

CELTIC NEWS

Bulletin of the Celtic League

Alba — Breizh — Cymru — Éire — Kernow — Mannin

WINTER, 1966, No.12.

+++++
K E R N O W
+++++

Cornwall's social conditions continue to suffer: The pre-natal mortality remains above that of England and Wales. Hospital outpatients are overcrowded at St. Austell and North Cornwall patients, forced outside Cornwall to Plymouth, experience prolonged delays because of shortage of specialists. Penzance's new hospital is indefinitely deferred. The number waiting for old people's homes is causing disquiet to the County Medical Officer.

A 1962 building survey, still relevant, shows that "Cornwall is worse off than... the rest of the country" in primary schools. The threatened removal of the School of Mines from Camborne to Plymouth is bad for the students and likely to lose the neighbourhood up to £150,000 a year, says the County Council Chairman.

All loans cut off from people desiring to buy or build houses; pre-fabricated houses, unfit to live in; an area with 1,200 unsatisfactory houses; an abandoned major sewerage scheme; rats on a beach; 22 houses obtaining water from a stream; 10 schools still dependent on wells; these are the woes of a number of local government authorities.

On the railways some travellers from London have not found room to travel to Cornwall for lack of provision; Launceston

lost its freight service without discussion. Further branch closures are rumoured. New rates have continued to rise.

Inadequate government help has prompted the infamous suggestion of local financing of toll roads.

However, co-operation amongst farmers and fishermen suggests that Arthur is not quite dead!

+++++++
A L B A | UNO MEMO: In Scotland the Press gave the Memo a fair hearing, with an excellent piece in the "Scotsman". The Radio also mentioned the Memo.
+++++++

SNP Progress: The recent membership drive has resulted in an increase of more than 5,000. There are now 21,000 members. According to Dr. McIntyre, the Party's president, people are joining the Party out of a sense of urgency. The total number of Branches is now over 160. In Inverness-shire, new branches have been formed and two new members in Skye have been appointed with special responsibility for recruiting among Gaelic-speaking Scots. The party political broadcasts on Radio and Television came across very well. Pity we have to wait another year before we hear some sense-speaking Scots on the medium again!

Gaelic: A six-point plan has been put to the Scottish Secretary. It makes a case for Gaelic as a living language, and, as such, measures ought to be taken to consolidate its position. In particular, the legal status of the language should be given prominence. Government grants should also be given to subsidise the publication of works in Gaelic.

Census Report: In November, the Report of the 1961 Census was published. It, as expected, confirmed a heavy drift south of manpower from the Highlands and North-East areas of Scotland. The Average density of population in Scotland was 170 persons per square mile, as compared with 793 per square mile in England & Wales. (The English density of population is masked by providing a figure which includes low-density Wales - Editor.)

Merry Christmas & l'Anglais! The Scottish Secretary (credit to him) has written to the House of Commons Publication Committee

objecting to this Year's HOC Christmas Card, which carries a picture of Simon de Montfort's Parliament of the 13th century with the quotation, "King Alexander III of Scotland, who did homage at Westminster at Michaelmas, 1278". It was for his English estates that Alexander did homage, not, as the card implies, as King of Scotland.

Stamp Please! The SNP have made representation to the Scottish Secretary for a stamp to commemorate the 650th anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath. The grounds are that the skirmish at Hastings is to be celebrated officially, so the Declaration which is of great importance to Scotland should be given due prominence.

Scottish Poverty: The value of whisky in bond in Scotland is SEVEN TIMES Great Britain's gold and convertible currency reserves.

Transport: The Scottish Vigilantes Association has gone into hibernation - just at the time when effective voices of protest are needed, especially in the Highlands. Small isolated communities are cut off by snowed-up roads, while comparatively snow-free railway lines remain open with no trains on them. The Highlands desperately need efficient lines of communication, for freight and passengers. Only the railways can provide these - and British Railways are closing them as fast as they can persuade the Minister of Transport that they are not economic. If the process carries on at the present rate, the Minister will soon be out of a job!

