outline of the economic, social and political state of Ireland at the beginning of our period - the closing years of the nineteenth century.

## 1. POPULATION

The population of Ireland in 1901 was 4,458,775,<sup>1</sup> 245,975 less than at the previous census (1891), a decline of 5.23 per cent. The population was to decrease slightly in subsequent years (1.5 per cent in the decade ending 1911), but the headlong rush from the country that had started with the Famine, was over - in the half-century ending 1901 the population had sunk by 5,846,393 or 47.5 per cent. But though the rate of decrease had slowed (in the decade 1881-91 it was 9.08 per cent) the Famine had left emigration as a permanent feature of Irish population statistics. In the calendar years 1891-1900 nearly half a million people left Ireland, almost all of them in youth or early middle age, 93.6 per cent going to foreign countries or British colonies, 89.4 per cent of these to the U.S.A.<sup>2</sup> In 1899 Irish emigrants to countries outside Europe represented .95 per cent of the population, more than twice Scotland's percentage (.4 per cent) and more than three times that of England and Wales (.28 per cent).<sup>3</sup> These

---

1. Census of Ireland, 1901, pt. II, general report, p.6.

2. 433,526 emigrants; 71.5% in the 20-45 age range, 90.6% in the 10-45 age range. Ibid, p.73.

3. Abstract of labour statistics (board of trade) for the years 1899-1900, p.183, [Cd.495], H.C. 1901, lxxiii. The numbers were: England and Wales 87,400, Scotland 16,072, Ireland 42,890.

figures are even more striking when we remember that the population in Great Britain (especially in England and Wales) was rapidly rising. A low marriage rate ensured that the trend would not be reversed; in 1901, married women were only 32.5 per cent of the female population in the reproductive age range (15-45), while the percentage of married persons among the population aged 15 and upwards was 37.7 as against 39 and 41.9 in 1891 and 1881 respectively. Births in Ireland sank from 115,951 in 1885 to 103,815 in 1899; during the same period they rose in England and Wales from 894,270 to 928,640 and in Scotland from 126,100 to 130,656.<sup>1</sup> The general demographic picture of Ireland is of an ageing population settling down at a figure under four and a half millions, accompanied by a heavy emigration rate to offset any natural increase, and facing a Great Britain with over thirty-six millions and a rising birth-rate.

The most populous of the provinces in 1901 was Ulster, which had also lost both relatively and absolutely, less in the 1891-1901 decade. The following table

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<sup>1</sup> Abstract of labour statistics (board of trade) for the years 1899-1900, p. 181.



shows the distribution by provinces:

Province	Population		Decrease	
	1901	1891	Number	%
Ulster	1,582,826	1,619,811	36,985	2.28
Munster	1,076,188	1,173,643	97,455	8.3
Leinster	1,152,829	1,191,782	38,953	3.27
Connaught	646,932	719,511	72,579	10.09

Though Ulster had a higher annual average emigration rate (expressed as a percentage of the population) than Leinster in the twenty years ending 31 March 1901 (Ulster .92, Leinster .78), the loss was greatest in the counties with catholic majorities; their rates were above 1 per cent, while only Derry of the counties with protestant majorities<sup>1</sup> failed to have less (Derry 1.02, Armagh .95, Antrim .91, Down .70). These four counties were more industrialised than the rest, three of them (Armagh, Antrim and Down) sharing the industries of the Lagan valley.

Ireland was, and is, a country with a relatively small urban population. In 1901 it was 1,384,929

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1. Percentage of catholics: Antrim 20.59, Armagh 45.18, Derry 41.41, Down 31.31, Belfast county borough 24.34 - Census of Ireland, 1901, pt. II, general report, table 142, p. 497.

(counting those in towns over 2,000), as against a rural population of 3,073,846. It had increased by 140,816 since 1891, but this increase was confined chiefly to Dublin and Belfast, the latter accounting for slightly more than half (the city boundary had been extended in 1896). Of the six county boroughs only Belfast (348,180) and Dublin (290,638)<sup>1</sup> were above 100,000; Cork came next with 76,122, and the rest were below 40,000.<sup>2</sup> There were thirteen towns with populations between 10,000 and 20,000, five of them in Ulster and five in Leinster, two in Connaught and one in Munster; all but one, Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) had less than 14,000. In Ulster three of the five towns (Ballymena, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newry, Portadown) were in the Lagan valley. Apart from the extensive depopulation of the Famine years, there is no demographic feature in the nineteenth century so striking as the rapid growth of Belfast. In 1841 its population was 75,300, in 1851, 100,301 - an increase of 33.19 per cent - while the percentage increase in Dublin was only 11.02,

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1. Excluding Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar (total population 58,401). - Census of Ireland, 1901, pt. II, general report, table 54, p.178

2. Derry 39,892, Limerick 38,151, Waterford 26,769 - Ibid., p.171, table 47A.

from 232,726 to 258,369.<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the century Belfast continued to grow at such a rate that by 1901 it had overtaken Dublin, so that both had populations of about 350,000 if we include in the capital city the adjacent districts of Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar.

improved the tenants' lot, but it was not until after the turn of the century that larger grants and the principle of compulsory sale of land to the Congested Districts Board (by the land acts of 1903 and 1909) hastened the process. The land question was to remain for some years one of political importance, and even to be attended by considerable agitation,<sup>1</sup> but the pattern of distribution was not to be fundamentally altered. Land holdings in 1901 amounted to 490,301 and supported a population of 2,666,304. The vast majority (81.9%) of these farms was under fifty acres and the standard of living of the smaller occupiers was still low. Apart from the tenants on holdings of less than five acres (amounting to 31,437) or on larger holdings in barren districts, there were about 300,000 landless

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1. Census of Ireland, 1851, pt. VI, general report, p. xv, table vi, [2134], 1856, xxxi. 1.

## 2. AGRICULTURE

Rural Ireland in 1901 was a land of small tenants who as a result of the land war of 1879-82 and the ensuing land legislation were slowly being transformed into peasant proprietors. The progressive reduction of rents and financial assistance in land purchase improved the tenants' lot, but it was not until after the turn of the century that larger grants and the principle of compulsory sale of land to the Congested Districts Board (by the land acts of 1903 and 1909) hastened the process. The land question was to remain for some years one of political importance, and even to be attended by considerable agitation,<sup>1</sup> but the pattern of distribution was not to be fundamentally altered. Land holdings in 1901 amounted to 490,301 and supported a population of 2,664,204. The vast majority (81.9%) of these farms was under fifty acres and the standard of living of the smaller occupiers was still low. Apart from the tenants on holdings of less than five acres (amounting to 81,427) or on larger holdings in barren districts, there were about 300,000 landless

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1. Half the country was a proclaimed area by Sept. 1902. F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party, 1890-1910, p. 238.

agricultural labourers.<sup>1</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century the pattern of agricultural production had been changing. The Encumbered Estates Act (1849), by breaking the entail on heavily indebted estates, enabled owners to sell their properties; evictions to the number of 262,000 families in three years,<sup>2</sup> the consolidation of holdings, and emigration, discouraged tillage; while tenants found it more profitable to place their savings in movable goods such as cattle than in permanent improvements which could be confiscated under the old system of land tenure. There was a consequent increase in livestock production. In the second half of the nineteenth century the number of livestock in Ireland rose steadily,<sup>3</sup> cattle in particular increasing by about thirty per cent from 3,564,400 in 1855 to 4,608,550 in 1900.<sup>4</sup> The increase was accounted for by cattle other than milch cows, which in fact decreased slightly in number.

1. 115,540 returned as general labourers in the census of 1901 were assumed by the census authorities to be almost entirely agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourers, shepherds and indoor farm servants make up the total of 333,192. If the general labourers in the six county boroughs are omitted the total comes to 294,522. See Census of Ireland, 1901, pt.II, general report, p.119, note (a).

2. Return ... of cases of evictions which have come to the notice of the constabulary in each of the years from 1849 to 1880, H.C., 1881 (185), lxxvii, quoted in J.H.Whyte, The Independent Irish party, pp.5, 166.

3. J.O'Donovan, The economic history of livestock in Ireland, p.206.

4. *Ibid.*, p.212.

Several factors were responsible for the growth of the very important livestock trade with Great Britain. Cross-channel steam communication enabled cattle to reach British ports quickly after the eighteen-thirties (a factor reflected in the steep rise of the average annual export figures<sup>1</sup>); railway construction in Ireland in the eighteen-fifties meant that cattle could be brought to Irish ports from a much wider area than formerly without serious loss in weight; a growing population, increasingly urbanised, provided a ready market in Great Britain; finally, livestock prices steadily appreciated (store cattle doubled in value) while cereal product prices either showed only slight advances (as with oats and barley) or, as in the case of wheat, declined sharply. The accompanying table (p.10) of Irish agricultural prices<sup>2</sup> shows how strong an inducement there was for livestock raising.

Between 1847 and 1874 the corn-growing area in Ireland declined by forty-three per cent,<sup>3</sup> while grass and pasture increased at the expense of roots and cereals.<sup>4</sup> The tillage area was still shrinking in the last twenty years, the percentages in 1881, 1891 and 1901 being

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1. 46,724 (1821-5), 98,150 (1835), 201,892 (1846-9) -J.O'Donovan, The economic history of livestock in Ireland, p.212.

2. Ibid., p.210, quoted from Barrington 'A review of Irish agricultural prices', in Stat. Soc. Ire., Jn., xv, pt.101.

3. Ibid., p.208.

4. Ibid., p.206.

Comparative prices of cereals and livestock products  
Base year (1840) = 100

Year	Wheat	Oats	Barley	Butter	Pork	Beef	Mutton	Wool	1-2 years	2-3 years	Statistic Index No. *
1850	73	101	87	74	92	81	100	92	89	130	74
1860	99	139	135	104	138	112	135	155	157	200	96
1870	84	127	118	141	144	148	162	110	157	200	93
1880	76	120	114	129	146	135	160	122	239	245	85
1890	59	123	99	91	107	119	152	84	255	249	70
1900	56	109	105	101	121	119	142	62	243	235	72

\* Index of wholesale prices

1. Census of Ireland 1901, general report, p. 77, table 77.

25.6, 23.9 and 22.9 respectively. The tillage area percentage also included land under permanent pasture and clover or grass, so that in 1901 only 12.3 per cent was under corn, root and green crops and flax, the rest, 7.7 per cent (pasture) and 2.9 per cent (clover or grass in rotation with other crops) being an addition to the grazing area of 52.3 per cent. Even the tilled area contributed to livestock rearing; oats was the most important of the corn crops (1,099,335 out of 1,317,574 acres) and the root and green crops total of 1,079,443 acres included 635,321 under potatoes, 289,759 under turnips and 77,285 under mangels. An agricultural economy in which livestock rearing and dairy-farming were so prominent determined the nature of the country's exports and reduced a labour force which could have been much larger in a period when tillage was still unmechanised.

Permanent emigration was, as we have seen, a feature of Irish life, but it was not the only type of emigration. Irish labourers had for long migrated every year (mainly to Great Britain) at harvest time in order to supplement their inadequate earnings at home. The 'wandering harvester' had been known in Ireland long before the Famine, as witness the song An spailpín fáinach, but even in the eighteenth century numbers had

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1. Census of Ireland 1901, general report, p. 13 and table 77.



MAP OF IRELAND  
SHOWING  
CONGESTED DISTRICTS.



started to go to Great Britain also, a phenomenon noted by Bishop Berkeley in his Querist (published 1735-7). In 1841, 57,651 left Ireland from 24 of the 32 counties, Dublin county contributing 5,625.<sup>1</sup> By 1880 the numbers had fallen to 22,900 and though they fluctuated they were still near the 20,000 mark in 1900 (19,022). The numbers were no longer drawn from a wide area as in 1841; 89 only left Leinster (none from Dublin county), 469 came from Munster, and Connaught and Ulster supplied the great majority (15,878 and 2,586 respectively) from the barren seaboard counties of Mayo (10,331), Galway (2,231) and Donegal (2,304). In 1901 the numbers rose to 19,732, partly because female migratory labourers and Arklow fishermen were included for the first time; but the proportions from various districts were not sensibly different, Mayo still heading the list with 10,000 odd, or 4.61 per cent of its population.

The decline in numbers after 1841 was a less hopeful indication than might at first sight appear. W.P. Coyne, superintendent of the statistics and intelligence branch of the department of agriculture and

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1. Report and tables relating to Irish migratory agricultural and other labourers for the year 1902,

[Cd. 1375], H.C. 1902, cxvi, pt. II, 135. The statistics in this section are taken from the reports for 1901 ([Cd. 850], H.C. 1902, xxvi, pt. II, 87) and 1902.

1. Report relating to Irish migratory labourers for 1901, p. 7, [Cd. 1375].

technical instruction, writing in 1902, made this clear.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the continuous emigration since 1841 we cannot in my opinion draw any comforting inferences from the decline or total disappearance of migratory labourers from the larger number of Irish counties. It is not, so far as one can see, that work has been found for them at home, but that they have left the country permanently.

In 1901, 73.6 per cent of the migrants went to England, 20.1 to Scotland and the rest (6.3) to other parts of Ireland. Coyne's report for 1901 (p.8) describes their conditions of work:

A large Scotch employer of Irish labourers ... was of the opinion that, in the majority of cases, the Irish migrant in England and Scotland had a rough time of it, and that the health of many of the young men and girls was undermined by insufficient food and exposure to inclement weather without the provision of a change of clothing. The general spirit amongst them is one of extreme thrift. ... My Scotch informant told me of a lad working on his own farm, who was brought to him one day in a faint. On enquiry he found that the young fellow had not had a proper meal for days, every penny he earned being immediately despatched to the old people in Mayo.

The same employer, according to W.P.Coyne, 'made quite exceptional provision on his own farm for the physical comforts of his Irish labourers in the matter of housing', and commented, no doubt in a spirit of enlightened self-interest, that he 'found it ... a distinctly economic expenditure'. He also testified to the excellent moral character of his temporary employees, and to the remarkable increase in their efficiency following an improved diet.

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1. Report relating to Irish migratory labourers for 1902, p. 7, [Cd. 1375] .

Of the total migrants in 1901, 80.3 per cent were landless, 2.6 had land under five acres and the remaining 17.1 were tenants of over five acres. Only in Connaught were there many migrants holding over fifteen acres, a fact easily explained by the poor quality of the soil in many parts of that province. The inadequate powers of the Congested Districts Board, appointed in 1891, had effected little change in such areas, from which indeed migration still takes place.

The earnings of the migrants are difficult to assess with accuracy. An Irish potato-picker in the Lincolnshire Fens earned about 4/2 a day if a man and 3/6 if a woman. A board of trade estimate<sup>1</sup> of the average earnings brought back by migrants to Great Britain worked out as £7.11s. per head, or a total of £123,148. This sum, according to W.P. Coyne's report for 1901 (pp. 7, 8) means

means a great deal to the district in which the standard of living is low, but at best it is a very narrow margin of profit, and has not the basis of a sound or progressive economy in it. Year in and year out, it is a constant struggle with these people and their families to make ends meet; and in a bad potato year the pinch of poverty is distinctly felt.

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1. Report relating to Irish migratory labourers for 1901, pp. 6, 7. [Cd. 850].

## 3. INDUSTRY AND TRADE

The first census of production for the United Kingdom was undertaken for the year 1907.<sup>1</sup> The information gathered showed the economic structure of the component countries and the division of resources and output between agriculture and industry. Irish agriculture had an output valued at £45,374,000 and employed 984,000 people.<sup>2</sup> Industry produced goods to the value of £67,000,000 in round numbers and employed a labour force of 291,304.<sup>3</sup> Scotland, with a roughly equal population, employed three times as many in industry and had an industrial output three times as great. The disparity was even greater between Ireland and the whole of Great Britain, for the larger island's industrial output was more than thirty-five times as great.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Final report on the census of production of the United Kingdom (1907), [Cd.6320], H.C. 1912, cix.1. Where the financial year of firms did not coincide with the calendar year, such firms were allowed to make returns for a year ending not earlier than 30 June, 1907 or not later than 30 June, 1908. The agricultural statistics in the volume were taken from separate reports covering the year ending 4 June 1908 for Great Britain and the calendar year 1908 for Ireland.

2. *Ibid.*, p.20. Farmers were included in the total of people employed and food consumed on the farm in the output. The corresponding figures for Great Britain (£158,700,000 and 1,340,000 persons) excluded occupiers and food consumed on the farm. Irish fisheries yielded £341,000 and employed fully only 8,027 persons; Scottish fisheries produced £3,221,000 and employed 28,951 persons while the corresponding figures for the whole of Great Britain were £11,377,000 and 65,161 persons.

3. *Ibid.*, p. iii.

4. *Ibid.*, loc. cit. The industrial output of Scotland in 1907 was valued at £208 millions, of Great Britain at £1,698 millions; the numbers employed were 885,403 and 6,693,672 respectively.

£54,175,000, or eighty per cent of the value of Irish industrial output came from four categories, food and drink yielding £27,335,000, textiles £15,836,000, the clothing trades £5,190,000, and the iron, steel, shipbuilding and engineering trades £5,814,000.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the food and drink trades shows that slightly over £10 million represented the produce of grain milling (wheat products £3,621,000, other grass such as barley and maize £3,125,000) and bread and biscuit manufacture (£3,265,000). The remaining important items were bacon-curing £3,755,000, butter £3,551,000, brewing and malting £5,906,000 and spirit distilling £1,416,000.<sup>2</sup>

The food and drink trades were dependent on agriculture, and though some branches used large quantities of imported material, others, such as the butter and bacon-curing trades, relied on native produce. In the textile trades, notably linen, the bulk of raw material used was imported from abroad.<sup>3</sup> Over eighty-four per cent (£13,354,000) of the total value of textiles produced came from the spinning, weaving and making up of linen, processes concentrated in the north-east and especially in the Lagan valley.<sup>4</sup>

1. Final report on census of production (1907), p. 19. The values of the production of other trades were: public utility services (mainly gas and work by local authorities on roads) £2,904,000, clay stone and building trades £2,418,000, paper and printing trades £1,692,000, timber trades £1,279,000, chemical and allied trades (no break-down given for Ireland) £1,191,000, metal trades (brass, copper, gold, jewellery, watches and clocks) £182,000, leather and canvas trades £226,000.

2. *Ibid.* pp. 492, 495, 503, 509, 524, 527.

3. In 1908 29,582 tons of flax were imported, as against 7,922 grown in Ireland. E.J. Riordan, Modern Irish trade and industry, p. 115.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 354, 356. The value of cordage rope and twine, included in the linen total, amounted to £103,000.

\* Final report on the census of production (1907),

Approximately half (£2,694,000) of the production in the clothing trades was made up by men's and women's outer clothing (£1,502,000), shirts, collars and cuffs (£1,016,000) and some minor related categories.<sup>1</sup> The shirt and collar industry was centred in Londonderry and employed almost exclusively women workers, in a town lacking resources for male employment.<sup>2</sup> The footwear industry produced only 542,000 pairs of boots and shoes (and 24,000 clogs) valued at £264,000, as against Scotland's 3,030,000 and England and Wales' 94,412,000 pairs.<sup>3</sup>

The iron and steel trades, in the absence of blast furnaces and rolling mills, made a tiny contribution to the value of production in iron, steel, engineering and shipbuilding.<sup>4</sup> Railway construction (including permanent way and rolling stock) was valued at £1,219,000 and general and electrical engineering at £872,000.<sup>5</sup> Shipbuilding accounted for about £3,000,000.<sup>6</sup> Pro-

Woollen and worsted trades (p.342) yielded £769,000. The rest of the textile total was made up of small items such as silk, but only United Kingdom totals were given for these, on the grounds that particulars of the few Irish firms involved might otherwise be disclosed.

1. Final report on census of production (1907), p.415. No details are given for £1,370,000 of the textile total (see note 2). The sum appears to cover the manufacture of handkerchiefs, embroidery, piece goods and other articles.

2. In 1901 over 18,000 workers were employed in the Derry factories as well as outworkers in counties Londonderry, Tyrone and Donegal, a total of 80,000 in all. Collars, fronts and cuffs were also made in Belfast. Ireland, industrial and agricultural, pp. 418-9.

3. Final report on census of production (1907), p. 419.

4. £69,000, mainly from castings and cast iron manufacture. Ibid., pp. 173 - 4.

5. Ibid., pp. 229 and 190. The principal items in general engineering were textile machinery (£298,000) and heating and ventilating machinery (£66,000), centred in Belfast. Repair and jobbing work accounted for £126,000.

6. Irish shipbuilding statistics were included in the total for

duction was practically confined to Belfast, for shipbuilding, which had restarted in Dublin in 1902, was on a small scale there, and at other ports was negligible.

The most revealing statistics in the 1907 census of production are those of coal, the basis of an industrial economy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ireland's meagre coal resources yielded 99,000 tons, Scottish mines produced 40,177,000 and those in England and Wales 226,342,000.<sup>1</sup>

Some general indications of a country's economic strength are provided by its external trade. Irish trade statistics for the nineteenth century can be only roughly estimated, for the abandonment of the Irish customs system in 1823 meant that the United Kingdom was treated as a single unit. The Childers commission on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland estimated that in 1895 Ireland had a favourable trade balance of £5,674,000 (imports £20,000,000, exports £25,614,000), but guesswork played so large a part in the individual estimates that little reliance can be placed on the results.<sup>2</sup> An effort was made by the department of agriculture and technical instruction to provide a more accurate figure for the year 1904, but while the report was much more valuable than the Childers' estimate, its compilers could not claim accuracy (especially for manufactured goods) and had to rely on the goodwill of exporting firms and make estimates in many cases on the evidence

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England and Wales because of the small number of Irish shipbuilding firms. Final report on census of production (1907), p. 194.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

2. First report of the royal commissioners appointed to enquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland ii, 178-9, [C 7720-II], H.C., 1895, xxxvi. 1.



of ships' manifests.<sup>1</sup> The report estimated imports at £53,299,930 and exports at £49,212,181, giving an unfavourable trade balance of £4,087,749.<sup>2</sup> Trade with Great Britain is not listed separately, but it is probable that it accounted for over 80 per cent of the total external trade.

Analysis of the exports shows that division I (food, farm produce and similar items) accounted for £30,429,137, division II (raw materials) for £3,452,743, and division III (manufactured goods) for £15,330,301. The principal items in the first division were livestock, meat and dairy produce (£22,443,172), and whiskey and porter (£3,990,578). Raw materials were mainly cotton (a re-export from Belfast), wool and flax, and, a significant item, nearly half a million pounds worth of hides and skins. Division III (manufactured goods) gave the compilers most trouble, for while the quantities exported were ascertained with as much accuracy as other goods, their value was more uncertain. With this qualification the more important exports were listed as: linen goods (£7,296,930), cotton goods (£1,232,356), ships (£1,500,000),<sup>3</sup> scientific instruments and machinery (£461,448), linen yarn (£1,232,356), rope, thread and various woollen goods and drapery.

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1. Report on the trade in imports and exports at Irish ports during the year ending 31 Dec. 1904, [Cd. 3237], H.C. 1906, cxiv. 655. Revised estimates of considerable importance were issued in the report for 1905, [Cd. 3631], H.C. 1907, lxxxi. 21. The revised estimates have been used.

2. The report also omitted all invisible imports and exports. Re-exports in 1905 were estimated to total £2,500,000.

3. 1904 was a poor year, as the output was usually greater. In 1905 the tonnage (143,472) was nearly double that of 1904, and the value was £2,500,000.

450,000 great hundreds (Aug.); Ireland, 140,000 great hundreds (Dec.) to 975,000 great hundreds (April).

The imports in the corresponding divisions amounted to £20,691,168 (farm produce etc.), £8,822,986 (raw materials) and £23,785,776 (manufactured goods). For a predominantly agricultural country division one seems excessively high, but it reflects the small tillage area; over £10,500,000 was spent on grains, flour and cattle feeding-stuffs. A more surprising item is bacon to the value of £1,542,817 (656,518 cwts.) imported mainly through Dublin.<sup>1</sup> More obvious imports were tea, sugar, tobacco, wine and spirits. Raw materials included coal, wood and supplies for linen, shipbuilding and other trades. Division three consisted largely of consumer goods such as clothing of various kinds (approximately £9,000,000 in value), footwear (£1,735,537), leather (£401,663), steel (£860,281) and machinery (£1,065,160).

Some serious weaknesses in the Irish economy are evident when the details are examined. Irish agriculture's principal exports were, in industrial terms, semi-finished. Cattle exports were store animals rather than fatstock,<sup>2</sup> beef and pork exports were negligible, and butter and eggs were subject to violent seasonal fluctuations. As an exporter of dairy produce Ireland compared unfavourably with Denmark, which was more successful in avoiding variation in supplies.<sup>3</sup> There were

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1. In 1905 it rose to £1,697,104 (729,957 cwts.). Imports into the United Kingdom in the same year came mainly from the United States and Canada (3,946,623 cwts. out of a total of 5,498,960), Denmark supplying 1,471,687 cwts.

2. Fat cattle 232,286 (value £3,844,333), store cattle 471,047 (value £5,120,281) in 1904.

3. Butter imports into the United Kingdom during 1905:- Denmark, 110,000 cwts. (Sept.) to 175,000 cwts. (May); Ireland, 15,000 cwts. (Feb.) to 115,000 cwts. (July).

Egg imports:- Denmark, 180,000 great hundreds (Feb.) to 450,000 great hundreds (Aug.); Ireland, 140,000 great hundreds (Dec.) to 975,000 great hundreds (April).

few industries utilising agricultural by-products. The export of hides and skins and the importation of a large volume of footwear and leather meant that Ireland was deprived of a boot and shoe industry using native resources and able to satisfy the demands of home and foreign markets.<sup>1</sup> Bacon exports were fully processed, but they were roughly balanced by imports of cheaper quality, chiefly from the United States. As subsistence farming was widespread the agricultural economy was not primarily organised for exports, which in any case were dangerously dependent on a single market (Great Britain) where competition was increasing, and even its specialisation in cattle and dairy produce required a growing volume of imported feeding stuffs.

In sharp contrast to agriculture, the industrial sector of the economy produced goods far in excess of the requirements of the home market. These export industries were distinguished by their location and the nature of their 'raw' materials. In 1904 roughly 80 per cent<sup>2</sup> of the total exports of manufactured goods in division three were shipped from Belfast and consisted of textiles and ships, linen products (yarn and goods) alone accounting for 57 per cent. The industrial hinterland from which such a striking percentage

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These figures are approximations - see diagrams I and II in report for 1905 [Cd. 3631] .

1. Thomas Russell, the United Irishman, noted in his diary (March 1791) that the Irish tanning and leather industry was being crippled by the shortage of bark in England. He proposed to Grattan, who was a member of a mediating committee in a dispute between tanners and shoemakers, that a bounty be paid on imported American bark. Grattan put it to Sir John Parnell, who said that the offer of a bounty would 'offend the people of England and that therefore it could not be done'. - Journals of Thomas Russell, S.P.O. Dublin.

2. Approximately £12,000,000 out of £15,000,000.

was drawn was the area covered by five of the present six counties of Northern Ireland (Fermanagh was not a textile centre). The linen industry used native flax (cultivated mainly in Ulster) but also imported a substantial quantity from abroad, especially from Russia and Belgium, as well as a certain amount of yarn. Lacking blast furnaces and rolling mills, Belfast imported most of its shipbuilding materials in a semi-manufactured rather than a raw state. Coal too was imported, so that heavy industry was an exotic growth, handicapped by its distance from sources of power and raw materials.

Irish linen had shared the temporary prosperity of the American civil war period, but over-expansion was followed by contraction when American cotton exports were resumed; it could not compete in price with cotton, and tariff barriers in the United States and continental countries were a further obstacle. Though the last quarter of the nineteenth century was generally a period of stagnation in the trade, with falling prices and reduced spinning capacity, there was some improvement in the closing years and the labour force was fairly constant in numbers.<sup>1</sup> Shipbuilding, concentrated in Belfast, had been expanding steadily since 1890, when 44,677 tons were launched, and in 1898 and 1899 reached an output of over 80,000 tons.<sup>2</sup> The Belfast centre

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1. See D.L.Armstrong, 'Social and economic conditions in the Belfast linen industry, 1850-1900'. I.H.S. vii, 240-41 (Sept. 1951)

2. There was a drop in 1896 to 43,205 tons. In 1905, 143,477 tons were launched. Board of trade labour statistics, 1898-1900 [Cd. 495], pp. 71,72, and Irish imports and exports, [Cd. 3631] .

was none the less well below Tyneside and the Clyde, where the 1899 figures were 500,980 and 254,379 tons. These two centres also built ships for the British Admiralty, from which Belfast had received no orders since 1886.

The Irish railway lines extended only to the coast. In the 1850s the Government spent over £1,000,000 on the railways, but the railways were built by private companies and the Government did not control them. By 1860 the total mileage was 1,000, and twenty-one years later it reached 2,500, at one mile of railway to about twelve square miles of area and 1,200 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The multiplicity of small companies and complexity of rates and fares prompted the Government to demand state intervention, and even state purchase, to enforce amalgamation from the eighteen-sixties onwards, but no action was taken. Amalgamation did take place slowly, but even in 1900 when the length of track had increased to 3,500 miles there were twenty-four companies and thirty-eight owning companies - the latter having 120 directors, or one to every fourteen and a half miles of line.<sup>2</sup>

Agitation for an investigation into the position of Irish railways and the desirability of state purchase

1. J. S. Conroy, A history of railways in Ireland, p. 15.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-70.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

## 4. TRANSPORT AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

The slow growth of industry in Ireland was matched by an equal slowness in railway construction. By 1847 2,600 miles had been opened for traffic in Great Britain, but Irish railway lines amounted only to 123 miles.<sup>1</sup> In the immediate post-famine years over £1,000,000 was advanced by parliament to various Irish railway companies and the pace of construction quickened; by 1865 the total mileage was 1,833, and twenty-one years later it reached 2,615, or one mile of railway to about twelve square miles of area and 1,800 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> The multiplicity of small companies and complaints of excessive rates and fares prompted M.P.s to demand state intervention, and even state purchase, to enforce amalgamation from the eighteen-sixties onwards, but no action was taken. Amalgamation did take place slowly, but even in 1906 when the length of track had increased to 3,363 miles there were twenty-four working and thirty-eight owning companies - the latter having 230 directors, or one to every fourteen and a half miles of line.<sup>4</sup>

Agitation for an investigation into the position of Irish railways and the desirability of state purchase

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1. J.P. Conroy, A history of railways in Ireland, p.13.

2. Ibid., p.84.

3. Ibid., pp. 58-70.

4. J.P. Conroy, A history of railways in Ireland, pp. IV7-8, 161.

4. Ibid., p.161.

5. Ibid., pp. 168-70.

started again 1897, and continued for ten years until a vice-regal commission of inquiry was appointed. Among the Irish nationalist M.P.s who conducted the campaign was William Field, chairman of the Irish Cattle Trades Association, who pointed out that the Irish railways unlike those of the English companies had no passenger duty to pay nor had been compelled by act of parliament to supply cheap workmen's trains; yet their haulage costs were five times the English rate and their passenger fares were over two-thirds higher. Another M.P., a director of the Grand Canal Company, claimed that Irish railway rates were the highest in the world.<sup>1</sup> The Irish companies also escaped having a 'legal day' fixed for the employees, for a commission appointed in 1891 reported that the exceptions to it would make any such recommendation useless. Recommendations could be made to the board of trade where hours of railway servants were excessive and penalties were provided for companies which failed to revise their schedules, but there seems to have been no case in which a company was fined or even cited before the responsible commissioners.<sup>2</sup> It may be added that Irish railway servants' wages were the lowest in the British Isles.<sup>3</sup>

A majority of the seven viceregal commissioners decided

1. J. P. Conroy, *A history of railways in Ireland*, pp. 177-8, 181.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-70.

3. Cf. *infra*, pp. 44-5.

in favour of the nationalisation of Irish railways under an Irish authority in their final report (1910); the three dissenting commissioners were in favour of voluntary amalgamation into a single company (with compulsion to be applied after a fixed date), and favoured assistance from the state in certain cases. A deputation from the general council of county councils urged the chief secretary for Ireland (A. Birrell) to take action on the majority report, but he was not encouraging and when British administration ceased after 1921 the problems of Irish railways were handed over unsolved to the new authorities.<sup>1</sup>

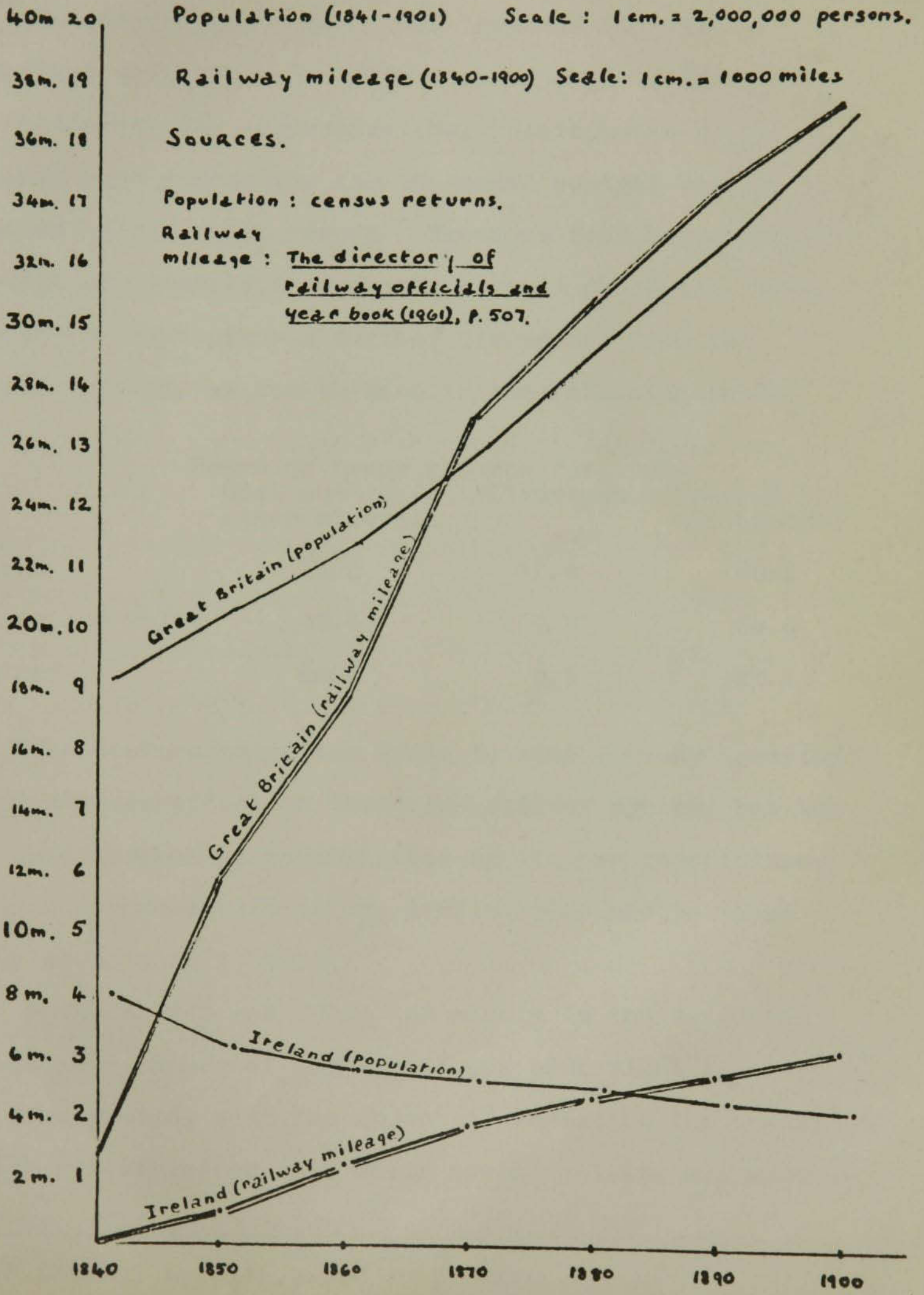
Any review of the efficiency of Irish railways must take into account the difficulties with which they were faced, difficulties which were not present in Great Britain. Railway construction started before the famine, when the population was over eight millions, but by the end of the century this figure had been almost halved by emigration and a falling birth rate. In Great Britain railway construction proceeded against a background of a rising population which almost doubled in the same period (in round numbers, from nineteen to thirty-six millions). The diagram on the following page illustrates the two divergent

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1. J.P. Conroy, A history of railways in Ireland, pp. 194-8.



Great Britain and Ireland



patterns.

In addition to a much lower density (in 1926 that of Ireland was about one-fifth that of England and Wales<sup>1</sup>) the population was unremuneratively distributed so far as railways were concerned, for the major centres were on the coast or on navigable rivers. Receipts from the profitable carriage of minerals formed only a small percentage of the total Irish receipts - a further divergence from the British pattern, as can be seen in the following table:<sup>2</sup>

	Board of trade returns for 1905		
	Coal and other minerals	Livestock	General merchandise
Ireland	14.0	15.5	70.5
England and Wales	47.6	1.8	50.6
Scotland	48.3	3.5	48.2

The weaknesses of the Irish economy already described had an adverse effect on the Irish railway system, but the conclusion cannot be avoided that by its own inefficiency it added unnecessarily to its difficulties and to those of the economy as a whole.

Between 1883 and 1896, and mainly in the congested districts, a number of light railways (603 miles in all) were constructed, with the object of assisting the transport of fish and livestock.<sup>3</sup> Their social utility was unques-

1. J.P. Conroy, op. cit., p. 360.

2. Ibid., p. 361.

3. Ibid., p. 241

tionable, but they never paid their way and were subsidised by guarantees from ratepayers of the areas concerned, and by the treasury.<sup>1</sup> They were placed <sup>(1 Jan. 1917)</sup> with the rest of the Irish railway system under government control, which continued until 1921; in 1925 those in the Irish Free State were absorbed by the Great Southern Railways Company under a government-sponsored amalgamation scheme. Most of them were later closed down.<sup>2</sup>

The tramway systems in both Dublin and Belfast were privately owned up to the end of the nineteenth century. By 1899 the Dublin system had electric trams running to the suburbs and steam trams to Blessington and Lucan,<sup>3</sup> but horse-trams were not superseded in Belfast until 1905, when the corporation bought out the private owners shortly before the expiration of their agreement.<sup>4</sup> Municipal ownership of public services in Belfast was virtually complete by the end of the nineteenth century; gas had been taken over in 1874, electricity for lighting purposes in 1892, and it was only the financial considerations that prevented the acquisition of the tramways before 1900. Few

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1. J.P. Conroy, A history of railways in Ireland, pp. 290-92.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 223, 334-7.

3. Thom's directory of the United Kingdom, 1900, p. 1276.

4. D.J. Owen, History of Belfast, pp. 288, 290.

public services in Dublin were municipally owned; the Dublin United Tramways Company had as its chief shareholder William Martin Murphy, and gas was supplied by private enterprise at a higher rate than in Belfast, where a strictly 'gas and water' socialism was respectable.

One further difference in the tramway services of the two cities should be noted: in Belfast, as a result of pressure from the trades council, special workmen's trams were run in the early morning and in the evening from February 1888 onwards; by 1890 two workmen's cars were running on every section of the system.<sup>1</sup> No such facilities existed in Dublin, possibly because it was not a manufacturing town and did not possess the large-scale units which distinguished Belfast shipbuilding, engineering and textiles.

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 11 Feb. 1888 and passim.

## 5. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

The failure of the general report of the Census of Ireland 1901 to distinguish between production and distribution in certain trades (e.g. no distinction is made between sellers and makers of footwear, or between employers and employees) makes it difficult to determine accurately the number of people engaged in various occupations. It was still an era of small-scale or individual production, at least in Ireland, in certain trades catering for personal consumption - tailoring for instance - so that the failure of the census authorities is understandable. But the general picture is clear. The bulk of the gainfully occupied population was engaged in agriculture, whether as tenant farmers or agricultural labourers. A very large, if indeterminate, number were employed in distribution, for the shopkeeping class was disproportionately great and many small shops were distinctly uneconomic, especially in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> The huge total of 166,672 females who were indoor domestic servants is in itself evidence of the inability of agri-

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1. There were approximately 1000 dairies, 600 grocers, 400 publicans and spirit merchants, 114 tea and coffee dealers, but under 100 butchers. Thom's directory of the United Kingdom 1901, Dublin 'Trades' directory, pp.1945-85.

culture and industry to absorb them, and of the existence of a relatively prosperous employing class.<sup>1</sup> Male domestic indoor servants, coachmen, grooms and gardeners amounted to 21,116.<sup>2</sup> The building trade<sup>3</sup> employed 53,848 men, with carpenters and joiners the most numerous (26,164), followed by painters and glaziers (7,381), masons (6,553), bricklayers (4,133), plumbers (3,132), builders (2,883), plasterers (2,536) and slaters (1,066). Transport workers<sup>4</sup> included 13,523 carters and 11,631 railway employees, all male. Engineering workers<sup>5</sup> (engine and machine makers, fitters, turners, boiler-makers, textile machine makers) amounted to 7,518, and shipyard workers (ship, boat and barge builders, shipwrights and ship carpenters) 5,960. The linen industry

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1. Census of Ireland 1901., general report [ed 1190] , table 20, p.125.

2. Ibid., p.118.

3. Ibid., p.120.

4. Ibid., p.118.

5. Ibid., p.119.

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1. Census of Ireland 1901., general report, pp.118 and 120.

employed in spinning, weaving and other processes 22,578 males and 48,886 females - a total of 71,644 workers.<sup>1</sup>

Wage rates in the various occupations are difficult to determine, especially where the employers were numerous and the employees largely unorganised, or where the nature of the work did not allow wages to be expressed by simple cash payments; with this proviso some useful comparisons can be made with wage levels in Great Britain. The wages of agricultural labourers (excluding men in charge of horses, cattle and sheep) were made up of cash wages and extra earnings and allowances, the total being expressed as a weekly money wage. In 1898, according to the Report on wages and earnings of agricultural labourers in the United Kingdom (Cd. 346 of 1900), wage levels in Ireland were as given in the following table:

Weekly wage rates of Irish agricultural labourers 1898\*

Province	County with lowest wage rate	Wage s.d.	County with highest wage rate	Wage s.d.
Ulster	Donegal	9.1	Down	12.5
Munster	Clare	8.9	Waterford	10.6
Leinster	Westmeath	9.3	Dublin	12.7
Connaught	Mayo	8.7	Galway	9.8

\* Extra earnings and allowances (included in the amounts given in the table) were estimated at from 4d. to 1/2.

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1. Census of Ireland 1901, general report, pp.122 and 128.

The corresponding figures for England are 14/8 (Oxfordshire) to 20/9 (Durham: the figure is for ploughmen); for Wales, 14/9 (Cardiganshire) to 19/1 (Glamorgan); and for Scotland, 14/- (Shetland, Orkney and Caithness) to 21/9 (Renfrewshire).<sup>1</sup> Even on the evidence of these official figures the highest agricultural labourers' wage in Ireland was below the lowest in Great Britain.

It is, however, unwise to assume that even such wages as these were generally paid in an occupation in which the workers were scattered, unorganised and not protected by any trade board regulations. It is probable that the British rates are reasonably accurate, as trade union organisation had existed among the English agricultural workers since the founding of Joseph Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union in 1872<sup>2</sup> - though after a promising start it had suffered a severe set-back when opposition became effective during a slump in agricultural

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D.L. Armstrong ('Social and economic conditions in the Belfast linen industry', I.H.S., vii, p. 240) gives a total of 65,000.

1. The Scottish figures include all classes of horsemen.
2. G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate: The Common People 1746-1938, p. 64.



prices.<sup>1</sup> In Ireland trade unionism was practically unknown among rural workers; it is not surprising that a speaker<sup>2</sup> at the Irish Trade Union Congress of 1901 found that a group of agricultural labourers in Wexford were being paid only four shillings a week. 'After paying, say, a shilling a week rent, it was preposterous to think a wife and family could be supported on three shillings.' Four shillings a week, in addition to food, seems to have been a common wage in some districts.<sup>3</sup> Sleeping accommodation, even for the migrant who worked on one farm for four or six months, was often primitive in the extreme and was usually a barn or loft. A yearly wage of £13 in addition to full board and bed, was regarded in some districts as exceptionally high. Harvest money (usually £1) was paid to the migrant who stayed for some months.

Official wages as high as ten or twelve shillings per week were paid only to exceptionally skilled workers

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1. G.D.H.Cole and R. Postgate: The Common People 1746-1938, pp.389-40.

2. James Chambers, poor law guardian (Dublin). Eighth annual report, I.T.U.C., p.37.

3. The writer's mother told him of labourers being paid at this rate at the beginning of the century in parts of Carlow, Leix and western Kildare. She also supplied information on working conditions and diet.

such as ploughmen, or task-workers engaged in the making of drains, and in such cases they had to provide their own food. Hours of labour were not fixed as were those of factory operatives, and the working day was generally from dawn to dusk. It was indeed 'a constant struggle with these people and their families to make ends meet', and the labourer's wife and children depended on charity or casual work to avoid starvation. Meat was rarely eaten more than once a week and then it was American bacon in the form of rashers or pigs' heads. We have already noticed the large imports of cheap salt bacon in the Irish trade returns for 1904; it was preferred because it was cheaper than the native product and its much greater proportion of fat took the place of lard or dripping.

A custom followed in Ulster and also in parts of Scotland was that of hiring farm labourers for a six-month period at hiring fairs held in May and November. The exact date varied according to the locality, but the hiring took place at an ordinary fair held in the nearest town. The farm labourer, known as a servant boy - a translation of buachaill aimsire (a boy hired for a period) - left his previous employer three days before the fair and might then be hired either by his old employer or by a new

female workers. We have seen how difficult it is to one. At some fairs, those wishing to be hired carried a straw in their mouths, and the bargaining that went on bore a strong resemblance to the chaffering over the animals at the fair. The custom could not but be degrading; the 1914-18 war was chiefly responsible for its disappearance.

It is not surprising that the Irish farmer found increasing difficulty in obtaining efficient permanent and temporary labour, so that the report on Irish migratory labour of 1908-9 [Cd. 4919] overstepped its usual caution and went so far as to say that the remedy lay in the making of as good a career for the agricultural labourer in Ireland as in Scotland:

The question is a difficult and personal one, which only the Irish farmers and the Irish labourers themselves can solve. But in such cases the first step must be taken by the farmer, who is in the stronger position and has the larger stake. ... There are in Ireland more than 165,000 holdings of over 30 acres in extent, occupying three-fourths of the total area of the country, and if the future of tillage on this very large proportion of the land of Ireland is to be safeguarded there must be an improvement in the work and wages of the labourer on this land.<sup>1</sup>

Domestic service was the female equivalent of agricultural labour for men; only in the Belfast area did the linen industry employ any large number of

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1. p. 17. p. 3.

female workers. We have seen how difficult it is to ascertain wages and conditions for agricultural labourers; the task is even more difficult for domestic servants in private houses. They are still poorly organised to-day in Great Britain, they were totally unorganised in Ireland at the beginning of this century. An attempt was made to estimate their money wages in a report<sup>1</sup> drawn up <sup>by Clara E. Collet, a permanent official of the British board of trade</sup> and published in 1899. In the prefatory letter to the comptroller-general of the commercial, labour and statistical departments, the commissioner for labour stated that one-third of the gainfully occupied female population in the United Kingdom in 1891 was engaged in domestic service, a sufficient indication of the social importance of this group of employees.

Miss Collet's report was based on a number of forms<sup>2</sup> issued between 1894 and 1898 to mistresses in London, England and Wales (excluding London), Scotland and Ireland. Returns were made for a total of 5,338 women, 1,867 in London, 2,461 elsewhere in England and Wales, 651 in Scotland and 359 in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> The Irish returns came from Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Limerick, and from their immediate neighbourhood, and did not include domestic servants on farms or in small country towns, whose wages if included would have lowered the average. The sample is small and its representative character doubtful, for no allowance was made for the deficiency

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1. Money wages of indoor domestic servants: Report by [Clara E.]  
Miss Collet to the labour department of the board of  
trade, [C.9346], H.C., 1899, xcii. 1.

2. Ibid, p.50 of indoor domestic servants: Report  
by Miss Collet to the labour department of the board of  
trade, [C.9346], H.C., 1899, xcii. 1.

3. Ibid, p.2.

3. Ibid., p.11.

in returns of lower-paid servants in one-servant households, as had been done in the English returns.<sup>1</sup> According to the evidence of the sample, domestic servants in Ireland were older and their wages were lower than in Great Britain. The following table gives their age distribution:

Age distribution of domestic servants<sup>2</sup>

Country	Percentage of total	
	Under 15	Over 45
England & Wales	7.7	9.1
Scotland	6.2	9.8
Ireland	4.7	21.6

Miss Collet makes the following comment:

The process of elimination of the unfit and infirm does not seem to go on in Ireland with the same completeness as in England, and the elderly and incompetent appear to be retained with more tolerance in Ireland. Perhaps also in Ireland capable servants are more inclined to stay on with mistresses to whom they are accustomed, without much thought whether they could earn higher wages elsewhere.

It may indeed be that mistresses in Ireland resembled less the slave-owner who gets rid of his inefficient slaves than did their English counterparts, but a more plausible explanation may be that the high Irish emigration rate lessened the number of servants under 45, and that the low marriage rate meant a larger number of elderly spinsters in the labour market.

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1. Money wages of indoor domestic servants; Report by Miss Collet to the labour department of the board of trade, p.11 [C.9346], H.C., 1899, xcii. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, p.11.

If the age distribution percentages indicate a less exacting attitude on the part of Irish mistresses, the wage rates show that they were less ready to pay their servants well. The average yearly wage in London was £17.8, in Scotland £16.5, in the rest of England and Wales £16, in Belfast £15.1, in Dublin £14.2, and in Cork and Limerick £12.3.<sup>1</sup> It was assumed in calculating the average wage that servants were distributed in the different classes of households in the same proportions as in London; we have already seen that no allowance had been made for deficiency in Irish returns of lower paid servants in one-servant households, and as the proportions of households employing several servants was probably much smaller than in London, the Irish wage rates given above are inflated.<sup>2</sup> Miss Collet calculated that the general average in Munster and Connaught<sup>3</sup> was probably not above £10, and that in Ulster and Leinster it probably lay between £12 and £14.

The average wage rose according to the number of servants employed in the household; this is accounted for mainly by the higher pay of skilled employees such as cooks and housekeepers, though it is probable that larger households were prepared to pay slightly more even to the less skilled in order to attract those potentially more capable. Miss Collet's analysis

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1. Money wages of indoor domestic servants: Report by Miss Collet to the labour department of the board of trade, [C. 9346], H.C., 1899, xcii.1., p.11 and for Scottish figure, p.8.

2. Ibid., p.10.

3. Ibid.; Miss Collet seemed to be under the impression that Limerick is in Connaught.

of the returns of households with staffs of various sizes is as follows:

Households employing:	Yearly wage rates <sup>1</sup>			Total in Ireland
	Dublin	Belfast	Cork & Limerick	
1 servant	£10.8	£12.6	£9.5	£11.3
2 servants	£13.5	£13.9	£11.1	£13.3
3 servants	£15.3	£16.7	£13.9	£15.5
4 servants	£16.6	£17.1	£14.7	£15.9
over 4 servants	£19.8	£19.7	£17.4	£18.7

The wages paid in the one-servant households in Belfast are appreciably higher than those in Dublin; the explanation may be that the Belfast linen industry employed some females who might otherwise have entered domestic service.<sup>2</sup>

There seems to be no survey of the working conditions, accommodation and diet of domestic servants in Ireland at the beginning of the century; they must have varied considerably from household to household. In some families the servants were fed more cheaply than their employers, but in others the food was

1. Money wages of indoor domestic servants: Report by Miss Collet to the labour department of the board of trade, [C.9346], H.C., 1899, xcii.1., p.10.

2. The numbers were: 22,939 linen workers, 7,556 domestic servants. Census of Ireland 1901, iii, no.1(a) City of Belfast, table xx pp. 27 & 30 [Cd. 1123(a)]. H.C. 1902, cxxvi, cxxvii.

plentiful and of the same quality for the entire household. Where men servants were employed they did the heavy work, but the general servant of the poorer family could not escape drudgery. Holidays and leisure time varied a good deal; the mistress employing one servant felt them to be a greater concession than did the mistress employing two or more. Miss Collet reported that the maximum holidays given in any one case in the whole of the survey were: a fortnight in summer, one day monthly, a half day every Sunday, and one evening out weekly. In several cases a half day was given on alternate Sundays, and time for evening church on other Sundays. An evening a week was given in most cases as well as Sunday evening, and one day a month free was common.<sup>1</sup> In some households an afternoon rather than an evening per week was given and the Sunday half day was approximately from 3.30 p.m. to 9. p.m., especially where the employee was young. Summer holidays might last a month, but board wages were rarely paid in Ireland unless the employee had to spend them in Dublin. Travelling expenses in the case of girls from country homes were not paid.

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1. Money wages of indoor domestic servants, pp.29,30.



The tenour of advertisements for domestic servants suggests that Miss Collet's survey was unjustifiably optimistic and that an Irish Esther Waters would have fared worse than her English counterpart. Strength and humility were demanded in the Freeman's Journal<sup>1</sup> by mistresses who sought 'a strong young girl for dairy, £8 a year'; 'a smart young girl, plain cooking, some washing, £6'; 'general servant, character must bear strictest investigation, plain cook, early riser, some washing, £9'. No wages were quoted in the cases of 'a strong humble girl' and 'a respectable humble little girl'. A bleak beginning awaited the successful applicant for one situation, to be filled by a 'humble little country girl, R.C., do house work, go messages', who was to be recommended for strictest honesty by her parish priest and be paid 15s. a quarter.

Old age or infirmity for a domestic servant meant poverty unless she had been so fortunate as to work in a household where wages and tips were sufficiently generous to allow her to save.

In the next group of workers, railwaymen, wage levels in Ireland were once again lower than in Great Britain. Average earnings for those employed in the coaching, goods, locomotive and engineering departments during the first week of December 1899 were: England -  $25/9\frac{3}{4}$ ; Scotland -  $22/10\frac{3}{4}$ ; Ireland -  $19/4\frac{1}{2}$ . This differentiation in wage level remained

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1. F.J., 11 Jan.1899.

unaltered in 1900 and 1901 - indeed it had existed at least as early as 1896,<sup>1</sup> when Irish railway workers were already members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Building-trade rates<sup>2</sup> in the United Kingdom varied, as they still do, according to area; highest rates prevailed in London, next came those of large or strongly industrialised towns, and finally the lowest given were those of Ipswich. The minimum wages and hours of labour (exclusive of overtime) recognised by the principal trade unions at the beginning of 1901 are shown in the following tables:

Country	Bricklayers		Masons	
	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.
England & Wales	7½d.-10d.	49-56½	7½d.-10½d.	44½-56½
Scotland <sup>3</sup>	10d.	51	8d.-9½d.	51
Ireland				
Belfast	8½d.	54	-	
Dublin	8½d.	54	8d(s)8½d(w)	54

1. Report on changes in rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom in 1902, p. xliv, [Cd.1562] H.C. 1903, lxvi, 839.

2. Figures for wages of building, engineering and ship-building workers are taken from appropriate tables in the board of trade labour statistics 1899-1900, [Cd. 495].

3. The Scottish rates apply to Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Glasgow's pay rates were the highest. No figures are given for bricklayers in Aberdeen and Dundee, and no hours for plasterers in Edinburgh.

1. See note 3, preceding page.

2. e.g. Sheffield.

Country	Carpenters		Plumbers	
	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.
England & Wales	7½d.-10½d.	49- 56½	7½d.-11d.	41- 56½
Scotland <sup>1</sup>	8d.-10d.	51	8d.-9½d.	51
Ireland				
Belfast	8½d.	54	8½d.	54
Dublin	8d(s)8½d(w)	54	6s.per day	51

Country	Plasterers		Painters	
	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.	Rates per hr.	Summer hrs.
England & Wales	8d.-11½d.	49- 56½	6d.-9d.	49½- 56½
Scotland <sup>1</sup>	8½d.-9½d	51	8d.-9d.	51
Ireland				
Belfast	8½d.	54	8½d.	54
Dublin	8d.	54	8d.	50

It is immediately apparent that building-trade workers, provided the rates and hours were generally applied, were far more favourably situated than agricultural and railway workers, and that their general conditions placed them within the British scale, though rather below workers in towns of similar size.<sup>2</sup>

1. See note 3, preceding page.

2. e.g. Sheffield.

In no case were the Belfast and Dublin workers below the minimum United Kingdom rates, the explanation being that they were members of long-established craft unions.

The wages and hours of craftsmen in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, especially in Belfast, compared favourably with those of cross-channel workers, and in certain cases (again in Belfast) were very high in the British scale. The tables again show, as in the case of the building trade workers, minimum wages and hours recognised by the principal trade unions at the beginning of 1901. The wage rates and hours are given on a weekly basis (exclusive of overtime).

Country	Patternmakers		Ironfounders + Weekly rate of wages
	Weekly rate of wages	Weekly hours of work	
England & Wales	32/-42/	53-54	30/-40/
Scotland	33/6-39/	54	38/- (Dundee)
Ireland			
Belfast	39/-	54	38/-
Dublin	35/-		36/-

+ Ironfounders generally worked a 53 or 54-hour week. At a few shops (unnamed) men worked 48, and at some others, 60.

Country	Engineers			Weekly hours of work
	Turners	Fitters	Smiths	
England & Wales	30/-40/	28/-40/	28/-38/	53-54
Scotland	30/-36/	30/-36/	30/-36/	54
Ireland				
Belfast	38/	37/	37/	54-56½
Dublin	35/	33/	34/	54

Country	Boilermakers and iron shipbuilders I				Weekly hours of work
	Weekly rate of wages - new work				
	Platers (Heavy) Boiler shops	Platers (Light) Ship-yards	Platers (Light) Boiler shops	Platers (Light) Ship-yards	
England & Wales	36/-45/	38/-45/6	34/-42/	38/-45/6	48-54 <sup>+</sup>
Scotland	36/3-43/10½	32/9-37/1½	35/-41/7½	32/9-37/1½	54
Ireland					
Belfast	43/6	38/6	43/6	-	54
Dublin	38/-	-	36/-	-	

+ Winter work, repair work and work in Royal dock-yards. The usual hours were 53 or 54.

Generally the hours were 53 or 54, as on previous years.

The tables show how successful the engineering and shipbuilding workers had been in keeping wages high in Belfast, where a high degree of trade union organisation and a considerable militancy had been a

Boilermakers and iron shipbuilders II  
 Country Weekly rate of wages- new work Weekly hours of work

## Riveters

	Boiler shops	Shipyards	
England & Wales	32/-38/6	35/-41/6	<sup>±</sup> 48-54
Scotland	34/3-38/	31/3-36/	54
Ireland			
Belfast	38/	35/6	54
Dublin	34/	-	

+ See note on preceding page.

## Shipwrights

Country	Weekly rate of wages		Summer hours of work
	New work	Repair work	
England & Wales	30/-42/	32/11½-43/6	*47-56½
Scotland	34/10½-38/3	37/1½ - 40/6	54
Ireland			
Belfast	38/3	40/6	54

\* Generally the hours were 53 or 54, as on Tyneside.

The tables show how successful the engineering and shipbuilding workers had been in keeping wages high in Belfast, where a high degree of trade-union organisation and a considerable militancy had been a

long-standing tradition.<sup>1</sup> In Dublin the relative unimportance of these trades meant that there was no concentration of workers in a few large establishments as in Belfast, and the same effective pressure could not be exerted.<sup>2</sup>

The linen industry reproduced in Ireland the horrors associated with the textile mills of the industrial revolution in England. They have been described in detail in D. L. Armstrong's article on the social and economic conditions in the Belfast linen industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, to which reference has already been made. The industry<sup>3</sup> was a low-wage one and employed a large proportion of females and juveniles (male and female) under eighteen years of age. Spinners were generally paid on a time-rate and weavers on a piece-rate, but piece-workers' earnings depended on the quality as well as on the quantity of the work

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1. In 1884 at a soiree and concert of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a speaker (S. Shearer) claimed a membership of 1000 in the Belfast branch. - North-ern Whig, 26th Apr. 1884.

2. Workers on ships' hulls: 5,960 (Ireland); 4986 (Belfast), 84 (Dublin).

Engineering workers (engine and machine makers, fitters and turners, boilermakers, spinning and weaving machine makers 7,518 (Ireland); 3846 (Belfast), 1337 (Dublin).

(Figures for Ireland, see Census of Ireland 1901, general report [Cd. 1190] table 20; for Belfast, iii table xx [Cd. 1123a]; for Dublin, i, table xx [Cd. 8471a].)

3. Unless otherwise stated, the information in this section dealing with the linen industry is taken from D. L. Armstrong's article in I.H.S., vii.

produced and both were liable to fines for certain offences. Weekly wage rates were as follows:

	1886	1906
Roughers	18s.6d.	21s.8d.
Sorters	23s.6d.	26s.3d.
Preparers	6s.10d.	9s.4d.
Spinners	8s.5d.	10s.5d.
Weavers	11s.6d.	11s.6d.
Reelers	8s.11d.	11s.3d.
Average wage	11s.-	12s.-

The flax-dressers (roughers and sorters) were men, which accounts for the higher wages in those two categories, while females were mainly employed in the other processes. The unhealthy nature of these processes, which in the preparatory stage involved the liberation of a great deal of flax dust, and in the spinning stages a hot, humid atmosphere necessary for the production of fine yarn ('wet' spinning), produced various diseases and shortened considerably the operatives' lives. Accidents were frequent in the highly mechanised processes and the chief victims were women and juveniles, for only roughing and sorting were not mechanised. Certain improvements were carried out, both in reducing dust and moisture and in fencing machinery, but even at the end of the century most of the occupational diseases and ailments were still common, and difficulty was experienced by factory inspectors in securing prosecutions for break-

*Land, 1901, pp. 122 and 125, gives 1,343 males and 3,113 females under 16, a total of 4,456 employed in the linen trade.*



ing of fencing regulations. The average hours per week worked were 56, as limited by the 1874 Act - ten hours per day from Monday to Friday, and six hours on Saturday. Work began at 6.30 a.m. and finished at 6 p.m., with a total of an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner.

The practice of employing children, known as half-timers, was in operation at the end of the century. In 1891 the minimum age at which children could be employed in factories was raised to eleven (from 1874 it had been ten) and it was not until 1901 that it was raised to twelve. In 1897<sup>1</sup> the number employed, principally in Antrim, Down, Armagh and Tyrone, was 4,896 - 2,227 boys and 2,669 girls. These children between the ages of eleven and thirteen worked and went to school on alternate days. The boys were employed in machine hackling and were exposed to the effects of flax dust, and though numbers left the mills when they began to feel the symptoms, and entered other employment, the effects remained and many died of the phthisis thus contracted. Girl half-timers were employed as doffers in 'wet' spinning and suffered from bronchial affections caused by the change from the hot atmosphere of the workroom to the cold air outside, while they were also liable to be attacked by a skin disease called 'lichen'.

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1. Board of trade labour statistics, 1899-1900, [Cd. 495]. The general report of the Census of Ireland, 1901, pp. 122 and 128, gives 1,343 males and 3,113 females under 15, a total of 4,456 employed in the linen trade.

The general picture of conditions in the linen industry shows at what price Belfast maintained its position as the chief exporter of manufactured goods in Ireland. It should be added that these conditions were aggravated by bad housing and a grossly insufficient diet, while the low wage-level forced mothers to remain in the mills until a few days before confinement and to return immediately afterwards. A high infant death-rate prevailed among the babies of such workers, who left them in the care of old women unwilling or unable to care for them properly. Half-timers were usually mill-workers' children, forced into the mills to supplement their parents' inadequate wages. Linen remained a sweated industry, though adults no longer worked in bare feet and though wages rose towards the end of the century (this may have contributed to the decrease in the numbers of half-timers). Flax-dressers and other male linen-workers were organised in a number of local unions, but the number of female trade-unionists was small, in spite of some attempts made by the Belfast trades council in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The importance of Belfast as an industrial centre justifies a further analysis of its working-class population at the beginning of the century. Though the analysis is not exhaustive, it shows clearly the existence of a protestant working-class 'aristocracy' and a catholic 'proletariat'. The

catholic population of Belfast in 1901 amounted to 24.3 per cent of the whole, and this percentage was roughly that of the male and female catholic percentages also (male 23.26, female 25.3). In shipbuilding the Census of Ireland, 1901, makes two divisions of workers on hulls, 1) ship, boat and barge builders, and 2) shipwrights and ships' carpenters. The percentages of catholics<sup>1</sup> in these two divisions were 1) 7.7 and 2) 5.7. In the engineering trades the percentages were slightly higher, e.g. engine and machine makers: 10; fitters and turners: 11.1; boilermakers, 9.9; textile machine makers: 14.0. The average percentage in the engineering trades was 10.1 (416 out of 3,846).

In the building trades the catholic percentages were: builders 16.1; carpenters 15.5; bricklayers 26.7; masons 35.6; slaters 61.9; plasterers and whitewashers 36; plumbers 11.6; painters and glaziers 21.4. The total numbers of masons and slaters employed are too small to serve as a basis for valid generalisation, and the inclusion of both plasterers and whitewashers in the same category makes it impossible to distinguish between them. The most significant percentage is that of carpenters, as it was

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1. It has been assumed that all those not catholics were protestants, on two grounds. The census distinguished between Roman Catholics, Episcopalian Protestants, Presbyterians, Methodists and all other denominations. The last category in the trades analysed rarely exceeds 6% and a glance at the complete list of all other denominations in Belfast shows that they are overwhelmingly evangelical protestant sects (the major ones amount to 16,642 out of 19,422). See note on p.55 on 1901 census returns for Belfast [Cd. 1123(a)] .

from this category that foremen were usually selected.<sup>1</sup>

It has already been made clear that in the linen industry the spinning processes were far more unhealthy than the weaving end, and that most of the flax-dressing processes were carried out by men; it is probable that such processes were covered by the census division 'other processes'. The catholic percentages among male linen workers were: other processes 16.8; weaving 15.1; spinning 37; among female linen workers they were higher: other processes 27.8; weaving 26.1; spinning 47.6.

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1. The total numbers employed were: builders 391; carpenters and joiners 3947; bricklayers 1336; masons 177; slaters and tilers 139; plasterers and whitewashers 477; plumbers 830; painters and glaziers 1589. For occupations and religious professions in Belfast see 1901 census returns for the city. [Cd. 1123(a)] , table xx pp. 15-32.

## 6. HOUSING

According to the census returns there were in Ireland in 1901, 858,158 houses and 910,256 families.<sup>1</sup>

Houses were grouped in four classes:

Houses in Ireland, 1901<sup>2</sup>

Class	1	2	3	4
Number	75,225	521,454	251,606	9,905

The form used by the enumerators, and the explanation given on page 11 of the general report, show the classification adopted. Briefly, houses in class 4 consisted of one-roomed cabins built of perishable material such as mud or wood, thatched and having one window. They were exceedingly primitive, usually not more than twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide, and the walls were often structurally unsound. Earthen floors, sometimes below the level of the surrounding ground, and poorly thatched roofs, ensured that the cottages were perpetually damp, while the small size of the single window - or a hole in the wall roughly stuffed with rags - prevented proper lighting. Sleeping accommodation was equally primitive in the poorest cabins, and consisted of straw beds cut off from the rest of the room by a sheet or light partition. The general squalor was increased by the presence of small livestock or poultry if no sheds had been built for them.<sup>3</sup> The number of these hovels had decreased from

1. Census of Ireland, 1901, gen. rep. p.111, table 8.

2. Ibid., form B 1, p.603.

3. This description is taken from Irish Agricultural Labourers (1881-1921) p.4., an unpublished thesis by G.F.E. Johnston, approved for moderatorship in Modern History (1954) in T.C.D.

89,374 in 1861 to 9,905 in 1901,<sup>1</sup> chiefly because of the enormous decrease in population, especially in rural areas (there were only 527 mud cabins in 'civic areas'), but partly also because of the operation of the series of Labourers Acts which provided for the building of agricultural labourers' cottages.

Class 3 might consist of one-roomed cottages, built of durable material such as stone, brick or concrete, thatched and possessing one window in front; or at best, of four-roomed cottages with two windows in front. An addition of a slated, tiled or iron roof to the best type of class 3 house was sufficient to raise it to the lowest section of class 2, a class represented by the good farmhouse. Class 1 required at least seven rooms and six windows. No attempt was made to estimate the number of houses with running water or sanitation, whether dry or water borne.

Accommodation, as distinct from houses, depended on the number of families in each house - e.g. 1st class houses with more than six families, 2nd class houses with four or more families and 3rd class houses with more than one family, were all considered as providing 4th class accommodation. The type of house combined with the number of families inhabiting it determined

1. Census of Ireland 1901, gen. rep. p.12.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

3. Ibid., p. 208.

4. Ibid., pp. 206-7.

the class of accommodation. The 910,256 families were accommodated as follows:

Housing Accommodation in Ireland, 1901<sup>1</sup>

Class	1	2	3	4
No. of families	67,950	513,085	287,998	41,223

Some indication of overcrowding is necessary if these statistics are to be of value. Tenements of one room in 1901 amounted to 79,149, and were occupied by 237,456 people, or 5.33 per cent of the total population.<sup>2</sup> If it is assumed that gross overcrowding occurs when five or more persons occupy one room, the figures for overcrowding were: 16,237 rooms inhabited by 101,845 persons (or 2.38 per cent of the total population).<sup>3</sup> In England and Wales the corresponding percentage was .18, but in Scotland it was even higher than in Ireland, 4.20 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

Overcrowding was heaviest in Leinster where 3.74 per cent of the population of the province lived five or more to a room. Connaught came next with 2.42 per cent, Munster was third with 2.18 per cent and Ulster had the best record with a percentage of only 1.24.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Census of Ireland 1901, p.111, table 8.

2. Ibid., p.112, table 10.

3. R.E.Matheson, 'Housing of the people in Ireland during 1841-1901', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., xi, pt. 82, 206 (June 1903).

4. Ibid., p. 208.

5. Ibid., pp. 206-7.

There were fewer rural than urban slum-dwellers in Ireland - 11,869 and 29,354 families respectively in 4th class accommodation<sup>1</sup> - and the former had at least the advantage of being more scattered. The six county boroughs arranged in order of density of population (persons per acre) were: Dublin (36.74), Cork (33.59), Belfast (23.73), Waterford (18.65), Derry (18.43), and Limerick (18.10).<sup>2</sup> Dublin was also distinguished by the exceptional number of families inhabiting one-room tenements - 21,747, or 36.70 per cent of the total number (59,263) of the city's families.<sup>3</sup> The corresponding percentages in the other county boroughs were: Cork 10.62, Belfast 1.00, Waterford 7.28, Derry 7.15 and Limerick 15.80.<sup>4</sup>

The extent of overcrowding is best shown by the following table which gives the percentage of the population in each county borough living five or more to a room. English and Scottish towns are included to give

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1. Census of Ireland 1901, gen. rep. p.111, table 8.
  2. *Ibid.*, p.171, table 47 A.
  3. Matheson, *op. cit.* p. 208.
  4. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-10.

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1. Matheson, *op. cit.*, p.211.



a basis of comparison.<sup>1</sup>

Towns                                      Percentage of population living five or more to a room

Dublin	10.61
Limerick	3.27
Cork	1.34
Waterford	.76
Derry	.60
Belfast	.10
London	.70
Liverpool	.24
Manchester	.05
Edinburgh	2.33
Glasgow	5.24

Despite the rapid growth of Belfast, its working-class population suffered less from bad housing than that of Dublin. As the older portions of the capital city decayed, the more prosperous citizens moved into the suburbs and adjoining townships and their places were taken by the poor. The large houses in areas such as Gardiner Street became tenements, dilapidated and verminous, owned by slum landlords who would not or could not keep them in repair. The task of rehousing was made more difficult by the refusal of townships such as Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar to be included in the city area and contribute to the rates. Clontarf, Drumcondra and Kilmainham were included only in 1901, whereas the city boundary of Belfast had been extended in 1896. Belfast was not without its black spots, but the rows of mean, small back-to-back houses were less dramatic than the tall tenements of Dublin.

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1. Matheson, op. cit., p.211.

It is not surprising that the squalor of the Dublin slums was reflected in health statistics. In the year 1902 the corrected death rate was 27.5 per 1000 as against 23.8 for Belfast and 23.5 for Cork.<sup>1</sup> The death rate for 76 great towns in England and Wales varied from 9.8 to 24.5.<sup>2</sup> 39.7 per cent of the deaths in Dublin occurred in public institutions such as workhouses, hospitals, lunatic asylums and prisons. Sir Charles Cameron pointed out that this proportion was much higher than in the large English towns, where only about 18 per cent of the deaths took place in public institutions. 'These facts seem to show that the proportion of poor and destitute people is much larger than in English towns.'<sup>3</sup> The infant mortality rate was 171 (per thousand of the estimated population under one year of age) compared with 135 for all England and Wales, 153 for the 75 largest English towns excluding London, and 144 for London. An epidemic of measles in 1902 increased the infant mortality rate, which was usually below that of English towns.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Charles Cameron concluded his survey of the public health of Dublin with the following remarks: A high death rate does not prevail amongst the well-to-do classes of Dublin; it is confined to the poorer classes of the community. I attribute it to several causes: - First, as amongst the poor in all large towns there is a comparatively high death rate, the undue proportion of that class in Dublin, affects the death rate of the

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1. Sir C.A.Cameron; City medical superintendent: Report upon the state of public health in the city of Dublin for the year 1902, Dublin 1903, N.L.I., p.21. The rate is for the Dublin registration area (estimated population to middle of 1902: 378,994, p.10)

2. Ibid., p.39.

3. Ibid., p.20.

4. Ibid., p.24.

death-rate of Belfast and the condition of the public health of the city. Belfast (1898). Evidence of Conroy Scott, executive sanitary officer, p.9.

whole community. That fact that out of the 59,263 families resident in the city of Dublin, 21,429 have each but a single room is proof positive of the excessive proportion of the poor in Dublin. The poor, and indeed the working classes generally are on the whole ill-provided with dwellings. The tenement houses of Dublin accommodate by far a larger percentage of the population than is the case in any other city in these countries. There is overcrowding of families in these houses, and their structure is such that they cannot properly be adapted to the conditions of their present occupants. Something has been done to provide proper dwellings for the lower classes, but much more must be accomplished before a substantial amelioration of their wretched house accommodation can be effected. In this connection I may mention that Liverpool is about to expend one and a half millions in erecting dwellings for the working classes.<sup>1</sup>

In Belfast the greatest number of persons living in one room was seven, while in Dublin, Cork and Limerick there were rooms containing even greater numbers. In Dublin there were 573 families of eight and over crowded into one-roomed tenements, 145 of them consisting of nine persons, 47 of ten, 13 of eleven and 6 of twelve or more.<sup>2</sup> But the absence of such fantastic conditions in Belfast did not produce a healthy city. Alarmed by a high death rate, the Belfast Corporation appointed in 1896 a special committee to report on the public health of the borough. The minutes of evidence showed that the city lacked modern sanitation. Dry privies were numerous; 26,620 in 1897.<sup>3</sup> Some 20,000 of the city's 50,000 houses were of the back-to-back variety.<sup>4</sup> They were in the main

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1. Cameron, op. cit., p.30.

2. Matheson, op. cit., p.208.

3. H.W. Bailie, medical superintendent officer of health: Report on the health of the county borough of Belfast for the year 1906. Belfast 1907, p.31.

4. Minutes of evidence of the special committee appointed 1 Aug.1896 to consider and report upon the present high death-rate of Belfast and the condition of the public health of the city. Belfast (1896?). Evidence of Conway Scott, executive sanitary officer, p.9.

equipped with dry privies and the night soil as well as domestic refuse had to be brought to the front; in the Carrick Hill area it was carried through the living rooms. The night soil was dumped at the side of the houses and removed weekly or fortnightly.<sup>1</sup> Dr Whitaker, the city medical officer of health, pointed out that Sir Charles Cameron had told him that he had abolished thousands of dry privies and that Dublin was now (in 1896) a water-closeted city; he (Dr Whitaker) agreed with the chairman of the committee that Belfast was very much behind other large towns in that respect and that there was no city like it.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the inquiry was concerned with building sites, an important consideration in a rapidly growing community. The city was low-lying and the alluvial soil on which it was built was insufficiently drained. Builders as a consequence were not exigent and were prepared to construct houses on land of doubtful suitability. Several of the witnesses objected strongly to a proposed site for 102 houses in Fife Street. Dead pigs, vegetable waste matter, sewage and excrement were all present, and an assistant surveyor (J. Munce) agreed that the chairman's description of it as an enormous dunghill was not too strong.<sup>3</sup> The euphemistically named Improvement Committee received all proposed development plans, but it appears that if they

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1. Minutes of evidence (public health of Belfast, 1896) p.41.

2. Ibid., p.52.

3. Ibid., pp.152-3.

4. Minutes of evidence, (Belfast public health, 1896), p.254.

5. Ibid., p.251.

took no action the plans were automatically approved after twenty-one days.<sup>1</sup>

Three of the witnesses (Alexander Taylor, Edward McInnes and Hugh McManus) were members of the Belfast trades council. Taylor's evidence described the conditions arising from the large number of livestock (principally pigs) kept by their owners in the back yards of working-class districts. The inhabitants of Percy Street (in Shankill ward) were separated by a 16 foot wall from a house and yard which contained 60 pigs and 30 cows. The pigs were kept at a height of 12 feet and the sewage seeped through into the street.<sup>2</sup> The number of pigs kept within the city limits was about 11,000.<sup>3</sup>

Edward McInnes himself lived in a back-to-back house and was able to speak of its disadvantages at first hand.<sup>4</sup> His evidence dealt with three plague spots. The first, Galway Court, was nine square yards in area; its houses had no yards or closets and a midden heap occupied the centre - nine feet from the houses and emptied by a surface channel. Sewage from a Galway Street midden seeped into Galway Court.<sup>5</sup> In Dean's Court, off

1. Evidence of G.A.Boyd, assistant surveyor, Belfast public health inquiry 1896, p.265. According to the same witness houses were built in 1895 without back passages.

2. Minutes of evidence, (Belfast public health inquiry, 1896) p.211.

3. H.W.Bailie, op.cit.,p.141, stated that in 1906 the pigs numbered 2,770. Strict enforcement of the bye-laws had reduced the former excessive number by 75 per cent. (p.31)

4. Minutes of evidence, (Belfast public health inquiry, 1896), p.254.

5. Ibid., p.251.

Barrack Street, there was a common privy for five houses and a carpenter's workshop; it lacked both door and seat. Against the workshop a midden was built, while behind the court was a piggery.<sup>1</sup> In Murphy' Row, off Barrack Street, thirty families lived in nine houses and had one closet or midden in common. The inhabitants preferred to use the open court at night.<sup>2</sup>

Outbreaks of typhoid were common, especially in working-class districts. Dr W. Gibson, whose practice was in Mountpottinger, said in his evidence that the building of houses on unhealthy sites was a direct cause of typhoid and similar diseases.<sup>3</sup> The typhoid death rate per 10,000 of the population had fluctuated between 7.9 and 4.5 during the years 1889-96, it increased sharply in the years 1897 and 1898, reaching 11.4 and 18.8 respectively. In 1897, 3,269 typhoid cases were reported and 354 persons died; in 1898, 640 out of 5,136 died.<sup>4</sup> In the space of eighteen months (16 April 1897 to 26 November 1898) there were 7,944 cases and 874 deaths, an outbreak which resulted in a visit from the medical inspector of the local government board. He reported that the outbreak was chiefly due to contaminated water supply, but that the spread of the disease was much aided by the want of proper sanitary accommodation in dwelling

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1. Minutes of evidence, (Belfast public health inquiry, 1896), p.252.

2. Ibid., p.253.

3. Ibid., p.213.

4. H.W.Bailie, op. cit., p.59, table 14 (deaths) and p.113, table 1 (cases).

5. H.W. Bailie, op. cit., pp.32-3.

6. Ibid., p.37.

houses.<sup>1</sup> The corporation had not adopted the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, 1889.<sup>2</sup>

The facts revealed by the 1896 inquiry,<sup>3</sup> and the typhoid outbreak in the following years, seem to have stirred the councillors out of their lethargy. The Notification of Diseases Act was adopted and dry privies were steadily replaced by water closets; in 1906 their number was reduced to 2,350. Health bye-laws were enforced, especially those on pig-keeping. In 1906 the typhoid death rate fell to 2.4, and the total death rate, which had been 24.3 in 1896, to 20.1.<sup>4</sup>

The infant mortality rate for Belfast in 1906 was 143 per 1000 of live births, for the Dublin registration area 146, for the 76 large towns in England and Wales 145, and for Glasgow 131.<sup>5</sup> An analysis made by the registrars of city cemeteries of the returns of the deaths of children under five years of age, showed that the mortality was greatest in the crowded working-class districts. Of the 850 deaths in the registrars' fourteen districts, 180 occurred in no. 3 (Shankill and Crumlin) and 142 in

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1. Twenty-seventh annual report of the local government board for Ireland, (1899), p.48, [C 9480], H.C. 1900, xxxix.i.

