

Irish News

IRISH FISHERIES.—A HISTORY OF IRELAND.—TRADE WITH CANADA.—
LOOKING AHEAD.—STORM AND FLOODS.—THE LANGUAGE MOVEMENT.
—THE OATH.

The president of the Irish National Fishermen's Association has issued a call to all Irishmen to contribute to the Association. It is pointed out that the wealth of the sea is not a wealth which has to be discovered or even made, it is there waiting to enrich the whole country if the fishing industry is properly fostered and developed. Already the campaign conducted by the Association has resulted in steps being taken by the central authorities to suppress illegal trawling.

A movement is afoot in support of the preparation of an authoritative and impartial history of Ireland, compiled from the original records in Irish and foreign libraries. Through the destruction of the Public Record office, Four Courts, Dublin, many documents of historic interest were lost. Some of those documents went back to the days of the Anglo-Norman invasion and embraced State papers of all classes, including many autograph letters of English monarchs, of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and other Irish chieftains. They also included the marriage license of the Duke of Wellington and portions of the wills of Swift and Daniel O'Connell.

A Trade Commissioner for Canada has come to Dublin, to develop and increase trade between Canada and the twenty-six counties of Southern Ireland. He intends to call on Irish importers to advise them of the address of the Canadian office in Dublin and to furnish them with statistics. If a Canadian exporter of, say flour, wishes to establish a market for his product in Southern Ireland he will communicate with the Dublin office and the Canadian Trade Commissioner there will put him in touch with desirable importers. A prominent Irish manufacturer fears that the function of the Canadian office in Dublin is to push in the 26 Counties the sale of Canadian goods, most of which Irish manufacturers and producers are able and willing to supply. He asks what steps are being taken to increase Irish exports to Canada. For the ten months, January to October, the value of the imports from Canada into the twenty-six counties was over \$5,000,000. In the same period exports from the twenty-six counties to Canada represented only \$100,000.

In his message to the nation on the third anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, Mr. Kevin O'Higgins has had the courage to dispense with comfortable commonplaces (says the *Weekly Freeman*). He does not disguise the fact that the Free State, like every European nation, is condemned to a stiff struggle in the teeth of wind and tide. Its opponents would like us to believe that the ordeal is an inevitable consequence of

the Treaty. This is about as sensible as if a section of the crew of a ship in the thick of a gale should argue that everything would come right if the captain consented to change the ensign. No revolution in the form of government will cut Ireland out of the European system, and so long as we are part of this system, so long must we be subject to reactions from economic upheavals that have shaken the whole Continent to its foundations. Under the Free State we possess the power, not indeed of averting these evils, but of mobilising our best energies to grapple with them. Judge Cobalan, who sees our problems from the outside, is emphatic that conditions in the Saorstát are immeasurably better than they were a year ago. "Liberty," he says acutely, "does not consist alone in the possession of free institutions, but in the exercise of power under those free institutions." The Saorstát provides the fullest scope for this exercise of power on the part not only of its statesmen, but of its citizens. Under it we are learning to eliminate our weaknesses, as well as to develop our strength. The reign of terror has been broken, and with security once more established the country is in a position to face its urgent social and economic problems. These are serious enough, but they are by no means so grave as those which confront the majority of European nations. Energy and honest endeavor, to quote Mr. O'Higgins, are the main qualities required to secure a happy solution, and the greatest achievement of the men who won the Treaty is that their exertions enable Irishmen to bring all their energies to bear in dealing with their own difficulties.

Ireland has experienced one of the most boisterous of Christmases, both as regards family festivities and in the matter of weather (writes a correspondent to an exchange). A gale has been blowing over the country since Christmas night, bringing thunder, lightning, snow, sleet, and tremendous rain. Rivers all over Ireland have burst their banks, and from Belfast, Cork, Galway, and Dublin, representing the four points of the compass, come reports of flooded streets and houses made uninhabitable by water. Along the coast there has been serious damage. At Lahinch, a favorite sea-side resort in Co. Clare, the promenade was practically destroyed by heavy seas, while the gale stripped houses of their roofs and blew in their windows. In one case sea and gale between them brought a whole house down. At Waterford, a heavy railway truck was blown along the track by the gale, its change of position nearly causing a first-class railway accident. In Kerry, lightning carried away a church belfry; at Monaghan, a haycart was blown off the road, two men being injured; while at Derry and Belfast boats are being used as street vehicles. Huge tracts of land are under water in many counties.

Dublin recently witnessed the spectacle of the leaders of the warring Irish sections united at the Congress of the Gaelic League in an attempt to revive the Irish language. The movement was seriously embarrassed by the political disquisitions of recent years.

It was surprising to see many men, including Eamon de Valera himself, who had been gaoled by the Saorstát Government, sitting in the same room with the Cabinet Ministers, and to see the generals who faced each other in the recent fighting assembled together to promote a movement of which all approved. Not a word of English was spoken throughout the proceedings.

There were men present, too, like Lord Ashbourne and Douglas Hyde, who have long been identified with the language movement, and yet who are aloof from the controversies which divide the Free Staters and Republicans.

The general criticism was that the Gaelic League has been ruined by politics, and the articles written by its president, Mr. McGinley, and printed in American newspapers, were condemned by Michael Hayes, Speaker of the Dail. It was also complained that the official organ of the league discussed controversial political topics.

The main purpose of the meeting was to raise funds, and the Free Staters feared the funds might be used for anti-Free State propaganda. The suggestion was made by a Free Stater, Professor McEnri of Galway, that there was plenty of money available in the funds collected for the Dail Eireann in America, which might be devoted to the language movement. This brought de Valera to his feet. He offered, on behalf of the Republicans, to abandon his American litigation provided the money was devoted to the economic reconstruction of Irish-speaking districts and administered by an independent committee drawn from the universities, including that of Belfast.

Patrick O'Maille, Deputy Speaker of the Dail, welcomed this proposal, but General Mulcahy, supported by Generals O'Murthuille and O'Sullivan, described it as highly controversial, and urged that it be dropped in the interests of unity. This course was adopted, and the Congress limited itself to the appointment of a mixed commission of 15 to investigate the condition of the language movement, and to make recommendations to the national convention.

At the moment (says a Home paper for January 24) there are frantic efforts being made by the rank and file of the Anti-Treaty party to persuade the leaders to enter An Dail and take the oath to the Saorstát. There is not the remotest chance of their succeeding in this. The reason for the change of outlook on the part of the rank and file is caused by the well-known intention of the Government, at as early a date as is convenient, to declare the 46 seats held by the Anti-Treaty Party vacant. Discussing this matter with a member of the Cabinet during the week, he told the writer that he was fully satisfied that when the election for these 46 seats takes place, the Anti-Treaty Party would not be able to win more than ten of them at the outside.

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