+++++++
C Y M R U | Plaid Cymru's 1,000 New Members: The first-ever Political Broadcast brought the National Party of Wales about a thousand new members; new supporters cannot be estimated. Many friends from other nations are joining; the nominal fee is 2/6d; the monthly "Welsh Nation" 7/6d. Readers may write to Plaid Cymru, 8 Queen Street, Cardiff.
+++++++

The Language Report: The Hughes-Parry Committee on the Status of the Language, set up by the Conservative Government, published its report in the autumn. It urged "equal validity" for the language; it interprets this as equal "status", but does not urge immediate equal use and facilities. It is a middle-course report, and one which should be accepted by all as an urgent forward step. The recommendations have been accepted in principle. That heads of Civil Service Departments in Wales should be Welsh-speaking is one recommendation which has not been accepted. Basically, the argument against the recommendation is that it would discriminate against the monoglot English-speaking majority. It the "educational" machine which deprives so many Welsh children of their linguistic birthright. When this fault is remedied the discrimination argument will lose its substance.

Celtic League brings publicity: Our case to UNO brought much publicity to the Welsh national movement, within Wales and outside. Before and after the Cardiff and London press conferences, it was the subject of at least six items on radio and television. C.L. Membership in Wales, which was already high, has increased again, we are told by the C.L. Secretary for Wales, Mr. J. E. Jones.

Postal Orders: Cymdeithas yr Iaith (The Language Society) has been waging war on the Post Office. While the banks are providing Welsh cheques and forms, the Post Office refuses even to put up its nameplates with "Swyddfa'r Post" except when renovations take place. Hundreds of the society's members have held sit-down demonstrations at Dolgellau and Llanbedr (Lampeter). Unfortunately, the postal unit is "Wales and the Border Counties". Welsh leaders in the government do not seem to have any influence on the Postmaster-General.

More depopulation planned: The English government is planning to close scores of Welsh coalmines - Before it has tried to plan the provision of other employment for the men in their valleys. About 1,000,000 people have gone to England since 1920, the Labour government seems determined to

get another half-million out of Wales; and to fill the void with Birmingham overspill.

"All we like sheep": Some years ago, at least 7 Labour M.P.s joined in the campaign for a Welsh Parliament; a petition of 250,000 names was made; everywhere over 80% of the people were for a Parliament. Labour was then in opposition; it was good for the party that some MPs played up to Welsh nationality. To-day, the party is in power, but not even two of the MPs have the gumption or the guts to tell Mr. Wilson that he will have to grant Wales a parliament; not even that he has to give Wales equal prosperity and development; or to stop closing mines until factories are opened; or that "equal validity" be granted to the language forthwith; yet, the threat of losing two votes would rock the whole English government!

+++++ The Agreement for a Free-Trade Area between
E I R E + Britain & the Irish Twenty-Six Counties has
+ now been signed. Psychologically, it is dif-
+++++ ficult to enthuse about the idea as the 50th
anniversary of 1916 approaches. Facing facts, our economy has never broken away from that of Britain. Our more efficient industries can certainly hold their own on the British market. The agricultural subsidies are merely a question of paying for produce at something approaching market price. This would seem to be the main Irish benefit from the agreement. As the over-all British tendency is to try to reduce internal farming to units as large as possible, it will be very necessary to ensure that this pattern is not imposed willy nilly on our own farmers. In default of a more or less self-sufficient Irish economy a European rather than a British link would have seemed more desirable, if only from the chance of having other influences to offset the anglicisation steamroller.

On the credit side, the new pattern will help to erode some of the vested interests associated with the border which

have had over 40 years to harden. In comparison with the Free-Trade Area we "enjoyed" throughout the last century, Irish interests can be defended by Dublin and to a lesser extent by Belfast. If the worst comes to the worst, as one of two contracting parties we shall be able to rescind the agreement.