2. Minutes of evidence, (Belfast public health inquiry 1896), p.213.

3. Councillor Young alleged that plans for the 103 houses in Fife Street were being rushed through by a majority of the improvement committee and the owners of the property; the chairman said that he thought it important that the press should not be excluded from the inquiry in view of such attempts to forestall the committee report. - Minutes of evidence (Belfast health inquiry 1896) pp.174-5.

4. H.W. Bailie, op. cit., pp.22-3.

5. Ibid., p.87.

no. 12 (Mountpottinger and Ballymacarrett).<sup>1</sup> These were districts containing linen mills and the children, as was pointed out by Dr Bailie, were in many cases 'debilitated from birth, this being due to a great extent to the fact that the mothers work in mills and factories within a few e/ days of the birth of the children, and return to work again as soon as their employers will permit'. In his report for the year 1907 Dr Bailie stated (p.100) that cases had been found where infants were constantly fed on bread soaked in tea; the women stated that they could not afford to buy milk.

Bad housing conditions, inadequate clothing and an insufficient diet made serious inroads on the health of the poorer sections of the community. There was a class of workers, numerically small, who worked in their own homes, where working conditions must have been less satisfactory than in many factories. Outworkers in 1906 in Belfast (the counts were carried out by the public health authorities of the city) amounted on an average to 2,834.5<sup>2</sup>. They were engaged in making-up work, button-holing and embroidery. Poor lighting and cramped conditions aggravated what was a sweated occupation. Payment varied according to the character of the work: 'in many instances it does not exceed 1d. to 2d. per hour, and from this has to be deducted the time spent in going for and returning with the work. In the poorer paid classes of work, such as hand embroidery of a coarse type, the workers do not make more than 6d. to 8d. per day'.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps

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1. H.W.Bailie, op. cit., pp. 85-6; registrars' districts, pp. 26-9.

2. Ibid., p.104.

3. Ibid., p.103.

of Belfast for the year 1906, p.104.



the clearest picture of the condition of unskilled labour in Belfast is furnished by a further comment from the same source: 'In spite, however, of the low rate of wages, the work is not largely done in the homes of the extremely poor; it is generally done by the wives of labourers in order to increase the weekly income by a few shillings.' Children often assisted their mothers, 'quite small ones doing "thread-drawing", a task prejudicial to eyesight and general health after a day's school work'.<sup>1</sup> Health visitors advised mothers to give their children 'a wholesome midday meal of porridge etc. instead of the customary white bread and tea',<sup>2</sup> the staple diet of the urban poor. It is interesting to note that after the 1914-18 war, when employees in the making-up trade could no longer be so ruthlessly exploited, employers found new sources of sweated labour in China; it was cheaper to have 'Irish' linen embroidered abroad, in spite of the cost of transport both ways.

Housing in Ireland, however wretched much of it still was in 1900, had improved during the second half of the nineteenth century. Greatest progress had been made in the rural areas, and, if negative action (emigration and death) had reduced the number of mud cabins, positive action had played a part. While tenant farmers occupied the centre of the stage with their increasing struggle for the land, agricultural labourers and their housing needs were receiving some attention in the background. A growing realisation that labour was needed

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1. H.W. Bailie, Report on health of the county borough of Belfast for the year 1907, p.171

2. H.W. Bailie, Report on health of the county borough of Belfast for the year 1906, p.104.

to work the land, and that unless some improvements were made it would become more difficult to secure such labour, made rate-aided building of labourers' cottages possible. Earlier acts in the sixties and seventies placed the onus for providing accommodation for labourers on landlords and farmers, but it was not until the passing of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1883 that appreciable results were obtained. This act authorised boards of guardians, after representation by twelve ratepayers, to submit an improvement scheme to the local government board; if approved, the board of works was empowered to advance money to the sanitary authorities. Subsequent acts (in 1885, 1886, 1891, 1892 and 1896) simplified legal procedure and increased financial assistance. In 1899 a total of 16,056 cottages had been authorised, of which 13,936 were actually let.<sup>1</sup> Most were in Munster (9,022) and Leinster (6,566), but Ulster and Connaught, provinces containing congested districts, had only 305 and 163 respectively. Rents varied from sevenpence halfpenny to two shillings per week, but the average rent was about one shilling.<sup>1</sup>

The new cottages were modest structures, but they were immensely superior to the hovels they replaced. The minimum standards of the local government board required at least two bedrooms and a kitchen, each room having a height of eight feet and windows not less than one-twelfth the area of the floor space, a floor at least nine inches above the surrounding ground, and a proper privy built at a distance from the house. Materi-

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1. Twenty-seventh annual report of the local government board for Ireland, pp. 68-71.

2. Local Government Board, Report, 1899, pp. 24-25, 27.

als used were bricks or stone, slates for the roof, concrete flags or tiles for the kitchen floor and timber for the bedroom floors.<sup>1</sup> Each cottage had a half-acre allotment (increased by the 1892 Act to one acre) which allowed the labourer to grow crops and keep a pig or poultry.<sup>2</sup> There was naturally a very great demand for such cottages, but as there was relatively little financial assistance from central funds (apart from loans) poor law unions were reluctant to increase their rates to meet loan charges, the annual loss caused by uneconomic rents and arrears, and the rising costs in building and land purchase (from about £100 in 1883 to £170 in 1906).<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1906 that fresh financial provisions, in the Labourers (Ireland) Act of that year, assisted rural district councils to repay annuities on cottages and permitted the Irish Land Commission to advance £4,250,000 in loans.<sup>4</sup> The result was a rapid increase in the number of cottages built.<sup>5</sup>

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1. G.F.E. Johnston, *op.cit.*, pp. 24-5, 27.

2. *Ibid.*, p.23.

3. *Ibid.*, p.33.

4. *Ibid.*, p.34.

5. *Ibid.*, p.54. 14,385 in 1900, 21,948 in 1907, 43,702 in 1914. A further sum (£1,000,000) was made available in 1911, as the earlier amount had been exhausted.

1. *Twenty-ninth annual report of the Local Government Board for Ireland for the year ending 31st Dec 1906* [Cd. 1859], H.C. 1908, xxvii, 4.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. xxii and xxiv.

3. [Cd. 1860], H.C. 1908, xxvii, 4.

The agricultural worker's housing needs were generally recognised by the end of the century, and the local government act of 1898, which enfranchised labourers for the first time, was followed by the election of rural district councillors who set to work energetically to draw up plans for new cottages; in the year ending 31 March 1901 the local government board received schemes for the erection of 5,891 new cottages and the addition of half-acre plots to 2,871 already built.<sup>1</sup> The urban working class was less fortunate. The relative positions of the two classes may be seen by the amounts of loans granted under the Labourers Acts and the Housing of the Working classes Act (1890); up to March 1901, £2,051,374 had been loaned for agricultural labourers' houses, and £438,550 lls. for the housing of urban workers.<sup>2</sup>

It cannot be said that the need for better housing was less in towns than in rural areas. Dublin and Belfast had their special problems of tenements and inadequate sanitation, but the majority of other county boroughs and towns were no better and some had the worst features of both the large cities, in addition to evils of their own. The supplement to the twenty-ninth annual report of the local government board for Ireland,<sup>3</sup> containing reports on the sanitary conditions of the principal towns for 1900-1, has as a monotonous refrain the immediate necessity for the provision of healthy dwellings

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1. Twenty-ninth annual report of the local government board for Ireland for the year ending 31 Mar 1901.

[Cd. 1259], H.C. 1902, xxxvii, 1.

2. Ibid., pp. xxxii and xxxiv.

3. [Cd. 1260], H.C. 1902, xxxvii, 429

for the working classes. 'The conditions under which a considerable proportion of the labouring classes in Birr live could not be more unfavourable' (p.83) .... 'the slum property in Kingstown is one of the worst description, and fit for nothing except demolition' (p.159); these are some of the more vigorous condemnations by medical inspectors of the conditions in the towns they visited. Common features were overcrowding, absence of sanitary conveniences, defective lighting and ventilation, filthy and dilapidated houses with leaking roofs, pigeries and slaughter houses situated among crowded dwellings, and occasionally, polluted water supplies. With the exception of a few towns or districts that were residential in character, most of the urban population was working class and lived in the conditions described. Over them hung the stench of the privy. In Armagh, for example, about 300 of the 1,399 houses had water closets, some 250 to 300 more had well-constructed dry privies, but as for the rest of the primatial city, 'the privies and middens were full of most abominable filth' and had not been emptied for months, in some cases for two years (p.69). Soil and air pollution inevitably occurred. In many towns there were houses without any sanitary conveniences - Lisburn, for example, where the urban council had effected improvements, still, in 1901, possessed 253 houses lacking conveniences (p.174). In a number of districts where the privy was missing, excrement and manure were deposited in yards or on streets, notably in the picturesque Claddagh area of Galway (p.141), in Youghal (p.200) and in Bandon (p.276). In Tandragee, a town of 396 houses, there were seventeen water closets - six of them in the Duke of Manchester's castle and two in the

rectory - but the general sanitary condition was abominable. An analysis of the town's water supply showed it to be unfit for consumption, not surprising since the town well was situated below a churchyard set within highly cultivated and manured land, and since its trap was excrement-covered. Forty-six cases of diphtheria had occurred in the seven months ending 20 February, 1901 (p.233).

Even where water-borne sanitation prevailed there were often grave defects. Sewers in the older portions of towns were porous and contaminated the subsoil, drainage could take place into a river which might assume the character of an open sewer, as in Wexford (p.252), or into the sea near the foreshore as in Bundoran (p.272) and Howth (p.285). The sewage from the 457 houses in Lisburn provided with water closets was discharged in a crude state into the Lagan canal (p.174). Some of the most horrifying passages in the reports deal with the insanitary state of slaughter houses in provincial towns; in many cases the meat was liable to be contaminated, in many others the slaughter houses were breeding spots for disease in the district. Slaughtering was sometimes carried on in dwellings, as in Tralee (two houses, p.247) and Bundoran (p.276). During the years 1889-1898 there were 228 cases of typhus in Tralee. Sanitary authorities had often not adopted bye-laws to control such outrages against public health, or were indifferent to their enforcement. Piggeries, already described as so numerous in Belfast, were to be found in most country towns, reaching incredible numbers like 100 in Kinsale (650 houses, p.169) and in Killarney (820 houses, p.153) and 250 in Nenagh (1,290 houses,

p.189)

The fact that a district was a noted residential area or seaside town was no guarantee of good housing and sanitation. One third of the population of Kingstown was classed as poor, and one water closet or privy and ash-pit commonly served six or more houses (p.158). 'The conditions under which the labouring and working classes of Howth (largely composed of fishermen) live could not be more unfavourable' was the verdict of the medical inspector, who found in one instance ten members of a family sleeping in a room fifteen feet square, and in another, a family of eight in a room thirteen feet by seven feet, and in a third, a family of eleven in a one-roomed cottage (p.285).

In general, housing for the urban working class owed little to municipal enterprise. Belfast (pp.22-7) and Derry (pp.49-58) corporations had built no houses, Dublin 375 corporation houses,<sup>1</sup> and Cork 318 (p.35), Waterford 260 (p.65) and Limerick 44 (p.44). Outside the county boroughs the greatest number of houses built by urban district councils were in the two districts of Pembroke (145 houses, p.193) and Rathmines and Rathgar (62 houses, with plans for 369, p.212), districts which logically should have been included in Dublin. Country towns either built none, or very few, the numbers ranging from seven in Galway to eighty in Kilkenny. The Drogheda corporation's inactivity was all the more un-

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1. Charles Eason, jun., 'The tenement houses of Dublin', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., x, pt.79, 385 (1899).

pardonable in that it derived a large revenue from house property situated in some of the most insanitary areas in the town (p.113). Council housing was in a few cases unsatisfactory; in Kilkenny for instance some of the houses built had no drainage, and sixteen houses repaired had no ashpit or privy accommodation (p.148). A more cheerful picture was presented by Lurgan, where many new four-roomed houses with water closets had been built, largely as the result of the council's two big improvement schemes (p.184).

Working-class housing was also carried out, chiefly in Dublin and the adjacent urban districts, by companies set up for the purpose. Sir Charles Cameron, medical superintendent for Dublin, listed a number of such companies at the beginning of the century; they included the Dublin Artizans' Dwellings Company, the City and Suburban Artizans' Dwellings Company, the Housing of the Poor Company and the Industrial Tenement Company.<sup>1</sup> By 1899 the first-named company had built 1,800 houses, and the other companies between 200 and 300.<sup>2</sup> In addition, houses were built for their employees by railway and tramway companies, by Lord Pembroke, Lord Iveagh and the Guinness Trust.

Housing by such bodies as the Dublin Artizans' Dwellings Company catered for the skilled worker or the better-paid general labourer in steady employment. Rents were as much as 4s. 6d. or 5s. per week, far too high

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1. Sir C.A. Cameron, How the poor live, p.6, Dublin 1904.

2. Charles Eason jun., loc. cit.



for most of the Dublin poor.<sup>1</sup> This company, incidentally, paid a dividend of five per cent on its shares in 1890, and was able to carry over £7,021 9s. 8d. to a reserve fund.<sup>2</sup> The general impression was that working-class housing rents were higher in Dublin and lower in Belfast than in other cities in Great Britain or Ireland,<sup>3</sup> and that a contributory factor was the exorbitant price demanded by Dublin ground landlords. A scheme for clearing ground in Brides Alley cost the corporation close on £12,000 per acre, while in other areas the price varied between £9,120 (Plunkett Street) and £6,500 (Coombe) per acre.<sup>2</sup> The last two areas were let at a yearly rent of £340 to the Dublin Artizans' Dwellings Company, which built 354 houses on them.<sup>4</sup> Even if the ground had been obtained at a reasonable figure, there was still the cost of clearing the site and providing proper drainage, which was bound to make slum clearance and the provision of new buildings in urban areas a much heavier task than the erection of agricultural labourers' cottages.

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1. Charles Dawson, 'The housing of the people, with special reference to Dublin,' in Stat. Soc. Ire., Jn., xi, pt. 81, p.53 (1901). Dublin corporation rents for 84 one-storey cottages in Eccles Street (built 1894-5) were 4s. per week. - Sir C. A. Cameron, Brief history of municipal public health administration in Dublin, 1914, p. 57. Pembroke urban council rents were from 4s. to 4s. 6d. per week. - Supplement to 29th annual report of local government board for Ireland, [Cd. 1290] p.193.

2. Dawson, op. cit., p.48.

3. Ibid., p.53 and Sir, C. A. Cameron, Brief history, p.59.

4. Sir C. A. Cameron, op. cit., p.62.

The cost of new urban housing varied greatly, even in the same town. In Cork, 318 houses had been completed by 1901, at an average cost of £87 per house. 271 houses cost between £71 and £80 each, but forty-seven houses built at Madden's Building cost £138.3 each and eleven houses being built at Harper's Land £545.45 each - a clear case of ground landlords charging the sanitary authority enormous sums for permission to improve public health. Rents charged for council houses in Cork ranged from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per week.<sup>1</sup>

In Waterford 260 cottages were built at an average cost of £127 each (p.60). Houses in country towns in course of erection or recently built cost about £140 each, as in Dundalk (p.122), Enniscorthy (p.132) and Clonmel (p.268), a sum roughly comparable to that for an agricultural labourer's cottage, though in Tullamore it rose to £187.5 (p.242) and in the urban district of Killiney and Ballybrack to £210 (p.155). Such information as is available shows that the town worker paid a higher rent for his new dwelling than did the rural labourer, in Fermoy (p.135) from 2s. to 3s. 6d. per week, in Skibbereen (p.218) 2s. 5d., in Dungannon (p.128) 3s. 6d. (the houses cost £180 each and were occupied by craftsmen) and in Bray (p.89) 1s. 6d. to 4s.

In Dublin the general labourer, the poor and the unemployed were housed in tenements; in Belfast they lived in kitchen houses, or in what were once country cottages, in old areas such as Dock and Smithfield. The

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1. Supplement to the 29th annual report of the local government board for Ireland, 1900-1, [Cd. 1260], H.C.1902, pp.31 and 35. Page references in the rest of the paragraph are to this supplement. r/

greatest housing problem was the provision of accommodation for such low-income groups, a problem virtually untouched at this period. As rents were lower in Belfast and employment prospects better, the situation was not so desperate as in Dublin. Even in tenements in the latter city half-a-crown a week was usually paid for accommodation. The following table is a summary of information about Church Street, a tenement area, at the beginning of the century.

#### Church Street tenements<sup>1</sup>

Houses	74	Total yearly rent of street	£2,365.6.0
No. of rooms in street	532	Poor law valuation of street	£857.10.0
No. of families	370	Average yearly rent per house	£31.19.3.24
No. of rooms per family	1.43	Average valuation per house	£11.11.9.08
Total weekly rent of street	£46.17.1		
Average rent per family	2s.6.39d.		

Thousands of Dublin families had incomes not exceeding fifteen shillings per week and many had as low as ten shillings or less. A tailor, married but with no children, and irregularly employed, paid half-a-crown a week rent out of his wages of ten shillings for accommodation in Dame court. He and his wife lived on two meals a day, a breakfast and a dinner-supper of dry bread and tea, though at the latter meal herrings,

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1. Sir C. A. Cameron, How the poor live, pp. 8, 9.

or sometimes porridge, were added. Shoemakers who, like tailors, were suffering from the competition of imported machine-made wearing apparel, often earned only 15s. to £1 a week, and the highest wage for labourers did not exceed £1.<sup>1</sup> Meat and vegetables were rarely eaten. Condensed skimmed milk (from 1d. to 3d. a tin) was used instead of whole milk, though it was not suitable for infants, and food generally was seriously deficient in fat. Only a skilled housewife could manage to produce a varied diet, especially as cooking facilities in tenements were limited.<sup>2</sup> Four diets, together with details of wages and rent, are given in the accompanying table (p.80).

The charwoman (no.4) showed ingenuity in varying the food for dinner. On Sunday it consisted of bacon, potatoes and cabbage (cost 9d.), on Monday, kalecannon (2½d.), on Tuesday, soup and bread (4d.), on Wednesday, fish and potatoes (4½d.), on Thursday, beef and potatoes (8d.), on Friday, bread and milk (2½d.), and on Saturday, eggs and potatoes (4d.)

The little meat eaten by the poor was usually American bacon (4d. or 5d. per lb.) in the form of pig's cheek or rashers, and dripping was often used as a substitute for butter.<sup>2</sup> The bread eaten was bakers' bread, the four lb. loaf costing 5¼d. in Dublin.<sup>3</sup> Tea, or, less often, cocoa, was the staple drink at meals. Porter consumption was high, for the labourer found one of his few pleasures in drinking his pint of plain in a cheerful public house away from the squalor of the over-crowded tenement.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cameron, How the poor live, pp.4,5. 2. Ibid., pp.11.14.  
 3. Report on wholesale and retail prices in the U.K. in 1902, with comparative statistical tables for a series of years, p.231, H.C. 1903, (321), lxviii.

Weekly income, rent and diet of the Dublin poor<sup>1</sup>

No.	Occupation	Rent	Wages	Number in family	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper	Vegetables
1.	Labourer, 5 Upper Tyrone St.	3s.	About 17s. Irreg.	8	Tea, bread, butter.	Same. (meat on Sun.)	Tea, bread, butter.	Cabbage, potatoes. (Sun.)
2.	Labourer, Murphy's cottages.	3s.	£1 Irreg.	5	ditto	Bacon, vege- tables.	ditto	ditto
3.	Bootmaker, North Anne St.	3s.	18s. when workg.	6	ditto	Bacon or egg, tea, bread.	ditto	ditto
4.	Charwoman, 65 Bridge- foot St.	1s.6d.	9s.	3	ditto	see p.79	ditto	ditto

1. Cameron, op. cit., pp.16-21.

1. Cameron, op.cit., pp.10-11.  
2. Ibid., pp.3-4.

There was little money for clothing when wage levels were so low. Children wore their parents' cast-offs and thousands went barefoot, even in winter. There was a huge trade in second-hand clothing, carried on principally in Patrick Street in the old Liberties. Furniture was a luxury, and it was not uncommon for parents and several children to sleep in one bed; bed-clothes were often filthy, as there was no means of washing blankets.<sup>1</sup> Pawnbrokers were numerous; they advanced from sixpence to two shillings on the pledges, often clothes, pawned on Monday or Tuesday and redeemed on Saturday. In a single year 2,866,084 tickets were issued in Dublin, representing £547,453 in loans - sufficient indication of the hand-to-mouth existence of many, though it should be noted that pawning was not confined to the poor; craftsmen and even white-collar workers resorted to it. As pawnbrokers' interest was limited to 5d. in the £1 per month, the needy were at least protected from the extortion of moneylenders.<sup>2</sup>

Since food claimed the largest possible proportion of wages, rents of more than a couple of shillings were beyond the reach of most working-class families. Semi-official opinion as represented by medical inspectors urged that sanitary authorities should build houses under

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1. Cameron, op.cit., pp.10-11.

2. Ibid., pp.3-4.

the appropriate acts.<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Cameron declared that private enterprise should undertake the construction of dwellings to let at 3s. per week upwards, while the municipality should be responsible for housing at rents from 1s. to 2s. 6d. per week.<sup>2</sup> Charles Dawson proposed that 'the state should ... undertake, or enable the local authority to make provision for the lives of the toilers in the towns...' by means of a loan from the post office savings banks and a municipal tax on holders of consols (holdings amounted to over £750,000,000), a plan which would provide some 30,000 tenements and be the urban equivalent of land reform.<sup>3</sup> He despaired of any proper rehabilitation of Dublin tenement houses which, it was calculated, needed some 7,000 water closets at the rate of one per two families.<sup>4</sup> He estimated that a house bringing in £62 8s. per year would, after ground rent, rates and taxes, the cost of ordinary repairs, dilapidation and loss by vacancies had been deducted, leave £24 18s. per year profit.<sup>5</sup> The houses in Church Street already mentioned no doubt left a smaller margin. In fact there was often a chain of landlords between the lodger and the

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1. See the recommendations of various medical inspectors in the supplement [Cd. 1260] to the twenty-ninth annual report of the local government board for Ireland.

2. Cameron, op. cit., pp.22-23.

3. Dawson, op. cit., pp.56, 51, 54.

4. Ibid., p.49. An estimate of the public health committee when commenting on recommendation of the vice-regal committee (1900).

5. Ibid., p.50.

ultimate owner,<sup>1</sup> with a consequent encouragement of rack-renting and a discouragement of any expenditure on repairs. In spite of a multiplicity of reports, plans and recommendations, little was done, for there were still 5,322 tenement houses in 1914 (as against 6,195 in 1903) and in 1161 of them there was one water closet only for 20 or more people.<sup>2</sup>

The report recommended a series of measures to develop the country's natural resources by the reclamation and improvement of land, the raising of rural living standards, assistance in emigrating to those who could not find work at home, and the provision of a temporary palliative for the sick, aged and infirm. The recommendations were disregarded and the passing of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1839 was followed by the division of the country into 163 poor law unions (between 1840 and 1842) and the erection of workhouses. Relief in the first instance could be given only to those willing to enter these forbidding, barracks-like structures, but in 1847 famine conditions compelled the authorities to grant outdoor relief in certain cases - destitute poor persons permanently or temporarily disabled, and destitute poor widows having two or more legitimate children dependent on them. Able-bodied destitute persons might also

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1. Eason, op. cit., pp.394-5. For two months, but apart

2. 'Report of the departmental committee of inquiry into the housing of the Dublin working classes' quoted in James Connolly, Labour in Ireland, Maunsel and Roberts (1922), p.339. Figure for 1903, Cameron, op. cit., p.7.

3. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, pp.2-3, [Ed. 1839], H.C. and H.L. 1839, 1.

4. Ibid., p.13.

5. Ibid., p.14.



## 7. POOR RELIEF

The provision of organised state relief for the poor in Ireland dates from the early nineteenth century. In 1836 a royal commission issued a report advising against the introduction of the English poor law system on the grounds that the central problem was lack of employment and not, as it was assumed to be the case in England, unwillingness on the part of the able-bodied to work. The report recommended a series of measures to develop the country's natural resources by the reclamation and improvement of land, the raising of rural living standards, assistance in emigrating to those who could not find work (this was regarded as a temporary palliative), and compulsory provision for the sick, aged and infirm.<sup>1</sup> The commission's recommendations were disregarded and the passing of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1838 was followed by the division of the country into 163 poor law unions (reduced after 1884 to 159) and the erection of workhouses.<sup>2</sup> Relief in the first instance could be given only to those willing to enter these forbidding, barrack-like structures, but in 1847 famine conditions compelled the authorities to grant outdoor relief in certain cases - destitute poor persons permanently or temporarily disabled, and destitute poor widows having two or more legitimate children dependent on them. Able-bodied destitute persons might also be given relief (in food only) for two months, but apart from the classes previously mentioned, outdoor relief was restricted, except in times of unusual distress.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, pp.2-3, [Cd. 3202], H.C. and H.L. 1906, i.

2. *Ibid.*, p.16.

3. *Ibid.*, p.14.

The system under which relief, whether indoor or outdoor, was given, remained unchanged save for minor modifications for the rest of the century. Alterations in the poor law machinery were made in 1872, when the local government board for Ireland took the place of the poor law commissioners, and in 1898, when, as a consequence of the local Government (Ireland) Act, boards of guardians ceased to be rating and public health authorities but kept their powers and duties in the administration of poor relief.

The total number of persons receiving relief (indoor and outdoor) at the end of the nineteenth century amounted to about 100,000, or slightly over two per cent of the population. A count on 11 March 1905 of inmates of workhouses (and fever hospitals) gave a total of 45,195, the highest figure for any Saturday in the year ending 31 March 1905 (the lowest was 39,356 and the mean between these two was 43,586). The total was made up of the following classes:

Workhouse Inmates (year ending 31 March 1905) <sup>1</sup>		
1. Sick (medical and surgical)	13,856	} 14,491
(fevered and infectious)	635	
2. Aged and infirm		14,380
3. Children (legitimate, illegitimate, deserted)		5,900
4. Insane and epileptic		3,165
5. Mothers of illegitimate children		2,129
6. 'Able-bodied' paupers (casuals, tramps etc.)		4,667

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1. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, pp.16-17.

2. Ibid., ii (appendix), pp.22-3.

A regrouping of the classes shows that about 40 per cent were mentally or physically sick, about 44 per cent aged, infirm or children, and only 10 per cent 'able-bodied paupers'. During the financial year ending 31 March 1904 the average cost of maintaining an inmate was £18 9s. 4d., or about 7s. 1d. per week.<sup>1</sup>

Outdoor relief was granted to a slightly larger number of people. The daily average during the years 1896-1905 varied from 54,469 (1897) to 64,604 (1899), but was generally about 57,000.<sup>2</sup> The total number on outdoor relief on 11 March 1905 was 55,670; a breakdown of this total shows that they were in the following classes:

Number on outdoor relief (11 March 1905)<sup>3</sup>

1. Adult males permanently disabled by old age or infirmity	8,346	
Their families	5,214	13,560
2. Adult males relieved in cases of sickness or accident	1,717	
Their families	5,426	7,143
3. Adult women permanently disabled by old age or infirmity	21,308	
Their children	233	21,541
4. Adult women relieved in cases of sickness or accident	1,095	
Their children	761	1,856
5. Able-bodied widows having two or more dependent legitimate children	2,790	
Their children	9,175	11,965
6. Lunatics, idiots, their depend- ants, orphans		308

1. Op. cit., ii (appendix), p.135.

2. Ibid., i, p.65.

3. Ibid., ii (appendix), pp.32-3.

The average weekly amount granted per head was 1s. 3d. during the years 1896-8, 1s. 2d, in 1899 and 1s. 4d, in 1900-06.<sup>1</sup>

The system of indoor and outdoor relief was grossly unsatisfactory. The general mixed workhouse might, in most cases, be 'clean and sanitary, and the food, clothing and warmth ... sufficient to maintain the inmates in physiological health', but the very basis of their organisation was demoralising. The huge establishments of Dublin (North Dublin with 3139 inmates and South Dublin with 4105) and Belfast (3672 inmates exclusive of 147 in the fever hospital) contained sick, aged, infirm, lunatics, imbeciles, sane and insane epileptics (some of the former in lunatic wards), children with or without their mothers, casuals, tramps, and able-bodied adults who were 'work-shy' or genuinely unemployed.<sup>2</sup> Proper segregation of these classes was impossible, but though the general mixed workhouse had been condemned by the royal commission of 1834 no attempt was made to replace it by specialised institutions. The vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland made recommendations in 1906, to this effect, but they were disregarded.

The administration of outdoor relief was in practice indiscriminate, unconditional and inadequate; indiscriminate in that little attempt was made to distinguish between the various classes of applicants; unconditional in so far as few authorities insisted on minimum standards of hygiene and sanitation in the homes of recipients; inadequate, as the average weekly amount paid per person

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1. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, i, p.65.

2. *Ibid.*, ii (appendix), pp. 8-9, 14-15.

could not possibly maintain him. Poverty replaced absolute destitution as the test and the shilling or two of relief money became one item, sufficient perhaps to pay the rent of a cabin or room, in the applicant's income, which might consist principally of charitable doles or casual earnings. The horror of the workhouse was sufficient to prevent many accepting admission to it when it was offered instead of outdoor relief, for, apart from the stigma attached to the pauper institution, it would mean the break-up of families - separation of husband and wife or parents and children. Voluntary charitable agencies could deal only with individual cases and abuses of both private and public poor relief could occur side by side with the existence of real destitution. There was no attempt to provide unemployment relief - a partial beginning was made by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 - though some guardians might connive at occasional departures from the rules prohibiting outdoor relief to the able-bodied. Unemployed members of skilled unions received benefit for varying periods provided they were fully paid up, but the labourers, unorganised or in unions which could not pay benefit in return for small dues, were dependent on charity.

15,489 during the year ending 31 December 1905. The

1. Report on departmental organisation on local government in Northern Ireland, p.18. Government of Northern Ireland, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1927, Cmd. 73.

2. Ibid., p.18.

3. Report of the vice-regal commission on public law reform in Ireland, 11 (appendix), pp.36, 74.

4. Ibid., pp.73, 77.

## 8. MEDICAL SERVICES

There were three categories of hospital accommodation in Ireland - workhouse infirmaries and fever hospitals, county infirmaries, voluntary hospitals. Every poor law union had its infirmary, forming part of or attached to the workhouse, and like it, financed by the poor rate. Patients entering such poor law hospitals did so with the legal status of paupers.<sup>1</sup> There were in addition thirty-four county infirmaries maintained partly by voluntary subscription, grants from county funds and payments from patients; admission to them was left in the hands of governors, who admitted an applicant if satisfied that 'such a person was a proper object for the said charity'.<sup>2</sup> By section 90 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, boards of guardians could remove the pauper stigma from workhouse infirmaries by converting them into district hospitals and placing them under the control of committees of governors, of whom two-thirds must be members of boards of guardians.<sup>1</sup>

The workhouse infirmaries on 1 December 1905 had 13,706 patients (including 1554 tuberculosis and 164 midwifery cases); during the year ending 30 November 1905 the total number admitted was 79,800.<sup>3</sup> County infirmaries had far fewer patients, 974 on 1 January 1906 and 15,489 during the year ending 31 December 1905.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. Report on departmental commission on local government in Northern Ireland, p.13. Government of Northern Ireland, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1927, Cmd. 73.

2. Ibid., p.16.

3. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, ii (appendix), pp.66, 74.

4. Ibid., pp.76,77.

2. Report of the vice-regal commission (poor law), i, p.23

workhouse infirmaries were often unsuitable structurally as hospitals, their equipment was poor, the medical staff was overworked and underpaid, and in workhouses where there were no nurses, nursing was carried out by able-bodied pauper inmates. The office of 'nurse' was not separately constituted by law in Irish workhouses until 1895, but no real effort was made to replace the pauper attendant until, on the suggestion of a philanthropic body, the Irish Workhouse Association, the government under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, agreed to pay one half of the salary of one trained nurse in every poor law union. In 1900 only 77 of the 159 unions had appointed such a nurse (nine of them had been trained under a scheme financed by the Countess of Pembroke); two unions, however, had made greater progress, for pauper nursing had been abolished some years earlier in Cootehill union hospital (Co. Cavan) and in Belfast the guardians were substituting non-pauper probationers.<sup>1</sup>

The number of patients was unduly swollen by the admission of aged and infirm, bed-ridden or feeble, who in the view of the vice-regal commissioners were not in need of medical attention or skilled nursing but who would have been neglected if placed in the healthy infirm wards; these amounted to about half the total number of cases.<sup>2</sup> County infirmaries were generally of a higher standard, but some were little better than the average union infirmary.

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1. Laura Stephens, 'Irish Workhouses', in Social Service handbook for Ireland, first ser., ed. J. Paterson Smyth for the Church of Ireland Social Service Union, Dublin & London 1901.

2. Report of the vice-regal commission (poor law), i, p. 23

The care of the mentally afflicted was the responsibility of the district asylums, which in 1906 numbered 24.<sup>1</sup> The service developed from the Lunacy (Ireland) Act of 1821 under which local boards of governors administered the asylums under the supervision of a central commission. In 1898 county councils, acting through asylum committees, replaced the earlier bodies. Asylum expenses were paid out of grand jury presentment until 1875, when parliamentary grants were made on the basis of half the actual cost of maintenance up to a maximum of four shillings per head per week; after 1898 grants were paid out of the Irish local taxation account.<sup>2</sup> But even lunatics did not escape the poor law, for boards of guardians maintained in the general mixed workhouse over 3000 lunatics and idiots (11 March 1905) and at least 6000 distinctly feeble-minded who needed appropriate treatment. Thus the boards of guardians had under their own charge half as many mentally defective persons as the asylum committees.<sup>3</sup>

Neither district asylums nor county infirmaries were part of the poor law, which also did not include the dispensary system. By the Poor Relief Act of 1851, popularly known as the Medical Charities Act., every poor law union was divided into districts under the care of the boards of guardians, who provided dispensaries, medicines and medical appliances. Dispensary committees appointed medical officers and midwives and

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1. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, ii (appendix), p.170.

2. Report of departmental commission on local government in Northern Ireland, pp.17-18.

3. National committee for the break-up of the poor law, The minority report of the poor law commission, 1909, i, p.299



would issue, as did also the relieving officer and warden for the district, tickets enabling poor persons to receive medical treatment and medicine either at their own homes or at the dispensary.<sup>1</sup> But the system was in practice most unsatisfactory. Medical officers were appointed in a part-time capacity with ill-defined duties, and at nominal salaries ranging from five to twenty-five pounds per year, their real income being derived from private practice.<sup>2</sup> About two and a half million of the population were attended under poor law provisions,<sup>3</sup> but though the vice-regal commission advised the establishment of a state medical service, this, like almost all the other recommendations, was disregarded.

Tuberculosis was widespread in Ireland, fostered by poor living and working conditions in rural and urban slums. During the year ending 30 November 1905, 6446 tubercular patients were admitted to workhouse infirmaries.<sup>4</sup> Belfast led the way for the treatment of this disease with the establishment in 1880 of the Provident Institution for Chest Diseases (Donegall Street); in 1896, owing to the efforts of a Quaker business man, Forster Green, the institution was incorporated as the Forster Green hospital (Knockbreda). In 1904 the Belfast poor law guardians acquired a site at Whiteabbey for the erection of a sanatorium, an action which William Walker, the Belfast labour leader, claimed was the result of his advocacy.<sup>5</sup> In 1907 Lady Aberdeen (wife of the lord lieutenant) was responsible for the holding of a tuberculosis exhibition

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1. Report of the departmental commission on local government in Northern Ireland, p. 10.
  2. J. Fleetwood, History of medicine in Ireland, pp. 202-3.
  3. Ibid., p. 309.
  4. Report of the vice-regal commission on poor law reform in Ireland, ii (appendix). 74.
  5. J. Fleetwood, op. cit., pp. 223-4; municipal election address (6 Jan. 1911) of William Walker.

in Dublin which aroused public interest, but sanatorium accommodation remained inadequate for many years; one useful result of the exhibition was the establishment of a nursing service for the tubercular poor.<sup>1</sup>

A qualitatively important part in the provision of medical care was taken by voluntary and charitable institutions. The principal voluntary hospitals were in the larger towns - Belfast, Dublin and Cork. The Rotunda hospital, an eighteenth century foundation, was a noted maternity centre in Dublin and provided a large extern midwifery service in the poorer districts around it.<sup>2</sup> In Belfast, where industrial accidents were common, the Royal hospital (renamed after 1899 the Royal Victoria) received regular subscriptions from employees of the principal firms through the agency of a workingmen's committee and a hospital Saturday fund; among the trade union organisations participating was the Belfast trades council.<sup>3</sup> The Mater Infirmorum hospital was similarly aided.

The great Dublin brewing firm of Arthur Guinness and Son provided extensive social services for its employees.<sup>4</sup> Pensions were already being paid before the middle of the nineteenth century to workmen and their widows, and by 1900 the non-contributory scheme allowed a man a pension of two-thirds of his annual wage after forty years' service. The elaborate health provisions included a free dispensary and domiciliary service for employees and their dependants, free hospital treatment and sick pay; other benefits included maternity grants, free protective foods for children and low-cost housing.

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address (6 Jan. 1911) of William Walker. **1.** Fleetwood, op. cit. p. 310.

**2.** The number of deliveries 'on the district' averaged nearly 2,000 a year. Fleetwood, op. cit., p. 149.

**3.** R. Marshall, Fifty years on the Grosvenor road, pp. 100-02; B.T.C. minutes, May 1886 and passim.

**4.** Guinness guide, social services; P. Lynch and J. Vaizey, Guinness's brewery in the Irish economy, pp. 237-8.

## 9. EDUCATION

In 1831 a system of national primary education was introduced, making provision for aid to primary (known henceforward as 'national') schools. The system was administered by a board of seven commissioners, whose aim was 'mixed' education: i.e. that children of different religious denominations should be educated in the same schools. Schools which were built with the aid of a grant from the board had to be vested in trustees responsible to the commissioners; non-vested schools were those built by local effort, and in this period the board's financial obligations to them were limited to payment of part of the teachers' salaries and a supply of free books. Controversy over the interpretation of the board's regulations about religious instruction, in which the presbyterian synod of Ulster was particularly prominent, led to the virtual abandonment of 'mixed' education by 1840 and the effective control of schools by the local managers (usually clergymen), subject to the general regulations of the board.<sup>1</sup>

Though the commissioners held to their original system of separate religious and combined literary instruction, by 1901 'mixed' schools were a small minority of the total. At that date, 368,835 catholic and 114,311 protestant children were being taught in schools attended by one denomination only; in schools partly or wholly staffed by protestant teachers there were 9511 catholic children, and in schools wholly staffed by catholics, 9555 protestant children. Less

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1. T. O Raifeartaigh, 'Mixed education and the synod of Ulster, 1831-40', in I.H.S., ix, 2 81-99 (Mar.1955).

than two per cent of the total number of catholic children attended schools where there were any protestant children.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1848 and 1867 the commissioners opened a number of model schools, which they controlled and financed. The schools had the double purpose of training pupil teachers and of exemplifying the best in primary education. The syllabus in such schools was more ambitious than that current in the national schools. But in the second half of the century they too ceased to be in practice non-denominational, for catholic children no longer attended them except in areas where there was a shortage of catholic schools.<sup>2</sup>

The 1892 Act<sup>3</sup> contained clauses to make attendance compulsory from 1 January 1894, but owing to various defects they were not enforceable, and in any case applied only to municipal boroughs, towns or townships under commissioners. The passing of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, remedied such defects and enabled any rural district council, by a request to the appropriate county council, to make attendance compulsory in its area; a county council could, by resolution, enforce attendance over the whole county.<sup>4</sup> There were still 35 of the 120 urban districts where attendance was not compulsory; in the rural districts only one (Roscrea union) out of 213 enforced the attendance clauses.<sup>5</sup> The average attendance, including children who made less than 75 attendances at school in the year, was 69.1% as against 82.17% in England and

1. G. Balfour, The educational system of Great Britain and Ireland (2nd ed.), p. 109.

2. See appendix 8 for a fuller account.

3. Irish Education Act, 1892, 55 & 56 Vic., cap. 42.

4. Guide to the law relating to school attendance and employment of children in Ireland, Dublin 1900, p.22. The Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, established county and district councils, and by definition of terms in the Irish Education Act, 1892, empowered them to finance school attendance committees.

5. C.H. Oldham, 'Impending changes in Irish education', in Stat. Soc. Ire., Jn., xi, pt. 81, p. 6 (1901).

Wales and 82.92% in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

The attendance requirements of the 1892 act were modest. Briefly, children between the ages of 6 and 11, or between 11 and 14 if they had not attained a prescribed standard (fifth class, first stage in national schools) in reading, writing and arithmetic, were required to attend a national or other efficient school for 75 days in each half year. Children could not be employed under the age of 11, except at sowing and harvest times; between 11 and 14 they could be employed as half-timers in a factory or workshop, even though they had not attained the prescribed educational standard, provided they attended school on alternate days. Attendance was not compulsory after the age of 11 if the principal teacher of the school gave the child a certificate of proficiency; there were also other grounds (distance, sickness, domestic necessity) on which attendance could be excused.<sup>2</sup>

Only 34% of children between the ages of 6 and 14 made attendances of 150 days or over in the school year 1900-01.<sup>3</sup> There were no doubt many cases in which children were kept away from school in order to help with work on farms or in the home, or because of inadequate clothing, but the condition of many school buildings was so bad that there was little inducement

1. G. Balfour, The educational system of Great Britain and Ireland (2nd ed.) p.109.

2. 55 and 56 Vic., cap.42, s.1.

3. Census of Ireland, 1901, general report, table 160, p.571.

for the child to attend. Of 8542 national schools, 2068 had out-offices which were middling or bad as regards cleanliness, 823 schools had none of any kind, 2411 needed building repairs, 2590 had poor or inadequate furniture and apparatus, 2344 had inadequate premises and playgrounds, while 1577 had no playgrounds at all. 1713 schools were crowded.<sup>1</sup>

Statistics cannot by themselves describe the misery of children in such schools. In summer they suffered from bad ventilation, in winter from damp and cold. A school inspector in the Galway group described the scene in schools in his district in a report dated 10 February 1898:

A very large proportion of the children of this province is poorly fed and very poorly clad. It is painful to see ... little groups of barefooted boys and girls, miserably clad, trying to make their way on a winter's morning to the neighbouring school ... My experience, and it is extensive, is that the schoolroom which awaits most children after their walk over black roads or paths, is a cold cheerless apartment. Some sods of turf have been placed on the hearth and lighted, but as yet they give no heat, nothing but a mass of smoke. One day last January - and this day and the school may be taken as typical of many others - I was examining in such a cheerless room as that which I have above described. As the children came in they sat - quiet, melancholy and miserable-looking, in the desks. I was glad to keep on my overcoat, and I also had the advantage of moving about. The sods of turf - there were not many - though 'lighted' about ten o'clock, smouldered away, but showed none of the usual appearance of a fire; no blaze, no heat - until half-past eleven. Even then the fire added little or

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1. Prof. A. Roche, M.R.C.P.I., 'The sanitary condition of our national schools', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., x, pt. 80, 545-6 (1900).

nothing to the heat of the room, but owing to the presence of the children the room began to get moderately warm.<sup>1</sup>

Another report, from Ballinamore (Co. Leitrim) describes seventeen schools in the district which were classified as bad. 'They are, for the most part, wretched hovels, thatched, unceiled, with rugged clay floors, imperfectly lighted, and still more imperfectly ventilated, and provided with neither offices nor playground; they are poorly furnished, afford inadequate accommodation, and offer no facilities for teaching.'<sup>2</sup>

Schools in bad condition were to be found in all four provinces, in relatively prosperous counties as well as congested and impoverished districts. Reports made during the year 1898 mention unsatisfactory buildings in Cork, Tipperary, Dublin, Antrim and Down as well as in more remote counties such as Cavan and Clare.<sup>3</sup> Defective schools were numerous in rural areas, but they were also to be found in Dublin and Belfast. One inspector said that though twenty-one schools had been enlarged in Belfast, there was still overcrowding, and some half-a-dozen schools were 'of such defective construction and ill-chosen situations that they would bring reproach upon any district'.<sup>4</sup> Even in 1907, though overcrowding was not general there were still schools with no playgrounds, with insufficient light and ventilation, and sanitary accommodation poor or in a bad state.

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1. Roche, op. cit., p.541.

2. Ibid., p.544.

3. Ibid., pp.540-5.

4. Ibid., p.543.

One school (Jennymount) in a district containing linen mills, had four unheated class rooms, and as the majority of the pupils were half-timers the school was frequently overcrowded.<sup>1</sup> In Dublin, where the population had increased only slowly, overcrowding was not as serious as in Belfast, but 'in nearly all the schools visited the amount of sanitary accommodation was found to be inadequate...'. There were usually no lavatory basins and the playgrounds were in some instances too small.<sup>2</sup>

Irish national schools were attended by over 800,000 pupils, whereas secondary schools of various kinds had in 1901 only 35,373 pupils.<sup>3</sup> It is true that the number in secondary schools had increased since 1891, when it was only 24,271, but it was still less than five per cent of the primary school population.

As post-primary education was beyond the reach of virtually all the children of the Irish working class, the primary school was their only environment outside their own homes; in many cases it was little better. By 1901 such schools were generally vested in trustees who received building grants of two-thirds of the cost of erection but who were responsible for their maintenance, or were vested in the board, who undertook maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. H.W. Bailie, Report on the health of the county borough of Belfast for the year 1907, p.235.

2. Supplement to the twenty-ninth annual report of the local government board for Ireland, [Cd. 1290], pp.17-18.

3. Census of Ireland 1901, general report, p.61.

4. G. Balfour, *op. cit.*, p.86.

1. Keefe, *op. cit.*, p.846.



Under the denominational system of education the responsibility for heating, lighting and cleaning the school was in the first instance that of the manager, but in practice the teacher was expected to take charge of such matters. Parents in many rural districts were required to supply fuel, and a not uncommon sight was a child setting out with a sod of turf for the school fire. Though schools vested in the board of commissioners of national education were better kept than non-vested schools, in some of them the walls were bare and grimy, the roofs cobwebby, and the windows dirty. In the words of a report dealing with schools in Tipperary '...bareness and squalor, unrelieved by any touch of care or adornment, are the prevailing features. The houses of the Irish peasantry are not remarkable for order and cleanliness, and at school they see little to improve them in this respect...'. Another report made the serious complaint that ~~some~~ recently-built schools were rapidly falling into bad repair owing to faulty planning and construction, and that the two-thirds grant by the commissioners had probably covered the whole cost, the local manager not having raised the remaining one-third. In non-vested schools repairs had sometimes to be made by the unfortunate teacher, who had the task of raising funds.

The poor material conditions of many school buildings might have been improved if hygiene had formed a part of the syllabus, but in fact it was taught in only one of the five training colleges and only 211 children passed in this subject in 1898.<sup>1</sup>

Irish education generally suffered from an undue

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1. Roche, op. cit., p.546.

emphasis on literature and mathematics, a defect which prompted a remark by the President of the Irish Trades Union Congress at the Cork congress (1895) that 'to judge by the present provision for intermediate and higher education in Ireland, it would seem as if all the youth of the country were destined to be clergymen, physicians, lawyers or civil servants'.<sup>1</sup> Students of science in Ireland in 1889-90 numbered 9531, and grants earned amounted to £7286; in 1897-8 the numbers had fallen to 3787 and the grants to £2108. In the same period in England and Wales numbers rose from 91,246 to 154,383 and grants from £75,684 to £167,414.<sup>2</sup> The national primary syllabus consisted chiefly of the three R's, and virtually no effort was made to give the elements of practical training. Drawing was taught half-heartedly in a few schools, and handicrafts were almost entirely ignored.<sup>3</sup> Earlier in the nineteenth century the national board had encouraged the study of agriculture and horticulture and even attached model farms to some schools, but governmental opposition in the seventies led to their abandonment.<sup>4</sup> In many primary schools rural science was largely an affair of textbooks, without practical work.

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1. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., (1895) p.13.

2. Department of agriculture and technical instruction for Ireland, Ireland; industrial and agricultural, 1902, p.160.

3. C.Dawson, 'The want of practical and industrial education in Irish national schools', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., x, pt.76, 216-27 (1896).

4. Department of agriculture and technical instruction for Ireland, op. cit., pp.139-42.

The gap left by the absence of scientific and practical training in secondary and primary schools in Ireland was not filled by technical education. Outside Dublin and Belfast it scarcely existed. In Great Britain, schools and classes came into being rapidly and in great numbers with the aid of exchequer grants under the local Customs and Excise Act of 1890. In Ireland, such grants went to the national and intermediate boards of education. The local authorities elected following the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, had power, under the Technical Instruction Act, 1889 (amended 1891 and 1892), to levy a penny rate for such purpose, but few exercised this right.<sup>1</sup> Trade unionists were particularly conscious of the need for technical education; it was the subject of a resolution at the first annual congress of the Irish Trades Union Congress in 1894, when J.P. Dunne, a Dublin compositor, moved

that this congress, recognising the great advantages conferred by technical education, and the appreciative stimulus given to same in all other portions of the Kingdom, hereby expresses regret at the apathy displayed by Irish local authorities in the extension and administration of the Technical Education Act, 1889, whereby our native artisans are severely handicapped in the race for national industrial supremacy.

The motion asked that classes should be established in trade union institutes rather than in centralised schools, and an addendum, moved by T. Kilkenny, a

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1. H.M. Thompson, 'Technical education in Ireland', in *New Ireland Review*, pp. 1 - 14, (Sept. 1902). / xviii

Dublin bookbinder, insisted, in the craft union hereditary tradition, that such education 'be confined to members of the particular craft concerned in the instruction given'.<sup>1</sup> The resolution was passed unanimously.

A general indication of the state of Irish education is given by an estimate of the amount of public and trust money available in the United Kingdom in 1901. In England and Wales there was £18,505,729, in Scotland £2,864,811, in Ireland £1,614,771.<sup>2</sup> Per head of population the figures were: England and Wales 11s.1d., Scotland 12s.10d., and Ireland 7s.3d., leaving Ireland once again the poor relation in the United Kingdom family.<sup>3</sup>

Some progress had been made in raising educational standards in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, but even in 1901 fifty per cent of the national school teachers were still untrained.<sup>4</sup> A revision of the primary school syllabus, with greater emphasis on manual instruction, drawing and domestic science, was made in 1900, and the salaries of teachers placed on a more satisfactory basis by the substitution of salary

1. Freeman's Journal, 30 April 1894.

2. G.Balfour, The educational systems of Great Britain and Ireland, (2nd ed.), p.292.

3. Population figures: England and Wales 32,527,843, Scotland 4,472,103, Ireland 4,458,775. R.E.Mattheson, 'The principal results of the census of the United Kingdom in 1901', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., xi, 85, 210 (1904).

4. G.Balfour, *op. cit.*, p.102.

grades for the results system.<sup>1</sup> A beginning was made in the expansion of technical education at the same time by a grant of £55,000 per annum to local authorities under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.<sup>2</sup> Few of these changes, however, were far-reaching, and they came at a time when they were commonplaces in other countries; Ireland as a consequence entered the twentieth century with an educational system notably inferior to that of her neighbours.

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1. C.H. Oldham, 'The bearing on industry of the impending changes in Irish education', in Stat. Soc. Ire. Jn., xi, 81, (1900) p.4.

2. Ibid., p.5.

## 10. THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The co-operative movement in Ireland was largely agricultural in character, in marked contrast to the movement in Great Britain, where consumers' co-operatives were dominant. The Owenite community which started in 1831 at Rahaline, County Clare, was an example of full-scale co-operative farming, and though during the two years of its existence it was remarkably successful (its failure was the result of the gambling propensities of the landlord from whom the community was buying the estate) it attracted no imitators in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The first co-operative societies were stores on the English model, one of which was started by Sir Horace Plunkett, but when he returned from America in 1888 he soon turned his efforts towards agricultural societies, in particular co-operative creameries. These creameries grew steadily in numbers, assisted by the Irish Agricultural Society (reformed in 1894) which provided help in accounting and other technical matters. Much valuable work was done by such societies and by co-operative credit societies, especially in the congested districts, where they helped to break the power of the gombeen man, but in the main their membership was drawn from the farming class; there was no plan in these producers' co-operatives for the agricultural labourer, nor for the urban worker.

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1. L. Smith-Gordon and L.C. Staples, Rural reconstruction in Ireland, pp. 36-7; J. Connolly, Labour in Irish history, chap. 11.

2. See Smith-Gordon and Staples, Rural reconstruction in Ireland, p. 59.

In 1899 there were 364 Irish co-operative societies, of which eight only were clearly consumers' co-operatives.<sup>1</sup> Six - Belfast, Lisburn, Londonderry, Equitable, Lurgan, Portadown, Suffolk (Dunmurry) - were in Ulster, one in Leinster - the Inchicore Co-operative in Dublin - and one in Munster - the Shamrock Co-operative Store in Blarney. The membership ranged from 92 (Dunmurry) to 640 (Belfast), and sales ranged from £1,696 (Lurgan) to £11,789 (Belfast). Most of these consumers' co-operatives had been started in the eighties and nineties and practically all were in large towns. It is not surprising that the most successful were in manufacturing towns, for in country towns the population was engaged chiefly in the distributive trades, and it was impossible to expect co-operative members to be recruited either from the employers or employees. The Blarney store was connected with an agricultural co-operative and the Inchicore society, founded in 1859, relied largely on railway workers. Co-operation took root with difficulty among the very poor;<sup>2</sup> it thrived best among industrial workers who could contribute share capital and had experience gained in trade union work, together with leisure time outside working hours in which they could attend to the work of organisation. In 1899 the Inchicore society

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1. Report of the chief registrar of friendly societies for the year ending 31 December 1899, pp.160-183, 1900, (30 - 1) lxxxix, pt. B, appendix K (L). Smith-Gordon and Staples, op. cit., p.278, give 424 as the total of all co-operative societies, but this includes auxiliary societies not separately registered.

2. See Smith-Gordon and Staples, Rural reconstruction in Ireland, p.39.

though it had sales amounting to £11,084, almost as much as the Belfast society, had 197 members only; its potential membership was much less than that of Belfast, which could draw on the large numbers of industrial workers in the city. Northern societies were also distinguished (except Dunmurry) by their allocation of money for the education of members.

The natural difficulties facing the co-operative store movement were increased by a clash between the English Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society over certain Co-operative Wholesale Society creameries in Ireland. The battle was fought out at an 1895 co-operative congress and led to the separation of the Irish section of the Co-operative Union and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. The organisation of consumers' co-operatives on the Rochdale pattern in urban areas was then left to the Co-operative Union, either through its north-western section or through an Irish sectional board called the Irish Co-operative Conference Association. Substantially the Irish Co-operative Conference Association was composed of northern societies and retained close links with the English and Scottish bodies.<sup>1</sup>

It was natural that the co-operative movement should meet with the hostility of traders; indeed as early as 1888 a Scottish traders' organisation inserted in Irish newspapers warnings of the dangers of co-operation, and

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1. Smith-Gordon and Staples, op. cit., pp. 204-10.

2. Smith-Gordon and Staples, op. cit., pp. 204-10.

3. Report of the chief registrar of co-operative societies for the year ending 31 Dec. 1899, pp. 105-106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.



the Doneraile society, started in the following year, was boycotted by wholesale houses. Local bakers often refused to supply societies, who imported bread from England and Scotland until they were able to build their own bakeries.<sup>1</sup> The unionist and nationalist press was also generally hostile; the nationalist party, which included many shopkeepers in its organisation, especially in towns, declared itself against co-operation in 1904, when John Redmond said that 'the real object of the co-operative movement ... is to undermine the National Party and divert the minds of our people from Home Rule, which is the only thing which can ever lead to a real revival of Irish industries'.<sup>2</sup>

The following table<sup>3</sup> gives a summary of the co-operative movement in Great Britain and Ireland in 1899:

Country	Number of members	Goods sold
England and Wales	1,389,628	£54,405,551
Scotland	272,118	£14,884,704
Ireland	23,388	£ 778,498

The weakness of the co-operative movement in Ireland is emphasised by the strength of the Scottish movement, with over ten times as many members and nearly twenty times the value in goods sold, though the populations in both countries were roughly equal.

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1. For the difficulties of the Doneraile society see Smith-Gordon and Staples, op. cit., p.42, and of the Belfast society, Belfast trades and labour council, Souvenir of the Trades Union Congress (1929), p.67.

2. Smith-Gordon and Staples, op. cit., p.201.

3. Report of the chief registrar of friendly societies for the year ending 31 Dec.1899, pp.194-5, 1900, (30 -sess.1), lxxxi, pt. B, appendix (L.)

## 11. IRISH POLITICAL PARTIES

The parliamentary representation of Ireland at Westminster during the last decade of the nineteenth century was divided between home rulers and unionists. The split in the Irish parliamentary party which followed the Parnell-O'Shea divorce case produced two nationalist groups, Parnellite and anti-Parnellite, a situation which lasted from 1891 to 1900. The strength of the combined groups remained remarkably steady, varying from 80 to 81, and the total home rule strength was increased to 82 from 1895 onwards with the return of a solitary liberal. Unionist strength reached its maximum in 1892 with 23 M.P.s, but did not fall below 21 in the remaining elections of the decade. The distribution of the 103 Irish seats among the groups is shown in the following table:

Irish general election results 1892-1900<sup>1</sup>

	1892	1895	1900
Anti-Parnellites	71	70	-
Parnellites	9	11	-
Nationalists	-	-	81
Liberal Home Rulers	-	1	1
Unionists	23	21	21

Irish election results were as stable geographically as numerically. Unionist strength was centred in the north-easter/counties, where the unionists could count n/ on all four seats in Antrim, three out of four in Down,

1. F.S.L.Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party, 1890-1910, p. 130.

1. Lyons, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

two out of three in Armagh, both seats in Derry, one out of four in Tyrone, and one of the two Fermanagh seats; in Belfast three of the four seats invariably returned unionists. Debatable seats were West Belfast, Derry City and North Tyrone. In the rest of Ireland Dublin University returned two unionists unfailingly, while South Dublin and to a lesser extent St Stephen's Green (Dublin city) were possible unionist seats. The minimum unionist total was therefore 18 and the maximum 23. Contests in West Belfast and Derry city were extremely close, and the registration of voters by the party machines was almost as important as the work done on polling day. North Tyrone was held from 1895 onwards by a liberal home ruler who could defeat a unionist by a combination of protestant and catholic votes unobtainable by a nationalist candidate. St Stephen's Green was a nationalist seat except in the case of a split nationalist vote, which occurred in 1892 and 1895. South Dublin, a middle-class and chiefly protestant area outside the artificial city boundary, was unionist in the absence of unionist dissensions.<sup>1</sup>

Another feature of Irish elections was the large number of uncontested seats. In 1892 no contests took place in 20 constituencies, but this abnormally low figure is explained by fights between Parnellites and anti-Parnellites and the intervention of unionist candidates hoping to take advantage of nationalist dissensions. The figures for 1895 and 1900, 61 and 71 respectively, are more representative; in 1895, 15 of the 21 unionists were returned unopposed.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lyons, op. cit., pp. 130-139.

The sharp division of Ireland, at least on the parliamentary level, into nationalist and unionist areas was in no sense a two-party division on British lines. There was no mass of floating voters whose change of opinion could cause the substantial alteration in party strength common in Great Britain; indeed British political parties did not exist in Ireland. The Irish liberal party disappeared at the introduction of Gladstone's first home rule bill in 1886, and though five Gladstonian liberals fought seats in the 1892 election, none of them was returned.<sup>1</sup> Liberal unionists retained the fiction of a separate label, but as early as 1887 they had been included in the group of Ulster unionist M.P.s led by Colonel Saunderson, Deputy Grand Master of the Orangemen of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> The unionist group might regard themselves as a British garrison in partibus infidelium, but they were not confident that they had the full support of any British party; Saunderson, speaking at a meeting of the University Philosophical Society (Trinity College, Dublin) in 1884, unconsciously expressed this when he said: 'When Englishmen set to work to wipe the tear out of Ireland's eye, they always buy the pocket-handkerchief at Ireland's expense'.<sup>3</sup> Though for unionists, Ireland in this context meant unionist and landlord Ireland, the sentiment, with appropriate interpretations, was held by all Irish parties. In the Irish political scene no third

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1. Lyons, *op. cit.*, p.133, n.2.

2. R.Lucas, Colonel Saunderson, M.P., p.92, n.3.

3. *Ibid.*, p.110.

party could avoid declaring its attitude to home rule and in consequence finding itself engaged on one side or the other; the liberal home rule party was thus reduced to an auxiliary of the nationalists, skirmishing in constituencies beyond their reach.<sup>1</sup> With the political pattern so firmly set, dissent except within narrow limits was a luxury foreign to Ireland.

The social composition of the nationalist and unionist representation is of considerable interest, and has a distinct bearing on the absence of labour candidates in the parliamentary elections of the decade. The nationalists were the less homogenous of the two groups, and may be considered first.

The total number of nationalist M.P.s, allowing for changes caused by death and retirement, was 87 in period I (1892-5) and 89 in period II (1895-1900). In each period 29 had received a university education, approximately 40 a secondary education, and the rest a primary education in national schools. There was some variation within these classes, especially among the graduates, who were drawn from universities in Ireland, Great Britain, and elsewhere, with different traditions and backgrounds; the broad divisions were however as indicated. The occupations of members can be given in greater detail, but it should be remembered that in some cases a member was virtually a professional politician if absence at Westminster or in prison prevented him from following his occupation.

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1. For details of such constituencies in the 1895 election see Lyons, *op. cit.*, p.51.

The occupations of nationalist members<sup>1</sup>

	1892-5	1895-1900
Barristers	16	14
Solicitors	6	5
Doctors	7	7
Journalists	13	18
Important business men	9	6
Local merchants	11	10
Landowners	6	8
Farmers	4	6
Tenant farmers	4	4
Labour leaders	3	3
Miscellaneous	8	8
Total	87	89

A reclassification into two groups, A and B, A representing the professional classes, landowners and important business men, B the local shopkeepers, farmers, labour leaders and salaried workers, yields the following table:

	1892-5	1895-1900
Group A	57	58
Group B	30	31
Total	87	89

1. Lyons, op. cit., p.169.

2. Ibid., p.173.

Though there were some wealthy men among the nationalist M.P.s, notably among the important business men who included distillers and a stockbroker, a linen manufacturer and a woollen merchant, they were not rich. The landowners were gentlemen farmers rather than owners of large estates, differentiated from prosperous farmers more by superior education and higher social standing than by greater wealth. It is difficult to determine how many M.P.s belonged to the kind of economic group from which the British Labour party later drew its support, but it is reasonable to say that there was more small farmer and labour representation in the Irish parliamentary party than in either of the two main parties in Great Britain.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the lack of wealth among the nationalists is furnished by the payment of 'indemnity money' to needy members. As M.P.s were not paid a state salary till 1911, it was impossible for the member without private resources to support himself. A substantial number of anti-Parnellite M.P.s, 35 in the period 1892-5, received indemnities, normally £200 per year, with greater amounts in cases of special hardship or when the recipient was an officer of the party. Of the 35, farmers, tenant farmers and labour leaders accounted for 11, the journalists were seven in number, and the rest included barristers, doctors, local merchants and even two who described themselves as landowners. The drop in party income between 1895 and 1900 reduced the amount available, and it is probable that during the whole period 1892-1900 not more than twelve to fifteen members were absolutely free from financial worry. The payment of members was common even in Parnell's time - in fact the general and continued poverty of the

In certain cases the division is rather arbitrary, and nationalists marked them off clearly from the two British parties in the house.<sup>1</sup> A division at least as sharp separated the nationalists from the Irish unionist M.P.s. Of the 23 unionists in period I (1892-5), 11 were university graduates and the remaining 12 had received a secondary education; in period II (1895-1900) when the total number was reduced to 21, the corresponding figures were 8 graduates and 13 with secondary education. The universities attended were Oxford and Trinity College, Dublin, and in one case Queen's College, Belfast, and the secondary schools included Eton, Harrow and Rugby; in some cases members had received a private education at least as expensive as that of a public school. The occupations of unionist M.P.s were consistent with their educational backgrounds, and are given in the table which follows:

Occupations of Irish unionist M.P.s

	1892-5	1895-1900
Barristers	9	8
Author	-	1
Landowners	8	8
Important business men	5	3
Miscellaneous	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>

1. Lyons, op. cit., chapter 6. The annual volumes of Thom's Directory of Ireland, Debrett's House of Commons, who was who, 1897-1915, and Return of the names of members returned to serve in each parliament from the year 1885 to the dissolution of parliament in the year 1900, H.C. 1901, (305), lit. 231.



In certain cases the division is rather arbitrary, some landowners being barristers or business men as well. The table invites comparison with that for the nationalist members, but the terms - e.g. 'barrister', 'landowner' - scarcely correspond. The unionist barristers were in the main rich or successful men who might count on political office, the landowners included holders of large estates (several being the sons of peers), while the important business men included directors of shipbuilding and linen firms, banks and railway companies. Only one, T.W. Russell, could be placed in occupation group B of the second table of nationalist members, for he was at various times an insurance agent and secretary of several temperance organisations, though fairly prosperous; his championship of the tenant farmers led him away from his unionist colleagues and in the end he became a liberal and a home ruler. As the unionist M.P.s could afford the expense of attending parliament and pay their own election costs, there was no scheme of payment such as existed among the nationalists.

The method of selecting parliamentary candidates and the nature of any organisation giving them support, give valuable information about the two groups of Irish M.P.s. In the Parnellite period the Land League, transformed into the Irish National League, provided a national organisation for the support of the Irish parliamentary party. County conventions, consisting of delegates from League branches, elected representatives to the national council of the League, and a modified version of this machinery

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1. The details of education and occupations of Irish unionist M.P.s are based on lists in the annual volumes of Thom, Directory of Ireland, Debrett's House of Commons, Who was who, 1897-1916, and Return of the names of members returned to serve in each parliament from the year 1885 to the dissolution of parliament in the year 1900, H.C. 1901, (365), lix, 231.

was also used from 1885 onwards for the selection of parliamentary candidates. The constituency conventions, usually attended by about 150 laymen and 50 priests, were presided over by an M.P. Discussion of the merits of the various candidates and the final selection were conducted in private session; the open session, usually with a priest as chairman, then took place and was devoted to publicising the successful candidate. Constituency autonomy was however limited, as the leaders of the parliamentary party had already reviewed possible candidates and their choice was generally adopted.

After Parnell's deposition and death clashes of opinion over the degree of local autonomy desirable were frequent in the majority party. Though the procedure followed resembled that of the previous decade, it was inevitable that the constituencies should have a greater say in the selection of candidates. The quarrels of Dillon and Healy, by impairing the unity of the leaders, made control from the centre more difficult than ever, and when the reunion of Parnellite and anti-Parnellite groups took place in 1900, the new national organisation, William O'Brien's United Irish League, gave the local conventions a far greater power than ever before.<sup>1</sup>

The income of the Irish parliamentary party (anti-Parnellite) was derived from many sources - dues from members of the national organisation, occasional subscriptions from wealthy individuals, collections in Ireland,

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1. Lyons, op. cit. p. 80.

1. This description of the selection of parliamentary candidates is based on the relevant section (chapter 3) in Lyons, op. cit.

Great Britain, America, Canada and Australia. The poverty of the Irish nationalist M.P.s made them dependent on the electors to a degree unknown in other parties, and when dissensions among the leaders brought about a decline in subscriptions the continued existence of the party was threatened; in the year 1899 the average indemnity per needy member was £68 lls. 6d., a powerful factor in bringing about the reunion of 1900.<sup>1</sup> Without constant subscriptions the party could not have carried out the vital work of registration, of fighting by- and general elections and conducting propaganda in Great Britain.

This review of the Irish nationalist party may be concluded by a summary of its programme, as set out in this statement issued in 1891 of the objectives of the Irish Federation, the national organisation of the anti-Parnellites:

The essential purpose of the Federation is to secure for Ireland a home rule constitution, legislative and executive, acceptable to the Irish people. Pending the achievement of this object, the Federation will endeavour to secure adequate reform of the laws affecting the tenure and ownership of land, improvement in the condition of Irish artisans and labourers, nurture of home industries, development of natural resources, reform of the several elective franchises and of the system of county government, repeal of coercive laws, and the establishment of a system of public education adapted to the circumstances of Ireland, and governed by the principle of equal treatment of all sections of the people.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lyons, op. cit., p.208.

2. F.J., 11 March 1891, quoted in Lyons, op. cit., p.219.

Irish unionist M.P.s were not grouped in a tightly knit party as were the nationalists, there was no organisation to correspond closely to such bodies as the Irish National League, and the procedure for the selection of candidates was more informal. Saunderson, writing to his wife in 1884, informed her that he had been asked to stand for Armagh, but that he would prefer Fermanagh. 'It appears there is to be a meeting of the gentry at which the question is to be opened; so I shall probably hear more about it before long.'<sup>1</sup> He also considered Tyrone, and was approached a year later by Antrim representatives, but he finally chose North Armagh. There was some opposition on the grounds that he had only recently joined the Orange Order and was a landlord, but a meeting of 'the farmers and Orangemen of North Armagh' in Portadown offered him the constituency, after he had addressed them.<sup>2</sup> A great landlord had little difficulty in becoming a candidate, and as most of the leading landowners and big business men were at the head of the Orange Order, they had at their disposal an electoral machine.<sup>3</sup> The revived order in the last quarter of the century provided a basis of popular support; political organisation was further extended in 1892 to meet the threat of the second home rule bill (1893) by the formation of rifle clubs (Ulster clubs) under Lord Templetown and the election of an

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1. R. Lucas, Colonel Saunderson, M.P., p.74.

2. Ibid., pp.84-5.

3. 12 of the 16 conservatives returned in Ulster in 1886 were orangemen. Ibid., p.90, n.1.

executive council from the central assembly of the Ulster Defence Union. Subscriptions went to rank-and-file organisations and to propaganda bodies such as the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union rather than to a parliamentary fund.

The Irish unionist members were associated with the British conservatives and liberal unionists, and were concerned principally with the defence of the status quo, so it is not surprising that they did not emerge as a distinctive party as early as the nationalists. The wealth of the members and the exclusively protestant nature of the Orange Order, their main rank-and-file organisation, lessened the need for an elaborate party structure. But the political and economic changes which took place towards the end of the century hastened its growth. The earlier unionist programme included the preservation of the union with Great Britain and resistance to agrarian reforms; when successive land acts reduced the political importance of the landlords, unionist power retreated to east Ulster. Here home rule was opposed on three main grounds: it would cut off the Ulster protestant colony from the British motherland, the welfare of Ulster's industries would suffer at the hands of a tariff-conscious Dublin parliament, home rule would mean Rome rule. To the increasing pressure of their opponents the unionists responded by greater organisation, which culminated in the formation in 1905 of the Ulster Unionist Council, a provisional government in embryo.

## II. THE ORIGINS OF THE IRISH TRADES UNION MOVEMENT

Though the Irish Trades Union Congress was not  
 for THE FORMATION OF A  
 body, there had been earlier attempts at forming an Irish  
 trade LABOUR MOVEMENT  
 Association brought together a number of the skilled  
 trades in the city. It was in no sense a militant body,  
 for its object was the protection of the rights of  
 labour it was careful to emphasize that 'labour had its  
 duties as well as its rights'.<sup>1</sup> That it had not been  
 formed to interfere with the legitimate progress of trade,  
 and that it felt it incumbent to call upon our fellow-  
 tradesmen throughout Ireland to co-operate with us for  
 the protection of trade and the promotion and encourage-  
 ment of native manufactures ...<sup>2</sup> In 1864, aided by a  
 personal guarantee of twenty pounds from Sir John Gray of  
 the Freeman's Journal, it took advantage of the Dublin  
 Exhibition to offer hospitality to fellow tradesmen from  
 other parts of Ireland and to suggest the creation of  
 similar associations throughout the country, 'independent  
 of, but in connection with the United Trades' Association

1. J.D.Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p.167

2. Irish People, 16 Apr. 1864, quoted in Clarkson, op.cit.  
 p.167.

3. Ibid., 29 Oct. 1864, quoted in Clarkson, op.cit.,  
 p. 171.

## II. THE ORIGINS OF THE IRISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Though the Irish Trades Union Congress was not formed until 1894, some twenty-six years after the British body, there had been earlier attempts at founding an Irish trades union centre. In 1863 the Dublin United Trades' Association brought together a number of the skilled trades in the city.<sup>1</sup> It was in no sense a militant body, for if its object was the protection of the rights of labour it was careful to emphasise that 'labour had its duties as well as its rights',<sup>2</sup> that it 'had not been formed to interfere with the legitimate progress of trade',<sup>2</sup> and that it felt it incumbent 'to call upon our fellow-tradesmen throughout Ireland to co-operate with us for the protection of trade and the promotion and encouragement of native manufactures ...'<sup>3</sup> In 1864, aided by a personal guarantee of twenty pounds from Sir John Gray of the Freeman's Journal, it took advantage of the Dublin Exhibition to offer hospitality to fellow tradesmen from other parts of Ireland and to suggest the creation of similar associations throughout the country, 'independent of, but in connection with the United Trades' Association

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3. Ibid., 29 Oct. 1864, quoted in Clarkson, op.cit., p. 171.

of the metropolis'.<sup>1</sup> Though the suggestion was immediately adopted by Enniskillen, Galway and Ennis, the projected federation seems to have had little more than a theoretical existence.<sup>2</sup>

The formation of the British Trades Union Congress in 1868 offered greater possibilities; indeed a Limerick suggestion in 1865 had already proposed 'an amalgamation of trades extending throughout Great Britain and Ireland'.<sup>3</sup> Irish participation in it was nonetheless small, though Dublin was represented at its inaugural meeting in Manchester.<sup>4</sup> It is true that when the congress met for the first time in Ireland (Dublin, 1880), twenty-four Dublin delegates were present and the president and secretary of congress, in accordance with precedent, were local men, but the grand total of one hundred and twenty delegates did not include any from Belfast, already the most important industrial centre in the country.<sup>5</sup> The stimulus of the Dublin congress was not sufficient to send more than a handful of Irish delegates to subsequent congresses; in 1882 only two attended, from Belfast and Dublin,<sup>6</sup> while in 1885 Ireland was unrepresented. In 1891 six attended,<sup>7</sup> four from Belfast,

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1. Clarkson, op. cit., pp.169, 171

2. Ibid., p.171.

3. Irish People, 26 Aug. 1865, quoted in Clarkson, op. cit., p.171.

4. Clarkson, op. cit., p.389.

5. Ibid., p.178.

6. Ibid., p.182, n.2.

7. Twenty-fourth annual report, [British] T.U.C., pp. 1,5,6,12,14.



including the trades council delegate, and two from Dublin, though the Dublin council would have been represented by its president had he not died shortly after his selection.<sup>1</sup> The following year the numbers rose to ten, largely owing to the increased representation of the Belfast trades council, which sent four delegates instead of one in a successful effort to have the 1893 congress held in Belfast. The invitation was issued by Samuel Monro of the Typographical Association and supported by H. Slatter of Manchester, a fellow compositor, who urged that trade unionism was the hope of Ireland and added somewhat optimistically that the cause would be helped if the congress were held the following year in Belfast.<sup>2</sup> Influenced by such a plea, the delegates gave Belfast an absolute majority over Norwich, which had beaten it into third place the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

If the Irish attendance at the British T.U.C. was small, there was a pronounced development in the growth of local trade union centres. The Belfast United Trades' Council was formed in 1881,<sup>4</sup> and though its numbers were few at first, by 1892 it claimed 12,000 affiliated members.<sup>5</sup> The corresponding Dublin body, a stronger organisation than its predecessor the United Trades' Association,

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1. Freeman's Journal, 27 July, 8 Aug. 1891.

2. Twenty-fifth annual report, B.T.U.C., p.66.

3. Twenty-fourth annual report, B.T.U.C., p.76.

4. 29 Oct. 1881, according to a date stamp in old minute books. Those of 1881-5 are missing.

5. Twenty-fifth annual report, B.T.U.C.

held its first formal meeting early in 1886,<sup>1</sup> and paid dues to the British T.U.C. on 7,000 members in 1892.<sup>2</sup> By this date trades councils also existed in a number of other towns, notably Cork, Newry and Drogheda.<sup>3</sup> Membership of such councils was drawn mainly from carpenters, joiners, bakers, painters or tailors; they were, however, unlike the Dublin United Trades' Association, not the preserves of the craftsmen, and included among affiliated bodies a number of general labourers' unions, at first organised on a purely local basis.

A fresh attempt to form an Irish federation was made in 1888, the Dublin trades council taking the initiative. Its treasurer, T.J. O'Reilly, a printer, impressed by the power of the Irish National League, the rank-and-file organisation of Parnell's Irish parliamentary party, suggested organising on the same plan 'for an affiliation of the trades throughout not only Ireland but the United Kingdom'. He was confident that the trades councils of Cork and Belfast would heartily co-operate.

By this means they could consult before elections, and they would in time be a power in the country. The Trades' Congress in England was a power which was not only respected but feared, and until they were feared they would never be respected. Why should they not have an Irish Congress meeting in Dublin?'

His suggestion was supported by members of both Irish and amalgamated (British) unions, including two members of the important Amalgamated Society of Engineers.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dublin Evening Mail, 1 Mar. 1886; J. Swift, History of the Dublin bakers, p.294.

2. Twenty-fifth annual report, B.T.U.C.

3. See appendix 1 for list of trades councils.

4. F.J., 12 May 1888.

Favourable replies were received from a number of trades councils (e.g. those of Cork, Clonmel and Waterford),<sup>1</sup> but the Belfast trades council was more cautious. It set up a special committee to consider the matter<sup>2</sup> and received the following report:

Your committee are of the opinion that a federation of the different trades throughout Ireland would be of great advantage to trade unionism. And would recommend the Belfast United Trades Council to assist the Dublin Trades Council in bringing the matter to a successful issue.<sup>3</sup>

The report was accepted unanimously, but on the reception of a draft scheme it was decided that the affiliated societies should first be consulted before the council committed itself.<sup>4</sup> Though the coach-builders and patternmakers reported favourably, the painters' delegate said his society was opposed to a federation, and the whole matter was referred to an augmented committee of nine.<sup>5</sup> When it was finally decided to send delegates to Dublin, the original motion to send 3 was carried only after amendments to send 1 and 2 had been defeated. The council also recommended every society to send delegates.<sup>6</sup>

The Irish Federated Trade and Labour Union, the title finally adopted, held its first conference on

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1. F.J., 3, 10 Dec. 1888.
  2. Belfast trades council minutes, 24 Nov. 1888.
  3. Ibid., 8 Dec. 1888.
  4. Ibid., 12 Jan. 1889.
  5. Ibid., 9 Feb. 1889.
  6. Ibid., 23 Mar. 1889.

4 May 1889 in the Angel hotel, Dublin.<sup>1</sup> 33 delegates were present from Belfast, Clonmel, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Limerick and Waterford, Belfast (8) and Dublin (10) providing over half the number. Cork's 6 delegates included Eugene Crean, a town councillor, and Michael Austin, both of whom were later to be the 2 successful candidates among the 7 labour-nationalists recommended by Michael Davitt for the general election of 1892.<sup>2</sup> The offices were filled with due regard to the importance of the various centres. Dublin provided the chairman (J. Ward, of the Dublin Regular Painters), Belfast the vice-chairman (W. J. McManus), and Cork (Michael Austin) and Dublin (T. J. O'Reilly) the joint secretaries. A central council of 9 was elected, 3 from Dublin and 1 from each of the other centres. Derry's representative was James McCarron of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, who was to preside at three conferences of the Irish Trades Union Congress in later years. A decision was taken to hold an annual congress, that of the following year to be in Belfast.

The congress was gratified by British trade union blessings. Letters of goodwill were read from the temporary chairman (J. Drummond, secretary of the London Society of Compositors) and secretary (George Shepton) of the London trades council, and at a later stage in the proceedings J. Havelock Wilson, then

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1. Report in F. J., on which this account is based.

