Was defeat inevitable for Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1932 general election?

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Abstract

Was defeat inevitable for Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1932 general election?

By John Hanamy

This thesis looks at the election that terminated the first government of the Irish Free State, and effectively the career of the party that formed that government. An analysis of the policies of Cumann na nGaedheal in 1932 and a comparison of those policies with those of the main opposition party Fianna Fáil will determine why the party lost power.

An examination of the support base of the party and Cumann na nGaedheal’s loyalty to its supporters will demonstrate that the government party had little choice in the policies it offered to the voters in the election. The methodology chosen to carry out this analysis is a series of research issues relevant to the period under examination. These issues are: The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921; the Oath of Allegiance to the British monarch; the policy of paying the land annuities to the British exchequer; and the economic situation obtaining in Ireland at the time of the election combined with the issue of trade relations with Britain. Other useful research areas are the problem of unemployment, the question of law and order and the role of the media during the period under analysis, January-February 1932. These questions are relevant in so far as they formed the election policies of the parties contesting seats and the subjects of many of the debates during the campaign. An analysis of the ten seats lost by Cumann na nGaedheal during the election is also provided in order to give an indication as to why the government party may have lost power in 1932.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Bernadette Whelan, for her guidance and critical analysis of my work at every step of the way. I would also like to thank Catherine Duff, Toni Jane Reddin, Michael Sinnott, Michelle O’Dea, Dermot O’Brien, Declan Jackson and my sister Liz Devereaux without whose help I may never have embarked on this adventure. Also, and especially, my Father who was so supportive during the period of my studies.
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Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis will attempt to answer the question posed in the title, ‘Was defeat inevitable for Cumann na nGaedheal in 1932?’ The question is a prompt for a further question: could Cumann na nGaedheal have done anything to avoid losing power in 1932? This work will examine a significant election in the history of the Irish state which is frequently referred to, and occasionally analysed but to date has not been the subject of any intrinsic study. This thesis will attempt to add to the scholarship of the period by examining the primary source material, particularly the newspaper coverage of the election campaign and challenging some of the opinions expressed in the historiography. The thesis will question current scholarship on the timing of the election and the consensus that the government party fought the campaign solely on the issue of law and order. There is an attempt to correct certain inaccuracies with regard to the election results in secondary sources and a desire to clarify the positions of some of the smaller parties. Essentially the work will focus on the policies of Cumann na nGaedheal, particularly with regard to the concerns of the party’s supporters and focus on the economic issues that, this thesis will argue, lost the government party power in 1932.

When W.T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council and party leader, dissolved the Dáil on 29 January 1932, the Cumann na nGaedheal party had held power for almost a decade.¹ They had fought three elections in that period, August 1923, June 1927 and September 1927. The first of those elections saw the party’s main opposition party, Sinn Féin, abstain, and the Labour Party returned with only

fourteen seats, Cumann na nGaedheal formed a government with a comfortable majority of sixty-three seats. In the election held in June 1927 Cumann na nGaedheal lost seventeen seats, returning with a reduced majority of fifty-seven seats and in the second election of that year, September 1927, they succeeded in retaining power with a narrow majority of sixty-two seats. The fact that in the latter two elections Cumann na nGaedheal faced a new party, Fianna Fáil, may have contributed to the reduction in its votes.

Throughout its parliamentary tenure Cumann na nGaedheal was a minority party, dependent on the support of other smaller parties in the Dáil. Its privileged position in governing without an effective opposition in its first four years of power enabled it to achieve significant achievements in rebuilding the country after the Civil War and establishing an independent sovereign state based on a new relationship with its former colonial ruler Britain.

It is worth noting the approach adopted by the party to implement these policies. Firstly it had an unwavering commitment to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, especially the Oath of Allegiance to the British monarch. This position became almost a dogma of belief for the party who regarded any attempt to alter its terms as a threat to the existence of the state. The payment of the land annuities to the British Exchequer, another of the clauses in the 1921 Treaty and the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, was also the basis of the Free State government’s relations with Britain.

Ireland’s economy was dominated by agricultural exports to Britain. The consequences of the Wall Street Crash in October 1929 took over a year to have an impact on the Irish economy but by 1931 exports had dropped to their lowest level

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2 Ibid, p.211.
since the Civil War. Cumann na nGaedheal were reluctant to impose trade tariffs at a time when most other nations were protecting their economies with duties. The question of tariffs especially in relation to the domestic agricultural market was a crucial one during the election. Unemployment was also a factor during the election warranting a parliamentary debate on the dissolution of the sixth Dáil on 17 December 1931. Unemployment figures as high as 80,000 were mentioned and the issue featured in many speeches delivered during the election campaign. The question of law and order was one that appeared in many newspaper reports during the election, dividing the main parties and some Independents into two camps; those who feared a descent into anarchy and those who worried that the government had become too draconian and autocratic. It was an important campaign issue for Cumann na nGaedheal in 1932 but it was by no means the only one.

Cumann na nGaedheal lost ten seats in 1932 out of sixty-six but five TDs had joined the party since the September 1927 general election. When the 1932 losses are subtracted from the total seats won in the previous election (sixty-two), Cumann na nGaedheal could be said to have lost only five seats. Its share of the popular vote fell by only 3.4 per cent and the party’s first preference vote in counties Louth, Waterford, Wexford and Cork City well exceeded that of Fianna Fáil. The 1932 general election was far from a disaster for Cumann na nGaedheal in spite of having lost power with fifty-seven seats out of 153 Dáil seats, the party was still the second largest in the Dáil.

5 James Meenan, The Irish Economy Since 1922 (Liverpool, 1970), p.73; Table 3.2.
6 See Chapter Two.
7 Connaught Telegraph, 6 February 1932.
9 Irish Independent, 20 February 1932.
There is no extant work on the 1932 general election. The event is viewed as the portal from which Éamon de Valera and Fianna Fáil emerged to take over the reins of power and into which Cumann na nGaedheal effectively disappeared. It is treated as a milestone in a narrative, but few historians have paused to isolate the election for study. Notwithstanding the limited period under examination, January to February 1932, there is a substantial general historiography to be examined.

Special emphasis is by necessity devoted to the limited studies of the Cumann na nGaedheal party. Ciara Meehan’s *The Cosgrave Party* is the most recent and most comprehensive study of the party. A sympathetic view is taken and an entire chapter devoted to the election where she attempts to explain Cumann na nGaedheal’s loss of power. She views her subject through the lens of political science and electoral marketing, referring to the works of such scholars as, Martin Harrod, Richard Rose and Denis Kavanagh. The election policies of Cumann na nGaedheal are thus examined from a late twentieth century approach particularly from the perspective of political marketing techniques employed in the United States of America. This may not always be appropriate when dealing with Ireland in the first half of the century. Meehan’s work is heavily referenced, containing over a hundred citations per chapter and has a comprehensive bibliography.

John M. Regan’s *The Irish Counter Revolution* offers some interesting insights into the financial donations received by Cumann na nGaedheal from Unionist sources and the genuine fears of communism expressed by some of its senior members. He suggests one of the primary purposes of the party’s economic policies was to protect its wealthier supporters. Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh’s *Days of Blue Loyalty* is a history of Fine Gael though it provides a useful background to the history.
of Cumann na nGaedheal. In common with Meehan’s work, Gallagher and Marsh also take a political science approach, making use of the works of Richard Katz and Peter Mair. This approach posits a political party in the role of a business attempting to sell a product. It ignores the ‘tribal’ element in Irish politics particularly nationalism which is less easy to analyse. Richard Dunphy’s *The Making of Fianna Fáil Power in Ireland* is probably one of the most informative studies of the main opposition party during the election. Donnacha Ó Beacháin’s *Destiny of The Soldiers* also examines the origins of Fianna Fáil but is more concerned with the party’s republican roots. With regard to Cumann na nGaedheal however, O’Beacháin shares with Gallagher and Marsh the view that the party’s weakness may have been its over-arching desire to maintain the closest of links with Britain. The recently published *Fianna Fáil: A Biography of the Party* by Noel Whelan offers a background to the party but adds little to the historiography of the period under review, though it offers some useful facts such as the roles of leading party members in the election. Niamh Puirséil’s work on the second opposition party, *The Irish Labour Party, 1922-73* is quite objective in its examination of Labour. The party did have some influence on the outcome of the election but with regard to the campaign she does admit that the election was, ‘a two horse race.’

With the exception of Kevin O’Higgins whose career falls outside the period covered by this work, biographies of the main personages of Cumann na nGaedheal are few. Anthony J. Jordan’s *W.T. Cosgrave, Founder of Modern Ireland* represents the only biography of the Cumann na nGadeheal leader. It is a useful work but offers no new insights and little by way of analysis. Risteárd Mulcahy’s *My Father the*  

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General and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis’ Portrait of a Revolutionary both deal with the role of Richard Mulcahy during the War of Independence and subsequent Civil War but offer only a passing reference to the 1932 general election. Apart from a handful of articles in newspapers and journals, there are no other biographical works on Cumann na nGaedheal figures. The founders of Fianna Fáil are better served with Diarmaid Ferriter’s Judging Dev, and Tom Garvin’s Judging Lemass, giving a broad but accurate insight into the two men who governed the country for most of the twentieth century. The books are objective and factual, though the narratives are frequently interrupted with large collections of copied primary source material which might have been better attached as appendices.

