

IRISH NEWS

GENERAL.

A married woman named Burke has just died at Nenagh, County Tipperary, at the age of 121 years. She was the oldest woman in the British Isles, and probably the oldest in the world. In 1912 Europe had 7000 living centenarians of whom 3888 were Bulgarians. In the Balkan countries, however, where there are no records kept, age is often a matter of guesswork rather than of fact.

The following is an extract from a letter from a well-informed Englishman, which appeared in the *Daily News* of Saturday, January 4:—"My advices from across the Atlantic are, that Irish-Americans who are the most active political body in the States, are getting every week into closer and closer union with the German-Americans. If events in Ireland develop, as well they may, during the spring, it is quite on the cards that we shall see in America the formation of an Irish-German-American bloc, definitely hostile to Britain, immensely powerful, numerically, financially, politically, and socially, and determined to use that power to the utmost for Britain's injury."

The inquiry into the maltreatment of the political prisoners in Belfast Gaol was rendered useless from the prisoners' point of view, as there was no guarantee to their counsel (Mr. Gavan Duffy) that the question of official privilege would not be raised, as it was at the inquest on Thomas Ashe. Official evidence went to show that the prisoners got out of hand when some of them were not treated as political prisoners, as was promised after Ashe's death. The governor admitted the whole body of political prisoners had to attend Mass in handcuffs, and some who approached the Holy Sacrament were treated in like manner. Mr. Justice Dodd, who presided over the Commission of Inquiry seemed horrified at this desecration of the Mass.

As a result of the general election, the Unionists return 22 members instead of 18 as heretofore. This is due almost entirely to the Redistribution Act of 1918, under which the Belfast seats were jerry-mandered to suit Sir Edward Carson's party. Belfast formerly returned four members, of whom one was a Nationalist; now there are nine, but owing to the manipulation of boundaries the Nationalists still return only one member, so the Unionists return eight members where they formerly had three. Again the failure of the "Party" to keep the Cardinal's compact lost the Sinn Fein Party East Down.

THE IRISH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: SOME PRESS VIEWS.

"An event marking a new epoch in Irish history was the opening of the *Dail Eireann* in the Mansion House, Dublin, on Tuesday, January 21. The assembly, which was conducted with order and dignity, adopted a Declaration of Independence for Ireland as a nation and addressed a memorandum to the free nations of the world setting forth Ireland's position and claims, the acknowledgment of which is asked for. On the question of internationalisation it laid down that 'Ireland is the Gate of the Atlantic,' and that her independence is necessary to the freedom of the seas. In calling on the free nations to support self-determination for Ireland, the memorandum demands that Ireland be confronted publicly with England at the Congress of the Nations. Both declarations were adopted with enthusiasm, and the proceedings adjourned. The entire proceedings of the *Dail*, except the reading of the English and French translations of the declarations, were conducted in the Irish language, no speeches being made in English.—*Irish Independent*.

"We feel that it would be to Ireland's advantage to be associated with Great Britain if we could get full Dominion self-government."—*Irish Independent* (leader).

"We must await the development of the policy laid down by the Assembly. We do not hesitate to

confess that we do so with the deepest anxiety and foreboding. The ideals embodied in the Republican declarations may be lofty and impressive, and they strike a note that fires the imagination of the young men of Ireland whose patriotism now, as always in the past, is a transfiguring passion. God forbid that this ardor should ever fail, for it is by virtue of it that Ireland has kept her soul alive under trials that would have broken a less resolute race. . . . In our judgment any attempt to give effect to the declarations of the Mansion House must inevitably lead to defeat, disaster, and the ruin of the national hopes."—*Freeman* (organ of the Irish Party).

"According to the strict letter of the law, it is an offence for any assembly to purport to usurp the functions of the Parliament at Westminster. No regard for that fact hampered yesterday's demonstrators. . . . This is not the moment to discuss the responsibilities of the executive. They must stand by the test of the consequences of yesterday's meeting."—*Daily Express* (Carsonite).

"The majority of Nationalists would obey the law and give little trouble, if they were confident it would be enforced. . . . They will obey the usurping rebels when they see that their legitimate rulers are weak and vacillating. As the rebels become bolder it is the duty of all loyal men to put aside any difference and unite in opposing them to the utmost. This is what Sir Edward Carson urges."—*Belfast News Letter*.

"The overwhelming victory of the Sinn Feiners at the polls encourages them to believe that they could issue practically an unanimous demand for independence, and fire a rhetorical shot which, if it did not echo round the world, would at least break the windows of the Peace Conference."—*London Daily Mail* (Tory).

"The studied air of dignity and solemnity which marked the first meeting of the 'Parliament of the Irish Republic' would have done credit to the proceedings in the British House of Commons, when Scotch estimates are the order of the day. The Sinn Fein M.P.'s were greeted with cheers, but I think the audience restrained its enthusiasm a little out of desire to preserve at all costs the dignity of the proceedings."—*Special correspondent, London Daily Express* (Tory).

"Everything was done decently and in order—indeed the circumstances of the opening of the Irish Parliament were entirely prosaic. I may say here, once for all, that the proceedings throughout were orderly and dignified, not a word being uttered that could provoke discord or ill-feeling."—*Special correspondent, London Times* (Tory).

"It is very easy to laugh at the Sinn Fein Parliament, but it is not so certain that it is wise. . . . No one who is not determined to deny patent facts can refuse to acknowledge that behind the Declaration of Independence at Dublin, fiercely in earnest, is the solid mass of almost all Irish opinion outside Ulster.

It is the policy or want of policy of the British Government which has driven the Irish people to this extremity. Let any honest Englishman put himself in the place of any Irishman during these years past; let him fancy himself the victim of the succession of alternate menaces and cajoleries, of promises continually made and as continually broken, and then let him try to say with a clear conscience that the bitterness of the Sinn Feiner, impracticable as it may be in its expression, is either unnatural or unreasonable. How the resulting situation is to be met is for the Government which made it, to decide."—*London Daily News* (Liberal).

"The meeting of the *Dail Eireann* must be regarded in the light of a deliberate challenge to the [English] pledgebreakers as well as a protest in the strongest form it could be made, against the methods that successive British Governments have employed in their dealings with this country."—*Cork Examiner* (Irish Party).

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