2. T. W. Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1906', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th ser., vol iii, 1953, p.70.

secretary of the Glasgow Firemen and Seamen's Union, and engaged in organising a branch in Dublin,<sup>1</sup> entered amid applause and addressed the delegates. The chairman was highly sensible of the value of the British connection:

There is a great field for operation before us if we would only follow the grand example of our English and Scotch brothers, whom we this day salute, and to whose glorious union, I trust, we may be soon affiliated, and thus acknowledge in an unmistakable way our appreciation of the many Acts of Parliament passed through their organisation and which we enjoy to-day.

Nor did he forget another aspect of British congresses when he hoped that at future Irish congresses 'the wealthy members of the community would imitate the grand hospitality displayed by their English and Scotch peers'.

The principal demands of the congress, whether by resolution or in the chairman's address, were the abolition of sweating and boy labour, a reduction in the hours of labour, more enterprise on the part of home manufacturers, additional factory inspectors, the provision of technical education and free libraries, and the formation of more trades councils and women's trade unions. The absence of workmen from local councils and parliament was severely commented upon, and there was unanimous agreement that the municipal franchise should be assimilated to that of parliament, and that the expenses of elections and parliamentary representatives should be borne by the state. Unanimous too was the

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1. The branch became affiliated to the Dublin trades council shortly afterwards. F.J., 10 June 1889.

decision to postpone publication of a trade journal after W. J. Leahy (Dublin Regular Coopers) had pointed out that it would be unfair when the Freeman's Journal was giving them support. Harmony was the keynote of the dinner, also held in the Angel and attended by over 120, which concluded the congress. T. J. O'Reilly, echoing the chairman's tribute to 'our Northern brethren who were, by their alacrity, the first to infuse fresh vigour into us', paid a compliment to Samuel Monro, the Belfast trades council president, who, amid applause, replied somewhat hyperbolically that there was 'only an imaginary difference between the men of Belfast and those of the rest of Ireland'.

Prospects for the growth of the Irish Federated Trade and Labour Union seemed bright, and it began to assume the appearance of a trades union congress, or at least the parliamentary committee of such a body. The Belfast trades council called its attention to Fenwick's<sup>1</sup> bill for the payment of weekly wages,<sup>2</sup> and the Belfast delegates' report was considered very satisfactory in June 1889.<sup>3</sup> But a storm suddenly blew up in August when the Dublin trades council asked for contributions towards a Sunday sports meeting to be run under the auspices of the federation. 'A very warm discussion' followed the reading of the offending cir-

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1. Charles Fenwick, the 'lib.-lab!Northumbrian miners' M.P.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 8 June 1889.

3. Ibid., 22 June 1889.

cular, and it was unanimously agreed that the secretary enter a 'solemn protest' against associating Belfast with the Sunday meeting and request the removal of the name of the Belfast council's vice-president (W. J. McManus) from the circular.<sup>1</sup>

The incident was to have a damaging effect on the growth of the new body. O'Reilly followed up the unlucky circular with a letter asking what Belfast was likely to subscribe towards its funds, and it is not surprising that the Belfast council determined to defer the matter and at a later stage decided that its delegate W. J. McManus should not attend an executive meeting in Dublin.<sup>2</sup> A correspondence lasting some months ensued, Belfast expressing in a lengthy resolution its dissatisfaction with the federation's reply, which, while acknowledging that a mistake had been made in the past, gave no pledge against its recurrence. Such an action tended 'to violate those principles of combination which are the basis of a true federation of labour'.<sup>3</sup> The council turned its attention to less contentious matters and accepted the lord mayor's invitation to draw up a loyal address of welcome to be presented to the lord lieutenant on his visit to Belfast. But although the council increased its indebtedness (its expenditure for the previous year exceeded its income) the address, 'beautifully engraved on vellum .. and fastened with blue silk ribbon', was a source of

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 10 Aug. 1889.

2. Ibid., 24 Aug., 28 Sept., 18, 26 Oct. 1889.

3. Ibid., 9 Nov. 1889.

irritation, for Richard Sheldon, the prime mover in the matter, complained that the council had been insulted; their representatives had neither been asked to present the address nor invited to represent the working classes at the civic banquet.<sup>1</sup>

The subsequent relationship of Belfast to the federation remained obscure, even to the council delegates, for notice of a question on the matter was given twice during the opening months of 1890 without any answer forthcoming.<sup>2</sup> A letter from the federation president in May provoked a motion that the council sever its connection with the federation but pay its share of costs already incurred; this was amended to an instruction to the secretary to re-open correspondence and ascertain how the council stood financially with the suspect body.<sup>3</sup> When the cabinetmakers later in the year asked that the ten shillings they had subscribed towards the formation of the federation should be forwarded to its executive, F. C. Johnston, a coach-builder, carried an amendment that it be returned to the local branch as soon as funds permitted.<sup>4</sup> Johnston, who had been secretary of the council from January to October of that year,<sup>4</sup> had distinguished his tenure of office by visiting England on a unionist political mission;<sup>5</sup> he was to appear later as a unionist candidate in municipal elections.<sup>6</sup>

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 21, 28 Dec. 1889, 1 Feb. 1890.

2. Ibid., 22 Mar., 26 Apr. 1890.

3. Ibid., 9 May 1890.

4. Ibid., 10 Oct. 1890.

5. Ibid., 22 Mar. 1890.

6. Belfast News-Letter, 24 Nov. 1897.



The relationship between the trades councils of the two cities was for some time marked by considerable caution on the part of Belfast. When the Dublin body invited its co-operation in welcoming a visiting Australian trade unionist, John Fitzgerald, the secretary was instructed, 'after considerable discussion', to seek further information and a guarantee that the 'gentlemen named in the printed circular would not introduce political or religious questions during their visit to Belfast, but confine themselves to labour questions'.<sup>1</sup> The word 'federation' was out of favour, and even a circular from Hull trades council on a proposed federation of all labour bodies was marked read.<sup>2</sup> The furious Parnell leadership controversy following the Parnell-O'Shea divorce case was an added reason for wary walking during 1891.

The year was one of much labour activity in Dublin. A meeting<sup>3</sup> was held on 28 February to celebrate the first anniversary of the Dublin gasworkers' success (they were members of Will Thorne's union) in winning an eight-hour day. The union's Irish organiser, Michael Canty, called for a federation of labour and its district secretary, Adolphus Shields, announced that they would have a conference with Parnell on the labour question.

A fortnight later a conference, composed almost entirely of general labourers, both of town and country, gathered in the Ancient Concert Rooms.<sup>4</sup> Canty successfully moved the adoption of a motion, to stand as the

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 22 Nov. 1890.

2. Ibid., 24 Jan. 1891

3. F.J., 2 Mar. 1891

4. Ibid., 16 Mar. 1891

first clause in their programme, for a universal legal eight-hour day. A motion for free and compulsory education was withdrawn, thus side-stepping an amendment to insert the word 'secular', which, a speaker warned, would bring workingmen into conflict with a large section of the Irish clergy. The remaining clauses of the programme (nationalisation of land and transport; triennial parliaments; manhood suffrage; payment of M.P.s, local councillors and election expenses; extension of the factory and employers' liability acts; taxation of land values; the employment of direct labour; the removal of food taxes; evening sittings of local boards; greater liberty for labour combinations; the promotion of all Irish industries; increased building of labourers' dwellings and the lowering of their rents) were all adopted.

Having decided to call the new organisation the Irish Labour League, the conference appointed an executive committee on which four places were to be reserved for delegates of the skilled trades, and then adjourned until the afternoon, when they were to be addressed by Parnell. The nature of the afternoon session alarmed a Belfast delegate, who felt that Colonel Saunderson, the Ulster unionist leader, might equally well have been invited, and that there was a danger of the meeting being given a political complexion. His fear had some substance, for Parnell's skilful speech, in which he contented himself with pleasing generalities, was greeted by applause and interjections directed against the anti-Parnellites; when he left the building he was preceded by the Gasworkers' band to a political demonstration.

The future of the Irish Labour League was not bright, for the skilled trades had taken no part in the meeting. The Cork trades council promised to 'watch with interest the result of your proceedings', but the Dublin council had earlier voted overwhelmingly against sending any delegates on the grounds that 'any such conference should be held aloof from all political parties';<sup>1</sup> the minutes of the Belfast trades council are silent on the matter. Parnell's early death removed a dubious champion of the new organisation; at this period success could scarcely attend a body which the craft unions had not founded.

Despite the coldness they had shown, the skilled trades in Dublin joined with the labourers in a vast May Day demonstration,<sup>2</sup> in which over 10,000 trade unionists marched with banners and bands to the Phoenix Park. The call for an international Labour Day, first issued for May Day 1890 by the Second International, had been answered then in Dublin only by two of the newly established general labourers' unions; in 1891 much stress was laid on the all-inclusive nature of that year's celebration. Three platforms were used so that the processionists and the thousands who accompanied them might have a chance of hearing the speeches; the president of the Dublin trades council, John Martin, was the chairman at the principal platform, and other officers of the council were among the speakers at the other two hustings. In spite of their presence there was a strong Parnellite tone in some of the speeches, particularly in

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1. F.J., 9 Mar. 1891.

2. Ibid., 4 May 1891.

that of Adolphus Shields, who claimed that Parnell had pledged himself to an eight-hour day, universal suffrage, and 'almost ... to land nationalisation and to many other reforms'. The four resolutions, moved at each platform, called for an eight-hour day, 'by legislation or otherwise', a greater degree of trade union organisation, revision of laws affecting labour and capital, and the assimilation of the municipal and parliamentary franchise, with, as a corollary, representation of Irish labour in parliament. Visiting British speakers included Davidson of the London Dockers and Curran of the Gasworkers, and there was sympathetic reference to the imprisonment suffered by Curran and Havelock Wilson.<sup>1</sup> A car containing police notetakers, protected by a detachment of police, was stationed close to one of the platforms. There was, however, no sequel in the form of police action, and the Freeman's Journal, at that time still a Parnellite organ, commented favourably on the orderliness of the Dublin demonstration as against riotous behaviour on the continent. Drogheda also had its May Day demonstration, at which the same resolutions were moved.

Labour activity continued unabated in Dublin. A fortnight after the May Day celebration, the Gasworkers held another demonstration where the speakers included Will Thorne, Pete Curran, and Edward and Eleanor Marx Aveling (a daughter of Marx), all of whom were prominent in the organisation of the unskilled in Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Wilson was serving a sentence of six weeks' imprisonment on a charge of unlawful assembly and riot during a dock strike in Cardiff. B.N.-L., 8 Apr. 1891.

2. F.J., 18 May 1891.

Later in the same month the project of an Irish congress was revived by John Martin, president of the Dublin trades council, when he reported to that body that the executive had considered holding a trades conference in June to consider labour representation. He believed that there was every possibility of carrying two seats in Dublin and two to four in the country, by labour candidates selected by the conference and bound to no political party. Every trade body and society throughout Ireland should be represented at the conference, which would discuss the best means of supporting their representatives in parliament. In England several districts were represented by workmen.<sup>1</sup>

This fresh start owed something to Michael Davitt who, in a conversation<sup>2</sup> with Martin and John Simmons (secretary of the Dublin trades council) late in 1890 had suggested that the labour leaders of the large towns be invited to confer with the Dublin officials upon the advisability of forming an Irish labour federation.<sup>3</sup> Davitt had earlier (21 January 1890) presided over the formation of an Irish Democratic Trade and Labour Federation at a convention in Cork;<sup>4</sup> it was in the main an organisation of agricultural labourers and workers in country towns, and had Michael Austin as one

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1. F.J., 25 May 1891.

2. It was primarily concerned with arrangements for a Dublin meeting to be addressed by the Australian John Fitzgerald, John Burns, Tom Mann and Cunninghame Graham.

3. F.J., 10 Nov. 1890.

4. T. W. Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement', pp. 67-8.

5. Ibid., 20 July 1891.

6. A circular from the Dublin trades council (contents un- specified) was marked read. S.F.C. minutes, 18 July 1891.

of its joint secretaries.<sup>1</sup> Davitt's suggestion to Martin and Simmons was probably prompted by a desire to see the Irish trade unions exercising on the Irish party the influence that the British unions had on the Liberal party in matters of social reform.

The conference was held in July in the new<sup>2</sup> headquarters (Capel Street), and was attended by delegates representing skilled and unskilled unions, mainly from Dublin, but including officers from the trades councils of Cork, Clonmel, Drogheda, Sligo and Newry.<sup>3</sup> The Irish Democratic Labour Federation sent three delegates, one of whom was Michael Austin, and agricultural labourers were further represented by four delegates from midland branches of a labour federation. Belfast and Derry were unrepresented, though it would appear that Belfast at least had been invited to attend.<sup>4</sup> John Martin and Michael Austin were elected president and vice-president, and an executive committee 'to form the nucleus of an annual trades congress for Ireland, towards the expenses of which each trades council and labour organisation be asked to subscribe', was appointed. It consisted of two members from each province, with John Simmons as secretary. Ulster had one representative only, from Newry, and it was agreed that Belfast and Derry be asked to select a delegate to fill the vacancy.

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1. D.D. Sheehan, Ireland since Parnell, pp. 172-4. Its nucleus was a local trade and labour association centred on Kanturk; events following the Parnell split disrupted the organisation.

2. F.J., 22 Dec. 1890.

3. Ibid., 20 July 1891.

4. A circular from the Dublin trades council (contents unspecified) was marked read. B.T.C. minutes, 18 July 1891.

The first resolution on the agenda was a strongly-worded demand for direct labour representation in parliament. It declared that the interests of the 'industrial classes' had been neglected by Irish parliamentary representatives hitherto, and the proposer, John Simmons, in his speech complained specifically of the existing members of the Irish party. It proposed that in order to ensure the election of properly representative workingmen, candidates should receive the approval of the local trades council or other properly organised labour association of the division or district, who might then 'more fully represent the views and wishes of his constituents'. The second and third resolutions were the familiar demands for the payment of M.P.s, election expenses and the assimilation of the municipal, poor-law and parliamentary franchises. All these were adopted, though some remarks of Canty of the Gasworkers on the third resolution (he thought that too much time was taken up at municipal meetings by discussion of political matters to the entire neglect of the interests of working men) provoked an exchange between him and Austin on the relative importance of labour and nationality. 'One of the essential characteristics of every Irishman, he [Austin] thought, should be his nationality (hear, hear). While every man present was a working man, and was most desirous of forwarding the cause of the working classes, it was, beyond doubt, a fact that wherever a workman was to be found the country which gave him birth stood foremost (applause).' Canty replied that he was as good a nationalist as Austin, but persisted in maintaining that 'the labour question came before so-called nationality'.

It is a measure of the belated importance which the Irish labour movement assumed in the eyes of the nationalist leaders that the Freeman's Journal, soon to opt definitely for the anti-Parnellite side,<sup>1</sup> carried an editorial in the same issue supporting the principles of the first three resolutions and declaring that it was high time there should be a real labour representation in the house of commons. It pointed out that Parnell did introduce 'one or two men who had a fair title to speak for labour', but that they were not elected as labour men. Payment of members was necessary if there were to be bona-fide labour M.P.s and as this was now liberal as well as labour policy the outlook was promising. The following year did see the election of two labour-nationalists (Austin and Crean) - three if Davitt is included - and a scattering of similar representatives at local government level, but such gestures were not sufficient to satisfy trade union wishes.

The remaining resolutions carried at the conference were in the main on orthodox trade union lines; only one, requiring a pledge from parliamentary candidates 'to resist the establishment of a peasant proprietary' and declaring that the private ownership of land was the prime cause of low wages, overcrowding and scarcity of employment, gave rise to a lengthy discussion, but the advocates of land restoration won handsomely, there being only two dissentients.

A further attempt was made in September to secure the participation of the Belfast trades council, which

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1. F.S.L.Lyons, The Irish Parliamentary Party 1890-1910, p. 27.



was invited to fill the vacancy on the four provinces committee. The secretary was instructed to write for further particulars,<sup>1</sup> and when the invitation was renewed in November a motion that the letter be marked read was moved, followed by an amendment that a delegate be appointed. 'After considerable discussion' the amendment was carried by twenty-six votes to eight.<sup>2</sup> But John Martin, the moving spirit in the four provinces committee, had died in August<sup>3</sup> and the infant trade union congress did not survive beyond the end of 1891.<sup>4</sup>

The two most important trade union bodies pursued their separate way during the early months of 1892. In March the Belfast council held a labour demonstration<sup>5</sup> in aid of striking linenlappers; some thirty protestant and catholic bands took part in the procession, and lots were drawn to determine their positions. Samuel Monro, the president, addressing the British Trades Union Congress a year later, quoted with pride the comments of a local paper:

In the monster procession which passed through the principal thoroughfares of the city, orange and green rosettes decked the breast of the District Master of the Orange Lodge, in common with that of the vice-president of the Irish National Federation. A Nationalist band cut out a route for the Orange society, and many a stalwart body of Nationalist toilers beat tramp to the music of a Protestant fife and drum... ' 6

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 26 Sept. 1891.
  2. Ibid., 13 Nov. 1891.
  3. F.J., 8 Aug. 1891.
  4. Appendix to Dublin trades council Labour Day Agenda 1894.
  5. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Feb., 4, 7 Mar. 1892.
  6. Twenty-sixth annual report, British T.U.C. p.25.

In spite of this amicable mingling of orange and green, or possibly because of it, the council refused an invitation to send three speakers to a May Day demonstration in Drogheda on the grounds that they were considering one of their own; a motion was indeed moved (13 May) that one be held in May of each year, but it was amended to read that the discussion be postponed to February 1893. One of the three invited, Murray Davis, who was an official of the Irish Federal Union of Bakers founded in 1889 by delegates from Dundalk, Drogheda, Dublin, Newry and Belfast,<sup>1</sup> did take part in the Drogheda meeting, where his speech was received with almost as much applause as that of the principal orator, Michael Davitt.<sup>2</sup>

Closer relations were brought about between the Dublin and Belfast councils by action on trade union issues. The Belfast council appealed to the Dublin body,<sup>3</sup> among others, for aid in having objectionable passages referring to trade unionists deleted from the fifth standard reading book issued by the commissioners of national education; the passages were omitted in a new edition distributed the following year.<sup>4</sup> In July, acting on behalf of the Belfast branch of the Typographical Association, they appealed to the Dublin council and the Dublin Typographical Society for help in dealing with the Belfast Morning News, which had its type set in Dublin by union labour, but was printed in Belfast in a non-union

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1. J. Swift, History of the Dublin bakers, p.296.

2. F.J., 2 May 1892;

3. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Apr., 13 May 1892; F.J., 9 May 1892.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Jan. 1893.

5. Clarkson, Labour and Religion in Ireland; p.166.

shop.<sup>1</sup> Help was prompt, and in less than two months the council delegates were informed that 'as a natural result of blacklegging the rat newspaper office - the Belfast Morning News - had at last been compelled to close its doors!'<sup>2</sup> A request from Dublin that Belfast's delegates to the British Trades Union Congress be instructed 'to assist in promoting the candidature of an Irish representative' on the parliamentary committee was favourably received.<sup>3</sup> The Irish aspirant at the Glasgow conference of 1892 was in fact Samuel Monro, but he came last of the thirty-seven candidates for the ten seats, polling only 19 votes as against the 129 which secured the tenth place.<sup>4</sup>

The 1893 congress duly took place in Belfast. Of the 380 delegates 34 were Irish, 27 being from Belfast, 1 from Newry and 6 from Dublin.<sup>5</sup> The larger Irish attendance was understandable, given the place of meeting; the following year it returned to a more normal level, when 8 delegates went to Norwich.<sup>6</sup> Samuel Monro presided, as president of the local trades council, and declared that 'trade unionism is the "ism" ... whose mission it shall be to free our unhappy land from the incubus of religious bigotry and political intolerance..', citing as evidence the successful demonstration of the previous year. He also made a strong plea for temperance, a cause which attracted much support among Belfast trade

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 10 June 1892.

2. Ibid., 25 July, 17 Sept. 1892.

3. Ibid., 26 Aug. 1892.

4. Twenty-fifth annual report, B.T.U.C., p.71.

5. Twenty-sixth annual report, B.T.U.C., pp. 5-10.

6. Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p.186.

union leaders. He had little success to report in the organisation of women workers, for the three societies started by the Women's Trade Union Provident League's officers, the Misses Florence Routledge and M.E. Abraham, had all collapsed in spite of the efforts of the trades council.<sup>1</sup>

The number of Irish resolutions debated was greater than usual, but local susceptibilities were wounded by some incidents caused by tactlessness or indifference.<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary committee report regretted that no workingmen J.P.s had been appointed in Scotland while there were over seventy in England; Ireland, where none had been made, was not included until a delegate drew attention to its omission.<sup>3</sup> Keir Hardie showed a wry tactfulness when, in moving a resolution declaring that independent labour representatives should always sit in opposition until they could form a cabinet, thought that 'an independent labour party should follow the example of a certain other political party [i.e. the Irish

1. Twenty-sixth annual report, B.T.U.C., pp.25, 31-2.

2. Clarkson (op. cit., p.185) is wrong in stating that congress 'declined to heed the appeal of a Belfast baker Murray Davis that it lay special emphasis on the necessity of increasing the number of factory inspectors in Ireland'; Davis asked if the resolution could be made to apply to Ireland and the president (Monro) replied that there was nothing in it which would exclude Ireland (p. 49 of the report). Clarkson (pp.184-5) also fails to point out that the 'English' delegate who maladroitly suggested that 'Ulstermen should do more than entertain' (pp. 84-5 of report), when proposing a collection on behalf of striking miners, was an Ulsterman himself, and proclaimed himself as such; he was E. McHugh, who with Richard McGhee had founded the N.U.D.L. in Glasgow and Liverpool. Clarkson's main contention, however, is correct.

3. Twenty-sixth annual report, B.T.U.C., p.33.

Parliamentary Party], which it would not be in order for him to name in Belfast ...'.<sup>1</sup> Tactfulness of any kind was totally lacking in a discussion on the holding of labour demonstrations throughout the United Kingdom on the first Sunday in May of every year. The delegate of the Belfast Power Loom Tenters protested: 'the people of Belfast were not in the habit of holding demonstrations on Sunday (hear, hear) ... the trade I represent would not have sent me here if they had known that it was proposed to hold a labour demonstration on Sunday'. A number of delegates sprang to their feet, delegates at John Burns's table described the protest as hypocritical, and Burns himself aggravated matters by repeating, after the resolution had been defeated by two votes, that bigotry had won, a sentiment which roused the gallery so much that the president had to ask them to control their feelings.<sup>2</sup>

A large labour demonstration, with Burns, Fenwick, Hardie and Ben Tillett as the principal speakers, was held on the Saturday following the congress. The model was that of the 1892 demonstration in which protestant and catholic bands took part, but it was not marked by the same harmony. The second home rule bill, for which Burns and Hardie had voted during its earlier passage through the commons, had been rejected by the lords the previous day, and there were appropriate orange rejoicings. The Thomas Sexton flute band<sup>3</sup> was roughly handled, some

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1. Twenty-sixth annual report, B.T.U.C., p. 49.

2. Ibid., pp. 77-8.

3. Thomas Sexton, nationalist M.P. for West Belfast (1886 - 92).

of its members having to receive hospital treatment, speakers - especially Hardie and Burns - were severely e/ heckled, and only the driver's rapid whipping-up of the horses saved Burns from a mauling when his brake was attacked by 500-600 men armed with sticks.<sup>1</sup>

Some efforts were made at the Belfast congress to meet the difficulties of Irish participation. Monro received a greatly increased support, but missed election by a handful of votes.<sup>2</sup> Standing orders were amended, on the motion of Hugh McManus, a Belfast printer, to allow the parliamentary committee to be increased by two, with the proviso that one seat should be reserved for 'a duly qualified member of a trade union in Ireland'.<sup>3</sup> Under the new standing orders, in force at Norwich, Richard Sheldon, a cabinetmaker and secretary of the Belfast trades council, was elected as the first Irish member of the parliamentary committee.<sup>4</sup> But in spite of these changes, which seemed to foreshadow a greater involvement of Irish trade unions in the affairs of the British trade union centre, the interval between the Belfast and Norwich congresses saw the birth of the Irish Trades Union Congress.

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1. Recollections of the labour movement in Belfast, 1884-1920, by R. McClung, pp.5,6; manuscript in the possession of the present writer.

2. B.N.-L., 11 Sept. 1893.

3. Twenty-sixth annual report, B.T.U.C., p. 81.

4. Ibid., p. 81.

5. Ibid., p. 74.

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1. Dublin trades council minutes, dated 16 (47) Mar. 1894.

2. Appendix to Dublin trades council labour day agenda 1894.

### III. THE YEARS OF CONFORMITY

The initiative in founding an Irish trade union centre came once again from the Dublin United Trades and Labour League, or, to use its less formal title, the Dublin trades council. The secretary, John Simmons, moved a lengthy resolution proposing the holding of a convention early in May to consolidate the interests of trades and labour organisations with the object of making 'more effective the legislative means at present in existence, of protecting the lives and liberties of the workers generally, to consider how best reforms can be effected in the way of removing impediments to human progress at present existing within the constitution under which we live, and to consider matters affecting trade and labour generally'.<sup>1</sup> The resolution was passed and a committee appointed to make arrangements and issue invitations.

The Dublin trades council claimed, in 1894, some 15,000 affiliated members, ranging among the skilled trades from carpenters (1200) to members of such dying occupations as cork-cutters (50) and silk-weavers (20), and including a variety of labourers' unions, from the United Labourers of Ireland (2000) and the Irish National Labour Union (12,000) - the latter a federal body - to the St Andrew's and O'Connell's carmen with 100 each.<sup>2</sup> Its headquarters was the Trades' Hall, Capel Street,

'... a magnificent building containing a large theatre, billiard room, library, council chamber, and ample

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1. Dublin trades council minutes, dated 18 (4?) Mar. 1894.

2. Appendix to Dublin trades council Labour Day Agenda 1894.

accommodation for the many trades who hold meetings within its walls - secured for the trade unionists of Dublin through the instrumentality of the council, assisted by the Rt. Hon. Ald. Meade, L.L.D., P.C., William Field, Esq., M.P. and Patrick Sheehan, Esq., as guarantors.<sup>1</sup>

Influenced no doubt by civic precedent, it had instituted in 1887 an honorary roll, which included such strangely diverse figures as Sir Charles Dawson (ex-lord mayor of Dublin), Mr Michael Davitt, Archbishop Walsh, Arnold Graves, B.L., Alderman Sir Robert Sexton and Lord Iveagh (then Mr Edward Cecil Guinness).<sup>2</sup> It was in the building so patronised that the 119 delegates to the first Irish Trades Union Congress met on 27 and 28 April.<sup>3</sup>

Preparations for the hospitality to be extended to delegates troubled the minds of the reception committee. Its chairman, E.L. Richardson, acknowledging contributions, expressed his disappointment on 8 April: '... up to this time the traders and merchants of the city, notwithstanding some large individual subscriptions, had not given them the assistance that they had expected from them'.<sup>4</sup> The fund reached a total of £67 11s., the main burden being borne by two breweries (Phoenix brewery £10 10s., Guinness £10, Lord Iveagh £10) and the Licensed Vintners' Association (£10),<sup>5</sup> as if to give substance to the charge, indignantly denied, made by the vice-president of the Glasgow trades council, that

1. Appendix to Dublin trades council Labour Day Agenda 1894; F.J., 22 Dec. 1890.

2. Appendix, D.T.C. Labour Day Agenda 1894.

3. F.J., 28 Apr. 1894.

4. Ibid., 9 Apr. 1894.

5. Ibid., 2, 9 Apr. 1894; Agenda, Irish T.U.C., 1894.



the Dublin council had an unholy alliance with the publicans of the city;<sup>1</sup> among the individual subscribers was William Martin Murphy, Esq., J.P., Dartry, who sent £1.<sup>2</sup>

The Belfast trades council was represented at this first Irish congress by six delegates.<sup>3</sup> Like the Dublin body it claimed 15,000 affiliated members<sup>3</sup> and the numbers at its meetings, usually under 30 at the beginning of the decade, had doubled by 1894.<sup>4</sup> When affiliation to the new congress was considered there was an exceptional attendance of 85.<sup>5</sup> There was some opposition to the sending of delegates to Dublin; two members moved the previous question, but the amendment was defeated - the secretary noting that only 12 voted for it.<sup>5</sup> The Belfast council did not consider that this participation in the new congress ran counter to the British connection, indeed the first of their resolutions for the Dublin agenda was the following: That this congress is of the opinion that the time has arrived when, in the interests of trade unionists, there should be a general amalgamation or federation of the trades councils of the United Kingdom, for the more effective organisation of the workers in each country; a better method of enforcing the rights and privileges with regard to matters relating to labour, and whereby the combined organisation can be utilised for the betterment and strengthening of trade unionism.<sup>6</sup>

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1. F.J., 27 July 1891.

2. Ibid., 2,9 Apr. 1894; Agenda, Irish T.U.C. 1894.

3. B.T.C. minutes 4 Apr. 1894; F.J., 27 Apr. 1894, Agenda, I.T.U.C. 1894.

4. B.T.C. minutes, passim.

5. Ibid., 16 Mar. 1894.

6. Ibid., 13 Apr. 1894; Agenda, I.T.U.C., 1894, p. 31; F.J., 30 Apr. 1894.

7. Twenty-fifth annual conference, B.T.U.C., p. 51.

The council forwarded the same resolution to the Norwich conference of the British Trades Union Congress some months later.

The agenda which was issued to the delegates contained an introduction which equally was free from any suggestion that the new congress was conceived as a rival to or a secession from the British congress. Though a reprint of an article from the Irish Worker, a general labour and trade union journal run by a Dublin printer Bernard Doyle, it clearly expressed the views of the Dublin labour leaders. After stating that the idea of holding an annual conference had been present in the minds of these leaders for some years past, it listed the reasons for the departure. These were, in brief, the inability of Irish unions to bear delegates' expenses,<sup>1</sup> the meagre results obtained when the Dublin and Belfast trades councils did send delegates, and the standing orders revised at the 1892 Glasgow conference which altered representation in an endeavour to check the growing numbers at conferences.<sup>2</sup> The results referred to as disappointing were not, mainly, Ireland's failure to obtain a seat on the parliamentary committee - though this was felt as a grievance - but the relegation to the last day of con-

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1. The expenses of the Belfast trades council's solitary delegate to the twenty-fourth annual conference of the British T.U.C. (Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1891) were £9 (wages, travel, hotel) plus 10s. to the parliamentary committee fund (B.T.C. minutes, 22 Aug. 1891); in 1892 (Glasgow conference) four delegates cost £28 plus £4 to parliamentary committee fund (B.T.C. minutes, 17 Aug. 1892). The expenses of the Dublin trades council's two delegates in 1894 (Norwich conference) were £20 (D.T.C. minutes, 23 July, 1894).

2. Twenty-fifth annual conference, B.T.U.C., p.51.

ference, known to delegates as 'the sacrifice of the innocents',<sup>1</sup> of Irish resolutions, where they shared the fate of other embarrassing and unpopular ones. The Irish Worker article pointed out that the fault lay with 'the overburdened congressional machine' and not with the few Irish representatives 'who could not make any practical impression on an institution dominated by delegates of English and Scottish mining and manufacture'.

We cannot ... find fault with our English and Scotch friends in pressing forward their own claims first - that is quite natural, seeing that their interests are in the main identical and the facilities at their disposal favourable; they cannot be expected to understand the wants of a community largely agricultural, nor can we hope that they would, so to speak, cut their own throats by assisting in a revival of the languishing manufactures of Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

The introduction concluded by urging the delegates to institute their own annual congress and maintain their own parliamentary committee which, while securing attention for their own needs would work in harmony with and assist the larger institution. The final words were a prophecy that the trades councils of Scotland would follow the Irish example, which they did three years later.<sup>3</sup>

The proceedings of the new congress<sup>4</sup> were eminently reasonable in tone. The chairman trusted that the demands and aspirations of the working men and women of

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1. Twenty-fifth annual conference, B.T.U.C., p.51.

2. Agenda, I.T.U.C.1894, introduction.

3. B.C.Roberts, Trade union government and administration in Great Britain, p.455.

4. See F.J., 28, 30 Apr. 1894 for report of conference,

Ireland would engage the serious attention not alone of the parliamentary representatives of Ireland but also the rulers of the United Kingdom; the lord mayor of Dublin, received with loud applause, said that they were powerful for much good and much evil, but assured his gratified listeners that

having watched now for many years the proceedings of the Dublin Trades Council and the affiliated societies in Ireland, so far as he could see while they had an immense power in their hands he did not think that anybody could say that they had not exercised it with great discretion.

Another visitor, W. J. Leahy, a cooper, recently elected to the corporation under the aegis of the local Parnellites,<sup>1</sup> while congratulating them on their large numbers, saw no imminent departure from the British Trades Union Congress. 'He considered that at the annual congress of the United Kingdom, Ireland certainly had not got a fair share of attention', but suggested that 'a special day ought to be devoted to Irish business'. If further proof were needed of the subsidiary nature of the new congress, it was furnished by the adoption of the Belfast resolution calling for a United Kingdom federation of trades councils. This resolution contained an added clause that it be forwarded to the British parliamentary committee, the whole matter to be dealt with by them at the earliest opportunity, and - the wording is significant - 'form part of the business of the next

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1. Leahy made his first appearance on 1 Jan. 1893; Dublin corporation minutes of that date. He, along with T. J. O'Reilly of the D.T.C., J. Canty and Adolphus Shields, had held a meeting in the Phoenix Park in support of Parnell. F.J., 8 Dec. 1890.

[British] Trades Union Congress'.

The speech of the president of the new congress, Thomas O'Connell, a carpenter and president of the Dublin trades council, drew from Alexander Taylor, a Belfast linenlapper, the tribute that 'their worthy president in his address had leaned to the side of moderation, and he thought it was a wise course'. O'Connell reviewed the progress of trade unionism and its increasing acceptance by the public; though rejoicing in the vindication of their right to strike, he warned the delegates that it would be criminal to resort to it if disputes could be settled amicably. On the eight-hour day question he was in favour of trade option, for 'with the hours at present worked in continental countries it would be suicidal to insist on its compulsory application to all industries', and he concluded, amid loud applause, with these words: 'I trust, ladies and gentlemen, that your deliberations may be productive of general good, that they may tend to bring labour and capital in Ireland into close harmony, and hasten the time when each shall occupy its true place and recognise the fact that their interests are identical'. Only once did he cease to be moderate; in a discussion on an employers' liability bill which contained an objectionable contracting-out clause not in the previous bill rejected by the house of lords, he intervened to say that the sooner the house of nonentities ceased to exist the better. As for labour representation in parliament and local government, he declared it most unsatisfactory that in Ireland they had to rely on those gentlemen who had been returned from a political standpoint and not one of the 103 had been returned on purely

labour lines. In England labour was represented at every level, in Ireland, where it was practically unrepresented, one of the essentials for reformation was the greater spread of trades councils.

The thirty-eight resolutions submitted were an Irish version of 'lib-lab' reformism. Legislation, or its enforcement, accounted for 12 resolutions on industrial conditions; hours, wages and unfair domestic competition were the subject of another 5, while 8 more dealt with labour organisation, housing and technical education. Political resolutions were strictly reformist, and called for a local government franchise on English lines, the payment of M.P.s and the revision of jury laws; a slightly contentious resolution on the taxation of land values provoked one opponent of Henry George and a vague declaration in favour of land nationalisation. The remaining 9 resolutions were the Irish ingredient in the mixture and were along the familiar nineteenth-century lines of protection for decaying Irish industries, joined to demands for an Irish share of government and war department contracts. Several were to be moved regularly at subsequent conferences; two concerned the use of Irish glass bottles and corks, a third, sponsored by the Dublin branch of the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers, demanded that no lord mayor should hold his office for more than one year as this deprived the coachmakers of employment. The last resolution met with mounting opposition at each congress until finally Belfast delegates declared in 1901 that they would not accept dictation on the frequency with which

graphical Society, with a similar history to that of the London Society of Compositors. Both were for a few years (1844-8) part of the National Typographical Associ-

their city might elect one person as first citizen.<sup>1</sup> Decaying crafts faced with foreign competition continued to occupy the time of congresses; in 1896 a resolution<sup>2</sup> was adopted protesting against the importation of foreign brass work and calling upon clergymen, architects and licensed vintners to use home-made work. Such pathetic appeals indicated the weakness of much of the Irish economy, especially of Dublin, dependent almost completely on industries producing consumer goods.

The 119 delegates in the Trades' Hall, Capel Street, represented over 21,000 trade unionists directly and 39,000 indirectly, through the trades councils of Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Drogheda. Irish branches of amalgamated unions were strongly represented; in the second half of the nineteenth century these British unions absorbed many of the Irish craft unions.<sup>3</sup> The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, and the Typographical Association,<sup>4</sup> had been particularly successful in en-

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1. Eighth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 51-2. Though the resolution was carried by 33 votes to 12, it did not appear in subsequent years; the parliamentary committee report of 1902 quoted a letter from the Dublin town clerk which stated that counsel had advised that the desired change in the standing orders of the Dublin corporation would be ultra vires. In Dublin the lord mayor received a salary, in Belfast the post was honorary.

2. Third annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 36.

3. For the spread of British unions in Ireland, see Clarkson, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 183-4.

4. Dublin had its own organisation, the Dublin Typographical Society, with a similar history to that of the London Society of Compositors. Both were for a few years (1844-8) part of the National Typographical Associ-

rolling Irish members of these skilled trades. So too had the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which was not represented at this first congress. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, while not quite in the same category, had an undisputed monopoly in Ireland although the wage-scales of its Irish workers were considerably lower than those of British railway workers. Building trade workers other than carpenters and joiners were in local unions, as were the linen workers of the north, for no British union catered for them. Four women delegates from Belfast and Dublin represented unions newly started by the trades councils of the two cities, the Textile Operatives of Ireland in Belfast, and the Bookfolders' section of the Irish National Labour Union in Dublin; their membership totals did not exceed a few hundred. The few unskilled workers organised were in a number of local Irish unions or in new British unions such as the National Amalgamated Union of Labour and the National Union of Dock Labourers. By 1898, the Register of Friendly Societies reported that the 96 Irish trade unions, many of them very small, had only 13,077 members.<sup>1</sup>

A parliamentary committee on the British model (one of its functions was 'generally to support the parliamentary committee of the United Trades Congress upon all questions affecting the workers of the United Kingdom') was elected at the Dublin congress. It consisted of eight members and a secretary, all members

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ation, and then were re-established as independent societies. See A.E. Musson, The Typographical Association, pp. 57, 69.

1. Clarkson, op. cit., p. 183.



of trades councils and belonging to skilled trades. Belfast and Limerick had two each, Cork and Drogheda one each and Dublin three, including the secretary John Simmons, a member of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. The Belfast members secured first and third places, Dublin second and fifth, the secretary being elected unanimously. This pattern in which the ruling body was dominated territorially by Dublin and Belfast and occupationally by the skilled trades, notably printers, carpenters and tailors, persisted during the early years of the congress. The unskilled workers were unrepresented except in 1895 and 1896<sup>1</sup> when the United Labourers of Ireland won a seat; in reply to the complaint of a labourer at a later congress that his category of worker was unrepresented, the chairman of the parliamentary committee retorted that while he sympathised, the labourers had only themselves to blame in that they split their vote by putting up more than one candidate.<sup>2</sup>

Delegates were suitably entertained. The Dublin United Tramways Company, of which William Martin Murphy was the principal shareholder, issued free passes - though the concession was somewhat marred by a congress resolution complaining of the excessive hours worked by the employees and of the refusal of the company to meet

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1. E. Goulding (1895) and P. Golden (1896) were both Dublin labourers. Clarkson is in error (op.cit. p.195) when he states that 1895 was the only year in which labourers were represented. See third annual report I.T.U.C., p. 45, and appendix 4 (infra) pp. 402-9.

2. Seventh annual report I.T.U.C., p. 45. Only seven of the delegates represented labourers.

the men as a body. The Gaiety Theatre admitted delegates to all parts of the house and the Phoenix brewery, already a subscriber, provided a carriage drive to Lucan and a free lunch. The meal was followed by customary speeches in an atmosphere of mutual good will, but the high sheriff<sup>1</sup> of Dublin introduced in his opening remarks what was in the opinion of some of his hearers 'political and contentious matter' by a reference to the late Mr Parnell. He attempted to explain, but his remarks were lost in the subsequent 'interruption and uproar' and 'the proceedings came to a somewhat abrupt conclusion'. The banquet given in the evening by the Dublin trades council went more smoothly, attended by more tactful municipal officers, and the toasts honoured included 'Our native land', to which Mr William Field M.P. replied, and 'The labour cause', supported by delegates from Dublin, Cork and Belfast, the northern representative being William Walker, who was later to dominate the Belfast labour scene.

The second Irish congress met in Cork the following year, but in the meantime events in the British congress had occurred which made it certain that henceforward Irish trade unionists would be dependent on their own efforts. Sheldon had been elected as the Irish representative at Norwich, but he held his seat only until the next congress (1895); the parliamentary committee of which he was a member drafted new standing orders which

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1. Richard McCoy, a strong Parnellite, chairman of the Parnell Leadership Committee. F.J., 8 Dec. 1890.

excluded trades councils from future meetings and rescinded the provision for special representation for Ireland. The subsequent congress ratified these decisions. The change was designed to bar the socialists, who had captured many of the trades councils and were undermining the 'lib-lab' leaders of the Trades Union Congress,<sup>1</sup> but this was no consolation even to Belfast, where the names of Fenwick and his colleagues were still powerful.<sup>2</sup>

The council made efforts to mobilise opposition to the ratification of the new standing orders and the resentment that followed the failure of these efforts resulted for some time in British Trades Union Congress correspondence being marked read. Henceforward Irish participation virtually ceased.

The machinery of the Irish congress was consciously<sup>3</sup> modelled on the British, a natural result of the fact that many of the leaders belonged to amalgamated unions and had attended British congresses. The rules govern-

1. B. C. Roberts, Trade union government and administration in Great Britain, p. 455.

2. When William Walker moved that the Belfast trades council delegates to the Norwich conference of the British T.U.C. be instructed to vote for Tom Mann as secretary of the parliamentary committee, an amendment, moved by R. Sheldon and T. Johnston, to postpone the question for six months, was carried by fifteen votes to six. Johnstone declared that 'he knew no one fitter than Mr Fenwick ... the only thing he knew about Mann was what he saw in the papers, that he had been an agitator'. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Aug. 1894.

3. 'We are not ashamed to admit that we took as our model the procedure and methods which resulted in bringing about material benefits for the workers of England during the past quarter of a century.' Address of G. Leahy, president, seventh annual report I.T.U.C., p. 6.

ing election and procedure of the parliamentary committee were as far as possible identical with those of the British committee. Its finances were to be dependent on any surplus from delegates' fees and voluntary subscriptions from trades councils and trade unions. In 1895 income amounted to £111. 15s., of which £54 5s. represented delegates' fees. Of the remaining £57 10s. trades councils supplied £26 (Belfast £10, Dublin and Limerick £7 each, Drogheda £2), trade unions in Belfast £18, and small contributions, in the main from local unions, accounted for the rest.<sup>1</sup> The executives of two amalgamated unions subscribed, the Typographical Association and the General Union of Carpenters. The more powerful amalgamated bodies such as the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the National Union of Dock Labourers, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, were represented by delegates but not by subscriptions. Richard Sheldon, who in 1895 was on the parliamentary committee of both congresses, moved the following motion in the Belfast trades council,<sup>2</sup> of which he was the secretary, and subsequently in the Cork congress:<sup>3</sup>

That it be an instruction from this congress to all delegates present, belonging to the various English and Scotch Trade and Labour organisations, to insist on their right to send a representative (who shall be a member of a branch in Ireland) to the Irish Trades Union Congress. The expenses of the said representatives to be paid out of the general fund.

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1. Second annual report I.T.U.C., statement of accounts.
  2. B.T.C. minutes, 9 May 1895.
  3. Second annual report I.T.U.C., p. 15.

The last clause was in fact a strong hint to the executives concerned; the motion was adopted by congress. The parliamentary committee at the Limerick conference (1896) referred to it in their report, saying that most of the permanent officials of the amalgamated societies looked with disfavour on the Irish congress, but already in 1896 the resolution seems to have been effective, for in that year the A.S.R.S. and the A.S.T. subscribed £10 and £2 each from their parliamentary committee funds.<sup>1</sup> The executives of the amalgamated unions continued to be the largest contributors under the 'voluntary' scheme until it was abolished in 1905; but the Irish T.U.C. income remained small under the voluntary scheme and the parliamentary committee was handicapped in its work.

The anxiety shown by the founders of the Irish T.U.C. to rebut charges of disloyalty to the British congress prompted them to repeat their reasons for the new development at several successive conferences. The president of the 1895 congress, and the parliamentary committee chairman in 1896, repeated the arguments and assurances of the Irish Worker article of the previous year, and the 1897 president, emphasising that their aim was 'to supplement rather than clash with our brethren across the water', pointed to the institution of the Scottish Trades Union Congress as proving the wisdom of the course adopted. The first president of the Scottish body had in fact used much the same argument as the Irish leaders ('there were many questions

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1. Third annual report I.T.U.C., statement of accounts.

which affect Scotland particularly to which our English fellow unionists cannot be expected to devote the necessary amount of time and attention which they deserve') but the Scottish unions were deeply influenced in their decisions by Keir Hardie and other socialists; they invited the Independent Labour Party founder to address their first meeting as a gesture of reproach to the British T.U.C. which had excluded him by the change in the rule governing delegates' credentials.<sup>1</sup> The 1897 Irish congress was attended by Hardie's comrade, Robert Smillie, as a fraternal delegate, and relations between the two bodies were close and friendly for many years. If the action of the British T.U.C. had reduced the Irish body to an unwilling 'external relations' position, it might nonetheless have its advantages, as H. McManus, chairman of the parliamentary committee, stated at Cork: 'Sometimes heaven sends us a blessing in disguise; let us hope that this is one, and that the outcome may be the vitalising of the energy and self-reliance of the Irish workman ...'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. B. C. Roberts, op. cit., p. 455.

2. Third annual report I.T.U.C., p. 6.

## IV. THE POLITICS OF CONFORMITY

The political position of the Irish Trades Union Congress was stated at the second congress by its president, J. H. Jolly of the Cork trades council, a compositor by trade:

I am not going to ascribe to this gathering any significance which it does not properly possess. The congress as such is of no party in politics. In regard to all those questions which divide Irishmen no less than others it holds itself absolutely neutral (hear, hear). Its members indeed do not abdicate nor suspend their rights for an instant to the fullest and freest expression of their own convictions, but the congress itself in its corporate capacity altogether refuses to throw its weight into one scale or the other ...<sup>1</sup>

This perfectionist attitude, especially dear to the hearts of most of the Belfast delegates, was maintained with a remarkable degree of success for a number of years. There were minor disagreements when temperance advocates, from both Belfast and Dublin, considered time was wasted in protesting against the Guinness monopoly of bottled stout or the use of foreign-made bottles and corks. Alexander Taylor said that provided goods were made under trade union conditions they had not right to protest: 'It was too late in the day to try and build a Chinese wall of protection around Irish goods'.<sup>2</sup> Another delegate protested that they should not acknowledge the principle that their neighbours in England had the right to starve them out. 'Their first duty was to look after

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1. Third annual report I.T.U.C., p. 11.

2. Fourth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 30.

their own interests (hear, hear)'.<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of the word 'foreign' was vexing. At the Belfast congress (1898) P. J. Tevenan, a Dublin railway worker who had spent some time in England, speaking on the King Charles' head resolution on home-made brass work, asked could they put down goods from England (made under the fairest conditions) under the category of foreign products. Four Belfast delegates spoke against the resolution, which was carried by four votes only.<sup>2</sup>

But the subject provoking the greatest disturbance in the placid deliberations of congress was the report of the Childers committee on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. An emergency debate at the Waterford conference revealed a division of opinion among the ranks of the northern delegates, Alexander Taylor (Belfast) and McCarron (A.S.T. Derry) speaking in favour of the motion of protest against over-taxation of Ireland. The opposition led by Samuel Monro claimed it had not been proved and that the whole matter needed further investigation, but McCarron denounced this as a tactical move which would suit Monro and those who were opposed to giving justice to Ireland. He waxed bitter over Mr Arthur Balfour's statement that Ireland had received back every farthing given to England, and his query as to Ireland's readiness to support the soldiers quartered there. He (McCarron) said no. 'They were peaceful in Ireland, and the

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1. Fourth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 30.

2. Fifthe annual report I.T.U.C., p. 52.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Sept. 1895.



country had no right to pay for them. This was a question on which all patriotic Irishmen should unite, and not allow themselves to be robbed by England any longer (hear, hear).'<sup>1</sup>

The motion was passed on a show of hands, but the subject came up for debate two years later at Derry, when McCarron presided. A similar motion was then passed by thirty-seven votes to three, but not before hot discussion. Monro stated that every unwritten law as to politics had been broken, while Councillor W. J. Leahy (Dublin), as if to prove the correctness of Monro's remarks, declared that Ireland would never be fairly treated by England, and would never have justice done to her until she had the right to manage her own affairs. Charles Darcus, a Belfast printer who had supported Monro at Waterford, jumped to his feet on a point of order: 'If this goes on I don't know where we are going to end'. Murray Davis held that 'Irishmen and Englishmen should be welded together as one man ... he was proud to be part and parcel of the British Empire'.<sup>2</sup> William Walker ended the debate by moving that the motion be put. Four years earlier in the Belfast trades council he carried by a large majority an amendment that a circular on the Plunkett Recess committee from the Dublin body be marked read,<sup>3</sup> and when he gave a report to the Belfast council after the Derry congress he complained strongly of the political complexion of the discussions:

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1. Fourth annual report I.T.U.C., pp. 49-50.
  2. Sixth annual report I.T.U.C., pp. 48-50.
  3. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Sept. 1895.

'unless the personnel of congress was changed he would recommend the council not to send delegates to it, as in his opinion the congress was not worth the money it cost'.<sup>1</sup> He did not, however, press the point; five years later he was elected president of congress.

Direct labour representation, especially at local government level, was considered primarily the responsibility of the trades councils. At the Cork congress, however, a resolution was passed which had it been implemented would have involved the T.U.C., at least financially. The parliamentary committee was to draw up a scheme for a fund and appeals were to be made to friends of labour, trades councils and organisations affiliated to congress; the fund itself was to be administered by the parliamentary committee. Parliamentary representation was not included, since it was considered that payment of M.P.s would be necessary before workers could be fairly represented. The scheme did not envisage a distinct party as such, but'...any labour representative chosen under this scheme must clearly understand that he should represent labour purely, and hold himself aloof from all political parties connected with such public bodies as he might be elected upon'.<sup>2</sup> The motion was moved by 'English-returned' Tevenan, the Irish secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and T. Foy of the same union; the plan recalled the ideas of the English Labour Electoral Association

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 17 June 1899.

2. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 36.

modified by some of the proposals of Tait and Hardie made at the 1891 congress of the British T.U.C. Since from lack of support the scheme came to nothing, the responsibility for labour representation remained with the trades councils.

The Labour Electoral Association of Great Britain and Ireland had been supported by both the Dublin and Belfast trades councils. No Irish representative was present at the first congress (Sheffield) in 1888, but John Simmons attended from the Dublin trades council in the following year and was elected to the committee. In moving the acceptance of its report he said that it only required 'some little stirring up' to make the Labour Electoral Association a success in Ireland as well as in Great Britain; though he was himself an Irish nationalist he regretted that 'too much attention had been paid by the Irish members to a certain class of the Irish people and too little to the Irish workingman, who had been totally neglected'.<sup>1</sup> Moving a motion later in the session urging the Irish people to return members pledged to support ameliorative legislation, he softened the accusation by saying that he and those he represented had no serious fault to find with the Irish parliamentary representatives, he regretted 'he should be compelled to say anything which might seem disrespectful to those gentlemen'. But when a Bradford delegate protested and seconded a Liverpool delegate's amendment designed to take the sting out of the resolu-

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1. Second annual report, Labour Electoral Congress, p.11

tion, the congress insisted on adhering to the original motion.<sup>1</sup>

John Simmons was the only Irish representative among the thirty-seven delegates, but he must have been gratified by the attention paid to Ireland at the annual dinner. A fellow committeeman (W. Matkin) expressed deep sympathy with the people of the 'Sister Isle', but thought that they were not trusting the democracy of Great Britain sufficiently: 'if their Irish friends mixed with them a little more it would be better for all (applause)'.<sup>2</sup> T. R. Threlfall, the Labour Electoral Association secretary, agreed with Matkin and thought such a course would solve the home rule difficulty; once the Irish question was out of the way 'there were many questions affecting the welfare of the people to settle'.<sup>3</sup> - a clear indication of the feeling among the English labour leaders that social legislation was being held up by Irish demands for self-government. Two other speakers also made references to English sympathy with Ireland, and Simmons in reply could only hope that not only Dublin but all the other towns in Ireland would be represented at the next congress.<sup>4</sup>

Simmons's hopes were not realised. He was accompanied by another Irish delegate in each of the two following years, in 1890 by Stephen Farrell of the

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1. Second annual report, Labour Electoral Congress, pp. 28-29.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

5. *Ibid.*, 25 Apr., 8 May and *passim*.

Waterford trades council and in 1891 by T. McKeivitt of the Dundalk branch of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union. Farrell denounced sweating nationalists,<sup>1</sup> while Simmons, who retained his committee seat on each occasion, complained bitterly that absolutely nothing was done for labour by the Irish members.<sup>2</sup> In 1892 Threlfall wrote to the Dublin council asking for assistance in getting the trades of Ireland to affiliate and send delegates, since his organisation had taken up 'strong, uncompromising and friendly co-operation on the Home Rule question',<sup>3</sup> but no assistance was given and not even Simmons was present at the 1892 congress. He attended the congress for the last time in 1894.<sup>4</sup>

The Belfast council was hostile when first approached in 1887,<sup>5</sup> but from 1891 onwards subscribed each year and expressed its sympathy with the Labour Electoral Association, though it was unable to send delegates.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Third annual report, L.E.C., p. 27.

2. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

3. F.J., 1 Feb. 1892. Point seven of the programme of the L.E.A. in force from 1889 (second annual report, p. 44) consisted of a demand for national parliaments for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with an imperial parliament for imperial affairs. One of the 1892 election leaflets (Ireland and the Labour Question) argued that British and Irish workers would benefit by the granting of self-government to Ireland. See fifth annual report, p. 40.

4. D.T.C. minutes, 9 July 1894; see also third annual report I.T.U.C., which includes short biographies of leading members.

5. A letter from Threlfall urging the formation of a branch, was marked read. B.T.C. minutes, 21 May 1887.

6. Ibid., 25 Apr., 8 May and passim.

An attempt on the part of Murray Davis to follow the example of some English boroughs and form a local branch as distinct from mere affiliation of the trades council was, however, opposed in an 'acrimonious' speech by Hugh McManus and action was deferred.<sup>1</sup> There was irony in the discussion which took place in the Belfast council on the circular inviting delegates to the last conference of the dying organisation; one member, a tailor, asked if the Labour Electoral Association were connected with any political party whereupon the chairman answered 'Not so far as I know', and the council then voted to send the usual delegate's fee of ten shillings, which was Belfast's last link with the 'lib-lab' creation.<sup>2</sup>

Irish labour had no direct representation at Westminster. The obstacles which faced labour candidates in England were also present in Ireland, but an Irish labour candidate had in addition to surmount the barriers raised by Irish nationalism and unionism. In spite of the peculiar difficulties which obtained in Belfast, it was there that the first Irish labour candidate appeared, in the general election of 1885, before the first home rule bill provoked the bitterest sectarian passions. He was Alexander Bowman, a flax-dresser, and secretary of the Belfast trades council.

The ground had been prepared for him by a small group of radicals, of whom the chief was a congregationalist minister, the Rev. Bruce Wallace; he had de-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 19 Dec. 1891.

2. Ibid., 25 May 1895.

livered a series of lectures to working-class audiences on such subjects as producers' co-operatives and land nationalisation, late in 1884.<sup>1</sup> Bowman was associated with him and was secretary of a small organisation, the Irish Land Restoration Society, which had the same ideals as its English and Scottish counterparts. It was this body which in January 1885 brought Henry George to Belfast, where he addressed a packed meeting in the Ulster Hall, presided over by Wallace.<sup>2</sup> As Dr Hugh Hanna, a prominent presbyterian minister and conservative champion known to his opponents as 'Roaring Hanna' was denied the opportunity to deliver a speech at the meeting, Wallace arranged a debate with him in the same hall shortly afterwards.<sup>3</sup> Encouraged by the public interest in radical politics, Bowman agreed to contest North Belfast at the general election of 1885. Though a member of the Belfast Liberal Association, he stood as a labour candidate.<sup>4</sup>

Bowman included in his election address the usual reforms demanded by trade unions (reduction in the hours of labour, additional factory inspectors, amendment of the Employers' Liability Act), a generous selection from Chamberlain's 'unauthorised programme' and a demand for local option; on the home rule question he stood for the maintenance of the union between Great Britain and

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1. Northern Whig, 11, 18 Mar. 1884.

2. B.N-L., 23 Jan. 1885.

3. Ibid., 27 Feb. 1885.

4. He was present at the annual meeting of the Belfast Liberal Association (B.N-L., 30 Jan. 1885); see also N.W., 20 May 1886.

Ireland, but referred discreetly to his antipathy to any injustice in its operation. His own statements and those of his supporters make it clear that he stood as a trade union candidate. Though his campaign was hampered by intimidation and the wrecking tactics of his opponents, he polled about one-third of the votes secured by the unionist, a linen manufacturer named Ewart.<sup>1</sup>

The following year the debates on the first home rule bill took place and the Belfast trades council found itself involved unwillingly in the controversy. The introduction of the bill had split the Ulster liberals. A demonstration in the Ulster hall (30 April) under liberal (in reality, liberal-unionist) auspices passed resolutions against home rule; it was attended by a large number of workmen, including a hundred who marched from the Sirocco works, dramatically led by a man on a grey charger.<sup>2</sup> Bowman, though a member of the general council and the executive committee of the Belfast Liberal Association was not allowed to move an amendment expressing confidence in Gladstone's leadership;<sup>3</sup> instead, arrangements were made for a deputation of workmen to lobby, in particular, trade union and radical M.P.s. These working-class allies of the Ulster unionists were in effect the first labour-unionists,

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1. For a fuller account of this election and a discussion of Bowman's candidature, see appendix 2.

2. B.N.-L., N.W., 1 May 1886.

3. N.W., 20 May 1886.



and were given considerable support by the Belfast press. The deputation's secretary, William Currie, was extremely active and wrote to and interviewed a number of M.P.s including Joseph Arch (to whom he described himself as 'Radical to the very heart') and Henry Broadhurst, secretary of the T.U.C.<sup>1</sup> Bowman, on the instruction of the parliamentary committee of the Belfast trades council, denied that the deputation had been appointed by the council or any trade union in Belfast.<sup>2</sup> His actions were upheld by a narrow majority (14-11) of the full council,<sup>3</sup> but some weeks later notice was given of a motion censuring him for violating 'a fundamental principle of its government, that political questions of a party and contentious nature should be eliminated from its proceedings'.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Mitchell, who was president of the Belfast trades council and who had signed Bowman's nomination paper in 1885, went so far as to say that had he known of Bowman's views at the time he would not have proposed him: 'Though differing politically from Mr Ewart, I am glad to say that through him North Belfast will be found in opposition to a measure which, I am convinced, would be injurious not only to the best interests of Belfast, but to those of Ireland'.<sup>5</sup> Bowman had allowed himself to

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1. N.W., 13 May 1886, B.N.-L., 15, 18 May 1886.

2. B.N.-L., 10 May 1886, B.T.C. minutes, 15 May 1886.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 15 May 1886.

4. Ibid., 5, 14 June 1886.

5. B.N.-L., 18 May 1886.

be drawn, in letters to Henry Broadhurst, into a controversy with William Currie,<sup>1</sup> and written as a Gladstonian liberal.<sup>2</sup> His attempt to persuade the council to distinguish between him in his public and private capacities failed, for though he succeeded in having the censure motion withdrawn, it was at the price of resignation from his position as secretary of the body he had helped to create five years earlier.<sup>3</sup> The council's political chastity was ensured by the delegates voting 18-13 to have a report of the meeting published.<sup>4</sup>

The fierce rioting and loss of life which followed immediately on the defeat of the first home rule bill during its second reading in the house of commons, lasted throughout the summer months and involved shipyard workers. The trades council passed a resolution condemning 'the cowardly ruffianism that has been and is disgracing our town', and calling upon all trade unionists to keep clear of disturbances.<sup>5</sup> Its desire

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1. William Currie (not to be confused with W.A. Currie, secretary of the Belfast harbour board) was a linen lap-  
per and later a cloth-passer (Belfast directory 1884, 1892) who, in addition to working in the same industry as Bowman, was a fellow member in the Belfast Debating Society and the Belfast Liberal Association.

2. N.W., 20, 21 May, 1886.

3. James Workman, a prominent member of the Belfast trades council, said in a speech at one of Bowman's election meetings that the candidate had conceived the idea of the trades council and with a few others had canvassed forty trades. N.W., 31 Oct. 1885.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 12 June 1886.

5. Ibid., 7 Aug. 1886.

to avoid political entanglements was strengthened by a not unexpected occurrence - decline in attendances and disaffiliation of a number of trade union branches. It was twenty years before another parliamentary labour candidate stood in Belfast.<sup>1</sup>

In local government, restricted franchise delayed the appearance of labour candidates. Once again Belfast was first in the field, thanks chiefly to Thomas Sexton,<sup>2</sup> who had given it the widest franchise of any Irish town. In 1891 the trades council selected Samuel Monro, who accepted nomination for one of the five wards in the city with the knowledge that if elected he would be required by his employer to resign his job. He polled strongly and might have been successful if the polling booths had not been closed between 7 and 8 p.m., so that many of his supporters were denied the opportunity of voting.<sup>3</sup> The trades council also supported in another ward Thomas Harrison, a barrister, who claimed on

1. B.T.C. minutes, Dec. 1885 to July 1886, passim. Among the unions which withdrew were the Power Loom Tenters, the Associated Carpenters and Joiners of Scotland, two branches of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, the Hackle and Gill makers and the Flaxroughers. The no. 2 carpenters' branch announced that they would withdraw their delegates until Bowman was removed from office.

2. Thomas Sexton, during his period as M.P. (nationalist) for west Belfast, introduced a section (s.3.) into a local act, the Municipal Corporation of Belfast Act (50 & 51 Vict. c. cxviii), 1887, which abolished the ten pound valuation for burgesses.

3. Cromac ward

Ritchie	2465	Elected
Bell	2419	
Monro	2106	

election to be the first labour candidate ever returned in Belfast;<sup>1</sup> as late as 1897 he continued to receive this support, as 'the consistent advocate of the claims of the working classes in Belfast',<sup>2</sup> though in that year he changed his label from independent to liberal unionist.<sup>3</sup> In 1893 the trades council tried again in another ward, and as Monro was unwilling to stand, nominated Murray Davis.<sup>4</sup> Davis was opposed in the council by delegates unionist in outlook and denounced by them at several election meetings of McCammond and Corry, his conservative opponents in the ward;<sup>5</sup> in vain he produced letters from two clergymen certifying that he was neither a socialist nor a nationalist; at the conclusion of the poll (he was beaten two to one) he complained bitterly of the conduct of the opposition and recited an extended list of denials - socialist, atheist, anarchist, home ruler, nationalist.<sup>6</sup> The trades council four days later passed an unanimous motion congratulating McCammond on his proposed election as lord mayor and calling him 'the workers' best friend'.<sup>7</sup>

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1. B.N.-L., 27 Nov. 1891.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 23 Nov. 1894.

3. Ibid. 6 Nov. 1897; B.N.-L., 29 Oct. 1897.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Oct., 19 Nov. 1893.

5. B.N.-L., 20-22 Nov. 1893. Two of his denouncers were Thomas Johnstone and F. C. Johnston; cf. appendix 2, p. 397, n. 3 and supra, p. 131. Thomas Johnstone had appeared as a delegate of the Power Loom Yarn-dressers' Society at the Belfast (1893) conference of the British T.U.C.

6. B.N.-L., 28 Nov., 1893.

7. Ibid., 2 Dec. 1893.

In the absence of electoral successes, councils made a practice of lobbying candidates outside their ranks and endorsing them in cases where they had shown themselves in favour of such policies as the enforcement of a fair wage clause in local contracts and the employment of local labour.<sup>1</sup> Outside Belfast the restricted local franchise encouraged such a course, and one Dublin trade union leader (J. Ward, who presided at the inaugural conference of the Irish Federated Trade and Labour Union) thought so highly of it that he preferred it for the time being to agitation for the extension of franchises.<sup>2</sup> A logical development of such a course was to request the dominant political party to include in its public representatives some labour men. The Belfast trades council never gave way to this temptation, for its leaders considered, with justification, that any political alliance would split the council. Owing to the threat of home rule, the unionist party had a sufficient working-class following to make advances to labour interests unnecessary. Such advances if made and accepted would have weakened the ties between Belfast and British labour, for British trade unionists could not be expected to welcome the Irish allies of British conservatives. An alliance with Irish nationalists was repugnant to the majority of the council and

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1. E.G. Belfast trades council interviewed candidates and published their answers. B.T.C. minutes, 19 Nov. 1897. Dublin trades council lobbied candidates specifically on the extension of the municipal franchise and fair contracts. F.J., 24 Nov. 1890.

2. 'We do not follow Mr Dawson's advice to agitate for extension of the franchises .. the best we can do now is to extract pledges from candidates.' F.J., 6 May 1889.

would have been profitless, indeed damaging, in the Belfast area, whatever it might yield in an Ireland under home rule. Labour in Belfast was forced, willy-nilly, to find its political expression in independent labour representation.

Elsewhere in Ireland the temptation to ask for representation through the nationalist organisation was strong. In 1890 William Martin Murphy, then a nationalist M.P., replied to a resolution of the Dublin trades council urging an extension of the municipal franchise, by pointing out that the Irish parliamentary party had in vain introduced bills with that object, and another nationalist M.P. attended to deplore the council's harsh criticisms of his party. J. Ward was not satisfied and retorted that Parnell should give labour at least one parliamentary representative.<sup>1</sup> The earliest nationalist concessions were made to the oldest trades council in Ireland, that of Cork,<sup>2</sup> where Eugene Crean its president was elected to the corporation in 1886;<sup>3</sup> in 1892 he and Michael Austin were elected as anti-Parnellite M.P.s. In the same year W. J. Leahy of the Dublin Regular Coopers was returned unopposed to the corporation, but though he was described by the Freeman's Journal as 'the workingman's candidate' and endorsed by the Dublin trades council, he owed his nomination and election to the Parnellite organisation in the city.<sup>4</sup> The Dublin council supported him three years

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1. F.J., 10 Nov. 1890.

2. See appendix I.

3. Second annual report I.T.U.C., p. 7.

4. F.J., 11,14,18 Nov. 1892.

later<sup>1</sup> when there was a threat to oust him, but within a year they condemned him unanimously, declaring that he 'should no longer be considered as voicing the opinions of labour in the municipal chamber' because he withdrew his support for the council's candidate for lord mayor.<sup>2</sup>

While the Dublin Trades Council as a body was pleased to have some of its members elected to councillorships under other auspices, there was an element in it which preferred 'pure' labour representation. The first candidate of this description to have the council's full support (it is probable that he was financed, and in the first instance selected, by his union, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners) was John Simmons, its secretary and constant representative at Labour Electoral Association conferences. He stood for a councillorship in 1895.<sup>3</sup> His own statement makes his position clear:

When asked to come forward as a candidate for Fitzwilliam ward he refused to do so until he consulted the Executive of the Trades Council ... and consenting to do so he had disclaimed any connection with any political body or organisation (cheers). He issued an address and he defied even the scrutinising eye of even Her Majesty's sub-sheriff to find in it any political allusion.<sup>4</sup>

If elected he would 'devote himself to the interests of his class and after that to the interests of the com-

1. D.T.C. minutes, 11 Nov. 1895.

2. Ibid., 7 Dec. 1896.

3. Ibid., 4 Mar. 1895. 7 Mar. 1895.

4. F.J., 4 Mar. 1895.

4. Ibid., 18 Dec. 1898.

5. He was sixth in a ward of four seats. F.J., 18 Jan., 1899.

munity generally.<sup>1</sup> Labour was unrepresented in the corporation, for of the two councillors who might be considered as labour-minded, one had abandoned any such claim and the other (W. J. Leahy) had stated that he did not represent labour alone.

The result was disheartening. Simmons came last in the three-cornered contest, beaten by a conservative and an independent, both of whom were engaged in the drink trade.<sup>2</sup> When he ran again in January 1899 his speeches, if not his election address, contained political allusions of at least historic interest. A resolution passed at one of his election meetings asked voters to show 'our present representatives that we do not forget the manner in which they treated O'Donovan Rossa',<sup>3</sup> an allusion to the efforts of Nannetti and Simmons to secure a home for the old Irish-American Fenian leader. At a meeting in support of another candidate (John Gibbons, secretary of the Bakers' Society), Simmons said that 'there were a good many parties nowadays, but he belonged to the old party called Fenian (cheers)'.<sup>4</sup> The Freeman's Journal (9 January) described him as 'an old '67 man'. The Fenian card was no more successful than the non-party one.<sup>5</sup>

1. In 1896 the trades council's preferred candidate

2. Richardson polled 237 out of a total of 510 votes

1. F.J., 5 Mar. 1895.

2. William Ireland (conservative) 223, Joseph Delahunt (independent nationalist) 176, John Simmons 141. Irish Daily Independent, 7 Mar. 1895.

3. F.J., 26 Nov. 1898.

4. Ibid., 12 Dec. 1898.

5. He was sixth in a ward of four seats. F.J., 18 Jan., 1899.



was its president (E. L. Richardson),<sup>1</sup> who was also unsuccessful<sup>2</sup> but was returned unopposed early in 1898, thanks to a nationalist association.<sup>3</sup>

During the eighteen-nineties a number of trade union candidates were elected to the corporation as the nominees of various nationalist organisations and they normally received the trades council's blessing. Richardson, approving of one of these as 'a practical workingman and a trade unionist', pointed out that another candidate who had submitted an election address for approval did not come within this description and added that the council recognised no politics in these cases. 'He remembered Mr W. J. Leahy asking the assistance of the council and although he had strong political leanings the council willingly supported him on labour grounds.'<sup>4</sup> So many of the Dublin trade union leaders were connected with outside political organisations that independent action was extremely difficult; Simmons complained that an ex-president of the council (Thomas O'Connell, who had presided at the first conference of the Irish Trades Union Congress) had lavished foul abuse on the council and on himself for intervening in one ward.<sup>5</sup> Even the council's president in

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 12 Oct. 1896.
  2. Richardson polled 237 out of a total of 510 votes cast. F.J., 26 Nov. 1896. One of his speakers was Thomas Harrison (cf. *supra*, p.174) who emphasised that Richardson was a labour (i.e. not a political party) candidate and could claim his support though he (Harrison) was 'a Unionist'. F.J., 21 Oct. 1896.
  3. D.T.C. minutes, 14 Feb. 1898.
  4. *Ibid.*, 26 Oct. 1896.
  5. *Ibid.*, 22 Nov. 1896.

1896 (John Fitzpatrick, a carpenter) when he contested a poor law guardian election did so at the request of a ratepayers' association, and the council in endorsing him expressed its gratitude to the local nationalist registration association for selecting him.<sup>1</sup>

In 1898, ten years after the similar British act, the assimilation of the Irish parliamentary and local government franchises, object of so many and so oft-repeated resolutions, was effected.<sup>2</sup> There was an immediate increase in the number of candidates calling themselves labour, both in towns and in counties and a number of trade unions and trade councils ran their own nominees.<sup>3</sup> In Dublin the corporation, 'the strong-

1. D.T.C. minutes, 28 Feb., 14 Mar. 1898.

2. Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 (61 & 62 Vict. c.37), s.98. By ss.2(5), 21(a) and 94(2) property qualifications were abolished for candidates, who were required only to be registered local government electors.

3. e.g. Sligo council contested eight of the twenty-four seats and secured three; there were other 'independent' labour candidates (F.J., 10, 18 Jan. 1899). In small towns and rural areas some curious 'labour' candidates appeared, as in Newcastle West (Limerick) where a branch of the Trade and Labour Association selected a merchant, a J.P. and a house and land proprietor - though a voice from the crowd denounced the merchant as never having paid a pound in labour, to which his proposer replied: 'That will do now. We don't want to insult anyone' (F.J., 10 Jan. 1899). In Nenagh (Tipperary) another branch agreed on ten candidates for artisans and labourers and eleven for commercial, professional and other interests, and appointed a committee to canvass on behalf of the twenty-one, who had been selected as nationalists (F.J., 3 Jan. 1899). The Trade and Labour Association was a successor to Davitt's defunct Irish Democratic Labour Federation, and like it had become a mere nationalist appendage.

7. Ibid., 18 Jan. 1899.

hold of Parnellism', approved of a resolution calling for unity between the pro- and anti-Parnellite section of the nationalist movement.<sup>1</sup> but there was no corresponding development in the labour ranks. A Labour Electoral Association, formed in 1895,<sup>2</sup> but not connected with any English body, endeavoured to distinguish between the motley crowd of candidates claiming to be labour. It produced a list of some eleven approved candidates, but could not agree about others, for the chairman, Thomas Kearns, and George Leahy (both of the trades council) would not follow E. L. Richardson in regarding as bogus labour candidates those who opposed the Labour Electoral Association nominees.<sup>3</sup> One approved candidate said that he appeared before the L.E.A. 'in the double capacity of a labour and a Nationalist candidate and would be faithful to his pledges to both',<sup>4</sup> while Kearns attended a Parnellite ward meeting to ask that one place be reserved for a workingmen's nomination;<sup>5</sup> even Richardson was proposed on nomination day by a parish priest who had done the same service for nationalist candidates.<sup>6</sup> Seven candidates endorsed by the Labour Electoral Association were returned, but apart from Richardson none was then prominent in the trades council.<sup>7</sup> The Irish Socialist

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1. F.J., 6 Dec. 1898.

2. D.T.C. minutes, 18 Mar., 27 May 1895.

3. F.J., 13 Jan. 1899.

4. Ibid., 2 Dec. 1898.

5. Ibid., 10 Dec. 1898.

6. Ibid. 6 Dec. 1898.

7. Ibid., 18 Jan. 1899.

Republican party put up its first candidate in this election; he was E. W. Stewart, manager of the party's paper, the Workers' Republic, and a member of the Shop Assistants (a British union); he finished at the bottom of the poll in his ward.<sup>1</sup>

The Belfast trades council had its first success a year earlier; in November 1897. The city boundary had been extended in 1896 and the electorate divided into fifteen wards (in every case returning an alderman and three councillors) instead of the previous five.<sup>2</sup> As the franchise had already been widened in 1887 and the sectarian passions attendant on the second home rule bill had subsided, the council was encouraged to put forward a candidate for councillor in each of the seven wards. All six<sup>3</sup> were returned, five of them heading the poll in their respective divisions. They were Alexander Taylor, a linen lapper and secretary of the Belfast trades council, Murray Davis, secretary of the Belfast Operative Bakers' Society, William Liddell, secretary of a Belfast painters' union, Robert Gageby, who had founded the Flaxdressers' trade union and been its secretary for the sixteen years of its existence,

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1. He polled 448 votes as against 613 for the last candidate elected. F.J., 18 Jan. 1899.

2. Clarkson (Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p.350) overlooks the earlier extension of the Belfast franchise and assumes that the election took place after the passing of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898.

3. William Liddell, a painter, stood in two wards, St. George's (in which he won the last seat) and Dock (in which he was at the bottom of the poll). B.N.-L., 26, 27 Nov. 1897.

Edward McInnes, a district delegate of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, and Alexander Bowman. Bowman, who had spent some time in England, had returned two years earlier to organise and act as secretary of a branch of the Municipal Employees' Association in Belfast.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the trades council in 1897 in contrast to the failure in earlier years can be explained by several factors other than the re-arrangement of wards and the absence of a home rule bill. The prolonged dispute in the engineering industry,<sup>2</sup> in which many Belfast as well as British firms locked out their employees, exciting a militant spirit even among the most unionist-minded workers,<sup>3</sup> and in October a vast demonstration which impressed the Belfast News-Letter, had as its principal speakers a number of the candidates, as well as John Burns, who on this occasion had not to contend with wrecking tactics.<sup>4</sup> The enquiry into the public health of the city to which these members of the trades council had contributed, had produced factual evidence of its insanitary condition and of reckless jerrybuilding; the evidence was given added

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1. B.N.-L., 27 Nov. 1897. Short biographies are given of the successful candidates.

2. For a fuller account, see J.B. Jeffrey's, The story of the engineers, pp. 143-9, and A. Shadwell, The engineering industry and the crisis of 1922, pp. 21-6.

3. The normally unionist-minded shipyard workers in Harland and Wolff, which had not locked out its men, levied themselves at the rate of 10s. a fortnight. Contribution card of William Nesbitt, Oct.-Dec. 1897, shown to the present writer.

4. B.N.-L., 11 Oct. 1897.

weight by the numbers of deaths from outbreaks of typhoid - the numbers did not diminish until 1899.<sup>1</sup> The trades council issued a manifesto to every candidate; it demanded proper measures to safeguard the health of the community, corporation dwellings for artisans, fair wages for municipal workers and the enforcement of a fair wage clause in public contracts.<sup>2</sup> Faced with irrefutable evidence of their own gross corruption and negligence, the ruling councillors fell back on 'me-too-ism' but this did not prevent the defeat of several prominent unionist aldermen and councillors (including a former lord mayor and his son) and the election of labour candidates.

The labour councillors as a body gave no cause for alarm. The Belfast News-Letter described Taylor as of a peaceful turn of mind, holding sound views on most questions and not 'of the forward school of labour candidates', thought Gageby to be of a retiring disposition and paid tribute to Murray Davis for the absence of strikes in the baking industry for many years.<sup>3</sup> A further factor in the success of Taylor and Gageby was their support for total abstinence. Gageby in particular excited approval (he was superintendent of a Sunday school) and the conservative association put forward only two candidates in his ward, proclaiming that they left the third seat for him. The two candidates, one of whom was F. C. Johnston, ex-secretary of the Belfast trades council, clung to his coat-tails, solicited votes

1. Cf. supra, pp. 64-66.

2. B.N.-L., 29 Oct. 1897.

3. Ibid., 27 Nov. 1897.

for him, and when they secured the two remaining seats, included his name in their thanks to the electorate.<sup>1</sup>

The trades council's victory was not complete. Taylor might state that 'he did not claim their suffrages as the advocate of any political creed', but the council did not venture into either of the two predominantly catholic wards, Falls and Smithfield. These had been arranged in the extension of the city boundary as the compromise price which the corporation had to pay to overcome opposition from the Irish Parliamentary party, and English indifference.<sup>2</sup> These two wards immediately became the battlefield on which a bitter and prolonged struggle, lasting until 1905, was carried on between the clerically dominated Catholic Association and the Belfast branch of the Irish National Federation led by Joseph Devlin.<sup>3</sup> One of the council's members (Francis Connolly) ran as a Devlinite, but when a speaker at an election meeting claimed that the candidate had the support of the council, that body denied it and disregarded Connolly's plea that if elected he would be a recruit to the labour party.<sup>4</sup> In Dock, where there was a sub-

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1. B.N.-L., 26 Nov. 1897. They were over 500 votes behind Gageby.

2. See T. J. Campbell, Fifty Years of Ulster, pp.45-7.

3. A full account is given in the chapter 'Joseph Devlin and the catholic representation of Belfast 1895-1905', in F.J.Whitford, 'Joseph Devlin', an unpublished thesis, approved November 1959 for the degree of M.A. in the University of London. Devlin persuaded some members of the Parnellite Irish National League to form a joint committee with his own organisation.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Nov. 1897.

stantial catholic vote, Catholic Association candidates entered the field with the result that William Liddell, the council's candidate, was swept aside; he could only complain, when the count showed him at the bottom of the poll, that he was not surprised, as a political and religious element had been introduced at the last moment.<sup>1</sup> The following year the council contested the aldermanship with another candidate, Robert Fleming, as the prospects seemed bright in the absence of a nominee of the Catholic Association. The result was no different, for the Catholic Association gave him the kiss of death by supporting him publicly; he was described as being in alliance with Fenians and moonlighters, and two trade union secretaries worked for the return of his unionist opponent.<sup>2</sup>

Until the close of the century the financing of labour candidates in Dublin and Belfast differed sharply. The Dublin trades council did not lack money, as was evident when it collected over £150 from its affiliated societies towards the Belfast trades council's appeal for the locked-out engineering workers in 1897.<sup>3</sup> But those of its delegates who were aldermen, councillors or poor law guardians were almost all nominees of outside organisations and it did not seem to feel any special financial responsibility for them. The Belfast

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1. B.N.-L., 27 Nov. 1897.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 9,16,29 July 1898.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 1 Nov. 1897, 28 Feb. 1898. Simmons estimated that the total contribution from Dublin trade unionists amounted to about £800.



trades council logically enough considered that it should pay the piper in order to ensure the correct non-party songs, and in 1892 set up a parliamentary and municipal elections fund.<sup>1</sup> The following year, fortified by a £100 surplus from the hospitality fund raised for the 1893 conference of the British T.U.C.,<sup>2</sup> it was prepared to subsidise its president (Monro) if elected a councillor, at the rate of £50 a year for his three years of office.<sup>3</sup> When Murray Davis stood instead he was assured a maximum of £40 for his election expenses.<sup>4</sup>

The demand that local government bodies should hold evening meetings was the subject of frequent but unavailing resolutions by labour organisations, which had great difficulty in compensating representatives for lost time. How difficult it was is shown by the Belfast council's efforts to finance some of its councillors elected in 1897. A municipal labour representation fund started for the purpose was exhausted within six weeks of the election and the council was driven to issuing ballot tickets and circularising the affiliated trade unions.<sup>5</sup> Ward committees failed to raise sufficient money and the burden was returned to the council.<sup>6</sup> In

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Apr. 1892. A week later the fund stood at £69 7s. 7d.