As for overall coverage of the period, the primary historical interpretation of Irish history remains J.J. Lee’s Ireland, 1912-1985. While it displays a negative bias against Cumann na nGaedheal, describing de Valera as ‘skilful’ while Cosgrave had ‘neither the capacious intellect nor commanding personality.’ It is nonetheless readable, well structured and precisely chronological. The background to Cumann na nGaedheal’s decade in government is examined with several pages being devoted to the 1932 general election, Ronan Fanning’s Independent Ireland, and Eunan O’Halpin’s ‘Politics and The State’ an essay in J.R. Hill’s A New History of Ireland aid in illustrating the building of the Free State and by necessity cover the 1932 election. However they both follow the narrative of an unpopular government waiting for the inevitability of defeat. These works are complemented by Diarmaid Ferriter’s The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000 which completes the social, cultural and economic context necessary to any study of the period. Michael Gallagher’s

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14 Risteárd Mulcahy, My Father the General, Richard Mulcahy and the Military History of the Revolution (Dublin, 2009); Maryann, Gialanella Valiulis, Portrait of a Revolutionary, General R ricard Mulcahy and the Founding of the Irish Free State (Dublin, 1992)

Electoral Support for Irish Political Parties also applies a political science approach to his study but Warner Moss’s *Political Parties in The Irish Free State* published just a year after the election gives a good overview of the period but suffers from a notable bias in favour of Fianna Fáil.\(^\text{16}\)

As for studies of the election itself, both Cornelius O’Leary’s *Irish Elections, 1918-77* and Richard Sinnott’s *Irish Voters Decide* are invaluable studies of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system and the detailing of the actual election results. An understanding of the voting system is important when it comes to analysing the results, especially with regard to the voter ‘transfers.’ This indicated the candidates the voters favoured even though their second or third preference may have been given to candidates from other party. Policies, particularly economic policies, this thesis will argue, were more important than ideological positions. Michael Gallagher’s *Irish Elections, 1922-44, Results and Analysis* is the only extant work to cover all elections in Ireland in the first two decades after independence. The work is meticulous though it does suffer from some inaccuracies. With regard to the economic background to the Free State three books in particular stand out, Mary E. Daly’s *Social, Economic History of Ireland* and Cormac O’Grada’s *Ireland, a New Economic History* and James Meenan’s *The Irish Economy Since 1922*. In addition to straightforward narratives, the works complement informative texts with a treasure of statistical detail. This helps to form a picture of the economic concerns of the voters during the election campaign and the rationale for the election policies of the parties. Meenan in particular illustrates the dependency of the Free State’s exports to Britain and the

vulnerability of Ireland’s free trade policy in the global protectionist world of the early 1930s.\textsuperscript{17}

Primary sources consulted in this work include the papers of two main political parties, Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, both held in the University College Dublin Archive. The Annual Report of The Administrative Council of The Labour Party was consulted in the analysis of the second opposition party and is located in the Labour Party Headquarters in Ely Place, Dublin. Newspapers, both national and provincial also advance the study of the election especially the campaign itself and provide an insight into the differing views of the newspaper owners. Billboard posters also examined, added to the visual aspect of the campaign.

A number of research questions run through each chapter revealing the issues and concerns of the parties and the voters. Already mentioned are the Anglo-Irish Treaty, The Oath of Allegiance and the payment of the land annuities. These issues divided the parties between those who sought close partnership between Britain and Ireland and those who wished for greater separation. The questions surrounding the economy, trade tariffs and the unemployment problem had assumed greater importance after the economic depression hit Ireland in 1931. As will be demonstrated these issues had an important bearing on the election results. The issues of law and order, the threat of communism and the role of the media in the election are less easy to evaluate with regard to how they might have informed the choices of the voters but were nonetheless relevant to the outcome of the election.

Chapter Two examines the timing of the election and the existing conditions that may have influenced Cosgrave’s choice to go to the country in early 1932. The remainder of the chapter will examine Cumann na nGaedheal’s election strategy and

\textsuperscript{17} James Meenan, \textit{The Irish Economy Since 1922} (Liverpool, 1970), p. 142.
analyse the party’s election literature. Chapter Three treats the opposition parties and applies the same focuses on their election manifestos and policies. There is a comprehensive enquiry into the position of the smaller parties including The Farmers’ Party and the two other rural organisations, The Agricultural League and The Farmers and Ratepayers Association often ignored or confused with the ‘main’ Farmers’ Party in secondary sources. Chapter Four will investigate the role of the media in the election. The method employed is an analysis of the newspaper reports of the final week’s campaign from the pages of the national daily newspapers and selected provincial papers. This will lend a flavour of how the candidates communicated with the voters and also revealed the political views of the newspapers themselves both national and provincial. The chapter will also examine the use the parties made of the limited media resources available in 1932, such as election posters and advertisements to communicate with their supporters. Chapter Five will study the election results focusing particularly on the ten seats lost by Cumann na nGaedheal and attempts to examine the local factors obtaining in the constituencies where the government party sustained losses. The conclusion will attempt to draw all these factors together and using the research questions as a frame-work, answer the question posed in the title.
Chapter Two

The timing of the election and Cumann na nGaedheal’s election strategy

On 29 January 1932 W. T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council and leader of the Cumann na nGaedheal party dissolved the sixth Dáil and called a general election for 16 February. This chapter examines, firstly, the timing of the general election. It raises the question why was it called so early in that year when an election was not required until October? What factors, such as economic, social and even religious may have influenced its timing? Secondly, it examines the reactions of the leaders of the other political parties and Independent TDs in Dáil Éireann to the calling of the election. Third what were the election issues for the government party, Cumann na nGaedheal?

The timing of the general election

A revealing letter written by Patrick McGilligan minister for Industry and Commerce, to Joe Walshe, secretary of the Department of External Affairs, on 18 September 1931 states quite candidly the minister’s view that an early election was not only advisable but absolutely vital in light of the disastrous economic situation.

There is no evidence that W.T. Cosgrave read McGilligan’s letter but both men

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20 University College Dublin Archives, (UCDA), Papers of Patrick McGilligan, (PPMCG), P35d/113, [Patrick McGilligan to Joe Walshe, 18 September 1931.]
worked closely together, consequently Cosgrave’s decision to call an election early the following year may have been influenced by the economic climate. Dermot Keogh wrote that the party was badly divided on the actual timing of the election. But Cosgrave obviously disagreed with his minister and rejected the idea of an early election in November 1931. Regardless of the actual date of the election, it might be argued that campaigning had begun as soon as the church bells had ceased to ring in the New Year.

On 2 January 1932 *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* carried advertisements on behalf of Cumann nGaedheal seeking financial donations from the public. An article in *The Irish Times* noted the best indication that an ‘election was in the ofﬁng was an appeal for funds by the government party.’ Perhaps an indication of the gathering momentum for an early election can be seen from the contributions to a Dáil debate on unemployment held on 17 December 1931. Richard Anthony, Independent Labour TD for Cork city stated: ‘If we are going to the electors which I dare say we will in the course of the next few weeks … then we will go to the country not on the question of what we did in 1916.’ Seán T. O’Kelly, Fianna Fáil T.D. for the North Dublin constituency stated, ‘… The general election is not so far off’. Even Ernest Blythe, Cumann na nGaedheal Deputy leader and Minister for Finance spoke of the ‘record of the government.’ A term rarely used except at the end of a government’s life. In a debate on prison conditions Cosgrave invited Seán

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22 UCDA, P39/Min/3, Minute Books of Cumann na nGaedheal and Fine Gael (MBCFG), 5 November 1931.
23 *The Irish Times* 2 January 1932; *Irish Independent*, 2 January 1932.
24 Ibid.
Lemass the deputy leader of Fianna Fáil, to take his remark to the hustings.27

Covering Dáil speeches in December 1931 the *Irish Independent* noted that ‘The debate flavoured of a general election.’28

An interesting aspect of the election campaign was its length. A headline in the *Donegal Democrat* on 16 January 1932 declared: ‘General election campaign in full swing.’29 A few days later the *Roscommon Herald* informed its readers that: ‘All parties have got to work in the election campaign.’30 It seemed the opposition parties had commenced their campaigns and left the government behind. At the beginning of the year Cumann na nGaedheal announced the opening of three election offices in Dublin city and the appointment of Richard Mulcahy and P.S. Doyle as election organisers.31 By 11 January eight candidate selection conventions had been held. Professor Michael Tierney, Cumann na nGaedheal TD for the National University (University College Dublin) declared at a Cumann na nGaedheal convention in Ennis on Saturday, 9 January, that the leader of Fianna Fáil, Éamon de Valera was no more fit to rule the country in 1932 than he was in 1922.32 Of the seven conventions held the following day, Sunday 10 January, five were convened by Fianna Fáil to select candidates in the five-seat Clare constituency, the seven-seat Kerry constituency, the four-seat Waterford constituency, the five-seat Carlow-Kilkenny constituency and the five-seat Leix-Offaly constituency. Two conventions were held by Cumann na nGaedheal for the five-seat Mayo South constituency and the three-seat Wicklow constituency. The last convention held that weekend was by the Labour Party in Navan which chose not to put any candidates forward for the three-seat Meath

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28 *Irish Independent*, 18 December 1931.
29 *Donegal Democrat*, 16 January 1932.
31 Ibid, 8 January 1932.
constituency. Also on that busy weekend William Norton, a Labour Party TD and member of The Irish Labour Party Administration Council addressed a meeting in Birr, County Offaly, where he stated that if after the election the Labour Party held the balance of power the party would vote for the political party most amenable to implementing Labour policies on nationalising the banks and extending credit to the farming community. De Valera, spoke at Clara, County Offaly, on Sunday 10 January outlining Fianna Fáil’s economic policy on developing local industry, the imposition of trade tariffs and withholding the payment of the land annuities to the British exchequer. Effectively a general election campaign had begun without an election having been called.

The most important meeting held that early weekend was in Ennis on 10 January. Addressed by Cosgrave, it was widely expected that he would announce a polling date; and the Irish Independent commented that he used the phrase ‘urgency’ in ‘preparing for an election’ and The Irish Press reported Cosgrave as saying an election was close at hand. But Cosgrave did not announce a dissolution of the Dáil. Instead he effectively launched Cumann na nGaedheal’s campaign. His speech set out the broad policies of his party which would be echoed in the weeks that followed. The words ‘economic,’ or ‘economy,’ were mentioned twelve times in the speech. He emphasised the importance of ‘co-operation’ with Britain in the area of trade and several times the importance of a government with a strong mandate who would be able to negotiate from strength at the forthcoming Imperial conference on British Commonwealth trade policy which was to be held in Ottawa on 21 July.

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
37 Irish Independent, 11 January 1932.
noted potential changes in British trade policy with the possibility of future ‘conferences’ on trade, and emphasised the need for continuity in government.\(^{39}\) The nature of the other conference Cosgrave referred to was clear. In December 1931 there had been correspondence between the President of the British Board of Trade, Walter Runciman, and the Irish Foreign Minister, Patrick McGilligan, on planning for a meeting to discuss changes in Britain’s trade relations with the Free State.\(^{40}\) The bulk of Irish exports went to Britain and in common with many other trading nations during the Great Depression the British government indicated its intention of introducing tariffs. This may have alarmed the government and with exports at an all time low and the Free State’s economy in serious trouble it was time for urgent action.\(^{41}\)

On 13 January 1932, McGilligan and Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture, and the Irish High Commissioner, John. W. Dulanty, met with Runciman. The meeting was referred to as a ‘Conference’ in the *Irish Independent*\(^{42}\) but the *Donegal Democrat* hoped that the meeting ‘will result in better trade relations between the two countries.’\(^{43}\) It appeared the government pinned much hope on this meeting taking place and it may have been the conference that Cosgrave had referred to in his speech in Ennis. An agreement favourable to Ireland’s trading relations with Britain at this point would have provided Cosgrave with an ideal opportunity to go to the country. However, no such outcome emerged from the talks and the election was not called. On 5 February 1932 the British government announced the imposition of trade tariffs but they were of no threat to Irish exports, indeed they gave a competitive edge to

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\(^{39}\) *Irish Independent*, 11 January 1932.
\(^{40}\) UCDA, PPMCG, P35b/31, Correspondence between the Minister for External Affairs and Walter Runciman President of the British Board of Trade, 10-17 December 1931.
\(^{41}\) Lee, *Ireland*, p.171.
\(^{42}\) *Irish Independent*, 13 January 1932.
\(^{43}\) *Donegal Democrat*, 23 January 1932.
agricultural produce from Commonwealth countries including Ireland, especially with regard to poultry and eggs. Cumann na nGaedheal did gain some concessions for Irish farmers but once Britain had abandoned free trade, the future prospects for an Irish economy based on agricultural exports appeared fairly grim. The vulnerability of the government’s economic policy which depended almost totally on trade with Britain was there for all to see. As the editorial in The Irish Press, noted on Cosgrave’s speech: ‘Of an independent economic policy Mr. Cosgrave did not give a single hint.’

