

CELTIC NEWS

Number 26
SUMMER 1970

* K E R N O W *

Parliamentary Election ,1970 . So in one constituency of the five, Falmouth and Camborne, there were 960 voters for Cornwall as a nation with Richard Jenkin as their representative! Could we have expected so many only a few years ago ? Nursed and organised, here is the basis for future growth and overlapping into another constituency with a second candidate, says the Chairman of M.K. Of the 3 opponents, Liberal, Labour and Conservative , we wish only to say that the Labour candidate who sat in the last Parliament inherited his seat from a man (Hayman) who, differing as he did from M.K, was regarded by all parties as much as a Cornishman as a man of the Labour Party. We consider that the complete unrelieved blindness of Dr J. Dunwoody to the existence of Cornwall destroyed a representation he should have regarded as a sacred trust, Englishman though he was ; through him the Labour Party has an added responsibility. Richard Jenkin was reported consistently in the cause of Cornwall and he was the only one who gave a clear message in the interest of the deeply exploited farmer who employs labour rarely and works nearly all the hours of daylight for very little reward. For the rest, their initial references to Cornwall thinned out as their leaderships necessarily commanded attention to distant issues .

Present rewards, emerging patterns : Camborne skilled engineering workers are striking for a basic wage of £16-5s; Cornish Trades Councils want £17 : income per head annually (1967-8) is £216 against UK £385 (Cornish Guardian, 22/1/1970); Unemployment is high .

Do we approach a solution ? The oil-fired power station is being put in Cornwall - to serve Plymouth ! Cottages are hired in winter by workers who have to hunt for accommodation when holiday visitors come (Western Morning News, 3/3/1970). The Independent features an immigrant miner : " I walked into South Croft and asked for a job ...half the wages ...in Doncaster now...£60 to £80 a fortnight...The Cornish are very independent!" The West Briton (2/4/1970) quotes a County Councillor admitting that Cornish teachers must first work two weeks outside Cornwall. Plymouth receives the local radio station.

Are the following symptoms of the language situation fortuitous ? 1) Through a competition, Helston Grammar School designed the first postmark with words in Cornish for Furry Day. 2) The St. Austell-Powey mayor was installed with Kernewek being used before English. 3) Without subsequent derision, Dr Whetter published an important article on learning Cornish in the Western Morning News and Miss J. Petchey followed with a fine letter about the actual use of Cornish. Both are bards. 4) Miss Petchey reports that classes in Cornish include many workers. St. Germans wants a professional organiser, under the County Council, against the Maud threat. In the County Council there was talk of "militant action" action. The editor of the West Briton called it "tactics of the gutter". In the Non-County Borough Committee for England/Wales a stand was made for Cornish nationalism - though shouted down. St Piran's flag flew on our national day (March 5) throughout Cornwall, especially on that order, said the Independent. Finally, Mebyon Kernow with Cornish National Party support has fought its first parliamentary election .

* A L B A *

The Elections All things considered (practical exclusion from television, Tory/Labour carve-up of the Press, etc.) the SNP did quite well, though

there is no room for complacency. The North of Scotland responded well to the challenge of self-government and Donald Stewart, provost of Stornoway ousted Labourite MacMillan who had held the seat for 35 years (needless to say, no loss to politics). Can we expect a goodie for Gaelic among Provost Stewart's thoughts ? Winnie Ewing, who held her vote, was knocked out by non-entity Wilson in Hamilton, but she will be back in the fray as soon as she stops cheering Donald Stewart's victory !

The Central Lowlands went badly for the SNP, many deposits being lost. Nevertheless, the 300,000 votes the party polled throughout Scotland are a good basis for further advancement. Meanwhile in Westminster there are two intriguing situations: 1) The government is not the one the majority of the people of Scotland and Wales voted for (as so often happens); 2) that same government has promised a "Scottish Assembly" but the majority of that government are not in favour of it. Nationalists must ensure that they at least carry out this last election promise !

The municipal elections : The results for the SNP were mildly disastrous. 27 out of 33 seats were lost and only 3 gained. This is only a setback on the path to Scottish independence. Lack of organisation, laziness and sheer inefficiency have all contributed to this result, but it must be seen as part of a general attitude, a general reaction against the party by the Unionist Press and other media. Nothing can survive such a barrage of abuse without being injured. It should however toughen Nationalists for the future - and get them canvassing round doors in their thousands, talking frankly to their own people and getting rid of some of the muck thrown by the Establishment.