In the wider Celtic setting, it means that we are more closely linked with the other Island Celts. Although this aspect of the matter probably escaped the notice of the English negotiating team, it seems likely that the fact that the 26 Counties has its individual voice to defend its own interests might form a useful argument/precedent for Scottish and Welsh (as distinct from British-English) interests to be given a similar voice within the Free-Trade Area.

Irish Writing: This past year has given no grounds for complacency regarding the language. Closer links with Britain (our latest boon is an Irish edition of the "Daily Mirror") make a serious programmed Gaelicisation effort a stark necessity if we are to survive as a national entity. Those familiar with the state of publishing in Irish can only hope that the government's most retrograde decision to cease subsidising the enterprising private publishers (notably Sáirséal agus Dill) in favour of state publishing will be reversed.

Nouveau Ancien Régime: In the Six-Counties General Election the Unionist Party coasted home, helped by rumours of assassination plots. One feature was the near obliteration of the Northern Ireland Labour Party which had recently been on the ascendent. They had completely betrayed the tradition of Labour in Ireland, in falling over themselves in their anxiety to assert their allegiance to the historical curiosity styled "Northern Ireland". Their electoral trouncing was a form of poetic justice for their misplaced opportunism.

+++++ Unemployment increases in the industrialised
B R E I Z H | districts of Nantes, St. Nazaire and Lorient.
+++++ Under the French development plan, Paris is

to attain a population of 11 million inside 20 years. This would put an end to Breton hopes of industrial decentralisation. Such a vast industrial centre would prove a magnet to the deprived population of Brittany. Recent decentralisation policy and the setting up of minor industries in Brittany would be completely reversed. The new Paris complex would starve under developed areas like Brittany of all available credit. The main Breton commodity would be Greater Parish manpower.

The Common Market Deadlock came at a most unfortunate time when Breton representatives were applying for credit, refused by the French government, to community organisations. French Military installations in Brittany are multiplying, notably in the densely-populated Brest area where a nuclear military base is being built. A residents' committee has made representations against the danger to life and to the livelihood of the local fishermen. On the South coast of Brittany, more land is being compulsorily acquired for similar purposes, despite protests from the local council. All Breton national organisations and papers are urging "Unite and resist militarisation instead of industrialisation".

Cultural Activities: The 18th InterCeltic Summer course in Breton was held at Rostrenen (29th July - 14th Aug.) was attended by 140, mainly young people. It included Literature, Middle Breton, Cornish, Chemistry, History, Maths, Philosophy and Ethnology. Lecturers belonged to the school for Breton by correspondence. 2 Breton plays were produced. In 4 months, 25,000 signatures were collected in support of teaching Breton in the schools, its use on TV and its extension on the Radio. (A French official had stated that he would apply to the government if it could be proved that 1,000 people wanted the teaching of Breton!).

New Celtic League Secretary for Brittany. Even Gwalereg was appointed to this office. His address is: C/o Kerlann, Kervreizh, 43 Rue St., Placide, Paris 6. C.L.Treasurer for Brittany is Ronan Tremel of 17bis Rue de l'Argonne, Houilles (Yvelines), S-et-O. The account (compte de chèques postaux) is: C.C.P. Paris 14545-20.

We must apologise for the delay in forwarding copies of No. 11. of C.N. to Breton members.

* * * * *

* * CELTIC LEAGUE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

A 62 page memorandum on the right of Brittany, Scotland and Wales to self-determination and international protection was forwarded on November the 4th to the General Secretary of the United Nations by the Celtic League. In the accompanying letter, (signed by the President and the General-Secretary of the League,) it was pointed out that the principles of the U.N. should be applied everywhere throughout the world, not only in the emerging nations of Asia and Africa, but also in respect of 3 of the oldest nations in Western Europe which to-day still lack the slightest measure of self-government. Copies of the memorandum were sent at the same time to the permanent representatives of the 114 member-states of the U.N. General Assembly, New York. Enclosed was a circular, reminding them of U.N. proclamations in favour of self-determination for all nations and drawing attention to the conclusions of the Ljubljana Seminar concerning the rights of national groups.