2. Ibid., 31 Jan. 1894.

3. Ibid., 16 Oct. 1893.

4. Ibid., 22 Nov. 1893.

5. Ibid., 11, 26 Feb. 1898.

6. Ibid., 13 Aug. 1898.

7. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Feb. 1901.

1899 it was estimated that £100<sup>1</sup> a year was necessary to pay for the lost time of two councillors and one poor law guardian, a sum which would have amounted to almost two-thirds of the council's total income; in actual fact the three representatives were paid about half that sum.<sup>2</sup> In 1900 they received ~~among~~ them less than £17.<sup>3</sup> In November of that year the executive committee passed a resolution that the council should endorse those of its members seeking re-election, but should undertake no financial obligations on their behalf.<sup>4</sup> Financially the new century opened inauspiciously with another liability; William Walker, already in receipt of lost time money as a poor law guardian, had been dismissed from his job for writing, as secretary of council, to the War Office about the violation of the fair wage clause in a castings contract,<sup>5</sup> and was paid 23s. 3d. a week until he found employment.<sup>6</sup> The council's liability ceased after some months, when Walker was appointed organising delegate for the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, but the year ended with the council owing its two public representatives

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 22 Apr. 1899.
  2. B.T.C. account book, balance sheet for 1899. Total income amounted to £172 9s. 9d., including £30 12s. in the labour representation account; payment for lost time amounted to £51 2s. 6d.
  3. Ibid., balance sheet for 1900. A further payment of £22 was made in January 1901.
  4. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 9 Nov. 1900.
  5. Ibid., 3 Aug. 1900, 2, 18 Jan. 1901.
  6. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Feb. 1901.

lost time money;<sup>1</sup> six years later the council still carried the same two names among its creditors.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1901 five of the six councillors had to seek re-election. The council nominated four others in the hope of striking a bargain with other parties, but they had to be withdrawn without any corresponding concession.<sup>3</sup> Of the five retiring councillors two had to withdraw (Bowman and Taylor),<sup>4</sup> one (Gageby) was given an unopposed return,<sup>5</sup> and the remaining two (Davis and McInnes) retained their seats in low polls against a freak candidate who sought election in six wards simultaneously.<sup>6</sup> Early the following year Davis died and the council's representation on the corporation was reduced to three.

Such a reduction did little to ease the financial burden of the council, and though it continued to fight elections, its candidates were seriously handicapped. Unless favourable factors were present as in 1897, the lack of a machine such as was possessed by other parties prevented the council returning a sizeable minority to the corporation. A proposal was made in 1900 to appoint a registrar to collect information and compile a list of labour voters, but even this modest attempt at electoral

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1. B.T.C. account book, balance sheet for quarter ending 2 Jan. 1902.

2. Ibid., assets and liabilities following statement of accounts for quarter ending 7 Jan. 1907.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 12 Jan. 1901.

4. B.N.-L., 8 Jan. 1901. appeal to meet the expenses of

5. Ibid., 7 Jan. 1901. the Dublin (1900) conference of

6. Ibid., 26 Jan. 1901. minutes, 19 May 1900.

machinery failed.<sup>1</sup> The council itself possessed no full-time officials, but a resolution to secure a permanent secretary came to nothing when the executive committee advised that the first step should be the establishment of a £50 reserve.<sup>2</sup> Its ordinary source of income was the dues of its affiliated bodies, amounting to about £100 a year;<sup>3</sup> as the yield from special appeals for labour representation had often to be supplemented from it, the council on occasions found it difficult to meet normal expenditure and had in turn to issue further appeals.<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Feb. 1900.

2. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1901. The yearly salaries of the officials amounted to £27, of which the secretary received £20.

3. During the years 1899-1903 the total varied between £98 7s. 11d. and £106 9s. 8d. B.T.C. account book, relevant years.

4. The council issued an appeal to meet the expenses of its three delegates to the Dublin (1900) conference of the I.T.U.C.; as sufficient funds were not forthcoming only one was sent. B.T.C. minutes, 19 May 1900.

## V. THE VOICES OF DISSENT

The steady flow of Irish labour to Great Britain in the nineteenth century is so marked that, apart from the special category of migrant agricultural labourers from the congested districts, any movement in the opposite direction is apt to be disregarded. The great majority of immigrants settled down permanently in the English midlands and in cities such as Liverpool and Glasgow, where many of them took an active part in trade union affairs - a glance at the lists of delegates to British T.U.C. conferences in the eighteen-eighties will discover an astonishingly large number of Irish names. They might aid the home rule cause and follow the voting directions of Parnell and his successors, but they could exert little direct influence on labour politics in Ireland. A number did however return, bringing with them the results of their experiences in the British labour movement; it is probable that they were of importance in assisting the growth of amalgamated unions in the country of their birth. Some of the leading figures<sup>1</sup> in the early years of the Irish T.U.C. had worked for a time in Great Britain; it is not surprising that such men, and those who had frequently attended meetings in Great Britain of the British T.U.C. and other labour organisations, should have been influenced by British examples. In trade union affairs this influence

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1. They include P. J. Tevenan (A.S.R.S.), R. P. O'Connor and Hugh McManus (printers), Michael Canty (labourer), Alexander Bowman (flaxdresser). See short biographies of some of these in the third annual report, I.T.U.C.

was particularly strong, and the work of the parliamentary committee of the British T.U.C. earned whole-hearted Irish admiration, but the climate of Irish political opinion was decidedly less favourable to labour policies if they were not of the 'pure labour' variety.

The prestige of British labour was highest in the north of Ireland. The Belfast area not only had its share of returned migrants but also a number of English and Scottish workers, for as a shipbuilding and engineering centre it was a familiar station on the round (the Clyde, the Tyne and Barrow-in-Furness were others) traversed by men who moved on when a ship was finished or when work slackened in an engineering firm. Some remained permanently in Belfast and became prominent in its labour activities.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that to such immigrants Belfast owed its introduction to the socialist section of the British labour movement.

The first branch of the Independent Labour Party in Ireland was established in Belfast in September 1892.<sup>2</sup> Its

1. A delegate (J. Radcliffe) to the Belfast trades council **asked**, as instructed by his society, if the council were to be represented at the Norwich (1894) conference of the British T.U.C. by two Englishmen (R. Sheldon and J. Wrightson). When they had replied Radcliffe stated that the third delegate (Hugh McManus) was also English, having been born in Liverpool. The matter was allowed to drop after other delegates had deplored 'the introduction of nationality into this council'. B.T.C. minutes, 16 July 1894. One of the principal speakers (George Stevens, a boilermaker) at the labour-unionist demonstration in 1914 said he was born and reared in Portsmouth. B.N.-L, 30 Apr. 1914.

2. *Ibid.*, 4 Sept. 1893. Alexander Stewart, who was chairman, refers to the 'Belfast Labour Party' as a young organisation which had its first meeting 29 Sept. 1892. Clarkson (Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p.349) assumes

chairman, reviewing its progress a year later, said that it had met with much opposition and that a number of the original members had left; nonetheless he claimed that the branch had held a large number of open-air meetings and made progress. On the Sunday before the opening of the Belfast (1893) meeting of the British T.U.C., the branch held a conference for which invitations had been issued to all those in favour of independent political action, including members of the Independent Labour Party, the Social-Democratic Federation and the Fabian Society. The chairman was an officer of the local branch (he was Alexander Stewart, a Glasgow-born shipyard worker<sup>1</sup>) and a four-part resolution was proposed and seconded by two other local committee members (J.H.Gilliland and W.M.Knox). The visiting speakers included Edward Aveling, H. H. Champion, Pete Curran, Ben Tillet, Keir Hardie and F. Brocklehurst, a representative selection from the socialist groups. Little was accomplished at this conference. Part one of the resolution, which was substantially a demand for a legal limit on the hours of work, was passed, as was a motion by Aveling for the nationalisation of the means of production and distribution. Part two dealt with organisation and suggested that an annual meeting should be held in the town selected by the British T.U.C. and during the same week; that a central

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that it cannot have been formed before the Bradford national conference in January, and places its inaugural meeting 'a few months later'. In fact a large number of branches were formed in the second half of 1892 as the result of Joseph Burgess's campaign. See Pelling, The origins of the labour party, p.115.

1. The Labour Opposition, Apr. 1926.

executive should be chosen; paid agents appointed; and that members should contribute one penny per quarter to central funds. After Aveling had pointed out that those who were present belonged to various organisations and could not dictate a line of action to the I.L.P., part two was withdrawn except for the clause which laid down the time and place of the annual meeting. Part three, a rhetorical statement that now was the time to aim at a domination of the house of commons, disappeared and part four on electoral reform was debated. It demanded equal adult suffrage, labour representation on public boards and in parliament, a permanent ballot providing for second voting, payment of election expenses, and the use of the referendum (reference of all great cases to the people). Tillet spoke in favour of adopting the policy to be put forward in the British T.U.C. by those in favour of independent political action, and part four was replaced by a pious generalisation declaring in favour 'of any proposal for the democratisation of the system of government'.<sup>1</sup>

In the afternoon of the same day the I.L.P. held a meeting at the Custom House steps, Belfast's equivalent of Hyde Park. Here every Sunday socialist and labour speakers competed with a variety of orators, from the straightforwardly evangelical to the virulently sectarian, the greatest crowds being drawn by those speakers most intimately acquainted with infernal geography and papal duplicity. To the astonishment of the local branch - and of the Belfast News-Letter - the

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1. B.N.-L., 4 Sept. 1893.



meeting was the most successful the I.L.P. had ever held; the crowd of over 3,000 listened in 'the utmost good order' to speeches by Aveling and Tillet, and a large number remained for a further meeting addressed by Pete Curran.<sup>1</sup>

Within a week the branch met with a different reception. A crowd fired by rejoicings over the defeat of the second home rule bill, swept labour speakers from the steps and on the following Sunday organised a counter meeting. An attempt to distribute socialist leaflets resulted in W. M. Knox being mauled, and chased by a crowd of some thousands until the police made a baton charge.<sup>2</sup> The followers of Arthur Trew, the founder of the Belfast Protestant Association, aggravated the difficulties confronting the I.L.P., and only police intervention saved William Walker's life on another occasion.<sup>3</sup>

In the Belfast trades council there was opposition of a less violent kind. The Power Loom Tenters made a strong protest against the I.L.P. Sunday conference, and the trades council by a majority decision (27-19) hastened to disclaim 'any connection with certain other so-called labour organisations'<sup>4</sup> and requested 'the working men of the city to take no notice of irresponsible parties who are endeavouring to propound their ideas

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1. B.N.-L., 4 Sept. 1893.

2. Ibid., Ibid., 18 Sept. 1893.

3. R. McClung, Reminiscences, pp. 7-8; The Labour Opposition Mar. 1925.

4. The conference called by the I.L.P. branch had been held in the Engineers' Hall, College St., where the Belfast trades council usually met.

under the mantle of trade unionism and labour'.<sup>1</sup>

The I.L.P. made little headway in Ireland. At the Bradford organising conference of January 1893 the committee said that their party had no existence in Ireland. 'It was true that they were led to believe that there was a very small branch somewhere about Belfast, but it had not put itself in evidence.'<sup>2</sup> In 1894 Belfast appeared in the branch directory and in 1896 Dublin and Waterford also were included as possessing branches,<sup>3</sup> but the Irish public was scarcely aware of their existence. What influence the I.L.P. exerted in Ireland must be sought rather in the political ideas expressed by individuals such as William Walker, Alexander Stewart and John Murphy of the Belfast trades council, all of whom held office at various times in that body. But there was little support from the more conservative members, who viewed I.L.P. doctrines as stumbling-blocks in the way of trade union advancement. When the council was considering instructions to its delegates to the British T.U.C. in 1894, Walker proposed that they move an emergency resolution sympathising with the friends and relatives of those who have suffered death by accident while following their usual avocation, and particularly the widows and relatives of those so sud-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 22 Sept. 1893.

2. Shaw Maxwell, London, executive council, I.L.P. (Report of I.L.P. conference, Bradford 1893, p. 8.)

3. Labour annual (1896), pp. 103, 104, 115.

1. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Aug. 1894.

2. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 21 Jan. 1894.

Alexander Stewart was successful (by nearly 50 votes to 20) in securing the council's permission to have the evidence

denly bereaved by the late Albion colliery disaster ... and that we regret that her Majesty's ministers in the House of Commons did not see fit to make their sense of regret at such a disaster known, by carrying a resolution of sympathy with the relatives, choosing rather to congratulate the Duke and Duchess of York on the birth of a son; and we think that the labour and Radical members failed in their duty by not supporting Mr J. Keir Hardie, who endeavoured to induce the House of Commons to sympathise with the sufferers of such disaster.<sup>1</sup>

Hardie's protest in the House of Commons on the same matter had provoked a wild scene; Walker's motion obviously terrified the council members and Sheldon, who was to run for office in the British T.U.C. under the new standing orders, hastened to move an amendment deleting all after the word 'disaster'. No one felt more sympathy with the victims than he, and he would support a resolution of sympathy if, as was more than likely, one was brought before the congress independently of the council. Sheldon's amendment was carried by twenty-two votes to two. During the eighteen-nineties Walker and his associates gradually acquired greater importance in the council until at the beginning of the twentieth century they were in a dominant position, but their rise was accompanied by a decline in their fervour. Walker himself did not share the outlook of Hardie on home rule and disarmament; when a circular came before the executive committee from the labour sub-committee of the International Crusade for Peace, he moved that it be marked read, and an amendment by Bowman was necessary to secure its adoption.<sup>2</sup>

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Aug. 1894.

2. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 21 Jan. 1899.

Alexander Stewart was successful (by twenty votes to ten) in securing the council's permission to have the officers

The remaining British socialist societies were even more poorly represented in Ireland. In Dublin, where there was continuity of socialist organisation from the eighties, the Dublin Socialist Union led by John Fitzpatrick and Michael Canty affiliated to the Social Democratic Federation in the eighties. Its members subsequently joined the I.L.P. branch formed in November 1894.<sup>1</sup> The Fabian Society had short-lived branches in Belfast and Cork; in Dublin the local society led a quiet existence for some six years, its most prominent member being Adolphus Shields of the Gasworkers. Hutchinson Trust lectures were delivered in the opening months of 1900, but though audiences were good, no lasting results were achieved. The Fabian regimen of gradualness found little favour generally with Irish public opinion, which preferred more radical treatment of the major political problems of the period.<sup>2</sup>

In 1896 a new voice was added to the small volume of dissent. James Connolly, born in Edinburgh (5 June 1868) the son of an immigrant Irish corporation labourer, arrived in Dublin. Influenced by his uncle John Leslie, an S.D.F. speaker of Fenian and Land League leanings, he chose to work in Dublin rather than emigrate to Chile, and within a few months of his arrival had founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party out of the remnants of the I.L.P.<sup>3</sup> Its membership was small but its activities were out of all proportion to its numbers. Connolly claimed that it planned the anti-jubilee demonstrations of 1897 and held the first meeting

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sign the circular. B.T.C. minutes, 28 Jan. 1899.

1. C.D.Greaves, The life and times of James Connolly, pp.589; E.J.Larkin, James Larkin and the Irish labour movement, p.86.

2. See appendix 5 for a more detailed account.

3. Greaves, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14, 56-9; Desmond Ryan, James Connolly, pp.12-17.

of protest against the Boer war.<sup>1</sup> It contested five municipal elections in Dublin, its candidates being E. W. Stewart (1899, 1900), W. McLoughlin (1901) and Connolly himself (1902, 1903). McLoughlin came nearest to being elected; he was only sixty-seven votes behind the successful candidate.<sup>2</sup> The party's opponents were in the main nominees of the home rule organisations (after 1900 the United Irish League) supported by clergy and M.P.s. In his 1903 election address, Connolly described the tactics of his opponents of the previous year:

... let us remember how the paid canvassers of the capitalist candidate - hired slanderers - gave a different account of Mr Connolly to every section of the electors. How they said to the Catholics that he was an Orangeman, to the Protestants that he was a Fenian, to the Jews that he was an anti-Semite, to others that he was a Jew, to the labourers that he was a journalist on the make, and to the tradesmen and professional classes that he was an ignorant labourer; that he was born in Belfast, Derry, England, Scotland and Italy, according to the person the canvasser was talking to.

Referring to the wholesale corruption of voters who were issued with free drinks by publican members of the corporation, he declared that 'there can never be either clean, healthy or honest politics in the City of Dublin, until the power of the drink-sellers is

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1. In a preface to an American edition of Erin's Hope, quoted in D. Ryan, James Connolly, p. 21.

2. Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p. 212 and n.6. See also W.P. Ryan, The Irish labour movement, pp. 153-4, and supra, p.183.

3. The Workers' Republic, a selection from the writings of James Connolly ed. Desmond Ryan, pp. 44-7.

absolutely broken - they are positively the meanest and most degraded section that ever attempted to rule a city'. Connolly, however, was not content only to denounce, or to present an immediate programme; he insisted on including a lesson in first principles. Arguing the necessity for the working class to establish a political party of its own, he stated that every political party was the party of a class. 'The Unionists represent the interests of the landlords and the big capitalists generally; the United Irish League is the party of the middle class, the agriculturists, the house jobbers, slum landlords, and drink sellers.'

Measured in terms of electoral success, the Irish Socialist Republican Party and its founder were failures. But Connolly's greatest contribution during these years in Dublin was to labour journalism. He poured out a steady stream of manifestos, pamphlets and articles, militantly republican and socialist, which were unlike anything that had hitherto appeared in Ireland. The manifesto<sup>1</sup> of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, written by Connolly and issued in 1896, bore the motto, 'The great appear great to us only because we are on our knees; LET US RISE'. The object of the party was 'the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic based upon the public ownership by the Irish people of the land, and the instruments of production, distribution and exchange'. A ten-point programme, desirable

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1. For the full text of the manifesto see Socialism and nationalism, a selection from the writings of James Connolly, ed. Desmond Ryan, pp. 184-6.

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exploiting classes of

in itself as helping to restrict emigration and palliate present social evils, was designed to organise 'the forces of the Democracy in preparation for any struggle which may precede the realisation of our ideal'. The programme itself contained proposals for the nationalisation of transport and finance and the gradual extension of public ownership to other fields. Pensions for the aged, infirm, widows and orphans were to be financed by graduated tax on all incomes over £400 a year, while a maximum working week of forty-eight hours and a minimum wage were to be fixed by law. There was to be free maintenance for all children, free education up to and including the university, and public control and management of national schools by elected boards - the last a direct blow at the clerical managerial system then in force in almost all Irish primary schools. Connolly was not to live to see the working week reduced to forty-eight hours, or the introduction of universal suffrage; another proposal, the establishment of rural depots of agricultural machinery to be lent out at a rent covering cost and management, was a partial anticipation of the soviet tractor stations of a later date.

The manifesto ended with a statement of principles clearly marxist in inspiration. Private ownership by a class of the means of production, distribution and exchange was 'the fundamental basis of all oppression, national, political and social', its abolition was necessary in order that the democratic principle should become the foundation of the economic as well as the political system of a free people. The subjection of one nation by another could 'only serve the interests of the exploiting classes of both nations'.

In Dublin, Connolly earned his living as a navvy in the main drainage operations, then as a proof-reader on a Sunday newspaper and finally as the party's organiser, with his salary of one pound a week paid when funds permitted. Despite such precarious circumstances he managed to reprint works of James Fintan Lalor, the 1848 revolutionary, publish selections from the writings of the United Irishmen, and contribute to Hardie's Labour Leader and republican journals such as Alice Milligan's Shan Van Vocht (Belfast) and Maude Gonne's L'Irlande Libre (Paris). He insisted that a political republicanism was useless: 'if you remove the English army to-morrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her financiers'.<sup>1</sup> He was equally insistent on the use of the ballot box and parliamentary processes; only if the party of progress had shown that it possessed the suffrage of the majority of the people and had exhausted all peaceful means was it justified in taking arms to assume the powers of government. Those who made a fetish of physical force were utterly regardless of principle and attached importance only to methods - 'an instance of putting the cart before the horse, absolutely unique in its imbecility and unparalleled in the history of the world'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Socialism and nationalism, ed. D. Ryan, p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 55.



The twofold policy that Connolly enunciated in varying forms - that 'political and social freedom are not two separate and unrelated ideas, but are two sides of the one great principle, each being incomplete without the other'<sup>1</sup> was to be his political creed for the rest of his life. It was given expression in the manifestos which he composed for the anti-jubilee protest of 1897 and the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. It informed the articles which fill the pages of The Workers' Republic, which he started in August 1898 with the help of a loan of fifty pounds from Keir Hardie. The eight-page weekly, which suffered periods of suspension when funds were exhausted, ceased publication in May 1903;<sup>2</sup> in September of the same year Connolly emigrated to the United States and did not return until 1910. The articles which he wrote provided a commentary on day-to-day politics, municipal and national, or on events such as the jubilee celebrations of 1897, the centenary commemoration of 1798, the Boer war, and the coronation of Edward VII. Subjects of less immediate interest - the Irish language question, physical force in politics, modern war - were discussed, always with reference to their social significance. The doctrinaire attitude might discourage readers, but the vigour and directness of the writing, and the analytical power of the writer, made other labour journalism appear vague,

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1. Socialism and nationalism, ed. D. Ryan, p. 186. The quotation is from the declaration of principles of the Irish Socialist Federation, founded by Connolly in New York in 1908.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16; Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p. 210.

sentimental and verbose. History, and especially the neglected history of the Irish working-class and radical movements, was Connolly's peculiar interest, and it was in the pages of The Workers' Republic that there appeared the opening chapters of his pioneer work, Labour in Irish History, later to be published in book form. They were sufficient in themselves to justify the paper.

The small attention paid in The Workers' Republic to trade union and labour matters at this time is a measure of Connolly's absorption in socialist politics. But if his energies were mainly employed in political affairs, he belonged to a trade union, the United Labourers of Ireland, and represented them in the Dublin trades council for some months.<sup>1</sup> The solitary motion moved by him during this period was practical and constructive; criticising the enmity shown by corporation contractors to organised labourers, he proposed that corporation work in future should be carried out by direct labour.<sup>2</sup> Despite the conservative nature of the trades council, the Socialist Republican municipal candidates were endorsed by that body, Connolly being proposed and seconded by two craftsmen.<sup>3</sup> He received

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1. He first appeared as a delegate in 1901 and was replaced in 1902. D.T.C. minutes, 4 Nov. 1901 and 7 Apr. 1902.

2. Ibid., 10 Mar. 1902. Ireland, p. 259.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 2 Dec. 1901. The proposer was a tailor and the seconder (C. Comiskey) a member of the local painters' society. Comiskey was a Gaelic League supporter and signed his name in Irish (see D.T.C. minutes, 17 Apr. 1902).

4. Desmond Ryan, James Connolly, p. 29.

the warm approval of Arthur Griffith, who described him as the foremost among the few able and honest candidates in the municipal election of January 1903 and urged every nationalist voter to support him, opposed as he was 'by the shoneens, the tenement house rack-renters of the poor, the publicans, and we regret to say, the priests'.<sup>1</sup> But, if we except his writings, Connolly had little to show for his seven years in Dublin. His party comrades thought him too doctrinaire and urged less uncompromising tactics to suit the difficult conditions in which they had to work. Connolly rejected all such suggestions and in a letter to William O'Brien, then a young member of the party, denounced his critics, including O'Brien, for their lack of faith in the cause and their want of loyalty to him. Disillusioned and embittered he left for America.<sup>2</sup> In later years he remarked cynically that he had made two grave mistakes in his life, the first in going to America, the second in returning from it.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the truth of such remarks, it is a fact that his experiences during his seven years in the United States softened some of his rigidity and prepared him for his re-entry into the Irish labour movement which he was to affect so profoundly after his return in 1910.

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1. United Irishman, 10 Jan. 1903, quoted in Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p. 259.

2. E.J.Larkin, James Larkin and the Irish labour movement, Interview of E.J.Larkin with William O'Brien. For an account of the internal dissensions in the I.S.R.P. see C.D.Greaves, The life and times of James Connolly, pp.125-7, 132-3.

3. Desmond Ryan, James Connolly, p. 29.

## VI. THE STRUGGLE IN THE IRISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS,

## THE DOMINANCE OF

## THE OLD UNIONISM

The end of the nineteenth century brought little apparent change in the Irish labour movement as represented by the Irish Trades Union Congress. The Dublin congress of 1900 (1900 - 1907) took place. The Lord Mayor (the Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Pile, Bart.), in robes and chain of office, attended by two sword-bearers, received the congress in the council chamber of the city hall and addressed 'the parliament of labour' in well-rounded clichés, expressing his confidence that their decisions would be of lasting benefit to the workers and the country itself. Two nationalist M.P.s (William Field and Michael Austin) and large numbers of aldermen and councillors were also present. Field, stressing the importance of home manufactures, declared that 'capital and labour should work harmoniously together to keep the work at home instead of sending it abroad'.<sup>1</sup> The president of congress (G. Leahy, a Dublin plasterer), stated that the Irish T.U.C. was founded 'to do for ourselves what had hitherto been attempted for us in a somewhat perfunctory manner by our brethren across the channel' and urged an alliance between the forces of labour and temperance 'both movements having much in common ... [being] non-political and non-sectarian'.<sup>2</sup> The advocates of temperance were sufficiently strong to secure support

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1. Seventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p.3

2. Ibid., pp. 18-9.

VI. THE STRUGGLES IN THE IRISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS,  
1900 - 1906

The end of the nineteenth century brought little apparent change in the Irish labour movement as represented by the Irish Trades Union Congress. The Dublin congress of 1900 was a very splendid affair. The lord mayor (the Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Pile, Bart.), in robes and chain of office, attended by mace and sword-bearers, received the congress in the council chamber of the city hall and addressed 'the parliament of labour' in well-rounded clichés, expressing his confidence that their decisions would be of lasting benefit to the workers and the country itself. Two nationalist M.P.s (William Field and Michael Austin) and large numbers of aldermen and councillors were also present. Field, stressing the importance of home manufactures, declared that 'capital and labour should work harmoniously together to keep the work at home instead of sending it abroad'.<sup>1</sup> The president of congress (G. Leahy, a Dublin plasterer), stated that the Irish T.U.C. was founded 'to do for ourselves what had hitherto been attempted for us in a somewhat perfunctory manner by our brethren across the channel' and urged an alliance between the forces of labour and temperance 'both movements having much in common ... [being] non-political and non-sectarian'.<sup>2</sup> The advocates of temperance were sufficiently strong to secure support

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1. Seventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p.3

2. Ibid., pp. 18-9.

for the recommendation of a royal commission on licensing laws that no child under the age of sixteen should be served with intoxicating liquor for consumption either on or off the premises (an amendment to fix the age at twelve was decisively defeated), but there was no interference with the arrangements of the Dublin trades council's reception committee. The lord mayor gave a reception, followed by a picnic at the Scalp, and the Dublin Press Club (representing printing and kindred trades) provided a dinner for some sixty delegates. Hospitality reached its peak at the trades council's banquet for delegates, friends and guests (130 in all), who sat down to five courses with appropriate wines, followed by toasts and songs.<sup>1</sup>

The composition and organisation of the Irish T.U.C. underwent little change. The numbers represented by delegates at conference had climbed slowly from 50,000 (Cork congress, 1895) to 67,000 (Sligo, 1901), but for the rest of the decade it fluctuated around 70,000. The

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1. The menu and entertainment are of interest as showing the social inclinations of the 'old unionism'. Seventh annual report I.T.U.C., pp. 13-15.

#### Menu

Soups: Oxtail, Julienne (Sherry)  
 Fish: Fillets of sole, turbot and lobster sauce (Amontillado)  
 Entrees: Lobster cutlets, Jardinière, savoy pie (Hock)  
 Rôti: Roast beef, horse-radish (St Julien)  
 Vegetables: French beans, peas, cauliflowers, new and mashed potatoes.  
 Sweets: Rhubarb tart, apple tart, Chancellor pudding, compôte of pears, peaches, apricots (Port).

#### Toasts

'Our native land', 'The Irish Trades Union Congress', 'Our guests'.

Songs: 'Il Bacio', 'The Meeting of the Waters', 'The Green Isle of Erin', 'The Sailor's Grave', 'Maying' (a duet),

finances of the organisation were meagre, and the parliamentary committee depended for its income on any balance remaining from delegates' fees and the response to its annual appeal (the main contributors were a few of the amalgamated unions, notably the A.S.R.S., and the Belfast and Dublin trades councils), which rarely yielded more than £50. It was not until 1905 that the decision was taken to replace subscriptions by affiliation fees based on Irish membership.<sup>1</sup> The change produced a steadier, if not much greater, income.

Dublin and Belfast continued to dominate the parliamentary committee, though an attempt to limit their representation to a maximum of two (and representation of any other town to one) was defeated only by the casting vote of the chairman (Alexander Bowman of Belfast) at the Sligo congress of 1901.<sup>2</sup> Labourers' unions were unrepresented until 1906, and on that occasion George Greig (N.A.U.L., Belfast) owed his election to a standing order disqualifying a candidate with a higher vote.<sup>3</sup> In the same year a new standing order was adopted declaring the secretary an ex-officio member of con-

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'Alice, where art thou?', 'The Snowy-Breasted Pearl'.

1. Eighth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 57. See appendix 4 for lists of officers and committee members.

2. Thirteenth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 76. Not more than one representative of the same trades council could be elected; of the two D.T.C. delegates (James Chambers and George Leahy), Chambers (36 votes) was elected. Leahy had 23 votes, Grieg (Belfast) had 15.

3. Ibid., p. 79. 7 Sept. 1911.

4. Ibid., 29 June 1900.

gress and parliamentary committee, and as such, permanent as long as he gave satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> John Simmons had been secretary for the first five years, and was succeeded in 1899 by Hugh McManus. The following year there were four candidates for the secretaryship and E.L. Richardson topped the poll, beating Simmons, McManus and Daly. Richardson remained secretary until 1910, when he resigned to become manager of the board of trade labour exchange in Dublin.<sup>2</sup> A printer by trade (member of the D.T.P.S.), he was a conservative craft unionist, but his administrative ability pleased William Walker, who complained that his successor (P. T. Daly) was much less efficient.<sup>3</sup> There were no full-time officials.

#### i. Nationalisation and Reform

William Walker approved of the 1900 congress in his report to the Belfast trades council. Confessing that 'he had not been at all favourable to the Irish Congress from the beginning', he said that the Dublin conference was most successful; 'there was evidently a desire on the part of all to redeem the past'.<sup>4</sup> This redemption consisted of absence of home rule sentiments. Resolutions on the need for technical education (and labour representation on its national board), for temperance and for free

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1. Thirteenth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 79.

2. Seventeenth annual report I.T.U.C., p. 43.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Sept. 1911.

4. Ibid., 29 June 1900.



books and meals for poor children were approved, as were the stock resolutions on matters of Irish trade union interest. The protection of home manufactures, the appointment of additional factory inspectors, the enforcement of safety regulations and of the fair wage clause in government and municipal contracts, a greater Irish share in supplying British military requirements, the payment of returning officers' charges out of the public purse - these had been and continued to be the staple of congresses.

Yet if the personnel, income and majority of resolutions were scarcely different from those of the founding congress, a new tone and a new resolutions revealed the changes that were taking place. They were more evident in the activities of the Dublin and Belfast trades councils,<sup>1</sup> but the ferments working in the lower levels of labour organisations ultimately affected the national body, so that the years from 1900 to 1906 constitute a transitional period in the history of Irish labour.

At the 1893 congress of the British Trades Union Congress held in Belfast, James Macdonald was at last successful in carrying his resolution confining support to candidates who were prepared to endorse the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. In 1895 William Walker moved in the Belfast trades council that a resolution be submitted to the Irish congress of that year declaring the 'ultimate solution of the Labour Problem is to be found in the Nationalisation of land, also the means of production,

1. B.T.U. minutes, 27 Apr. 1895.

1. See infra.

distribution and exchange', and adding a demand for the immediate state purchase and working of the Irish railways.<sup>1</sup> Though the trades council struck out 'the ultimate solution', Walker was not defeated, for he had the deleted paragraph moved at the Cork congress by James McCarron of Derry. McCarron, described in the report of the Waterford congress (1897, p.10) as having, in labour questions, 'a leaning to what is considered by some the extreme side', was an official of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors. He was an energetic and forceful trade unionist; in a big strike in Derry he had been imprisoned for vigorous picketing. A full-faced, expansive man, he was extremely popular with delegates, who elected him regularly to the parliamentary committee, usually at the top of the poll.<sup>2</sup> He was president of congress three times and in his own city successively councillor and alderman. In spite of his 'extreme' reputation, he was essentially an 'old unionist'; he combined membership of an amalgamated union with support for the Irish parliamentary party. In proposing 'the ultimate solution', he shocked the more conservative delegates by asserting that the land laws forced agricultural labourers into the towns and brought down wages; if land could be nationalised, so could every source of production, distribution and exchange. 'Labour created capital, which was the fruit of the tree of labour'.

Alexander Taylor, president of the Belfast trades council, moved an amendment declaring that the quickest way to attain the ultimate solution was to have carried in-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Apr. 1895.

2. See appendix 4.

to effect reforms with which the vast majority of workers agreed: 'The resolution meant that private property was a thing that could not exist'.<sup>1</sup> The amendment's seconder (E. L. Richardson, Dublin, later secretary of the I.T.U.C.) declared that the resolution practically said that trade unionism was played out, and William Field<sup>1</sup> warned the delegates that the resolution would do them infinite harm; '... the theory of socialism was all right if they had to deal with angels and not with human nature'. In spite of a Dublin delegate's remark that 'socialism might be bad, but it could not be worse than the present condition of things' and McCarron's conclusion that the co-operative commonwealth was not an impossibility but the only way to prevent social injustice, the delegates decided that they were not angels and carried the amendment by 57 votes to 25.<sup>3</sup> Walker raised the issue in the Belfast trades council when the congress delegates gave their report, saying that congresses should exercise an educational

1. Taylor opened a small shop after he ceased to work as a linen lapper. -Interview with D. McDevitt. He is described as a stationer and newsagent in his nomination paper for the aldermanship of Court ward in 1901. B. N.-L., 7 Jan. 1901.

2. Field was a cattle-dealer and attended the Cork congress as a delegate of the Land and Labour Association. Ostensibly an organisation of rural workers it was in effect an appendage of the nationalist party. At the following congress (Limerick 1896) Field and two others (J.J. Shee M.P., Kendal E.O'Brien, later an M.P.) were not accepted as delegates on the grounds that they did not satisfy standing order 2, which required delegates to have worked or be working at the trade they represented.

3. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 25-6.

4. See *supra*, pp. 25-6 (Transport and Other Public Services)

social influence in the state rather than merely record agreed decisions, and calling Taylor's attitude reactionary. Taylor held that the passing of the resolution would have damaged congress and described nationalisation as a will-o'-the-wisp; he was supported by 27 votes to 3.<sup>1</sup>

At the Limerick congress of the following year, McCarron moved the same resolution, but again Taylor's amendment was carried by a comfortable majority.<sup>2</sup> At Waterford (1897) McCarron changed his tactics, and acknowledging that previous congresses had rejected nationalisation of all industries, asked that it be applied to land, mines and railways. Congress accepted this instalment unanimously.<sup>3</sup> How small the instalment was, can be realised on examination. A demand for the nationalisation, or at least the state purchase of Irish railways, had been made as early as the eighteen-sixties,<sup>4</sup> and the second congress (1895) had endorsed it. Mining was negligible as an industry in Ireland and had none of the importance it had in Great Britain. Land nationalisation was unlikely to arouse opposition in a congress attended almost exclusively by urban delegates who felt that the woes of the tenant farmers had hitherto engrossed political energies to the exclusion of their own. McCarron contented himself with moving the same resolution regularly at subsequent congresses up to 1906, changing his seconds annually.

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 22 June 1895.

2. Third annual report, I.T.U.C., pp.

3. Fourth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 34-5.

4. See supra, pp.25-6 (Transport and Other Public Services)

The tone of presidential addresses was almost invariably reformist. Ruskin and Carlyle were frequently quoted when speakers exalted the dignity and rights of labour, but no new view of society was given until 1904 when Walker presided at the Kilkenny congress. In a highly rhetorical speech<sup>1</sup> he looked forward to a time

when all men shall feel they are brethren ... when we shall enforce the dictum of St Paul that he that shall not work neither shall he eat, and when we shall be able to declare that our laws give equal opportunities to all the sons and daughters of men.

The vice-chairman of the parliamentary committee (James Chambers, a Dublin saddler), impressed by Walker's oratory, hoped that his ringing voice would be heard ere long in the house of commons demanding equality and justice for the workers of his native land,<sup>2</sup> but when he himself presided at the Wexford congress (1905) he issued a warning against

irresponsible people presuming to act in the name of trade unionism ... we recognise only those demands that tend to

1. Urging a platform common to all creeds and parties in Ireland, he said it 'will enable us to cast around the poor and the weak of our brethren the protecting mantle of a united people's love and care (loud applause). In the ambic of a Divine mysteria, it is hard to reason the whys and wherefores of our conflicting opinions'. Eleventh annual report, I.T.U.C., Walker's address, pp. 7-17. Clarkson (Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p. 213) is wrong in stating that Walker was the only president of the Irish T.U.C. from 1894 to 1907 to declare for political action of the workers through a party of their own; Stephen Dineen also did so, in less rhetorical language. See *infra*, p. 217.

2. Walker was a prospective labour candidate for North Belfast. See *infra*, p. 331.

3. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 6. Third annual report, p. 20.

secure to the worker at least a living wage, a just percentage of the profits of his toil - in short, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, whether that work be for the state, the local authority or the private employer.<sup>1</sup>

But the 1906 congress (Athlone) heard the first unequivocally socialist presidential address which, if it contained quotations from Carlyle and Ruskin, also drew upon Morris. Stephen Dineen, a Limerick baker, in inviting the delegates to 'come join in the only battle', turned his back on reformism:

In spite of the palliatives mentioned the unemployed problem will still be with us until the workers' party becomes the dominant force in the state, and the evil of the capitalist system ... is finally got rid of by the substitution of public for private control of industry.<sup>2</sup>

#### ii. Irish trade unionists and Irish M.P.s

The principal business of the parliamentary committee was to lobby members of parliament and ministers in support of congress resolutions. They made two unsuccessful attempts to see the chief secretary for Ireland (John Morley) after the first congress, but finally secured an interview with him through the intervention of William Field.<sup>3</sup> The support of Irish nationalist M.P.s was sought on Irish affairs, but this did not indicate any political preference on the part of Irish trade unionists. In the early years the committee sent congress resolutions to labour M.P.s in general, but on specific matters (e.g. the fair wage clause) they wrote to Sir

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1. Twelfth annual report, I.T.U.C., p.6.

2. Thirteenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p.136.

3. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p.8, third annual report, p.22.

Charles Dilke, Sidney Buxton, Michael Davitt, T.W. Russell and John Burns. Anxious to have a fair wage clause inserted in the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898, the committee wrote to fifteen of the principal M.P.s of all parties. They received a number of favourable replies, 'perhaps the most important from John Dillon' (chairman of the Irish parliamentary party), who promised his best support.<sup>1</sup> Though an appeal to trades councils to provide expenses for a deputation drew a response only from Cork<sup>2</sup> McCarron, Simmons and Taylor went to London and interviewed Irish and other members.

In their 1901 report the committee thanked Keir Hardie and Sir Charles Dilke for assistance to Irish trade unionists. To the same congress, however, they reported that they had sought the help of the Irish party and had received a reply that the party was in entire sympathy with the resolutions (on the Factories and Workshops bill) and would support them. The committee also reported the election to parliament of J. P. Nannetti,<sup>3</sup> who would fill the gap left by the defeat of Michael Austin. Occasionally during the rest of the decade the help of British labour M.P.s was sought, but most of the parliamentary work on behalf of the Irish

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1. Fifth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 38.

2. It was a constant complaint of the parliamentary committee that they were seriously handicapped by want of money, so that deputations to London could be sent only on rare occasions.

3. Nannetti had been secretary and later president of the Dublin trades council; he was elected as a nationalist.

T.U.C. was done by nationalist M.P.s.

The new century brought with it a change of the Irish party's attitude to organised trade unionists. When the divided nationalists were brought together in the United Irish League, its National Directory adopted new rules governing the conventions for the selection of parliamentary candidates.<sup>1</sup> Each convention was to be composed of delegates representing almost every organisation which could conceivably be considered nationalist (e.g. the National Literary Society, the Gaelic Athletic Association) as well as all nationalist public representatives in the constituency. Each branch of the Land and Labour Association was entitled to six delegates, each trades council could send six, and the local United Irish League executive could also invite additional representation of trade and labour bodies. The Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, had brought a large number of working-class representatives into local councils;<sup>2</sup> this development, and the greater control exercised by the rank-and-file organisation over the Irish parliamentary party made the nationalist M.P.s much more sympathetic to trade union requests.

Nannetti rapidly became a liaison officer between Irish trade unionists and his party. Even the Belfast trades council, normally cautious in its approval of politicians, endorsed a circular from the Dublin council appealing for subscriptions to Nannetti's testi-

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1. F.J., 20 Sept. 1900, quoted in F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party 1890-1910, p.151.

2. See supra, pp. 181-2, and chap. I, s.11 (Irish political parties) p. 117.



monial and emphasised to its affiliated trade bodies that Nannetti's position was unique in Irish trade union annals, 'he being the only trade union M.P. Ireland sends to Parliament'.<sup>1</sup> When a resolution was passed at the Sligo conference (1901) on the motion of two Belfast delegates, both members of the Belfast branch of the Typographical Association - Hugh McManus (chairman of the parliamentary committee) and John Murphy (president of the Belfast trades council) - that returning officers' expenses should be paid out of the rates, the resulting petition to parliament was presented on behalf of congress by Nannetti.<sup>2</sup> Two years later another petition, signed by the officers, on working-class housing in Ireland, was also presented by Nannetti to the chief secretary.<sup>3</sup> But the strongest indication of the dependence of congress on the Irish party was the interview Nannetti arranged with the party's chairman (John Redmond) and some of his colleagues in 1902, and which took place in Dublin's Mansion House, lent by the lord mayor. Redmond promised assistance on most of the matters mentioned by the deputation and hoped that there would be more frequent meetings between the two organisations than in the past.<sup>4</sup> The same procedure was followed in 1904 and was repeated on a number of occasions after 1906. Nannetti himself received constant tributes

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 5(?) Sept. 1901.
  2. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 20.
  3. Eleventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p.30.
  4. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp.24-5.

to his work,<sup>1</sup> and the annual reports, and at times the presidents, frequently praised the activity of the Irish party on behalf of the Irish trade unionists.

In spite of the satisfactory performances of Irish nationalist members, there was a feeling among some northern delegates that assistance should also be asked from Irish unionist members. Edward McInnes (N.A.U.L., Belfast) urged such a course while at the same time paying the nationalists 'the tribute of being sound labour men', though he was opposed to them in politics.<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary committee thereupon invoked the help of the Irish unionist leader, but had to report to the following congress (Newry, 1903) that not even an acknowledgement was received from Colonel Saunderson.<sup>3</sup> The parliamentary committee took care in succeeding reports to list the names of members who voted against desirable measures.<sup>4</sup>

1. 'Your committee trust this feeble expression of appreciation of valuable services rendered will be endorsed by Congress in a more emphatic manner.' - parliamentary committee's report of a letter of thanks to Nannetti. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 33.

2. Ibid., pp. 34-5. McInnes was moving a resolution requesting non-contributory old age pensions.

3. Tenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 31.

4. The parliamentary committee received a reply from the secretary of the Irish unionist members promising to consider 'with an open mind' a Trades Disputes bill. All the official unionists who voted, opposed the bill. Twelfth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 32.

1. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 33.

2. See supra, p. 265-6.

3. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 7.

At the second congress (Cork, 1895) Samuel Monro, who had presided at the Belfast congress of the British T.U.C. (1893), replying to a toast (The Labour Cause) said that they were assembled in Cork for one purpose - 'to improve their condition and that of those dependent on them, and with that view they gladly accepted the help of influential men like the Mayor and the M.P.s'.<sup>1</sup> Mayors and nationalist M.P.s continued to attend congresses, and even on occasion expressed the hope of seeing more labour representation in public life. Tevenan's scheme<sup>2</sup> for labour representation on local government bodies was put forward at the Cork congress (1895), which was attended by Alderman E. Crean, one of the two labour-nationalist M.P.s. Crean, who joined in the mayor's welcome to the delegates, anticipating the debate on Tevenan's resolution claimed that nearly nine years earlier, while president of the Cork trades council, he had been elected to the corporation 'purely and simply as a labour representative. He was a working joiner then, and he was a no better man now'.<sup>3</sup> Though Tevenan's scheme came to nothing for lack of finance and though the nationalist party grew more benevolent in its attitude to trade unionists, the desire for more direct labour representation persisted.

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1. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 38.

2. See supra, p. 165-6.

3. Second annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 7.

was ruled out iii. Direct Labour Representation

narrowly defeated (1900)

In Belfast, William Walker was the strongest advocate of labour representation free of party political taint. Seconded by a Dublin fellow A.S.C.J. delegate he moved a resolution at the Dublin (1900) congress instructing elected representatives of labour to abstain from publicly supporting the nominees of any political party unless such a nominee was approved of by the local trades council (or trade union where no trades council existed). P. T. Daly,<sup>1</sup> making his first appearance at the Irish Trades Union Congress as a D.T.P.S. delegate, proposed an amendment that branches of the Labour Electoral Association be established in every town in Ireland and that a pledge-bound labour party be created, pledged to vote as the majority should decide. Daly's amendment, with its echoes of Parnellite pledges,<sup>2</sup>

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1. Daly was already deeply involved in the political schemes of his D.T.P.S. fellow-member, Arthur Griffith; in Nov. 1900 he was present at the first annual convention of Cumman na nGaedhael, one of the forerunners of Sinn Féin. R. P. Davis, *The rise of Sinn Féin, 1891-1900*, p. 17, unpublished thesis approved for the degree of M.Litt. (1958) T.C.D.

2. An earlier attempt at a pledge-bound party was made in 1850, when a tenant league conference recommended that the new league (the 'League of North and South') should support only 'representatives who will give a written pledge that they will support in and out of Parliament a tenant law, based upon, and carrying into effect, the principles adopted by the Irish Tenant League; and that they will withhold all support from any cabinet that will not endorse these principles'. F.J., 10 Aug. 1850, quoted in J. H. Whyte, *The independent Irish party*, p. 13. The failure of the attempt was underlined when Sadleir and Keogh (of the 'Pope's brass band' fame) took office.

The Parnellite pledge was as follows:

I.... pledge myself that in the event of my election to

was ruled out of order, and the original resolution narrowly defeated (24-21).<sup>1</sup> A year later Walker's motion (moved by John Murphy and seconded by Walker) was passed.<sup>2</sup>

From 1893 onward the legal rights which trade unions enjoyed under the Trade Union Act of 1871 and the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 were assailed by a series of adverse judgements.<sup>3</sup> The climax came in the Taff Vale case, in which it was decided that a trade union could be sued in its corporate capacity for tortious acts committed on its behalf, and in the Quinn v Leathem case, where the judge's decision made a strike or boycott, or a threat of strike or boycott, in certain circumstances a conspiracy to injure; as a result of the Taff Vale case the union funds were liable for damages in such an event.<sup>4</sup> The right to picket had already been severely circumscribed by decisions in earlier cases, with the total result that unions were seriously concerned about their position.

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parliament I will sit, act and vote with the Irish parliamentary party and if at a meeting of the party convened upon due notice specially to consider the question, it be decided by a resolution supported by a majority of the entire parliamentary party that I have not fulfilled the above pledge I hereby undertake forthwith to resign my seat. Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and his party, p.143.

1. Seventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 29.

2. Eighth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 36.

3. See John Saville, 'Trade unionism and free labour: the background to the Taff Vale decision', in his Essays in labour history, ed. Asa Briggs and John Saville.

4. See F. Bealey and H. Pelling, Labour and politics, 1900-1906, chapters 3 and 4.

B.T.U.C. and attend the Huddersfield congress, and Walker and Bowen accompanied them and were successful. B.T.U.C.

The counter-offensive (hostile newspaper articles, the organisation of strike-breaking forces by such bodies as the Shipping Federation and the National Free Labour Association<sup>1</sup>) had in the first instance been directed against the new general unions, but the legal decisions in the main concerned members of craft unions, who had previously been able to manage disputes in a quiet fashion, even to the extent of paying subsistence and travelling allowances to persuade non-unionists to leave factories where they had been introduced.<sup>2</sup> The resultant state of alarm was a powerful influence in increasing affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee and in preparing the way for the election of a greatly increased number of labour members of parliament and for the passing of the Trades Disputes Act of 1906.

The legal decisions in the Taff Vale and Quinn v Leatham cases aroused the fears of Irish as well as British trade unionists, since all were affected by them. Indeed the Quinn v Leatham case was of direct Irish interest, for it arose out of the efforts of the Belfast Journeymen Butchers' Association (Quinn was its treasurer) to persuade Leatham, an employer, to dismiss his non-union assistants. Both the Belfast trades council and the Irish Trades Union Congress were concerned in raising funds.<sup>3</sup> The Irish T.U.C. printed the legal

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1. See appendix 7.II

2. In the case of a Dublin bottlemakers' strike in 1886, the Dublin trades council persuaded the employers to pay the expenses of the seventy Swedish workers who had been brought to Dublin under false pretences. J. Swift: History of the Dublin bakers and others, pp. 294-5.

3. The council advised the butchers to affiliate to the B.T.U.C. and attend the Huddersfield congress, and Walker and Bowman accompanied them and were successful. B.T.C.

opinion on the new status of trade unions obtained by the Scottish T.U.C., and a second opinion by the barrister Clem Edwards.<sup>1</sup> The result was that labour representation ceased to be an academic question and A. Taylor (Belfast linen lappers) and Robert Gageby (Belfast flaxdressers' secretary) had no difficulty in getting a motion passed declaring that money, in view of the Taff Vale judgement, would be more usefully spent on advocating direct labour representation in parliament than on law.<sup>2</sup>

At the same conference (Cork, 1902) Taylor (seconded by W. Hayes, of the Belfast Bakers' Society) moved the usual motion forbidding labour representatives to support the nominees of any political party 'unless such nominee is approved of by the local trades council or other recognised labour organisation'. Daly proposed an amendment that the recognition be by congress and that the parliamentary committee be instructed to draw up a scheme for the creation 'of a pledge-bound labour party, controlled by and answerable to the Irish Trades Union Congress'. He complained that Taylor's resolution had no binding force and that in Dublin candidates not endorsed

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executive committee minutes, 30 July, 20 Aug. 1900; B.T.C. minutes, 21 Sept. 1900. The Dublin butchers contributed £20 and the trades council circularised its affiliated societies.

1. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp.26-9. Clem Edwards (1869-1938) started as a farm labourer, studied law and was called to the bar in 1889. He played an important part in the nineties as trade union organiser, publicist and labour journalist. He became a liberal M.P. in 1906. See Essays in labour history, ed. Asa Briggs and John Saville, p. 324, n. 4.

or even condemned by the trades council had received the public support of labour men. John Murphy (Belfast) announced he would vote against the amendment, because it was based on insincerity - no doubt a reference to Daly's own political commitments<sup>1</sup> - but after the lengthy debate was closed, Daly's amendment and the substantive motion were carried by 45 votes to 12. Among his varied supporters were William Walker and E. W. Stewart (of Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party).<sup>2</sup>

One of the grievances of Irish trade unionists against the British Trades Union Congress, one which helped to maintain the Irish congress in existence during its initial years, was the exclusion of trades councils from representation. John Simmons, opening the proceedings (as vice-chairman of the parliamentary committee) at the Sligo congress (1900), referred to this exclusion, and declared, in the presence of two fraternal delegates from the Scottish congress, that 'if the gentlemen who had forced Irish and Scotch trade unionists to establish their own congresses were aware of the success which had since followed these undertakings, they would have been very slow to drive Irish and Scotch workers from the fold'.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the repeated declarations at Irish congresses, and in a circular to amalgamated unions, that the Irish

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1. Daly, who retained his connection with the bodies which later produced Sinn Féin, was endorsed by the Dublin trades council (minutes, 10<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1903) for a councillorship in the Rotunda ward, and congratulated by them on his election at the head of the poll (minutes, 9 Sept. 1903).

2. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 42-3.

3. Eighth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 3-4.



body had not been founded in any spirit of rivalry - its work was 'analogous and auxiliary to the British United Trades Congress'<sup>1</sup> - relations between the organisations had grown cool. A formal acknowledgement by the secretary of the British T.U.C. of a number of resolutions forwarded to him by the Irish parliamentary committee produced an irritated report to the 1899 congress that nothing further had been done.<sup>2</sup> Two years later the British secretary expressed sympathy with the Irish resolutions, but only widened the breach by adding his parliamentary committee's views on the 'unfortunate existence of these sectional congresses'; his committee were convinced 'beyond the shadow of a doubt' that the time had come for both the Irish and Scottish congresses to return and again be 'part and parcel of the British Trades Union Congress as in days of yore'. In an obviously restrained reply, the Irish committee unanimously defended their organisation which 'has greatly benefited trades organisation in this country and has fully justified the necessity for its existence'.<sup>3</sup> The days of yore did not return.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Seventh annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 15-16.

2. Sixth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 34-5.

3. Eighth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 3-4.

4. A further effort was made in 1910, when two delegates of the Postmen's Federation (from Cork and Glasgow) moved an instruction to the parliamentary committee to confer with the B.T.U.C. committee for an amalgamation of the two congresses. The previous question was moved by James Larkin and a delegate of the Irish Glass Bottlemakers and carried by 23 votes to 15. Seventeenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 48. Some amalgamated executives sent representatives to Irish congresses, hence the Glasgow delegate's presence.

The Belfast trades council had greatly regretted the broken connection with the England of the United Trades Congress, but an opportunity to renew it in a somewhat altered form came with the formation in February 1900 of the Labour Representation Committee. Its growing trade union membership made it a much more respectable body than the Independent Labour Party, which in any case no longer had a Belfast branch, and the legal battering that trade unions had received counselled political remedies. In addition the 'old unionists' had lost influence in the council and William Walker, who had been secretary for a year and a half until his appointment as an official of the A.S.C.J., was the dominant figure (he became president in 1902<sup>1</sup>). The initial conference of the L.R.C. fixed the affiliation fee for trades councils at £5, a figure which most councils regarded as beyond their means, but the conference of the following year made the minimum £1. The Belfast council, on Walker's motion, decided unanimously in 1902 to affiliate and send two delegates to the next conference.<sup>2</sup> They were instructed to invite speakers to visit Belfast and address the council on the possibility of fighting 'one or more' of the city's parliamentary divisions at the next general election.<sup>3</sup>

The delegates duly attended the important L.R.C. conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne (February 1903). The efforts of the trade unions to reverse by legislation the

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 19 Jan. 1902.

2. Ibid., 18 Oct. 1902.

3. Ibid., 5 Feb. 1903.

situation created by 'judge-made law' were obvious in the Newcastle decisions that there was need of an organisation with a tighter political constitution and an adequate fund for maintaining M.P.s. James Sexton<sup>1</sup> moved a motion requiring candidates for ratification by the executive committee of the L.R.C. to be promoted by affiliated societies (or a conference of affiliated societies in the district to be fought); they were also to accept the L.R.C. programme and, if approved, to appear in constituencies under the title of labour candidates only. Hugh McManus, a Belfast delegate, proposed a Parnellite pledge for such M.P.s. 'How had Mr Parnell's programme been made effective? Every man was bound by a pledge similar to that which he asked the conference to accept. They would also be asked to sit and vote on questions that have been settled by a majority vote in the House of Commons.'<sup>2</sup> The addendum was carried on a card vote of 501,000 to 194,000.<sup>3</sup> The Belfast delegates also carried out their instructions to invite speakers to visit Belfast. Keir Hardie and J. Ramsay MacDonald accepted the invitation and when they had fulfilled their engagement accompanied the Belfast contingent to the Newry congress of the Irish T.U.C.

Delegates at Newry were frequently reminded of the importance of labour representation. Their fraternal delegates to the Scottish congress reported that it was

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1. James Sexton, secretary of the N.U.D.L.
  2. L.R.C., third annual conference report (1903), pp.32-3.
  3. It was repealed at the 1904 (Bradford) conference and the exact procedure left to the executive committee to decide. G.D.H.Cole, British working class politics, p.175.

the main subject discussed at Ayr, and the Scottish fraternal delegates in their turn emphasised that if trade unionists wished to protect themselves they must have political power. Hardie summarised trade union requirements (right to peaceful picketing, protection of union funds against compensation claims by employers, right of a union to bring out men in support of another union) and stressed the absolute necessity, if the growing power of employers was to be checked, for political action by labour. He looked forward to the return to parliament of Irish labour members who would work together, realising they had one common interest 'which was greater than national feeling, greater than religious differences, the principle of seeking to uplift the people to whom they belonged'. MacDonald repeated Hardie's message and as secretary of the new organisation pointed with pride to its phenomenal growth, for it now represented about 900,000 trade unionists.

It was somewhat of an anti-climax that when the parliamentary committee's report was presented it contained no mention of political representation. Daly was quick to state that the committee had failed to carry out the previous year's instruction to draw up a scheme for a pledge-bound labour party; he warmly praised MacDonald's speech of the day before. The president (Walter Hudson, Irish secretary of the A.S.R.S.) could only explain that his committee was daunted by the task of reconciling the conflicting political opinions of Irish industrial workers, but invited delegates to see standing orders committee if they had a suitable resolution. Murphy and Walker did so and were gratified to have their motion passed: 'That this Congress of Irish

trade unionists heartily recommends to the trade unionists of this country an immediate affiliation with the Labour Representation Committee to promote the formation of independent labour representation in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

The resolution was ineffective<sup>2</sup> and was moved regularly at later congresses by Belfast delegates (with occasional support from Dublin members of amalgamated unions) who found it provoked opposition. The discussion, however, showed that politically the congress consisted of three groups, the majority content with the Irish parliamentary party, a smaller group favouring affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee (after 1906 to the British labour party, its successor) and a handful, led by P. T. Daly, who demanded the formation of a distinctively Irish labour party. The two minority groups might unite temporarily, but their aims were too dissimilar for the alliance to be lasting.

The debate on labour representation at the Kilkenny congress (1904) was spirited. The parliamentary committee's report which preceded the debate gave a lengthy account of the committee's interview with John Redmond, in which Walker thanked the leader of the Irish parliamentary party for the way 'he guided the destinies of the Party for the amelioration of the

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1. Tenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 54.

2. Belfast was the only Irish trades council which affiliated to the L.R.C. and sent delegates, but occasionally an amalgamated union might include an Irish delegate from another town, e.g. H. O'Rourke (N.S.R.S, Dublin) attended the Liverpool conference. Belfast had four present at this conference, W. Walker (A.S.C.J.) and E. McInnes (N.A.U.L.) in addition to the trades council representatives, John Murphy and Alexander Boyd. Labour Representation Committee, fifth annual conference report, 1905, pp. 4-21.

welfare of all Irishmen' and sought support for a trades disputes bill.<sup>1</sup> It also listed the numbers of Irish M.P.s. who voted for and against the bill and pointed out that over fifty nationalist M.P.s made the London-Dublin crossing on two successive nights in order to support labour.<sup>2</sup> Finally, standing orders were suspended in order that McCarron might move and W. Hudson (A.S.R.S., Dublin) second a motion of thanks to Redmond and his colleagues. McCarron pointed out that the bill would not have passed its second reading if fifty-five Irish nationalist M.P.s had not voted for it - the parliamentary committee and its energetic and able secretary (E. L. Richardson) had taught the Irish members 'what the labour question was'. Hudson, with a certain realism, said that the Irish party in acting as they did, also took action with regard to their own immediate interests, because the subject struck at the bedrock of all organisations, political and otherwise. His remark that it was the duty of the Irish party to go with the workers provoked two Dublin delegates to praise the altruism of the nationalist members and rebuke the ingratitude of prominent labour men who were an obstacle to the very party from which they never sought assistance in vain.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Eleventh annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 31-5.

2. Ibid., pp. 35-6. There was a nationalist convention in Dublin on April 21, and a division on the bill the following day. The bill passed its second reading but no more was heard of it. The prime minister (A.J. Balfour) was not prepared to support it - his argument was that a commission, to which the unions refused to give evidence, was sitting on this matter.

3. The two Irish unorthodox unionist members, T.W. Russell and E. Mitchell, together with the independent unionist Tom Sloan, also voted for the second reading.

It is not surprising that when the Belfast delegates moved their usual motion on labour representation, the debate<sup>1</sup> that followed should be concerned with the merits of the Irish parliamentary party. Its defenders claimed that there was no need for a labour party; W. J. Leahy (Dublin Regular Coopers) claimed that they had a labour party in the house of commons in the nationalist party. No man outside Belfast was prepared to go forward as a candidate without declaring his political opinions, whether Conservative or Nationalist. As an Irish Nationalist he could not see his way to sink his Nationalist opinions by voting for such a resolution as this, which would pledge him to vote for a labour candidate. His assertion that no candidate would have a chance in Dublin unless selected by a nationalist convention drew a retort from George Leahy (Dublin, plasterer) on the number of bogus labour men there, and an assertion that he 'yielded to no one as an Irish Nationalist, but believed in the principle that Labour should go first and Nationality afterwards. Until they had independent labour representation in Ireland they would never get their grievances remedied'. To a delegate who cited George Leahy's defeat in a municipal election, E. W. Stewart pointed out that the other Leahy (W.J.) had himself been defeated though he 'was always assuring them that his politics were his first concern'. Walker, as president putting the resolution to the vote, declared that if 'they were to secure economic emancipation they should find a neutral platform on which men holding different political opinions could meet'; the resolution was carried by 41

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1. Eleventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p.55 et seq.

2. Irish Labour

votes to 14.<sup>1</sup> The same resolution was carried in 1905 (Wexford) after the withdrawal of an amendment, moved by McManus and a Cork delegate (Councillor Michael Egan), agreeing with the principle of the motion but affirming that the main duty of Irish trade unionists was the financial support of the work of congress and its parliamentary committee - i.e. propaganda for trade unionism, the material welfare of the workers and the development of Irish industries.<sup>2</sup> That McManus should move such an amendment after his speech in an earlier L.E.A. conference is less surprising when the weak financial position of congress (a position to which he referred) is remembered - in itself a reflection of the large number of Irish workers, especially the unskilled, still unorganised - but it is also an indication of his nationalist views.

#### iv. Irish versus British Trade Unions.

The net effect of the Athlone congress (1906) was to include in the debatable land the organisation of trade unions as well as labour representation. A resolution urging the formation of an Irish federation of trade unions and asking for the assistance of amalgamated executives in carrying out the scheme, provoked a sharp debate on the rival merits of Irish and amalgamated unions. Though the resolution was moved by the delegates of two amalgamated unions (Councillor M. Leahy, Limerick, Typographical Association, and J. Treacy, Dublin, Amalgamated Painters), it had its origin in the Dublin trades council.

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1. Eleventh annual report, I.T.U.C., p.

2. Twelfth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 48-9.



The executive committee of that body had brought in a report that the existing federation (The General Federation of Trade Unions<sup>1</sup>) was the best that could be obtained at that time. E. L. Richardson and W. P. Partridge (an A.S.E. delegate who spoke warmly of the aid given by the existing federation to Dublin members on strike) moved its adoption, but an amendment referring back the report in order to ascertain the possibility of forming an Irish federation of trade unions was carried on the casting vote of the president, P. T. Daly.<sup>2</sup>

George Greig (N.A.U.L., Belfast) proposed an amendment drawing the attention of Irish trade unionists to the desirability of affiliating to the General Federation of Trade Unions. In the debate that followed P. T. Daly produced what in effect were Sinn Féin arguments for Irish-based unions and an Irish federation - that while broadly speaking the interests of Irish and British work-

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1. After many attempts from 1874 onward, the B.T.U.C. founded the General Federation of Trade Unions at a special conference in 1899 with Pete Curran as president and Isaac Mitchell (A.S.E.) as secretary. Its advocates intended it to be a powerful organisation capable of carrying out the industrial functions shirked by the parliamentary committee. It was to secure unity of action among its federated societies, to promote industrial peace by methods (arbitration, mediation) which would avoid strikes, lock-outs and inter-union disputes, and to establish a fund for mutual assistance. At the outset 44 societies with 343,000 members (about one-quarter of the T.U.C. unions) joined. A collection of loosely bound autonomous unions, it possessed limited powers. Most of the larger unions stayed outside it, not wishing to have their own authority diminished and seeing no financial advantages in it. See B.C. Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, p. 162.

2. D.T.C. minutes, 10 July 1905.

ers were the same, their practical interests did not coincide, and that the money taken out of the country by amalgamated unions left that country so much poorer. He also criticised the limited autonomy allowed to the Irish members of such unions and rebutted Greig's assumption that 'Britain' included Ireland as well as Scotland. Rather surprisingly a Belfast printer, Charles Darcus, sympathised with both Greig and Daly; he admitted that English executives were loath to allow their Irish members to spend money except as a last resort, but he used this as a reason for supporting the amendment. Michael Canty (Dublin, Corporation Labourers) argued that the reasons (inadequate representation and neglect of Irish interests by the British T.U.C.) applied equally to the federation question. An Irish federation ought to be able to maintain itself; he believed in the policy of Sinn Féin. But the Belfast delegates took their stand on the international character of trade unionism; one (E. Deane of the Belfast Operative Bakers) claimed that there were 10,000 members of amalgamated unions in his city and ironically informed Daly that he would have to consult an encyclopaedia to see whether Ireland was British or not.

But the chief defenders of the amalgamated unions were their nationalist members, and especially Alderman McCarron of Derry and Patrick Lynch of Cork, both of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors. Lynch said he happened to be a member of an amalgamated union himself and he and the association to which he belonged thanked God that they were amalgamated (hear, hear), because by being so they had obtained benefits they never could have received otherwise. He could say with authority that Ireland was receiving ten times more money than

Assistants (D.T.C. minutes 19 Sept. 1904) and was having inter-union trouble with the Irish Drapers' Assistants led by M.J. O'Leane, a Sinn Féin member.

ever she sent across the water.<sup>1</sup>

McCarron reiterated Greig's statement that the great bulk of amalgamated unions in Ireland were affiliated to the General Federation of Trade Unions, which had spent £5000 on behalf of the A.S.T. in the very city from which Daly came. £3000 had been spent fighting the master tailors of Limerick. He claimed that at a recent congress of his society in England six of the eleven delegates were Irish, and as the Irish were the pioneers of the labour movement in England they were being asked to fight with their brothers who were prepared to help them in any struggle. He reminded delegates of the trouble the congress had in getting contributions from societies and in keeping up their membership - what would happen if societies had to contribute an additional 8d. per member? His financial argument was reinforced by a Dublin brassfounder<sup>2</sup> who said that they had received from the federation of their own trade fifteen times the amount they paid into it, 2d. per week per man. His society would not give up that benefit. E. W. Stewart, now an official of his own amalgamated union, attacked Daly and the other Sinn Féin delegates who had 'skedaddled from their own amendment because it was not possible to produce that scheme'.<sup>3</sup> When the lengthy debate was closed the amendment was

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1. Thirteenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 64.

2. Dignan.

3. The amendment Daly carried by his casting vote in the Dublin trades council. See supra, p. 236. E. W. Stewart had been appointed an official of the National Union of Shop Assistants (D.T.C. minutes 19 Sept. 1904) and was having inter-union trouble with the Irish Drapers' Assistants led by M. J. O'Lehane, a Sinn Féin member.

passed and the substantive motion carried by 36 votes to 14. The 14 votes for the motion asking for an Irish federation represented Sinn Féin strength at the congress, the 36 votes were the combined efforts of the Belfast and nationalist members of amalgamated unions. The alliance of the last two groups was, however, limited in scope and time.

unity was the primary consideration. The primary difficulty for its independence v. Stalemate

The striking success of labour candidates in Great Britain at the general election of 1906 had excited renewed interest in political representation. The parliamentary committee rejoiced 'at the awakening of the British democracy and the consequent founding of an Independent Labour Party in the new parliament', and their pleasure was tempered only by their regret at losing Walter Hudson, who had been elected one of the new M.P.s.<sup>1</sup>

When John Murphy moved the usual Belfast motion<sup>2</sup> recommending affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee, he was careful to moderate his criticism of the nationalist party. 'He had no fault to find with the Irish party, but as such they did not represent entirely

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1. Thirteenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p.3. Hudson had been elected as senior member for the two-member borough of Newcastle-on-Tyne by a comfortable majority. He had served as a guard on the North Eastern railway (England) for twenty-six years until his appointment as Irish secretary of the A.S.R.S. (1898). It was not uncommon for amalgamated unions to send English officials to Ireland. Clarkson's comment (Labour and nationalism in Ireland, page 400, n.3) that Hudson had to go to England to find a constituency is therefore scarcely relevant. Hudson was a member of the outgoing parliamentary committee.

2. The debate is reported in the thirteenth annual report,

the views of the voters of Ireland. There were Unionists in Ireland as well as Nationalists, and he contended that they should have a distinct Labour party.' But the movers of the amendment (that there was no need for a new party as 'the Irish party is everything that labour requires') were not content to be moderate. P. Hayes (Limerick, Mechanics' Institute) argued that national unity was the primary consideration ('a country fighting for its independence from an alien Government could not be too united') and recommended Murphy to confine his scheme to the north of Ireland - its representatives had in all cases voted against the interests of labour. His seconder, Councillor M. Leahy (Limerick), thought it might be a good plan for north of the Boyne, 'but any man from the South who would try to put in a man purely on the labour ticket ... should be inside a lunatic asylum'. Daly opposed both the motion and the amendment, referred to his own scheme for an Irish labour party which he proposed at Cork, and attacked Murphy for opposing it. He regretted Walker's absence,<sup>1</sup> as he had a word to say to him which he would not say behind his back. An Athlone councillor (David Barry) was less concerned with niceties and denounced him for 'a pledge he signed against his co-workers on sectarianism, also on the Home Rule principle',<sup>2</sup> and said that he was not surprised at Walker's election defeat. Thomas McConnell (Belfast

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I.T.U.C., pp. 70-3.

1. Walker was detained in Belfast by a strike. Ibid., p. 48.

2. The reference is to Walker's fight in North Belfast and his answers to questions put to him by the Belfast Protestant Association. See *infra*, pp. 346-7 and appendix 10.

Operative Bakers) endeavoured to explain Walker's defeat - he had a difficult job to handle, for the workers of Belfast were divided in many ways - and excepted Thomas Sloan and Joseph Devlin<sup>1</sup> from the charge that Belfast M.P.s never voted in the cause of labour. Sixteen speakers in all took part in the debate, including Walter Hudson, now an M.P. Michael Canty (Dublin Corporation Labourers) was the last speaker, and like his leader P. T. Daly condemned both the motion and the amendment. As if in anticipation of the events of 1907 he complained, amid cries of dissent, that the skilled men ignored the claims of the unskilled.

The debate, like that on an Irish federation, ended only when the closure was applied. The amendment was put to the vote and defeated by 31 votes to 17; the motion itself was rejected by 33 to 18, thus leaving the congress with no fixed policy on labour representation. The amendment had been defeated by a combination of Belfast and Sinn Féin delegates against the nationalists, while in the vote on the motion itself the nationalists joined with Sinn Féin delegates to defeat Belfast.

Nannetti, newly elected lord mayor of Dublin, had made a special journey to speak to the congress and to receive an address from the Athlone trades council. In his speech,<sup>2</sup> delivered after the debate, he pleaded with

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1. For the parts played by Sloan and Devlin in Belfast politics, see *infra*, pp 356-66 and appendix.9.

2. Thirteenth annual report, I.T.U.C.C., pp. 74-5.

the delegates to regard the Irish parliamentary party as a labour party.

Where was the necessity of setting up new parties? The platform on which he was proud to stand was broad enough for any workingman. They could make the Parliamentary Party do everything they wished. ... They were purely labour as well as Nationalist and he as a worker could not be with them on the platform that day were it not that he was a Nationalist as well (hear, hear). He could not be a Member of Parliament were he a purely labour candidate, and he challenged contradiction when he said that not a single constituency in Ireland would return a man on the labour question purely.

Hurt by Canty's reference to the neglect of labourers' claims, he explained that he and his colleagues who had founded the Dublin trades council had made it their principal charge to protect the unskilled. The Irish party's liaison officer had done no more than carry out a holding operation in both matters, for labour representation continued to provoke disagreement, and the claims of the labourers were to be vindicated in a fashion thoroughly uncomfortable for many old-style unionists by the arrival of James Larkin the following year.

#### vi. The Control of Education

One further contentious subject was raised at the Athlone congress, though it was not debated. The president, Stephen Dineen, had in his address put forward two schemes for education, 1) that the state should confine itself to secular education, giving equal facilities to all denominations to provide the religious education desired by parents for their children and 2) that the state should provide religious education for all, according to the wishes expressed by parents; he himself favour-

ed the first course.<sup>1</sup> E. W. Stewart, moving a vote of thanks to Dineen, seized the opportunity to attack denominational control, saying that Irish education was unsatisfactory because 'the education question was used as a football by contending religious bodies striving for supremacy'.<sup>2</sup> He was cut short by the chairman (McCarron), who asked him to confine himself to the vote of thanks.

The control of education had already been discussed with acrimony at an earlier congress. In 1901 Walker moved a motion in the Belfast trades council (after circulars from the National Labour Education League had been read) asking for the establishment of elective school boards in Ireland and declaring that popular education should be 'free from the great obstacles to all educational reform, a) sectarianism, b) political wire pullers and vested interests'.<sup>3</sup> J. Keown (Plasterers) opposed it, saying that the scheme would not remove sectarianism but would only make matters worse, and McManus pointed out that English education was financed out of local rates, while in Ireland the money came from the consolidated fund; the two systems therefore were different. An attempt was made to adjourn the discussion, but Walker carried his motion by 22 votes to 2. In 1903 Walker successfully moved a somewhat similar motion to be submitted to congress:

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1. Thirteenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 32.
  2. Ibid., p. 37.
  3. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Nov. 1901. Walker was elected to the committee of the National Labour/League. B.T.C. / Education executive committee minutes, 12 Dec. 1901.



That in the opinion of this council and congress the time has arrived when an educational system should be established in Ireland, placing elementary, secondary and technical education under the control of an administrative body elected for that purpose only; as we believe that the present system of education in Ireland does not tend to foster that true educational spirit which should prevail in a community such as ours.<sup>1</sup>

The motion was rearranged by standing orders committee and combined with another protesting against the Irish equivalent grant being applied to anything other than primary education.<sup>2</sup> Walker in proposing it severely criticised the arrangements for education in Belfast and said that all schools should be conducted upon the system of the Belfast model school,<sup>3</sup> 'absolutely free from all denominational control'. E. L. Richardson moved an amendment which would reduce the motion to a simple affirmation of the need for improvement in primary education, and deplored Walker's suggestion, coming as it did at a time when there was a cessation of strife. McManus, seconding, declared that education was one of the most difficult questions of the day. McCarron went further and moved the rejection of the motion, expressing surprise that such a controversial subject should have

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 18 Apr. 1903.

2. Tenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 47. The equivalent grant was a sum of £185,000 from the British treasury given for Irish expenditure; the motion condemned a proposal to use it for increasing the compensation given to landlords willing to sell out to tenants.

3. See supra, chapter I, p. 95 and appendix 8, III.

been introduced at all. 'If they passed the resolution they would be approving of what was opposed to the Catholic church and to Catholics. Catholics refused to send their children to any school where the children would not get religious training.'

The opposition to Walker's motion was not confined to Catholics. Charles Darcus (Typographical Association, Belfast branch) declared that any attempt to divide the schools from a certain amount of clerical control in Ireland would be simply beating the air. ... He was of the opinion that the fundamental truths of Christianity ought to be taught to the children to make them fit for life. Any other step would be backward. He would oppose separating the youth of the country from religious instruction.

He was supported by speakers from Kilkenny and Limerick who gave additional proofs of his contention that the model schools were steadily losing numbers. Despite denials by other Belfast delegates, and by E. W. Stewart of Dublin, of any desire to interfere with religious training, or 'ostracise Catholics from their religion', the amendment was carried by 47 votes to 14, and the resolution defeated by 38 to 16.<sup>1</sup>

Denominational control of education in Ireland was firmly established by the second half of the nineteenth century and supported by the vast majority of Catholics and many Protestants. Connolly had included its abolition in the programme of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, but the group he led was numerically unimportant. Walk-

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1. The debate is reported in the tenth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 47-9.

er's proposal was that of the Belfast trades council which he dominated and, more important, was a part of British labour's programme.<sup>1</sup> It was an additional reason in the opinion of most delegates for opposing affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee.

### vii. The End of a Period

The Athlone congress marked the end of a period in the history of the national trades union centre. The heat and bitterness of the prolonged debates on such subjects as labour representation and Irish versus British trade unions had been entirely absent from the harmonious discussions of the Dublin congress of 1900. By 1906 the failure of the attempt to exclude politics was plain. It was no longer possible to confine discussion to trade union affairs and the desire to obtain representation raised immediately the question of political organisation. The fate of the resolution on labour representation at the Athlone congress meant that henceforward a three-cornered struggle would be carried on among supporters of the nationalist party, those affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee and the group desiring an independent Irish labour party. The resolution which was virtual-

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1. A resolution, proposed by the Gasworkers and agreed to, included a clause 'that all schools, whether elementary, secondary or technological, shall be under popular control—that is, under the control of the directly elected representatives of the people'. L.R.C., third annual conference report, (1903), p.55. At the Swansea congress (1901) of the British T.U.C., a similar resolution was passed.

ly a demand for Irish-based trade unions was defeated comfortably, but it was significant of the growing support for Sinn Féin ideas among a section of Dublin workers. Canty's complaint of the neglect of the unskilled by the craft unions, though it was brushed aside, emphasised the weakness of trade union organisation among Irish labourers and the unrepresentative nature of the congress itself. Even the reference to secular education was a reminder of another element - denominational differences - in Irish political life. When the congress concluded it had asked, with varying emphasis, the questions which the Irish labour movement had to answer in the succeeding years.

Clarkson, in describing the state of the Irish labour movement as it was at the end of this period, wrote that it was about a generation behind the British labour movement; 'the "old unionism" still held sway; the political weapon was almost neglected'.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the weakness of general unions in Ireland may be considered later,<sup>2</sup> though it should be remembered that even in Great Britain the new unions had lost ground by the middle of the nineties and did not make a permanent recovery until 1910.<sup>3</sup> The political backwardness of the Irish labour movement is not surprising in view of the very different conditions obtaining in Ireland. The British movement was not hampered by the claims of nationalism, yet it was slow

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1. Clarkson, op. cit., p. 214.

2. See infra, pp 379-80.

3. E.J.Hobsbawm, 'General labour unions in Britain, 1889-1914', Econ. Hist. Review, 2nd ser. I, nos. 2 and 3 (1949), p. 124.

to break its dependence on the liberal party. Irish trade unionists in the nineties were prepared to make use of the parliamentary services of both unionists and nationalists and ~~ceased~~ to apply to the former only because of their general indifference to labour's claims. The members of the Irish parliamentary party were socially much closer to trade unionists than were the M.P.s of the two main British political parties, and dependent to a greater extent on popular support.<sup>1</sup> The small number of labour members in the house of commons before 1906, and the growing attention paid by the Irish party to trade union demands helped to extend the period of dependence of Irish trade unionists on nationalist members.