Many reasons are put forward by historians to explain why an election was called seven months before it was legally required. The first reason relates to the Imperial trade conference which was due to be held in Ottawa that summer. The conference would set the terms of trade between the Free State and Britain so whichever party represented Ireland would require a clear mandate from the electorate. Dermot Keogh suggests that had Cosgrave waited until the summer to announce the election this would have given Fianna Fáil time to prepare for an election. However there is evidence that Fianna Fáil had expected a general election to be called in 1931 and was as prepared to fight a campaign in early 1932 as it ever was. The second reason related to the thirty-first International Eucharistic Congress which was to be held in Dublin, on 22-26 June 1932. Cosgrave’s government did not want a religious event of such international status and honour to be spoiled by a divisive general election. The third reason given for Cosgrave’s decision was

44 The Irish Times; Irish Independent, 6 February 1932.
45 The Irish Press, 11 January 1932.
47 Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, p.59
domestic and more mundane: the perilous economic situation. On 12 September 1931 J.J. McElligott, secretary to Ernest Blythe, prepared a confidential report on the state’s finances. McElligott was concerned that ‘government departments have as yet entirely failed to realise the serious financial position of the country.’ The prevailing world depression was referred to as a ‘trade depression’ which, more than anything, revealed Cumann na nGaedheal’s view of the nature of the Free State’s economy. McElligott concluded that the budgetary position in 1932-33 would be ‘very serious.’ Already deep cuts in the pay of teachers and Án Garda Síochána had been announced. If McElligott’s advice was followed much worse would follow for the electorate.

The point has been made by Meehan that Cumann na nGaedheal was essentially a party that during its long term in government ‘worked with the interests of the people at heart’. In other words, the party did not play around with the timing of the election for its own advantage. Lee described Cosgrave’s timing as ‘poor’ because it coincided with a serious drop in agricultural prices and that the timing of the election did not display an ‘elevated sense of public duty.’ Lee believes that Cosgrave was simply incapable of political guile. Perhaps Lee meant the kind of ‘skills’ a politician required to retain office and it may be a harsh judgement but given that Cumann na nGaedheal lost power, it may have been a true one.

The reactions of the other parties to the announcement:

When the election was finally called, the polling date was set for 16 February. The announcement was not unexpected by Fianna Fáil and Labour, indeed there may have been a certain impatience within the opposition parties about how long it took

54 Lee, Ireland, p. 171.
Cosgrave to dissolve the sixth Dáil. Fianna Fáil did not even wait for the President’s announcement and went ahead and launched its election campaign in Wexford on 23 January. The meeting was addressed by de Valera who focussed on three main points that would form the basis of the party’s election manifesto in 1932: the abolition of the Oath of Allegiance, the retention of land annuities and the repeal of the Special Powers Act or Constitutional Amendment No. 17 passed in 20 October 1931 in response to renewed IRA activity. The act gave the Gardaí the powers to detain suspects without charge and it set up a military tribunal which could try those accused of subversive crimes.

Speaking on behalf of the Labour party in Knock, Co. Mayo, on 17 January, Labour leader Thomas J. O’Connell stated that his aims were to secure employment, nationalise transport and establish a housing scheme. In his speech he seemed to despair of a Cumann na nGaedheal government ever implementing these policies. He concluded with a criticism of the Special Powers Act.

Another opposition group was the Agricultural League a small special interest organisation based around the farming community. It launched the manifesto of one of its main candidates, John F. O’Hanlon in Bailieborough, County Cavan, on 5 February. O’Hanlon introduced his running mate, John Henry Murphy, into the four-seat constituency of Cavan and emphasised the League’s agenda; the removal of rates on agricultural land, a reduction in government expenses both at national and local level, the use of revenues collected from tariffs on agricultural imports to be invested in agriculture. It was the only party contesting the election to openly share Fianna Fáil’s policy on land annuity payments, although O’Hanlon’s policy on the

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55 Doherty and Hickey, A Chronology of Irish History, p. 214.
57 The Irish Press, 18 January 1932.
58 Anglo Celt, 6 February 1932.
annuities meant a moratorium of two years on the payments.\textsuperscript{59} The Independent candidates had begun declaring themselves at meetings and through advertisements in local newspapers long before polling day was announced. Independent Alexander Hazlet and Independent Republican John McGahey declared their candidacy for the three-seat Monaghan constituency on 15 January.\textsuperscript{60} Momentum was growing for an election.

When the Dáil was finally dissolved it must have looked like yet another scene in a very long play, and an anti-climactic scene at that. The editorial in \textit{The Irish Press} on the following day, 30 January, opened with the sentence ‘At last the Dáil has been dissolved.’\textsuperscript{61} The date of the election may have been the worst-kept secret in the country as the \textit{Connaught Sentinel} on 26 January (three days before the announcement) accurately forecast both the dates of the dissolution as well as the polling date.\textsuperscript{62} The election campaign for the 1932 general election was well underway by the end of January. This suggested that the timing may not have been entirely in the hands of the government as the other parties had started the campaign without waiting for an announcement. But it may be suggested that of all the parties contesting it, Cumann na nGaedheal were the best prepared. The emphasis on trade and the maintenance of good relations with Britain were central to Cumann na nGaedheal’s election policies. As will be seen the party had drawn up a comprehensive campaign handbook\textsuperscript{63} and secured the services of an established advertising company. Cumann na nGaedheal’s campaign would be to warn the voters that any change to the status quo, either political or economic would be detrimental to an exporting nation. According to the government party Fianna Fáil were the threat to

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 6 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 16 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{The Irish Press}, 30 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Connaught Sentinel}, 26 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{63} See page 28.
this status quo and must be opposed regardless. The main opposition party had prepared a list of pledges for voters which it was hoped, would not only improve the economy, but create a more peaceful and stable society. While both parties employed the same methods during the campaign, speeches, newspaper advertisements, bill posters, their message and emphasis as will be seen were quite different.

**Cumann na nGaedheal fights the election**

Cumann na nGaedheal launched its publicity campaign in the *Irish Independent* on Saturday 30 January 1932. It took the form of extensive coverage of a meeting held in the Mansion House in Dublin the previous evening chaired by the Lord Mayor, Alfie Byrne. The headline in the *Irish Independent* blazed, 'Dáil Dissolved: Election on February 16.' Beneath this were photographs of government ministers and coverage of a speech delivered by Cosgrave at the Mansion House. Cosgrave began with the government’s list of achievements: ten years of stability, the creation of 50,000 jobs, improvements in education, agriculture, industry and housing and the fact that the Irish Free State was the envy of the wealthier nations of Europe and the United States because it had no external debts and its national credit position was sound. He also pointed to the work of the Land Commission in consolidating tenant farmers in their holdings, the establishment of industries and the building of the Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme. Among this list of accomplishments was the Free State’s entry into the League of Nations in 1924.

Cosgrave then gave a short history of Cumann na nGaedheal’s ten years in government. This focussed on the reconstruction of the country from the ruins of the

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64 *Irish Independent*, 30 January 1932.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
Civil War to a situation of order and peace which included cordial relations with Britain, which he described as ‘Our greatest customer.’ With regard to trade with Britain Cosgrave was familiar with the details. The Exchequer returns for the Free State to 1 April 1931, showed that exports to Britain in the previous year, totalled £3,383,918. This is in comparison with exports to Germany worth £133,897 and £20,157 to the United States. If Cosgrave was familiar with these statistics, it is very probable that Cumann na nGaedheal’s middle class supporters, while unaware of the figures, recognised Britain as Ireland’s largest trading partner.

Cosgrave described the tough times ahead and the importance for the country to have a government with a clear mandate to take the hard decisions he felt were necessary. He did not spare his listeners the harsh reality: ‘Our trade returns have taken a sudden jump downward, our national income has followed suit.’ He candidly told his audience that whatever party took office after the election, it would be faced with tough, urgent decisions and he hoped that a new government would not pursue what he called ‘rash theories, political or economic,’ otherwise the work of the previous ten years would have been wasted.

Cosgrave described his government as ‘A reserve of national energy.’ He wanted to use this energy and experience to pull the country out of the economic crisis and felt confident a responsible government could overcome the dangers that faced the people. Among the challenges were internal disturbances which he claimed would arise from the Fianna Fáil party’s policy to release Irish Republican Army (IRA) prisoners recently detained under the Special Powers Act. Fianna Fáil, he

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68 Ibid.
69 UCDA, PEB, P24/99, Supplementary Memorandum, 15 September 1931.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
claimed wanted to repeal the act. In Cosgrave’s view the prisoners were terrorists and murderers, and Fianna Fáil intended releasing them into society. He instructed the Mansion House audience to note that the Roman Catholic hierarchy had condemned what he called a ‘conspiracy’ by left-wing groups to overthrow the state. He went on to quote IRA instructions to its members not to participate in any way in the general election. He concluded that as a result of emergency legislation, including the Special Powers Act, the forces outside the law were afraid of the Cumann na nGaedheal government. Thus he implied that Fianna Fáil’s wish to repeal the 1931 act equated with support for the forces of violence. Moreover Cosgrave was attempting to smear the main opposition party with the taint of communism and militant republicanism.