"In our memorandum, we submit evidence that Brittany, Wales and Scotland constitute (such) national groups and that they need for their survival as distinct entities the recognition of their right to selfgovernment, or, in one case at least (Brittany), international protection".

"U.N. procedure will prevent official discussion of these cases, yet we hope that they will help to draw international attention to the situation of three old West European nations now threatened with extinction, and that they will be borne in mind in future U.N. work for the effective protection of national groups".

Press Conferences took place on the same day in Dublin, Cardiff, London and Paris, to explain our action. Gwynfor Evans

and J. E. Jones spoke first in Cardiff, then travelled to London, where they were assisted by P. O Conchúir and Mr. Martin, chairman of the London section of the Scottish National Party. In Paris, the conference, organised by E. Gwalereg, was conducted by Yann Fouéré. In Dublin, the speakers were Yann Goulet, Dr. Noelle Davies, Gordon Mac Gill-Fhinnéin and Alan Heussaff. (Questions and replies were mainly in Irish). Altogether, press presentation was fairly satisfactory. Apart from the pressmen and photographers who attended, a number of reporters were given telephone briefings, in Wales, in Ireland and also in Scotland, where Frank Thompson had made preliminary arrangements. Prior to the conferences, about 600 copies of the memorandum were sent to foreign and "national" press correspondents in London and Paris, as well as to a large number of important newspapers in other countries.

Results: The sending of the memorandum was well reported in Wales (at least 14 newspaper articles or references), in England (minimum 18), in Ireland (Dublin dailies, "Inniu" had articles in prominent columns), in Scotland (excellent report in the "Scotsman" in particular). Between these countries there were about a dozen Radio and TV items. In France "Le Figaro" and "Le Monde" had short, objective reports, but there was no mention otherwise; this applies of course to the "regional" press in Brittany, although the main daily, "Quest-France" was represented at the Press Conference. Of course, there were accounts in the Breton national periodicals. There were further enquiries and interviews with C. L. officials after Nov. the 4th; in particular Granada ITV and by "Time" magazine. We have no information concerning reports in other countries. All in all, the publicity given to the national movements in the 3 countries on Nov. 4 was satisfactory. There were adverse factors, particularly, De Gaulle's announcement that he would again stand for the French presidential election, which could not be foreseen.

Memorandum Footnote: Expenses connected with the Memo,

printing, stationery, postage, press conferences, etc. were a big item for the modest funds of the League. This can best be met by spreading our overheads over a wider membership. Entice (or bully) your friends into taking up membership!

+ * * * * *

CELTIC LEAGUE SEMINAR

The Central Council of the Celtic League will meet in Dublin next Easter. In addition, we plan to organise a 2-3 day Seminar, on international questions of interest to all the Celtic peoples, to which all our members are invited. It is also possible that a C.L. delegation will take part in the commemoration of the 1916 Rising. In order to make arrangements as early as possible we request those interested to write immediately to their national secretary or to the general secretary, who will then inform them about the time and place of the meetings. Accommodation could be reserved by the general secretary if requested specifically and early enough. A deposit may be required, however.

+ * * * * *

Celtic Studies & Breton Writing are the poorer by three recent deaths.

Yarl Priel died last August, aged 80. Though a latecomer to Breton Literature, his works include a number of plays, a novel, 3 volumes of memoirs and numerous translations into Breton, published by "Al Liamm". His first play "An Dakenn Dour" was broadcast by Rennes Radio.

The Norwegian Celtologist, Alf Sommerfelt died, after a car accident. In Brittany he was known for his excellent study of Breton phonetics. His interest in Brittany and the other Celtic countries was by no means confined to academic matters. His fellow-countryman Prof. Carl J. S. Marstrander died in December. Professor of Celtic languages at Oslo University

over a period of 40 years, his work is well known to savants of Irish, Scottish and Manx Gaelic.