#### viii. Irish Nationalists and British Labour

The chief advocates of independent labour representation were Belfast delegates, who wished to rid themselves of the necessity for relying on Irish nationalist M.P.s. Affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee was an umbilical cord connecting them with a British political party, so that though they opposed unionist candidates they maintained the connection with England and satisfied both their unionist and labour ambitions. Yet the political sustenance transmitted was at times hardly to be stomach-ed. William Walker was the strongest supporter of the British connection, and it was he who was responsible for the visit of Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald to Belfast

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1. See supra, chap. I (Irish Political Parties), pp. 112-14 and chap. IV (The Politics of Conformity), p.181.

and Newry in 1903; but it was in spite, not because, of their views on the Irish question that he brought them.

British labour leaders had an unfortunate tendency to favour Irish home rule.<sup>1</sup> Hardie and MacDonald were discreet during their visit, and their addresses to the Irish Trades Union Congress were chiefly concerned with co-operation between British and Irish labour in the pursuit of their common interests. Nevertheless Hardie had for long favoured Irish independence, and in 1898 had helped Connolly to start The Workers' Republic.<sup>2</sup> His attitude to the Irish parliamentary party was warmly approving. On his return to the house of commons in December 1900 he had taken his seat on the top bench below the gangway among the members of the Irish party. The first survey of his parliamentary work that he gave to the Independent Labour Party conference of 1901 contained a remarkable passage dealing with the Irish nationalists: The outstanding feature in this parliament was the way in which it was dominated by the Irish party. A considerable number of the representatives from Ireland were men who, by training and instinct,<sup>3</sup> were in the closest sympathy

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1. See supra, chap. II, pp.144-5, for the hostility shown by a portion of the crowd at a Belfast labour demonstration towards John Burns and Keir Hardie, who had voted for the second home rule bill.

2. He lent Connolly £50. D. Ryan, James Connolly, p.17.

3. He might have added that their financial position resembled his own. At this conference it was agreed that Hardie be paid £150 a year towards his expenses as M.P., the money to be raised by subscriptions from trade unions and individuals. I.L.P. report of ninth conference (1901), p. 11.

with the claims and aspirations of the workers, and they had given many proofs of the fact that their sympathies in this direction were not bounded by the Irish sea. The truest representatives of Democratic feeling in the house [of commons] were the Irish Parliamentary Party, a fact which the workers of Britain would do well to recognise.<sup>1</sup>

J. Bruce Glasier at the same conference referred, amid applause, to the presence in the house of commons of eighty Irish representatives, 'who were proud to call themselves rebels' and said that they were a reminder that they had 'a little India and another Transvaal at their own doors ... It [Ireland] was still disloyal, still like the Transvaal - unsubdued'.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever might be the shortcomings of the Irish nationalists in Irish labour eyes, at Westminster they were regarded as the natural allies of the trade union members. In August 1901 they supported the United Textile Factory Workers Association in securing the amendment of a clause in a Factory and Workshop bill relating to a general stoppage of work at noon on Saturdays.<sup>3</sup> Their abstention on a motion (14 May 1902) calling for legislation to remedy the situation following the Taff Vale decision resulted in its defeat (by 203 votes to 174),<sup>4</sup> but they enthusiastically supported bills with

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1. I.L.P. report of ninth conference(1901), p. 40.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. F. Bealey and H. Pelling, Labour and politics, p. 100.

4. Ibid., p. 93.

5. For a fuller account of Davitt's relation with the British labour movement, see T.W. Hooley, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1900', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th ser., vol. lli, 1963, pp. 25-79.

the same object in every one of the following years.<sup>1</sup> Hardie habitually voted with the Irish members, and they responded by supporting measures of trade union interest.

This co-operation was not confined to parliament. Willie Redmond (brother of the re-united Irish party's leader) supported Robert Smillie in a by-election in North-East Lanark (September 1901), though his help was not an unqualified asset; there were northern unionists among the Lanarkshire miners. Michael Davitt in the last years of his life, when the antagonism between himself and Hardie had disappeared, did his utmost to rouse Irish support for labour. In a speech at Glasgow he declared that the 'party which should hold the balance of power in the next House of Commons should be the British Labour Party' and urged Irish voters to refuse assistance to a tory or liberal in any constituency where their votes might help to elect a labour candidate.<sup>2</sup> His last campaign was in the general election of 1906, when he spoke for a large number of labour candidates in London, the midlands, South Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire; it was fitting that he was able to take part before his death (30 May 1906) in the labour victory demonstration in the Queen's Hall on 16 February 1906.<sup>3</sup>

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1. F. Bealey and H. Pelling, op. cit., p. 204. The bill in 1903 was introduced by David Shackleton (labour M.P., Clitheroe); that in 1904 by J. H. Paulton (liberal M.P., Bishop Auckland) and the 1905 bill by T. P. Whitaker (liberal M.P., Spen Valley).

2. Ibid., pp. 243-4.

3. For a fuller account of Davitt's relation with the British labour movement, see T.W. Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1906', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th ser., vol. iii, 1953, pp. 53-76.



Proposals for what might be called in modern terms a popular front were made on a number of occasions. W. M. Thompson, the editor of Reynold's Newspaper, after the extinction of his National Democratic League (founded October 1900), called for a new version, a Radical Democratic Party, to be led by Sir Charles Dilke and allied to the Irish party, which he considered 'intensely sympathetic with labour'.<sup>1</sup> Hardie himself, in a speech during the North-East Lanark by-election, calculated that a combination of the Irish, the radicals and the labour forces 'would dominate politics inside the next dozen years'.<sup>2</sup> He made his most detailed suggestions in March 1903, a few months before he visited Belfast, in an open letter to Lloyd George. He proposed that after the next general election Lloyd George should found a new party, the Party of the People, consisting of an alliance between 85 Irish, 50 labour and 25 independent radical M.P.s.<sup>3</sup> Hardie's suggestion was not taken up; instead, there followed negotiations between Ramsay MacDonald and Herbert Gladstone, the liberal chief whip, resulting in an agreement to share constituencies and so bringing about the liberal and labour victories of 1906.<sup>4</sup> In November 1905 the Irish nationalists made their alliance with the liberals

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1. Bealey and Pelling, Labour and politics, p.135.

2. Labour Leader, 28 Sept. 1901, quoted in Bealey and Pelling, op. cit., p.135.

3. Bealey and Pelling, op. cit., p.145.

4. For the MacDonald-Gladstone entente and its results see Bealey and Pelling, op. cit., pp.125-59, 288; Philip E. Poirier, The advent of the labour party, pp. 175-93, 263.

and secured Campbell-Bannerman's commitment to home rule.<sup>1</sup> This did not however prevent them giving support to any British labour candidate who was sound on home rule, 'except in cases where he is standing against an old and tried friend of the Irish cause'.<sup>2</sup>

In rank-and-file organisations, the alliance was more than mere co-operation. At constituency level at least one branch (Leeds) of the Labour Representation Committee made provision for the affiliation of local branches of the United Irish League.<sup>3</sup> The Independent Labour Party in Great Britain was even more accommodating and as late as 1918 Irish nationalists could join local branches. The chairman, Philip Snowden, dealing with the possible labour candidature of the chameleon-like Colonel Arthur Lynch, said that

the I.L.P. had always admitted members of the Irish Nationalist Party without requiring that they should sever their connection

1. See F.S. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party, pp. 112-3.

2. Northern Star, 6 Jan. 1906. The manifesto was adopted at a meeting of the executive committee of the United Irish League in Great Britain (T.P.O'Connor in the chair and John Redmond in attendance). The full text is as follows:  
The working people of Great Britain have never up to this been fairly represented in the House of Commons. The Irish National Party have always been steady and consistent supporters of the claims of Labour, while the Labour members who have succeeded in getting into the House have always been courageous and steady supporters of the Irish National demand. A great opportunity now seems to offer itself to increase the representation of British labour in the House. For these reasons we recommend our people in all cases where a Labour candidate, who is sound on the question of Home Rule, is in the field to give their votes to that candidate, except in cases where he is standing against an old and tried friend of the Irish cause, or where the support of the Labour candidate would ensure the return of the Unionist candidate.

3. Bealey and Pelling, Labour and politics, p. 237.

with it. Members of the Liberal and Conservative parties were not eligible for membership of the I.L.P., but that rule had never applied to the Irish Nationalist Party.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of occasional clashes when their candidates suffered by the Irish vote going to home rule liberal rivals, British labour leaders, it is not unfair to say, accorded a de facto recognition as a labour party to the Irish parliamentary party and thereby hampered the growth of an Irish political labour organisation.

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1. I.L.P., report of twenty-sixth annual conference (1918), pp. 53-4. Lynch was born in Ballarat (Australia) in 1861 and educated at Melbourne, Paris and Berlin. In 1899 he organised the second Irish brigade of the Boer army and led it in the South African war. He was later charged by the British authorities with treason, sentenced to death, but reprieved (1903). In the British house of commons he represented Galway city (1901-9) and West Clare (1909-18). In 1918 he was given the rank of colonel in the British army and conducted recruiting campaigns in Ireland. He was also a physician (M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P., 1908) and a voluminous author (over thirty works in prose and verse, science and fiction, in English and French). He died in 1934. See J.S.Crone, Concise dictionary of Irish biography, p.282 and his own autobiography, My life story (1934).

#### 1. Irish Industries and 'Fair' Houses

Much of the energy of the Dublin trades council was spent in endeavouring to protect northern trades by denouncing the importation of goods of non-Irish origin.

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1. Fifth annual report I.T.O.C., p. 87.

## VII. THE DIVIDED AIMS OF THE DUBLIN LABOUR MOVEMENT

Unlike the Belfast trades council the Dublin body was slow to evolve a coherent policy on labour representation. In Belfast political, religious and social patterns all reproduced the basic design of orange versus green, protestant versus catholic, unionist versus nationalist, and as a consequence narrowed the field of manoeuvre for the trades council. The northern city was, in the words of the president of the 1898 congress, 'the industrial and commercial capital of Ireland' and a source of pride as proving that 'Irishmen, when given equally favourable opportunities, are not less industrious nor inferior in mechanical and commercial enterprise to those of any other nation'.<sup>1</sup> The multifarious groupings in Dublin presented no clear-cut political pattern and the economic picture of the city was scarcely more definite: a composite of food, drink and building industries, a large distributive trade and a multiplicity of small-scale manufactures. Belfast had shared in the British industrial expansion of the nineteenth century, Dublin had seen its trades unable to withstand the competition of large-scale manufacture.

### i. Irish Industries and 'Fair' Houses

Much of the energy of the Dublin trades council was spent in endeavouring to protect moribund trades by denouncing the importation of goods of non-Irish origin.

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1. Fifth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 27.

Church authorities were pronounced offenders and from 1895 to 1897 both protestant and catholic clergy were impartially censured. The goods included organs, first communion cards and prayer books printed in Belgium, church furniture from Rome, and stained glass windows from Munich. The organ builders were particularly vigilant (they were affiliated on a membership of twenty in 1894) and secured 'the severest condemnation of the clergy and select vestry' of Trinity church, Rathmines, for importing a new organ; the parishioners were asked to show their disapproval by refusing further contributions.<sup>1</sup> In 1897 they condemned 'in the strongest manner the unjust action of the authorities of the Roman Catholic church, Glasthule'<sup>2</sup> for a similar offence, and at the same meeting reported that the Royal Dublin society, in spite of its charter,<sup>3</sup> was about to import an organ from Leeds though Herr Lizst had borne testimony to the excellence of Dublin organs. The council had written to the catholic archbishop of Dublin (W. J. Walsh), who replied that he was tired of urging people to buy Irish goods; it was no use unless these were as cheap and as good as imported articles. However, they had his sympathy.<sup>4</sup> When a complete chapel-

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 29 Sept. 1895.

2. Ibid., 1 Feb. 1897.

3. It was founded in 1731 'for the improvement of Husbandry, Manufactures and other useful Arts', and did much to encourage home industries. Constantia Maxwell, Dublin under the Georges, pp. 172-3.

4. D.T.C. minutes, 30 Mar. 1896.

of-ease made of wood and corrugated iron was imported from England by the clergy of Rathgar parish the secretary (John Simmons) remarked bitterly that 'when their pastors resorted to the expedient of importation it was little wonder that others should resort to the same course'<sup>1</sup>.

The sheep followed faithfully in their pastors' steps, so faithfully that no council meeting was complete without some complaint about imported goods. Shop fronts (the number was so great that the American theory of obsolescence seems to have taken possession of Dublin shopkeepers), billiard tables, liveries, even a new clock for the Rathmines town hall, aroused the anger of delegates. The Irish literary movement was not blameless, and the council had to reproach a Dublin firm for having a book printed in Germany<sup>2</sup> and later query the printing in London of J. M. Synge's Well of the Saints and Lady Gregory's Kincora (in the Abbey Theatre series).<sup>3</sup> No political prejudices interfered with the work of protecting Irish industries; the president (E. L. Richardson) referring to Edward VII's visit in 1903, expressed on behalf of the council the hope that the manufactures used and the workmanship employed would be obtained at home, while earlier the meeting had received a favourable report from the delegates who had attended the Wolfe Tone demonstration committee meeting in the city hall.<sup>4</sup> The coach-

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 30 Mar. 1896.

2. Admittedly a technical work, Heneby's The sounds of Munster Irish. D.T.C. minutes, 25 Mar. 1901.

3. Ibid., 20 Feb. 1905.

4. Ibid., 15 June 1903. The president's hopes were disappointed. A brassfounders' delegation later complained that

makers and cabinet-makers, previously concerned with foreign competition in horse-drawn carriages, were alarmed at the importation of motor cars in 1906 and appealed to purchasers to see that the bodies were Irish made, an appeal they renewed some years later when they also had to protest at the purchase of 1250 railway carriages and lorries of non-Irish origin.<sup>1</sup> The council, in the hope of stimulating local industries, subscribed regularly to the Dublin Industrial Development Association, but had on occasions to express dissatisfaction at the wages paid by the industrial revivalists.<sup>2</sup>

Allied to the problem of importation was that of goods made in non-union houses. The promoters of memorials to the patriot dead were at times negligent of the claims of the living, and protests were useless when contracts for the railings around Parnell's grave and the Fontenoy memorial were entrusted to non-union houses.<sup>3</sup> Nor were ecclesiastical authorities above suspicion; an Electrical Trades Union delegate had unanimous support in urging that the president of Maynooth college be asked to give the contract for electric lighting to a fair house.<sup>4</sup> In spite of years of energetic lobbying, the council's efforts were often un-

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nearly all the work and workmen for decorations and illuminations had been imported. D.T.C. minutes, 13 July 1903.

1. Ibid., 9 July 1906; 20 Jan. 1908.

2. Ibid., 9 Feb. 1903.

3. Ibid., 30 Mar. 1896; 10 Dec. 1906. The memorial was to commemorate the part played by the exiles of the Irish brigade in the French victory at Fontenoy (1748) over English and Dutch forces led by the Duke of Cumberland.

4. Ibid., 26 Mar. 1900.

successful; when George Leahy reported in 1908 that plastering work in two Dublin convents had been done under unfair conditions and that neither the superior-esses nor the archbishop (who had refused to receive a deputation) had given satisfactory replies, the council was justly irritated. Though the vice-president (M. J. O'Lehane) thought that religion should not be introduced in the matter, he held that people who lived in the city should support its workers; it was time they had a newspaper of their own. T. Milner (coach-makers) asserted that clergy of all denominations were to blame - they were inclined to beat down the wages of the workers. He was supported by a brassfounders' delegate, who reiterated the old complaint that most ecclesiastical brasswork was imported, and the condemnatory motion was passed unanimously.<sup>1</sup>

It is a measure of the council's single-mindedness in pursuit of fair wages that even the vice-regal menu did not escape notice; they backed the successful appeal of a poulterers' delegate to Earl Dudley that only fair houses should tender for the supply of poultry and game to his excellency's table at Dublin castle and the vice-regal lodge.<sup>2</sup> An appeal to the representative of the British throne is understandable in a period when political consciousness in the council was not high, but it is astonishing to find that twelve years later vice-regal patronage was still being solicited. In April 1915, in a period of acute political feeling, and less than a year before the

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 17 Mar. 1908 (cutting from F.J.)

2. Ibid., 29 June, 27 July 1903.



Easter 1916 rising, the council unanimously passed a motion protesting against the action of the newly appointed lord lieutenant in ordering his state uniform from a London firm and directed that copies of the resolution be sent to the vice-regal delinquent, the press and the Dublin Industrial Development Association. The motion was moved by William O'Brien, the close associate of James Connolly, who was himself present at the meeting.<sup>1</sup> The logical conclusion to be drawn is that the tradition of protection for Irish industries was too strong to be lightly disregarded even in time of war and incipient rebellion. It left its mark on congress agendas, which became so crowded with resolutions against importation in the years before 1914 that it became the custom to group them together and pass them en bloc.

## ii. 'Social' Politics

The Dublin trades council prided itself, in its corporate capacity, on keeping clear of politics. What constituted politics was not always plain to delegates, but a lathmaker who wished to ban the introduction of any question having a political tendency had his amendment refused as irrelevant. E. L. Richardson pointed out that the matter under discussion (an employers' liability bill) was a social

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 19 Apr. 1915. William O'Brien was a delegate of the A.S.T. Connolly may not have been in the hall during the discussion on the motion, which was the last item reported in the minutes, but his announcement of the forthcoming publication of The Workers' Republic is recorded immediately before O'Brien's motion.

question - 'there were social politics as well as politics pure and simple'.<sup>1</sup> That definition was given in 1894. The lathmaker's political education continued and five years later he seconded a motion to send a deputation to a meeting dealing with the erection of a statue to Parnell. It was opposed by delegates on the grounds that the movement was political; Alderman William Doyle regretted that, though a Parnellite himself, he could not vote for it. A supporter of the motion argued not unreasonably that the project was no more political than that of the Wolfe Tone and United Irishmen Memorial committee, to which the council sent its officers and Alderman Doyle. The power of logic, or more probably the strength of the Parnellites, convinced the council and the motion was carried by 34 votes to 8.<sup>2</sup>

Such a course of action was however scarcely typical. In the years before the Parnell split the council did not hesitate to take part in politics; they adjourned a meeting in November 1888 in order to attend a Manchester martyrs' commemoration ceremony in Glasnevin cemetery,<sup>3</sup> and some months later, with Nannetti in the chair, expressed sympathy with William O'Brien, who was suffering in Clonmel jail 'the cruel, barbarous and tyrannical

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1. F.J., 8 Jan. 1894. William Field M.P. had written to explain his absence from the house of commons during the discussion of the bill and a motion was moved that his letter be inserted in the minutes. The lathmaker (Best) held that it was a political question as it had been made a plank in the Newcastle programme of the liberal party.

2. D.T.C. minutes, 14 Aug. 1899.

3. F.J., 26 Nov. 1888.

treatment of minions of the Chief Jailer of Ireland'.<sup>1</sup> But such a course was in keeping with the general tone of nationalist feeling and was not considered political, in the sense of party political. The council did not take part in the Parnellite controversy, but unhesitatingly joined in amnesty demonstrations for political prisoners in the eighteen-nineties,<sup>2</sup> and the various celebrations of the centenary of the 1798 risings.<sup>3</sup>

The indeterminate nature of the council's politics is admirably illustrated by John Simmons, who was its secretary - except for one year - from its foundation in 1886 until 1917. Born in Carlow in 1852, he was apprenticed to carpentry at the age of 15 and came to Dublin when he was 22. He claimed to have been a Fenian, 'an old '67 man', but he was no irreconcilable; he approached the lord lieutenant in 1882 on behalf of the Dublin Workmen's club in order to get his assistance in establishing technical schools, and later was the secretary of the

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1. F.J., 4 Feb. 1889. William O'Brien M.P., a chief lieutenant of Parnell and a leader in the agrarian Plan of Campaign, during which he was imprisoned a number of times. The 'Chief Jailer' was Arthur Balfour, the Irish chief secretary. The motion (a lengthy one) used strong language and by implication took the liberal side in English politics; it prayed that the day 'may be not far distant when our fellow toilers of England, Scotland and Wales may be afforded that opportunity which they so much desire of hurling from power a party and men so devoid of the commonest instincts of humanity, and whose semi-maniacal governing gyrations have assumed the character of "administrative blackguardism" and "street ruffianism".'

2. D.T.C. minutes, 1 Apr. 1895, 18 Jan., 26 Apr. 1897.

3. Ibid., 14 Sept. 1897, 18 July, 8, 29 Aug. 1898, 5 June, 31 July 1899.

Dublin Conciliation Board and a member of a technical schools board and public library committee. His Fenian past did not prevent him from attending the British T.U.C. from 1888 to 1894 and several congresses of the Labour Electoral Association as his council's representative; in the meantime he became a member of an amalgamated union on his local society joining the A.S.C. and J. When he first contested a corporation election he was in his early forties, a man of about middle height, with a greying beard and a gentle appearance.<sup>1</sup> His mild disposition enabled him to act as peacemaker in council disputes and won the regard of delegates. His political education kept pace with that of his organisation; unlike some others of his generation he lacked personal ambition and continued to serve the council when under Larkin's leadership it championed the unskilled. He resigned because of ill-health in 1917 and the council agreed to pay him a pension.<sup>2</sup>

Nationalist feelings did not prevent the council approving of a benevolent unionist. On the suggestion of W. J. Leahy they had endorsed Sir Robert Sexton's candidature for the position of lord mayor of Dublin and were extremely angry with Leahy when he withdrew his proposal after he had circulated printed copies of Sexton's letters

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1. The third annual report, I.T.U.C., p.            contains a photograph and short biography.            A

2. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 15 Feb. 1917, D.T.C. minutes, 17 Feb. 1917. Simmons had been ill for some time and had offered his resignation in 1915. Ibid, 6 Sept. 1915.

4. See supra, p. 105 (The Co-operative Movement).

5. D.T.C. minutes, 2 June 1908, 23 Feb. 1908.

of thanks. They denied Leahy's right to be considered a labour representative and did not take him back into favour for some years.<sup>1</sup> John Simmons and Patrick Shelley proposed Sexton again in 1898, Simmons arguing that he had looked after workingmen's wants, citing his support for artisans' exhibitions and technical schools, and describing him as 'a good employer and a friend of labour'. The motion was carried in spite of two dissentients who objected that Sexton did not 'voice the national sentiment with regard to self-government for Ireland'.<sup>2</sup> A few weeks later Simmons had to admit Sexton's lack of national feeling as shown by his refusing the use of the Mansion House to the projectors of a statue to Wolfe Tone; but he defended the council's previous endorsement of the lord mayor on the grounds that they (the council) were non-political.<sup>3</sup> Sir Horace Plunkett, the pioneer of agricultural co-operation<sup>4</sup> and a moderate unionist M.P., was warmly regarded by the council. One delegate considered that he might be relied on for support in labour matters and on a later occasion E. L. Richardson and G. Leahy sponsored a motion which spoke of 'his whole-hearted concern for the material interests of Ireland'.<sup>5</sup> Delegates who were members of the Irish Socialist Republican Party did not share the council's enthusiasm and disapproved of too fulsome an attitude to public figures and employers; E. W. Stewart dissented

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 7 Dec. 1896.

2. Ibid, 20 June 1898.

3. Ibid, 4 July 1898. No statue was ever erected, though a site was secured, a result which would have been less trying to Tone than the persistent attempts to turn him into a political plaster saint.

4. See supra, p. 105 (The Co-operative Movement).

5. D.T.C. minutes, 2 June 1902, 23 Feb. 1903.

from the Plunkett resolution and W. McLaughlin moved an unsuccessful amendment to a motion thanking the lord mayor for hospitality to Irish Trades Union Congress delegates in 1900; it censured the action of the reception committee in soliciting favours from employers and considers such actions humiliating and uncalled for'.<sup>1</sup>

In true accord with the moderate opinions of delegates (except when their craft privileges were affected), the council frequently approached prominent citizens, ecclesiastical and lay, on trades disputes. The nationalist catholic archbishop of Dublin (W. J. Walsh) was sought as a last court of appeal; he was asked to intervene in building strikes in 1889 and 1896 (the second had lasted four months) and was duly thanked for his mediation.<sup>2</sup> Nine years later he was asked to arbitrate in a bricklayers' strike, but was prepared only to act his former part of conciliator.<sup>3</sup> A month afterwards E. L. Richardson suggested the protestant archbishop (J. R. Peacocke) as arbitrator but after a long discussion Richardson thought it wise to withdraw his motion.<sup>4</sup>

William Martin Murphy, one-time nationalist M.P. and a leading Dublin business man with interests in several continents, was highly regarded. John Ward, the president of the Metropolitan House Painters' trade union, and an ex-president of the council, urged support

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 18 June 1900. The amendment received only two votes.

2. Ibid, 31 Aug. 1896.

3. Ibid, 6 Mar. 1905.

4. Ibid, 3 Apr. 1905.

for him when he was a candidate for a Dublin constituency in 1892, and spoke of his 'great services to my trade ... I have never met so earnest an advocate of the painters' rights as Mr Murphy, and, moreover, what he preaches in public he practises in public'.<sup>1</sup> Good relations between Murphy and the skilled unionists continued; he subscribed to the hospitality fund of the first congress in 1894 and provided free transport for the delegates,<sup>2</sup> while in 1899 Simmons reported a most satisfactory interview with him as chairman of the Dublin United Tramways Company. He was tendered the marked thanks of the council, on the motion of an A.S.E. delegate, for the manner in which he acted in the interest of the engineers.<sup>3</sup> Two years later Simmons again had occasion to speak of his favourable reception by Murphy and other directors when he sought the provision of early workmen's trams at cheap rates. Though some delegates were not prepared at that stage to thank Murphy, cheap fares were granted shortly afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

The first (Dublin 1894) and third (Limerick 1896) congresses had adopted perfunctorily the complaint of the Dublin tramwaymen about working conditions and their request for a nine-hour day.<sup>5</sup> In 1902 the Dublin council

1. F.J., 4 July 1892.

2. Supra, pp.148, 156.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 25 Sept. 1899.

4. Ibid., 23 Sept., 7 Oct. 1901.

5. Supra, pp.156-7.

heard a further complaint from a conductor, who charged that the men were subjected to petty tyranny and dismissed arbitrarily.<sup>1</sup> The council passed the matter back to the man's own union (the Dublin and District Tramwaymen's Union), which then had it raised by W. J. Leahy at the Cork congress of 1902. Leahy, who was to adopt a very different attitude during the 1913 strike, on this occasion revealed that the motormen and conductors suffered from a split working day, starting at 7 or 7.30 a.m., knocking off at about 1 p.m., starting again at 4 p.m. and then working perhaps until 12.30 or 1 the next morning. In a series of letters Davitt disproved Murphy's claim that his employees were better off than Glasgow tramwaymen, and produced evidence that the Dublin men had longer hours, were paid worse wages and had no free Sundays.<sup>2</sup> Leahy's condemnatory resolution was adopted unanimously, yet the tramwaymen had to wait eleven years before a champion appeared - Larkin. It is significant that the next attack in the Dublin trades council on the Dublin United Tramways Company was not concerned with working conditions but with the importation of tramcars from England. A coachmakers'

A.B.C. and J. branch, was elected to the executive com-

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 24 Mar. 1902. *see vice-president in*

2. Ninth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp.44-5. In 1890, a nationalist M.P. W. A. Macdonald (Ossary, Queen's co.), referring to harsh criticism of the M.P.s at a previous meeting of the Dublin trades council, said that though he was a shareholder in the tramways he would willingly part with a portion of his dividend rather than allow the state of things alleged to continue, i.e. that drivers and conductors worked from 7 or 8 a.m. to 12 midnight. F.J., 10 Nov. 1890.

*Journal* (31 May, 1913) described him as 'the last of the original Dublin Labour Party in the Corporation'. The other members were given as J.P. Bannetti, Patrick Dowd, E.L. Richardson, Joseph Clarke, W.J. Leahy, Michael Fitzpatrick, A.J. Lord.



delegate<sup>1</sup> protested that there were capable tradesmen idle during winter and spring and added that 'as almost the entire earnings of this company are derived from the working classes, we consider their action a gross injustice to the people by whom they live and thrive'. The motion was passed, but only after G. Leahy deprecated personal attacks on Murphy.

### iii. Labour in the Dublin Corporation

The attempts of the trades council to form a Labour Electoral Association and send a distinctive labour group to the Dublin corporation were moderately successful only. Of the number of 'labour' candidates elected in January 1899, only E. L. Richardson might be considered independent of party affiliation, though he had close relations with official nationalist councillors. William Doyle, who was a visitor in December 1898 (he was described as the 'Labour candidate for the Rotunda ward'), ran with three other nationalists, including Nannetti, and was elected alderman.<sup>2</sup> In June 1899 he appeared as a delegate of an A.S.C. and J. branch, was elected to the executive committee at the same meeting and became vice-president in August.<sup>3</sup> W. J. Leahy was the only other member of the

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1. F. Farrell; D.T.C. minutes, 11 June 1906.

2. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1898; F.J., 18 Jan. 1899.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 19 June, 14 Aug. 1899. When Doyle resigned from the corporation in 1913, the Freeman's Journal (31 May, 1913) described him as 'the last of the original Dublin Labour Party in the Corporation'. The other members were given as J.P. Nannetti, Patrick Dowd, E.L. Richardson, Joseph Clarke, W.J. Leahy, Michael Fitzpatrick, A.J. Lord.

'Dublin Labour Party' who could be described as a member of the trades council - his attendances as a delegate were fitful.<sup>1</sup>

The semblance of unity possessed by the group before the election was soon lost. Connolly, writing in The Workers' Republic nine months later, was severe:

All of them hold the same political and social beliefs as the remainder of the Municipal Council - believe equally with them in the capitalist system, and that rent, profit and interest are the necessary and inevitable pillars of society. ... From the entry of the Labour Party into the Municipal Council to the present day their course has been marked by dissension, squabbling and recrimination. No single important move in the interest of the worker was even mooted, the most solemn pledges were incontinently broken, and where the workers looked for inspiration and leadership, they have received nothing but discouragement and disgust.<sup>2</sup>

In the same article, he described a contest for the position of lord mayor, in which Alderman Patrick Dowd was the 'labour' candidate, as a fight not between capital and labour 'but a sordid scramble between two sets of political wirepullers, both equally contemptible', and confessed to having been disappointed in the labour men elected under the auspices of the Labour Electoral Association.<sup>3</sup>

1. He reappeared, after a long absence, as a delegate of his local union, the Regular Society of Coopers on 13 March 1899. D.T.C. minutes of that date.

2. The Workers' Republic, ed. D. Ryan, pp. 51-2.

3. Dowd was one of the candidates endorsed by the L.E.A., the others being G. Leahy, E. L. Richardson, Joseph Clarke, John Simmons, Michael Canty, William Doyle, Alexander Blaine, John Gibbons and Edward Fleming. F.J., 13 Jan. 1899.

4. Ibid., 17 Dec. 1899. The list also included E.W. Stewart and J. ... the defenders of the L.E.A. ...

5. Ibid., 20 Oct., 1 Dec. 1899.

Arthur Griffith, who had welcomed the return of labour candidates in the hope that they would clear up corruption, turned in disgust from them and referred in 1901 to the group as

the so-called Labour Party, which having made itself the tool of the Pile<sup>1</sup> clique and the whiskey ring in turn in the Council Chamber, has earned for itself the contempt and laughter of men who looked to it once with hope as the party of Nationalism, progress and corruption-killing in the Corporation.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1899 the trades council considered a Labour Electoral Association resolution calling for an inquiry into charges of bribery made against corporation labour members. It was supported by Aldermen Doyle and Dowd and carried easily, an amendment expressing confidence in the members being rejected.<sup>3</sup> The inquiry settled nothing, and until its demise the L.E.A. was an occasion of wrangling and bitterness. When it refused to endorse E. L. Richardson, the chairman of the trades council proposed its repudiation. His motion, moderated by the peace-loving Simmons, was carried by 17 votes to 15. A recount was demanded and refused. Delegates protested that the council's time was being wasted 'on matters not affecting labour - not an item on the agenda had been taken up'. The meeting ended in disorder.<sup>4</sup> In 1902 and 1903<sup>5</sup> efforts were

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1. Alderman Thomas Pile, Dowd's rival and a very moderate nationalist.

2. United Irishman, 7 Sept. 1901, quoted in Clarkson op.cit., p. 257.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 25 Sept., 1899.

4. Ibid., 17 Dec. 1900. The supporters of the repudiation included E.W. Stewart and W. McLaughlin, the most prominent of the defenders of the L.E.A. was Alderman Doyle.

5. Ibid., 20 Oct., 1 Dec. 1902, 4 May 1903.

made to patch up matters, but the L.E.A. was finally repudiated by the trades council, which decided to set up a new organisation.<sup>1</sup>

The executive committee decided that the new body, if the trades council were to recognise it, should consist of at least twenty societies with an aggregate membership of 5000.<sup>2</sup> The Labour Representation Committee, a name borrowed like that of its predecessor from the English organisation, was assailed by William Field and a number of United Irish League councillors, including Joseph Clark, who had been endorsed by the L.E.A. in 1899. E.L. Richardson, as president of the trades council, in submitting the new body for approval complained of the grossly malicious attacks on it and on himself. The attackers, whom he described as 'moral assassins and unfit for public life', had gone so far as to interfere with his means of livelihood. E. W. Stewart, anticipating Larkin's later denunciation of the local bosses of the United Irish League, dismissed the arguments of the attackers as absurd and their nationality as sham - 'they had no more nationality than a cat'. The attacks were condemned and the L.R.C. approved, though George Leahy opposed on the grounds that the breach in the labour ranks would be widened and P. T. Daly regretted he could not vote for the motion - no doubt because of his Sinn Féin sympathies.<sup>3</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 24 Aug. 1903.

2. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 8 Oct. 1903.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 16 Nov. 1903.

4. Ibid., 3 Dec. 1903.

The new model was no more effective than the old. P. T. Daly, elected a councillor in 1903, dissociated himself from the group in 1904.<sup>1</sup> The conduct of some of the men endorsed as labour candidates by the council finally alarmed E. L. Richardson, who wished to protect the council's good name; he carried a motion early in 1906 instructing the executive committee to formulate rules which would make endorsement less automatic.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the same year a long debate took place on the subject. J. Lumsden (plasterers) in proposing his motion, said that he was afraid it was 'the political and not the trade union ticket' that appealed to the workers of Dublin.<sup>3</sup> The motion instructed the executive committee to call a delegate meeting of all trades and labour societies in Dublin to establish a Labour Representation Committee and secure direct labour representation on the public boards of the city. A suggestion that the association should be established on the lines of the English organisation, made by W. McLoughlin, provoked Michael Canty to exclaim that the trades of Dublin were capable of minding their own business without the interference of Englishmen in their affairs. Simmons defended the English L.R.C., saying that it was composed of good trade unionists in sympathy with

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 5 Sept. 1904. Daly, as chairman having to put a motion inviting the labour party in the corporation to sympathise and support the corporation labourers, whose grievances were ignored, said that he had 'separated himself from the previous Labour Party, as constituted', but that the workmen would have his full support.

2. Ibid., 5 Feb. 1906.

3. Ibid., 3 Dec. 1906.

Ireland. P. T. Daly pointed out that he had had to dissociate himself from some of the men put forward under the first regime and that he would have to consider his position if the resolution were passed. Lumsden quieted some fears in his reply by denying he wished affiliation with the English L.R.C. and the motion was passed with one dissentient.<sup>1</sup>

The formation of the organisation was delayed for some months. Finally Lumsden, now president of the trades council, moved that the secretary call a meeting of trades and labour bodies in June 1907 'to discover whether it is possible to form an L.R.C. in Dublin'.<sup>2</sup> The L.R.C. was formed, but as there had been no radical change in the personnel of the labour group in the corporation its effectiveness was limited.

Griffith, writing in January 1903 before the municipal elections, lashed both the United Irish League ('an agency of the worst description for demoralisation') and 'the so-called Labour Party':

We observed the Labour Party on Christmas Day going to Mass at the Pro-Cathedral in state. It wore an unctuous smile, a London tall silk hat and kid gloves, a Leeds suit and Nottingham boots, and leaned on the arm of the Publican. ... The publican, the slum-owner, the loyal-address shoneen, the bogus labour man, are in the Corporation, and control it only because they have been voted there by the voters whom little knots of knaves in every ward drive like sheep to the polls.<sup>3</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 3 Dec. 1906.

2. Ibid., 27 May 1907.

3. United Irishman, 3 Jan. 1903, quoted in Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p. 258.

Griffith's description of the social aspirations of these labour representatives is borne out by their conduct even within the trades union organisation. The banquet provided for the 1900 congress delegates was arranged by W. J. Leahy, the chairman of the reception committee, with funds solicited from Dublin employers. Alderman Doyle presented 'a handsome gold locket and pendant' to George Leahy as president of the Irish T.U.C. and the Dublin trades council, as well as the more usual address.<sup>1</sup> Most of the labour group identified themselves with their fellow corporators and rose out of their class rather than with it; Patrick Dowd did so as early as 1895, when he retired from the treasurership of the council in order to set up in business on his own, receiving a chain, inscribed medallion and address on his departure<sup>2</sup>; when William Doyle laid down his aldermanship in 1913 it was because of the pressure of his own growing business<sup>3</sup>; and W. J. Leahy in the following year denounced Larkin to the Dublin Mercantile Association.<sup>4</sup>

The positive achievements of these labour representatives in the corporation were slight. Alderman Doyle claimed to be the moving spirit in reviving shipbuilding at the North Wall yard, a project backed by the trades council, which persuaded the corporation to initiate it.<sup>5</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 27 Aug. 1900.

2. F.J., 5 Mar. 1895.

3. Ibid., 31 May 1913.

4. Irish Independent, 18 Feb. 1914.

5. F.J., and D.T.C. minutes, 11 Feb., 7 Oct. 1901. Simmons said at the October meeting that William Martin Murphy should be included in the vote of thanks as he had suggested a Clyde firm should be approached.

Richardson, politically the least committed member of the group, attended to the grievances of corporation employees, for whom he secured holidays ('four full and Free days') in 1898, some months after his election.<sup>1</sup>

The wretched housing conditions<sup>2</sup> in the city did not, it would appear, worry the labour group unduly. P. T. Daly appeared as a D.T.P.S. delegate for the first time in January 1902; at the next meeting he moved a long resolution calling for the

taxation of ground and land values, the rating of empty houses, the establishment of fair rents tribunals (accessible to tenant roomkeepers as well as householders), fixity of tenure while obeying the tribunal, the compulsory regulation of tenement houses, the amendment of the act to allow municipal authorities to advance the entire purchase money on security of title and the compulsory sale on a valuation by a valuer appointed by the borough authority.<sup>3</sup>

The motion was supported by George Leahy, James Connolly and the president (Alderman W. Doyle), passed and sent to Irish M.P.s, a number of whom acknowledged it. The collapse of a tenement house in Townshend Street<sup>4</sup> later in the year, accompanied by loss of life, roused J. Lumsden (plasterer) to condemn members of the corporation who were the owners and responsible for their condition. Wishing to prevent

1. D.T.C. minutes, 29 Aug. 1898.

2. Supra, chap. I, sec. 2 ('Housing'), pp. 60-2, 75-83.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 27 Jan. 1902.

4. The three-story tenement collapsed, burying the occupants in its ruins, killing a woman and injuring others. At the inquest evidence was given that an officer of the sanitary department of the corporation had served notice that the house was dangerous, but that a member of the city engineer's staff had objected. B.N.-L., 11 Oct. 1902.



'these house jobbers' from entering the corporation, he moved a motion condemning the inadequate supervision of tenement property and impressing on the labour group the necessity of agitating for the proper supervision by competent tradesmen of such property. The motion was supported by Richardson and sent to the lord mayor and the labour group.<sup>1</sup>

Griffith seized the opportunity presented by the labour group's inactivity about housing to attack E. E. Richardson when he was a candidate for the Inns Quay ward in January 1903. He described him as the best candidate in the field for ability and commonsense but said that though he had represented the ward for two years<sup>2</sup> he had never 'bothered his head about the slums surrounding that great institution, the Dublin Trades Hall, Capel-street'.<sup>3</sup> Stung by Griffith's sarcasm, Richardson, the president of the trades council for 1903, introduced two months later a lengthy report from the executive committee. The municipal authorities were to be approached to hasten building schemes, a circular was to be issued to trades councils and other bodies in Ireland asking that proposals be forwarded to the prime minister and Irish M.P.s. The executive committee were in communication with D. D. Sheehan (an Irish M.P. who had taken a special interest in rural housing); he would

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 20 Oct. 1902.

2. Richardson had been elected in 1896 for the Mountjoy ward in 1896, and for Inns Quay in 1899, so that in fact he had represented it for four years.

3. United Irishman, 17 Jan. 1903, quoted in Clarkson, Labour and nationalism in Ireland, pp. 257-8.

were not entitled. The report is given in James Connolly, Labour in Ireland, pp. 330-40.

move a private bill and the council would call on the Dublin M.P.s to attend. The council would affiliate to the National Workmen's Housing Council, which had a bill before the house of commons in the charge of another Irish M.P. (Dr Macnamara). Finally, the council's delegate would move a housing motion at the Newry congress of the Irish T.U.C. The motion was seconded by Lumsden, and passed. The same meeting adopted other housing motions; one demanded that the corporation use its powers under existing acts to build new houses, prevent the creation of new tenements and restrict the activities of jerry builders; another repeated Daly's earlier resolution.<sup>1</sup>

Richardson continued to urge housing reforms,<sup>2</sup> but the calibre of the corporation members made it difficult for him to achieve any worthwhile results. In 1906 the president of the trades council had to report that at a conference convened by the council with the object of promoting a housing bill in the next parliamentary session, only 35 corporation members had attended, though 80 circulars had been sent out.<sup>3</sup> Slum property in Dublin was safe, protected by a guard of publicans, house agents, and gombeen men in the corporation.<sup>4</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 23 Mar. 1903.

2. He announced in August 1903 that the lord mayor had promised to convene a conference to urge on the chief secretary (George Wyndham) the need for Ireland's inclusion in a housing bill. Ibid., 10 Aug. 1903.

3. Ibid., 26 Nov. 1906.

4. A housing commission report in 1914 showed that fifteen members of the corporation owned slum property, and that three of them were receiving rebates of taxes to which they were not entitled. The report is given in James Connolly, Labour in Ireland, pp. 330-40.

A number of trades council members were elected as poor law guardians during the period. Two at least (J. Chambers, a saddler and ex-president of the council, and George Leahy) did useful and honest work. In 1902, after repeated pressure, they persuaded the guardians of the North Dublin Union and the governors of the Richmond Asylum to make their workmen pensionable; the South Dublin Union followed suit when a similar resolution was submitted.<sup>1</sup> Bribery, 'testimonials' from grateful workmen and other forms of corruption were, however, common, and it is evident that some labour representatives succumbed; the practice of receiving 'testimonials' was one of the reasons for the discredit which overtook the first 'Dublin Labour Party', and at a much later date (1919) was the immediate cause of a disastrous split in the trades council itself.<sup>2</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 10, 24 Feb. 1902.

2. A circular letter, dated 24 May 1919 and signed by the officers and committee of the Dublin trades council, was addressed 'To the officers and members of all affiliated unions'. Before dealing with the matter in dispute (a 'testimonial' to a labour poor law guardian) it rehearsed the history of labour representation in Dublin following the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898:

On that occasion, thanks to the awakening intelligence of the Irish workers, Labour Candidates were elected in large numbers in many parts of Ireland, and in Dublin no less than one-fifth of the Dublin Corporation was returned on the Labour programme, pledged to sit, act, and vote as an independent party.

It soon became evident, however, that these men were utterly unfitted to maintain an independent, incorruptible, party. They became involved in the intrigues and jobbery of the dominant political factions, and vied with the men they were elected to fight in getting jobs for their friends and relations, promoting testimonials to themselves, and feathering their nests generally. As a result, the workers became thoroughly disgusted with Labour Representation, the

Public representatives are notoriously difficult to keep in line when strong organisation is absent. The Dublin trades council did not exercise the same discipline over its local government members that the Belfast body did, nor shoulder the same financial burden in elections. It did, however, make a grant of three pounds, at least from 1903,<sup>1</sup> to the election expenses of approved candidates, and only ceased when the formation of a new Labour Representation Committee was decided upon in 1906.<sup>2</sup> Broken time was also paid by the council, but if the public representative attended to protect the interests of a particular craft the trade union concerned was asked to pay the expenses involved.<sup>3</sup>

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desire for an independent Party of Labour was killed, and the movement as a whole, suffered through the discredit and dishonour of those it had elected. And so ended the first Dublin Labour Party, "unwept, unhonoured and unsung", and for almost a generation the Dublin workers lost faith in Labour Representation.

Given the manner in which so many of the labour candidates were sponsored by nationalist organisations, and the accommodating attitude of the trades council at that time, it may be questioned whether any binding pledge was exacted. The proportion elected also seems unduly high. But there can be little quarrel with the general description of the representatives castigated. Portion of the letter is printed in Clarkson, op. cit., p. 206, n. 2.

1. P. T. Daly was granted three pounds towards his election expenses. D.T.C. executive ~~committee~~ minutes, 13 Aug. 1903. The amount was later increased to three guineas. D.T.C. minutes, 15 May 1905.

2. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 20 Dec. 1906; D.T.C. minutes, 7 Jan. 1901.

3. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 10 Dec. 1903, and 26 Jan. 1905 and passim.

## iv. Cultural Nationalism

As Parnell's body was being lowered into the grave, Maud Gonne told Yeats, a shooting star flashed across the October sky and burned out. It was an apt symbol of the fall of nationalist hopes, reduced to dust and ashes in the arid strife that followed. To the original feud between pro- and anti-Parnellites was added a struggle for power among the anti-Parnellite majority until Archbishop Croke was driven to declare in 1895 that home rule was unattainable in measurable time because of the factitious behaviour of Irish politicians.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, these years of general nationalist humiliation were also years of reconstruction. In November 1892 Douglas Hyde addressed the Irish National Literary Society. His theme was the necessity for de-anglicising Ireland - 'we have lost the notes of nationality, our language and customs ... we find ourselves despoiled of the bricks of nationality ... we must now set to, to bake new ones, if we can'.<sup>2</sup> The task of baking the bricks was undertaken by the Gaelic League, founded in July 1893 with Hyde as president. Two rules set out in the first annual report stated that the work of the society was to maintain Irish as a living language and banned political or religious controversy; they were followed by a declaration that these were fundamental rules

1. F.J., 13 Feb. 1895.

2. The revival of Irish and other addresses, pp. 118-29, quoted in Irish historical documents, ed. Edmund Curtis and R.B. McDowell, pp. 310, 313.

which should not be altered or abolished.<sup>1</sup> The members included moderate unionists as well as nationalists during the period when its leaders were not overtly political. Branches were started all over Ireland and the organisation was extended to Great Britain; by March 1902 it had a total of 441 affiliated branches.<sup>2</sup> In 1905 Hyde went to America and returned early in 1906 with £10,000 which he had raised for the League's work. Irish received only lukewarm approval in the early years of the Gaelic League - the catholic hierarchy and Maynooth in particular offering resistance<sup>3</sup> - but it finally secured official recognition when in 1910 the senate of the National University by majority vote made it a compulsory subject for matriculation.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to assisting local branches to conduct Irish classes, the League staged a yearly Oireachtas, or literary festival, encouraged Irish dancing and music and by other social activities baked the bricks of nationality. Its organisers travelled around the countryside, making conscious what was almost a collective unconscious. Even

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1. 'Is buin-riaghlacha an dá riaghail so thuas agus ní dleaghthach a n-athrughadh ná a gcur ar gcúl.' Quoted in James Carty, Bibliography of Irish History, 1870-1911, p.272.

2. Ibid., p.xvii.

3. The bishops issued a statement that in their opinion it would not be right to make Irish a compulsory subject in matriculation, as it would hinder the progress of the university by antagonising those who did not know Irish or were unwilling to learn it. Griffith commented: 'We are greatly grieved that once again the Catholic Church of Ireland has taken the wrong side'. Sinn Féin, 23 January 1904, quoted in Seán O'Lúing, Art O'Gríofa, pp. 194-5.

4. James Carty, op. cit., p. xviii.

sports and athletics were affected, for the Gaelic Athletic Association, founded in 1884, revived and codified the ancient game of hurling, popularised handball and invented Gaelic football. But the growth of cultural nationalism was not confined to the Irish language. W. B. Yeats led the Irish Literary Theatre, the precursor of the Abbey theatre, and though most of its productions were in English, the distinctive atmosphere was Irish. Yeats played an important part in the organisation of the ninety-eight centenary celebrations and wrote Cathleen Ni Houlihan under their influence.<sup>1</sup> Its glorification of the 1798 rising prompted Yeats in old age to ask himself:

Did that play of mine send out  
Certain men the English shot? <sup>2</sup>

Cultural nationalism passed over easily into a more active form; some Gaelic League organisers later became recruiting agents for political organisations. In 1903 Padraic Pearse was appointed the editor of the League's official journal, An Claidheamh Soluis<sup>3</sup> and its name, in view of Pearse's later career, acquired an added meaning.

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1. Cathleen Ni Houlihan was produced in 1902. Yeats was for a time a member, though an inactive one, of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

2. From The man and the echo, in Collected poems, p.393.

3. An Claidheamh Soluis (The sword of light) was first issued on St. Patrick's day, 1899.

Notes on the natural resources of Ireland, support for Irish industries, the study and teaching of Irish history, language, music and arts, the initiation and execution of an Irish foreign policy. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Art O Griofa, p. 106.

defeated by three votes after an hour in  
 council chamber. *ibid.* v. Sinn Féin  
 had been carried on for some months in

The significance of such movements in the slow develop-  
 ment of new political attitudes may be difficult to assess,  
 but a clear line of descent can be traced in the case of the  
 societies to which Arthur Griffith and his acquaintances be-  
 longed. Griffith returned from South Africa in October 1898  
 after a stay of less than two years, and when he had worked  
 for a time as a compositor (he was a member of the D.T.P.S.)  
 he became, on the suggestion of his friend William Rooney,  
 the editor of the new nationalist-separatist weekly, the  
United Irishman. Its first issue was dated 4 March 1899. In  
 1900 a new organisation came into being, Cumann na Gaedhael,  
 the result of a fusion of several literary-political clubs of  
 which the chief was Rooney's Celtic Literary Society, a Par-  
 nellite offshoot of an earlier society. It held its convention  
 in November of that year; among those present was P. T. Daly.<sup>1</sup>  
 The objectives of Cumann na Gaedhael resembled those of the  
 Gaelic League but also included political aims, the most im-  
 portant being the "nationalising" of all public boards.<sup>2</sup> When  
 Queen Victoria visited Dublin in March 1900 she was presented  
 by the lord mayor (Alderman Thomas Pile) with a loyal address  
 from the Dublin corporation, but when Edward VII came three  
 years later he did not receive one, for the proposal had been

28 November, 1906 - a Gaelic

1. *Supra*, p. 223, n.1.

2. Other objectives were: the publication of information  
 about the natural resources of Ireland, support for Irish  
 industries, the study and teaching of Irish history,  
 language, music and arts, the initiation and execution of an  
 Irish foreign policy. Seán O Lúing, Art O Gríofa, p. 106.



defeated by three votes after an angry scene in the council chamber. Public agitation against the proposal had been carried on for some months by a new body, the National Council, already in existence in May, some months before the royal visit. Its constitution, adopted in August, stated that the National Council 'consisted only of members opposed to the British government of Ireland'.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Griffith was once again the begetter.

The new movement developed rapidly for some years after 1903. In 1904 Griffith wrote a series of articles entitled The resurrection of Hungary in his paper the United Irishman, and had them published in book form in the same year; 20,000 copies were sold in three months.<sup>2</sup> He proposed that Ireland apply Hungarian methods, refuse to send members to Westminster as Hungary refused to be represented in the imperial parliament in Vienna, and by the summoning of a 'Council of Three Hundred', composed of abstentionist members from Westminster as well as local government members, create an Irish parliament. Taking his stand on the Renunciation Act, 1783, he contended the act of union was invalid and called for the restoration of the constitution of 1782. The 'Green Hungarian Band', as the National Council was derisively called by its opponents, endorsed The resurrection of Hungary.<sup>3</sup>

The National Council held its first convention on 28 November, 1905 - a date that is usually regarded as mark-

1. United Irishman, 8 Aug. 1903, quoted in R.P. Davis, The Rise of Sinn Féin, p. 22.

2. Seán O Lúing, Art O Gríofa, p. 125.

3. Ibid., chapter 9 and p. 131.

ing the foundation of Sinn Féin. A new constitution was adopted, with provision for the starting of branches in every electoral division, and a committee elected. In the public session Griffith delivered a lecture, later published as Sinn Féin policy, which was approved as the programme of the movement. It called for the Council of the Three Hundred as an embryo parliament,<sup>1</sup> and the displacement of British by national law courts, the creation of an Irish bank and stock exchange, an Irish civil service and the appointment of consular agents to protect Irish commercial interests abroad. Griffith adopted wholeheartedly the protectionist ideas of the nationalist German economist Friedrich List, whose book he had read in Samson Lloyd's translation, The national system of political economy; though List's theories presupposed an economy sufficiently large to be viable (he visualised an economic Grossdeutschland which included the Low Countries), Griffith hailed them as the means by which Irish industry would recover and even exceed its former glories.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Griffith dropped his earlier scheme for the inclusion of abstentionist members of the British parliament. The first resolution passed at the convention asked the general council of county councils to act as a de facto parliament: That the general council of county councils presents the nucleus of a national authority, and we urge upon it to extend the scope of its deliberations and action; to take within its purview every question of national interest and to formulate lines of procedure for the nation. United Irishman, 9 Dec. 1905, quoted in Curtis and McDowell, Irish historical documents, p. 314.

2. A summary is given in Seán O Lúing, Art O Gríofa, pp. 135-9.

(30 Aug. 1900) and P. S. O'Leary (11 Apr. 1907) to George Gavan Duffy in Seán O Lúing, Art O Gríofa, pp. 141-2.

P. T. Daly, who had retained his active membership of the movement from the founding of Cumann na nGaedhael, was present at the convention and made a statement which showed that there were those for whom non-violent resistance was a temporary expedient: 'We (sic) believed in passive resistance until by active resistance they could end the foreign government of Ireland (cheers)'.<sup>1</sup> Daly continued to play a prominent part and was elected to the resident executive of the National Council for the five years from 1906 to 1910.<sup>2</sup>

By 1906 there were three organisations pursuing much the same programme, Cumann na nGaedhael dating from 1900, the National Council from 1903, and the Dungannon club, founded in Belfast by Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough in 1905. In April 1907, at a meeting in Dundalk the first and third bodies were united to form the Sinn Féin League with Daly as president.<sup>3</sup> There was friction between it and the National Council, though Daly publicly denied this, for the Sinn Féin Leaguers were strongly separatist and Griffith, in the opinion of P. S. O'Hegarty, did not want any of them in the National Council: 'Griffith's platform is a platform which excludes the separatist'.<sup>4</sup> The Sinn

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1. United Irishman, 9 Dec. 1905, quoted in R. P. Davis, The rise of Sinn Féin, appendix VI.

2. Sinn Féin, 8 Sept. 1906, 7 Sept. 1907, 22 Aug. 1908, 28 Aug. 1909, 8 Oct. 1910.

3. R. P. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

4. Its first objective was the regaining of sovereign independence for Ireland. See letters of Bulmer Hobson (23 Aug. 1900) and P. S. O'Hegarty (11 Apr. 1907) to George Gavan Duffy in Seán O Lúing, Art O Gríofa, pp. 141-2.

Féin League had little time for the constitution of 1782 and the Renunciation Act; many of its members were physical force men biding their time. Nonetheless the two organisations were united, on P. T. Daly's motion, at the August 1907 convention of the National Council, under the name of Sinn Féin.<sup>1</sup> In the previous year the United Irishman, bankrupted in a libel action, ceased publication; its place was taken three weeks later by Sinn Féin.<sup>2</sup>

The appearance of Daly as a delegate at the Dublin trades council in January 1902 was followed by an increased interest there in the language movement. Some delegates signed their names in Irish and the council received a deputation from the Gaelic League appealing for financial support and general approval from the trade unions. Approval was granted ('it would give an impetus to Irish manufacture') and the council was represented with its banner in an Irish language demonstration in March.<sup>3</sup> The following year the same procedure was followed (the deputation included Patrick Pearse) and the officers took part in a preparatory organising meeting.<sup>4</sup> Participation in language demonstrations became an annual event; council delegates attended an industrial conference<sup>5</sup> arranged by the Gaelic League and P. T. Daly) at the annual conference of the Gaelic League.

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1. R. P. Davis, *op. cit.*, p.49; Séan O Lúing, *op. cit.*, p.143.

2. The last issue of the United Irishman appeared on 14 Apr. 1906, the first of Sinn Féin on 5 May. See Art O Gríofa, *op. cit.*, pp.157-8 for the interesting libel action that reflects Griffith's integrity and freedom from sectarian prejudices.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 10 Feb., 10 Mar. 1902.

4. *Ibid.*, 9 Feb. 1903.

5. *Ibid.*, 23 Jan. 1905.

League, and at its invitation took part in wishing Douglas Hyde God-speed on his American tour in 1905; they presented An Craoibhín Aoibhinn with a resolution of support and a suitable address.<sup>1</sup>

The accusation of the Glasgow trades council's vice-president that they had an unholy alliance with the publicans of Dublin had annoyed delegates in 1891, but it was one which could no longer be made.<sup>2</sup> George Leahy had been an ardent temperance advocate; he now had support from a number of the new delegates, especially those associated with Sinn Féin. By 1905 the council as a body was committed to the temperance movement, its executive committee marching in the annual demonstration; the following year the Ireland's Own band accompanied them in their tribute to Father Matthew.<sup>3</sup> In 1906 the council after some debate endorsed, on Leahy's motion, a resolution of the Workmen's Temperance Association regretting the refusal of the Licensed Vintners' Association to close on St Patrick's Day and calling on all workers to refuse to enter any houses which did open; they had already pledged themselves the previous year to abstain from drink on Temperance Day.<sup>4</sup> In 1906 also, the council sent a deputation of five (the officers and P. T. Daly) to the annual conference of the Workmen's Temperance Association, and continued to do so in sub-

1. D.T.C. minutes, 30 Oct., 13 Nov. 1905. An Craoibhín Aoibhinn (the pleasant little branch) was Hyde's pen-name.

2. Supra, pp. 147-8.

3. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 5 Oct. 1905; D.T.C. minutes, 1 Oct. 1906.

4. Ibid., 5 Mar., 1 Oct. 1906.

and John (name) were members

4. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1906.

sequent years.<sup>1</sup> When Larkin settled in Dublin in 1907 he found a trades council that accepted at least his views on alcohol.

#### vi. Trade Union Nationalism

During the second half of the nineteenth century, many of the skilled workers in Dublin, as in the rest of Ireland, were absorbed in British amalgamated unions. The Regular Carpenters of Dublin, which had John Simmons as a member, was taken over by the A.S.C. and J. in January 1891. The A.S.C. and J. had two branches in Dublin, but in 1890 their total membership was only 160. The Dublin society started a movement for a 54-hour week, instead of the 60 hours prevailing, and the A.S.C. and J. in the course of the struggle against the employers increased their own membership to 415. After friendly negotiations the 600 members of the Dublin society joined the amalgamated union.<sup>2</sup> Though certain craft unions, for instance the D. T. P. S., resisted, the general sentiment was in favour of joining British unions. The chairman and secretary of the trades council offered congratulations to the saddlers on their becoming an amalgamated society in 1897,<sup>3</sup> and E. W. Stewart's appointment in 1904 as the Irish organiser of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants and Warehouse Clerks was similarly celebrated.<sup>4</sup>

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 3 Apr. 1906, 8 July 1907.

2. S. Higenbotham, Our society's history, pp. 136-

3. D.T.C. minutes, 30 Aug. 1897. Both (John Fitzpatrick and John Simmons) were members of the A.S.C. and J.

4. *Ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1904.

A distinction must be drawn between a resistance to amalgamation based on local loyalties and an opposition springing from a conscious nationalism - though in practice the second might develop from the first. The growing nationalist resistance in the Dublin trades council during the first years of the century is of importance in the history of the Irish trade union movement. A number of delegates identified with incipient Sinn Féin, which for most of its early years was a Dublin growth, defended local societies and encouraged their expansion. It was this group which passed a resolution in favour of an Irish federation of trade unions, during Daly's presidency<sup>1</sup> in 1905. But as early as 1900 members of amalgamated unions felt the need to defend their unions. During a lock-out in the tailoring trade, W. Loughlin took pains to make it clear that the dispute was of local origin and did not emanate from England as had been stated; McCarron of Derry, an A.S.T. Irish executive member, addressed the council at length and denied that the Dublin branch was under English influences.<sup>2</sup> In the printing trade the existence of some T. A. branches as well as the D. T. P. S. led to serious friction in 1905, when both societies complained that the other refused to recognise its membership cards.<sup>3</sup> A motion condemning printing and bookbinding firms for importing workers when competent local members were available,

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1. Supra, p. 236.

2. D.T.C. minutes, 7 May 1900.

3. See A.E. Musson, The Typographical Association, pp. 240-1 for an account of the relationship between the bodies.

was proposed and seconded by delegates affected and supported by members of local unions, one, James Buggy,<sup>1</sup> attacking the principle of amalgamation. W. McLoughlin and E. W. Stewart, as members of amalgamated unions replied, but Daly took the side of the D. T. P. S., his own union, and declared the motion carried.<sup>2</sup>

The advocates of Irish unions received reinforcements in 1905 when the Irish Drapers' Assistants affiliated to the council. The union was led by M. J. O'Lehane, who had first appeared at the council in September 1902.<sup>3</sup> E. W. Stewart ~~and~~ opposed the acceptance of two temporary delegates of the union, and when he was overruled by Daly, complained of Lehane's refusal to honour a resolution on reciprocal trade unionism passed at the Wexford (1905) congress.<sup>4</sup> The dispute dragged on for some months and was the subject of an inquiry by the executive committee; in the end the friction was resolved and the two unions co-operated on matters affecting their members' interests.<sup>5</sup> But the Irish Drapers' Assistants was the stronger body, it sent six delegates to the council shortly after its affiliation, and as Lehane's influence grew Stewart's weakened.<sup>6</sup>

Sinn Féin members of the trades council carried a rather greater weight than their number might suggest; they

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1. He usually signed his name in Irish, as did Peadar Macken and P.T.Daly. D.T.C. minutes, 19 Sept. 1904 and passim.

2. Ibid., 21 Aug. 1905.

3. Ibid., 22 Sept. 1902.

4. Ibid., 4 Sept. 1905.

5. Ibid., 18 Sept., 16, 30 Oct., 1905; 2 Apr. 1906.

6. Ibid., 2 Oct. 1905.

3. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 5 Jan. 1905; D.T.C. minutes, 9 Jan. 1906. 4. D.T.C. minutes, 31 Oct. 1904.



usually acted as a group, and they had at least two councillors on the Dublin corporation, P. T. Daly from September 1903 and M. J. O'Lehane from April 1906. Daly had been returned at the head of the poll in his ward in 1903 and when he was being endorsed for the 1906 election he was praised for his 'unceasing attention and able advocacy' of labour claims. A committee from the council was set up to work in conjunction with his own committee, but in the event it was not necessary, for he was returned unopposed.<sup>1</sup> O'Lehane's unopposed return was also the subject of congratulation, E. W. Stewart seconding the motion.<sup>2</sup> Peadar Macken was also endorsed on the motion of his fellow-Sinn Féiner, Daly.<sup>3</sup> Macken was to be elected vice-president of the council in 1916, but never took office, since he was killed in the Easter rising.

#### vii. The Council's View of British Politics

The council's attitude to British labour politicians and their allies was in general favourable and even on occasions enthusiastic. Sir Charles Dilke's efforts on behalf of trade unions were appreciated and when his wife died, the motion of condolence described her as 'one of the best friends of the workers, especially the women workers of these countries', and her husband as 'the earnest friend of the workers'.<sup>4</sup> They expressed pleasure at Arthur Hen-

1. D.T.C. minutes, 27 Nov. 1905, 8 Jan. 1906.

2. Ibid., 2 Apr. 1906.

3. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 5 Jan. 1905; D.T.C. minutes, 9 Jan. 1905. 4. D.T.C. minutes, 31 Oct. 1904.

erson's 'brilliant victory' in the Barnard's Castle bye-election and at Walter Hudson's selection as a parliamentary candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne, considering it a compliment to the council of which he was a member.<sup>1</sup>

At the same meeting they rejoiced at the selection of a candidate for an Irish constituency, William Walker, chairman of the parliamentary committee of the Irish Trades Union Congress, 'as we believe that if elected he will be a distinct addition to the Labour Party in the House of Commons, and a strenuous advocate of labour interests'. The council co-operated heartily in the agitation for a new Trades Disputes bill; a meeting addressed by James Sexton, secretary of the N.U.D.L., and presided over by the lord mayor of Dublin, was under the joint auspices of the British and Irish T.U.C.s and themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The British labour success in 1906 impressed the council's delegates. Simmons moved an enthusiastic motion: That this Trades Council desires to congratulate the Great Democracy of Great Britain on its Great Triumph in the cause of labour, by its return to parliament of a splendid force of Uncompromising advocates of Trade Unionism ...<sup>3</sup> which took special note of Hudson's 'triumphal return'. The motion was seconded by a plasterer (J. Lumsden), not normally pro-British, and supported by an I.D.A. delegate. The new executive committee, though containing a number of Sinn Féin members and fellow-travellers, were moved to order 100 copies of the L.R.C. conference report (they had ignored

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 5 Oct. 1903.

2. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 20, 22 Oct. 1904.

3. D.T.C. minutes, 23 Jan. 1905.

4. Ibid., 29 Jan. 1900.

L.R.C. circulars in 1904), an order repeated the following year.<sup>1</sup> In January 1905 the council had accepted the offer from Ruskin College of a scholarship for a delegate, and unanimously selected Peadar Macken.<sup>2</sup> When Walter Hudson left Ireland he was presented with a 'handsomely illuminated address' (there had been one dissentient to the proposal) and the council listened attentively to his account of the British labour party's work in parliament.<sup>3</sup> But the impression made by British labour successes was not sufficiently strong to make them affiliate to the Labour Representation Committee, as the Belfast trades council had done.

The council's self-denying ordinance on politics was observed during the Boer war in that no motion was passed approving or disapproving British actions in South Africa. Some delegates, however, managed to express their sentiments indirectly. A resolution from the Blackburn (England) trades council asked for state assistance to be granted those dependent on charity through the accidents of war, and its endorsement was moved by Simmons. A coachmaker's delegate described the resolution as a piece of impertinence and another moved that the letter be marked read on the grounds that politics should not be introduced. The resolution was nonetheless adopted by a large majority.<sup>4</sup> Echoes of the Boer war were heard in another resolution when the council condemned the governor of Gibraltar (Sir George White) for employing naval and military personnel to load

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1. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 8 Mar. 1906, 8 Sept. 1904, 31 Jan. 1907.

2. D.T.C. minutes, 23 Jan. 1905.

3. Ibid., 20 Aug. 1906, 21 Jan. 1907.

4. Ibid., 29 Jan. 1900.

ships and break a strike of coal porters; Stewart, who moved the motion, described it as 'a piece of unscrupulous tyranny ... upon unarmed workmen',<sup>1</sup> and said that White would not dare to use such methods with 'the armed peasantry of South Africa'.<sup>1</sup> The council also joined in condemning the employment of indentured Chinese labour in the South African mines. A letter from the Capetown trades council on the matter resulted in Simmons moving a motion which was to be sent to the chairman of the Irish party and Colonel Saunderson. Motions passed by British organisations were less the result of humanitarianism than of a desire that the British working-class should share in possible profits, and the Dublin trades council's resolution sprang from a similar wish:

believing that our own countrymen who are located there will be vitally affected, we call upon our representatives in the House of Commons to protest against the importation of these hordes of barbarians to the detriment of legitimate workers ....<sup>2</sup>

Of socialism little was heard. Delegates like E. W. Stewart and W. McLoughlin, early members of Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party, turned to trade union affairs after their leader's departure for America. What appears to have been the remnants of the party, known as the Socialist Party, existed outside the council. A letter from that body suggesting the holding of a Labour Day was passed to the executive committee in 1905, but the suggestion was

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 25 Aug. 1900. Captain Jack White, Sir George White's son, made amends by taking the workers' side in the Dublin dispute of 1913 and helping to train the Irish Citizen Army.

2. Ibid, 10 Jan. 1904.

not taken up.<sup>1</sup> In the following year one P. Murphy asked for permission to refer to socialism for trade unionists but the executive committee refused to grant it.<sup>2</sup>

The Dublin labour movement, as represented by its trades council, had made little progress since 1899, when it had its first group of representatives returned to the Dublin corporation. The experiences of those early years, however, were not without effect, for the old procedure whereby the council automatically endorsed almost any 'labour' candidate, had been discredited. Successive attempts to form a labour representation committee were evidence that the council realised the need for discipline. By 1907 it was clear that the council willed the end, but lacked the means - a dominant group to gain control by arousing support for its own policy. Sinn Féin tried to be such a group ~~but~~ failed, for its efforts were piecemeal and spasmodic. The council was no longer self-complacent; the conjunction of new times and socialist leaders was to make it in a few years accept a militant programme.

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1. D.T.C. minutes, 6 Feb. 1905.

2. D.T.C. executive committee minutes, 8 Nov. 1906.

## VIII. LABOUR IN BELFAST: THE ASCENDANCY OF WILLIAM WALKER

'An elysium for the working man' was the description of Belfast which its lord mayor gave to the delegates attending the 1898 congress of the Irish T.U.C. He buttressed his hyperbole by citing the large volume of employment given by the shipyards and the 'most comfortable' houses obtainable at rents of 3s. to 5s. weekly.<sup>1</sup> He did not spoil the fair prospect by a recital of the low wages of unskilled male labour or of conditions in the linen industry, nor did he mention the sanitary state of the city revealed by the recent inquiry; in particular he did not refer to the sectarian animosities which divided the working class. Yet in a sense his exaggeration was understandable, for wage rates were somewhat higher in Belfast than in Dublin, unemployment, except in crises, less, and housing superior - especially after the end of the century.<sup>2</sup> Belfast was an Irish Manchester and Glasgow combined, and though its workers paid a heavy bill in accidents and industrial diseases, they were not under the same necessity to emigrate as were Irish workers generally. Trade union spokesmen, as well as employers and political leaders, boasted of their citizenship of the industrial capital of Ireland and took pride in its manufactures, however militant they might be during strikes or lock-outs.

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1. Fifth annual report, I.T.U.C., p.21.

2. See supra, chap. I, sections 5 (Occupational distribution, pp. 45-50) and 6 (Housing, pp. 60, 62-6).

## 1. Local Manufactures and Fair Wages

The relative superiority of Belfast to Dublin as an employment centre meant that its trade council spent far less time in protests against outside competition. The council nonetheless in its earlier years complained of work that could be done locally being done in England; in 1892 one of the questions put to municipal candidates asked that corporation contracts be given to local manufacturers.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later candidates were again asked much the same question, for it seemed likely that the furnishings of the new city hall would be imported, and labour councillors were for some years energetic in preventing or protesting against sub-letting of various contracts to outside firms. Edward McInnes, in other matters an impeccable unionist, was positively an anglophobe on the subject of cross-channel contracts. When the manager of the city tramways system proposed ordering the new electric trams from England McInnes denounced the suggestion, saying that

with a contractor from across the water they inevitably brought in a large floating population ... and a good proportion of them would remain, as in Newcastle-on-Tyne, causing overcrowding, sickness and disease, and being a tax upon the poor-rate.<sup>2</sup>

McInnes as the organiser of general labourers had no wish to have his task made more difficult by the introduction of

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 8 Apr., 28 Oct. 1892. A delegate pointed out that the executive committees of the two societies concerned in the April complaint (bootmakers and printers) had the printing for local branches done in England.

2. Ibid., 17 Sept. 1904. Newcastle-on-Tyne was the headquarters of his union, the N.A.U.L.

more unorganised men into a city where unskilled unions had made little progress.<sup>1</sup> Craft unions were less concerned, for they were aware that much of their own work was exported and that they could not logically protest at some imports. In addition Belfast had no large number of dying handicraft industries to protect and though the council heard a delegate of the Horseshoers say that his society was opposed to the introduction of electric tram-cars, which would throw twenty members out of employment, they were rarely moved to more than a passive sympathy. Fair wages aroused more interest, but the relatively buoyant state of such occupations as the building trade protected craftsmen, if not labourers, against low wages. Occasional protest had to be made, but there were few of the denunciations frequent in Dublin. A building trade delegate reported at one executive committee meeting that non-union labour was being used in the construction of a church; he had interviewed the churchwardens, but they had pointed out that the contract was given to the contractor unreservedly, so no further action was taken.<sup>2</sup> In 1904 a delegate complained that the plastering of a masonic hall in Ballymacarrett was being done by unfair labour, but this revelation, which would have caused anger in Dublin, was the subject of brief and inconclusive discussion only.<sup>3</sup>

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1. In 1893 a delegate of the N.A.U.L. (founded 1889 as the Tyneside and General Labourers' Union) said that about 16,000 labourers in the city were in great need of organisation. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Oct. 1893.

2. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 17 Aug. 1900.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Jan. 1904.



Government and municipal, rather than private contracts, aroused the council's interest. In 1899 Walker was severely criticised by several delegates, including McManus, for not being sufficiently active in pressing the board of guardians to adopt a fair wages clause. He defended himself by saying that he could do more by working quietly than by talking about it, in view of the difficulty of getting support from non-labour guardians.<sup>1</sup> In the following year he was elected secretary of the council and wrote in that capacity to the war office to complain that a government contract for metal castings had been sublet to unfair shops. Walker was dismissed by his employers, the Clonard foundry, and was paid victimisation wages for six months until his election as organising delegate for his union, the A.S.C. and J.<sup>2</sup> Another violation involved an admiralty contract for shot bags, normally made by sail-makers, whose recognised wages were 32s. per week. A local firm employed cheap labour and paid wages ranging from 9s. to 25s. The council sent a deputation to the secretary of the admiralty, H.O. Arnold-Forster, who was at that time the member for West Belfast. His reply to their complaint angered the council, for he considered that the clause was not violated if the men were willing to receive low wages. McInnes said that 'a man of that type was incapable of representing any constituency of workers like those who made up Belfast' and urged that it was the trade council's duty

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 25 July, 12 Aug. 1899.

2. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 8 Aug. 1900, 2, 18 Jan. 1901; B.T.C. minutes, 6 June 1901.

to see that the Belfast M.P.s, with the exception of T. H. Sloan, were called to account.<sup>1</sup> The unsympathetic attitude of unionist M.P.s provided the trades council with a further incentive to contest parliamentary seats.

A fair wages clause in government contracts had been, in theory at least, obligatory since 1891 when a house of commons resolution was passed to that effect, but a similar clause for local government work was permissive. Irish municipal and county councils were slow to agree to such a clause, and it was a marked triumph for the Belfast trades council that the city council adopted the proviso in 1903; a telegram despatched the same day by Councillor Robert Gageby reached Newry during the Irish T.U.C. dinner and was the occasion of further rejoicing.<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary committee of congress were stimulated to fresh efforts and were able to announce in 1905 that the general council of county councils of Ireland had passed unanimously a resolution in favour of the inclusion of the clause in all contracts accepted by its constituent bodies.<sup>3</sup> But labour organisations, whether T.U.C. or trades councils, had to exercise constant vigilance to have the clause enforced or its application widened; it normally formed one of the subjects raised in interviews or correspondence with government officials.

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 15 Nov. 1902, 5 Feb. 1903; B.T.C. executive minutes 29 Jan. 1903.

2. Tenth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 45.

3. Twelfth annual report, I.T.U.C., p. 25.

ii. The Belfast Trades Council: Social Assistance  
and Labour Journalism

The Dublin trades council during the early years of the twentieth century took a part in the temperance and Gaelic language movements in addition to sending representatives to ceremonies commemorating the patriot dead. The Belfast council shunned such activities, and while individual members might speak at temperance meetings they did not attend as council representatives. On the other hand the council assisted in the yearly collections for the Royal (later the Royal Victoria) and Mater Infirmorum hospitals.<sup>1</sup> Both hospitals had workingmen's committees which arranged that small levies should be collected regularly by some of the principal firms from their employees' pay; in return, contributors had priority in the allocation of beds.

Trades councils constantly received appeals on behalf of men locked out or on strike, or for the families of prominent trade unionists in distress when the breadwinner died. The Belfast council at one meeting reported three appeals, for striking railway servants in Scotland, for pottery workers at Doulton's, London, and from the local committee of the Irish Distress Fund.<sup>2</sup> Occasionally a contribution might be made from the council's own meagre resources, but normally the appeal was endorsed and sheets cir-

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1. Supra, chap. I, sec. 8 ('Medical Services'), p. 93.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 24 Jan. 1891.

culated among the affiliated unions. For the Cardiff dock strike fund the council raised over ninety pounds in answer to Havelock Wilson's circular.<sup>1</sup> It also assisted the weaker local societies or helped to cover the initial expenses of organising labourers' and women's unions.

In 1899 the trades council secured representation for the first time on the Belfast poor law board when William Walker was elected a guardian. From 1899 until 1910 the council provided a Christmas treat, and occasionally a summer excursion, for children and old people in the city's workhouse.<sup>2</sup> Like their Dublin confrères the Belfast labour guardians took an active interest in poor law matters and gave evidence to the vice-regal commission which had its report published in 1906.

It was during the nineties that the council made a first attempt to venture into labour journalism. In November 1895 the vice-president, Richard Wortley, proposed that a monthly paper should be published, with the proviso that it should 'avoid all party politics, and ... be run purely in the interests of labour by the Belfast United Trades and Labour Council'.<sup>3</sup> He estimated that £500 would be needed, but declared it would be a shame if the 13,000 trade unionists affiliated to the council did not launch such a journal and make it a success. It appeared under the name of the Belfast

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 28 Feb., 7, 28 Mar. 1891. By July 1900 £300 had been subscribed through the council for the Quinn v. Leathem case. N.W., 28 July 1900.

2. B.T.C. account book, passim; minutes, 30 Dec. 1899.

3. Ibid., 7 Nov. 1895.

4. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 4 Nov. 1905.

Citizen, with Alexander Taylor as editor,<sup>1</sup> but by March 1898 it needed a subsidy of three pounds a month, and it seems to have ceased publication during the same year.<sup>2</sup>

Renewed labour activity after the Boer war resulted in another paper, the Belfast Labour Chronicle, published jointly by the executive committee of the council and the L.R.C.<sup>3</sup> Its first number appeared in October 1904, and bore the motto 'Labour conquers all things'; it cost one half-penny.<sup>4</sup> The early issues, consisting of four pages and published once a month, devoted much of their space to corporation affairs. John Murphy seems to have been the editor, but Walker was a constant, and probably the principal, contributor. With the approach of the North Belfast by-election (September 1905) the paper was doubled in size and published weekly. A notice in November claimed that the demand for 'the only labour weekly in Ireland' had become so great that the printing order had been increased by 2,000. 'We are pleased to say that we have secured a very large circulation and the journal has now become an excellent medium for business men's advertisements. We want to make the Chronicle a thoroughly self-supporting weekly.'<sup>5</sup>

With the exception of one issue, the printing was carried out by a Belfast printer, John Adams. The excepted

1. The photograph of Taylor in the report of the 1898 (Belfast) Irish T.U.C. has a caption describing him as editor.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 26 Mar. 1898. I have been unable to trace any copies.

3. Ibid., 17 Sept. 1904.

4. Clarkson, op. cit. (p.489) is incorrect in stating that it was published 1903 - 5.

5. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 4 Nov. 1905. A joint meeting of both bodies was held on 7 Jan. 1907. Interest was

number was printed in Bangor, and the transfer led to charges during the 1905 election that this was done because printing workers' wages were lower there than in Belfast. Walker convincingly rebutted the allegations by showing that printers' wages were the same in Bangor as in Belfast; he added rather weakly that Adams had been overburdened with work but that the paper would be printed by him in future.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the relations between the paper's publishers and their printer may have been at the time, they were complicated in December by the publication of an unsigned article in the Chronicle attacking Sir Daniel Dixon, the lord mayor of Belfast and Walker's election opponent. Walker acknowledged authorship of the article, but from various causes could not appear in the resultant libel action successfully taken by Dixon against the printer.<sup>2</sup> Walker considered that he had been badly treated by Adams and refused to write for the paper, which was nevertheless carried on by Murphy and others.<sup>3</sup> But the Chronicle did not pay its way in spite of efforts by the trades council and the L.R.C.<sup>4</sup> and in all probability it ceased publication in the second half of 1906. The trades council owed over sixty pounds to Adams on the paper's account in January 1907, and had to spread repayment over several years.<sup>5</sup>

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1. B.E.T., 6, 8, Sept. 1905.