Declaration of Arbroath. The celebrations were held in April (some of them at least), and the amazing and hilarious spectacle of the then Secretary of State, Willie Ross, being actually present and participating at a function commemorating Scottish independence was the best turn !

Gàidhlig. Things are quiet, unfortunately, on the language front, although there is good news in the information that a Gaelic youth club has been set up in Inverness and that a similar one will be set up shortly in Glasgow .

1320 Club . Welsh and Breton translations, as well as a Scots Gaelic one, are available of the Club's pamphlet "The Disunited Kingdom". Send a 4d stamp for postage to : Ronald Macdonald Douglas, Tigh an Uillt, Wilton Dean, Hawick, Alba. The Club also issues an excellent quarterly, "Catalyst", with views of different aspects of Scottish nationalism and nationhood and it is becoming increasingly Celtic in outlook. Subscriptions (16/- per annum) should be sent to Mrs J.R. Thomson, 8 Corslet Rd, Currie, Midlothian, Alba.

* C Y M R U *

The General Election. It was a bitter disappointment that Mr Gwynfor Evans, President of Plaid Cymru, failed narrowly to hold his seat at Carmarthen ; the loss is Westminster's as well as ours. Otherwise the election was proof of notable progress on all fronts. In 8 constituencies Plaid Cymru came second in the poll and in 4 seats secured 5-figure polls. Almost everywhere the Plaid Cymru share of the poll increased, sometimes many times over. In the only constituency where an increase was not registered the results, paradoxically, were most encouraging of all. The story deserves to be told more fully. In Merthyr Tudful the Labour Party made desperate efforts to unseat the sitting member, 83-year old Mr S.O. Davies as they were terrified of the progress Plaid Cymru might make if a by-election were held there .Mr Davies has been sympathetic to Plaid Cymru since its foundation and is the only Labour M.P. to have had the moral courage to appear on a Plaid Cymru platform. Previously in such situations the Labour Party has only had to put up an official candidate in opposition to the deposed member for him to be humiliatingly defeated .They no doubt expected the same result to occur here .In fact Mr S.O. Davies romped home with a majority of over 7,000. When the results were declared the official Labour candidate, surprised and enraged, mouthed some remarks about traitors to the Labour movement, but was shouted down with cries of "sour grapes". Mr Chris Rees, the Plaid Cymru candidate, who lost many votes to ' S.O. ' paid a warm and generous tribute to him and to his work for Wales. This was the first time for many years for an official Labour candidate to be rejected in the mining valleys of South Wales; he will not be the last!

John Edward Jones (J. E.)

With the sad and sudden death of 'J.E.' the Celtic League and in particular the Welsh Branch has lost a most dedicated and tireless worker, who was known personally to a very large number of Celts in the 6 lands and who had a deep understanding of all Celtic problems. In Wales we often turned to him for friendship and advice and had come to depend greatly on his experience and wisdom. In spite of the burden of work arising from the general election J.E. gave over an hour on the morning of his death to arranging Celtic League affairs; it would be impossible to list the many sacrifices he made willingly to further the Celtic cause. Fortunately, as part of his testimony he was able to complete his personal history of his political work a few months before he died. His book, published in Welsh, will soon be appearing in an English version "For Wales : J.E. and Plaid Cymru" (Gwasg John Penry - Abertawe (Swansea), 30/-). This is essential reading for all who have the interests of the Celtic movement at heart. From his life-long association with Plaid Cymru J.E. has been able to shed valuable light on the creation and growth of the movement and of the personalities who led the way in the critical formative years. He gives an inspiring account of the re-awakening of national self-respect and how its outward manifestation, the national party, has grown in spite of great discouragement and difficulties through patiently following a narrow path with good faith, skill and determination. Plaid Cymru and later the Celtic League were fortunate indeed in the guidance they received from 'J.E.' and we who are left must do our best to carry on his work without faltering.

Language Rights : Recently a few bilingual signs have been appearing unexpectedly in places where English only has been the rule .Some official forms are now obtainable in Welsh for those who are prepared to face and overcome some discouragement. It is not always realised that one of the most unwelcome of forms - the Income Tax Return- can be sent back and a Welsh one received in its place. A Welsh motor tax disc can be obtained on request. This change in attitude, though a small step in the right direction, is welcome indeed and thanks must go Cymdeithas yr Iaith Cymraeg, the Welsh Language Society, whose determination and sacrifice has caused its opponents to retreat. The English tide is beginning to ebb.