The second danger identified by Cosgrave was the possibility of a Fianna Fáil-led government destroying the friendly relations with Britain which the government had so carefully built up. He pointed out that the most egregious policy of the Fianna Fáil party was to abolish the Oath of Allegiance which he believed would not only ‘tear up the treaty’ but effectively destroy the Free State itself. He identified three main Fianna Fáil aims which he was convinced would end the good relations with Britain. First, there was Fianna Fáil’s proposed policy of non-co-operation with Britain, particularly in relation to withholding the land annuities from the British exchequer. Second, the combining of the Offices of Governor-General (the official representative of the British monarch in Ireland) with that of the President of the Free State. The latter move would effectively end Ireland’s membership of the British Commonwealth. The third danger which Cosgrave identified was that a Fianna Fáil-

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74 Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
led government would attempt to control all aspects of the economy as was the case in the Soviet Union. He finished this part of the speech by reiterating that the government was best able to deal with trouble-makers and subversive elements at home while maintaining important trading relations with Britain and the British Commonwealth.77

The remainder of his speech covered the question of tariffs and the government’s commitment to support indigenous industry. He claimed that his government wished to institute a policy of ‘selective tariffs’ not the raising of indiscriminate duties proposed by the opposition. He concluded by returning to the issue of the world depression and its adverse effects on the Irish economy. He warned of cuts in services, cuts in public spending and that tough decisions needed to be made, but he felt confident that the present government had the experience to lead the country though the crisis.78 The speech was extensive and served the purposes of launching Cumann na nGaedheal’s election campaign and setting out the party’s aims. It was not, however, Cumann na nGaedheal’s official manifesto. The electorate would have to wait over a week for that. The latter was published in the Sunday Independent on 7 February 1932. Ciara Meehan notes that prior to 1977 political parties in Ireland did not issue formal manifestos at election times.79 However, the half page advertisement carried in the Sunday Independent quite concisely captured the government party’s election programme in 1932.

The Cumann na nGaedheal election manifesto presented to readers a redacted version of Cosgrave’s Mansion House speech. The document was addressed ‘To the people of the Irish Free State’ and was signed by Cosgrave and the chairman of

77 Ibid.
78 Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
79 Meehan, The Cosgrave Party, p. 174
Cumann na nGaedheal and Minister for Education, John Marcus O’Sullivan.\textsuperscript{80} Like the President’s earlier speech the manifesto opened on an historical note by declaring that the aspirations of the Irish people were to fight for their independence and to free themselves from oppression. The manifesto then proceeded in a similar vein to Cosgrave’s speech by reiterating the government’s achievements in establishing an ordered state where its citizens were free from external restraint to develop their lives culturally and economically, free from the threat of poverty or war and ‘free from any external restraint whatsoever.’\textsuperscript{81} The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 was mentioned as the main pillar of the state and the manifesto asked the people of Ireland to make a choice to either continue along the road of peace and prosperity in a ‘God-fearing life’\textsuperscript{82} or jeopardise this order and stability by engaging in political experimentation that was ‘foreign to Irish mentality.’ The ‘tradition of suffering’ was invoked in the defence of the nation state.\textsuperscript{83}

The threats to the state and people were vague and identified merely as subversive to the ‘national life of Irish people’\textsuperscript{84} the government felt that it was its duty ‘to save the State from those whose policy, if put into practice, would involve its destruction.’\textsuperscript{85} A warning was made of a similar fate suffered in a country with, what the manifesto called a ‘spiritual tradition no less noble than our own.’\textsuperscript{86} This may have been a reference to the electoral victory of the republican parties in Spain in 1931 which led to the exile of King Alfonso XIII. This gave an interesting insight into the political values of Cumann na nGaedheal. The party seemed to have regarded the

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Sunday Independent}, 7 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
ousting of a dictatorial monarch as a tragedy, simply because he was a Roman Catholic and because he was replaced by a government of the left.

The readers were asked to note de Valera’s declaration about abolishing the Oath of Allegiance and the combination of the Offices of Governor-General with that of President of the Free State. The threat to the existence of the state was now identified by Cosgrave as the main opposition party. Among the achievements under threat was the respect and status the Irish Free State held among the nations of the world, while the goodwill of the United States and the British Commonwealth would vanish. And Ireland’s international trade would collapse. This latter point may have been aimed at Cumann na nGaedheal’s supporters, the strong farmers and agricultural exporters for whom trade with Britain was of paramount importance. The aspiration to a unified Ireland a barb aimed at Fianna Fáil’s anti-partition policies, would be put at risk if the stability of the state was to crumble.87

The manifesto invoked the spirit of unnamed ‘greatest Irishmen,’ and stated that if they were still alive they would endorse Cumann na nGaedheal’s policies. Cumann na nGaedheal aligned itself with the very existence of the Irish Free State. The manifesto opened on an historical note and closed in the same manner. The voters were reminded of the 1922-3 Civil War and it was suggested that the vital issues at stake then were exactly the same as those in the current election. The date ‘1922’ was printed in the manifesto and referred to by Cosgrave to remind voters of the past chaos.

As a piece of election literature the manifesto made its point with vigour and focus. It was a classic example of election drum-beating if a little on the melodramatic side. The contrast with Cosgrave’s Mansion House speech over a week earlier was

obvious. Little was said about the economic crisis; instead much was made of the achievements of the Cumann na nGaedheal government which were portrayed as heroic and historic. No mention was made of the practical accomplishments such as the creation of 50,000 new jobs and perhaps one of the Cumann na nGaedheal’s greatest achievements, the Shannon Scheme.\(^{88}\)

The absence of any mention of the world-wide economic depression in the manifesto may be explained by the lapse of time between the publication of the piece in the *Sunday Independent* on 7 February and the delivery of William Cosgrave’s speech over a week earlier. A review of the government party’s election strategy of the party appeared to have taken place in the interim with far less emphasis placed on the economy and more on the government’s achievements. Clearly the party was still working out its election strategy. Mitchell opines that Cosgrave was too overwhelmed by the economic crisis to think of political opportunism.\(^{89}\) By the time the manifesto was printed it appeared that Cumann na nGaedheal felt it necessary to offer its non-business supporters something more than an improvement in trade. It is an indication of how little the party understood the voters outside its professional middle classes and large farmer base, that all it could think of was an appeal to their past and traditions. The use of the words ‘Irish suffering’ was coupled with the words ‘famine’ ‘oppression’ and ‘poverty.’ While recalling Ireland’s past difficulties these words may have been metaphors for economic hardship rather than that experienced by the electorate, and the threat that if Cumann na nGaedheal was not returned to government, the voters could expect a return to such suffering. This ‘warning’ tactic was a significant tool that would be employed in most of the Cumann na nGaedheal election literature throughout the 1932 campaign. It juxtaposed Cumann na nGaedheal

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with Ireland’s heroic past and warned the voters if they did not vote for the
government party they would be guilty of collaborating in the destruction of the Irish
State.

The word ‘religion’ was mentioned three times in the manifesto which also
included a mention of the ‘Pope’ and a ‘God-fearing life.’ The Mansion House
speech carried only a passing reference to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The IRA
was referred to by Cosgrave as a threat in his Mansion House speech while the
phrases ‘political experiments’ and ‘doctrines which are subversive of religion’
appeared a number of times in the manifesto. The tough decisions facing the
government outlined in the Mansion House speech were transformed into the tough
decisions facing the Irish people in the manifesto. The dangers mentioned by
Cosgrave had been transformed into the imminent destruction of the state and its
institutions in the manifesto. Cosgrave asked the electorate to put its trust in an
experienced government who would guide it through the economic crisis while in the
manifesto the people were asked to put any economic concerns aside and tackle the
biggest crisis of all, the defence of the state itself. Lee describes this strategy as
Cumann na nGaedheal’s attempts to evade economic issues in the 1932 election
campaign. However economic concerns were prominent in the government party’s
election literature, in particular any threats to the Anglo-Irish trading relationship.
Business and trade were central to the party’s strategy.

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90 *Sunday Independent*, 7 February 1932.
91 Ibid.
92 *Lee, Ireland*, p.169
In a memo written in 1931 the party Chairman, John Marcus O’Sullivan, one of the authors of the manifesto, wrote:

> We cannot take our political policy and our economic policy as two entirely separate railway systems … there must and there will be the closest connection between them …. Trade relations between this country and Great Britain are bound to be of first class importance for us.\(^9^3\)

The campaign to withhold the land annuities from the British Exchequer was one of Fianna Fáil’s main economic policies\(^9^4\) and a threat to this relationship. Another issue that directly threatened trade with Britain was mentioned by Cosgrave in the Mansion House speech, namely ‘a policy of indiscriminate tariffs.’\(^9^5\) This also threatened Cumann na nGaedheal’s free trade policy.\(^9^6\)

Associating Fianna Fáil with policies that would wreck trade with Britain made sense as did linking Fianna Fáil with communism. An early example of this was Cosgrave’s assertion that Fianna Fáil’s policy of establishing state boards was tantamount to state control of the economy. All were threats to the free market. Two other speeches made at the same event at the Mansion House were those by Alfie Byrne, the popular Lord Mayor of Dublin who spoke alongside Cosgrave as did Richard Mulcahy, the Minister of Local Government and Health. Byrne’s speech seemed to be in the nature of a warm-up for Cosgrave and focussed on what he called the ‘smouldering fires of Communism,’ while Mulcahy made the bold statement that ‘the citizens of the Free State in 1932 were the first generation of Irish people who

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\(^{93}\) UCDA, Papers of John Marcus O’Sullivan, (PJMOS), LA60/122,123,124, 1932, undated.

\(^{94}\) UCDA, Papers of Fianna Fáil, (PFF), P176/830, Fianna Fáil election pledges, 9 February 1932.

\(^{95}\) Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.

\(^{96}\) Michael, Gallagher and Michael, Marsh, Days of Blue Loyalty, p.17.
had control of their own destinies.\textsuperscript{97} Both these points encapsulated the historical destiny of the Irish people and the threats to their religious way of life and were presented in the manifesto. The Mansion House speech appeared to have been Cumann na nGaedheal’s election manifesto for the business classes, while the manifesto in the \textit{Sunday Independent} may have been aimed at the non-business voter.

How did Fianna Fáil react to these opening salvos of the campaign by the government? On 29 January 1932, \textit{The Irish Press}, the Fianna Fáil organ, described the holding of the election in the first week of Lent as shameful as the government could use the Roman Catholic bishops’ Lenten pastorals for political purposes. The same issue reported a meeting held by de Valera in Rathmines Town Hall in Dublin city, the previous night, where the party leader spoke of being in possession of what he called ‘dope’ (an old fashioned slang term for secret information) originating from the government party intended for use in the election campaign.\textsuperscript{98} De Valera was referring to a booklet issued by Cumann na nGaedheal to its party workers.

\textit{Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers} was intended as a primer for campaign workers and candidates in debates or speeches during the election campaign. It was not, as far as is known, distributed among the public though it bore many similarities with the Mansion House speech and the Cumann na nGaedheal manifesto. It is arranged in eighty chapters, some of which are no more than a page long and many headings in bold print were presumably intended to be emphasised or highlighted by the speakers. Also highlighted was the fact that it was printed on Irish made paper. \textsuperscript{99} Although no publisher or printing address was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[97] Ibid.
\item[98] \textit{The Irish Press}, 29 January 1932.
\item[99] See Appendix II, Title page of \textit{Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers}. p.152.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
presented, Liam Burke the Cumann na nGaedheal director of elections in 1932\textsuperscript{100} worked on the party newspaper \textit{The Star} which was published at 5 Parnell Square, Dublin.\textsuperscript{101} It is possible that \textit{Fighting Points} originated from the same address.