2. See *infra*, p.323, n.1 .An appeal against the verdict in the High Court (Dublin) was lost. B. N.-L., 27 Jan. 1906.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 7 June 1906.

4. *Ibid.*, 17 Mar. 1906. A joint meeting of both bodies was held to deal with the position of the paper, still published in June.

5. B.T.C. account book, liabilities following statement of accounts for quarter ending 7 Jan. 1907. Interest was

The extant issues<sup>1</sup> show that the Chronicle was concerned chiefly with municipal affairs and personalities, treated with a freedom not altogether unwarranted if some of the charges of corruption were well founded. It also printed statements issued by L.R.C. headquarters, and supported sympathetically the campaign in England carried on by nonconformists against the English education act of 1902 (which gave some aid to denominational education), and reported the resistance to compulsory small-pox vaccination. On Irish affairs it was uncompromisingly anti-home rule and obsessed with the fear of catholic clerical domination.

### iii. Labour in the Belfast Corporation

Belfast provided the first Irish parliamentary labour candidate; it was also the first Irish city to have a trades council following consciously a political labour policy. The life of the I.L.P. branch in the early eighteen-nineties was short, and its activities considered with disfavour by the council, but some of the I.L.P. members were also able and hard-working delegates who gradually managed to influence and finally dominate that body. The hard core of old unionists had been eliminated as early as 1894, when the president (Samuel Monro) and vice-president (Joseph Mitchell) had resigned because they objected to the way in which delegates to the Norwich congress of the British T.U.C. had been

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charged on the debt, which was still being paid off in 1911. Statement of the accounts for quarter ending 6 Oct. 1911.

1. The issues available to the present writer were: in 1904 no. 1 (Oct.) and in 1905 nos. 12 (12 Sept.), 13 (23 Sept.), 14 (30 Sept.), 15 (7 Oct.), 17 (21 Oct.), 19 (4 Nov.), 21 (18 Nov.), 24 (9 Dec.).

selected and considered that labourers were over-represented on the council. After a heated discussion a motion to accept their resignation was carried by a single vote (28 to 27). Monroe later set up in business on his own and did some of the council's printing,<sup>1</sup> Joseph Mitchell remained as a delegate and from 1902 onwards was unfailingly elected to the position of assistant secretary. Mitchell was a bookbinder and was frequently victimised for trade union activity,<sup>2</sup> a possible factor in his radical change of outlook - in 1886 he condemned Bowman's support for home rule, by 1909 he was himself a socialist and a home ruler.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the councillors elected in 1897 were moderate trade unionists, even if they were not as conservative as Monroe. But the tide was running against moderation. The Clyde-Belfast engineering strike of 1895-6 ended in the Belfast members being forced back to work by the decision of the A.S.E. executive not to continue contingent benefits, and the resultant dissatisfaction led to the election of more militant A.S.E. leaders.<sup>4</sup> During the strike about

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1. Monroe did job-printing for the council. B.T.C. account book, statement of accounts for quarters ending 4 Apr, 1907 and 2 Apr. 1909. McManus had earlier raised the question of giving printing work to Monroe. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Oct.1904.

2. Interview with F. Carson and William Boyd.

3. *Supra*, p. 172; Mitchell and D.R.Campbell supported Larkin at the 1909 congress of the I.T.U.C. and were attacked in the council for their refusal to support Belfast delegates of an anti-home rule complexion. B.T.C.minutes, 19 Mar.1910.

4. For an account of this strike see J.B.Jeffreys, The story of the engineers, pp. 140 - 41.



2000 engineering labourers were locked out, and on the newly formed Ulster Conciliation Board appeals to the employers to intervene in the dispute were useless - which evoked condemnation of the lord mayor of Belfast and the chairman of the water commissioners, both employer members.<sup>1</sup> The 1897 engineering strike was a further incitement to militancy and materially assisted the councillors in their election.<sup>2</sup> In April 1900 the refusal of the employers to grant a wages advance and a reduction in working hours led to a year-long strike by carpenters.<sup>3</sup> The executive committee of the trades council helped to stage a demonstration in September of the same year.<sup>4</sup> There was, however, no political significance in the procession, for it was accompanied by the Cromwell, Kane Memorial, Ballymacarrett Conservative and G.W.Wolff flute bands. The Belfast News-Letter commented favourably: 'The display of Union Jacks and other loyal flags was an exceedingly creditable one, and it was noticeable that the music played by the bands was confined to loyal or military airs'.<sup>5</sup> It is disappointing to note that in spite of this pleasing display the employer did not hesitate to import non-union joiners and that when the dispute finally went to arbitration

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 24 Oct., 14, 22 Nov. 1895.

2. Supra, p. 184.

3. Sec. 5, Higgenbotham, Our society's history, p. 169.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 21 Sept. 1900.

5. B. N.-L., 29 Sept, 1900.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 4 Mar. 1895.

4. McClung, op. cit., p. 7; B. N.-L., 9 Sept. 1893. Previous efforts had been made in 1890 and 1891. The first meeting was addressed by Miss Florence Routledge and M.E. Abraham of the Women's Trade Union and Provident League. A Women's

seven months later, the men gained no advance in wages.

In 1899 John Murphy was elected president and William Walker assistant secretary of the council. In the following year Walker became secretary, and in 1902 succeeded Murphy, who had retained his own position in the intervening years. Walker's vote was more than five times that of his nearest rival and was a measure of the ascendancy he had obtained and was to hold for almost the entire decade.<sup>1</sup> To the Belfast public he was labour's psychopomp.

The dominant figure in Belfast labour politics was born in 1871 and served his apprenticeship as a joiner in Harland and Wolff's shipyard, where he assisted in the organising of the platers' helpers.<sup>2</sup> In 1893 he was a delegate of the A.S.C. and J. to the Belfast trades council, which elected him to an organisation and propaganda sub-committee.<sup>3</sup> When the British T.U.C. met in Belfast in the same year, advantage was taken of the presence of trade union leaders to repeat earlier attempts to organise women linen workers, and Walker was entrusted with the arrangement for a large meeting in the Ulster hall; the speakers included Lady Dilke, Miss M.E. Abraham, Keir Hardie and Ben Tillet.<sup>4</sup> Walker acted as secretary of the new

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 28 Jan. 1899 and 1900, 12 Jan. 1901, 19 Jan 1902.

2. The sources used for the early years of Walker's career are R. McClung, *Reminiscences of the labour movement in Belfast*, pp. 7-8 and S. Higenbotham, *Our society's history*, pp. 280-1; Higenbotham is incorrect in some details.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 4 Mar. 1893.

4. McClung, *op. cit.*, p. 7; *B. N.-L.*, 9 Sept. 1893. Previous efforts had been made in 1890 and 1891. The first meeting was addressed by Misses Florence Routledge and M.E. Abraham of the Women's Trade Union and Provident League. A Women's

union for several months, and handed over the position to a woman organiser after some criticism of his work.<sup>1</sup>

In 1893 Walker was only twenty-two years of age, but his energy and self-confidence quickly brought him to the front. His good looks, set off by long hair, a bohemian tie and soft black hat, together with a fluent and aggressive style of speech, made him a favourite orator at the 'Steps' as long as the I.L.P. held meetings there. In 1894 he attended the first congress of the Irish T.U.C. as one of the Belfast trades council delegates, and at the banquet was the northern representative who spoke to the toast 'The labour cause', being chosen in preference to such veterans as Richard Sheldon. After working as a joiner in building and textile machinery firms he was elected in 1901 district delegate of his union, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.<sup>3</sup> The position was a full-time one, but the holder had to seek re-election at the end of a three-year term. Walker served his members well and remained their

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Society of Spinners, Preparers and Reelers was formed but went out of existence in 1891. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Sept., 10 Oct., 1890, 10 Apr. 1891 and passim.

1. The report of a special committee of the Belfast trades council (minutes of 3 Aug. 1894) held that the charges made by a delegate of the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (the new union) against Walker were justified and that the organisation needed improvement; the report was adopted by a large majority. Some months later (*ibid.*, 18 Oct. 1894) Walker reported that the membership, which amounted to 750 at the beginning of the year, had fallen to 250. A motion that a woman organiser be appointed, and that the council and affiliated unions renew financial help, was carried unanimously.

2. R. McClung, *Reminiscences*, p. 8.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 6 June 1901.

official until he resigned in 1912 to become a representative of the commissioners appointed under the National Insurance Act.<sup>1</sup> After his death one of the Belfast branches of his union was named after him.<sup>2</sup>

Appointment as a full-time trade union official greatly enhanced Walker's standing. He resigned from the secretaryship of the trades council when he became an A.S.C. and J. official but was elected president at the first opportunity, in January 1902. It was in this year that he carried unanimously a motion for the affiliation of the council to the Labour Representation Committee and established himself as the political director of the Belfast labour movement.<sup>3</sup>

The return of labour representatives to the Belfast corporation was perhaps the dearest ambition of the trades council. After the 1901 election it was left with four councillors (William Liddell, Robert Gageby, Murray Davis and Edward McInnes) and made a serious attempt to increase this number in January 1902. Liddell was given an unopposed return which left the council free to concentrate on its two other candidates, William Walker in Pottinger ward and John Murphy in Victoria.<sup>4</sup> The executive committee was unable to have the services of the City Brass Band as it had decided not to take part in any political, religious or election meetings; instead, two pipers were engaged at 7s. 6d. each for a parade. For polling day twenty-four

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1. Minutes of the managing committee (Belfast district) of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, 6 Jan. 1912.

2. He died 23 Nov. 1918. McClung, Reminiscences, card 18, 3/

3. Supra, p. 229.

4. B. N.-L., 7 Jan. 1902. he was usually referred to as Murray Davis.

personation agents were hired at 6s. each.<sup>1</sup> But the council had to be content with a moral victory only, for Walker was beaten two to one by a conservative candidate in a three-cornered contest, and Murphy came third of five candidates in his ward.<sup>2</sup> In an inquest on the results Walker declared that the fights had been the first on purely trade union lines and principles and that the 900 votes had been secured against powerful conservative and catholic associations with money and influence at their disposal. Another delegate once again deplored 'the introduction of a religious element' which, he declared, robbed them of a certain victory in Pottinger.<sup>3</sup>

The death of Murray Davis in the same month left a vacancy in Pottinger.<sup>4</sup> There was a division of opinion on the advisability of fighting it, Hugh McManus speaking bitterly of the difficulties facing labour candidates -

1. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 9 Jan. 1902.

<u>Pottinger ward</u>			<u>Victoria ward</u>		
<u>Thompson</u>	1678	Elected	<u>Watson</u>	589	Elected
Walker	718		McIlroy	579	
Maguire	529		Murphy	200	
			McDonnell	120	
			Hill	91	

The Belfast News-Letter editorial expressed satisfaction at the defeat of Walker and Murphy, whom it contrasted unfavourably as labour socialists with the respectable labour councillors such as Gageby and Davis. It also labelled Murphy pro-Boer. B.N.-L., 16 Jan. 1902.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 19 Jan. 1902.

4. Davis died 19 January at the age of forty-eight. He was a member of two masonic lodges, and had been secretary of the Belfast Bakers' Society for thirteen years. B.N.-L., 20, 21 Jan. 1902 (obituary and death notices). His full name was Samuel McMurray Davis, but he was usually referred to as Murray Davis.

eight retired, leaving the remaining seven to hold office until 1907. B.N.-L., 15 Jan. 1904.

'in his experience he had not been in any local election where the bogey of religion was not raised and flaunted in our faces'.<sup>1</sup> The executive committee decided that the candidate should be Samuel McCormick, who was a member of Murray Davis's society, the Belfast Bakers'. McCormick reported that he had been offered fifteen pounds by an individual to withdraw from the election. He refused to do so, but was defeated.<sup>2</sup> During the campaign he had written to the conservative association asking that the seat should be left open to him, an action which produced an angry but inconclusive discussion in the trades council.<sup>3</sup>

There were no labour candidates in the annual elections of January 1903, when as usual fifteen councillors' seats were filled.<sup>4</sup> In 1904 the council put up three candidates, Samuel McCormick, William Walker and Alexander

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 24 Jan. 1902. McManus was Irish organiser of the Typographical Association (1894-1910). A.E. Musson, The Typographical Association, pp. 112, 127. He was himself a catholic.

2. Pottinger ward

Dawson (Belfast Conservative Association)	1497	Elected
McCormick (Labour)	1218	
Hill	19	

In reply to the trades council's statement that Murray Davis's seat should be filled by another labour man, the conservative association retorted that Walker had opposed their nominee in Pottinger. Dawson promised to 'follow in the footsteps of the late Mr McMurray Davis, who was an honourable and straight-forward gentleman, and a personal friend of his own'. B.N.-L., 25 Feb. 1902.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Mar. 1902.

4. The city council consisted of fifteen aldermen and forty-five councillors elected by fifteen wards. Councillors held their seats for three years, fifteen (one in every ward) retiring each January. Aldermen held theirs for six. In 1904 eight retired, leaving the remaining seven to hold office until 1907. B.N.-L., 15 Jan. 1904.

Boyd. McCormick on this occasion was given an unopposed return and Walker had a narrow victory in Duncairn.<sup>1</sup> Boyd polled strongly in his ward, and was beaten by only 85 votes in a total poll of 2137.<sup>1</sup> But Gageby did not contest his seat and the net result was that the total of labour corporation representatives was four, as in 1901. In the same month the trades council was informed that Liddell would not complete his term as councillor and that his seat would be declared vacant in June.<sup>2</sup> In the by-election the seat was won by Boyd, whose prominence in the new Independent Orange Order gained him support.<sup>3</sup>

The election results of January 1904 were known on January 16. When Walker entered the trades council meeting that evening he was given a rapturous reception and the ordinary business of the council was suspended in favour of exultant speeches by the labour councillors, and congratulatory resolutions.<sup>4</sup> Enthusiasm was not confined to Belfast; one result of Walker's success was his appointment as president of the 1904 Irish T.U.C., to be held in Kilkenny, for the secretary of the trades council of that town wrote immediately to say that they were waiving the right of chair-

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<u>Duncairn ward</u>			<u>Cromac ward</u>		
Walker	1471	Elected	Craig	1112	Elected
Mercier	1413		Boyd	1027	
majority	58		majority	85	

B.N.-L., 16 Jan. 1904.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 26 Jan. 1904.

3. B.N.-L., 22 July 1904. Boyd had a majority of 239 in a total poll of 1895.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Jan. 1904.

manship in his favour.<sup>1</sup> His election gave the labour group in the corporation a leader of energy and determination, and hopes for greatly increased representation were high.

The 1905 elections raised the number of labour councillors by one; Henry Howard, the district delegate of the Boilermakers' Society, won comfortably in Pottinger. Boyd retained the seat he had won six months earlier and John Murphy came within 120 votes of gaining a seat in Court.<sup>2</sup> The council for the first time contested a seat in Falls, but the candidate, Daniel McDevitt, could make little impression on the electorate, which in that ward was still absorbed in the bitter fight between rival nationalist factions.<sup>3</sup> McDevitt's failure was not unexpected, and the contest was undertaken principally for propaganda purposes. The council had further ill-luck, however, in the loss of Edwards McInnes, who had been one of its original councillors; he had to be committed to an asylum after a mental breakdown.<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.N.-L., 18 Jan. 1904.

2. Ibid., 17 Jan. 1905.

3. Supra, p. 186. McDevitt attributed his small poll (he came last with 487 votes in a three-cornered contest which was won by James Macken with 1516 votes) to the fact that the victor had long been a member of the trades council. Northern Star, 21 Jan. 1905.

4. Interview with Daniel McDevitt. In April 1906 G. Greig, a Scotsman who succeeded McInnes as N.A.U.L. organiser, informed the council that the McInnes family were in distress; arrangements were made to raise funds to relieve them. B.T.C. minutes, 5 Apr. 1906.

5. Ibid., 15 Jan. 1906.

6. Ibid., 15 Jan. 1907. The report is inaccurate in giving R. Gageby and H. Howard as labour councillors under the control of the trades council; Gageby did not turn to the corporation until January 1908. It is also incorrect to say that McCornick was sent.

7. Ibid., 21 Jan. 1907.



The council's efforts in the 1905 election left it in debt,<sup>1</sup> and an appeal for subscriptions brought in so little that only two candidates went forward in 1906. Both were unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> Finances however improved during the year, stimulated by the British labour victory and Walker's own parliamentary contests. In 1907 the council made its greatest attempt since 1897 to elect representatives, and put seven candidates in the field. All were defeated, including Walker, who did not defend his councillor's seat in Duncairn, but stood for the aldermanship of another ward. Only the three labour councillors who had not to vacate their seats were left - A. Boyd, H. Howard and S. McCormick. The Northern Whig commented with satisfaction on the defeat of 'the Trades Council party' and pointed out that in reality its only representative was Boyd, as neither of the other two 'acknowledge allegiance to its authority'.<sup>3</sup>

The 1907 defeat was a severe set-back to the trades council's ambitions, though delegates did their best to minimise the results. The chairman (W.J.Murray) attributed the defeat to the combined action of the 'Conservative Association, the Citizens' Association, the Christian Civic Union, the Roman Catholic Defence Association and the Licensed Vintners' and Grocers' Association', and alleged that these bodies had spent between £10,000 and £20,000 on the elections as against the trades council's £200.<sup>4</sup> One

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Apr. 1905.

2. N.W., 16 Jan. 1906.

3. Ibid., 16 Jan. 1907. The report is inaccurate in that it gives R.Gageby and H.Howard as labour councillors no longer under the control of the trades council; Gageby did not return to the corporation until January 1908. It is clear that McCormick was meant.

4. Ibid., 21 Jan. 1907.

candidate (W. Hayes), speaking of his own election fight said that 'to have polled close on a 1000 votes was a thing of which no man need to be ashamed, and that without the aid of any drink and cigars. It was money that lost the election'.<sup>1</sup> The chairman drew comfort from the total labour vote, which he said was greater than at any previous election, but he overlooked or neglected to point out that the number of labour candidates was greater than in any year since 1897, and that their opponents had also done better. For a few years the council continued to put up candidates in appreciable numbers, but with negligible success; it was not until January 1920 that a sizeable block of labour representatives were returned, and then under the more favourable voting system of proportional representation.

The fortunes of labour in the government of the two major Irish cities up to 1907 invite comparison. There was greater cohesion in the Belfast labour group, which, unlike the loosely associated Dublin corporators, had been elected in 1897 as distinctive trade union candidates free of commitments to other parties. They had taken their duties seriously, and held quarterly meetings in which they reported to the electors and trade unionists.<sup>2</sup> When their request for evening sittings of the city council was refused, they attended the daytime meetings though those councillors who were not full-time trade union officials were inadequately compensated for lost time. A chronic shortage of money handicapped

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1. N.W., 21 Jan. 1907.

2. A lengthy report of one such meeting was given in B.N-L., N.W., 27 Apr. 1898, and B.T.C. minutes 26 Apr. 1898.

trial' candidate. B.N-L., 15 Jan. 1904, 17 Jan. 1905; N.W., 15 Jan. 1906. J. Mercer, a former delegate, offered himself as a candidate 'in the labour interest' for Shankill ward, but his letter was marked read. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Nov. 1905.

the trades council both in maintaining public representation and financing candidates.

The greatest number of labour councillors at any time was six, a small minority of the full council of sixty. Most of the original councillors were of the 'pure labour' variety and did not earn the hostility of their opponents. Walker and Murphy took a clearer political line, were dubbed 'labour-socialist' and met with greater opposition; it became fashionable for the conservative press from 1902 onwards to regret the political attitude of the newer labour candidates, whom they contrasted unfavourably with the moderate older representatives.

The financial weakness of the trades council was an important factor, but not the only one, in the lack of labour success. Death and forced retirements (as in the cases of Taylor, Davis, Bowman and McInnes)<sup>1</sup> reduced the number of actual and potential councillors. When Walker entered the corporation, six years after the first labour councillors had been elected, the team he led was small and its discipline lax. Some trade union candidates ran as independents,<sup>2</sup> and detracted from the appearance of unanimity. Councillors such as Howard and McCormick, while backed by the trades

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1. Taylor had to withdraw from the 1901 election when it was discovered that he was connected with a contractor to the Belfast corporation. B.T.C. minutes, 12 Jan. 1901. While Bowman did not fight his seat in the same election he would have been an obvious future candidate had he not been disqualified after September 1901 on his appointment as the superintendent of corporation baths.

2. E.g. John Spence, and A.S.E. member, was refused endorsement but fought several elections unsuccessfully as an 'industrial' candidate. B.N.-L., 16 Jan. 1904, 17 Jan. 1905; N.W., 16 Jan. 1906. J. Mercer, a former delegate, offered himself as a candidate 'in the labour interest' for Shankill ward, but his letter was marked read. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Nov. 1905.

council, were representatives of their unions; Howard's selection had in the first instance been made by his own society, which then decided to ask for the council's endorsement.<sup>1</sup>

Candidates did not hesitate to have non-labour speakers on their platforms, understandably in a period when there was no political rank-and-file organisation with a well-defined programme and constitution. But such a proceeding caused friction, as when Walker denounced Murray Davis for having on his platform in January 1901 a member of the corporation who employed non-union labour.<sup>2</sup> Walker himself, however, sought a greater freedom of action in local government elections than might have been expected from the champion of independent labour representation. At the inaugural conference of the Belfast branch of the Labour Representation Committee in 1903 he was successful in removing 'local government bodies' from a resolution requiring L.R.C. candidates to adhere strictly to a party pledge - 'it would offend people they did not want to offend at an election'.<sup>3</sup> Walker had been bitterly disappointed by his defeat in 1902 and was evidently determined that it would

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Oct. 1904. The selection of candidates was normally carried out by the Belfast trades council. The procedure in Howard's case, where his society made their selection and then asked for the council's endorsement, was exceptional and resembled that of the Dublin trades council. The unsatisfactory results of such an arrangement have already been described in the case of Dublin. *Supra*, pp.268-79.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 12 Jan. 1901.

3. *N.W.*, 2, 27 June 1903. The unfinished business of the first day's meeting (May 29) was adjourned until June 27. Walker carried his amendment by 28 votes to 16.

not be repeated in 1904. His success in that year no doubt confirmed him in the wisdom of his policy, but in the long run it made effective discipline impossible. The concession is comprehensible in the circumstances of the time and was not peculiar to Belfast, but it was in part dictated by strong personal ambition.

Some councillors erred through trade union particularism. The Municipal Employees' Association complained to the executive committee in 1901 that for two years Murray Davis had been hostile to the interests of their members and submitted a detailed list of grievances.<sup>1</sup> Davis would not attend a meeting to discuss the matter, but wrote that the municipal employees had no grievance and that 'he wasn't going to be bounced'.<sup>2</sup> The dispute continued for some months and ended only by Murray Davis's death.

In 1904 the Belfast corporation set about acquiring the privately owned tramways system. The trades council approved of the project, but objected to the omission and inclusion of certain clauses in the parliamentary bill. The council was very active in pressing objections, and despatched a deputation consisting of Walker, McInnes and the secretary (John Murphy) to London, where they interviewed some of

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1. B.T.C. E.C. minutes, 24 Oct. 1901. Davis was accused of opposing the granting of shirt money to stokers, water-proofs and emergency duty money to lamplighters and 'security' (i.e. the oldest men getting good work).

2. Ibid., 30 Oct. 1901.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Aug. 1904.

4. Interview with Daniel McDevitt. *Supra*, p. 315, n.41.

the Irish nationalist M.P.s and secured certain concessions.<sup>1</sup> But within a week a bitter quarrel broke out over the retention by the corporation of Andrew Nance, who had been manager of the private system. A motion objecting to the appointment of Nance was moved by Murphy, and supported by Walker and Boyd (now councillors) but opposed by McInnes. Boyd wished to know if McInnes had changed his view after a personal interview with Nance and Murphy said that he (McInnes) 'left himself open to the gravest suspicion of every honest man in the room'. Though McInnes characterised this statement as 'untrue, cowardly and unfair', the chairman sided with Murphy and the motion was carried by a majority of over two to one.<sup>2</sup> Much of the energy of the council was spent subsequently in fruitless attacks on Nance. Relations between McInnes and the other councillors deteriorated, and impaired the work of the group in the corporation. The discovery of an agreement between McInnes and a company engaged in the electrification of the tramways system, by which McInnes's union was given sole organisation rights, produced a final breach in 1905.<sup>3</sup>

When facing the electorate, the labour councillors were in the embarrassing position of having some of their programme adopted before any of them entered the corporation. The principal public services - gas, water and electricity - were municipally owned before 1900. The tramways system

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1. B.T.C. E.C. minutes, 12 May, 11 June, 4 Aug., 1904. They were successful in having clerkships in the transport department filled by competitive examination and securing guarantees about the completion of a section of the system.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 27 Aug. 1904.

3. Interview with Daniel McDevitt. *Supra*, p. 315, n.4.

was taken over a few years later, but at best the trades council could claim only to have hastened its acquisition. Municipal housing had been a labour demand in 1897, but it did not attract public support. The city was rapidly growing, housing conditions by nineteenth century standards were tolerable, and rents were not excessive. Primary school accommodation was poor and inadequate, but since schools were denominationally controlled, Walker's attempts to have new buildings provided and administered by the corporation were unsuccessful. Labour councillors had therefore to concentrate on defects in administration.

In 1903 Walker had defeated an attempt to strengthen discipline among the labour representatives, and his subsequent conduct weakened it still further. Three months after the failure in the January 1907 elections, W.J. Murray gave notice of a motion<sup>1</sup> instructing the executive committee to draw up a re-organisation scheme for the labour municipal group under four heads: 1) joint consultation, 2) a scheme to clear off the council's debt, 3) reconsideration of the municipal programme, 4) consideration of ward organisation. The council adopted it at a meeting in June,<sup>2</sup> but in the interval Alexander Boyd had incurred their censure<sup>3</sup> and they ceased to have an official representative. Boyd lost his seat in St George's ward the following year.<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 20 Apr. 1907.

2. Ibid., 6 June, 1907.

3. He supported the opposition candidate against John Murphy in a by-election in Dock ward.

4. Boyd was defeated by 507 votes in a total poll of 2311. Drumming parties turned out and bonfires were lit to celebrate Boyd's defeat. B.E.T., 16 Jan. 1908.

In addition to internal difficulties, the trades council had to contend with a number of reformist organisations. Conservative and liberal-unionist associations lost ground, but bodies such as the Belfast Protestant Association and later the Citizens' Association and the Christian Civic Union, drew off support which might have gone to a vigorous labour group. Dissatisfaction with jobbery and corruption and the state of public health, led to the creation of the Citizens' Association. This body came into being early in 1905. The trades council had campaigned against corruption in municipal affairs; Walker had in particular attacked Sir Daniel Dixon, the lord mayor, for allegedly making a profit out of the sale of sloblands to the corporation,<sup>1</sup> and labour speakers criticised the abnormally high death-rate in the city, sending delegates to a special public health conference summoned by the Citizens' Association.<sup>2</sup> But their efforts earned them no electoral dividend. In November 1906 the Citizens' Association held its second annual meeting and claimed that it had a membership of over 1000 as a result of its growth in twenty months. Its president appealed to the 'better class of business men' to stand for the city council and its secretary announced that they intended to contest the next municipal election.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 9 Dec. 1905. Walker reprinted his article and used it in his election fight against Sir Daniel Dixon (Jan. 1906). Dixon was successful in a libel action against John Adams, the printer. Delays on the part of the defendants, and a mistake in one of the sums mentioned in the article, prevented Walker from appearing in the case. The judge commented drily on the alliterative nature of the article's headings - 'At It Again - Robbing the Ratepayers-- Dodger Dan's Deal'. B.N.-L., 27 Jan. 1906.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 3 May 1906.

3. B.N.-L., 9 Nov. 1906.



Traditional tory strength was reduced in January 1907, but the gains went to the new middle-class organisation, which returned five councillors. Independents of various kinds, including independent labour and Sloanite<sup>1</sup> candidates, contributed to the defeat of the trades council. A slight consolation was afforded by the election in Smithfield ward of Michael McKeown, long associated with unskilled trade unionism and a former delegate to the trades council.<sup>2</sup> He was, however, returned as a United Irish League nominee, for the council did not on that occasion venture to fight in either Smithfield or Falls, where the clerical party received its death blow.

#### iv. The Labour Representation Committee in Belfast

Politics in the strict sense of involvement with either of the main English parties or with Irish nationalists and unionists found no place in the Belfast trades council's deliberations or activities. Most of the delegates were unionist in as far as they took it for granted that Ireland should be a part of the United Kingdom. When Richard Wortley presided over the Irish T.U.C. of 1898, he offered the 'delegates assembled from the four provinces of Ireland a cead mille failthe (sic) to the industrial and commercial capital of Ireland', but his use of the traditional Irish phrase was no indication of nationalist views. It was then still possible to regard the terms 'Irish' and 'British' as compatible. The defeat of the second home rule

1. For Sloan see infra, pp. 333-4 and appendix 9K (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order).

2. The council withdrew their candidate, McDevitt saying that McKeown was 'a very good labour man'. B.T.C. minutes, 3 Jan. 1907.

bill (1893) and the disorganised state of Irish nationalism after Parnell's death, assured a degree of tranquillity during the long tenure of government by the conservatives, and the Irish question did not become a matter of serious public controversy until after the liberal victory of 1906.

The trades council was silent on Boer war issues; the I.L.P. branch had collapsed and meetings at the 'Steps' had ceased. The only entry in the executive committee minutes that indicates the council's feelings is for November 1899 - and no seconder could be found when a delegate moved that Alex Taylor should represent the council on the lord mayor's Transvaal Refugee Fund.<sup>1</sup> The council contributed to the fund for Gibraltar labourers on strike against Sir George White,<sup>2</sup> but no delegate utilised the opportunity to denounce the South African war, as happened in the Dublin council.<sup>3</sup>

In January 1904 the war was discussed in retrospect. J. Keown, a plasterer, introduced a motion protesting against the introduction of Chinese indentured labour on the Rand. His argument was a simple one - the war had cost the British public a large amount of blood and treasure; British labour should be employed 'to relieve the urgent strain that England is suffering from at present, that of over-population, and compensate the nation for the great sacrifice made; that sacrifice was made mainly by the working classes of the Empire'. The seconder of the motion argued that the war had been undertaken to secure the franchise for the

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1. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 4 Nov. 1899.

2. Ibid., 25 June, 22 July 1902. No action was taken on an S.D.F. circular about the strike. B.T.C. minutes, 3 July 1902.

3. Supra, pp. 294-5.

British Uitlanders, but the effect of the Chinese labour ordinance would be to drive the white man out of South Africa. McDevitt considered that the problem of sweated labour in Belfast, rather than that of Chinese labour, should occupy the council. A scriptural condemnation of the South African war came from a delegate who quoted from 'an old book - "That whatsoever a man soweth that should he also reap" '. He thought that 'by going to war with the Boers we had entered into one of the most unjust and cruel wars that had ever disgraced a nation, and we were now reaping our reward'.<sup>1</sup> The motion was nonetheless carried, only three dissenting.

With the end of the South African war, political labour organisation in Belfast revived. The Belfast trades council affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee in 1902,<sup>2</sup> and in 1903 held a conference to start a Belfast branch of the L.R.C.<sup>3</sup> Most of the delegates came from trade unions, but the Belfast Co-operative Society, the I.L.P., the Clarion Fellowship, the Ethical Society and the Ruskin Hall Educational League were also represented. The eagerness with which developments in the English labour movement were followed and imitated in Belfast accounts for the existence of the last three bodies.<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 26 Jan. 1904.

2. Supra, p.229.

3. The conference was held in two parts (30 May and 27 June 1903).

4. The Clarion Fellowship was a Belfast branch of the English organisation sponsored initially by Robert Blachford, editor of the Clarion, and author of Merrie England. The Ethical Society was connected with the Ethical Union, which was strongest in London. See Pelling, The origins of the labour party, pp. 144, 146, and G.Spiller, Ethical movement in Great Britain. The

The Belfast branch of the Clarion Fellowship was in existence in 1902, when it offered to assist the trades council in organising meetings in favour of the municipalisation of the tramways.<sup>1</sup> It was given permission to sell literature at a meeting of postal clerks addressed by Keir Hardie on the day before the L.R.C. conference.<sup>2</sup> The Ethical Society and the I.L.P. applied for representation at the conference, as they were not automatically invited;<sup>3</sup> the co-operative society was approached by a special deputation in order to secure endorsement of the circular calling the conference and inviting appointment of delegates.<sup>4</sup> The Belfast I.L.P. branch seems to have been re-established in 1903, and its secretary John Burns attended the conference.<sup>5</sup>

The conference was held on Saturday, May 30. The tone was set by a meeting of postal telegraph clerks addressed by

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Belfast Ethical Society was founded in 1897, joined the Ethical Union in 1898, and was dissolved in 1913. Spiller, *op. cit.*, p. 114. It enjoyed some popularity during 1905-6. McClung, *Reminiscences*, card 10.

1. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 12 Nov. 1902.
2. B.T.C. minutes, 18 Apr. 1903.
3. *Ibid.*, 7 May 1903; B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 8 May 1903.
4. B.T.C. minutes, 18 Apr. 1903, B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 24 Apr. 1903. The Belfast co-operative society did not have the intimate connection with the political labour movement that English societies had; in later years its personnel included members of the Ulster Unionist party and the Orange Order.
5. The I.L.P. annual reports from 1897 to 1902 make no mention of Irish branches. The Belfast branch is noted in the branch directory for 1903 and 1904, but it sent no delegates to I.L.P. conferences until 1909. In September 1907 three new branches were formed. McClung, *Reminiscences of the labour movement in Belfast*, card 14.

Keir Hardie on the previous day. At that meeting the wages' grievances of the clerks had been discussed and a resolution passed protesting at the personnel of the government committee appointed to consider the matter - it had been selected by the postmaster-general and contained no workers' representatives. The meeting also adopted a resolution in favour of direct labour representation and the speakers emphasised that without such representation no permanent and satisfactory settlement of labour claims could be secured.<sup>1</sup> Two delegates were sent to the next day's conference.

The 112 delegates at the L.R.C. conference in Ye Old Castle Restaurant represented thirty-six amalgamated branches and local unions, as well as the political organisations already mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The A.S.C. and J. sent 12 members, the biggest delegation, and the Belfast trades council, as joint sponsors with L.R.C. headquarters (represented by Hardie and MacDonald) came next with 11. The need for labour to have a party of its own was reiterated by speaker after speaker from Hardie and MacDonald downwards. A boilermaker, James Dyson, and Edward McInnes, both proclaimed themselves 'ardent' conservatives, but were prepared to put their politics on one side in order to do their best 'for direct Parliamentary representation of labour'. Alexander Taylor and Walker referred to Bowman's election fight nearly twenty years earlier, Taylor saying that every man must now do his duty as a small majority of the working-class vote would have elected Bowman. Each of them moved resolutions which were passed.

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1. I.N., 30 May 1903.

2. Ibid., 1 June 1903, which contains the fullest report, including a list of delegates. Other reports are given in B.N.-L. and B.E.T. of the same date and N.W., 2 June.

Taylor proposed support for labour representation in parliament and a pledge to advance the interests of the L.R.C among trade unionists. Walker's resolution was more specific. It asked that the labour movement generally should unite in promoting labour candidates in favourable constituencies, 'of which Belfast is one', and that such candidates, if returned, should 'form one of, and loyally co-operate with a labour party in Parliament in advancing the interests of labour and that on all labour matters they shall act independently of other parties'.

The conference was adjourned for a month, and when it reassembled the Belfast L.R.C. was finally constituted on the lines proposed by the executive committee of the Belfast trades council.<sup>1</sup> Trade union branches were entitled to 2 delegates per hundred members, with a maximum of 5, the trades council itself had 11, and the Belfast Co-operative society, the I.L.P. and the Clarion Fellowship 2 each. The constitution provided for officers, president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary, and an executive committee of 12 composed of 6 representatives of trade union branches, 4 of the trades council and 1 each of the I.L.P. and the Belfast Co-operative society. John Keown objected to the Clarion Fellowship being represented, saying that the L.R.C. might as well provide for the 'Orange society, the Conservative Association and the Belfast Protestant Association', but his amendment to exclude the Fellowship was defeated after Murphy had declared amid applause 'as soon as the Orange Society falls into line

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1. This account of the adjourned conference is taken from the reports in the Belfast News-Letter and Northern Whig of 29 June 1903. Clarkson (p.351) is wrong in stating that 'in 1905 the Belfast Labour Party came into being'.

with the general labour question we will be very happy to receive them'.

The officers elected were all the leading members of the trades council, so that the new body and the council were governed by an interlocking directorate.<sup>1</sup> The L.R.C. theoretically maintained a separate existence for three years, and was useful in mobilising extra support at election times. It was finally amalgamated in August 1906 with its parent body, the trades council,<sup>2</sup> no doubt in order to avoid duplication of effort; provision was made for separate balance sheets, but the same delegates could represent their societies on both bodies.<sup>3</sup> A curious discrepancy in membership came to light during a discussion of the details of the fusion. Some nine or ten branches of the A.S.C. and J. were affiliated to the L.R.C., but only one to the trades council.<sup>2</sup> The explanation is to be found in the bad relations between the council and Walker over an inter-union dispute, and the latter's interest in the L.R.C. as an electoral machine.<sup>4</sup>

The adjourned conference also passed Walker's resolution<sup>5</sup> which had been previously adopted at the meeting on May 30,

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1. The officers were: A. Taylor (president), E. McInnes (vice-president), John Whitla (treasurer), John Murphy (secretary), Daniel McDevitt (assistant secretary).

2. B.T.C. minutes, 30 Aug. 1906. The Belfast Representation Committee (17 Aug. 1906) passed a motion for amalgamation. A pencil draft of the minutes on a loose sheet in the B.T.C. minutes book shows that the leaders were also prominent in the trades council.

3. Ibid., 2 Aug. 1906.

4. Infra, p

5. Supra, p. 329.

with some changes. Joseph Harris, an Upholsterers' delegate, and a member of the trades council, was successful in having the resolution amended so that labour representatives on local government bodies would be subject to the same discipline as members of parliament<sup>1</sup> and unable to support non-labour candidates without the consent of the L.R.C. Walker objected to the first part of the amendment, but Harris would not withdraw it; Walker, however, carried a further amendment deleting it.

The month between the two parts of the conference had been used to invite unions to suggest a constituency to be fought and to nominate candidates. John Murphy, now secretary of the L.R.C. as well as of the Belfast trades council, reported that there was practical unanimity among the trade unions that North Belfast should be fought, but that the twenty branches submitting candidates' names were divided. Robert Gageby and William Walker had each received nine nominations, and Alexander Bowman and Alexander Taylor one each. The suggestion of a union that Walker should fight South Belfast was greeted with laughter, as it would have meant opposing Tom Sloan, the independent unionist M.P. elected the previous year. North Belfast was the final choice and three months later the L.R.C. selected Walker to fight the seat, a decision ratified by the council.<sup>2</sup>

Belfast's affiliation to the L.R.C. headquarters in London continued to be the responsibility of the trades coun-

1. i.e. that if returned they should form one of, and loyally co-operate with a labour party in Parliament and local government bodies'.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 1 Oct., 7, 21 Nov. 1903. No L.R.C. minutes are extant, apart from the draft minutes of 17 Aug. 1906, but the trades council minutes contain occasional letters and reports.



cil. Hugh McManus and Thomas Hughes attended the 1903 conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne and reported encouragingly on the growth of the organisation - the 240 delegates represented more than 8,40,000 men, more than double the number represented at the previous conference.<sup>1</sup> The council attached importance to the L.R.C. and always chose as delegates, officials or leading members such as William Walker, John Murphy and Alexander Boyd. At Bradford (1904) the Belfast delegates invited the L.R.C. to hold the 1905 conference in their city, but Liverpool was chosen instead. They were successful, however, at Liverpool; for Belfast was selected 'by a clear majority' as the meeting place for 1906.<sup>2</sup> At the same conference Walker, present at an A.S.C. and J. delegate, was elected to the standing orders committee for the following year, and moved a motion of appreciation for MacDonald's work as secretary.<sup>3</sup> Arrangements for 1906 were however upset by the general election of that year, and the conference was postponed and transferred to London, where John Murphy attended as the trades council representative. Belfast finally received the L.R.C. (renamed the Labour Party) in 1907 and had the satisfaction of hearing Walker as a principal speaker at a public meeting in the Ulster Hall. The council remained faithful in its affiliation to the British Labour Party and continued to send delegates to annual conferences until 1918.

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 5 Mar. 1903.

2. Labour Representation Committee, fifth annual report, 1905, p. 54.

3. Ibid., pp. 37, 57. Some amalgamated, and occasionally local Belfast unions, sent Irish delegates to L.R.C. and British Labour Party conferences, but even after 1906 they did not exceed half-a-dozen, and they were mainly from Belfast.

## v. The Example of Sloan

In August 1902 T.H.Sloan, a shipyard worker, was elected as an independent unionist M.P. for south Belfast. He had the assistance of a number of Belfast trades council delegates in his campaign, even though the council refused to endorse him and disapproved of the organisation, the Belfast Protestant Association,<sup>1</sup> which sponsored him. He was the first working-class candidate to be successful in Belfast and his election was an invitation to others to challenge the conservative and liberal-unionist associations in the city. During the discussion on the motion to endorse Sloan, one delegate held out hopes that the A.S.C. and J. might nominate Walker for the constituency, and though they were not realised, such hopes were an indication of the temper of the time.

Over a third of the delegates supported Sloan, though his sectarianism antagonised many and his claim to be a trade unionist was questioned - it was both asserted and denied that he was a member of the N.A.U.L. Sloan's activity at the January election in Pottinger ward (Mitchell said that Sloan and his 'comic man' Galbraith denounced Walker all over the city<sup>2</sup>) was another black mark against him, for it was too

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The Irish attendance in 1907 was abnormally large, but only three of the twenty-nine delegates came from centres outside Belfast. [British] Labour Party, seventh annual report, 1907.

1. For an account of the Belfast Protestant Association, the career of T.H.Sloan and the Independent Orange Order, see appendix Q (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order).

2. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Aug. 1902.

3. Ibid., 15 Oct. 1902.

recent to be easily forgotten. The strongest arguments on behalf of Sloan were that he was a workingman's candidate and that not to endorse him was to countenance his opponent, who was a landlord. To those who feared that Sloan might be too political (i.e. on the Irish question) his chief supporter declared 'as they were aware, any man going up for a constituency in Ireland must be one thing or the other, orange or green'. There was no direct reply to this contention, but one delegate, who declared himself a protestant, considered Sloan's bigotry an insuperable barrier.

They must admit that the best members they in Ireland had in the House of Commons as regards the Labour cause were the Nationalists, and he did not see for a moment how Mr Sloan could go into the same lobby with those men when he was ridiculing them from one year's end to the other.

Had Sloan been less virulent in his sectarianism he would have had the council's official backing, for delegates were united in their desire to see Belfast return an M.P. sympathetic to labour.

The Belfast Protestant Association followed up their success in south Belfast by endeavouring to increase their membership. At the beginning of October they wrote to the trades council asking for a list of the names of secretaries of affiliated unions and delegates to the council. The motion to mark the letter read was carried, but only after an amendment to send the names requested, had been defeated.<sup>1</sup> A more positive reply to the B.P.A. challenge came a fortnight later when the council unanimously decided to affiliate to the L.R.C., and a delegate asserted that they could win East Belfast.<sup>2</sup> The council was committed as a body to con-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Oct. 1902.

2. Ibid., 18 Oct. 1902.

test elections when its representatives to the Newcastle conference of the L.R.C. were instructed to invite speakers from headquarters to address the council on fighting one or more Belfast seats at the next general election.<sup>1</sup> Walker's comment that local M.P.s would be more amenable to reason if they believed they would be opposed was an indirect tribute to Sloan's success.

The choice by the Belfast L.R.C. and the trades council of Walker as the candidate for north Belfast was made towards the end of 1903. During the following year Walker's prestige grew, as he successively won a council seat in Duncairn ward, was re-elected district delegate of his union and presided over the Kilkenny meeting of the Irish T.U.C. In January 1905 the trades council elected him president once again, this time unopposed. Such distinctions were gratifying, but they did not make any direct contribution to the election expenses to be faced. In April, however, John Murphy announced that Walker had been one of the parliamentary candidates chosen by the A.S.C. and J. to run under L.R.C. auspices, a decision that meant he would be financed by his society.<sup>2</sup> The general council of the A.S.C. and J. had in 1904 proposed a scheme, which was later accepted by the rank and file, by which three members should be selected to contest suitable parliamentary constituencies. Election costs, and a parliamentary salary of £250 per annum and travelling expenses, were to be raised by an annual levy of one shilling per member.<sup>3</sup> Murphy also pointed out that

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 5 Feb. 1903. The heading of this paragraph in the minutes is: 'Institution of the Belfast L.R.C.'

2. Ibid., 6 Apr. 1905.

3. Higginbotham, Our society's history, p.274.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Mar. 1905.

Walker had headed the list in each of the two ballots held by the union. The motion of congratulation he moved was passed unanimously, and he announced that arrangements would be made for a series of meetings in the constituency with Arthur Henderson, M.P. since 1903, as principal speaker. Walker, replying to the congratulations offered, felt that he had 'surpassed himself' even in getting into the first three, 'as unfortunately it seemed to be a canon of the Amalgamated Unions that "Irishmen need not apply", but in this instance they had excelled themselves - out of 62,000 votes he had obtained 16,333'.<sup>1</sup> He added that his election would be the first contest in Belfast where labour and capital would meet on an equal financial basis, a remark appreciated by a council always handicapped in fighting wealthier opponents.

Walker at this time was the most prominent figure in the Irish labour movement. The Dublin trades council in 1903 and the Irish T.U.C. over which he had presided in 1904, had rejoiced at his candidature,<sup>2</sup> and hopes were heightened when he was adopted by an amalgamated union, for it was a proof of his standing in the British trade union world. But entire harmony did not prevail within the Belfast trades council. A cabinetmaker delegate, speaking to the congratulatory motion on Walker's success in the A.S.C. and J. ballots, hoped he (Walker) would fight as hard for north Belfast as he had for the joiners.<sup>1</sup> The reference was to a demarcation dispute between the two unions. The disagreement had been discussed at a meeting<sup>3</sup> of the trades council a month earlier

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Apr. 1905.

2. Supra, pp. 293, 216.. ng with them'. N.W. & Aug. 1905.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 9 Mar. 1905.

and a resolution passed that a joint committee of the two unions and the council should deal with it. Walker adopted an uncompromising attitude, ignored the suggestion of a joint committee, and declared that the dispute was not a suitable one to be dealt with by the council.<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet-makers complained several times of Walker's statements on the issue and the council, at a particularly acrimonious meeting in July 1905, recommended that an agreement like that operating in other towns be adopted in Belfast, and requested a reply within three months. Though the recommendation had been carried by a two to one majority, Walker refused to accept it and resigned his presidency of the trades council.<sup>2</sup>

Walker's decision was embarrassing to the council. Some delegates wished to send a deputation asking him to reconsider his resignation, 'it would be a great loss to the trade union movement', but the secretary, normally a stout supporter of Walker, said that it would be useless. He feared that demarcation questions would be decided by the courts, 'to the discredit and discomforture of trade unionism' if strong unions were to crush small ones and refuse to accept arbitration within the movement. A boilermaker, W.J. ('Skin') Murray, expressed the opinion of delegates of various trades when he said that Walker had resigned because

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 18 Mar., 15 Apr. 1905.

2. Ibid., 20 July, 3 Aug. 1905. Walker also announced that he had given a notice of motion in his society (the A.S.C. and J.) that it withdraw from the trades council and that he placed his poor law and city council seats at the disposal of the council. A linenlapper delegate (- Bloomer) stated that 'Councillor Walker could not bear to hear any of the delegates give an opinion on the matter contrary to his own without interrupting and disagreeing with them'. N.W. 4 Aug. 1905.

the council had reversed an earlier ruling of his. The motion to send a deputation was defeated and Walker's resignation accepted 'with regret'.<sup>1</sup>

Though the Cabinetmakers assented to the council's demarcation scheme within the stipulated time,<sup>2</sup> the A.S.C. and J. made no reply. The dispute dragged on into 1906, and was aired again at a council meeting in March. The cabinetmaker delegates were understandably irritated, for they had kept silent for six months in order not to embarrass Walker during his election fights in September 1905 and January 1906; indeed they had not opposed Walker's re-election as president at the beginning of the year. Their motion to condemn the joiners for not putting into force the demarcation scheme was carried, but it was a hollow victory, for a further motion to allow the matter to drop was carried after the council's powerlessness to enforce the decision had been pointed out.<sup>3</sup>

Disagreements between the two closely related trades over the allocation of work were common enough; they ceased only when the two unions concerned (the Amalgamated Union of Cabinetmakers and the A.S.C. and J.) united in 1918.<sup>4</sup> The dispute was, however, not an isolated event, for during 1906

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Walker did not carry out the threat to have the A.S.C. and J. disaffiliate, and his offer to resign from his public office was not accepted.

1. B.T.C. minutes, 3 Aug. 1905.

2. Ibid., 5 Oct. 1905.

3. Ibid., 1 Mar. 1900. The dispute arose over the making of show cases, which the Cabinetmakers claimed was done by their members in England and Scotland.

4. S. Higginbotham, Our society's history, pp. 212-3.

Walker was involved in further quarrels. In June he accused the secretary (J. Murphy) of neglecting his duties by attending the Irish T.U.C. instead of staying to deal with a dispute in the linen industry. The secretary in turn asked Walker why he furnished reports to the Ulster Guardian when there was a labour paper [ the Belfast Labour Chronicle ] in existence, to which Walker replied that he would never write a line for it while it was printed by John Adams, 'who had betrayed them over it'. The secretary was defended by other delegates, and the executive committee report, on which most of the discussion took place, was adopted.<sup>1</sup>

A month later, as a sequel to the textile dispute, W.J. Murray gave notice of a motion of censure on Walker. Though he later withdrew it, A.S.E. delegates complained of Walker's action in a demarcation dispute between their own society and the A.S.C. and J.; they alleged that he had secured the dismissal of one of their members by reporting the dispute to Alexander Carlisle, the general superintendent of Harland and Wolff's shipyard, instead of first taking up the matter with the A.S.E. district committee.<sup>2</sup> The subject was debated at a later meeting when Walker was present. Walker denied that he had mentioned any names - the man had been dismissed with other fitters, and if similar circumstances arose he would again act in the same way. He refused Murray's invitation to admit that mistakes had been made on both sides. Appeals for peace induced the mover of a censure motion to withdraw, and its seconder to attempt a modification. In the

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 7 June 1906.

2. Ibid., 5 July 1906.

3. McClung, Reminiscences, pp. 12-13.



end, after a vote in which most of the delegates took no part, the motion was defeated.<sup>1</sup>

#### vi. The 1905 Election

Despite the ill-feeling aroused by the demarcation disputes, the Belfast trades council united to support Walker in his election fights. The death in August 1905 of Sir James Hazlett, the sitting member for north Belfast, faced Walker with an immediate contest. The trades council held a special meeting, repudiated the suggestion of a section of the Belfast press that the demarcation dispute would affect the council's support for Walker, and passed an unanimous resolution endorsing him.<sup>2</sup> The conservative candidate was a local timber merchant, Sir Daniel Dixon, lord mayor of Belfast, and a constant target for Walker's attacks in corporation affairs.

The labour candidate's campaign was vigorous and thorough. L.R.C. headquarters supplied Ramsay MacDonald as election agent and Arthur Henderson as the principal visiting speaker. In spite of conservative posters denouncing MacDonald as a pro-Boer and home ruler, and attacks on Henderson as a nationalist ally, labour meetings were successfully held in every part of the constituency. A dinner-hour audience at Workman and Clark's listened attentively even to Ramsay MacDonald,<sup>3</sup> though some shipyard workers were by tradi-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 6 Sept. 1906.

2. Ibid., 22 Aug. 1905.

3. McClung, Reminiscences, pp. 12-13.

tion violently orange and unionist. In a pre-election address Walker announced himself as a unionist in politics who desired 'to co-operate with any section of parliament on social questions'.<sup>1</sup> At one meeting he made a strong appeal for support to the protestant working class when he announced that the contest was unique since members of both the new and old Orange orders were on his brake. He refused however to rely on

any party, section, or religious bigotry. Catholics and Protestants, though not agreeing on certain grounds, should agree on others when it was a question of the Workman's Compensation Act, the amendment of the Factories Act, and an Old Age Pension Scheme.<sup>2</sup>

The enthusiasm shown for Walker throughout the constituency alarmed the Belfast conservative press, which feared in north Belfast a repetition of the defeat suffered three years earlier in south Belfast. The speakers at Dixon's inaugural meeting, held in Clifton Street Orange Hall, were shouted down by a combination of Sloanites and Walkerites and a melée broke out, in which, as Devlin's paper, the Northern Star, joyfully put it, 'the furniture and fittings of the hall suffered sadly'.<sup>3</sup> The unionist candidate in south Belfast had experienced the same kind of reception at his first meeting. The alliance between labour and dissident unionist supporters was further em-

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1. N.W., 24 Aug. 1905.

2. Ibid., 6 Sept. 1905.

3. Northern Star, 9 Sept. 1905. McClung estimated that some sixty per cent of the audience were Walkerites and Sloanites. The chairman, a linen manufacturer named Sir William Ewart opened by saying, 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is a splendid meeting and I only wish some of the Walkerites were here'. A joiner spoke up, 'Man, we are all here', whereupon pandemonium broke out and continued until the meeting ended. Subsequent meetings were heavily stewarded and potential interrupters refused admission. McClung, Reminiscences, p.12.

phasised by the presence on Walker's platform of such men as Alexander Boyd of the Independent Orange Order. Boyd during these weeks was also speaking with Sloan on behalf of Richard Braithwaite, the secretary of the Belfast Protestant Association, in a municipal election against Lord Shaftesbury during September.<sup>1</sup> Walker himself at one of his own meetings adopted Sloan's language and arguments, saying that 'as soon as they sent men to the House of Commons who had a strong love for their fellows they would smash the dead-heads of Ulster, and remove the objections the labourers of England had to the Ulster Unionist Party'.<sup>2</sup>

The Dunraven-MacDonnell devolution proposals of 1904-5, though they came to nothing,<sup>3</sup> had a profound effect on Irish unionism. They produced a precipitate, Ulster unionism, which assumed a distinctive form with the creation of the Ulster Unionist Council in March 1905. The devolution controversy left Ulster unionists suspicious of the ability and determination of southern unionists to resist home rule, and encouraged them to organise resistance on a provincial basis. As a result, Walker had to contend with greater resistance than Sloan. The principal unionist newspapers carried editorials and the usual anonymous letters signed 'A Protestant', or 'Shipyard Worker', questioning the labour candidate's loyalty in view of his association with Henderson and MacDonald. One unionist speaker made the charge that when Walker presided at the Irish T.U.C. dinner in Kil-

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1. N.W., 9 Sept. 1905.

2. Ibid., 6 Sept. 1905.

3. See appendix Q (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order), p.

kenny, no toast of 'the King' was given, but instead 'Ireland a Nation'.<sup>1</sup> Walker redoubled his assurances, excusing English labour support for home rule on the grounds that every Irish unionist member of parliament, with the exception of Sloan, had voted against an eight hours' bill for miners, but asserting that if they returned to the house of commons a man who 'was a Unionist, plus a labour representative, they would be striking the greatest blow that could be struck against the maintenance of Home Rule opinion in England'.<sup>2</sup> This assertion was greeted with cheers, as was also a categorical statement that if returned he would vote against home rule. Even MacDonald assured his audience that Walker as an M.P. would be free to vote as he pleased on the issue, and would not be subjected to any pressure. 'In this contest there was no question of Home Rule, because Mr Walker was perfectly sound from their point of view.'<sup>2</sup>

Though the Belfast press, with the exception of the nationalist Irish News, sided with Dixon and gave little coverage to Walker's campaign, the unionists were increasingly apprehensive of the outcome as polling day, Thursday September 14, approached. The labour attack on Dixon and his supporters was extremely damaging; Dixon's record in the allocation of municipal contracts (they included the purchase of tramwaymen's

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1. N.W., 6 Sept. 1905. According to John Murphy, who present with Walker at Kilkenny, no northern delegate had seen the toast list before the dinner began. On Murphy's suggestion, E.L. Richardson, secretary of the parliamentary committee of the Irish T.U.C. conferred with the chairman (Councillor McCarthy of the Kilkenny trades council). McCarthy spoke to the toast's proposer, who made no statement 'which could give offence to the most loyal man in Ireland. Some of the Ulster representatives present, thinking no evil, honoured the toast, but Mr Walker and I kept our seats'. Open letter of Murphy to Ramsay MacDonald, Belfast Labour Chronicle, 12 Sept. 1905.

2. N.W., 7 Sept. 1905.

clothing from a London sweatshop and sale to the corporation of land owned by him) was fully exposed at Walker's large and numerous meetings, as was his constant opposition to fair wages for corporation employees, and to reforms in housing and education.<sup>1</sup> One speaker, indignant at a unionist's belittling of Walker's nominators, retorted that at least it was not they who had turned Carrick House into a brothel, while a Chronicle editorial referred to Dixon as a man who 'has but narrowly escaped "the stench of the Divorce Court"'.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of large numbers of paid canvassers, of bribes and of intimidation, prospects of a unionist victory grew dimmer as Walker continued to win more protestant workers.<sup>3</sup> There remained the catholic voters in the constituency, estimated at about 1000. The Irish News was not unsympathetic to the labour candidate and Joseph Devlin's weekly

1. The London firm, Hyman Lotery, paid 6d. per jacket to outworkers for making boys' reefer jackets; a mother and daughter by working from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. were able to earn only 4s. per day. Boys' suits were paid for at the rate of 5½d. per suit. Truth, 12 Apr. 1900, quoted in Belfast Labour Chronicle, 22 Sept. 1905. Dixon's sale of land to the corporation included the site of Dundonald cemetery and some sloblands for sewage purification works.

2. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 12, 23 Sept. 1905. Carrick House was a municipal common lodging house, the subject of an earlier scandal involving unionist councillors. Sir Daniel Dixon's misadventures figured in satirical verses and election songs, with references to 'Daniel in the Lyons' den'; the Lyons were near neighbours of Sir Daniel.

3. Ibid. 23 Sept. 1905. The local report to the A.S.C. and J. headquarters stated 'so patent was the corruption even to the man in the street that eight days before the election Mr J. Ramsay MacDonald ... advised doing no more fighting but to permit matters to run their course and then claim the seat on petition'. S. Higenbotham, Our society's history, p. 280.

Northern Star gave him qualified encouragement: 'The Nationalist vote might just make all the difference in the case of a close contest, and as Mr Walker, the Independent Orange Candidate, professes Labour sympathies, he is certain to attract a large element of support. The issue will be decidedly interesting.'<sup>1</sup> A unionist candidate could scarcely expect to attract even a sizeable minority of nationalist votes, at best he might hope that they would not be cast for either candidate. Dixon took some care to avoid extreme sectarian statements in his election address, had it published in the nationalist press (it appeared twice in the Northern Star) and gave prominence to his support for the reform of the poor law system, the provision of old age pensions and the improvement of workmen's compensation acts.<sup>2</sup> He declared his opposition to the establishment or endowment of any sectarian university in Ireland, a proposal favoured by catholics, if not by nationalists, and called for a shortening of drinking hours. Temperance and non-sectarian education were favourite demands of Sloan and indeed of Walker, so that the labour candidate could not make capital of their omission from Dixon's programme. The lord mayor was himself no total abstainer, but he was regarded with amused tolerance by many, who preferred his free-and-easy manners (he had started life in Ballycastle as a joiner) to the frock-coated virtue of some of his predecessors. Nor was he unique in making money from selling property to the corporation, for councillors frequently bought and sold land on the outskirts of the growing city.

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1. Northern Star, 2 Sept. 1905 (The Week at Home).

2. Text in N.W., 30 Aug., Northern Star, 2, 9 Sept. 1905.

The Belfast Protestant Association, though it had been rebuffed some years earlier by the Belfast trades council, was determined to intervene in the election. Armed with a series of questions drawn up by the council of the Imperial Protestant Federation, its secretary, Richard Braithwaite, interrupted his own municipal campaign against Lord Shaftesbury to demand answers from both candidates. The fourteen questions were in the Maria Monk tradition and if answered in the affirmative would antagonise catholic voters. Braithwaite made numerous attempts to interview Sir Daniel Dixon, but Dixon's agent used delaying tactics and at last insisted that Walker must be approached first, as Sir Daniel's protestant and loyalist bona fides were beyond suspicion. Walker in turn evaded Braithwaite for some time. Finally the B.P.A. secretary encountered him alone during the week-end before the election. Pressed hard and fearful of losing Sloanite votes, Walker without consulting his election committee answered the questions to the satisfaction of the B.P.A.<sup>1</sup> He committed himself to the retention of the sovereign's declaration against transubstantiation<sup>2</sup> (which described 'the sacrifice of the mass' as 'superstitious and idolatrous'), to the inspection of convents and monasteries, and to the remarkable statement that 'Protest-

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1. Interview with Daniel McDevitt. The questions, and Walker's answers, are given in appendix 10.

2. Text in Select statutes, cases and documents, ed. Sir Charles Grant Robertson (8th ed., London 1947), pp. 137-8. A bill to modify the declaration was introduced into Parliament in 1901, but was not proceeded with. The declaration was finally modified by the Accession Declaration Act, 3 Aug. 1910 (1. Geo. V. c. 29).

antism means protesting against superstition, hence true protestantism is synonymous with labour'.

When Ramsay MacDonald and the election committee were presented with Walker's answers there was consternation in Tudor Place, the labour headquarters. The general opinion was that the 1000 catholic votes had been lost. MacDonald's first reaction was to throw up his position as agent, but he was persuaded to stay. The B.P.A. then approached Dixon's agent, who affected to disbelieve their claim that Walker had answered the questions. When he was shown Walker's replies he turned the B.P.A. officials out, prepared handbills containing the questions and answers and had them circulated at the Holy Family confraternity meeting two days before polling day.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Interview with Daniel McDevitt. Similar details supplied by R.R.Campbell, son of D.R.Campbell. I have been unable to trace the handbills in question. A handbill, lacking a date and imprint, but possibly circulated in this election, is as follows:

To the CATHOLIC ELECTORS of North Belfast.

The Catholic Church is constitutionally Democratic, and always to the front supporting the rights of Democracy. The Supreme Pontiff Pius X is sprung from the people.

But Democracy and Socialism must not be confounded.

Democracy means the lawful rights of the working man. Socialism, carried to its logical consequences, is mob law and spoliation. It is opposed to the commandments of God and can never be supported by any Church.

In the present contest in North Belfast, Socialism seeks to supplant Democracy, and cannot therefore be supported by any good Catholic.

Whatever may have been the political differences in the past among Belfast Catholics they have always stood united in upholding the doctrines and teaching of their Church. The Catholics of North Belfast cannot conscientiously vote for Mr Walker, the Socialist Candidate.

BY ORDER

The Irish News (17 Apr. 1907) in an editorial, 'Piggotry



The B.P.A. document was printed in Lindsay Crawford's paper, The Irish Protestant, published in Dublin, and in the Northern Whig of Monday September 11. On Monday evening the Belfast executive of the United Irish League held a private meeting to consider the North Belfast election. No statement was issued, but opinion was divided on the disposition of the nationalist vote, according to the Whig correspondent, who hopefully believed that it would go to Dixon.<sup>1</sup>

Though the catholic vote was doubtful, Walker's supporters were in good heart. They had made a thorough canvass of the constituency and had been favourably received by all but the most intransigent conservative supporters.<sup>2</sup> On polling day the display of blue and white favours, and the stream of voters to labour tally rooms promised victory. But Dixon's pink favours were worn by over 1000 paid canvassers, 725 vehicles carried his voters to the poll, and unionist out-voters had their expenses and first-class fares paid.<sup>3</sup> Unionist election expenses, according to the not un-

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and the North Belfast Election', refers to similar anonymous handbills circulated on the eve of the polling in Walker's third North Belfast election. The title of the editorial is a reference to Richard Pigott, the author of the forged Parnell letters.

1. N.W., 11, 12 Sept. 1905.

2. McClung, Reminiscences (pp.13-14) tells of canvassing a voter who would have made an admirable senator under Caligula: 'Logan and I called on a man in Foyle St, and we suggested that he should vote for the best man (W.Walker) irrespective of parties, but he replied that he was a party man and would vote for an ass if the conservative party instructed him to do so.' Another voter was more discriminating, if equally impractical, for he announced that he would vote for 'King Billy'.

3. Local report to A.S.C. and J. headquarters. S. Higenbotham, Our society's history, p.280.

biased Belfast Labour Chronicle, were 'six or seven times' the £1000 they should have been.<sup>1</sup> Labour and capital had not, after all, met on equal terms. Victory went to the longer purse, though Dixon's majority was only 474 votes in a total poll of 8406. To his followers waiting outside the city hall Walker promised that he would be at the head of the poll at the general election.<sup>2</sup>

Next The high expectation of success and the mixture of anger and disappointment at the result among Walker's supporters found expression in the editorial of the following issue of the Belfast Labour Chronicle. Headed 'A Discredited City', it asserted that Dixon's return could be explained only on the assumption that 'a great many of the voters in the division are either invincibly ignorant or hopelessly corrupt'.<sup>3</sup> Dixon was 'a wealthy and ignorant old dotard' in whose election 'every dodge incident to Parliamentary elections in the days of pocket-boroughs were [sic] resorted to without scruple or shame'. The writer was confident that an election petition would unseat Sir Daniel, but the cost would be £1200 to £1500, 'about double the sum spent by the Labour Party' in the election, and there was no guarantee that Walker would not have to fight the seat a second time. The editorial contrasted Walker's 'unsullied reputation in private life' and his record of public service

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1. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 23 Sept. 1905.

2. North Belfast

Sir D. Dixon (cons.) 4440

W. Walker (lab.) 3966

Majority 474

N.W., 16 Sept. 1905.

3. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 23 Sept. 1905.

with the sullied reputation and reactionary career of Dixon, 'this foe of the people'. It added that Walker believed in the 'Union between Great Britain and Ireland and', with a glance at Dixon's private life, 'in the union between one man and one wife, in spirit and fidelity'. It made no reference to the B.P.A. questions, nor did it attempt an analysis of voting figures. It ended with the assertion, 'Next time we will win'.

The north Belfast election had been followed closely in England. Some days after the declaration of the poll Pete Curran, the I.L.P. and Gasworkers' Union veteran and an original executive committee member of the L.R.C., wrote to the Daily News protesting at Walker's description of himself as a 'Unionist in politics' on the grounds that he violated the constitution of the L.R.C. He contended that Walker was in the same category as a candidate describing himself as a liberal or conservative, and defended his own home rule opinions by arguing that self-government for Ireland was 'essentially a Labour question', because its industrial resources would never be developed until the home rule question was settled once and for all.<sup>1</sup>

The executive committee of the A.S.R.S. supported Curran's objection and requested the L.R.C. to explain their endorsement of Walker as a 'Labour Unionist' candidate. Walker, however, did not lack defenders. Among the writers to the Daily News was T.R.J. of Belfast, who argued that 'the workmen who have been weaned from Conservatism in favour of Independent Labour representation are expected by Mr Curran to support without question, the Liberal Party's proposal

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1. Quoted in Belfast Labour Chronicle, 23 Sept. 1905.

known as Home Rule'.<sup>1</sup> The Chronicle in the same issue announced that the L.R.C. executive committee had 'come to the sensible finding that Mr Walker stood as a Labour Candidate only' and remarked that Curran might never have written his letter if he had not been a candidate for Jarrow, where there was a strong Irish nationalist vote.

The Daily News controversy was repeated in the Belfast trades council. One meeting was abandoned after an excited delegate had declared that the Belfast press, 'rotten to the core', was responsible for Walker's defeat, and, when he had been ruled out of order, accused some delegates of being rotten trade unionists who instead of voting for Walker on the day of the poll had been running around looking for drink.<sup>2</sup> In October a calmer discussion took place on a circular from the trades council's representative on the L.R.C. (J.R.Clynes of the Oldham trades council). Clynes's defence of Walker was a reply to an attack in the Manchester Evening News. A motion to mark the letter read was defeated in favour of an amendment to refer it to the executive committee, which could draw up a resolution and give its views on the matter to the next L.R.C. conference.<sup>3</sup>

The controversy over the phrase 'Unionist in politics', was renewed on the arrival of a letter from the Rotherham trades council asking for the Belfast council's opinion. After a lengthy debate the closure was applied and an amend-

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1. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 30 Sept. 1905. 'T.R.J.' was Thomas Johnson, later a leading supporter of home rule, president and secretary of the Irish T.U.C. and a leader of the Irish Labour Party in the Dáil.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Sept. 1905.

3. Ibid., 21 Oct. 1905.

ment, to give the decisions of the L.R.C. executive committee as the opinion of council, carried against a motion to mark the letter read.<sup>1</sup> Later in the same month (November) John Murphy as secretary moved a resolution for the L.R.C. conference declaring that Walker had stood solely as a labour candidate; after some objections that it had not been discussed by the executive committee it was carried by 18 votes to 12. At the same meeting a stiff debate took place on a proposal to add the nationalist to the liberal and conservative parties as banned organisations in the L.R.C. candidates' pledge. A delegate's plea that the change would be disastrous to the labour party as the nationalists were the best friends of labour in the house of commons was disregarded and the motion carried by 22 votes to 9. The balance was redressed when by 29 votes to 8, the unionist party was also proscribed.<sup>2</sup>

The general election of 1906 caused the L.R.C. conference to be held in London instead of Belfast. By the casting vote of the chairman (William Walker) the council decided to send one delegate (the secretary) to London. He was allowed, at his discretion, to drop the resolution affirming that Walker had stood as a labour candidate only.<sup>2</sup>

At the London conference John Murphy withdrew the resolution on Walker, but moved the council's amendment to the party pledge.<sup>3</sup> He disclaimed any intention to bar co-operation,

1. B.T.C. minutes, 18 Nov. 1905.

2. Ibid., 25 Jan., 1 Feb. 1906.

3. Clause II. Object:

To secure by united action the election to Parliament of candidates promoted in the first instance by an affiliated Society or Societies in the constituency who undertake to form or join a distinct group in Parliament, with its own Whips and its own

wishing merely to declare labour's independence. 'They did not regard Home Rule in the North of Ireland as being a Labour question.'<sup>1</sup> Murphy was supported by Charles Darcus, the Belfast T.A. delegate, and by J. Jones, a Liverpool Irish stone mason. Jones, though he proclaimed himself a home ruler ('not only for Ireland, but for every other country'), denounced labour 'hobnobbing' with the Irish party, which he said contained some most reactionary men. James Sexton, the secretary of the N.U.D.L., countered by quoting the support given by the Irish nationalist M.P.s to the Trades Disputes bill, and thought that they could leave it to the labour men 'in the Irish Party to work out the salvation of that party'.

The last speakers were two Belfast delegates; Joseph Glennon (a coachmaker) described the Belfast trades council's amendment as 'absurd and ridiculous', more especially as the council by resolution had supported at least one nationalist candidate in Belfast at the general election. Walker, present as an A.S.C. and J. delegate, scouted the idea that the nationalist M.P.s were disinterested in travelling to London to vote for the Trades Disputes bill. Dozens of liberals -

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policy on Labour questions, to abstain strictly from identifying themselves with or promoting the interests of any section of the Liberal or Conservative parties, and not to oppose any other candidate recognised by this committee. All such candidates shall pledge themselves to accept this constitution, to abide by the decisions of the Group in carrying out the aim of this constitution, and to appear before their constituencies under the title of Labour candidates only.  
Labour Representation Committee, sixth annual report, p. 50.

1. The debate is given in the same report, pp. 50 ff.

had not the whole of the facts before them in making their decision, he gave it as his opinion that Walker should not have answered the questions, as they had no connection with

and Tories - did the same. Support would be forthcoming in proportion to Labour's independence.

They must remember that the bulk of the men from whom they must draw their recruits in Ulster and in Lancashire were Tories, but how were they going to do that if it could be said that the Labour movement was open to an alliance with the Nationalist Party. That party had men in its ranks true on Labour questions, and they wanted those men to come out of that Party into their Party - the Internationalist Party (cheers).

The amendment was carried with only a few dissentients. On the following day Sexton moved a further amendment that L.R.C. candidates should not 'include in their election addresses any expression of political faith other than that of the Labour Party'. He would have withdrawn his amendment, he said bitterly, had it not been that on the previous evening one had been adopted 'in order to accommodate the peculiar morals of Belfast'. When a delegate asked if there were no peculiar morals at Liverpool as well, he replied that they were bad enough, but he drew the line at Belfast. He went on to complain that while Will Thorne was not endorsed for South West Ham because he was a socialist, Walker could proclaim himself a 'Unionist in politics' and be 'whitewashed by the Executive'. The conference, however, was not prepared to reverse the previous day's decision and Sexton's amendment was lost.

There was curiously little comment on the B.P.A. questions in the trades council, though the explanation may be that any prolonged discussion of them might have disrupted the organisation. Hugh McManus, speaking on the Rotherham trades council letter did, however, refer to them. Arguing that the L.R.C. had not the whole of the facts before them in making their decision, he gave it as his opinion that Walker should not have answered the questions, as they had no connection with

labour.<sup>1</sup> The chairman ruled that the points raised by McManus were irrelevant, as the L.R.C. had been concerned solely with Walker's views on home rule. Comment, however, came from outside. 'Stargazer' in Devlin's Northern Star, considered that Walker had been responsible for his own defeat.

Mr Walker might have counted on the Nationalist vote had he been a genuine labour candidate, professing merely Unionist proclivities, for, as between two Unionists the Nationalist Party ever supports the more tolerant and progressive of the two, especially if he happens to be a Labour candidate. But Mr Walker showed himself to be not only a violent Unionist, but a rabid bigot to boot.

In a word, Sir Daniel Dixon played his cards admirably, completely outwitting the Labour nominee. He refused to be badgered into signing the blasphemous declaration consisting of a series of questions put to him by the Belfast Protestant Association of bigoted guttersnipes.<sup>2</sup>

One further reference was made to the questions. When the council discussed Walker's renomination for the general election of 1906, Joseph Glennon, a coachmaker, opposed endorsement because he (Walker)

had entered into political and religious entanglements from which their candidates should be absolutely free. He had dragged himself through the party mire of the city up to the neck, and this would be laid at the door of trade unionism.<sup>3</sup>

George Greig pleaded for solidarity among trade unionists, saying that they should not fasten upon one mistake in a heated election campaign. His plea was accepted and Walker was endorsed by a vote of 36 to 2.

1. B.T.C. minutes, 2 Nov. 1905.

2. Northern Star, 23 Sept. 1905.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 16 Dec. 1905. Glennon was elected to the executive committee of the council in 1906 and 1907.



## vii. The Three-leaved Shamrock

A triple alliance of liberal, labour and Irish nationalist voters helped to determine the outcome of the general election of 1906 in Great Britain. A not dissimilar alliance, looser, less public and with local variations, operated against the unionists in Ireland, especially in the north. In Belfast three of the four divisions were contested. Sloan defended his south Belfast seat, Walker again fought north Belfast and Joseph Devlin, secretary of the United Irish League and Grand Master of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin), left his safe Kilkenny seat in an attempt to win back west Belfast, which had been in unionist hands since Thomas Sexton lost it in 1892. One of his meetings was addressed by Hugh McManus and attended by protestants as well as catholics. Its chairman, John Rooney, was so moved by the honour of presiding over a mixed audience that he had recourse to a Patrician symbol:

He sincerely hoped their efforts would result in the blending of Orange and Green on Thursday next, and that it would be a three-leaved victory. They had a shamrock with the name of Devlin on it, and he trusted that next Friday morning it would bear three names - Devlin, Walker, Sloan (three cheers).<sup>1</sup>

The trinity was indeed endorsed by the trades council, but not en bloc. Before coming to any decision the council sent to candidates in several constituencies a list of eighteen questions on their attitude to trade union demands (the amendment of acts governing workmen's compensation and trades

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1. Northern Star, 20 Jan. 1906. The meeting was held in the National Club, Berry St. on Sunday, January 14. The badge consisted of a shamrock with a photograph of Devlin in the centre. Courtesy of John Jamison.

disputes, an eight-hour working day) and matters of more general interest such as old-age pensions, the Chinese labour ordinance, housing, temperance and poor-law reform, adult suffrage and payment of M.P.s.<sup>1</sup> In north Belfast Sir Daniel Dixon was not troubled with the list, and Walker was formally re-endorsed. In south Belfast little time was wasted. A motion expressing support for Sloan had been moved in May 1905, when it seemed likely that he would be opposed by Dr Henry O'Neill, who had done much for public health in Belfast. Opinion at that time had been divided among supporters of both candidates. An amendment to defer consideration of the whole matter for two months had been carried narrowly, by 21 votes to 18. Both John Murphy and Joseph Mitchell had objected that endorsement of Sloan would be inconsistent with the spirit of independent labour representation and of the non-sectarian nature of the trades council, 'which was composed of delegates of different faiths'; Murphy however had added that 'the Council should not commit itself to the support of Mr Sloan unless they received something like an equivalent in the North'.<sup>2</sup> In January 1906 Sloan's conservative opponent was Lord Arthur Hill, who did not reply to the council's questionnaire. Sloan answered yes to all the questions but two, and even on those he kept an 'open mind'.<sup>3</sup> The council unanimously decided to support him. No other course was possible in view of the support Walker had received from Sloan's followers in September 1905 and expected to receive again.

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1. See appendix 11 for the list of questions.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 4 May 1905.

3. Ibid., 13 Jan. 1906.

The situation in west Belfast was more complicated. The candidates were Captain J.R.Smyly, unionist, Joseph Devlin, nationalist, and A.M. Carlisle, independent. Carlisle, the general superintendent of Harland and Wolff, the Queen's Island shipbuilding firm, had plainly expressed his hostility to the official unionists at the time of Sloan's election.<sup>1</sup> When Francis Joseph Biggar, protestant nationalist, solicitor, and vulgarisateur of Irish history, suggested to him that he should stand, he welcomed the opportunity to inflict further damage on the unionists. West Belfast was a constituency where the electorate was almost evenly divided between nationalist and unionist, and where the intervention of a third candidate could subtract the handful of votes needed to throw the election either way. Biggar acted as Carlisle's election agent and arranged the formalities for his shadow campaign.<sup>2</sup>

All three candidates sent replies to the trades council questionnaire. Smyly considered that his views on public questions were adequately represented in his election address and speeches. Alexander Carlisle's answer was also limited to a sentence, though an engagingly frank one:

If returned to Parliament you may rest assured that my actions will not be against the interests of the working man or of the poor, and although you and many trade societies

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1. See appendix 9 (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order), p. 438, n. 1.

2. Biggar was sympathetic to the incipient Sinn Féin organisations such as the Dungannon Clubs, rather than to the official Irish nationalists. As Carlisle would have been mobbed he held no meetings; instead, Biggar arranged an enormous poster display and the 'delivery' of a certain number of votes. Interview with Bulmer Hobson, who was in constant touch with Biggar at this period.

16 Jan. 1906. Attendances were normally such Biggar, C.G. 25

may have thought that I was on the wrong lines during the last quarter of a century, in the management of the men, I can assure you that anything I did was, in my opinion, for the best interests of the working men and the firm with which I was connected.<sup>1</sup>

Devlin replied fully to all eighteen questions and was able to show that he had already voted in favour of a number of them. In view of his dependence on the support of the licensed trade, his answer on temperance reform was ingenious, 'I consider that the proper housing of the working classes is a real solution of the temperance question'. His replies were so satisfactory that James Dyson, while admitting himself 'to be a strong Conservative' could not withhold his approval of such a 'strong Labour programme'.

The reactions of the delegates at the small meeting<sup>2</sup> revealed the political strains within the council. One delegate moved support for Smyly, but could find no second-er, for the unionist candidate's reply was too chilly for all but the most ardent conservatives. A motion of support for Devlin was then moved. An amendment to publish the replies and let the electors judge for themselves was ruled out of order because the circular to candidates promised a decision. A second amendment, to substitute Carlisle's name for Devlin's, resulted in a tie of eight votes each, and it needed a further vote before Devlin won by ten votes to nine.

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1. The replies of all candidates were considered at a special meeting of the trades council. B.T.C. minutes, 13 Jan. 1906.

