

Irish News

CONTINUED DEPOPULATION—AN IRISH PRESBYTERIAN LEADER'S VIEWS—CURFEW ABOLISHED IN THE SIX COUNTIES—VACANCIES IN THE DAIL—JUBILEE INDULGENCE IN DUBLIN—IRELAND AND FRANCE. A DISASTER AVERTED.

No census has been taken in Ireland since 1911. Irishmen have, therefore, to search in other places for indications as to whether the population is growing or still dwindling. They will get an unpleasant surprise from the statistics on education now available. The period covered is that from 1912 to 1920. In the first of these years there were 8255 schools and 499,038 attendances. Every subsequent year showed a falling-off, and in 1920 the numbers were 7898 schools and 481,154 attendances. It is believed that this represents the extent of emigration in that period. It is of interest to notice that in the Free State, for which figures are given separately for 1921, the religious percentages of the pupils were: Catholics, 93.9; Protestants, 4.7; Presbyterians, 1.0; Methodists, 2; and others, 2. In 1921 there were 240 schools teaching through the medium of Irish.

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The Commissioners appointed under Article 12 of the Anglo-Irish Treaty to determine the boundary between the North-East area and the rest of Ireland made a tour, extending over some days, along the border counties (says an exchange). It is significant that during this tour the Commissioners kept quite close to the line of the existing boundary. The inference drawn from this procedure is that nothing more than mere rectification is intended. Rectification would give no relief to the Catholics in Tyrone and Fermanagh counties. From the very start Catholics have been opposed to partition. Business men and others among the Protestants are beginning to realise that partition involves many evils and inconveniences. Rev. J. W. Hamilton, Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, hopes that "the day will come when there will be no partition in Ireland. The best opinion in the North dislikes partition, and would be glad to see the day when North and South could work together without any friction about boundary questions, commerce, or boycotts." He paid a tribute to the authorities in the South of Ireland, and went on to observe: "I wish that the Northern leaders would do more in the way of encouraging and admiring, rather than ridiculing, as they do far too much, these men in the South." In the Belfast Orange press he was taken to task for this statement. Replying to the strictures, Dr. Hamilton says: "The one matter that I criticised was what I regarded as the too frequent habit of many public men and of the press to see nothing but evil about the doings of the Southern Government, and evermore holding it up to ridicule and contempt. I fear your comment stands out as a conspicuous illustration of the unworthy habit I refer to."

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Curfew has been "lifted" at last; for the first time during a span of years that may

be referred to as "several," people in Belfast and all over the Six Counties can walk abroad at any hour of the 24 without incurring various pains and penalties—if detected (says the *Irish Weekly*). The announcement issued on December 30 has already been received with mingled feelings. On one side are the sturdy lovers and champions of freedom, who naturally abhor all restrictions on the personal liberty of the individual. One of them explained his views in an interview that night. "I don't want to be out of doors after 12 o'clock one night in the 365," he said, but I want to be at liberty to go out, and remain out, while I do no injury to anyone, at any hour of the night or morning it pleases me to do so." On occasions many citizens were subjected to serious inconvenience. But the other side of the case was stated briefly by the owner of a lock-up shop, who said:—"My place was raided twice within two years while the Curfew rule was imposed, though thieves knew they would be challenged by the police if they appeared in the public street between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. Now that any burglar can walk to his own hiding place as independently as if he were the Lord Mayor, and at any hour of the morning, with his booty in his pocket or under his top-coat, I expect the industry of Bill Sykes and Charles Peace will prosper and wax more profitable than shipbuilding or linen-making."

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The nine members who have resigned and whose seats have to be filled in the approaching by-elections are:—Mr. Joseph McGrath (North Mayo), Mr. D. McCarthy (South Dublin), Mr. Sean Milroy (Cavan), Mr. Sean McGarry (North Dublin), Mr. T. Carter (Sligo-Leitrim), Mr. Frank Cahill (North Dublin), Mr. H. Finlay (Roscommon), Mr. Sean Gibbons (Carlow-Kilkenny), Mr. Alex McCabe (Sligo-Leitrim). It will be seen that three of the vacancies occur in Dublin—one in South Dublin and two in the North City constituency. The only other constituency in which two elections will take place is Sligo-Leitrim. Mr. McGrath's group consisted of 10 members, one of whom, Mr. Osmond Esmonde, still sits in the Dail. The Dublin correspondent of the *Irish Weekly* says:—"A miniature general election, involving contests in nine constituencies, will take place in the Free State about the middle of February or the beginning of March, and already active preparations are being made by the various parties. The predominating forces are Government and Republican, and as the contests will spread over the entire area of the Free State, strenuous, and it may be decisive, campaigns may be expected."

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An important pastoral letter has been published by the Archbishop of Dublin, giving

the conditions under which the Jubilee Indulgence of the Holy Year may be gained in the metropolitan archdiocese (says *Catholic News Service* for January 26). Referring to the Apostolic Letter of Pius XI, Archbishop Byrne says: "In Rome eighty visits to the Basilicas are prescribed for residents and forty for pilgrims. In this diocese a similar work of piety, the visitation of churches, is selected by the diocesan authority. For those residing in parishes within the present city boundary the churches to be visited are—the Pro-cathedral, Marlborough Street; St. Andrew's, Westland Row; St. Joseph's, Berkeley Street. A visit is to be made to each of these churches on ten separate days not necessarily successive. "Those residing in parishes outside the present city boundary will make the thirty visits in their own parish church or in any chapel-of-ease in their own parish. In parishes outside the city not more than three visits are to be made on the same day. Parish priests will be able to guide their parishioners in case of any doubt arising as to the church or chapel in which the visits are to be made. All persons above-mentioned, who are privileged to gain the Jubilee during the present year and are resident in convents or institutions of whatsoever kind in this diocese, may make the thirty visits in the chapel of their convent or institution, not, however, making more than three visits in one day." By the same instrument Archbishop Byrne empowers all confessors to commute this work to other works of religious devotion and charity for those who are unable to make the visits to the churches or chapels.

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At the dinner given by the Union of the Friends of Ireland in honor of the inauguration of the Irish Chamber of Commerce in Paris and of the passage of Mr. Cosgrave through Paris, several speeches were delivered, notably one by Mgr. Baudrillart, the Rector of the Catholic University of Paris. The Monsignor referred to the ties which united and "would continue to unite Catholic Ireland and France."

Mr. Cosgrave spoke of the love which Ireland felt for France, and expressed the hope that the Irish Chamber of Commerce in Paris, which was the first chamber of commerce founded by Ireland abroad, would serve as a bond of union between the two countries.

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What might have been a catastrophe on the Armagh-Keady railway line was luckily averted on Saturday near Tassagh recently. The viaduct permanent way completely subsided about thirty feet, leaving the rails suspended in mid air. Fortunately the subsidence was noticed by a farmer named Peter Mackey, of Lislea, who ran to the nearest station, Ballyards, and reported the matter. He was just in time to stop a train heavily laden with passengers and goods from Armagh to Keady, which would have dashed into the broken section with what appalling results can be imagined. The train was brought back to Armagh, and the passengers conveyed to Keady by road with charabancs and motors.