

Irish News

GENERAL.—GERMANS IN DUBLIN.—DAIL EIREANN'S PROGRAMME.—
DUBLIN BROADCASTING STATION.—THE SHANNON TROUBLE.

The death is announced of Canon Fortune, P.P., Taghmon. Deceased was a well-known Wexford priest.

Canon Ryan, P.P., Dolphin's Barn, has died at Bournemouth. Deceased was the author of a learned work on the Gospels for the Sundays.

The mortality among Dublin priests is remarkable, Canon Ryan is the third member of the Chapter to die within one month.

Mr. Vincent O'Brien has just been appointed to the control of the Irish Free State's first musical broadcasting station. Readers will remember that he toured New Zealand with John MacCormack about thirteen years ago.

On his retirement, Sir Thomas Maloney, the last Irish Chief Justice, was presented by the members of the legal profession with a portrait of himself in oils by Sir William Orpen. Sir Thomas is an old Christian Brothers' boy.

The Pope presented President Cosgrave with a valuable medal, on the occasion of his visit to Rome. To Mrs. Cosgrave he gave a beautiful beads. The Irish President had also a long interview with Mussolini.

Great interest was taken in Ireland in the cordial reception accorded to the Irish pilgrims. The Pope's words of welcome were particularly affectionate and his speech aroused great enthusiasm among the pilgrims.

A grand reception was given in the old Irish College, by Monsignor Hagan. There were half a dozen cardinals and many Roman prelates there to meet President Cosgrave and the pilgrims.

The number of medical students in Trinity College this year is 35. This is the lowest number on the roll since 1892.

Mr. Good, T.D., declared that while in Dublin a bricklayer received 9½d an hour, in 1914, to-day he is paid at the rate of 1/10 an hour. This is higher wages than that given in Glasgow or Liverpool. He urged an inquiry into the prohibitive cost of building in Dublin at present.

While the dispute over the Shannon scheme still drags along, the Limerick unemployed are growing tired of it, and already 150 men are at work on sections of the scheme. These unskilled laborers are making substantial progress and may accomplish the task before the organised workers are aware of it. The contractors are satisfied that they can go ahead with the plans regardless of what the Unions will do.

Mr. Dempsey, Free State representative in Paris, recently returned to France after a visit to Ireland. He is actively promoting increase of direct trade between Ireland and France. He reports that during his visit he formed the impression that politically, industrially, and otherwise, the Free State was perhaps the most stable country in Europe to-day.

Archbishop Mannix received the freedom of the city of Dublin from the suppressed corporation. Referring to the gatherings in

his honor in various parts of Ireland in which he was accorded a civic reception, he remarked that these functions were not helped on by the Government or by the clergy, but they seemed to him to come from all parties. He was not allowed to enter the Six Counties, and some towns in the South refused to give him a civic welcome.

For some weeks past the number of Germans in Dublin has become noticeably greater. They are now to be met frequently on the streets, generally in groups of three or four. All of them are not, of course, Siemen's workers. Some are engaged on the Marino building scheme, and in addition there are representatives of various firms encouraged to seek business in the Free State by the success of their compatriots.

When the members of Dail Eireann re-assemble after their long holiday, they will enter upon a session that promises to be more lively than any yet held. No authoritative statement has yet been made in regard to the Ministry's legislative programme, and a matter of particular curiosity is the attitude the Government will adopt towards the report of the Liquor Commission. Labor will open the campaign by an onslaught on the department of Industry and Commerce, because of the Shannon trouble. When that issue has been cleared the unemployment problem will be kept in the foreground until some satisfactory assurance is extracted from the Ministry. The Farmers, on their part, will take an early opportunity of asking that the air be cleared in respect of the Government's agricultural policy, whether it is to be one of subsidised tillage or not.

Then there are all sorts of lively subjects to come before the legislature either in the shape of legislative proposals or otherwise. In addition to the Liquor Commission's report there will be the vexed question of the medical register; the complaints about the staffing of the civil service; the report of the Boundary Commission (the mystery regarding the publication of which grows deeper every day); the Compulsory School-attendance Bill, and a great deal of other such controversial topics.

After a period of inactivity, during which all other countries were allowed to outstrip us in the development of wireless, preparations for the opening of the Dublin broadcasting station are now being rushed with feverish haste. The transmitting station is to be in McKee barracks, formerly the Marlborough Barracks, beside the Civic Guard depot in the Phoenix Park. The whole undertaking is to be under the control of the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, though against his will, for it will be remembered that Mr. Walsh was strongly opposed to such an arrangement. It is understood the service will be inaugurated in six or seven weeks'

time, when an address by Mr. Cosgrave will probably be broadcast. Wireless enthusiasts are not very optimistic, for they naturally assume that our resources will not enable the Free State to engage such talented artistes as Great Britain can afford. On the other hand Irish Irelanders are satisfied that under Mr. Walsh's control the service will be genuinely national in tone and outlook.

Some aspects of the present Shannon dispute are worrying the taxpayer, and have yet to be made clear. First of all, it is asked, did Siemens calculate their contract prices on the wages they have offered, and how did they arrive at the wage figures? Secondly, what is the amount of the contract for the scheme? Thirdly, if a settlement of the wages dispute involves an increase in the cost of the enterprise will that increase fall upon the taxpayer or upon the German firm? To answer these questions it is well to bear in mind that the exact terms of the contract with Siemens have never been made public. Mr. McGilligan emphasised in the Dail and Senate that the entire scheme involved a maximum outlay of £5,200,000. Beyond that figure little is definite. One gathered from the Minister's speeches that the method of procedure is this: Siemens tender for the work, giving in detail their charge for each particular portion of it. These figures are binding upon Siemens, and are a maximum, but not a minimum, because the Government reserved the right, if it could get any particular portion of the work done at a smaller figure by another firm, to hand that particular part over to the other firm.

But there is one important exception to this arrangement. In regard to the civil constructional work—presumably the railway extensions, the drainage, and the embankment—Mr. McGilligan admitted that the estimates might vary by 10 per cent. This is the part of the work that has caused the present dispute and it therefore seems certain that any increase in the cost will fall upon the Irish taxpayer. With regard to the wages, Mr. McGilligan several times in the Dail and Senate clearly stated that he and his Department took responsibility for advising Siemens in that particular. The whole subject it is understood, is to be raised in the Dail by the Labor Party, when some further light may be thrown upon the position.

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