2. Many delegates were taking part in the trade union demonstration, a regular feature of Walker's elections, or working in the north Belfast constituency. Letter of John Murphy to A.M. Carlisle, B.T.C. minutes, 13 Jan. and I.N., 16 Jan. 1906. Attendances were normally much bigger, e.g. at

In the 1906 general election a number of opposition candidates appeared in hitherto peaceful unionist constituencies. They were dubbed 'Russellites' by the unionist press on the convenient, if not always accurate ground that their politics were those of T.W.Russell. It was in this election that the member for south Tyrone made his first appearance as an independent unionist; he later became a liberal home ruler. One independent (R.G.Glending) defeated the unionist candidate in north Antrim, where the newly formed Independent Orange Order led by Sloan and R. Lindsay Crawford had attracted a larger following than the official order.<sup>1</sup> Had it not been for an error in his nomination papers, Lindsay Crawford would have carried the attack as far as south county Dublin, where he proposed standing against the unionist Walter Long, Irish chief secretary.<sup>2</sup> Seven 'Russellite' candidates, as well as Russell himself, fought in the general election. All contested county constituencies, three in Antrim, two in Down, one in Londonderry and one in Fermanagh. In north Tyrone a liberal candidate, Sergeant Dodd, defeated his unionist opponent.

In Belfast the open anti-unionist alliance consisted of nationalist, labour and independent unionist forces. But

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a meeting to consider the 1906 municipal elections, (B.T.C. minutes, 20 Jan.1906) at least 64 were present. In the same letter Murphy gave the following details: the motion to support Smiley lacked a seconder, the motion to endorse Devlin was carried by ten votes to nine, the recommendation of Sloan for south Belfast was unanimous.

1. Sloan spoke in support of Glending at election meetings and the Rev. D.D.Boyle, Grand Chaplain of the order, accompanied him at the counting of the votes. B.N.-L., 29 Jan.1906.
2. Northern Star, 27 Jan. 1906.

it also extended beyond the city, more tenuous and less effective. The Belfast trades council sent its questionnaire to candidates in three neighbouring constituencies (east Antrim, north and east Down). None of the official unionist candidates replied and the answers of their 'Russellite' opponents earned them the council's support.<sup>1</sup> All three, however, were defeated. Though other constituencies were beyond the reach of the council, the sympathies of at least the independent orange delegates were on the side of the 'Russellites'.<sup>2</sup>

In the second attempt to win north Belfast Walker did not repeat his gaffe in answering B.P.A. questions; (it appears indeed that Sloan's supporters were not anxious to lose possible labour or nationalist votes by asking them). In fact he made an effort to regain lost ground by declaring at one of his meetings that 'he was neither a bigoted Protestant nor a Roman Catholic; he was not ashamed of his Protestantism, but he was not a bigot, and he wanted to get every man equal rights'.<sup>3</sup> The Northern Star in return made no reference to 'bigoted guttersnipes'; instead, it reported its founder's description of the three contests in Belfast as 'a fight of the workers and toilers against in-

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 13 Jan. 1906.

2. R.G. Glendinning owed his success in north Antrim to independent orange support. Dr S.R. Keightley in south Londonderry, denounced as an ex-orangeman who had been only a year in the old order, appears to have joined the new order. He was a member of the platform party both at the Shawe-Taylor meeting on 16 December 1904, and at a lecture by Lindsay Crawford on 'Democracy and Nationalism' in November 1906. B.N.-L., 6 Nov. 1906.

3. N.W., 4 Jan. 1906.

trigues, political machines and confiscation'.<sup>1</sup> In the same election speech Devlin promised that if Sloan and Walker were elected, 'whatever differences I have with them - and the differences will be as vital in future on fundamental questions as before - I shall be glad to cooperate with them in everything that can appeal to the cause of labour'.

Walker in his election address outlined a programme covering the points submitted by the trades council to other candidates. He also included demands for financial reform to prevent Ireland being taxed beyond her capacity, economy in government spending and the administration of primary, secondary and technical education by popularly elected bodies. For the contentious phrase 'a Unionist in politics', he substituted a no less explicit declaration: 'As you are fully aware, I am Firmly Opposed to Home Rule, or any measure tending to weaken or impair the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland'.<sup>2</sup> The Northern Whig, in a review of prospects early in the campaign, affected to believe that Walker's statement represented a ~~weaken-~~ing of his unionist convictions, that the change had been made in deference to the views of the L.R.C., and that it would lose him votes.<sup>3</sup> On this occasion there were no British labour speakers to assist him, but he had good prospects of getting a full nationalist vote, which had been divided in the previous election. The extent of the collaboration between labour and nationalist was disclosed two years later by Joseph Mitchell; he claimed that prominent

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1. Northern Star, 20 Jan. 1906.

2. 'Address of Councillor William Walker (Labour Candidate)', dated 1 Jan. 1906.

3. N.W., 8 Jan. 1906.

United Irish League members had asked him to use his influence with protestant working men to secure votes for Devlin, and given him 200 tickets to distribute on the Shankill road (a protestant working-class area in west Belfast) for Devlin's Ulster hall meeting. W. J. Murray added that he too had used his influence on Devlin's behalf.<sup>1</sup>

In the north Belfast by-election of September 1905 there had been a poll of eighty-two per cent. At the general election the poll reached eighty-four per cent on a new register containing 1100 additional voters.<sup>2</sup> Walker, with substantial nationalist support, increased his vote by over 650, but Sir Daniel Dixon, sparing no efforts financial and otherwise, pushed up his own by 500, winning with a reduced majority of 291.<sup>3</sup>

The Belfast trades council offered hearty congratulations to their chairman on his 'vigorous and energetic fight ... to rescue the Parliamentary seat from the hands of the enemies of labour' and considered the 'splendid poll indicative of a glorious victory on the next occasion!'<sup>4</sup>

1. N.W., 8 Jan. 1906.

2. B.E.T., 13 Jan. 1908. These disclosures were made after labour candidates and speakers had been pelted with rotten eggs and flour during municipal election meetings in Falls and Smithfield. Walker, who was one of the speakers, commented, 'If this is a sample of Home Rule, then God save us from it.'

3. 1905 register, 10,232, 1906 register, 11,385. N.W., 18 Jan. 1906.

4. North Belfast

Sir D. Dixon (cons.) 4907

W. Walker (lab.) 4616

Majority 291 N.W., B.N.-L., 19 Jan. 1906.

4. B.T.C. minutes, 20 Jan. 1906.



Walker himself, in an interview published in the Daily Mail, attributed his defeat to the success of the liberals in England. Their return to power had 'brought Home Rule into the arena' and made Belfast voters all the more anxious to return official unionists.<sup>1</sup> Walker's explanation was hardly correct, for it did not account for the defeat of the official unionist in south Belfast. In spite of the reduced unionist majority in 1906, the labour candidate's real opportunity had come four months earlier when there had been a hasty assembling of the unionist machine. It is possible that if Walker had then obtained a full nationalist vote, instead of losing a substantial portion of it by answering the B.P.A. questions, he would have fought the general election with the added prestige of being the sitting member.

To the bitterness of narrow defeat were added troubles arising from the aftermath of the contest. The trades council assumed financial responsibility for the legal costs which fell upon some of Walker's supporters involved in personation cases. It appealed to its affiliated unions for help, but received a dusty answer from those engaged in demarcation disputes with Walker.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Quoted in N.W., 22 Jan. 1906. Many election results had already been declared before polling day in north Belfast, and a liberal victory was not in doubt.

2. E.g. a postcard, with the postmark 21 May 1906, from an A.S.E. branch secretary: 'I am sorry to state that I have met with a very cold reception re subs. for personation cases owing to a little friction caused by an action of W.W. re demarcation of work between A.S.E. and A.S.C.J.'

The trades council paid £17. 10s. to Walker as a contribution to the expenses of the personation cases. Statement of account (March 7, 1906 to June 5, 1907) of the Belfast Labour Representation Committee in the account book of the Belfast trades council. It is not clear whether those involved had personated, or had wrongly charged others.

The other two leaves of the shamrock bore the names of Sloan and Devlin. The unionist campaign in Belfast had opened with a large demonstration on January 2 in the Ulster hall, which was decorated with union jacks, banners and mottoes bearing such legends as 'One Crown, one flag, one Parliament'.<sup>1</sup> Sloan's supporters showed scant respect for their surroundings, greeted warnings about the dangers of home rule with cries of 'It's a bogey', 'We've been gulled long enough', and interrupted the principal speakers continually.<sup>2</sup> Lord Arthur Hill, the unionist candidate in south Belfast, fared no better than his predecessor Dunbar-Buller, and was defeated by the same margin of over 800, which he asserted were nationalist votes. Sloan's supporters sang 'Derry's Walls' and cheered Alexander Boyd, who presided over the victory celebrations, when he said that the democracy of labour would have at least one representative in the house of commons.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to the intervention of Alexander Carlisle, adroit intrigue and a first-class political machine, Devlin won back west Belfast for the nationalists by a majority of 16 votes, in a total poll of 8,413.<sup>4</sup> Carlisle, who had polled

1. B.N.-L., 3 Jan. 1906.

2. Northern Star, 6 Jan. 1906.

3. N.W., 20 Jan. 1906.

4. West Belfast

J. Devlin (nat.)	4,138
Capt. J.R.Smiley (lib.unionist)	4,122
Rt.Hon.J.A.M.Carlisle (indep.lib.unionist)	153

Majority 16

B.N.-L., 20 Jan.1906.

153 vital votes, was held responsible by unionists for the loss of the seat, and his effigy as a latter-day Lundy was borne in procession and burnt by Arthur Trew and his followers, who for good measure stoned the windows of the Independent Orange hall in Great Victoria Street.<sup>1</sup>

#### viii. The Growth of Socialist Organisations

The activity generated by Walker's elections was responsible for the birth of some new political organisations. During the autumn of 1905 a labour club<sup>2</sup> was formed in Duncairn ward, which Walker represented in the Belfast corporation. A month after the general election of 1906 Walker's election committee leased the premises, at Tudor Place, which had been used as election headquarters, and founded the North Belfast Labour Club.<sup>3</sup> The club's activi-

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1. N.W., 20 Jan. 1906. Lundy, the faint-hearted governor who proposed to surrender Derry to Jacobite troops in 1689, is the orange prototype of traitor. Arthur Trew was the leader of the B.P.A. until he was displaced by Sloan. See appendix Q (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order). One of the unionist election posters showed Carlisle opening gates to allow Devlin and his followers to enter and bore the inscription, 'A Modern Lundy'.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 21 Oct. 1905. A delegate asked if the council intended to put forward a candidate for Duncairn in the January municipal elections as 'the new club there' wished to be informed of the council's plans.

3. R. McClung, *Reminiscences*, p. 17 and card 11. McClung implies that both clubs were founded at the same time and states that their period of existence was from March 1906 to September 1907. It gives the officers of the North Belfast Labour Club as S. Irvine (chairman), J. Bush (vice-chairman), Joseph Mitchell (secretary), R. McClung (treasurer). Samuel Hazlitt gives a list of these labour clubs at this period, Duncairn, North Belfast and Greencastle. Interview with S. Hazlitt.

ties included two large meetings in Belfast, the first addressed by G.H.Roberts and Philip Snowden, both British labour M.P.s, and Snowden's wife, Ethel Snowden, the second by Pete Curran.<sup>1</sup>

The labour clubs were primarily electoral bodies concentrated in the north parliamentary division of Belfast and composed of election workers and followers of Walker. Two other small organisations, the Belfast Ethical Society and the Belfast Socialist Society, with aims of a more general propagandist nature were in existence at about the same time. The Ethical Society, run by James H. Gilliland and W.M. Knox, sponsored discussions and lectures during the winters of 1905 and 1906 in a little hall in York street.<sup>2</sup> Both Gilliland and Knox had been its delegates to the inaugural meeting of the Belfast L.R.C. in 1903, and both had been leaders in the Clarion Fellowship which absorbed the remnants of the Belfast branch of the I.L.P. when it broke up at the approach of the South African war.<sup>3</sup> Knox's record of activity in the labour and socialist movements went back to 1891, when he secretary of a short-lived local Fabian society.<sup>4</sup>

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1. McClung, loc. cit., and B.T.C. minutes, 6 Sept. 1906. The first meeting was held in the Y.M.C.A. hall on October 11. According to McClung the hall, which holds 2,500, was filled on both occasions at a charge of sixpence per head. Other meetings were held in Ballymena and Lisburn.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with Samuel Hazlitt.

4. See appendix VI (The Fabian Society in Ireland).

5. McClung, op. cit., p. 19. The cross-channel speaker was Chapman.

6. Belfast Socialist Society pamphlet in the possession of T.R.Johnson, who stated in an interview with the present writer that the society profited by a Christian socialist

The Belfast Socialist society was formed in 1905 by Thomas Johnson (T.R.Johnson). In a letter to the Belfast Labour Chronicle he referred to the cry 'Beware of Socialism' raised by the press during Walker's first election and invited those socialists willing to support 'an active propaganda of their principles' to attend an organising meeting.<sup>1</sup> The society was formed in October 7 with about seventy members. Alexander Stewart was elected chairman and T.R.Johnson secretary.<sup>2</sup> After some time the members decided to conduct open-air propaganda and engaged a cross-channel speaker through an advertisement in Keir Hardie's paper, the Labour Leader. The 'week's mission' consisted of six meetings at the custom-house steps, the first to be held there since labour speakers had been driven away by Arthur Trew's followers in the eighteen-nineties.<sup>3</sup> After this new departure the 'Steps' became once more a centre for labour and socialist propaganda.

The regular meetings of the Belfast Socialist Society were held on Saturday evenings in a hall in Garfield Street. A catholic selection of pamphlets was on sale, Henry George's Progress and Poverty, Robert Blatchford's Britain for the British, Ramsay MacDonald's Socialism and Society, Fabian Essays and H.M. Hyndman's Economics of socialism.<sup>4</sup> McClung

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1. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 30 Sept, 1905.

2. Ibid., 7 Oct. 1905; McClung, Reminiscences, p. 15. Other prominent members were W.J.Murray, Joseph Hayes, Joseph Evans, Harry Stockman and James Baird. Walker was a member but rarely attended.

3. McClung, op. cit., p. 16. The cross-channel speaker was - Chapman.

4. Belfast Socialist Society pamphlet in the possession of T.R.Johnson, who stated in an interview with the present writer that the society profited by a Christian socialist

records his impressions of the society's meetings as follows: 'Looking back now after a lapse of years it seems to me that no matter what subject was under discussion, someone always managed to get in a speech about the class war'.<sup>1</sup> Divergent reformist and marxist views among the members caused the secession in 1908 of a number led by Hugh Orr, who formed the Communist club, which met during its short existence in a room in 109 Donegall street, on the same floor as the Clarion Fellowship.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1907 three branches of the I.L.P. were formed in Belfast. The North Belfast and Duncairn Labour clubs were the nucleus of the corresponding I.L.P. branches, and the Belfast Socialist Society became the Belfast Central I.L.P.; later, branches were started in the parliamentary divisions of south and east Belfast. A federal council, with Tom Henderson as its first chairman, was elected and charged with joint propaganda work.<sup>3</sup>

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current running at the time. The society ran a meeting in the Ulster hall addressed by a congregational minister, Rev. R.T.Campbell, who was prominent in the English movement.

1. McClung, op. cit., p. 15.

2. The Communist club merged with the Clarion Fellowship, which in turn became a purely social club. Interview with F.C.Carson.

3. McClung, op. cit., p.21; interview with Samuel Hazlitt. The federal council was formed at least as early as January 1908, when a lecture on 'Land values' was advertised under its auspices. B.E.T., 18 Jan. 1908. Tom Henderson, a joiner in Workman Clark's shipyard, was expelled in July 1912 when socialists and catholics were driven from their employment. He became one of the Clydeside labour M.P.s in the nineteen-twenties.

Clarkson's account of the Belfast Socialist Society is incorrect in a number of details. He suggests (pp. 349-50) that after the demise of the Belfast branch in the eighteen-nineties 'as the Belfast Socialist Party, the handful of

## ix. North Belfast: Walker's Third Round

The year 1906 was marked by frequent quarrels between Walker and other members of the Belfast trades council. Walker did not stand for any office or for the executive committee at the beginning of 1907, and George Greig, the successor to Edward McInnes as Belfast N.A.U.L. organiser, was elected president. In January 1907, however, all the labour candidates were defeated in the municipal elections, and differences appeared less acute in face of the common disaster.

Further encouragement to unity came from the conference of the British Labour Party, held later in the same month and presided over by J.J. Stephenson, a member of the general executive council of the A.S.E. Stephenson was a Belfast man by birth and had been one of the I.L.P. pioneers in the city during the eighteen-nineties. Walker himself was elected to the executive of the British Labour Party<sup>1</sup> and spoke in company with Keir Hardie, David Shackleton, Arthur Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald, all M.P.s, at

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propagandists lived on'; the society was not founded until 1905. On p. 213 he states 'in 1905, the Belfast Socialist Party was carried over into the Independent Labour Party, over the protests of the Irish Ireland element'. The merger did not take place until September 1907. There were no protests from an 'Irish - Ireland element'. Interviews with F.C. Carson, William Boyd, J. Jamison and T.R. Johnson.

1. [British] Labour Party, seventh annual report (1907), p. 59. Walker, who was present as an A.S.C. and J. delegate, was elected to the trade union section of the executive committee.

a demonstration in the Ulster hall, an honour which gave much satisfaction to his supporters. Despite the municipal defeats a week earlier Walker made an optimistic claim when proposing a vote of thanks to Hardie.

The old hostility towards the exponents of Socialism had passed away in Belfast, and in no city in the empire could they witness such signs of progress. They were bigoted by nature and disposition, and they carried into the new movement the old instinct of keen antagonism to those opposed to them. It was because of that instinct that he ventured to say that within the next ten years Belfast would leave Bradford and other towns far behind in regard to the type of men they sent, not only to the corporation, but to the Imperial Parliament (applause).<sup>1</sup>

When Keir Hardie rose to reply the large audience stood and cheered enthusiastically, waving hats and handkerchiefs. The veteran leader, moved by the reception, declared that the meeting was a most remarkable one, and recalled the hostility shown him on his first visit to Belfast, when he was prevented from reaching the custom-house steps. Echoing Walker's remarks, he declared that 'political intolerance and religious bigotry were going down before the Labour movement, and the people were going back to the old religion - the religion of humanity'.<sup>1</sup>

The death of Sir Daniel Dixon shortly afterwards provided the occasion for testing the accuracy of these pronouncements. Before the election a new factor, or more accurately a new version of an old one, altered the political situation. This was an offer by the liberals, who now possessed an absolute majority in the house of commons, of a devolution

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1. N.W., 25 Jan. 1907.



scheme embodied in an Irish Council bill.<sup>1</sup> It fell far short of home rule demands, and though John Redmond did not condemn the bill out of hand, he gave it a very cool welcome on its introduction. In May a nationalist convention rejected the proposal, which was abandoned by the government shortly afterwards. The bill was introduced on March 7 by the Irish chief secretary, Augustus Birrel, and though the proposed Irish council was to have only strictly limited powers, it awakened memories of the Dunraven devolution scheme of 1904-5<sup>2</sup> and revived unionist fears.

When Dixon died, Walker's supporters assumed that he would once again contest north Belfast, but he at first refused.<sup>3</sup> When he accepted nomination he did so reluctantly,<sup>4</sup> for his municipal defeat in Shankill ward (which had polled strongly for him in 1906) and the renewed home rule threat were unpromising portents. To support him the trades council

1. The council was to consist of about 90 members, three-quarters elected and the rest nominated, with the chief secretary an ex-officio member. It was to control a number of Irish departments (those concerned with local government, agriculture, education, public works and the congested districts) and have a special fund created out of money from the British exchequer. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party, p.115.

2. See appendix 9 (The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order) p. 446, n. 1.

3. The Northern Whig (15 Mar. 1907) stated that Walker was unlikely to fight and that his refusal had taken his sympathisers aback. His wife had died earlier in the month after a long illness, and the trades council had passed a vote of sympathy with him. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Mar. 1907.

4. 'He did not think he was saying too much when he informed that audience [at an election meeting in the Ulster hall] that his own personal inclinations were absolutely adverse to the fight.' N.W., 23 Mar. 1907.

summoned a special meeting of delegates and trade union officials. W.J.Murray, who had himself quarrelled with Walker, appealed to the meeting to sink all differences in the common effort, and moved a motion, seconded by Alexander Boyd, pledging assistance. The motion was carried nem. con. and forty enrolled themselves as workers.<sup>1</sup>

Once again the A.S.C. and J. assumed responsibility for election expenses, the L.R.C. undertaking to contribute one quarter of the total amount.<sup>2</sup> Walker on this occasion had the help of a team of British labour M.P.s led by Keir Hardie.<sup>3</sup> The rise in the political temperature of Belfast made him all the more anxious to emphasise his opposition to home rule. Speaking in the Ulster hall on March 22, with Hardie and W.T.Wilson, he declared he was 'personally totally opposed to a Parliament in Dublin', but qualified it by saying that he was not afraid if there were such a parliament 'the Roman Catholics in his society would cut his throat'.<sup>4</sup> Hardie assured the audience that on questions 'outside labour - such as Disestablishment, Home Rule and other kindred topics', each labour party member was free to vote as he pleased - unless he (Hardie) were converted, he

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1. B.T.C. minutes, 21 Mar. 1907.

2. N.W., 19 Mar. 1907.

3. Others were George N. Barnes, W.T.Wilson, G.H.Roberts, Arthur Henderson, Will Crooks and Ramsay MacDonald. Councillor Alfred Gould of Hull also assisted in the campaign. Walker's membership of the executive committee of the British Labour Party accounted for the large number of visiting speakers.

4. N.W., 23 Mar. 1907.

would support a home rule bill and equally Walker could vote against it. Two other British M.P.s, G.N.Barnes and W.T.Wilson, were more definite in their assurances a fortnight later, when both of them made light of home rule fears at an open-air meeting. Wilson denied that the Labour Party was committed to home rule and Barnes went so far as to say that the people of England and Scotland had made up their minds that home rule was unattainable.<sup>1</sup> The electorate was offered a further British labour view on the constitutional question when Arthur Henderson spoke at a second Ulster hall meeting of preserving 'one unbroken imperial family' and restricting home rule to local matters.<sup>2</sup>

The unionist candidate in the election was G.S.Clark, of Workman, Clark, the second Belfast shipbuilding firm. Like his predecessor he spent money lavishly on the election. According to the Northern Star, 'The Old Gang are sparing no pains or expense ... Well equipped with the sinews of war, the North Division has been utterly overwhelmed with the output of flaring posters and gorgeous handbills'.<sup>3</sup> The children were not forgotten, tiny union jacks were distributed among them and they were instructed in the various unionist committee rooms to shout 'Vote for Clark. Down with the traitors!'<sup>3</sup> When Walker offered to debate publicly with his opponent, Clark refused and repeated in his reply earlier charges that the British Labour Party was under Irish nationalist influence.<sup>4</sup>

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1. N.W., 6 Apr. 1907.

2. Ibid., 16 Apr. 1907.

3. Northern Star, 20 Apr. 1907.

4. N.W., 5 Apr. 1907.

Though the home rule card was the strongest in the unionist pack, it was not the only one played. Walker endeavoured to meet criticism of the 'collectivist tone'<sup>1</sup> of the 1907 British Labour conference by citing the moderator of the presbyterian General Assembly, who had urged the necessity of co-operation and brotherhood, in Walker's view qualities which constituted 'the essence of socialism'.<sup>2</sup> In the same speech he complained of the difficulty of knowing what a unionist was. 'Unionism seemed to be synonymous with Protestantism in the old days of 1886, but at present they found Orange lodges passing votes of confidence in Roman Catholic candidates for parliament.'<sup>3</sup>

Neither criticism of the voting records of unionist M.P.s, nor opposition to the establishment of a catholic university,<sup>4</sup> were sufficient to win over unionist electors. Ramsay MacDonald and the candidate addressed a dinner-hour meeting at Workman, Clark's shipyard, but were unable to repeat their 1905 success. A boilermaker challenged the claim of a trade union official, John Hill (who had

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1. N.W., 19 Mar. 1907.

2. Ibid., 23 Mar. 1907.

3. Walker's reference was to Denis Henry K.C., who stood several times as a unionist candidate in north Tyrone, a constituency held from 1895 by a liberal relying on a combination of nationalist catholic and protestant home rule votes.

4. Much of the controversy over the reorganisation of Irish university education between 1903 and 1908 centred on the desire of the Irish catholic hierarchy to have the former Catholic University College, Dublin, subsidised out of public funds and the mainly unionist opposition to it. Successive schemes (one by Lord Dunraven) were rejected by the various interested parties until 1908, when the Irish Universities Act was passed, making Queen's College, Belfast a separate university, excluding Trinity College, Dublin, and

spoken at a previous meeting) to represent the executive committee of his society, and the following day held a shipyard meeting in support of Clark.<sup>1</sup>

Walker's campaign concluded with the customary demonstration organised by the trades council. The unions paraded through the city bearing their banners and followed by a large but not altogether friendly crowd. Among the unions represented was the revived National Union of Dock Labourers led by its organiser, James Larkin, who had already begun the work which was to alter the whole basis and direction of Irish labour.<sup>2</sup> In a scuffle with a hostile section of the crowd the dockers' banner was torn, but the meeting place was reached without further incident.<sup>3</sup>

Larkin was one of the speakers, and he denounced those responsible for the attack on his union's banner. He welcomed the announcement by the management that both shipyards would be closed on polling day; it would enable the men to vote for the labour candidate. The time had come to strike a blow for trade unionism and their watchword should be 'Walker, London'.<sup>3</sup> Walker himself, conscious perhaps that he had neglected nationalist voters, made a final appeal to them, 'not because they were Catholics, but

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including the remaining university colleges (except the presbyterian Magee College, Derry) in a National University of Ireland. See T.W.Moody and J.C.Beckett, Queen's, Belfast, i. 353 - 61, 381 - 91.

1. N.W., 12, 13 Apr. 1907.

2. Credentials in favour of Larkin and four other delegates of the N.U.D.L. were received by the trades council early in April. B.T.C. minutes, 4 Apr. 1907. Larkin had begun his organising work in late January, when he attended the British Labour Party conference in Belfast.

3. B.N.-L., 17 Apr. 1907.

because they were democrats'. He alleged that the unionists had been angling secretly for their vote and had published a leaflet 'which stated that the persecution of the Church in France was due to men like himself (laughter).'<sup>1</sup>

On polling day an impressive number of unionist election workers ensured the maximum vote for Clark, aided by a transport fleet which included about 100 motor cars, an unusual sight at that time in Belfast.<sup>2</sup> When the poll was declared it showed a majority of over 1800 for Clark. He had raised Dixon's general election figure by 1100, while Walker had dropped 400.<sup>3</sup>

The 1907 fight was Walker's last attempt to win a parliamentary seat in Belfast. His prominence in the British Labour Party - he was elected to its executive four times between 1909 and 1911 - earned him an invitation to contest the Scottish constituency of Leith Burghs. He stood against

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1. N.W., 17 Apr. 1907. One anonymous pamphlet included the following sentence: 'Socialism has pillaged France's Church, broken up our Holy Images with Military Force, and put to the sword her Bishops and Clergy.' Editorial in I.N. (11 Apr. 1907) which denounced it as a forgery. The Irish News supported Walker on democratic grounds.

2. Ibid., 18 Apr. 1907.

3. North Belfast

G.S. Clark	(cons.)	6021
W. Walker	(lab.)	4194

Majority 1827

B.N.-L., 18 Apr. 1907.

a liberal and a tory in the first general election of 1910, but came last.<sup>1</sup>

The dissensions during 1906, and electoral defeats in 1907, lessened Walker's stature in the Irish labour movement. In his native city he still commanded a strong personal following, fought in two municipal elections and took part in the work of the local I.L.P. It was inevitable, however, that the loss of public office should reduce his influence, especially as he did not stand for any of the leading positions in the trades council. The work of the council was taken over by other delegates, the most important being D.R. Campbell, an insurance official. By the end of the decade Walker's opinions no longer prevailed, and though the council by resolution supported him in Leith Burghs, his choice of a Scottish constituency indicated that the former Belfast labour leader had transferred his interest to the British movement.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Leith Burghs

R.C. Munro-Ferguson	(lib.)	7146
Sir Robert Cranston	(cons.)	4540
W. Walker	(lab.)	2724

Majority 2606 B.N.-L., 22 Jan. 1910

Clarkson is incorrect in stating (p. 352) that Walker had accepted a government post and was therefore not available to contest north Belfast in January 1910. Walker did not become a representative of the national insurance commissioners until January 1912. See supra, p. 311.

2. Walker was elected vice-chairman of the British Labour Party at the 1911 conference. It is true that he fought a municipal seat in January 1911, but in his election address he described himself as 'The People's Candidate'. He made no mention of endorsement by any labour organisation (the Belfast trades council had endorsed him on January 5), stated that he had consented to contest the seat 'at the request of large numbers of the electors', and devoted most of the address to his past record as a councillor and poor law guardian. Election address dated 6 January, 1911.

## CONCLUSION

The populations of Ireland and Scotland in the opening years of the twentieth century were roughly equal, but the Scottish industrial labour force was three times as great as the Irish.<sup>1</sup> Though Irish skilled workers were more highly organised, in branches of British amalgamated unions or in viable local unions, disparity in the total numbers of trade unionists was such that it accounted for the slow growth of the Irish as compared with the Scottish T.U.C.<sup>2</sup> England, with its greater population and massive industrial force, presented an even sharper contrast.

Had there been no political complications to arrest development, the small proportion of skilled workers in the Irish population would still have afforded but a narrow basis for a strong trade union organisation. Belfast and Dublin, with the doubtful addition of Cork, were the only Irish towns of importance, and their trades councils and delegates as a consequence dominated the Irish T.U.C. The agricultural population was a poor source of recruitment, composed as it was of peasant proprietors, and a steadily diminishing number of labourers. A few scattered groups of rural workers, mainly labourers in country towns and surrounding districts, were enrolled in local trade and labour leagues which rarely reached a membership of more than a hundred or endured for more than a few years. Even in England agricultural unionism was weak,

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1. Supra, p. 16.

2. The Scottish T.U.C. was formed in 1897, three years after the Irish congress. In 1902 it had an affiliated membership of 128,000 as against the Irish T.U.C.'s 70,000. Ninth annual report, Irish T.U.C., p.36.



though the concentration of labourers on the larger English farms made organisation easier. The various attempts to form Irish agricultural labourers' unions from the eighteen-seventies onwards had all ended in failure.<sup>1</sup>

There remained the urban unskilled, potentially the biggest force but as yet unharnessed by the trade union and political labour movement. Weak local unions had existed before the great upsurge of the late eighteen-eighties in England. New unions, the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, the National Union of Dock Labourers, the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers, spread to Ireland and for a couple of years had some success. The employers' counter-offensive was but one of the factors that ended the unions' growth or even their existence. In Belfast, where employment prospects were brightest, the N.U.D.L. was destroyed by press attacks on Michael McKeown, its local organiser, for taking part in a home rule campaign in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> In 1905 the strongest general union, the N.A.U.L., had only 1600 members in its seven branches.<sup>3</sup> In Dublin unemployment was heavy and organisation consequently difficult. The Gasworkers' Union disintegrated, the Irish National Labour Union, a federal organisation with branches in Dublin and Cork, had a jurisdictional dispute with the N.U.D.L. and after 1900 broke up into its constituent parts;<sup>4</sup> the Dublin branches of the N.U.D.L. in turn disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

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1. J.W.Boyle, 'The rural labourer', in Threshold, iii, no. 1, 34 (Spring 1959).

2. Interview with Seán McKeown, son of Michael McKeown.

3. Belfast Labour Chronicle, 9 Dec.1905. Probably an inflated figure. Seven branches were affiliated to the Belfast trades council on less than 1000 members in 1906. Dues book of the Belfast trades council, pp. 37-42, 81.

4. Emmet J. Larkin, James Larkin and the Irish labour movement, pp.112-13.

5. There were sporadic attendances of one or two delegates of

The position was no better in Cork, Derry or the smaller towns. A motion debated at the Limerick (1896) conference of the Irish T.U.C. instructed the incoming parliamentary committee to inquire into the wages of unskilled labour and the existing degree of organisation, and to circulate a scheme for unionisation three months before the 1897 congress to districts supplying information. Several delegates complained of the exodus from congress during the debate, but to no avail, for though the motion was passed it was not implemented.<sup>1</sup>

Three problems faced the leaders of the Irish working class in 1906: the organisation of the unskilled, the 'nationalisation' of trade unions, and political action. No systematic attempt had been made to deal with the first problem, either by the Irish T.U.C. or by the few trades councils.<sup>2</sup> Michael Canty's complaint at the 1906 congress that the skilled men had neglected the claims of the unskilled was substantially justified and was reflected both in the composition of the Irish congress and its parliamentary committee. As long as the Irish T.U.C. remained the preserve of the craftsman it represented unions almost smugly conservative in outlook and concerned with their sectional interests. The inclusion of the labourer confronted the leaders with the miseries of the most oppressed

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the N.U.D.L. from 1894 to 1897; in 1899 six delegates attended, and after a visit by James Sexton the numbers rose to seven, representing branches 18 and 19. D.T.C. minutes, 21 Jan. 1894, 10 May 1897, 10 Apr. 1899, 1 Jan. 1900. Affiliation lapsed shortly afterwards and was not renewed until Larkin's reorganisation drive in 1907. D.T.C. minutes, 28 Oct. 1907.

1. Third annual report, I.T.U.C. (Limerick), p. 30.
2. Only six trades councils were affiliated in 1906.

strata of the working class - the poorly paid general worker, the women and juveniles in sweated industries, and the mass of unemployed, a class peculiarly numerous owing to the weakness of the Irish capitalist economy.

Whether the spread of amalgamated unions in Ireland should be halted - and indeed reversed - was debated for the first time at the 1906 congress.<sup>1</sup> Despite occasional jurisdictional classes between British and Irish unions, the question assumed importance only with the growth of Sinn Féin sentiment, which stood for the 'nationalisation' of all organisations in Ireland. Since not all Irish unions shared the outlook of delegates like P.T.Daly - the Belfast unions catering for linen workers are an obvious example - and their membership was small, they could make little immediate headway against amalgamated unions when the temperature of nationalist feelings was low. The sentiment nonetheless existed and in a period of resurgent nationalism was capable of winning support, especially if Irish branches considered that they were treated as troublesome relations by union headquarters.

For delegates like P.T.Daly, on the left wing of Sinn Féin, political action required an Irish labour party. That the congress remained for so long essentially 'lib-lab' is accounted for by the complex political situation. The desire for national freedom, even in an attenuated form, muted criticism of the Irish parliamentary party, which claimed to be labour as well as nationalist, and selected an occasional

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1. Supra, pp. 235-9.

trade unionist as a candidate for a safe seat.<sup>1</sup> The presence of Belfast delegates of unionist sympathies made the discussion of directly political questions a danger to congress unity. It was safeguarded by leaving the responsibility for political action to trades councils.

Belfast had made the first attempt to return a labour M.P. from Ireland when Bowman stood in 1885, and it was the only trades council to set up a distinctive political organisation and to contest parliamentary seats in the first decade of the twentieth century. Speculation may be permitted on what would have happened if Walker had been successful in 1905. His reputation stood high with Irish trade unionists in 1904, and his importance would have been enhanced after the liberal and labour victory of 1906. As the first independent labour M.P. returned by an Irish constituency, his prestige and influence might have been sufficient to induce, at least until political feeling on home rule grew high, others to follow his example and support the Labour Representation Committee.

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1. Michael Austin and E. Crean in 1892 and 1895. Austin was defeated and Crean re-elected in 1900. Alderman W. Doyle proposed (D.T.C. minutes, 24 Sept. 1900), in view of Redmond's and Davitt's encouraging remarks on direct labour representation, that the council forward the names of John Simmons and Councillor J.P. Nannetti for selection. Simmons stated that he would not stand for a division of Dublin. Nannetti, who had not been connected with the trades council for many years, and had been elected as a nationalist candidate to the corporation, was chosen by a nationalist convention. He was returned at the general election for the College Green division. The trades council received no reply to their letter. See also C. Desmond Greaves, The life and times of James Connolly, p. 103, where Simmons's name is misprinted as 'Simms'.

At both the 1904 and 1905 congresses the Belfast trades council's resolution urging affiliation to the L.R.C. was carried. In the heated debate of 1906 it was rejected, though the congress acclaimed the victories of British labour in the preceding January. The bitterness of some of the speeches in the debate was caused by Walker's conduct in the 1905 by-election, when he had answered the questions of the Belfast Protestant Association.<sup>1</sup> Support for the British Labour Party was forthcoming in later congresses, but it was never more than formal and no trades council outside Belfast applied for affiliation.

The importance of the 1905 by-election lay neither in Walker's defeat, nor in his opposition to home rule, but in the sectarian image which he, as a labour candidate, presented to the electorate. Despite his energy and ability he did the cause of independent labour representation both immediate and long-term damage by his statement equating labour with protestantism,<sup>2</sup> a statement with anti-catholic overtones. That it was not an isolated aberration was shown by his review of <sup>b/</sup> the Dungannon club manifesto<sup>3</sup> some weeks later in the Belfast Labour Chronicle of 7 October 1905. The manifesto's proposal that trade unions in Ireland should be 'nationalised' provoked the following comment:

What do our Manifest/s want? Do they suggest that the inter-ant/  
national principle of Trade Unionism should be dropped, and

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1. Supra, pp. 239-41, 346-7.

2. Supra, pp. 346-7.

3. See supra, p.286. Bulmer Hobson, the author of the manifesto, stated to the present writer that the review was written by Walker; his informant was at that time associated with the paper. Internal evidence also supports Walker's authorship.

that Irish Trade Unionism should take refuge under the banner of Nationalism, and the upas tree of Rome's priesthood?

His opposition to home rule was couched in the same language:

With some of the methods suggested by the Manifesto we heartily agree, such as the nationalisation of our transit service, the promotion of home manufactures (short of boycotting), and the improvement of education; but all these things may be attained without handing Ireland over to the domination of the priesthood, and we can find no escape from the conclusion that such domination would be complete and irrevocable if Ireland's representation, as suggested by the Manifesto, were withdrawn from the House of Commons to exercise sub-clerical functions in Dublin.

Walker's statements must be viewed against the background of Belfast's pattern of segregation, which was fundamentally economic in origin, though complicated by social, political, religious and even territorial factors. Protestant workers, strongest in the skilled trades,<sup>1</sup> feared lest they be displaced by Catholics, and as a consequence violently opposed home rule. The frequent riots which characterised the city had encouraged ghetto-like concentrations of Catholics in well-defined areas of the city,<sup>2</sup> and the creation of Falls and Smithfield wards in turn fostered representation on a sectarian rather than a political basis.

The aim of professed socialists was to lead a united working-class movement. Walker's statements were, however, more than anti-clerical, they were anti-Catholic. Anti-clericalism was not uncommon in left-wing Irish nationalist and republican movements, and was to be found in Sinn Féin organi-

1. *Supra*, pp. 53-5.

2. See Emrys Jones, A social geography of Belfast, pp.187-204.

sations. Anti-catholicism on the other hand pandered to the illiberal elements in the protestant working class and intensified catholic sectarianism, itself nurtured by past oppression. Walker's opportunism impeded the unification of the Belfast working class, made certain that the catholic votes he received were negatively anti-unionist, and ensured that in future crises the political, and even the trade union labour movement, lacking united support, would tend to split along the familiar unionist-protestant, nationalist-catholic lines.

Belfast's efforts to return independent labour M.P.s were not imitated elsewhere in Ireland. Even at local government level Dublin's attempts to establish a distinctive labour party were ineffective. Labour councillors in other towns were hardly distinguishable from those of the various nationalist groups. Socialism in Dublin was confined to small groups of individuals, the remnants of Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party.

James Larkin's arrival in Belfast early in 1907 had been preceded, and in a sense prepared for, by certain events of the previous year. The liberal government, under pressure from labour M.P.s, had passed the Trades Disputes Act. It cancelled the accumulated decisions of 'judge-made' law and restored the right of picketing, which Larkin was to use effectively in his first Irish strike. Lindsay Crawford had moved to the north at the end of the year. The Ulster Guardian under his leadership was to prove sympathetic to labour, and with him as Grand Master the Independent Orange Order was to be an ally in times of crisis. Joseph Devlin, conscious of his indebtedness to protestant working-class votes in 1906, would lend temporary aid. The Dublin trades council, though it still lacked direction, had been slowly

changing in personnel; it was no longer the complacent body it had been at the beginning of the century, for among the delegates were future lieutenants of Larkin.

In the first year of his Irish career Larkin attended a conference of the British Labour Party, carried out his unprecedented organising drive in the major Irish ports, affiliated N.U.D.L. branches to the Belfast and Dublin trades councils, was a delegate to both bodies, and was present at the fourteenth congress of the Irish T.U.C., held in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> He shifted the centre of interest from conference and committee rooms to the streets, the quays and the docks. His daemonic energy roused disciples, and enemies, wherever he went. He was responsible for the Irish labour movement taking up the first of its outstanding tasks - the organisation of the unskilled. When that had begun, the other problems, the 'nationalisation' of trade unions, the creation of an Irish labour party, could not be delayed indefinitely.

#### APPENDICES

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1. Credentials in favour of five N.U.D.L. delegates, of whom Larkin was one, were received by the Belfast trades council in April. B.T.C. minutes, 4 Apr. 1907. In October a N.U.D.L. application for affiliation was received by the Dublin trades council, and Larkin attended a meeting in December, where he seconded a motion to appoint delegates to a right-to-work committee. D.T.C. minutes, 28 Oct., 9 Dec. 1907. At the Irish T.U.C. he spoke on the 1907 strike and on a motion urging affiliation to the L.R.C. Fourteenth annual report, I.T.U.C., pp. 27, 36.



APPENDIX 1

TRADES COUNCILS IN IRELAND.

Year	1894		1895		1896		1897		1898	
	Unions	Trade Member-ship	Unions	Trade Member-ship	Unions	Trade Member-ship	Unions	Trade Member-ship	Unions	Trade Member-ship
Wolfeboro	77	16,850	47	10,430	65	16,000	56	17,500	53	16,692
Worcester	21	1,072	22	1,110	19	2,050	24	2,000	25	1,500
Worcester	13	626	15	600	11	750	9	600	8	500
Worcester	74	15,000	64	12,700	64	12,000	60	12,000	62	15,000
Worcester	-	-	9	300	9	300	7	100	5	100
Worcester	19	1,112	20	1,500	18	1,200	12	800	10	800
Worcester	11	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worcester	7	250	7	377	7	300	7	200	-	-
Worcester	-	-	13	500	13	700	13	500	13	500

APPENDICES

a) Figures for 1894, those for 1895 not being available.  
 b) Figures incomplete.  
 c) Dissolved 1895.

APPENDIX 1

TRADES COUNCILS IN IRELAND.

Founded	1894		1895		1896		1897		1898		
	Trade Unions	Membership	Trade Unions	Membership	Trade Unions	Membership	Trade Unions	Membership	Trade Unions	Membership	
Belfast	1881	7777	18,830	77	18,830	65	16,000	56	17,500	53	16,892
Cork	1880	21	1,072	22	1,199	19	2,090	24	2,000	25	1,520
Drogheda	1891	13	626	13(a)	626(a)	11	739	9	400	8	194
Dublin	1885	74	15,000	61	12,710	64	12,010	60	12,000	62	16,000
Kil-Kenny	1895	-	-	9	371	9	371	7	134	5	130
Limerick	1893	19	1,112	20	1,600	18	1,277	12	940	10	850
London-											
derry(b)		11	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry (b)	1890	7	250	7	377	7	250	7	250	-	-
Waterford	1895	-	-	13	350	13	370	14	600	(c)	(c)

- a) Figures for 1894, those for 1895 not being available.
- b) Figures incomplete.
- c) Dissolved 1898.

Source: Report by the chief labour correspondent of the board of trade on trade unions in 1898, pp.204-5, [C.9443] xcii, 493.

## THE NORTH BELFAST ELECTION OF 1885.

Alexander Bowman, the first labour candidate to appear in Ireland, was about thirty years of age at the time of the election.<sup>1</sup> His photograph in the Sligo congress (1901) of the Irish T.U.C. is of a handsome bearded man in the middle forties, with fine eyes and commanding appearance. He started work as a machine boy in a linen mill at the age of ten under the half-time system then prevailing,<sup>2</sup> and in due course became a flax-dresser.<sup>3</sup> His election speeches and his presidential address at the Sligo congress are evidence that he belonged to the small class of workmen whose natural intelligence overcame the handicap of long hours of work and little formal education. McClung says that he 'was not a declared socialist, but a class-conscious trade unionist and a widely-read man'.<sup>4</sup>

J.D.Clarkson (Labour and nationalism in Ireland, p.349) states that Alexander Bowman ran as liberal candidate with

1. N.W., 31 Oct. 1885. At the time of his nomination Bowman was a draper's traveller. B.N-L., 25 Nov. 1885.

2. N.W., 20 May 1886. Bowman's own description of himself. See also B.N.L., 30 Jan. 1885.

3. M.N., 31 Oct. 1885. He gave these details in a speech at his first meeting.

4. McClung, Recollections of the labour movement in Belfast, p.1.

the backing of the Belfast trades council. Bowman was indeed a liberal, a member of both the general council and executive committee of the Belfast Liberal Association,<sup>1</sup> but there is no evidence that he was endorsed by that association. The reports of his candidature stated that a deputation waited on him with a requisition, signed by between 400 and 500 voters, asking him to come forward as 'the working man's candidate for the North Division of Belfast'.<sup>2</sup> The meeting at which he was formally adopted passed a resolution pledging itself 'to put forth its utmost efforts, financially and otherwise, to secure his return to the Imperial parliament as labour representative for the Northern division of Belfast'.<sup>3</sup> While there is no direct contemporary proof of his endorsement by the Belfast trades council (the council minutes for the period are missing), the weight of available evidence is strongly in favour of it. The chairman of his adoption meeting was James Workman, a leading member of the council,<sup>2</sup> the president (Joseph Mitchell) was his first nominator, and the assentors included other members.<sup>4</sup>

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1. N.W., 20 May 1886. Bowman's own description of himself in a letter to Broadhurst. See also B.N.L., 30 Jan. 1885.

2. N.W., Belfast Evening Telegraph, Belfast Morning News, all 10 Oct. 1885.

3. B.N-L., 31 Oct. 1885.

4. Ibid., 25 Nov. 1885.

Bowman's appearance as a candidate was met by one unionist paper with assumed incredulity ('Mr Bowman and his friends ... are having a harmless little joke'...) and real anger (an 'impertinence').<sup>1</sup> The local nationalist paper, shortly after the first announcement of Bowman's intention to fight the election, said it was understood that a barrister (Robert Dunlop, Q.C.) had withdrawn in order to leave the struggle between the conservative William Ewart and Bowman, 'who comes forward in the liberal interest', and that a fund would be opened to defray his expenses, to which a leading liberal (John Shaw Brown, J.P.) intended to subscribe liberally.<sup>2</sup> A speaker at one of Ewart's meetings declared that Bowman had been put forward by parties who did not care to be identified with him and that one merchant had contributed £100 to his election fund.<sup>3</sup> There was no acknowledgement by Bowman or his supporters of any such backing; at his adoption meeting he accepted the nomination on condition that his election expenses were found for him and suggested to his audience

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1. B.E.T., 31 Oct. 1885.

2. M.N., 15 Oct. 1885.

3. N.W., 25 Nov. 1885. An interrupter identified the merchant as John Shaw Brown, but the speaker was not prepared to confirm it - 'it was only common report'.

4. B.E.T., 19 Nov. 1885.

5. B.E.T., 19 Nov. 1885.

that as the sheriff's expenses<sup>1</sup> would be between £125 and £150, 3000 workmen in the division contributing one shilling each would supply all their requirements. If this were done and he were returned to parliament he undertook to support himself there - 'he could do much with tongue and pen!'<sup>2</sup>

Bowman was insistent throughout his campaign on the non-party nature of his candidature. He declared that the requisition asking him to stand had been signed by 'almost 500 electors, Whig, Tory and Nationalist, without distinction of religious creed' and criticised both liberals and conservatives for joining together to emasculate the Employers' Liability Act.<sup>2</sup> When he read his election address at one of his meetings he emphasised that 'at present almost forty candidates were seeking suffrages on purely working men's principles and would not permit themselves to be absorbed in any of the great political parties',<sup>3</sup> and that he was 'in favour of the formation of a labour party which should zealously attend to the origination and promotion of measures likely to promote the well-being of the working population'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See Appendix 4.

2. M.N., 31 Oct. 1885.

3. N.W., 19 Nov. 1885.

4. B.N-L., 19 Nov. 1885.

His own programme owed much to that of Chamberlain's 'unauthorised' one; it also contained details of purely trade union interest such as the demand for shorter hours of labour and the appointment of additional factory inspectors from the working class. In addition he advocated arbitration to settle international disputes and the extension of the vote to women householders. To a question about General Gordon he replied that he had not come forward as a politician and had no statement to make.<sup>1</sup> No such answer was possible on the first item on his programme, the maintenance of the union; here he made a somewhat oracular statement which was to be copied, mutatis mutandis, by many of his successors in the Belfast labour movement: 'our true strength and interest lay in hearty and honourable union with Great Britain, but as we could only have satisfactory and abiding union on the basis of justice, he should oppose every movement in the direction of injustice and wrong'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Bowman had earlier in the year proposed the government's Egyptian policy as a subject for discussion in the Belfast Debating Society, of which he and William Currie were members. Currie was the leader of the anti-home rule deputation which interviewed 'lib-lab' M.P.s in 1886. The Belfast Debating Society also discussed Henry George's doctrines. B.N-L., 27 Jan. 17 Feb. 1885.

2. N.W., B.N-L., M.N., 19 Nov. 1885.

The first Irish labour candidate's campaign was distinguished by the wrecking tactics which labour's opponents have so often employed. A schoolroom engaged by Bowman for a meeting was seized by Ewart supporters who repelled the would-be speakers, wrecked the room and did not spare even the school harmonium.<sup>1</sup> A later ticketed meeting was more successful, but even here there was interruption for a number of Ewart supporters gained entry by forged tickets, and a substitute chairman (B.Hobson)<sup>2</sup> had to be called upon as the intended chairman was prevented from entering by hostile crowds.<sup>3</sup> Bowman's own house in Berlin Street was wrecked, he and his family escaping by the back. The temper of the times is recalled by Robert McClung:

The Pope and Home Rule for Ireland played a big part in the fight which took place. Bowman had no intention of handing North Belfast over to the Pope, although the Tories declared he would. ... Among the working classes in 1885 there was a real dread of Home Rule. I can remember the stories being told in '85 and '86 to the effect that the Home Rulers had already balloted for who would own the shipyards. I can remember being told that the man who came to our door and sold herrings and Lough Neagh pollen was to own and control Ewart's spinning mills as soon as the Home Rule bill became law....<sup>4</sup>

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1. N.W., B.N-L., M.N., 14 Nov. 1885.

2. Probably Benjamin Hobson (father of Bulmer Hobson) who was on the committee of the Ulster Liberal Association. Interview with Bulmer Hobson.

3. B.N-L., N.W., 19 Nov. 1885.

4. R. McClung, *Recollections*, p. 2. The ballot referred to was an ingenious fund-raising device invented by J.G. Biggar, nationalist M.P. for Cavan.



Bowman was supported by the local nationalists, whose paper, the Morning News, interpreted his statement about the working of the union as implying that its operation had been conducted without a due regard for justice, and prophesied that if he were returned to parliament he would find there 'a powerful party [i.e. the Irish parliamentary party] devoted to every item, or almost every item, in his circulated address'.<sup>1</sup> Its support became absolute when Parnell issued his directive to the nationalists of Ulster: 'Mr Bowman is opposing Mr Ewart, conservative, on purely labour lines, apart from any political organisation, and he should have the thorough support of the Nationalist voters'.<sup>2</sup> The Northern Whig, liberal-unionist in temper, offered ostentatiously disinterested support,<sup>3</sup> for which it was bitterly attacked by speakers at Ewart's meetings; it summed up on the eve of the poll as follows: 'In the North Division they [the liberals] will generally, with the Nationalists and Orangemen, unite

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1. M.N., 20 Nov. 1885.

2. M.N., N.W., F.J., 26 Nov. 1885.

3. N.W., 2 Nov. 1885. 'An electoral victory in the cause of labour will be far more permanently beneficial than an electoral victory in the cause of King William or Mr. Parnell'.

in support of the workingmen's candidate Mr Bowman, on non-partisan grounds!<sup>1</sup>

The two remaining papers, the Belfast Evening Telegraph and the Belfast News-Letter, were violently partisan, the first named excusing the wrecking of Bowman's meeting and the schoolroom in which it was held by referring to the labour candidate's 'liberal and democratic' opinions which local residents viewed with disfavour.<sup>2</sup> The unionists attacked Bowman initially as a follower of Henry George and a radical but as the campaign progressed Thomas Johnston,<sup>3</sup> forerunner e/ of a prolific succession of unionist working men, denounced him as a republican of the deepest dye,<sup>4</sup> and, heartened by Ewart's approval, announced at the final meeting that Bowman 'was worse than a Home Ruler, as, to the speaker's own knowledge he had said that he wished that the last thread binding England and Ireland were severed'.<sup>5</sup>

The results of the eighty-seven per cent poll showed

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1. N.W., 25 Nov. 1885.
  2. B.E.T., 14 Nov. 1885.
  3. A member of the Belfast trades council; he acted as chairman on a number of occasions in 1887. B.T.C. minutes May-Nov., passim.
  4. B.N-L., 12 Nov. 1885.
  5. N.W., 25 Nov. 1885.

that in north Belfast at least, the thread held strong. Bowman secured a high proportion of the nationalist vote in the area,<sup>1</sup> but his share of the rest was small; he was defeated three to one.<sup>2</sup> The next labour candidate, William Walker, fighting twenty years later, was to be less ambiguous about home rule.

While it is probable that Bowman received some covert liberal support he is best considered a radical-labour rather than a 'lib-lab' candidate, despite his appearance as a Gladstonian liberal in the home rule controversy of 1886.<sup>3</sup> In the eighteen-eighties he was associated<sup>4</sup> with James Morrison Davidson, a radical journalist who was one of the five candidates of the Scottish Land Restoration League in the general election of 1885, and was then a Scottish nationalist as well as a land reformer - he later became a socialist.<sup>5</sup> Bowman

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1. 'The Nationalists gave him their cordial support, in accordance with the terms of Mr Parnell's manifesto'. M.N., 27 Nov. 1885. In 1886 the Parnellite candidate (J. Dempsey) in a straight fight polled 732 votes against Ewart's 4,522.

2. W. Ewart 3,915  
A. Bowman 1,330  
2,505 B.N.-L., 28 Nov. 1885.

3. Cf. *supra*, pp. 20-21.

4. Interview with Daniel McDevitt.

5. See G.D.H. Cole, British working class politics, p.100.

2. Interview with his son, R.R. Bowman.

himself claimed to be on the lecture list of the Socialist Democratic Federation from 1886 onwards,<sup>1</sup> and in his later activities seems to have parted company with the liberals. In 1889 he went to Glasgow and took part in the single-tax movement.<sup>2</sup> After another short stay in Belfast he moved in 1891 to London, where he stayed for about four years and was an active member of the Social Democratic Federation, standing for a school board election in Walthamstow.<sup>2</sup> On his return to Belfast he resumed work as a flaxdresser, for his position as organiser and secretary of the Belfast branch of the Municipal Employees' Association was a spare-time one.<sup>2</sup> Until his appointment to a post under the Belfast corporation in September 1901 his public activities were in trade union affairs, apart from three years as a city councillor.

There is little doubt that Bowman can claim to be Ireland's first labour candidate. G.D.H.Cole omits him from his lists in British working class politics, 1832-1914, though he has a better title to be included than men such as Davitt, Austin, Crean and Joyce, and Clarkson, as already mentioned, classifies him as a liberal with labour backing;

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1. Interview with Daniel McDevitt.

2. Interview with his son, R.R. Bowman.

both mistakes may have arisen from such a source as the Constitutional year book for 1911 (quoted by Clarkson, p.349), where he is listed as a liberal.<sup>1</sup>

1. Constitutional year book for 1911, p.213.

N. Belfast	W. Ewart d.	C	3915
1885	A. Bowman	L	1330

APPENDIX 3

I.T.U.C. FINANCES (1895-1906).

Receipts

Subscriptions	Delegates' fees	Total receipts	£	s	d
895 (Cork)	57 10 0		54	5	0
896 (Limerick)	21 0 0		38	10	0
897 (Waterford)	36 9 7		38	5	0
898 (Belfast)	59 14 3		41	10	0
899 (Derry)	20 13 9		42	15	0
900 (Dublin)	37 10 6		61	10	0
901 (Sligo)	55 16 4		54	15	0
902 (Cork)	45 10 0		41	5	0
903 (Berry)	55 0 2		62	5	0
904 (Kilkenny)	57 17 2		64	0	0
905 (Wexford)	56 9 11		50	5	0
906 (Athlone)	74 4 0		52	10	0

\* A new standing order dealing with Finance was carried at the 1895 (Wexford, twelfth annual report, p.50). Affiliation fees, payable on membership, were on the following scale: 1d per member up to 25s; 250-500-1000 £1 10s.; £1 for each 1000, or part thereof, after the first. Trades council: £1 for each 5000 or part thereof registered.

APPENDIX 3

I.T.U.C. FINANCES (1895-1906).

	Receipts			Total receipts			Expenditure			Balance					
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d			
1895 (Cork)	57	10	0	54	5	0	111	15	0	38	9	9	43	16	4
1896 (Limerick)	21	0	0	38	10	0	108	6	4	36	10	1	40	14	5
1897 (Waterford)	36	9	7	38	5	0	123	9	8	36	18	1	49	10	4
1898 (Belfast)	39	14	3	41	10	0	130	14	7	41	17	0	32	14	11
1899 (Derry)	20	13	9	42	15	0	96	3	8	36	12	3	26	10	5
1900 (Dublin)	37	10	6	61	10	0	125	10	11	41	18	10	50	2	7
1901 (Sligo)	55	16	4	54	15	0	176	12	7	38	14	8	64	16	2
1902 (Cork)	45	10	0	71	5	0	193	0	4	45	3	9	60	3	1
1903 (Newry)	53	0	2	62	5	0	183	14	11	40	7	7	70	16	0
1904 (Kilkenny)	57	17	2	54	0	0	190	5	2	44	17	11	45	(approx)	
1905 (Wexford)	56	9	11	50	5	0	192	6	5	36	17	9	56	11	5
1906 (Athlone)	*74	4	8	52	10	0	190	10	1	38	10	6	82	6	9

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\* A new standing order dealing with finance was carried at the 1905 congress (Wexford, twelfth annual report, p.50). Affiliation fees, payable on Irish membership, were on the following scale: 1d per member up to 250; 250-500 £1 8s. 4d.; 500-1000 £1 10s.; £1 for each 1000, or part thereof, after the first 1000. Trades councils: £1 for each 5000 or part thereof represented.

## APPENDIX 4

Year 1) President  
 OFFICERS AND PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF THE IRISH TRADES UNION  
 Meeting 2) Secretary  
 CONGRESS.

1894 1. T.O'Connell 2. J. Walker (T.A.) Belfast  
 Dublin (A.S.C. and F.) 3. J. Walker (T.A.) Dublin

NOTE. From 1894 to 1902 (with the exception of 1901) the president of the local trades council was elected president of congress; in 1903 and subsequent years the chairman of the parliamentary committee was invariably elected to preside at congress.<sup>1</sup> From 1918 onwards the president was elected at congress, became the chairman of the national executive and was entitled to preside at the following year's congress.

1. J.R. Jolley J.R. Jolley T.A. Dublin  
 Cork The secretary was appointed on a yearly basis until 1906, when a new standing order declared him an ex-officio member of congress and the parliamentary committee, and as such permanent as long as he gave satisfaction.

The chairman and treasurer of the parliamentary committee were elected by the committee itself.

In the following lists the chairman of the parliamentary committee is marked with an asterisk.

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1. There were no trades councils in Sligo(1901) or Newry (1903); in 1904 the Kilkenny trades council waived their right to provide the president, in favour of Walker.

Year	Place of meeting.	1) President	2) Treasurer	3) Secretary
1893	Derry	James McCarron (A.S.T.)	Alex. Taylor (Irish Linen)	Parliamentary Committee
	Limerick	Murray Davis (I.Fed.U.Bakers)		
1894	Dublin	1. T.O'Connell (A.S.C. and J) Dublin	*H.McManus (T.A.)	Belfast
			E.L.Richardson (D.T.P.S)	Dublin
			R.Sheldon (Am.U.Cabinet makers)	Belfast
			P.Golden (U.Lab.I)	Belfast
		2. Patrick Dowd (A.S.C. and J) Dublin	J.H.Jolley (T.A.)	Cork
			T.O'Connell (A.S.C.& J)	Dublin
			J.Carter (Baker)	Drogheda
		3. John Simmons (A.S.C. and J) Dublin	J.A.Hennessy ( )	Limerick
			R.P.O'Connor (Typ.Assoc)	Limerick
1897	Waterford	1. P.J.Lee (porkbutcher)	*J.McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
			R.P.O'Connor (T.A.)	Limerick
1895	Cork	1. J.H.Jolley (T.A.)	J.H.Jolley (T.A.)	Cork
		2. P. (A.S.Cork)	*P.J.Tevenan (A.S.R.S.)	Dublin
			P.Goulding (Un.Lab.of Ireland)	Dublin
		2. J.H.Jolley (T.A.)	Murray Davis (I.Fed.U.Bakers)	Belfast
			Thomas Gavin (Local Painters)	
		3. John Simmons (A.S.C and J) Dublin	A.Taylor (Irish Linen)	Limerick
			James McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
			R.Sheldon (A.U.Cabinet)	Belfast



1896	1. James D'Alton	James McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
1898 Limerick	(T.A.)	Alex. Taylor (Irish Linenlappers)	
Belfast	(A.S.T.)	A. Taylor (Irish Linenlappers)	Belfast
	Limerick	Murray Davis (I.Fed.U.Bakers)	
	Belfast	P.J. Tevenan (A.S.R.S.)	Belfast
	2. J.H. Jolley	J.H. Jolley (T.A.)	Cork
	(T.A.)	*P.J. Tevenan (A.S.R.S.)	Dublin
	Cork	P. Golden (U. Lab. I)	Dublin
	3. John Simmons	J. Fitzpatrick (A.S.C. & J)	Dublin
	(A.S.C. and J)	P.J. Leo (porkbutcher)	Waterford
	Dublin		
	3. John Simmons	J. O'Brien (Op. Plasterers)	Cork
	(A.S.C. & J.)	W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)	Dublin
	Dublin		
1897	1. P.J. Leo	*J. McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
Waterford	(porkbutcher)	R.P. O'Connor (T.A.)	Limerick
	Waterford	P.J. Leo (porkbutcher)	Waterford
1899	2. P.J. Tevenan	P.J. Tevenan (A.S.R.S.)	Dublin
Derry	(A.S.R.S.)	Murray Davis (I.Fed.U.Bakers)	
	Derry	*W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)	Belfast
	Dublin	Joseph O'Brien (Op. Plasterers)	Cork
	2. A. Taylor	A. Taylor (Irish Linenlappers)	
	3. John Simmons	A. Taylor (Irish linenlappers)	
	(Irish linen-)	Patrick Cassidy (W.U.D.)	Belfast
	(A.S.C. and J.)	J. Fitzpatrick (A.S.C. & J)	Dublin
	Dublin	James Chambers (Saddler)	Dublin
	Belfast	John Simmons (A.S.C. & J)	Dublin
	3. Hugh McManus	R.P. O'Connor (T.A.)	Limerick
	(T.A.)		
	Belfast		

1898  
Belfast

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. R. Wortlay<br>(A.S.T.)<br>Plasterers)<br>Belfast                      | *J. McCarron (A.S.T.) Derry<br>A. Taylor (Irish linenlappers)<br>A. Taylor (Irish Linen Belfast)  |
| 2. P.J. Tevenan<br>2. A. Taylor<br>(Irish linen-<br>(A.S.R.S.)<br>Dublin | P.J. Tevenan (A.S.R.S.) Dublin<br>Alex. Bowman (Flaxdressers<br>Municipal Employees Assoc.)<br>James Chambers (Saddl) Belfast<br>R.P. O'Connor (T.A.) Limerick<br>Murray Davis (I. Fed. U. Bakers)<br>Belfast |
| 3. John Simmons<br>(A.S.C. & J.)<br>Dublin                               | J. O'Brien (Op. Plasterers) Cork<br>W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)<br>Dublin  |

1899  
Derry

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. J. McCarron<br>(A.S.T.)<br>Derry                  | J. McCarron (A.S.T.) Derry<br>A. Bowman (Flaxdressers) Belfast<br>*W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)<br>Dublin |
| 2. A. Taylor<br>(Irish linen-<br>lappers)<br>Belfast | A. Taylor (Irish linenlappers)<br>Belfast<br>Patrick Cassidy (N.U.D.L.)<br>Dublin                           |
| 3. Hugh McManus<br>(T.A.)<br>Belfast                 | James Chambers (Saddler) Dublin<br>John Simmons (A.S.C. & J) Dublin<br>R.P. O'Connor (T.A.) Limerick        |

1902

1900  
Dublin

1. W. Cave (Bootmaker) Cork  
 1. George Leahy James McCarron (A.S.T.) Derry  
 (Operative  
 Plasterers) A. Taylor (Irish Linenlappers)  
 Belfast  
 Dublin \*A. Bowman (Flaxdressers) Belfast  
 2. A. Taylor John Simmons (A.S.C. & J) Dublin  
 (Irish linen- James Chambers (Saddler) Dublin  
 lappers)  
 Belfast John Gribbons (Local bakers)  
 Dublin  
 3. E.L. Richardson Walter Hudson (A.S.R.S.) Dublin  
 (D.T.P.S.) W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)  
 Dublin

1903

1901  
Sligo

1. W. Hudson George Leahy (Op. Plasterers)  
 Dublin  
 (A.S.R.S.)  
 1. A. Bowman A. Bowman (Flaxdressers) Belfast  
 (Flaxdressers) George Leahy (Op. Plasterers)  
 Dublin  
 Belfast John Simmons (A.S.C. & J) Dublin  
 2. George Leahy Walter Hudson (A.S.R.S.) Dublin  
 (Operative W.J. Leahy (Reg. Soc. Coopers)  
 Plasterers) Dublin  
 Dublin James McCarron (A.S.T.) Derry  
 3. E.L. Richardson\* Hugh McManus (T.A.) Belfast  
 (D.T.P.S.) William Liddell (Local Painters)  
 Belfast  
 Dublin



1904 Kilkenny	1. W. Walker	J. McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
	(A.S.C. & J)	S. Dinneen (Baker)	Limerick
		H. McManus (T.A.)	Belfast
	Belfast	*J. Chambers (Saddler)	Dublin
	2. E.W. Stewart	W. Walker (A.S.C. & J)	Belfast
	(Shop Assistant)	W. Hudson (A.S.R.S.)	Dublin
	Dublin	G. Coates ( )	Cork
	3. E.L. Richardson	E.W. Stewart (Shop Assistants)	Dublin
		(D.T.P.S.)	
	Dublin		

1905 Wexford	1. J. Chambers	James McCarron (A.S.T.)	Derry
	(Saddler)	James Chambers (Saddler)	Dublin
	Dublin	E.W. Stewart (Shop Assistants)	Dublin
	2. E.W. Stewart	P.T. Daly (D.T.P.S.)	Dublin
	(Shop Assistant)	*Stephen Dinneen (Baker)	Limerick
	Dublin	W. Hudson (A.S.R.S.)	Dublin
	3. E.L. Richardson	George Leahy (Op. Plasterers)	Dublin
	(D.T.P.S.)		
	Dublin	John Simmons (A.S.C. & J)	Dublin

RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

1906

Athlone	1. Stephen Dinneen * (Baker) Limerick	James McCarron (A.S.T.) John Murphy (T.A.) James Chambers (Saddler)	Derry Belfast Dublin
	2. E.W.Stewart (Shop Assistants) Dublin	Walter Hudson (A.S.R.S) E.W.Stewart (Shop Assistants) Stephen Dinneen (Baker)	Dublin Dublin Limerick
Act, 1832	3. E.L.Richardson (D.T.P.S.) Dublin	Michael Egan (U.K.Coachmakers) George Greig (N.A.U.L.)	Cork Belfast

By S.48 of the Representation of the People Act, 1832

and the payment of returning officers' salaries (two guineas per day) and expenses (one guinea per day) were to be shared equally by all the candidates in an election.

S.19 of the Representation of the People (Ireland) Act, 1850 (13 & 14 Vict., C.68) limited the cost of a polling booth to £3 if it were erected in a public building and to £5 if not in a public building. It reduced payments to deputies and poll clerks to £2 and £1 per day respectively.

The Ballot Act, 1872 (35 & 36 Vict., C.35) required, by S.8, the returning officer to provide the additional apparatus (e.g. ballot and nomination paper) for a secret ballot, and the expenses incurred were also to be shared equally among the candidates. S. 27 of the Act, modifying its application to Ireland, limited by sub-section (4) the returning officer's expenses to those actually and necessarily

## RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The demand that returning officers' expenses at parliamentary elections should be a public charge recurs constantly in labour programmes up to 1918. These expenses were fixed by a series of nineteenth century statutes.

By S.48 of the Representation of the People (Ireland) Act, 1832 (2 & 3 Will. 4, C.88) the cost of polling booths and the payment of returning officers' deputies (two guineas per day) and poll clerks (one guinea per day) were to be shared equally by all the candidates in an election.

S.19 of the Representation of the People (Ireland) Act, 1850 (13 & 14 Vict., C.68) limited the cost of a polling booth to £3 if it were erected in a public building and to £5 if not in a public building. It reduced payments to deputies and poll clerks to £2 and £1 per day respectively.

The Ballot Act, 1872 (35 & 36 Vict., C.33) required, by S.8, the returning officer to provide the additional apparatus (e.g. ballot and nomination papers) for a secret ballot, and the expenses incurred were also to be shared equally among the candidates. S. 17 of the Act, modifying its application to Ireland, limited by sub-section (4) the returning officer's expenses to those actually and necessarily

incurred by him and provided that they should not exceed the amounts allowed by statutes then in force in Ireland.

~~one-11~~ The 1872 act did not enable the returning officer to require a candidate to give security for these expenses before he was nominated, and in a case (Davies v. Lord Kensington 1874 L.R. 9 C.P. 720) where a candidate refused to give such security and the returning officer declared the opposing candidate elected, the election was set aside. This loophole was filled by S.3 of the Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act, 1875, which enabled the officer, if he thought fit, to require security for the charges under the Act. The maximum amount of security, specified in the third schedule of the Act, varied between counties and boroughs and according to the number of registered electors. It could be as low as £100 where the registered electors in a borough did not exceed 1,000, or as high as £1,000 where the registered electors in a county exceeded 30,000. If a candidate did not give or tender security he was to be deemed to have withdrawn.

S.2 of the Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act, 1885 (48 & 49 Vict., C.62), reduced the maximum amount of the security which could be required where the number of candidates did not exceed the number of vacancies. Instead of being variable (one-fifth of the maximum specified in the third schedule to the 1875 Act) the figure was fixed at £25.



The modern system whereby a candidate at a British election deposits £150, to be forfeited if he does not poll one-eighth of the total vote, dates from the recommendation (para. 27) of the Speaker's Conference of 1917 on Electoral Reform (Cmd.8463). The conference also (para.25) recommended that 'returning officers' charges should be paid by the State on a scale to be fixed by the Treasury'. Accordingly, S.29 of the Representation of the People Act, 1918 (7 & 8 Geo. 5) provided that the returning officer was to be paid by the Treasury in accordance with a scale of maximum charges prescribed by it. Ss. 26 and 27 also provided for deposits and forfeiture.

A Dublin branch, formed in 1892<sup>1</sup> had a somewhat longer life. Its contingent and that of the Reform League marched together in the Dublin May Day procession of 1894, and it was represented by Adolphus Salfield of the Seaworkers on the number one platform at the Phoenix Park demonstration which followed.<sup>3</sup> The society seems to have been most active in the middle years of the decade, thereafter it gradually declined and by 1899 it was in abeyance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Report of the executive committee of the Fabian Society for the year ending 31 Mar. 1892, p. 18.

2. Ibid. p. 23.

3. D.F.C. Labour Day Agenda 1894.

4. Fabian society E.C. report 1895 (p.8), 1896 (p.2), 1897 (p.4)

## THE FABIAN SOCIETY IN IRELAND

Branches of the Fabian society in Ireland had a brief existence. A Belfast society was formed in February 1891, with W.M. Knox as secretary, and for some months carried on much useful work. But by the following year its membership had shrunk to six, and when two of its most active members left the city the secretary could only report that 'its animation is suspended'.<sup>1</sup> Some of its members helped to found an I.L.P. branch in the autumn of the year.

A Dublin branch, formed in 1892<sup>2</sup> had a somewhat longer life. Its contingent and that of the Reform league marched together in the Dublin May Day procession of 1894, and it was represented by Adolphus Shields of the Gasworkers on the number one platform at the Phoenix Park demonstration which followed.<sup>3</sup> The society seems to have been most active in the middle years of the decade, thereafter it gradually declined and by 1899 it was in abeyance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Report of the executive committee of the Fabian Society for the year ending 31 Mar. 1892, p. 18.

2. Ibid. p. 23.

3. D.T.C. Labour Day Agenda 1894.

4. Fabian society E.C. report 1895 (p.8), 1898 (p.2) 1899 (p.8)

The successes of a number of labour candidates in the elections following the 1898 Local Government Act had its effect on the Fabian Society executive. 'Nearly a year before it occurred to the Queen to visit Ireland', they reported with unconscious humour, 'the E.C. came to the conclusion that they too had hitherto neglected that country'.<sup>1</sup> Considering that 'the recent creation of District and County Councils must give rise to administration problems, towards the solutions of which Fabian experience might prove useful', they decided to extend the Hutchinson Trust<sup>2</sup> lectures to Ireland. As there were no trades councils, co-operative and socialist societies in many places, a preliminary tour had to be undertaken in order to set up local committees. Lectures were given by J. Bruce Glasier and S.D. Shallard, who undertook a series of tours of a month each in various areas. In the first month the towns visited were Dublin, Dundalk, Drogheda, Maryborough and Baltinglass, in the second however, Waterford, Wexford, Carrick-on-Suir and New Ross. Encouraged by their success the lecturers spent a further month in the work, Glasier visiting Munster (Cork, Tipperary, Thurles and Cashel) and Shallard Ulster

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1. Fabian society E.C. report. (1900), p.11.

2. In 1894 Henry Hutchinson left over £9,000 to be spent by five trustees for the educational purposes of the Fabian Society. His daughter died shortly afterwards and left £1000 for similar purposes. E.R. Pease, The history of the Fabian Society, p.99.

(Belfast, Londonderry, Enniskillen and Lurgan). Shallard paid a return visit to Ulster in 1901.<sup>1</sup>

In Belfast, Dublin and Cork the trades councils made arrangements, but elsewhere the local organisers were mayors and councillors, assisted by the leading citizens, 'lay and clerical'. The Irish nationalist M.P.s Wm. Field, J.J. Shee and Kendal O'Brien, who were leading members of the Irish Land and Labour League, and had attended early congresses of the Irish T.U.C., were especially helpful. The local organisation made a selection from a list of subjects and arranged the place and time of the lectures. In the smaller towns lectures were given in the court house, which was also the town hall, in Cork in the municipal buildings, lent by the corporation and in Dublin in the trades council's own hall. In Belfast the trades council, who had to hire a hall, charged 2d for a single lecture and 3d for the course of four (The workers' condition, Trade unionists, Municipalities at work, Drink and Poverty).<sup>2</sup>

The Fabian lecturers tours had three results, none of them of any lasting significance. The Belfast trades council subscribed for a period to the Fabian book box service.<sup>3</sup> A

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1. Fabian society, E.C. report, 1900 (pp. 11, 12), 1901 (p. 10).

2. B.T.C. minutes, 30 Dec. 1899.

3. B.T.C. minutes, 14 Nov. 1904.

local society was formed in Cork in March 1901, but though it included two town councillors, its membership barely reached double figures. By 1903 six members had left Cork and the four remaining ceased to constitute a society. Two pamphlets were prepared by Fabian headquarters on railway nationalisation and local government but sales were small, though both had a topical interest.<sup>1</sup>

More significant was an encounter Glasier had with an old fellow-agitator in Edinburgh in the days of the Socialist League. Connolly greeted Glasier at the end of a lecture: 'And so, Glasier, you have become a Fabian!' Glasier, describing Connolly a few weeks later 'stampeding with a mob through the streets [of Dublin, on the occasion of Chamberlain's visit], brandishing the Boer flag, and shouting for an Irish Republic and the defeat of Britain in the Transvaal', envied him his self-indulgence and irresponsibility. 'How straight and broad, but ah! how exhilarating seemed the path along which he was careering with the policemen at his heels!'<sup>2</sup> Connolly's reply, in the S.D.F. paper Justice, 'How I envied his self-restraint and sense of responsibility!', was more than

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1. Fabian society, E.C. report. 1900 (p.12), 1901 (p.16) 1902 (p.11), 1903 (p.16).

2. Clarion, March 1900, quoted in Desmond Ryan (ed.), Socialism and Nationalism, a selection from the writings of James Connolly. p.8.

a retort, it was both a prophecy and an analysis of the different positions in which the two men, and the movements to which they belonged, were placed.

E.R. Pease, the historian of the Fabian Society, writing before 1916 and describing the work of the Fabian Society as 'the working out of the application of the broad principles of Socialism to the industrial and political environment of England' remarked that 'the application of the principles of socialism to Ireland has not yet been seriously attempted'<sup>1</sup>. The Fabian brand of socialism was but chillily received in Ireland.

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1. E.R. Pease, The history of the Fabian Society, p.240

## APPENDIX 7

THE SHIPPING FEDERATION AND THE NATIONAL FREE LABOUR ASSOCIATION

The Shipping Federation was established by the shipping owners as a reply to the formation of the National Union of Sailors and Firemen (by J. Havelock Wilson, 1887) and the victory of the Dockers' Union (London, 1889). It united seven-eighths of all British tonnage, established at all the main ports offices at which seamen were obliged to register before they could be employed and in 1891 introduced its own ticket which pledged the holder to work with union and non-union men alike. It was in effect a strike-breaking organisation directed against the new general unions in ports. It formed a special labour department which undertook to supply labour to employers involved in disputes. A common procedure was to quarter the men at the waterfront in boats, which served as floating hostels and were easily protected against picketing strikes.

The Shipping Federation's most spectacular victory was in Hull. By 1892 the dockers in that port were highly organised, but during a seven weeks' strike, in which military and police were employed to protect the Federation black legs, the union's power was broken. Hull became a stronghold of 'free' labour in 1893.

Disputes involving general unions were often marked by violence, and the Hull pattern of employing police and military to overawe strikers was frequently repeated. The 'free' labour employed in strikes was of poor quality, inefficient at work, drunken and of the petty criminal class.

An early example of intervention by the Shipping Federation in Ireland occurred during a Dublin corn porters' strike in 1891. The masters of Federation corn vessels refused to employ a 'tallyman' per vessel to check the discharge of cargoes by the grain labourers. The tallymen, weighmen and corn labourers struck work on Friday, June 25.<sup>1</sup> Graeme Hunter, a Shipping Federation official, undertook to discharge the cargoes on the quayside, leaving the merchants to carry them away. The delegation of the societies (three local unions) representing the men had earlier reached an agreement on June 22 with the merchants whereby, in return for surrendering their right to have a tallyman on each vessel, the merchants would give them facilities for checking the grain labourers' work, not introduce steam winches and withdraw the Federation men. But the men repudiated the agreement, the merchants formed a Merchants' Protection Association and

*Journal*, 6 July 1891.