New Roads : One of the most persistent complaints voiced by Mr Gwynfor Evans in the last London Parliament was the lack of serviceable roads in Wales. In the last few months a start has been made on a few much-needed highways and in particular on that overdue necessity, the Cardiff-Merthyr road. This surely must rank as the most often promised and most often delayed highway in recent history. It at least shows that nowadays nothing is obtained from London without asking for it long and loud.

Celtic League Tent : The Celtic League will have its own tent at this year's National Eisteddfod at Rhydaman. Here the publication of the national movements and books of general Celtic interest will be made available. Cultural material in all Celtic languages will be displayed. The intention is to foster inter-Celtic consciousness and to provide a welcome to visitors to the Eisteddfod from other Celtic countries. All visitors will be welcome. Please call, make yourself known and stay as long as you can. The tent will be a convenient meeting place for Celts visiting the Eisteddfod (August 3-8, Rhydaman, Carmarthenshire).

*B R E I Z H * "Cradle of democracy" : By 15 votes out of
***** 17 the Council of Europe in Strassburg decided to publish a report by the European Commission of Human Rights, condemning the use of torture against political prisoners in Greece. France abstained, a sinister augury for political agitation in France, where a new repressive law against political demonstrations, sponsored by the "sheik" Pleven, is creating a very explosive situation. Under this law, the organisers of legal public demonstrations are liable for any damage arising from them to either person or property. This amounts to a full licence to the police to provoke incidents. Breton organisations are aware of the threat it represents. It will help them perhaps to convince a discontented people that the French State is the antithesis of freedom.

Plus ça change ... The French government is using Bretons to fight a rearguard colonialist action in nominally "independent" Tchad (Central Africa). A further Breton battalion, is to be sent there. The first victim was a man from near Rennes. "The Bretons have too many children", said Debré, minister for "Defence", in 1961. "The Breton economy, being agricultural, will not be disrupted by mobilization", said a predecessor in 1955. As in

6

1914-18 a colonized people continues to be used as cannon fodder.

GALV, founded a year ago to campaign for the teaching of Breton and its admission to TV, held its first annual meeting in Karaez (19 April). 1000 delegates, and representatives of all teachers associations, attended. Speakers denounced the colonial policy of the French State in Brittany and the support given by the bourgeoisie, which controls the mass media, to its cultural aspects in particular. All pro-Breton petitions made to the French authorities since 1870 were fruitless: GALV will organise mass meetings and plans protest marches with the aim of involving the people as a whole in the struggle for our language. 32 branches were formed during the past year. On May 10, GALV decided to intensify its campaign among workers and teachers and to work in close contact with the trade union movement.

416 candidates to the baccalaureat opted this year for a Breton test in the "Academy of Rennes" (covering Brittany minus Loire-Atlantique but plus French Mayenne). This is twice as many as last year, and a quarter the number of those who submitted for an optional test this year.

Fined for refusing to pay some tax supplement, Marie Keruhel appealed to a higher court on the grounds that the Treaty of Union of 1532 expressly prohibited the levy of taxes in Brittany without the consent of the Breton Parliament (Supreme Court). Her appeal was rejected for some reason of procedure - the French don't want to deal with the substance of the claim. Miss Keruhel will now put it before another court. The French repealed the Treaty in 1788 - Brittany is no longer legally bound by it.

An Association Bretagne-Irlande wants to foster "cultural, touristic and economic contacts" between our two countries. The aim is to be commended but we must point out that as far as we know none of its sponsors is committed to a Brittany free of French ingerence and we gather that it is in English-Ireland that they are interested. We shall gladly correct this impression if we are wrong.

Beware of the Alliance Francaise : its drive to spread the French language and culture uses the "at home" argument

7

that it will open new outlets to French trade .Francophonie is a new name for French imperialism. But the industrialists are not responding generously to this argument: they are accused of lacking imagination and withholding financial help .

Dr Guy Caro, a member of the Parti Socialiste Unifié and of the Breton Liberation Front II , was elected to the General Council of Côtes-du-Nord . Let us hope he will shake this rubber-stamp assembly out of its complacency and bring its president, Pleven, to give a precise account of his connivance in the colonization of Brittany . "Western Brittany" is being sacrificed in the 6th French Plan, says a document issued by the (Breton) Cornwall Expansion Committee. All of Brittany is similarly treated ! On the 27th of May, 20,000 workers demonstrated in 4 towns for employment in "Finistère": many, but not enough, spoke of the Breton struggle. A group of Landernev shop-keepers who went to a mass meeting organised by the small businessmen in Paris last March had the Breton flag hoisted on their bus , a sign that the real nature of the economic troubles in Brittany is recognised by ever wider sections of the people .