In the first section the importance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was reiterated with Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith’s roles contrasted with those of de Valera and the Unionist leader Edward Carson.\textsuperscript{102} This equated de Valera with Unionism. Under the second heading which related to the achievements of the government were to be found the work of the Land Commission in vesting land to the tenant farmers, the establishment of the Agriculture Credit Corporation (ACC) and the development of the sugar beet industry. Also mentioned were grants to local authorities to foster the fishing industry, a house building scheme in the Gaeltacht area and more prosaic initiatives such as the hand-woven tweed cottage industry.

Achievements in the international arena included the appointment of ambassadors and plenipotentiaries to other sovereign states and the reception of ambassadors from those countries including the Papal Nuncio from the Vatican City. The Statute of Westminster, 1931 was mentioned and a quotation from Cosgrave hammered home the \textit{leitmotif} of Cumann na nGaedheal ‘The Treaty and the Treaty alone is the basis of relations between the two countries.’\textsuperscript{103} The writer, of course, was referring to Britain and Ireland.

More mundane improvements such as the reorganisation of the postal service, drainage schemes and reform of the Poor Law system all led up to the crowning economic achievement of the Free State’s first government, namely the Shannon Hydroelectric power station built at Ardnacrusha, County Clare, in 1929 which

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Cork Examiner}, 13 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{101} John M. Regan, \textit{The Irish Counter Revolution}, p.316.
\textsuperscript{102}Cumann na nGaedheal. \textit{Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers}, (Dublin, 1932), pp. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Fighting Points}, pp. 69-70.
\end{footnotesize}
provided electricity to 75,000 customers. The reduction of unemployment figures from 41,000 in 1922 to 21,000 in 1932 and grants to local authorities were listed, as well as tax reductions for the employed. The long list of benefits concluded on an almost arrogant tone with the document asking the reader, ‘What the people owe the government?’ and followed with ‘Look back, then to 1921, to 1922, with its turmoil and murder and gunmanship’. The two opening sections may have been intended to link the Anglo-Irish Treaty with stability and a prosperous economy. However, a sour note was struck in the form of a quotation from the *Western People* which warned ‘The danger lies not in the length of the years, but the shortness of memories.’ It was not the most humble valediction of a party hoping to serve the people for another term.

The arguments against the policies of the opposition parties and the explanation of government policy opened with the question of land annuities or more correctly, there was a lengthy rebuttal of Fianna Fáil’s position which proposed withholding the payments. The document went into almost forensic detail in explaining how the land annuities came about and why they must be paid annually to the British Exchequer. The British and Irish governments were portrayed as simply brokers facilitating a business arrangement between the Irish farmers and the holders of land bonds who had put up the original money to purchase the estates from the landlords for the tenants. Paying the land annuities to Britain was seen as both a legal obligation as well as good business etiquette. Any attempt to withhold such payments was seen as ‘communistic’ and the genesis of the anti-annuities campaign was dated to December 1926 and to Peadar O’Donnell, a member of the IRA Army Council and founder, in 1931, of the Socialist Republican Party, *Saor Eire*. The brochure stated

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104 Ibid, p.45
105 *Fighting Points*, p.70.
106 Ibid, pp.18-25.
that Éamon de Valera was present at the meeting that launched the anti-land annuity campaign and that he was anxious to lend his support to the movement. This also tarred de Valera with the communist brush.

The second economic argument that *Fighting Points* made was the question of duties on imported goods. In a pre-election speech in Carlow on 14 January 1932 Cosgrave had distilled the main priorities for the government in the coming election down to just two: defending the Treaty and recovering trade. There was an almost exasperated tone in a line in bold print which declared ‘The government has striven all along to lift the question of protectionism out of the maelstrom of purely party issues.’\(^{107}\) It would appear that this statement was aimed at Fianna Fáil who sought to drag the issue of protectionism into the political arena. However Cumann na nGaedheal’s indignation may have backfired as the government’s policy on tariffs was itself rather ambiguous.\(^{108}\) This confusion may have arisen from statements in *Fighting Points* where the booklet boasted that in the previous seven years, twenty-three indigenous industries had been protected by duties and Cosgrave was quoted as saying that the government was ‘frankly protectionist.’\(^{109}\) Clearly using tariffs to protect Ireland’s economy was popular but the government came across as too timid to go down the road of full protectionism. It appeared that Cumann na nGaedheal was being pushed into imposing tariffs incrementally both by the economic circumstances and in response to Fianna Fáil’s encouragement. Meehan suggests that the main opposition party appeared to have a better understanding of what the people wanted than the government.\(^{110}\)

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\(^{107}\) Ibid, p. 47.


\(^{109}\) *Fighting Points*, pp. 45-46.

\(^{110}\) Meehan, *The Cosgrave Party*, pp. 129-130

90 *Fighting Points*, p. 54.
The attacks on Fianna Fáil account for the largest section of *Fighting Points*. This can be ascertained from a question posed halfway through the document. The reader was asked to reflect on the achievements and benefits that the government had brought to the people and then asked what can Fianna Fáil set against them except a record of ‘bloodshed and destruction.’

The chief method employed to attack the main opposition party were their own words.

The Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis was held in Dublin on 28-9 October 1931. It was there that de Valera set out the party’s policies for the coming election campaign. The main points from de Valera’s speech that *Fighting Points* highlighted were (a) the plans to abolish the Oath which according to the brochure would ‘tear up’ the Anglo-Irish Treaty, (b) the policies to repeal the Constitutional Amendment and hold another general election within a year and (c) to combine the post of Governor General with that of the President of the Free State.

*Fighting Points* outlined the rest of Fianna Fáil’s programme for government. For example, Fianna Fáil policy promised to guarantee the price of wheat for cereal growers, protect domestic products with import duties, set up a housing board and establish an advisory council for the advancement of industrial development. Also a feature of Fianna Fáil’s economic policy was a scheme to allocate 40,000 holdings of seventy-five acres each to be distributed to tenant farmers. Fianna Fáil had something to offer almost every sector of Irish society. For example, guaranteeing the price of wheat was welcomed by tillage farmers as the price of wheat exports had dropped dramatically. Total exports in 1926-27 were £142,000 but in 1930 exports had declined to £111,000. Promises to introduce tariffs were widely welcomed by Irish farmers once the British government introduced tariffs in February 1932. The Irish

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market was in danger of being swamped by the dumping of cheap agricultural imports from the continent.\textsuperscript{113} It is indicative of the narrow focus of Cuamnn na nGaedheal’s election strategy that the party was not able to see the allure Fianna Fáil’s promises had for a sizeable majority of the Irish voters.

The following chapter in \textit{Fighting Points} elucidated familiar themes, blaming the Fianna Fáil party for the depredations of the Civil War and tying the party to communism. One part of the Irish Roman Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter from October 1931 was quoted to emphasis that Saor Eire was a communist republican organisation with associations with Fianna Fáil.\textsuperscript{114} The booklet concluded with a more focussed attack on Fianna Fáil’s economic policies. This featured under a bold heading titled ‘Is It a Dictatorship.’\textsuperscript{115} Fianna Fáil’s policy of boycotting official public functions was mentioned three times and was roundly condemned. The threat of isolation under a Fianna Fáil government was visualised as a ‘Chinese wall’ with The Free State becoming a ‘Hermit nation.’\textsuperscript{116}

It may be appropriate at this point to discuss the tactic referred to as the ‘red scare’ in secondary sources, (Lee, Meehan Ó Beacháin).\textsuperscript{117} On 10 September 1931 Cosgrave had sent Cardinal Joseph McRory, Catholic Primate of Ireland a Garda memo linking the IRA with communism.\textsuperscript{118} The government’s effort was successful, the bishop’s pastoral the following month condemned both Saor Eire and the IRA. However linking Fianna Fáil to both of these organisations would prove to be problematic. Aside from the main opposition party’s support for the withholding of the land

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid, pp. 140-141.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid, p. 141.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid, p.146.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid, p.158.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Lee, \textit{Ireland}, p.169-70; Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.176; Ó Beacháin, \textit{Destiny of The Soldiers} p.124-5
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ronan Fanning, ‘Four Leafed Shamrock.’ Twenty fifth O’Donnell Lecture, delivered by Ronan Fanning, 22 February 1983, UCD.
\end{itemize}
annuities, there was no connection between de Valera’s party and communism. As has been said Fianna Fáil’s policies of state control of industry and agriculture and the erection of tariffs to protect the domestic economy may well have been an incentive to voters and not the threat Cumann na nGaedheal intended them to be. As for the perceived threat to the Roman Catholic faith alluded to in the government party’s manifesto, de Valera’s own speeches made it clear where his loyalties lay, ‘My own belief is that there is no immediate danger whatever of these principles (Roman Catholic values) being under-mined, none whatsoever.’ And his distaste for left-wing politics, ‘that principle or that doctrine should not be preached here or spread here.’

During the period of the election campaign IRA violence had virtually ceased so Cumann na nGaedheal’s warnings of a renewed civil war may have rang a little hollow. The government party’s attempts to smear Fianna Fáil with the communist brush were based solely on the main opposition party’s economic policies and its support for the anti-land annuity campaign. The effectiveness of these tactics will be seen when the results of the election are examined later in this thesis.

*Fighting Points* was a proactive piece of election literature. It focused on and developed the basic Cumann na nGaedheal election policies that could be found in both Cosgrave’s speeches and the party’s manifesto: The protection of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Oath of Allegiance, ten years of achievements in economic, agricultural and infrastructural accomplishments were listed and supported by statistics. The development of the Free State’s sovereignty was mentioned, though significantly this was contingent upon Ireland remaining within the British Commonwealth and maintaining good relations with Britain. The issues the government felt it must explain or defend were featured, such as the payment of the

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land annuities and the avoidance of large scale tariffs which would threaten trade. The threat from subversive elements and communist ideology and the attacks on Fianna Fáil centred on that party’s attacks on the Treaty and its tariffs and land annuity policies. Some statistical information was provided on Department of Foreign Affairs’ expenditure\textsuperscript{120} but total government expenditure was not mentioned at all and where unemployment was addressed, it was stated that the number of people out of work in 1932 was lower than in 1922.