+++++++ It is regretted that last edition's Manx was
M A N N I N subject to printer's error and that the cur-
rent edition includes no Manx section.

+++++++
Book-Tokens: Irish or Scottish readers with a Christmas book-token would be well advised to use it to purchase the poems of Mary MacLeod (21/-, Oliver & Boyd for the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society). She wrote before the smashing of the Scottish Gaelic social system in 1746. The path of the reader is made easy by an English prose translation on each facing page.

U.D.I.: As a politician, Mr. Wilson has handled his UDI troubles with some degree of finesse, taking into account the Suez-like split which prevails among his electorate. Looking into the future, the Scottish and Welsh U.D.I.s will not be managed quite so easily.

Rebellious Rhodesia. For the Aborigines on these isles, the Wilson/Smith pantomime cannot have failed to afford much amusement. As at the time of Suez, Great Britain has been split down the centre. Lord Avon acted, albeit ingloriously - and talked afterwards. Mr. Wilson, in contract, has proved allergic to any napoleonic whiff of grapeshot. The White Man in Africa will have to trim his sails to the wind of change. Nearer home, despite the constant diet of propaganda with which they are fed, our Euro-Afro-Asians will decide that they too are tired of bearing the White Man's burden. Wilson or one of his successors will be confronted with other UDIs that cannot be countered quite so easily as the Rhodesian variety.

UDI: The rumour that a delegation from Mebyon Kernow visited Mr. Wilson (on the Isles of Scilly) with a Cornish U.D. I. ultimatum has been officially denied!

Hunger Strike: The administration is not being allowed to

think that publication of the Hughes-Parry Report and acceptance of many of its recommendations - at some future date - means that the issue can be put into cold storage. Four young Welshmen, from Merthyr, Bangor, Menai Bridge and Wrexham, respectively, greeted the New Year on Hunger Strike, as a protest "against the continued inferior status of the Welsh Language". Their Five-Day Fast was at the Merthyr Tydfil office of Plaid Cymru. All four belong to both Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Language Defence Society.

Clyde Shipyard Saved. For once we can breathe a word of praise for Her Britannic Majesty's government. By giving their blessing to the arrangement by which the Fairfield shipyard, in danger of closure, will be re-organised on a joint public/private enterprise basis the livelihood of many Clydesiders has been reassured. In this season of goodwill we shall forego analysis of the motivation for this particular gift-horse.

Ljubljana Seminar on the Multi-National Society. Organised by the U.N. and held at Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, (8-21/6/65) the seminar was attended by representatives of 21 member-states. We shall give later a detailed account of the report published by the U.N. One of its conclusions: "There was general agreement that all governments should promote and protect the rights of ethnic, linguistic or national groups". "That the United Nations as well as governments and institutions should undertake and stimulate more intensive research on ethnic, religious, linguistic and national problems". France was not invited to, nor represented at the Seminar. No doubt the U.N. recognises her wish to be considered "One and Indivisible".. Perhaps our memorandum will help the U.N. to realise that they are very complacent, and make them invite France to the next Seminar. We are sending copies of the memorandum to the delegates who went to Ljubljana.

LEAGUE ADDRESSES :

General-Secretary: A. Heussaff, 9 Br.Cnoc Sion, Dromchonrach,
Baile Atha Cliath 9.

Treasurer: Dr. N.Davies, Coolagad, Greystones, Co.Wicklow.

Celtic News: P. O Conchúir, 82 St. Alban's Avenue, Bedford
Park, London, W.4.

*Ha paeet hoc'h eus ho skodenn-
oloaz d'ar C'hevre ?*

In order to make easier and more efficient the Treasury task we kindly request our readers to pay their annual fees (10F), the sooner, the better, to the national treasurer for Brittany.

M. TREMEL R., 17 bis, rue de l'Argonne — 78-HOUILLES
C.C.P. 14545.20 PARIS