Thanked for ... bad service. The rector of the Rennes Academy (who heads all education in 4/5 of Brittany) has shown over the past years that he would readily have given facilities for our culture to develop. We know this is impossible while France dominates Brittany. But obviously the present authorities will not tolerate the slightest concession: Henri Moal was offered a higher post ... outside Brittany . He refused this kick upstairs

and decided to stay in Rennes as an ordinary member of the staff of the University where he hopes to continue to serve Brittany. He received numerous letters of congratulations .

: É I R E :

Bernadette. The new English Home Secretary, Mr Maudling , has enough to keep him busy with the 'Irish Problem'. The 'crimes ' alleged against Bernadette date from before the R.U.C. had been Cameronised into the semblance of a normal police force. The Stormont judiciary has not yet been subjected to a similar civilising process. Her sentence was political rather than judicial; even so it was a political imbecility. Followed as it was by her arrest before she could give the calming-down speech in the Bogside that was intended, it was inevitable that the cauldron would boil over well before the Orange crescendo on the "Twelfth of July". The 6-County people have been victimised by history so that the ready equations , catholic= nation-

8

alist, protestant-unionist, tend largely to apply. Bernadette has consistently maintained a non-sectarian stand and has condemned Dublin's shortcomings as roundly as those of Stormont. Letters to the English Home Secretary in protest against her imprisonment (even though it should confirm her representation of Mid-Ulster as long as the constituency lasts) would not be amiss. In addition, such letters would help to counter the traditional divide-and-conquer policy which is evidenced by the extensive use of Scottish soldiers.

The 12 Apostles : Bernadette, in absentia, and Gerry Fitt have been joined by a further nationalist (Unity) member who is in turn balanced by Dr Paisley's very own brand of Sinn Féin. "Ulster (sic) is British" as a well repeated slogan has not altered the objective reality. The 6-Co brew has naturally spilled over into the 26.A leadership struggle in the government party has polarised on Dove and Hawk lines, while other cross-permutations provide endless scope for conjecture .

Delayed ecumenism .: The episcopal ban on catholics attending Trinity College has finally been removed. In practice, as some 1400 catholics are registered there, the ban was not taken too seriously; nevertheless, it was a form of catholic paysleyism and we are well rid of it.

Law and Order : The well-being of the community has tended to take second place to the rights of property. The last few months have seen a great deal of activity in protest against one form or other of imperialism. Such abuses as ascendancy fishing rights get -rich-quickly property 'development', as well as the blatantly obvious English presence have attracted various forms of "squatting" protest . What does seem ominous is the purchase of C.S. gas from an English firm. This means of riot control is now classified as too dangerous by the U.S. army. Although its sanction by the mealy-mouthed Sasanaigh was in character, its contemplated use by the Dublin government is an appalling admission of subservience. Such situations where crowd control is involved are likely to spring from areas where the government has ignored one of the national aims to which it has paid lip-service .

Jellyfish Éireann . For three weeks the people of the Western Gaeltacht were able to listen to Irish all day on a "Pirate" station. Undoubtedly this prompted the official acceptance of

9

the need for a radio station for the Gaeltacht. Excessive delay implementing this will almost certainly lead to broadcasts from other Irish "pirates".

* CELTIC LEAGUE NOTES *

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the Celtic

League will now be held in Truro, Cornwall, on October 17-18 next. Members are cordially invited. In order to make the necessary arrangements, members should notify the secretary general or R. Green if they intend to participate. Proposals for C.L. activity, resolutions, etc. should be sent to A. Heussaff if possible 3 weeks before for inclusion in the agenda. Preparations are being made for the adoption of a constitution, based on 9 years of experience in the field of inter-Celtic co-operation. It will be the first conference not attended by the late J.E. Jones (see Welsh section) but his comments on the draft for a constitution had been received as soon as it was circulated among the secretaries.

The Conference offers all our members an opportunity to make the League of Celtic Nations more active. We have projects but not enough people to undertake the work of carrying them out.

1970 ANNUAL VOLUME of the Celtic League may reach you with this bulletin. The editor, Frank G. Thompson, received enough material for a book of more than 200 pages. At the rate of subscription which prevailed till now, we should not have exceeded 150 pages but a compromise of 180-190 pages was agreed in the hope that many members will help us to clear the printing and postage costs by sending us extra donations or, if they have not yet paid their fee for 1970, the higher fee we have decided upon. Since 1961, the minimum fee has been held at 10/- per annum but in the mean time the £ has depreciated by nearly half. We have therefore decided to raise the fee to £1 per annum, except for students, unemployed and retired people who need only pay 10/- as hitherto. For airmailing of our publications to non-European countries, the minimum fee will now be £1-5-0 or \$3.⁰⁰ (U.S.).