**Conclusion**

Campaigning for the 1932 general election effectively began in the first week of January. The opposition parties did not wait for the dissolution of the sixth Dáil before embarking on their own campaigns. Thus Cumann na nGaedheal was deprived of any element of surprise and commenced its campaign in a ‘catch up’ mode rather than being the first party out of the traps. The announcement of a polling day simply intensified the work the parties were already engaged in, such as candidate selection meetings, election advertisements and political meetings which took place in many towns and cities almost every day from the first week onwards. The factors that may have influenced Cosgrave’s decisions about the date of the election were manifold. First there was the need to have a strong government in place to represent the Free State in time for the Commonwealth trade conference in Ottawa. Second there was the unwillingness of any of the parties to hold an election prior to the hosting of the Eucharistic Congress to be held that summer. Third there was the economic situation and the fear of more wage cuts in the public services.\textsuperscript{121} An attempt to exploit the fear of a renewed IRA campaign was linked with the emergence of communist groups

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, p. 158
\textsuperscript{121} Meehan, *The Cosgrave Party*, p. 182
such as Saor Eire. The latter was presented by Cumann na nGaedheal as a threat to the existence of the state and their activities may have garnered sympathy for the government party in the same way as the fear of political instability following the assassination of Kevin O’Higgins in 1927 had resulted in an increase in support in the second general election held that year. However given the momentum that had built up with respect to pre-election campaigning it would appear that the calling of an election in early 1932 was inevitable and Cosgrave could not have credibly held out till the summer or autumn of that year.

Campaigning for the election had virtually begun on 17 December 1931 when the adjournment debate in the Dáil took place. Speeches made by representatives of the main parties and Independents from then on were those of contestants in a general election. The 1932 campaign, therefore, was a long election campaign. There were three main events that had brought the government party’s election programme before the public. The first, coverage of Cosgrave’s Mansion house speech on 29 January, the second, the party’s election manifesto published in the *Sunday Independent* on 7 February and the third, the issuing of *Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers*. Together they identified the government party’s election programme and separated it from that of Fianna Fáil and the other parties. There were omissions in the government party’s election literature, particularly on the issues relative to poverty and emigration. The election literature focused largely on its past achievements. However three important issues emerge as the government party’s primary election platform. The defence of the payments on the land annuities in order to maintain good trading relations with Britain, the refusal to countenance the imposition of large scale trade tariffs which would threaten the government’s policy

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of free trade, and the linking of Fianna Fáil with left-wing Republican communist elements. It is difficult not to characterise the government party’s approach as defensive: defending the state politically and economically Cumann na nGaedheal felt they were in no position to offer the voters anything in 1932 but a continuation of the status quo.
Chapter Three

Election policies: Fianna Fáil, The Labour Party,
The Farmers’ Party, others

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the contribution of opposition parties and Independents contesting the 1932 general election. This analysis will involve a brief history of each and an examination of their election policies. Fianna Fáil was the largest opposition party contesting the election, the Irish Labour Party, the second largest with the Farmers’ Party, the third. There were two smaller farmers’ groups, two communist parties and twenty Independent candidates. The time period covered by this chapter is from early January 1932 when effective campaigning had begun to 9 February when all the nominations had been received.

The Election Campaign

On 9 January the Cork weekly newspaper the Southern Star published an article signed by a correspondent under the nom de plume ‘Fear Faire’ (The watcher, or look-out man). The article forecasted an election for February, which the writer said was more or less confirmed. Attention he said, must now shift to the ‘Other parties’ and ‘Independent’ candidates in the contest.123 Primary among those ‘other parties’ was Fianna Fáil.

123 Southern Star, 9 January 1932.
Fianna Fáil was established on 16 May 1926. Its leader was Éamon de Valera with Seán Lemass, the honorary secretary of the party. In 1932 Lemass was also the national director of elections. One of de Valera’s early election statements came during the adjournment debate on unemployment in the Dáil on 17 December 1931. De Valera used the opportunity to introduce one of the main planks of Fianna Fáil’s economic policy, namely trade tariffs. The Fianna Fáil leader turned the debate on the government’s economic policy, by suggesting that Cumann na nGaedheal had little to offer the electorate beyond the hope of a preferential trade agreement with Britain. The prospect of receiving this preferential treatment became more remote after the British government announced its intention to impose limited duties on goods entering Britain in November 1931.

De Valera’s solution to the unemployment problem was to increase domestically produced goods while reducing foreign imports particularly those of an agricultural nature. He estimated that up to 25,000 jobs could be created with domestic produce serving the Irish market. This implied that the government party, Cumann na nGaedheal was a free trade party because of the government’s reluctance to raise import duties even when many other countries were doing so in response to the economic crisis resulting from the Wall st Crash of 1929. James Meenan and Mary E. Daly point out that the only reason the Irish Free State government imposed comprehensive tariffs in early 1932 was simply to prevent Ireland becoming a dumping ground for foreign agricultural produce following the British government’s intention to introduce tariffs. Meenan stated that between the imposition of tariffs by

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127 The Irish Times, 17 November 1931.
Britain in February 1932 and the change of government in Ireland in March of that year the Irish Free State was the only example of a free trade area in the world.\textsuperscript{129} Even in the face of an economic catastrophe the Cumann na nGaedheal party clung to free trade as its primary economic doctrine. Fianna Fáil had found the government’s ‘Achilles’ heel.’ Businessmen in Wexford and Cork supported Fianna Fáil’s policies on protectionism.\textsuperscript{130} It may be assumed that there were businessmen in other parts of the country who shared these views probably for exactly the same reason.

The second barb that Fianna Fáil directed at the government in the debate of 17 December was patriotism, or more specifically, Cumann na nGaedheal’s lack of same. Seán T. O’Kelly, Fianna Fáil TD for Dublin North, quoted the economic doctrine of Arthur Griffith, one of the founders of Sinn Féin and President of the Provisional Government in the third Dáil (June 1922-August 1923). O’Kelly accused Cosgrave and Richard Mulcahy, Vice President of the Executive Council, of ‘tearing up the teachings of Griffith’ and adopting the ‘… British Empire gospel of Free Trade’.\textsuperscript{131} O’Kelly continued by quoting Dean Swift’s words ‘burn everything English but coal’ and suggested that this doctrine informed Griffith’s economic policy. Fianna Fáil’s strategy was to create doubt in the minds of the voters about the government’s patriot credentials. It would appear that this was more than an election tactic, de Valera confided to Joe McGarrity one of the leaders of the Irish American organisation Clan Na Gael in 1926 that should the current political personalities be replaced by ‘class interests’ such as farmers and labourers the national question might be submerged in ‘economic class warfare.’\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{129} Meenan,\textit{Irish Economy}, p. 142
\textsuperscript{131} Oireachtas.ie/dail/1931/12/17/ Vol. 40, No. 20, Column 3049 [Accessed 22 February 2012]
question’ was of such importance that he was adamant that nothing, even the survival of the Irish economy should distract attention from it.

In a speech on 9 January 1932 delivered in Clara, County Offaly, and in Thurles, County Tipperary on the following day, de Valera revealed more of Fianna Fáil’s election programme.\(^{133}\) The withholding of the Irish land annuity payments from the British Exchequer would, he said, benefit the Irish Exchequer by a sum of £5,500,000 and could enable capital projects such as the Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme to be undertaken every year. He also criticised the Constitutional Amendmen, Special Powers Act brought in by the government on 17 October 1931.\(^{134}\) De Valera proposed to abolish the Oath of Allegiance, an action he hoped would bring into the Dáil the very political groups causing the subversion. De Valera’s Clara speech saw the introduction of the first of several slogans that Fianna Fáil would use in the election, ‘Ireland for the Irish.’ ‘Speed the plough’ and ‘Fair play for all.’\(^{135}\) These slogans would find their way into election posters and newspaper advertisements of the party and would be repeated in the speeches of Fianna Fáil candidates particularly the leading members of the party throughout the election campaign.

Seán Lemass spoke at an election meeting in Tralee also on Sunday, 10 January. His speech responded to criticisms from Cumann na nGaedheal that a Fianna Fáil government would start a trade war with Britain because of the opposition party’s policies on the introduction of tariffs. Lemass was at pains to point out that Fianna Fáil would strive for a better deal for Irish agricultural exports to Britain in return for the preference shown to British imports into the Free State.\(^{136}\)

\(^{133}\) *The Irish Times*, 11 January 1932.
\(^{134}\) Doherty and Hickey, *A Chronology of Irish History*, p.214.
\(^{135}\) *The Irish Press*, 29 January 1932.
\(^{136}\) *The Irish Times*, 11 January 1932.
De Valera also responded to attacks from the government. But when he spoke in Wexford on 24 January, two new points emerged in the Fianna Fáil election programme; firstly, that Fianna Fáil adhered closely to Christian principles, secondly, the party was critical of the Military Tribunal set up by the Special Powers Act which gave the government the power to ban political organisations. De Valera addressed another meeting almost a week later in Dublin. The slogan ‘fair play for all sections of society’ made its appearance at this meeting and de Valera again felt it necessary to declared that he had no wish to start a conflict with Britain.\textsuperscript{137} On the contrary, he stated that Fianna Fáil was the ‘peace party.’\textsuperscript{138} Addressing a meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon he stated that while Fianna Fáil favoured a self sufficient economy there was nothing communistic or socialistic about the party. Speaking in Claremorris, County Mayo on 31 January he emphasised Fianna Fáil’s policies on land annuities and the Oath.\textsuperscript{139}

A complete draft of Fianna Fáil’s election pledges or what might be called an election manifesto today, revealed the aims of the main opposition party for the election which they hoped would see them form a government. The main points have already been mentioned, the abolition of the Oath of Allegiance, the retention of the land annuities, the development of home industries and the raising of tariffs against foreign imports. However another point entered the election campaign at this stage, namely that Fianna Fáil had no intention of introducing a land tax. This was a response to an allegation made in Cumann na nGaedheal’s election handbook, \textit{Fighting Points for Speakers and Workers}.\textsuperscript{140} At the bottom of the typed list of election pledges and highlighted at de Valera’s own request, and in his handwriting,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{137} Ibid, 29 January 1932.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Ibid, 29 January 1932.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Ibid, 1 February 1932.
\item \textsuperscript{140} See Chapter Two.
\end{itemize}
was a sentence asking the electorate ‘not to allow themselves to be deceived by the misrepresentations of their opponents.’

A piece of election advertising for the main opposition party appeared in The Irish Press on 5 February. It opened with the words, ‘Here’s what a Fianna Fáil government will do for you.’ The document contained a series of five headings, four of which were aimed at a certain section of Irish society. The first, and from Fianna Fáil’s perspective, the most important, was the agricultural community under the title ‘Tillage.’ The reader was told that tillage land could be increased up to 1,410,000 acres which the Department of Agriculture had calculated would accrue ‘wages payable on an acre of wheat at £2 6s. 6d.’ The pledge continued that it would increase total wages by £3,130,000 or £16 per year to ‘all males and females over 12 years of age whether farmer or labourer.’ The calculations were simplistic, the growth figure optimistic. But the aim was to focus the reader’s attention on the £16 at the end of the section. The party had, however, done its research well. In the early 1930s most farmers worked holdings of five acres or less. The appeal of such a claim for the small farmer struggling to make ends meet during the Great Depression was clear.