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1. F.J., 26 June 1891.



called in the Federation, which agreed to shift the cargoes from the quays to the warehouses.<sup>1</sup>

The strike spread, involving carters and other general labourers. Meetings of the men were held regularly during the strike and addressed by Dublin trades council spokesmen and leaders of several unions, including Adolphus Shields of the Gas Labourers, E. Donnelly of the Sailors' and Firemens', and R. Foreman of the ASRS. Edward McHugh, one of the founders of the N.U.D.L. arrived on July 8 and also addressed the men. But the speeches of the new union leaders did not please more conservative trade unionists. At a demonstration on behalf of the strikers, held in the Phoenix Park, John Martin, president of the Dublin trades council, said that the Dockers' Union had subscribed £1000 to the Australian strikers but not a 1000 pence to the Dublin men. He condemned as a firebrand a man who had addressed them and quoted Henry George and David Wilson.<sup>2</sup>

Adolphus Shields defended the new unions, but the controversy ended with the collapse of the strike. The men

1. A summary of events up to July 5 is given in the Freeman's Journal, 6 July 1891.

2. F.J., 13 July 1891.

2. Ibid., 10 July 1891

went back to work unconditionally on July 18. But the Federation men were slow and inefficient and were subjected to the ridicule of the old hands, who were not afraid of the sloping planks used as the vessels rose in the water and could do three times as much work. As a result few of the 'free' labourers were retained. Almost all the carters were taken back immediately and the non-union carters, the sons of small farmers, left of their own accord. The store hands suffered, the merchants took back only six of the fifty strikers, retaining the strike-breakers from the country.<sup>1</sup>

The Shipping Federation were prepared to bring black legs from long distances. While some of the 'free' labour in the corn porters' strike was recruited from the countryside, more came from Belfast, Scotland and the north of England. The strikers did not take their arrival calmly, and when some of them were escorted by police to lodgings in the town, a crowd followed and broke some windows, The landlady then refused to take in the Federation men who left. Though they were again escorted by police the crowd attacked them and one man was slightly injured by a law clerk sympathiser with the corn porters.<sup>2</sup>

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1. F.J., 20 July 1891

2. Ibid., 10 July 1891

The 'free' labourers also clashed with police. On July 13 seven, with addresses in Glasgow, Belfast and transit sheds at the North Wall, were fined 10s or seven days' imprisonment for being drunk, disorderly and resisting arrest. Uneven-handed justice was also dealt out by the magistrate to three men who had assaulted one of the seven scabs, and on his testimony the men were given three months' hard labour.<sup>1</sup>

The scabs in turn had grievances. Harry Stewart, Federation official, imported a number from Belfast, telling them that there was not a strike in Dublin, just a dispute with tallymen. Three of the men engaged complained of misrepresentation by the official. The terms offered were: £5 for a months' work and 9d an hour overtime, three meals a day and tobacco and porter ad lib.. The diet was to have been: breakfast - bread, butter and two eggs; dinner - a pound of meat and bread and potatoes; supper - tea, bread, butter and cheese. The men complained that they got no such diet and scarcely any tobacco or porter.<sup>2</sup>

In 1893 the Shipping Federation passed over some of their problems to an organisation which they subsidised, the National Free Labour Association. It established a

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1. F.J., 14 July 1891

2. Ibid., 20 July 1891

free labour exchange and a district office in each main area. The officials, usually ex-policemen, maintained live registers of workmen who had signed the free labour pledge - to work in harmony with union and non-union men alike. In the early years of the twentieth century the railway companies became the principal patrons of the association.<sup>1</sup>

These striking-breaking organisations were of use where unskilled labour was required; in disputes involving skilled trades they could offer little worthwhile help to employers, as in the 1897 engineering strike, where the 'free' labour supplied damaged machinery. Irish trade unions had to contend with a steady influx of non-union labour from the country, but they also were threatened by the importation of English and Scottish blacklegs. The Shipping Federation maintained officials in Ireland and intervened on a number of occasions in Irish strikes and lock-outs, the two most important being the Belfast (1907) and Dublin (1913) disputes led by James Larkin.

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1. Most of the material on the origin and development of the Shipping Federation and its subsidiary is to be found in John Saville, 'Trade Unions and free labour: the background to Taff Vale decision', pp.323-39, in Essays in labour history, ed. Asa Briggs and John Saville, and in the evidence of Cuthbert Law, general manager of the Shipping Federation in Report of the industrial council on the enquiry into industrial agreements, minutes of evidence, pp. 567 ff., [Cd.6953], H.C. 1913, XXVIII.

## APPENDIX 8

## THE MODEL SCHOOLS

3) to Model schools were opened between 1848 and 1867.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the central institution in Marlborough Street, Dublin, which comprised the original model schools as well as the training establishment and the offices of the board of national education, there were twenty-eight model schools in different parts of Ireland. These were divided into two classes, district and minor model schools. The district model schools possessed boarding facilities for resident pupil teachers, and the minor schools did not. Their distribution by provinces was very unequal, as the following table shows:

	Model Schools	
	District	Minor
Ulster	8	5
Munster	5	-
Leinster	6	1
Connaught	2	-

The model schools had a threefold purpose:

1. *Op.cit.*, pp. 426-7

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 230, 236.

1. Royal commission of inquiry into primary education (Ireland), i, pp. 211-20, [c. 6], H.C., 1870.

- 1) to promote the united education of protestants and catholics in common schools;
- 2) to exhibit the best examples of national schools;
- 3) to give a preparatory training to young teachers.<sup>1</sup>

Prospective teachers were to complete their training in the central establishment in Dublin, but in practice this was not always done.

The model schools were distinguished from all others in that they were controlled by the boards' commissioners who appointed and dismissed teachers and assumed all financial liability. Model school teachers received extra salaries and allowances. In many of the schools a more ambitious curriculum than that of the national schools was introduced, the subjects including book-keeping, geometry, algebra, science, music and drawing.<sup>2</sup> Fees were graduated according to the means of the parents and until the eighteen-seventies amounted to 1d per week, 2s. 6d. per quarter, or 5s. per quarter.<sup>3</sup>

The model schools met with denominational opposition from the first. During the early years the bishops and

1. *Op.cit.*, pp.426-7

2. *Ibid.*, pp.213, 220, 436.

3. *Ibid.* p.211. *supra*, p.101.

clergy of the established church denounced them, as they were part of the national school system to which they were opposed. The commissioners did not make themselves responsible for the religious instruction of the children, but they gave opportunities for the attendance at agreed times by clergymen of various denominations or persons appointed by them, thus carrying out their aim of combined secular and separate religious education. Catholic support for the schools existed initially, but after the synod of Thurles and the appointment of Cardinal Cullen to Armagh (1850) and the death of Archbishop Murray of Dublin (1852),<sup>1</sup> catholic hostility was outspoken. As new catholic schools were opened (many of them run by teaching orders such as the Irish Christian Brothers) catholic pupils were withdrawn. By 1870 no catholic priest attended to give religious instruction in any of the model schools.<sup>2</sup>

The part played by the provincial model schools outside Dublin in the training of teachers diminished<sup>3</sup> as new

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1. Ibid., p.211.

2. He was a member of the board of national education until his death.

3. Op. cit., p.439.

4. About fifty per cent of the teachers were still untrained in 1901. See supra, p.103.

denominational training colleges were opened after 1883.<sup>1</sup> By 1898 of the 5,586 trained teachers in primary schools, 2906 had received their training in denominational colleges, the rest having attended the central non-denominational college at Marlborough Street, Dublin.<sup>2</sup> As the number of denominational colleges grew they were responsible for an increasing number of the trained and assistant teachers appointed, in the year ending 30 September 1898 they could claim 151 out of the total of 207.<sup>3</sup> The four denominational training colleges were under catholic (3) and Church of Ireland (1) management, which explains the small numbers of the members of these churches in Marlborough Street. The majority of the students were presbyterian and methodist.<sup>4</sup>

The failure of the attempt to provide 'mixed' education was most evident in the model schools. In the same year

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1. From this year onwards denomination training colleges were eligible for grants.

2. Sixty-fifth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, year 1898-9, p. 30, [C. 9446], H.C. 1899.

3. Ibid., p. 20.

4. Numbers of Queen's scholars admitted for the session 1897-8: catholics 50; Church of Ireland 47; presbyterians 140; methodists 21; others 4. Ibid., p.30.

1. Figures in the preceding figures in this paragraph are also from the same source.

2. Tenth annual report, I. T.S.G., p. 49.



(ending 30 September 1898) they had 2,358 catholic pupils out of a total of 9,615. 2017 of these were in Dublin and Cork, where there were not enough catholic schools for them. One model school ((Trim , Co. Meath) was practically a catholic school (only 17 of the 177 children were protestant). Elsewhere the numbers were negligible and usually consisted of the children of catholic teachers or officials in the school. Ten of the thirty model schools had no catholic pupils and another eight had under 20. Three of the models mentioned in the debate on education at the Newry (1903) congress of the Irish Trades Union Congress were those of Belfast, Limerick and Kilkenny. In 1898 Belfast had 17 catholic pupils out of a total of 1060, Limerick had 21 out of 282 and Kilkenny 1 out of 71.<sup>1</sup> In some cases model schools, built in mainly catholic areas when hopes of non-denominational education were high, were more than half empty, Kilkenny, designed to accommodate 1300 pupils, had only 36 on the roll in 1903.<sup>2</sup>

Control of the model schools passed to the Ministry of Education in Northern Ireland and to the Department of

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1. *Op.cit.*, p.16. The preceding figures in this paragraph are also from the same source.

2. Tenth annual report, I. T.U.C., p. 49.

Education in the Irish Free State on the emergence of the new state. In Northern Ireland, by an education act of 1923,<sup>1</sup> model schools were placed under the control of the local education authorities in their area, and became in fact public elementary schools, though in some cases they maintained the traditionally wider curriculum. In the Irish Free State no such uniform procedure was adopted, except that after 1924 all became national schools. Of the eighteen in the new state, seven went out of existence or were handed over to a local religious authority, and the remaining eleven were placed under the management of the Minister of Education (represented by an inspector) or the joint management of the Minister of Education and a local religious authority.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Education Act (Northern Ireland), 1923, [13 & 14 Geo. 5, ch. 21] , s. 14 (1), and first schedule.
2. Information supplied by the secretary of the Department of Education, Republic of Ireland, in a letter dated 14 January 1961.

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1. In 1907 he was fined forty shillings for indecent behaviour (i.e. for disgusting language about two M.P.s, T.H. Sloan & J.W. Russell). He said in his defence that he had been speaking for eighteen years in the district and that nothing had ever occurred before. *E.H.*, 1907

2. E. Erwin, speaking in support of C.W. Dunbar-Buller, the official Unionist candidate opposed by T.H. Sloan in the South Belfast bye-election of August 1902, said that he (Erwin) was a friend of Arthur Erwin. 'Eight long years ago at the Custom House steps there was not one of those who were shouting so much

## THE BELFAST PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION AND THE INDEPENDENT

## ORANGE ORDER

The neo-classical Belfast custom house is situated in front of the berths of the cross-channel steamers. At the rear the steps leading up to it, surmounted by cannon, have provided for generations a convenient platform for speakers. Here on Sunday afternoons from the eighteenth-seventies a variety of orators drew crowds to be instructed, entertained or on occasions infuriated. The most popular were those who exploited that vein of religio-political sectarianism which is to be found in the lumpen citizenry of the city, but is not peculiar to them. The best-known exponent was Arthur Trew, who according to his own account spoke there regularly from 1889.<sup>1</sup> Trew and some companions were responsible for the attacks on the young Belfast I.L.P. branch in 1893-4, and it would appear that the Belfast Protestant Association grew out of this activity.<sup>2</sup>

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Trew for some years lived in Dublin and came each Sunday to speak at the 'steps', where he made a collection to pay his train fare. By the end of the century he was established in Belfast and directed the agitation against what were considered ritualistic practices. In 1901, he, Richard Braithwaite and others were tried on a conspiracy charge in connection with a Corpus Christi procession held on Sunday June 9 from St. Patrick's church to St. Malachy's college. The procession was greatly disturbed by hostile crowds and as a result Trew was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment and Richard Braithwaite (secretary of the B.P.A.) to six months.<sup>1</sup>

During Trew's imprisonment T.A.Sloan took his place at the 'steps'. Sloan, a labourer<sup>2</sup> with some talent for

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now. Arthur Trew and himself took up the cudgels against the socialists who were propagating their doctrines at the steps. Thus the B.P.A. was established.' B. N.-L., 13 Aug. 1902

1. B.N.-L., 24,25 July 1901. Crown counsel mentioned that Trew had been engaged in open-air meetings at the 'steps' for seven years past, that he had visited Belfast each week at first, but ultimately settled in Belfast.

William Boyd recollects attending the 'Steps' instead of Sunday school and noting the collection of Trew's train fare. Interview with William Boyd.

2. He claimed to be a member of the N.A.U.L. His claim was disputed by some delegates to the Belfast trades council, but upheld by the chairman. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Aug. 1902. He is described in his 1902 nomination paper as a 'cementer' (N.W., 15 Aug. 1902) and in 1906 as an 'artisan' (Ibid, 15 Jan, 1906) Lyons, Irish Parliamentary party, p.136, wrongly describes him as a manufacturer. Alexander Boyd, speaking at Banbridge on August 3, 1905, said that Sloan 'was adopted as an honest-workingman, an independent Protestant, to follow in the steps of William Johnston.' Irish Protestant, 12 Aug. 1905.

public speaking, was in the habit of holding politico-religious meetings in the platers' shed in Harland and Wolff with the tacit approval of the management (W.J. Pirrie, later Lord Pirrie, the controlling partner, and his brother-in-law, Alexander Carlisle, the general superintendent, both of whom disliked the conservative leaders in Belfast).<sup>1</sup> At the 1902 'Twelfth' demonstration of the Belfast orangemen, he attacked Colonel Saunderson, leader of the Irish unionist M.P.s and Grand Master of Belfast, asserting that he had voted against the inclusion in a bill of a clause providing for the inspection of convent laundries. Members of the Belfast Protestant Association had earlier heckled Saunderson, and though they allowed other speakers to be heard they did not accept the Grand Master's denials.<sup>2</sup> Sloan was suspended for two years by the County Grand Lodge of Belfast, a sentence confirmed by the Imperial Grand Lodge at their meeting in Armagh the following year.<sup>3</sup>

Trew emerged from prison on July 18. William Johnston of Ballykilbeg, M.P. for South Belfast, had died the previous day. He had served a prison sentence in 1868 for defying

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1. Interview with John Jamison.

2. N.W., 14 July 1902.

3. B.N.L., 4 June 1903.

the Party Processions Act at a time when the Orange Order was not popular with Irish conservatives and his championship of land tenure reform and temperance made him an unorthodox figure. He came to terms in later years with official unionism, but by then he had established a tradition of orange dissent.<sup>1</sup> Sloan's ascendancy during Trew's imprisonment and his following among shipyard workers made him the choice of the Belfast Protestant Association as their candidate for South Belfast. Trew supported Sloan during the election but later attacked him and left the B.P.A. [Some glimpses of the Belfast underworld are given by the evidence in cases involving the former allies. Sloan's constant companion was a buffoon-like character Thomas Galbraith, nicknamed 'the bubble burster'. His wife alleged that Trew had intimidated her by bringing a hostile crowd to her house. During the hearing the resident magistrate asked if one of Trew's witnesses was a member of the Bogey clan,<sup>2</sup> and Mr Galbraith's counsel asked another was he one of the gentlemen known as the Forty Thieves. Trew in

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1. D.N.B., second supplement, ii. 376-7. The mover of a motion that a letter of condolence be sent to his family from the Belfast trades council said that 'Mr Johnston during his life was one of the very few friends of this Council in the House of Commons'. B.T.C. executive committee minutes, 22 July, 1902. Other committee members thought the motion unwise, but it was adopted unanimously at a meeting of the full council. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Aug. 1902.

2. An early type of the 'teddy-boy' juvenile delinquent.

3. B.M.L., 14 Aug. 1902.

turn charged Sloan and Galbraith with intimidation, a case which produced the following exchange during the crossexamination of Trew by Sloan's counsel:

Did you ever call Mr Sloan a blackguard? - Not on this occasion.

And did you ever do it, sir? - I may have long ago.

And did you ever call him a foul epithet? - I may have called him a liar.

And did you ever call him a bastard? - Not when there were any ladies present (loud laughter).

Would you ever on any occasion use filthy language to Mr Sloan? - I answer a fool according to his folly.

Is that meant for Mr Sloan or for me? (laughter) - I read it in the Book of Proverbs. 1

Sloan's campaign consisted of attacks on the Ulster 'deadheads' - the leaders of Ulster unionism - who slighted the unionist workingmen, opposed temperance reforms and were generally 'soft' on ritualism in the Church of Ireland or the menace of Rome; an additional charge was their support for the English education bill of 1902.<sup>2</sup> The conservative choice was a liberal-unionist, Charles W. Dunbar-Buller, whose family had commercial interests in Belfast. Sloan asserted that he had money in the drink trade, which Dunbar-Buller denied,<sup>3</sup> but the unionist candidate was of little importance in the election.

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1. N.W., B.N.L., 2 June 1903.

2. The bill, which was welcomed by anglicans and catholics, met with furious opposition from nonconformists, who said that it would put the cost of sectarian education on the rates. See R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, pp.355-8.

3. B.N.-L., 14 Aug. 1902.

The principal object of Sloan's attack was Colonel Saunderson, against whom he repeated the earlier charge that the Grand Master of Belfast had voted against the inspection of convent laundries.<sup>1</sup> Sloan and his supporters made so much of this matter that the contest was known as the nuns' laundries election.<sup>2</sup>

1. B.N.-L., 15 Aug. 1902.

2. The reports of Misses L.E.A. Deane and H. Martendale (factory inspectors) for 1905 describe working conditions in the laundries of penitentiaries, houses of mercy and orphanages in Ireland. Penitentiaries: The machinery in the large places was good, but bad in the small penitentiaries. The short-term institutions were badly planned and ill-ventilated. The alleged hours of employment were from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the work was the same as in commercial laundries where there was much overtime.

Houses of mercy: Conditions were much worse than in penitentiaries. The principal meal was taken between 3 and 4 p.m., the diet was poor and the dormitories overcrowded. Little outdoor exercise was allowed except on Sunday. After the first year four pounds a year was given for clothes. The laundry was run for profit rather than for training.

Orphanages: Five orphanages were inspected, four catholic and one protestant, admittance was refused to a sixth where the nun in charge said that children of ten years of age and upwards worked in the laundry doing public washing.

The protestant orphanage contained fifty children. Two older girls were responsible for cleaning, though they were physically incapable of doing it. The aim was to make the home self-supporting by the work of the laundry, 'which has been planned with almost every defect possible except that of being underground'. Some extern women were employed.

The four catholic orphanages contained 380 children. Conditions were poor in all of them. In the worst the children were employed in a large public laundry or in a clothing work-room from the age of nine. Working hours were from 10-15 a.m. to 6-15 p.m. with an interval of one hour; on Saturdays work stopped at 6 p.m. None of the children had had baths for six months before the inspectors' arrival and no care was taken of their teeth or eyesight. The reverend mother, who knew of the



The revolt against the heads of the Orange Order spread beyond the ranks of the Belfast Protestant Association. The Springfield Temperance loyal Orange Lodge 948, meeting in the West Belfast Orange Hall, passed a resolution approving of Sloan's candidature, as did the Tyrone True Blue L.O.L.497, though without certain necessary formal preliminaries.<sup>1</sup>

Sloan also claimed that he was supported by the Grand Lodge of Dublin after he had been exposed as not belonging to the Belfast City Grand Black Chapter; it is clear that he had the backing of individual orangemen even in lodges which had not endorsed him officially.<sup>2</sup> Saunderson accurately recognised the danger when he said that Sloan belonged to 'a new movement which utterly refused to accept the authority of the heads of the Institution'.<sup>3</sup>

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factory acts, stated that she did not wish to have any official inspection, educational or otherwise, even though a grant might be obtained on these conditions. Report of the chief inspector of factories for the year 1905, pp. 260-62 [Cd 3036], H.C. 1906, xv, 405.

1. B.N.-L., 15, 16 Aug. 1902.

2. Ibid., 15 Aug. 1902. According to the Northern Whig (6, 7 Aug. 1902) many lodges had earlier declared for Sloan, who claimed that the 'working lodges' (i.e. containing working-class brethren) supported him. He was himself Master of St. Matthew's Total Abstinence Lodge. Speech of Alexander Boyd at Banbridge. Irish Protestant, 12 Aug. 1905.

3. B.N.-L., 14 Aug. 1902.

The followers of Sloan were no respecters of unionist leaders, who had the unpleasant experience of receiving from former supporters the treatment usually reserved for nationalist and labour candidates. Dunbar-Buller's first meeting was held in a small hall which was soon filled by a crowd containing a large number of Sloanites. They shouted the speakers down, smashed the furniture, and forced the abandonment of the meeting; the candidate and the platform party escaped with some difficulty through a back entrance.<sup>1</sup> Sloan disowned responsibility for the disturbance, but the unfortunate Dunbar-Buller had to face organised opposition during the rest of his campaign. The anger of one of his speakers, a solicitor called Wellington Young, was so great that it could find expression only in satanic mixed metaphor:

the money that was creating all the disturbance, the money that was creating the mob of the unwashed to beat down free speech, was not supplied by Mr Sloan but by the cloven foot behind him, who wanted to sit in Parliament, having first pushed him in through the Belfast Protestant Association (boos).

The 'cloven foot' was W.J.Pirrie (of Harland and Wolff) who had been seeking a parliamentary nomination for some time and was disappointed when he did not get it.<sup>2</sup> It is probable

1. B.N.L., 13 Aug. 1902.

2. Pirrie made a flying visit to Belfast on the day when the unionist selection meeting was being held. In a conversation with a Northern Whig reporter Pirrie said that 'though not anxious to interfere at all, he would not refuse to become a candidate if nominated by a responsible and representative body of electors of the constituency. That had been his

that Pirrie did supply money for Sloan's election expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence of the strong appeal that Sloan made to a section of the protestant working-class is to be found in the pre-election discussion which took place in the Belfast trades council. An ironfounder (W.Nicholl) pleaded with the delegates to ignore the body sponsoring Sloan but to recognise that he was a labour candidate, a plea repeated by other metal workers. The opposition hinted that the A.S.C. and J. might nominate William Walker and emphasised Sloan's bigotry; one delegate said that the B.P.A. nominee's 'principal object was running down his fellow men, simply because they were Roman Catholics. He was a Protestant but he did not believe in that sort of thing.'<sup>2</sup> He went on to praise the Irish nationalist

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attitude when first approached on the matter.' N.W., 6 Aug. 1902.

The check to his parliamentary ambitions made Pirrie's relations with conservative leaders even cooler than they were before, and hastened his departure from liberal-unionism; he ultimately became a liberal home ruler. See R.D.C. Black, 'William James Pirrie', in Threshold, i. no. 1, 58-67 (Feb. 1957), and in Conor Cruise-O'Brien (ed.), The Shaping of Modern Ireland, pp. 174-84.

1. His brother-in-law, J.A.M. Carlisle, in a letter to the Northern Whig on polling day, announced that he had given his support and vote to Sloan, and went on to make a bitter attack on the conservative leaders.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 7 Aug. 1902. The secretary (a polisher named W. Moore) suggested that if the council could not get an independent workingman to stand, they should ask 'the manager of the Queen's Island. He would sooner have Pirrie than any invertebrate person.' His proposal was greeted by cries of 'bosh!' and 'We have enough of that sort.'

members, saying that it must be admitted that they were the best Irish supporters of labour in the house of commons. After a vigorous debate the motion to support Sloan was defeated by 19 votes to 11.

Sloan had the assistance of a number of trades council delegates in his campaign. One meeting was opened by John Keown, a plasterer,<sup>1</sup> who found it difficult to reconcile his trade unionism with his bigotry; he accused Larkin during the 1907 strike of discriminating against protestants in the allocation of dispute pay<sup>2</sup> and finally joined the labour-unionists.<sup>3</sup> Another delegate was Alexander Boyd, who had succeeded Bowman as the organiser of the Municipal Employees' Association. Boyd had been at the conservative association meeting which chose Dunbar-Buller, but had broken away, complaining that if they were to select a liberal-unionist it should have been Pirrie; he became Sloan's principal trade union speaker.<sup>4</sup> Unlike Keown he supported Larkin wholeheartedly in 1907 and contributed greatly to the temporary

1. N.W., 7 Aug. 1902.

2. B.T.C. minutes, 12 Sept. 1907.

3. N.W., 30 Apr. 1914.

4. Ibid., 8 Aug. 1902,

alliance of orange and green.

The nature of Sloan's policy is best described by his own attack on Buller, who, he said, was not fighting a man but 'Protestantism, Orangeism, total abstinence, trade unionism, and in a word he was fighting Protestant Belfast.'<sup>1</sup> Sloan's most positive statement at the same meeting was one of support for old age pensions and the right of town tenants to own their own houses after paying rent for a number of years. The mixture pleased a sufficient number of voters to secure the return of the democratic orange candidate.<sup>2</sup> He justified his labour supporters by his parliamentary record, for he voted constantly for bills to improve factory conditions, working-class housing and the legal positions of trade unions. The election result evoked an editorial in the Belfast Newsletter, which said that it must be taken seriously and that the rank-and-file unionists had been much neglected, something which had been noticeable even in William Johnston's time.<sup>2</sup>

The blow struck against official unionism was followed in 1903 by a heavier one against the Orange Order. When Sloan

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1. N.I.W., 7 Aug. 1902.

2. South Belfast

Sloan	3795
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Dunbar-Buller	2969
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Majority	826
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B.N.-L., 19 Aug. 1902.

returned from Armagh, where the Imperial Grand Lodge of Ireland had confirmed his suspension, he was met at the Great Northern Station by bands, banners and a large crowd of supporters. He explained that his suspension would be lifted if he gave a written apology to Colonel Saunderson, but he could not allow his dignity as a public man to be insulted. He had support within the Grand Lodge of Ireland, for many members were indignant at the way the Belfast lodge 'had attempted to place the iron heel on the face of the democracy of Belfast.'<sup>1</sup> A month later the Independent Orange Order held its first demonstration.

The new order seemed at first glance little more than a group of dissident orangemen led by the Belfast Protestant Association, and leavening their 'No Popery' sentiments with resentment at the slighting of working-class brethren by the orange ascendancy. The resolutions moved by Sloan at the demonstration in Dundonald were the stock-in-trade of professional protestants - a demand for the inspection of all convents, opposition to the establishment of a sectarian (i.e. a catholic) university, and resistance to any modification of the declaration made by British monarchs at their accession, whereby they repudiated the doctrine of transubstantiation as

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1. B.M.L., 4 June 1903.

'superstitious and idolatrous'.<sup>1</sup> That there was a promise of something more positive was due to the chairman, who was making his first appearance in Belfast politics. He was 'Mr Lindsay Crawford, a Dublin gentleman and member of the Grand Lodge of Ireland'.<sup>2</sup>

Crawford had been born in Lisburn, educated privately and after some youthful experience in business and journalism founded the Irish Protestant, which he edited from 1901 to 1906.<sup>3</sup> It was a monthly journal (issued weekly from the middle of 1904)<sup>4</sup> published in Dublin and devoted to attacks on ritualism in the Church of Ireland, of which Crawford was a prominent layman. Its editor's growing interest in democratic politics was reflected in the journal, a development which led to clashes with shareholders; in November 1906 Crawford left Dublin and became the editor of the Ulster Guardian, a liberal weekly.

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1. Supra, p. 346, n.2

2. N.W., 14 July, 1903. The Northern Whig gives the fullest account of the demonstration.

3. R.M.Young, Belfast and the province of Ulster in the twentieth century, p. 588.

4. At the 1905 annual meeting of shareholders the chairman Colonel Lefroy referred to the difficulties of the paper's first year as a weekly. Crawford had to defend his policy of supporting Sloan and the Independent Orange Order against shareholders who resented attacks on the Unionist party. Crawford threatened to 'reconsider his position' if the policy was changed, and said that they 'must be prepared to make sacrifices for their principles, if not they had better renounce honest journalism.' The report was adopted. N.W., 29 Aug. 1905.

Sloan in 1903 was thirty-three years of age. His limited political insight confined him to a crude radicalism, and even this was gradually modified by the influence of 'the best club in the world'; his working-class supporters noted with some dismay that within a few years he had become quite a dandy in matters of dress.<sup>1</sup> Crawford, two years older than Sloan, was a man with a bold and active mind; unlike his contemporary he was too intelligent to be content with the barren sectarianism of his immediate surroundings, a fact which can be noted even in his first speech as an independent orangeman. He soon became the principal, or more accurately the only theoretician of the new order.

In his chairman's speech he spoke of his sympathy with the expelled members of the old order, he had come 'as an individual Protestant in support of those who, he believed, had at heart the principles of Protestant truth and sincerity.' He drew a distinction between the orange leadership and the

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1. They were particularly distressed by his wearing an overcoat with a fur collar. Interviews with Mrs F.F. Pattern s.o/ F.C. Carson, D. McDevitt. A cartoon in the Belfast Evening Telegraph (14 July, 1906) shows Sloan wearing a fur-collared coat labelled 'Conciliation' with a discarded 'No Pope' hat lying on the floor.

2. He was born in 1868. Letter (28 Nov. 1960) of Miss Morna E. Crawford, daughter of R. Lindsay Crawford, to the present writer.



A more important demonstration, which was far bigger than that rank and file, saying that the leaders of the old order of the old order, was held at Bellinsey in North Antrim; here looked upon the orangeman as a machine for voting purposes. Lindsey Crawford, new Imperial Grand Master of the new order, made a lengthy speech attacking the old order, when he criticised the Archbishop of Canterbury for expressing a wish to have the King's accession oath modified. But he broke away from the conventions of inter-orange and sectarian strife when he spoke of the note of dissatisfaction of the people with the ruling classes. 'The Prime Minister himself represented a decaying class— out of touch with the people, out of touch with the genius of progress - a class which would not be tolerated in any community of thinking men, because it represented the spirit of retrogression and surrender.'<sup>1</sup>

The first demonstration of the new order was a small affair and the 500 brethren who marched to Dundonald in 1903 were a mere handful compared with the demonstrators of the old order. The numbers had grown to 2000 by 1904, when the independent 'Twelfth' was held at the Giant's Ring, a pre-historic earthworks near Belfast. Sloan was the principal speaker, supported by a platform party which included Alexander Boyd and a member of the Grand Lodge of England.<sup>2</sup>

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1. N.W., 14 July 1903.

2. Ibid., 13 July 1904.

A more important demonstration, which was far bigger than that of the old order, was held at Ballymoney in North Antrim; here Lindsay Crawford, now Imperial Grand Master of Ireland in the new order, made a lengthy speech attacking William Moore,<sup>1</sup> the Unionist member of parliament in north Antrim for his attitude to the Land Purchase Act of 1903. He defended the order's association with Russellites<sup>2</sup> and radicals in their opposition to a bill on education, alcoholic licenses and Chinese labour on South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Crawford's speech made a considerable impression in the constituency and by strengthening the independent unionist opposition, contributed to Moore's defeat in the general election of 1906.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Moore was mainly responsible for the formation of the Ulster Unionist Council in 1904-5. R. McNeill, Ulster's stand for union. pp.34-5

2. Followers of T.W. Russell, M.P. for north Tyrone. See supra, chapter II, section 11 (Irish political parties) p.116.

3. N.W., 13 July 1904. Balfour's Licensing Act of 1904 compensated brewers and publicans who had to surrender redundant licenses, out of a fund levied on the trade itself. See R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, pp.360-1.

4. In a letter to Crawford, dated 15 July, 1904, the Rev. D.D. Boyle; presbyterian minister of St. James's church, Ballymoney, wrote that 'the public here was deeply impressed by our demonstration and your speech has been received with much favour.' The letter also confirms Crawford's position as the policy-maker of the new order, for Boyle stated that he had re-read 'the manifesto' [i.e. resolutions and a statement of the order's position, not to be confused with the 'Nagheramorne' manifesto of July 1905], was delighted with it, and considered Crawford right in making no references to the expulsions from the old order after July 1903. He also thought that the new order's case should be put to orangemen in Scotland, the colonies and America, and that Sloan and Crawford should go on a deputation to the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which was likely to

The land act of 1903 had been made possible by the work of a group of Irish landlords of a moderate unionist outlook. In August 1904 they formed the Irish Reform Association and turned their attention to the political problem. Their president, Lord Dunraven, with the help of the Irish under-secretary, Sir Antony MacDonnell, drafted proposals for the devolution to Ireland of an increased measure of local government.<sup>1</sup> The scheme was published in September and evoked immediate Irish, and especially Ulster, unionist hostility. The controversy which followed led to the formation of the Ulster Unionist Council and the resignation

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prove sympathetic. Letter in possession of Miss Morna E. Crawford.

1. The proposals were drawn up by Lord Dunraven, who had presided over the conference which led to the land Act of 1903, with the help of Antony MacDonnell, the Irish under-secretary. They were in brief i) a financial council to administer Irish expenditure, ii) the council to consist of the lord lieutenant as president with twelve elected and twelve nominated members, one of whom would be the chief secretary, iii) methods by which Irish revenue might be raised, iv) a statutory body to deal with certain Irish business of a parliamentary nature, the body to consist of Irish representative peers, the Irish members of parliament, and members of the financial council past and present. The disclosure of the scheme aroused Irish unionist opinion, especially in Ulster, and led to the resignation of the Ulster Unionist Council. For a detailed account of the origin and fate of the proposals see F.S. Lyons, 'The Irish unionist party and the devolution crisis of 1904-5', I.H.S. vi, pp. 1 - 22.

of George Wyndham the Irish chief secretary.<sup>1</sup>

A leading member of the Irish Reform Association was Captain Shawe-Taylor. He was a county Galway landlord who had proposed the land conference which led to the 1903 land act. He took up the defence of the Dunraven proposals enthusiastically and wrote to the Irish Protestant offering to debate them with Ulster protestants and orangemen. Sloan in reply invited him to do so in Belfast and arranged a meeting in the Y.M.C.A. hall, Wellington place, on December 16. The hall was crowded beyond its normal capacity of 2,500, though the tickets of admission were priced 1s. and 6d.<sup>2</sup> Unionist M.P.s were invited to attend, but all refused, some courteously, others with contempt; on the other hand the audience included members of the old order.

After declaring that ancient prejudices were passing away and that in Ireland they had learned 'that true religion did not consist in beating one another for the love of God'<sup>3</sup>

1. The Council was formed in Belfast on 2 December and held its first public meeting in March 1905, when it assumed the name by which it was to be known henceforth.

2. The proceeds of the meeting were given to the lord mayor's Unemployed Fund. Sloan at the conclusion of the meeting thanked A.M. Carlisle of Harland and Wolff for having Captain Shawe-Taylor as his guest.

3. The meeting is reported in detail in the Irish Protestant, 24 December, 1904.

Shawe-Taylor pleaded for a solution to the university question. That was necessary in order to raise the power, influence and prestige of the catholic laity. He believed that a fair and honest solution would be to add a provision that no ecclesiastic of any denomination should have the right on account of his office and rank to hold any position on a university governing body. He was opposed to state-aided denominational universities, whether catholic or protestant, and considered it was useless to say that Trinity was open to catholics. Ninety-three per cent of its students, and all its governing body, were protestant, and it contained a protestant church and a protestant divinity school. Reminding his hearers of the support which Belfast and Ulster gave the volunteer movement in the late eighteenth century and of how the Irish Volunteers won Grattan's independent parliament from England, he declared amid laughter that 'the question of Devolution would have been nothing but a cough-lozenge to the hungry Orange lions of that day.' He denied that the position of any section would be worse under devolution, and made the suggestion that working men north and south should unite in one party to advance their common interests. He concluded by asking the Orangemen of Ulster what their policy was. 'Were they going to hold aloof for their fellow-countrymen, or would they come, bringing with

them their self-reliance and their independence of character, and stand shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen in raising up their common country?'

Sloan made a rambling speech of the street-corner kind; it contained little more than condemnation of official unionists who supported the 1902 education act, opposition to a catholic university and a query as to the part played by Sir Antony MacDonnell in the devolution scheme. He had little to say on the principle of devolution except that if it meant 'taking away the power now possessed by the priests he was a devolutionist.'

The third speaker was Lindsay Crawford, who moved a vote of thanks to their guest. He considered that Shawe-Taylor's solution for the university question was no solution, as it would not be accepted by the bishops. Trinity College was protestant 'simply because the Church of Rome was opposed to mixed education.'

Crawford's criticism of Shawe-Taylor's historical references and defence of devolution was curiously, though no doubt intentionally ambiguous. He described Grattan's parliament as linked to England 'by ties of corruption and bribery', representing only 'the old landlord ascendancy party through the rotten boroughs of Ireland.' He denied that it had contributed to Irish prosperity or that any

The devolution scheme had 450  
self-respecting home ruler would accept it as in any sense  
an adequate measure of national self-government. As for the  
proposed devolution scheme, its financial council with twelve  
co-opted members was a return to the discarded ex-officio  
grand jury system, and its origin was the Provincial Councils  
proposal of 1885, which Joseph Chamberlain had supported as  
a modification of home rule to safeguard the imperial parlia-  
ment and protestant minority. The reason for devolutionists  
stopping short before reaching home rule, the natural sequel  
of their scheme, was 'distrust - in respect of University  
Education, distrust of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy; in  
respect of Devolution, distrust of the Irish Roman Catholic  
laity.'

Nothing that Crawford had said so far was calculated  
to displease the audience, which loudly applauded his analysis  
of devolution and protestant fears. He continued, however,  
in a different strain, by saying that a review of 'the tear-  
stained annals of Irish national life' forced them irresis-  
tably to the conclusion that [the woes of Ireland were mainly  
attributable to British misgovernment - to the fact that  
Ireland had been governed, not on national but on sectarian  
lines; that the Act of Union had made, not for the uplifting  
and strengthening of the national and secular forces of the  
country, but for the conciliation and increased power and  
wealth of an intolerant irreconcilable ecclesiasticism that  
knows no country and recognises no superior civil authority.

At no time in his speech did Crawford advocate a home  
rule policy, yet nowhere did he denounce it. He criticised

the devolution scheme and Grattan's parliament for the same reason - the undemocratic nature of both. His attack on the Act of Union for its failure to strengthen the 'national' as well as the 'secular forces of the country' was a new departure for even an independent orange speaker, and gained added significance from his next sentence:

Not until the Irish Roman Catholic placed the reasonable claims of his country before the impossible demands of his Church; not until the Irish Protestant inscribed in indelible characters in the articles of his political creed the words: - 'Not that I love Empire less, but that I love Ireland more' - would there dawn on the dark horizon of Irish politics a single ray of hope for the co-operation and consolidation of all classes and creeds for the material progress and prosperity of this country.

Crawford's conclusion was a confident assertion that when Ireland was

governed and educated on truly national lines [it would be] writ in the annals of the nation that in the Protestant city of Belfast, under the shadow of that hill on which was brought forth the untimely fruit of Irish Republicanism, there was sown by men - who, while widely differing in many essentials, were yet indissolubly linked together in the sacred bond of a common love for a common country - there was sown the seed of a better national hope - a seed predestined to sure and certain fruition.

1. Cavehill, which overlooks Belfast. On it, in 1795, before his departure for America, Tone, with some Belfast United Irishmen, took a solemn obligation 'never to desist in our efforts, until we had subverted the authority of England over the country, and asserted her independence.' Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, ed. William Theobald Wolfe Tone. (Washington, 1826) i. 128.



William Walker was the fourth speaker. He considered that Ireland was too weak and poverty-stricken to stand alone, instead of devolution he wished to 'solidify the Union, not in any narrow spirit, but in the broad spirit of striving for the prosperity and welfare of their native land.' He was opposed to the ascendancy of any particular sect, be that sect Protestant or Catholic. His bold statement that 'the old Cromwellians tortured and destroyed, just as the Roman Catholic Hierarchy had done in their days of power' was greeted with hisses and cries of 'Withdraw' and it took some minutes before Sloan was able to restore order and appeal for a fair hearing. Walker's last suggestion was that Trinity College should be made 'more national', i.e. that it should be non-denominational.

Though the Independent Orange Institution had grown in numbers since its first demonstration in 1903, it had not distinguished itself in any positive fashion from the old order. Among its spokesmen only the Grand Master had shown any originality, but he now set about the task of having his views adopted by the whole order. At a demonstration at Magheramore, County Antrim, held on July 13 (a routine demonstration had been held at Belfast the previous day) a manifesto was issued 'from the Independent Orangemen of Ireland' to 'all Irishmen whose country stands first in

their affections.'<sup>1</sup> It was the work of Lindsay Crawford and, given the nature of the organisation which sponsored it, well deserved the adjective 'remarkable' applied to it by the Belfast correspondent of the Press Association.<sup>2</sup>

The manifesto proclaimed that the members of the new order stood

once more on the banks of the Boyne, not as victors in the fight, nor to applaud the noble deeds of our ancestors... but to...hold out the right hand of fellowship to those who, while worshipping at other shrines, are yet our countrymen - bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

It attacked clericalism of all kinds in Irish politics, and considered that the 'lamentable condition of Ireland is mainly attributable to the false conception of nationality that prevails both among rulers and people; to the fact that our own country has been governed not on national but on sectarian lines'. In education it rejected clerical control of schools and instead of the establishment of a catholic university, proposed that Trinity College, after its divinity school was handed over to the Church of Ireland, should become a truly national university - 'with its proud traditions [it] is the heritage of the Irish race.' It called for compulsory land purchase to hasten the transfer of land to tenant farmers, supported the claims of town tenants and urged a revision of Irish finances and a redis-

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1. N.W., I.N. 14 July 1905. Both papers printed the manifesto in full. It was also printed in the Irish Protestant (22 July 1905) and issued as a pamphlet.

2. It is so described in the summary given in Joseph Devlin's Northern Star, 22 July 1905.

tribution of Irish parliamentary seats. It rejected the Dunraven devolution proposals of 1904-5 on the grounds that they relied too much on nomination instead of election and were therefore undemocratic. The sacred legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland was not mentioned, instead Dublin Castle government was condemned and both English liberals and Tories considered as untrustworthy 'on any of the questions that divide Ireland', as they would continue to play off 'Irish Protestants and Nationalists against each other to the prejudice of our country.' The conclusion recalled, perhaps unconsciously, Tone's desire to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the names of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter:

we consider that it is high time that Irish Protestants should consider their position as Irish citizens and their attitude towards their Roman Catholic countrymen, and that the latter should choose once for all between nationality and sectarianism. In an Ireland in which Protestant and Catholic stand sullen and discontented, it is not too much to hope that they will reconsider their positions and in their common trials unite on a true basis of nationality... There is room in Ireland for a patriotic party with a sound constructive policy that will devote itself to the task of freeing the country from the domination of unpracticable creeds and organised tyrannies and 'to securing the urgent and legitimate redress of her many grievances.

The manifesto was signed by Sloan and the principal officers of the order, R. Lindsay Crawford, Grand Master, the Rev. D.D. Boyle, Grand Chaplain, and the County Grand Master James Matier. Sloan, in putting the manifesto to the

meeting (it was not read as it was almost 3,000 words long) said that it 'represented their intentions and motives'. It is doubtful if Sloan understood the full implications of the manifesto, but he covered himself by saying that he did not necessarily agree with the Grand Master in everything that he did; 'Mr Crawford and himself could live and agree to differ in some things.' He also claimed that he was a member of the Ulster unionist party in the house of commons and contrasted its kindness and consideration to him with the hostile attitude of the Grand Lodge of the old order.

There was an immediate reaction to the manifesto from the unionist press, which denounced it as a devolutionist document. The Northern Whig, hitherto not unfriendly to the new order, joined the Belfast Evening Telegraph and the Belfast News-Letter in condemning the signatories, and especially Lindsay Crawford, and declared that the attack on the newly-formed Ulster Unionist Council and the phrase 'unionism is likewise a discredited creed', were evidence of the nationalist character of the new policy.<sup>1</sup> Sloan promptly wrote a personal apologia, reaffirming his unionism and protestantism. He complained that the original schism was

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1. N.W., 15 July 1905. For some weeks following the publication of the manifesto the unionist press carried articles and letters on the manifesto.

not of the new order's making, and that its members had striven to 'maintain the traditions of their forefathers without injury to those who may differ with them, but honestly endeavouring to take their part in everything they believe to be for the common good of all.'<sup>1</sup> He pleaded that the manifesto was misunderstood - he would have denounced it had it been anti-unionist in policy.

The nationalist press generally welcomed the manifesto. The Irish News, after some sharp remarks in early leaders on its 'virulent anti-catholic tone' saw signs of better things in its patriotic spirit and gave the new order favourable publicity.<sup>2</sup>

Lindsay Crawford was supported in his new departure by a number of correspondents. The novelist George Birmingham (the pseudonym of the Rev. J.O. Hannay, a Mayo Church of

1. N.W., 17 July 1905.

2. It reprinted from the Irish Protestant a report of a meeting, under the auspices of the Protestant Federation of Liverpool, which Crawford read the manifesto to a crowd of *at/* over 7,000 and had it unanimously approved. I.N., 22 July 1905. The Dublin Irish Daily Independent of the same date gave the substance of an interview with Lindsay Crawford, in which he stated that 'as an Ulsterman I regret to say that the evil influences of feudalism and clericalism prevail north of the Boyne just as strongly as they do south.' He considered protestantism sectarianism 'as destructive of national life and progress' as its catholic counterpart.

Ireland rector) described the manifesto as 'the most helpful document which has appeared in Ireland for the last hundred years',<sup>1</sup> and urged him to send a copy to P.D.Kenny, editor of the Irish Peasant. A well-known K.C., Albert Wood of the North West Bar, wrote that 'your doings on 12th and 13th are almost the only talk of the Bar here' and that manifesto, noted by the London papers, was 'cleverly and well done.'<sup>2</sup> Michael Davitt congratulated him on his 'strong democratic pronouncement' in his interview with the Irish Daily Independent, saying that it would prevent the devolutionist leaders from exploiting the Independent Orange movement for anti-national ends. He suggested that the manifesto should be revised on similar lines before publication for special circulation and in a later letter offered some financial help towards it.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Letter dated 15 July, 1905. Hannay had contributed under the pseudonym Eoghan, 'A neglected chapter of Irish history, rewritten for Irish Protestants,' on the volunteer movement of 1782, to the Irish Protestant.

2. Letter dated 16 July 1905 and headed 'North West Bar'.

3. Two letters dated 22 and 25 July 1905, marked private, and addressed from 'St. Justin's / Dalkey'. These letters and those from Hannay and Albert Wood are in the possession of Miss Morna E. Crawford.

~~Shaftesbury~~ In spite of the defection of some members<sup>1</sup> the manifesto was endorsed by independent orange bodies in Belfast during July and by a meeting of orangemen of the old order at Banbridge in August.<sup>2</sup> For some months Sloan contented himself with his apologia and defended the manifesto against criticism, though it was obvious that he was jealous of its author. Addressing a branch of the B.P.A. he asserted, while not repudiating the manifesto, that he was free and untrammelled - 'Roamnism, Devolution had not caught him... Lindsay Crawford with all his ability and all his pluck had not thrown the mantle of mesmerism over him.'<sup>3</sup> The two nonetheless continued to work together and with Alexander Boyd, spoke for Richard Braithwaite, whom the B.P.A. put up to oppose Lord

1. They included Nathaniel Bonar, of the Johnston Memorial Independent L.O.L., No. 13 (N.W., 19, 21 July 1905) and John Keown of the Belfast trades council. Keown, who had spoken for Sloan in the 1902 election, described himself in his letter as 'member of No.4 No Surrender Independent Orange Lodge, delegate to the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, and Chairman of No.1 Branch B.P.A. Weekly Northern Whig, 29 July 1905. Other letters were signed with pen-names by correspondents claiming to be members of the new order.

2. 'Grand Orange Lodge of the Independent Order at Belfast, July 29, Independent Orangemen of Belfast, July 31, meeting of Orangemen (Parent Order) of Banbridge and district, August 3.' Inside back cover of the manifesto in pamphlet form.

3. N.W., 28 Aug. 1905. F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party, p.136, n.1., assumes that Sloan was the author and gives him too much credit for deploring sectarian animosities. Passages in the manifesto, as well as its leading ideas, can be found in earlier speeches of Crawford.

Shaftesbury for the aldermanship of a Belfast ward; it was significant however, that Crawford attacked Shaftesbury as a moneyed aristocrat and left the others to denounce ritualism and Romanism.<sup>1</sup>

The approach of the general election of 1906 brought a crisis in the affairs of the new order. Crawford was no longer able to keep Sloan, fearful of losing his seat, in line. A convenient letter from an associate, George Park, enabled Sloan to assure his supporters that he was sound politically. He wrote a full recantation, dissociating himself 'unreservedly' from any portions of the manifesto which had been 'construed as antagonistic to the settled policy of the Unionist party in Ulster', promising loyal co-operation with the Ulster Unionist party at Westminster, and adopting the resolutions to be submitted to a forthcoming meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council.<sup>2</sup> The returning prodigal also attended as a member of the platform party, the Unionist Council's demonstration in the Ulster hall on January 2.<sup>3</sup>

Sloan's recantation was swiftly followed by angry denunciations of his apostasy. Colonel Hutcheson-Poe, of

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1. N.W., 9 Sept. 1905. Shaftesbury defeated Braithwaite by 1648 votes to 791. Ibid., 14 Sept. 1905.

2. B.N.-L., 1 Jan. 1906.

3. Sloan was at the back of the platform. I.N., 3 Jan, 1906.



the Irish Reform Association, in a letter to the press was forthright in his condemnation - 'for downright barefaced audacity and shameless indifference to all common ideas of honesty commend me to Mr Sloan's recantation.'<sup>1</sup>

In an interview with a representative of the Dublin Evening Mail, Lindsay Crawford agreed that a suggestion had been made to have the Independent Orange Order oppose Sloan in South Belfast. Though Sloan had been present at a meeting of the Grand Lodge a week earlier, he had not told them of the steps he was about to take, 'but I may say I have always dreaded the surrender of Mr Sloan.'<sup>2</sup> Crawford pointed out that Sloan had been approached even before the issue of the manifesto by unionist leaders anxious to have Sloan remove independent orange opposition to William Moore and other official unionist candidates.

Unable to fulfil his part of this bargain, opposed in his own constituency by a conservative candidate (Lord Arthur Hill) and fearful lest he lose left-wing independent orange and nationalist support, Sloan made a partial withdrawal of his recantation. At the B.P.A. meeting on Sunday, January 7,

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1. I.N.A., 5 Jan. 1906.

2. Ibid., 8 Jan. 1906.

he complained of continued official unionist hostility even though he had tried to make peace with them on the subject of the Magheramorne manifesto. 'He could see nothing objectionable in the manifesto' but he had expunged those declarations which his unionist friends thought devolutionary.<sup>1</sup>

Sloan was duly elected for South Belfast and the threatened split was averted. Crawford himself was involved in difficulties with the Irish Protestant. In 1904 new shareholders had been brought in to meet the expense of issuing the paper as a weekly. Crawford's support of the Independent Orange Institution and his changed political line met with increasing opposition from them, especially after the issue of the Magheramorne manifesto. He survived an attack at the annual meeting of shareholders in August 1905,<sup>2</sup> but as he made no concessions, and his opponents had financial control of the paper, he was dismissed early in 1906.<sup>3</sup>

The Ulster Guardian in its issue of September 15,

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1. B.N.-L., 9 Jan. 1906.

2. Supra p. 442, n. 4.

3. Alice Stopford Green, the widow of the historian J.R. Green, and herself a writer on Irish history, paid this tribute in a letter dated 30 May, 1906 to Crawford: 'You have made a good fight in Ireland and I deeply regret that it is to close in its present form, and I sympathise most heartily with your situation especially considering that it was the Chairman's vote only that decided the matter'. Letter, in possession of Miss Morna E. Crawford.

carried an announcement that 'Mr R. Lindsay Crawford, author of the "Magheramorne Manifesto", has severed his connection with the Irish Protestant, and is about to take up his residence in the North, having received an important Press appointment.' The 'important Press appointment' was the editorship of the Ulster Guardian. The weekly paper was the official organ of the Ulster liberal Association, itself formed in April 1906 as a result of the liberal victory in England.<sup>1</sup>

Heartened by his new appointment, Crawford threw himself with renewed energy into his task of extending the influence of the orange democracy. In November he stated during the course of a lecture on 'Democracy and nationalism' in Belfast that there could be no union between the two orders unless it was 'based upon the acceptance of the peculiar and distinctive doctrines embodied in the Magheramorne manifesto.'<sup>2</sup>

1. In view of later developments it is interesting to note the remainder of the paragraph.

'This will be good news for Mr Crawford's many friends and admirers in Ulster, and should be of great assistance to the Independent Orange movement in its efforts to educate the democracy. It is a well known fact that the directors of the Irish Protestant for some time past have been out of sympathy with Mr Crawford's democratic principles, and as they are of the landlord class we presume it is their intention to run the paper in future as a Tory organ.'

2. Ulster Guardian, 10 Nov. 1906. The lecture was under the auspices of No. 1 District of the Independent Orange Institution.

Though he declared that their fight with 'the Longs, the Moores and the Craigs... was not one over Home Rule, Devolution or Russellism, it was that the common people might rule', his remarks about home rule implied that democracy necessarily included self-government.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he praised Sloan, denounced those who tried to sow distrust between them, and claimed that Sloan and himself were fighting 'the fight of the twentieth century, which was that government must be by the people for the people.'

In his lecture Lindsay Crawford referred to the impending by-election for Colonel Saunderson's north Armagh seat. The unionist candidate was William Moore, who had lost his seat in north Antrim at the general election to an independent backed by the new order.<sup>2</sup> Crawford promised the order's support to an independent candidate W.J. MacCaw if he were going to make an honest fight but if he did not, someone else would have to fight Moore. MacCaw withdrew under official unionist pressure and Crawford took his place with only a week in which to conduct his campaign.

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1. Walter Long, William Moore and Charles Craig (brother of James Craig, later Lord Craigavon) were all unionist M.P.s. Crawford said that home rule was a unionist principle established in the colonies and local government. 'The only country in the empire peopled by the white race in which the principle of trusting the people had been denied to its fullest extent was this country of Ireland.'

2. Supra, p.360.

The fight was a very bitter one. Moore, who considered Crawford to be mainly responsible for his defeat in north Antrim, alleged that he was sent down to Armagh by 'the little Russellite - Pirrie gang in Belfast.' He could not understand why the nationalists were willing to support him. 'This creature had used language of the Roman Catholic religion which he (Mr Moore) would be ashamed to say of any man's religion. That was for a while when it was necessary to raise the wind from a Protestant democracy.'<sup>1</sup> Crawford replied that he stood 'on the side of his unfortunate countrymen who for years had been kept back in the march of civilisation by lawlessness and sectarian influences.'<sup>2</sup> In his eve-of-the-poll speech he appealed for an end to 'this accursed sectarian strife' and described Moore's party as 'the implacable enemy of the working classes.'<sup>3</sup> He had the assistance of Alexander Boyd at several of his meetings, but they were disrupted by organised hostile crowds; at a meeting in the market square of Portadown 400 police kept the crowd at bay and enabled Sloan to speak.<sup>4</sup> Intimidation

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1. B.N.-L., 12 Nov. 1906.

2. Ibid., 15 Nov. 1906.

3. Ibid., 16 Nov. 1906.

4. B.N.-L., 10, 15 Nov. 1906.

continued on polling day (November 16); according to Crawford both his voters and election agents were threatened with violence. He would have been defeated even if there had been no irregularities; as it was Moore had a three-to-one victory.<sup>1</sup>

A week after polling day Crawford and his wife took up residence in Magheramorne, where they were given a reception complete with a torch-light procession, fireworks, bonfires on 'Manifesto Hill', and an address of welcome from the Manifesto Independent L.O.L., 64, Ballycarry.<sup>2</sup>

The first issue of the Ulster Guardian edited by Crawford appeared in January 1907. The editorial gave

1. B.N.L., 19 Nov. 1906. Crawford declared that liberty of speech and of voting were absent in the election - over 1000 of his supporters were prevented from voting and at one polling station his agent had to retire four hours before the close of the poll under threat of murder.

<u>North Armagh</u>	
W. Moore (unionist)	4228
R.L.Crawford (independent)	1433

majority	2795
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2. Ulster Guardian, 1 Dec. 1906. Rev. J.E.Bartley, of nearby Ballycarry, said that the manifesto had given him some hope for Orangeism and Ireland. 'It was a gospel of peace and love, and if no other monument was erected to the memory of Lindsay Crawford the future historian would hand down the text of the Magheramorne Manifesto as a fitting memorial of an Irishman who was destined to play a great part in the life of his country.' A mob, concealed at the approaches to the railway station, threw stones at the party, and later smashed gates and mobbed a guest who was returning to Belfast.

notice of its new and vigorous policy;

As a Liberal journal, our sympathies go out to the yearning of Democracy, and our pages provide a common platform for every Irishman - be he Orange or Green, Protestant or Roman Catholic - whose ideals of government are Liberal and democratic....<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent issues of the paper showed what the policy meant in practice. Under the heading, 'Labour World' trade union and labour news was sympathetically and regularly reported, and Crawford, both in reports of his own speeches, in editorials, and in articles on sweated trades emphasised the wretched working conditions in Belfast industry.<sup>2</sup> The attempt to awaken a consciousness of Irish nationality in Ulster was made even in literary and social articles, and pride was expressed in the part taken by protestants in the United Irish and Young Ireland movements.<sup>3</sup> To quote James Connolly,

1. B.N.-L., 2 June 1908. When Crawford was dismissed in May 1908 by the board of the Ulster Guardian, he sent to the press copies of a letter addressed to Hugh Mack, the board's chairman. It contained a review of his editorship of the paper and the passage quoted from his first editorial.

2. The issue of 29 February, 1908 contained reports of the parliamentary debate on the Sweated Industries bill (its rejection was seconded by Captain Charles Craig) and a lecture on infant mortality in Ireland. It also reported Crawford's lecture, under the auspices of No.1 Independent Orange Lodge, on 'One hundred years of Irish history,' in which he referred to sweating in the Belfast linen trade and said that 'the linen merchants of Ulster...were now the last buttress of Toryism and Castle ascendancy in Ireland'.

3. One issue of the Ulster Guardian (9 Feb. 1907), contained a report of the presentation of an address to James Lowry, who had lent his land for the Magheramorne manifesto demonstration,

Crawford endeavoured to demonstrate 'that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of a civil and religious liberty out of Catholics'.<sup>1</sup>

Crawford received a congratulatory letter on his first issue from Francis Sheehy-Skeffington,<sup>2</sup> who thanked him for an appreciative advance notice of the National Democrat, which he and W.P.Ryan were bringing out as a successor to the suppressed Irish Peasant.<sup>3</sup> Skeffington had strongly influenced Crawford in the later years of his (Crawford's) editorship of the Irish Protestant, for after initial disagreements,

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and a short biography of an ancestor of his, David Bailie Warden, a colonel in the United Irish army in 1798. A second article reported an address/a barrister W.H.Davey to the Y.M.C.A. Literary and Debating Society in Derry on Irish poetry. Davey made particular mention of patriotic writers like William Drennan, Thomas Davis and Sir Samuel Ferguson and deplored the anti-Irish spirit in Ulster. A third article defended the Christian socialist, the Reverend R.J.Campbell.

1. James Connolly, Labour in Irish history (Dublin and London 1922), p.216. Crawford (Ulster Guardian, 29 Feb. 1908) said that he 'was not a socialist, nor did he believe in the accepted theory of Socialism... But the socialistic theory was preferable to the economic heresy of the linen trusts and monopolists'.

2. Letter, dated 13 January, 1907, in the possession of Miss Morna E. Crawford.

3. Cardinal Logue had, in a letter to the proprietors, threatened to ban it in his archdiocese as 'a most peniculous anti-Catholic print'. The proprietors stopped publication immediately. See Brian Inglis, 'Morgan of the Leader and Ryan of the Irish Peasant' in Conor Cruise O'Brien (ed.), The Shaping of Modern Ireland, pp.108-23, and W.P.Ryan, The Pope's green island, pp. 7-16.



Crawford accepted his fellow-journalist's view of Irish nationality. They became friends and the Skeffingtons visited the Crawfords in Magheramorne.<sup>1</sup>

During the Belfast dispute of 1907, Larkin and the men on strike received valuable help from Lindsay Crawford, both in Ulster Guardian editorials and in public meetings. At the July 12 demonstrations of the Independent Orange Order collections were taken up in aid of the men, and Sloan and Crawford supported them in their speeches. At the old order's Belfast demonstration permission to take up a collection was refused. Crawford declared that the old Orange bottle could not hold the new wine of twentieth century democracy... [The independents] had earned for themselves a definite place in Irish history as the vanguard of that Protestant democracy, whose lips had been touched with fire from the altar of national freedom. The old Order was the last bastion of class-rule in Ireland and the open foe of the people. 2

In the aftermath of the dispute Sloan had second thoughts about his support for the strikers, and qualified

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1. American Biography, xxxv, article on Lindsay Crawford, quoted by Miss Morna Crawford in a letter to the present writer; letter of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington to Lindsay Crawford (dated 24 Aug. 1907), in which he thanks him for hospitality and announces the demise of the National Democrat and the preparations of his life of Michael Davitt for T. Fisher Unwin, the publishers.

2. N.W., 13 July 1907.

his earlier statements. Finally at a meeting in the Ulster hall, his supporter George Park<sup>1</sup> in the chair, he condemned the attacks on blackleg Tories and declared that 'he would never vote against the working man, but he would never wilfully injure capital.' He denied that he had tried 'to blend Orange and Green... he never imagined those colours would blend - but when Protestants and Roman Catholics had common interests no sectarianism ought to make a gulf between them.'<sup>2</sup>

Crawford continued his efforts to blend orange and green in the opening months of 1908 and became increasingly outspoken in his advocacy of a policy indistinguishable from home rule. In a letter to the London Times (April 21) he replied to a speech of the Earl of Erne, Grand Master of the old order, asserting that 'Unionism and Protestantism are no longer interchangeable terms in Ulster... This new Ulster is loyal to Ireland'. Four days later he received a directive from the board of the Ulster Guardian to cease publishing matter advocating 'directly or indirectly, either Home Rule or Devolution in any form'.<sup>3</sup> He refused to obey, and at the end of May took his leave of the paper in a blistering letter

1. Supra, p.459.

2. B.N.-L., 17 Dec. 1907.

3. B.N.-L., 2 June 1908.

to the chairman of its board

More than once I alluded in leading articles to the necessity of grounding the Liberal revival in Ulster on something more patriotic and statesmanlike than the transference of social power and influences from the Tory to the Liberal side by the wholesale creation of magistrates and the shuffling of offices... It will scarcely be denied that to the Independent Orange Order, the Labour Party and the Nationalists, the Ulster Liberal Association owes the fact that, after wandering in the wilderness for twenty years, it has been able once more to speak with its enemies within the gate. But for the fact that Ulster Liberalism was regarded as a progressive and democratic force, and that Lord Pirrie's powerful influence was behind it, the working men of Belfast would never have rallied to its support as they did.

One of the first ultimatims presented to me was a minute of the Board prohibiting me from advocating in leading articles the right of the worker to a living wage and fair conditions of labour, and this in opposition to men without whose disinterested support the Liberal Association could have held no meetings in Belfast. To denounce landlord rights as tenant wrongs is a cheap passport to political fame for some Liberal employers of labour, who own no land, but these men, if linen merchants and manufacturers, have a different code of ethics in their relations with flax growers and workers. 1.

In the same month of May Lindsay Crawford was expelled from the order of which he was Grand Master. The County Grand Lodge of Belfast suspended him for his letters and speeches on home rule, and in a subsequent communication expelled him for 'disorderly conduct and insulting language' at the same meeting.<sup>2</sup> Crawford appealed to the Grand Lodge

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1. B.N.-L., 2 June 1908.

2. B.N.-L., N.W., 21 May 1908.

of Ireland. Sloan presided at the meeting and though there were conflicting reports about its decision (Crawford claimed that it upheld him by twenty votes to thirteen), it was the end of the Grand Master's career in the Independent Orange Order.<sup>1</sup>

With Crawford's expulsion Sloan became Imperial Grand Master and reverted to his earlier policy of sectarian speeches. At the July 12 demonstration in the same year a serious decline in membership was observed, and the succeeding years brought no reversal of the trend.<sup>2</sup> Prominent working class brethren like Alexander Boyd and Richard Braithwaite left the order.<sup>3</sup> His following reduced in quality and quantity, Sloan lost his seat in the first general election of 1910 - and his reputation as a total abstainer.<sup>4</sup>

1. N.W., 10, 11 June 1908. The Independent Orange Lodge Martin Luther No. 56 handed back its warrant and dissolved because it objected to Lindsay Crawford's expulsion by the Belfast County Grand Lodge and to Sloan's ruling as presiding officer at the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Ibid., 15 June 1908.

2. N.W., 13 July 1908, 14 July 1909.

3. Richard Braithwaite, erstwhile secretary of the B.P.A., appeared as a labour candidate in the Belfast municipal election of January 1908. 'Woodvale Ward did not want the Labour-Socialist doctrine as represented by Mr Braithwaite.' B.E.T. 16 Jan. 1908.

4.	South Belfast.	James Chambers K.C. (Unionist)	5772
		T.H.Sloan (independent)	3553
		majority	<u>2219</u>

B.N.-L., 22 Jan 1910.

In June of the same year Lindsay Crawford, unable to find employment in Ireland, emigrated to Canada.<sup>1</sup> His subsequent career as journalist in Canada and Irish Free State consul in New York was not without interest, but he himself considered that the Magheramorne Manifesto the greatest achievement of his political life.

The Independent Orange Order, deprived of Lindsay Crawford's leadership, never regained its short-lived importance; its survival today is a historical anomaly.

The president of the Irish Temperance League made an attempt after the election to persuade Sloan to emigrate to Canada, as he had started to drink heavily. Interview with Bulmer Hobson, who was approached by the president for assistance.

1. 'Your letter made me feel very unhappy. I was trying to believe that something would turn up in Ireland to keep you... If there were a hundred of us like you in Ireland, I think we'd bring about a revolution.... If Canada doesn't suit, try South America. Roger Casement is British Consul at Rio Janeiro and might be able to tell you of openings.' Letter of Robert Lynd (dated 25 May 1910) to Crawford. Courtesy of Miss Morna E. Crawford.

Crawford wrote from Montreal (30 June 1910) to John Devay offering to write a series of articles for the Gaelic American on 'The Rise and Fall of the Independent Orange Movement in Ireland.' Devoy's Post-bag, ed. William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, ii. 394-5.

5. Will you continue to maintain  
diplomatic relations with the  
of St. James?

Yes.

## APPENDIX 10

THE QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED BY THE BELFAST PROTESTANT  
ASSOCIATION TO CANDIDATES IN THE NORTH BELFAST BY-  
ELECTION, AND WILLIAM WALKER'S ANSWERS (1905)

1. Will you oppose every attempt to abolish, or otherwise alter, the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, which require the sovereign of these realms to make the Statutory Declaration against Transubstantiation upon his accession to the throne?

Yes.

2. Will you uphold the Parliamentary enactments which prohibit the Throne of Britain to a Roman Catholic or to a Protestant who has married an adherent to the Papal Communion?

Yes.

3. Will you resist every effort to throw open the office of Lord High Chancellor and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to Roman Catholics?

Yes.

4. Will you labour for the enforcement of the Acts of Parliament which prohibit the residence of Jesuits and Roman Catholic monks in this Kingdom?

Yes; except when they are English born, and keep within the limits of Civil law.

5. Will you contend against every proposal to open diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the Court of St. James?

Yes.

6. Will you resist every attack upon the legislative enactments provided by our forefathers as necessary safeguards against the political encroachments of the Papacy?

Yes.

7. Will you strive to secure the periodical inspection of convents and monastic institutions; the liberation of such of their inmates as are forcibly detained; the compulsory registration of all deaths in such institutions and the suppression of all private burial grounds?

All convents and conventual institutions which harbour other than their proprietors should be officially inspected.

8. Will you make an effort to obtain a redistribution of Parliamentary seats for the purpose of diminishing the extravagant representation of Ireland, by means of which the Roman Catholic and Disloyal party has hindered the business of the House of Commons?

Yes, but no reduction in the aggregate of numbers.

9. Will you offer strenuous resistance to all demands for the expenditure of public money upon the establishment or endowment of a Roman Catholic University or College in Ireland?

Absolutely.

10. Will you try to procure the institution of a Parliamentary inquiry into the manner in which the public funds have been bestowed upon Roman Catholic institutions (particularly in Ireland) and the publication of full particulars of each endowment and grant, the amount of public money given in each case, and the object to which it has been applied?

All public grants should forthwith cease, and a return made of how previously the money had been spent.

11. Will you use your influence for the purpose of obtaining the abolition of the Bishop's veto; the substitution of deprivation for imprisonment in the case of ministers who fail to obey the law; and the emancipation of the Church of England from the condition of anarchy created by the systematic disloyalty of the Romanising clergy?

Absolutely opposed to Sacerdotalism.

12. Will you withstand every attempt to bring forward Home Rule for Ireland; or any measure or clause of a measure which would introduce Home Rule by a policy of 'devolution' or by the establishment in Ireland of a legislative body empowered to enact laws on purely Irish affairs?

I believe that only by the co-operation of the English workman can the Irish labourer be helped; hence I shall oppose Home Rule in any form.

13. Will you insist upon the fulfilment of the duty of His Majesty's Government to protect the King's Protestant subjects from the boycotting persecuting policy formulated by the Church of Rome, and carried into effect by the Catholic Association of Ireland, the United Irish League and other organisations?

The full power of the state should be used to secure the fullest civil and religious liberty.

Will you, in all things, place the interests of Protestantism before those of the political party to which you are attached?

Protestantism means protesting against superstition, hence true protestantism is synonymous with labour.

Sources: N.W. 11 Sept. 1905.  
Northern Star, 23 Sept. 1905.



10. Will you support APPENDIX 11  
single franchise?

THE QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED BY THE BELFAST TRADES COUNCIL  
TO CANDIDATES IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1906

1. Will you advocate and support the amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act, so that it may include seamen and all others at present excluded from its provisions?

2. Will you vote for a Bill giving Old Age Pensions to all workmen over 60 years of age?

3. Will you advocate and support a measure for the taxation of urban land values?

4. Will you support a Bill to sanction peaceful picketing in Labour disputes?

5. Are you in favour of the immediate nationalisation of Irish railways?

6. Will you support a Bill for the taxation of mineral royalties?

7. Are you in favour of the abrogation of the Chinese labour ordinance?

8. Will you vote for an eight-hours' working day in all occupations when the labour is continuous?

Sources: B.T.C. minutes, 11 Jan. 1906.  
9. Will you state briefly your views on housing, Poor-law and Temperance reform?

10. Will you support a bill for adult suffrage and a single franchise?
11. Are you in favour of the compulsory sale of estates by the Irish landlords?
12. Are you in favour of extending the powers of municipalities in trading matters?
13. Will you support the amendment of the Unemployed Workmen Act so as to give the community power to abolish unemployment?
14. Will you vote against Labour Bureaux being made use of in connection with Trades Disputes?
15. Will you oppose the imposition, under any pretext, of further taxes upon the food of the people?
16. Are you in favour of the Returning Officers' expenses (in Parliamentary elections) being paid out of the public rates?
17. Are you in favour of the payment of M.P.s?
18. Are you in favour of the assimilation of the Belfast Harbour Franchise to the municipal?

Sources: B.T.C. minutes, 11 Jan, 1906.

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1. Manuscript Materials

## 1. Belfast trades council.

The following materials covered by this thesis are in the council's possession.

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a) Minute books. These are complete except for two periods: October 1881 (when the council was founded) to October 1885, December 1895 to September 1897.

Until November 1892, when the press was admitted, the minute books constitute the only record of the meetings of the council.

b) Executive committee minutes exist for the period February 1899 to April 1903.

c) An account book for the years 1899 - .

d) A dues book for the years 1903 - .

## 2. Dublin trades council.

The council possesses the following:

a) Minute books. These cover the years 1894 to 1906 (January).

b) Executive committee minutes for 1903 - 7.

3. Reminiscences of Robert McClung, in my possession. McClung was an official of the Workers' Union (established 1898) and later of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, when that union absorbed the Workers' Union in 1930. McClung was connected with the political labour movement in Belfast from an early age and was present at election meetings of Bowen in 1885. He was one of Walker's election workers in 1905-7 and treasurer of the North Belfast Labour Club before it became a branch of the I.L.P. in 1907.

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The reminiscences consist of twenty-six pages covering events during 1885-1912, and twelve cards of notes for the years 1901-20.

4. Two letters of Michael Davitt, dated 20 February 1891 and 19 December 1894, to Michael McKeown. The first is concerned with McKeown's activities as an N.U.D.L. organiser, the second with his work for the Irish National Federation. One letter of James Larkin, dated 12 May 1932, to the family of Michael McKeown on the occasion of his death, recalling his work for the National Union of Dock Labourers in Great Britain and Ireland. Letters in the possession of Mr Seán McKeown of Belfast, son of Michael McKeown.
5. Letters to Robert Lindsay Crawford, in the possession of his daughter, Miss Morna E. Crawford of Boston, Massachusetts. Fifteen of the letters are dated between 1904 and 1910. The correspondents include the Rev. D.D.Boyle, Grand Chaplain of the Independent Orange Order, Michael Davitt, Alice Stopford Green, Canon J.O.Hannay ('George A. Bermingham'), Robert Lynd, Francis Sheehy Skeffington and Albert Wood, K.C. The letters deal with the Independent Orange Order, the Magheramorne manifesto, and Lindsay Crawford's own career.
6. Minutes of the managing committee (Belfast district) of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners for the years 1911-14, in the possession of the Belfast district of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers.
7. Journals of Thomas Russell, State Paper Office, Dublin. See p.22. n.1.

## II. Interviews

(The following people were interviewed during the years 1957 - 60.)

Mr R.R.Bowman, C.B.E., permanent secretary (retired) of the ministry of labour, Northern Ireland, son of Alexander Bowman, supplied information on his father's activities in Great Britain and Belfast between 1889 and 1901.

Mr William Boyd, a retired official of the National Union of Vehicle Builders, and a former delegate to the Belfast trades council, provided reminiscences of the Belfast Labour movement, the Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order.

Mr R.H.Campbell, son of D.R.Campbell, contributed his own recollections and those of his father.

Mr F.C.Carson, who spent a lifetime in the engineering industry and was acquainted with leading members of labour and socialist organisations in Belfast, furnished detailed information on the development of such organisations in the first decade of this century.

The late Samuel Hazlitt provided lecture notes on the early history of the labour movement in Belfast and supplemented them with personal recollections.

Mr Bulmer Hobson, the author of the Dungannon club manifesto of 1905, gave background information on Belfast politics in the first decade of the century, as did his sister, Mrs. F.F.Patterson.

Information on the Belfast Socialist Society was provided by two members, Mr John Jamison and Mr Thomas R. Johnson. Mr Johnson, the founder of the society, was an official of the Belfast trades council and later secretary of the Irish Labour Party and Trades Union Congress. He confirmed incidents in Walker's elections gleaned from other sources.

The late Daniel Joseph McDevitt, delegate to the Belfast trades council from the early eighteen-nineties, delegate to the Irish T.U.C., labour municipal candidate on several occasions, was an important source of information. He was closely associated with the leading members of the Belfast trades council, especially with William Walker. His tailoring establishment was an unofficial discussion centre for many years for those interested in politics. His recollections were invariably accurate when checked against evidence from other sources.

Mr Seán McKeown, son of Michael McKeown, supplied information about his father's activities as trade union and political organiser.

### III. Printed Materials

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2. Second (1889), third (1890) and fifth (1892) annual reports of the Labour Electoral Congress.
3. Reports of the executive committee of the Fabian Society for the years (ending 31 March) 1892 - .
4. Reports of the Independent Labour Party conferences, 1893 - .
5. Labour Representation Committee, annual conference reports 1901 - . After 1906 the title was changed from 'Labour Representation Committee' to 'Labour Party',
6. Irish Trades Union Congress

a) Agenda of the first congress (Dublin, 1894), published by the Dublin trades council. With it is bound up the agenda for Labour Day (May 6) and an appendix giving a history of the council.

b) Annual reports of the Irish Trades Union Congress, 1895 - .

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in Ireland (above, B.IV.3).



Next Business.

<sup>Amendment</sup>  
 Mr Johnston proposed & Mr Monroe seconded that a special meeting be summoned to discuss the conduct of Mr Bowman in writing to Mr Broadhurst on a vote being taken the amendment was declared carried after which Mr Monroe handed in the following notice of motion for special meeting

\* That at the formation of this Council it was for obvious reasons, deemed a fundamental principle of its Government that Political Questions of a party & contentious nature should be eliminated from its proceedings that the necessity for conducting the Councils work on the lines indicated has existed since its formation and still exists, that the secretary, Mr Alexander Bowman, has for a considerable time past violated this principle by taking an active part in party politics and notably in the position he has taken up with regard to the Government of Ireland Bill now before Parliament that the secretary's action in this particular case has by implication committed the Council to approval of that measure and as a protest against such an assumption, and in justice to the great majority of Belfast Trades Unions, who were dragged unwillingly into a false position we call upon Mr Bowman to resign his office as secretary  
 Resolved that special meeting be called for Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> Inst at 5.30.

March 18<sup>th</sup> 94

The fortnightly meeting of the Trade Council was held on the above date Mr J. O'Sullivan presiding Other delegates present

The other delegates present were:—  
 E L Richardson, Vice-President; P Dowd, Treasurer; John Simmonds, Secretary; Brush-makers, Mr Berkeley; Bakers, P Keogh; Bacon-curers, Mr J Brennan; Brassfounders, P Flood; Bookbinders, T Kearnes; Basketmakers, Mr Cunningham; Bottlemakers, J Murray; Boot and Shoe Riveters, Mr Quinn; Brewery Labourers, T Comerford; Coopers, S Kane, Mr Jordan; Cabinetmakers, Union, Mr Hicks; do Alliance, Mr Clinton; Carpenters, No 3 Branch, J Simmonds; do No 4 Branch, P Lynskey; do No 5 Branch, T O'Connell; do, No 6 Branch, J Fitzpatrick; Dock Labourers, Mr Tierney; Litho Printers, Mr Smith; Lathmakers, Mr Best; Organ. Builders, Mr White; Operative Butchers, Mr M'Ketterick; Plumbers, P Dowd; Plasterers, G Leahy, P Kelly; Painters (Amalgamated), J Ward; Paper Cutters, Mr Kelly; Rope-makers, Mr Lowry; Stationary Engine Drivers, Mr Dodds; Slaters, J Byrne; Saddlers, J Chambers; Stonepointers, Mr O'Neill; Stereotypers, Mr Holmes; Silkweavers, Mr Murphy; Type Printers, E L Richardson, C O'Reilly, C Timmons; Tailors, P Shelley, Mr M'Mahon; Tramwaymen, P A Tyrrell; United Labourers, E Kearney; J Nelson, Messrs M'Doughlin, and Maher; L N Labour Union, H Sheridan; Confectioners, P Martin; Amalgamated Smiths, J Swan; Engineers, No 1, Mr Perkins; Poulterers, Mr Ryan. Visitors — J P Nappiti, Labour Correspondent; M Conway, J M'Key, J Taaffe.

The minutes of last meeting read and signed. The Secretary read letters from Sir J. Hibbert, Browne and Nolan and Pile. Mooney Heo also Circular in re Government Contracts and grievances of Trade and Labour bodies = Mr Simmonds proposed the adoption of the following resolution which was seconded by Mr Lynell, supported by Messrs O'Reilly and Richardson and adopted.

"That this meeting is of opinion that the time has arrived when a convention of delegates of the various trades and labour organizations of Ireland should be held with the view of considering the best means of consolidating the interests of these bodies, promoting the objects of trade unionisms, making more effective the legislative means at present in existence, of protecting the lives and liberties of the workers generally, to consider how best reform can be effected in the way of removing impediments to human progress at present existing within the Constitution under which we live, and to consider matters affecting trade and labour generally; that a committee be now appointed with power to make arrangements for the holding of a convention on the lines indicated early in May."

The following Committee were appointed to carry out the necessary arrangements Messrs Fitzpatrick, Kearney, Lynell, Shelly, P. Kelly, O'Reilly, Swan, Kearney, Hicks, Jordan, Cunningham, Smith and the Officers.

Mr Richardson proposed the following resolution: "That this Council in expressing satisfaction at the proposed appointment of additional factory inspectors

E. J. TULLOCH

J. O'HARA

J. FITZPATRICK

MURPHY DAVIS

A. TAYLOR



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, 1897.

J. McCARTON

J. SIMMONS

P. J. LEO

R. P. O'CONNOR

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Members of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, in the Phoenix Park, May 1901. In front, from left: John Arnall, E.W. Stewart, Thomas Brady, James Connolly, John J. Lyng, William O'Brien, John Carolan. At back, from left: W.J. Bradshaw, John Brannigan, J. Goff, Mark Deering, Murtagh J. Lyng, Daniel O'Brien, Thomas J. Lyng, James Bishop.



A. Bowman



H. McManus



W. Walker



E. L. Richardson



R. L. Crawford



T. H. Sloan