Many of the contributions in this year's volume deal with the problems which we expect to confront our nations and national movements in the coming decade and ways are proposed to tackle

them. Titles include: "The link between linguistic and social struggle" by M. Ó Caollaí, president of Conradh na Gaeilge and vice-president of the Celtic League; "Conditions of viability for new vernacular communities" by Neven Henaff; "The Glór na nGael Competition" by one of its organisers, D. Ó Riagáin showing how Irish is being brought back into public use in the English-speaking areas; "Prospects of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland" by D. Kelly, a member of the NICRA executive committee; a review of the political situation in the Irish Republic, by R. Johnston, a leading Republican. These indications, concerning only the Irish section (with one exception), will show that we are concerned with breaking new ground and "Facing the Challenge of the Seventies" -- the broad theme of this volume. It can be taken that the other five nations are equally well represented -- we have not got details yet - Editor). DO NOT DELAY TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, we need your

Celtic Solidarity. £41-15-0, collected by the Breton ^{help} Secretary * to help the riots victims of August 1969 has been forwarded to Séamus de Napier, treasurer of the Housing Association which is rebuilding houses in Bombay Street, Belfast. Séamus is also secretary of the Irish Language Society there, but the work to do with rehousing has prevented the society from concentrating on its language pressurising.

* A nearly equal sum collected by Jakez Derouet was forwarded to the families of the two Welshmen who lost their lives in Abergele on the eve of the Caernarfon "investiture" last year. The statement by the Celtic League protesting against the holding of Concorde test flights over well-populated areas of all Celtic countries was well echoed in Scottish and in some English newspapers.

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CELTIC LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Return this slip)

Name

Address

Subscription / fee enclosed (see note p. 10)

Donation

OMMA (= Here) is the annual newsletter of the Cornish Branch of the C.L. Its first issue, which had a far more professional format than Celtic News, was quickly sold out. The Branch is to be congratulated on its initiative and seems to be in the running for the claim to be the most active branch.

GENOCIDE : A Dutch centre undertaking research on this variety of crime is in touch with the C.L. Secretary Gen. His attention will be brought to the policies of assimilation in Brittany and Cornwall in particular .

MYSTERY ISLAND : We have no word from the Isle of Mann

MYTHS AND MYTHOLOGY : The systematically propagated myth that our ancestors were barbarians, all of whom, except the Irish and the Picts, were civilised by do-gooding Romans, is gradually being dispelled. The C.L. is concerned with a viable Celtic future, rooted in our own tradition and accepting all that is worth borrowing. It would therefore seem that "Celtic Mythology" is requisite reading for all Celtic League members. The author, Proinsias Mac Cana, is professor of Welsh at University College, Dublin. He gives an excellent survey of what is a very specialist study and also provides a useful introduction to Irish and Welsh sagas. It has a wealth of illustration and costs only 25/- .136p.11x8" (The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd).

BREST DECLARATION : Some 80 representatives of peripheral regions or countries (including Alba, Eire, Cymru, Breizh and many regions from N. Norway to Italy and Turkey) met in Brest (7-10 May) and signed a declaration addressed in particular to the EEC authorities urging the necessity of a balanced development for the whole of Europe (details in the bulletin of the Council of Europe, "Forward in Europe", 3/1970), 67-Strasbourg.

CELTIC LEAGUE ADDRESSES. Secretaries. ALBA : Mrs M. Denovan, 9 Dalgleish Rd, Dundee; BREIZH : J. Derouet, 2 Place du Martray, 44-Nantes (money orders to Jacques Derouet, CCP 3264-47 Nantes); CYMRU : A. Edwards, 2 Clos Ton Mawr, Rhiwbeina, Caerdydd; EIRE : J. Williams, 47 Páirc Líosáin, Áth Cliath 6; KERNOW : R. Green, Penmarth, Carnmenellys, Redruth; MANNIN : J. Irving, Tynwald Grove, Peel; London: Dr D. Ap Glyn, 23 Belvedere Close, Teddington, Middx; New York: V. Stock, 1018 Cypress Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11227, U.S.A. Secretary General: A. Heussaff, 9 Br Cnoc Síon, Áth Cliath 9, Éire. Editor, Annual Volume : F.G. Thompson, Arnish, 31 Braeside Park, Balloch, Inverness, Alba; Editor, Celtic News : P. Ó Conchúir, 34 Pulleyns Ave., London E6 3LZ.