The second heading called ‘Economy’ began with the stated aim of cutting government expenditure and giving tax payers value for money. Fianna Fáil believed that savings could be made without ‘reducing public services’ or inflicting hardship on any ‘class of government servants.’ The pledge proposed cuts in

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141 UCDA, P176/832, Papers of Eamon de Valera, (PEDV), Fianna Fáil election pledges, 9 February 1932.
142 The Irish Press, 5 February 1932.
143 Ibid, 5 February 1932.
144 Ibid, 5 February 1932.
145 Ibid, 5 February 1932.
146 Meenan, Irish Economy, Table, untitled, p.113.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
expenditure where the state was not legally bound by the Anglo-Irish Treaty, for example there was the sum of £1,152,500 paid to the British government in respect of Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), pensions. Readers and potential voters were also told that the burden of taxation could be lightened by not less than £2,000,000 per year. No sources however were provided for these calculations.

The third heading: ‘Employment,’ set out Fianna Fáil’s plans to create jobs in 1932. This was essentially to be achieved by manufacturing goods that were normally imported. A table of industries, trades and skills were listed and the number of jobs which could be created in each sector was given. Employment in grain milling would increase by 14,000. In ‘woollens and worsteds’, 658 jobs would be created and in soap making and candles, 154. Again the basis of these calculations was not presented.

The fourth heading, ‘Housing’ dealt with the establishment of a state housing board and a promise to build 40,000 new houses in a ‘maximum of five years.’ The final heading titled ‘A Fianna Fáil government will’ set forth a list of eight commitments, including the creation of a co-ordinated public transport system, the preservation of the railways and a commitment to develop the fishing industry.

There was also a promise to increase the old age pension, the elimination of the political test for employment in the public service and to guide the economy in a more self-reliant, self-sufficient direction. Beneath the text was a picture of a farmer following the plough being pulled by two strong horses with the slogan ‘Speed the Plough.’ Other phrases summarised the document’s message such as ‘End of destitution.’, ‘Stop emigration’, ‘More tillage’, ‘More Houses’.

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149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
The official Fianna Fáil manifesto appeared in *The Irish Press* on 11 February 1932. This was an expanded version of the list of pledges including de Valera’s instructions to the voters already mentioned.\(^{153}\) The document opened with the words, ‘To the electors. Fianna Fáil seeks a mandate to proceed with the following items included in its programme.’\(^{154}\) It comprised eight points and a further section which protested against partition and a paragraph promising to respect the rights of minorities. There was also a commitment not to introduce a land tax.\(^{155}\) The first of the pledges concerned abolishing the Oath which the advertisement stated ‘stands in the way of national unity and the obedience of the law.’\(^{156}\) The Oath, the manifesto suggested, had lead the government to rule by coercion. The second and third pledges were made on the questions of retention of the land annuities and a review of the commitment to pay state pensions to former members of the RIC. The fourth and fifth promises concerned developing both Irish agriculture and the manufacturing industry to meet the needs of the home market and the erection of trade tariffs against foreign imports. The sixth point committed a Fianna Fáil government to negotiating better trading terms with the British government in order to secure preferential treatment for Irish goods in Britain in return for the same terms for British imports. Point seven, pledged a cut in public spending but no reductions in public services or to the salaries of middle or lower grade civil servants. There was also a promise to make promotion easier in the civil services. Point eight was a promise to promote the Irish language through the development of the Gaeltacht region. The last line of the advertisement repeated de Valera’s

\(^{153}\) See Chapter Three.

\(^{154}\) Ibid.

\(^{155}\) Ibid.

\(^{156}\) Ibid.
instructions to the voters with regard to misrepresentation.\textsuperscript{157} The advertisement was signed by the Fianna Fáil party leader Éamon de Valera and dated 9 February 1932. The document contained the basis of the Fianna Fáil programme for the 1932 general election. Absent however were plans to merge the office of the Governor General with that of President of the Free State a policy which Cumann na nGaedheal had accused Fianna Fáil of wanting to implement.\textsuperscript{158} Also missing from this manifesto was the promise by Fianna Fáil to repeal the Constitutional Amendment Act.

The technique employed in the manifesto was to list a series of policies which the Fianna Fáil leadership believed should be implemented for the good of the nation. Apart from the request to the voters not to allow themselves to be swayed by government propaganda, the document made no attempt to pander to the emotions or idealism of the voters. With regard to some issues, such as the retention of the land annuities, it explained why the payments should be retained by the Irish Exchequer, namely that it would increase revenue which would mean the farmers would ‘be relieved completely of the rates on their holdings.’\textsuperscript{159} This ‘common sense’ approach was continued throughout the document with the pledge to negotiate a better trade deal with Britain for Irish goods and to maintain good trading relations between Ireland and Britain, because ‘each was the other’s best customer.’\textsuperscript{160} This phrase echoed Cosgrave’s description of Anglo-Irish trade relations in the speech he delivered in the Mansion House on 29 January 1932.\textsuperscript{161} The commitment to cut government spending was justified as ‘eliminating waste and extravagance.’ And the encouragement to all citizens of the nation to be content

\textsuperscript{157} The Irish Press, 11 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{158} Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{159} The Irish Press, 11 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
with ‘frugal living’ attempted to create a sense of egalitarianism during a time of economic crisis. The document reflected the policies of the Fianna Fáil party in 1932 with regard to the Oath, the land annuities and the party’s economic programme of self-reliance reflected de Valera’s own words and manner of speaking.

Fianna Fáil’s election policies as communicated in The Irish Press advertisement and the party manifesto, were direct, with strong emphasis on the economy. Mention was made of the tax burden of the citizens, government spending and plans to create employment and increase wages. For the rural vote specifically, there was a programme to abolish rates for agricultural land and increase farm yields. Both documents were factual pieces of election literature with Fianna Fáil’s ‘political’ programme, the abolition of the Oath and the Special Powers Act balanced by practical fiscal measures. Fianna Fáil made a point of refuting Cumann na nGaedheal’s allegations that the main opposition party had links with communism and on de Valera’s instructions it requested the voters not to believe the government party’s propaganda. However the main thrust of Fianna Fáil’s election policies were aimed at the financial concerns of the electorate.

Another party concerned with the electorate’s well-being was the Irish Labour Party, the oldest party contesting the election, having being founded in Clonmel on 28 June 1912.162

The party was established as ‘The political wing of the trade union movement’ even though it had officially separated from the Trade Union Congress in 1930. Its leader was Thomas J. O’Connell, who was described by Puirseal as a ‘diligent

162 Doherty and Hickey, A Chronology of Irish History, p.179.
parliamentarian but far from exceptional.'163 The Labour director of elections in 1932 was the former trade union activist P.T. Daly.164

Prior to the election the party was in weak position. It did not have a single TD in Dublin city and county.165 As the 1932 election campaign commenced the Irish Labour Party held just eight Dáil seats, 166 one in Limerick city, one in Wexford town and the rest in rural constituencies. The only constituencies where the party had held one or more seats for three consecutive elections, 1923, June 1927, September 1927, were all rural: Cork West, Clare, Leix-Offaly and Kildare. Moreover the party had expelled two of its most able deputies, Richard Anthony of Cork City and Daniel Morrissey of Tipperary, for defying the party whip in the vote on the special Powers Act the previous October.167 In contrast to most of their counterparts in Britain and Europe the Irish Labour Party represented mainly the farming community and their election programmes and newspaper advertisements reflected this.168 The land acts passed by the Westminster parliament between 1869 and 1903, leading up to the Birrell Land Act of 1909, had turned most of the tenant farms of Ireland into small self-owning holdings.169 It was from these voters that Labour was attempting to garner support in 1932. With regard to the urban working class, they were in the 1920s and 1930s small and vulnerable.170 This forced Labour to compete with the government party and Fianna Fáil for the much larger rural vote.171 Fianna Fáil appealed particularly to the small farmer and farm labourer.172

164 The Irish Press, 29 January 1932.
165 Ibid, 1 February 1932.
168 Connaught Telegraph, 6 February 1932.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid, p.249.
The larger farmers supported Cumann na nGaedheal and the Farmers’ Party. The rural voters, the Labour Party were attempting to woo were conservative, and property owning. To the detriment of the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil was making significant inroads into the working class vote, both rural and urban.\textsuperscript{173}

The political scholar Stefano Bartolini describes the Irish Labour Party as wholly dependent on the trade unions well into the 1930s and that it existed for the purpose of defending trade union interest in the Dáil.\textsuperscript{174} However this may be an unfair assessment as the party had broken its links with the Trade Union Congress in February 1930 and as has already been noted most of the Labour Party’s safe seats were in rural areas.\textsuperscript{175} It is important to remember however that the official title of the Labour Party was The National Labour Party. This according to Puirséil encapsulated it’s ‘nationist ideals’\textsuperscript{176} and the party’s new constitution had no mention of socialism, workers or capital. Ellen Hazelkorn suggested that the party had abandoned class as a political ideology in favour of nationalism.

The first Labour constituency to launch its election campaign was the five-seat constituency in Wexford on 3 January 1932.\textsuperscript{177} The party put forward two candidates, James Shannon and the Mayor of Wexford, Richard Corish, who had held the seat for Labour since 1922. The previous day saw candidate selection meetings held in the five-seat constituency of Carlow-Kilkenny, the nine-seat constituency of Galway, the three-seat constituency of Louth and the three-seat constituency of North Cork.\textsuperscript{178} But the first effective announcement of a campaign launch was at a meeting in Roundwood, Claremorris, County Mayo on 10 January

\textsuperscript{173} Puirséil, \textit{The Irish Labour Party}, p.27.
\textsuperscript{174} Stefano Bartolini, in O’Drisceoil and Lane (eds), \textit{Politics and the Irish Working Class}, pp. 256-7.
\textsuperscript{175} Puirséil, \textit{The Irish Labour Party}, p.32.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{The Irish Times}, 5 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
addressed by the party leader. T. J. O’Connell had held the only Labour seat in the
five-seat constituency since June 1927 when he topped the poll. However he
recorded the lowest number of first preference votes in the second election in
September of that year.\(^{179}\) He probably knew he had a fight on his hands as Fianna
Fáil fielded four candidates, Cumann na nGaedheal three, and there was also the
presence of an active Independent candidate, Thomas Moclair. \(^{180}\) O’Connell’s
Roundwood speech had a rousing opening: ‘In the Irish Free State, no man need be
hungry or unemployed.’\(^{181}\) The Labour Party, he stressed, was consistent in its
policies over the years and it offered the same choice to the electorate as it had in
1922. Social and economic reform would form the main ‘plank in their programme’.
O’Connell stated that the Labour Party ‘had at all times supported the claims of the
small farmers and wage earners and would continue to do so.’\(^{182}\) This claim would
consistently inform O’Connell’s election advertisements. He noted that 80,000
people were unemployed and he criticised the government for its failure to fulfil the
promises it had made in the past to alleviate unemployment by instituting a scheme
of relief work.\(^{183}\) On the question of partition, O’Connell stated that the government
had failed to unite the country and to utilise land for tillage. Other government
failures were identified as the commitment to establish a national housing board and
a promise to improve the health and well being of children.

O’Connell touched on the fractious ‘Librarian question.’ \(^{184}\) Letitia Dunbar
Harrison was a Protestant Trinity College graduate who was appointed County
Librarian for Mayo. However Mayo County Council had refused to sanction her

\(^{180}\) Connaught Telegraph, 6 February; 13 February 1932.
\(^{181}\) Irish Independent, 11 January 1932.
\(^{182}\) The Irish Times, 11 January 1932.
\(^{183}\) Connaught Telegraph, 6 February 1932.
\(^{184}\) The Irish Press, 11 January 1932.
position. The government, committed as it was to the inclusion of minorities but fearful of local opposition, had cancelled the appointment and transferred Dunbar Harrison out of the county to Dublin.\textsuperscript{185} The wishes of the Council (and local Roman Catholic clergy) were placated, albeit with a compromise. O’Connell described these events as ‘wretched manoeuvrings.’\textsuperscript{186} The Labour Party, perhaps less constrained than the other parties when it came to seeking the blessing of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, felt it could speak more openly on matters that risked clerical disapproval. O’Connell was selected as the only Labour candidate for Mayo South with T. J. Waldron as the constituency’s director of elections. At a second public meeting on 17 January in Knock, County Mayo O’Connell revealed the essence of the Labour manifesto.\textsuperscript{187} As with his Roundwood speech, he invited the audience to look back over the government’s record and to compare it with Labour’s opposition. Labour had focussed on unemployment and the setting up of a national housing scheme, reform of the taxation system and pensions for widows and orphans as well as a plan to nationalise the transport industry and develop agriculture and industry. O’Connell indirectly attacked Fianna Fáil when he said that in 1922 the Labour Party had been criticised for taking the Oath of Allegiance but recently the people who had been most critical had themselves taken the same oath and entered the Dáil.\textsuperscript{188} He continued in a similar vein, when he asserted that Labour’s policies stressed the necessity of having only one army under the control of the constitutionally-elected government and was pleased to state that this was a Fianna Fáil belief also. This may have been a reference to Fianna Fáil’s links to the IRA and to the efforts of members of the Labour Party to persuade first, the Anti-
Treaty republicans in the summer of 1925 and later Fianna Fáil in July 1927 to recognise the legitimacy of the Irish Free State and enter Dáil Eireann.\textsuperscript{189}

One of the Labour Party’s most accomplished Dáil performers was the Cork T.D. William Davin. He gave mixed signals to Fianna Fáil when he spoke on 17 January in Stradbally, County Laois.\textsuperscript{190} Davin told his audience that Labour was upholding the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the attendant financial settlements, but while the Labour Party ruled out any support for Cumann na nGaedheal, a post election deal with Fianna Fáil was not to be taken for granted.

Mitchell stresses the same position in the context of the Labour Party’s election programmes in the respective 1922, 1923 and the 1927 (both the June and September) elections.\textsuperscript{191} On 6 February 1932 the party paper, \textit{Watchword}, carried the party’s manifesto. This was issued by the Administrative Council of the Labour Party but contained little that was new. The document opened with an \textit{apologia} explaining why Labour had misgivings about the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty but nonetheless accepted it as the first step to achieving an independent Ireland. Its deputies were also prepared to take the Oath of Allegiance but explained that this was considered a formality and nothing more. The Labour Party was pleased that Fianna Fáil had also taken this view which demonstrated the soundness of their approach.\textsuperscript{192} The unchanging principles of the party included the subservience of the national army to the civil authorities, the endorsement of constitutional politics and the repudiation of violence to achieve political aims. The latter point, was redolent of O’Connell’s speech at Knock on 17 January.\textsuperscript{193} It is useful to compare other parts

\textsuperscript{189} Puirséil, \textit{The Irish Labour Party}, pp. 19-23.
\textsuperscript{190} The Irish Times, 18 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{192} Watchword, 6 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{193} The Irish Times, 18 January 1932.
of Labour’s manifesto with the leader’s speeches. It may not be an exaggeration to say that on a number of occasions O’Connell’s words found their way directly into the party’s election literature.

The Labour programme proclaimed, ‘The same in 1932 as in 1922.’ Provisions were proposed to reduce unemployment, end child poverty and to introduce widows’ and orphans pensions. These proposals appeared under bold eye catching headings such as ‘care of the children’ and ‘widows’ pensions.’

A reduction in the prices of basic food stuffs such as butter and milk, and other items such as tobacco, were promised. Other commitments included the establishment of a national housing board to include the provision of housing allocations to low paid tenants. The party compared the government’s housing statistics which showed that between 1922 and 1930, 24,500 houses were built for a population of almost three million as opposed to 110,844 houses built in Scotland where there was a population of over four million in the same period. There were also proposals to nationalise the transport industry and the canals.

The Labour programme in Watchword included a lengthy attack on the government which it claimed had broken its promises made in the first Dáil, (1919-21) and again in 1923. These promises were the right to work, the right to a fair wage, the development of industries and agricultural land. A further promise sought to end partition. This was an implied criticism of the 1925 Boundary Commission which resulted in the Free State government accepting the border as fixed by the Government of Ireland Act in 1920.
Labour’s leadership felt that certain issues such as the land annuities and tariffs, would ‘loom large’ in the coming election. With regard to the former, the Labour Party believed that the matter could be resolved through diplomatic channels with Britain. On the issue of tariffs, Labour favoured the selective use of duties to protect Irish industries, a policy identical to that of Cumann na nGaedheal. Labour also offered a policy involving the government providing cheap loans to encourage certain manufacturers, such as those engaged in clothing and footwear, to produce low cost goods for the Irish market. The party leadership warned against the use of tariffs to protect Irish manufacturers inclined to use their privileged, sheltered status to charge higher prices. The party called on those protected by duties to ‘pay fair wages to their employees.’

The final section of the Labour party manifesto treated the question of how the party would vote on government formation after the election. It indicated that a decision would be made on the basis of who ‘will maintain order, preserve peace and put down crime.’ The Labour Party indicated that it would not hesitate to ‘depose from office any Ministry which fails to fulfil its promises to the workers and the poor.’ Though the party was at pains to point out that it had no pact or alliance with Fianna Fáil, Labour made clear that, if it held the balance of power after the election, it would almost certainly not vote for a Cumann na nGaedheal government. Apart from opposition to the special Powers Act, and a concern for the poor and those on low incomes, the policies of The Irish Labour Party seemed to be closer to Cumann na nGaedheal than Fianna Fáil. Its unwillingness to engage with the issues of land annuities and tariffs demonstrated a party unable or unwilling to

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200 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
203 Watchword, 6 February 1932.
address the main polemics of the 1932 campaign. The party appeared to have no opinion on the Oath beyond the preamble in the opening of the manifesto that Labour deputies on entering the Dáil had no choice but to take it. On the question of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Labour leadership seemed distressed that this question was overshadowing other more important issues.\textsuperscript{204} The election results will show whether this opinion was shared by the voters in 1932.

In his book, \textit{Political Parties in the Irish Free State}, the political theorist Warner Moss suggests two reasons why The Farmers’ Party had not been dealt with in his examination of political organisations in Ireland in the early 1930s. He stated that first, because the party had effectively ceased to exist as a national political party after the June 1927 general election and secondly, because party officials had refused to furnish the author with any information concerning their organisation.\textsuperscript{205} As one of the marginal parties contesting the election there is a dearth of primary source material on The Farmers’ Party and extant historiography of the period describes an organisation as little more than a bit player with little influence on the outcome of the election.

The Farmers’ Party, also officially titled as the Independent Farmers Union, had been founded to contest the 1922 general election. It consisted of a coalition of farmers’ unions from each county many of which had been in existence prior to 1922.\textsuperscript{206} The leaders of The Farmers’ Party up until 1927 were Denis Gorey and Michael O’Hanlon. The former resigned his position to join Cumann na nGaedheal prior to the June 1927 election, and a plan to merge with Cumann na nGaedheal in

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Watchword}, 16 January 1932.
the Spring of 1927 came to nothing.\footnote{UCDA, PCGFG, P39 M/1 Meeting of the standing Committe, 1 April 1927.} Thereafter the party appeared to have no leadership.\footnote{Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.86.}

In 1932 The Farmers’ Party was, in the words of Richard Sinnott, ‘No more than a loose federation of deputies.’\footnote{Sinnott, \textit{Irish Voters Decide: Voting Behaviour in Elections and Referendums Since 1918} (Manchester, 1995), p.61.} In the period between the September 1927 general election and 1932, three of its TDs had joined Cumann na nGaedheal, John White (Donegal) Michael Jordan (Wexford) and Michael Heffernan (Tipperary).\footnote{Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.180.} A fifth member, John O’Hanlon had joined a rival organisation, the Agricultural League. Sinnott describes the journey of the smaller parties who had bled members from Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1920s to form rival parties only to see them return ten years later to the larger party.\footnote{Sinnott, \textit{Irish Voters Decide}, p.44.}

On the eve of the general election The Farmers’ Party had two TDs, Daniel Vaughan and Timothy O’Donovan. They represented the party in the neighbouring constituencies of Cork North and Cork West respectively and had held these seats since 1923.\footnote{www.electionsireland.org/results.cfm?election=1923&cons=56 [Accessed 15 March 2012].} The party also ran a candidate in the five-seat Cork City constituency and the five-seat Cork East constituency. County Cork could be described as a stronghold for the party. The Farmers’ Party manifesto was straightforward. It contained four points. Firstly, a recognition of the importance of the agricultural sector in the state and a statement declaring that ‘The industry on which the Irish Free State mainly depends should have direct representation in An Dáil.’\footnote{\textit{Southern Star}, 16 January 1932.} Secondly, there was a commitment to support the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Thirdly, they sought a reduction in government spending and, fourthly, there was a pledge to vote independently in the Dáil.\footnote{Ibid.}
There was little in The Farmers’ Party programme that could be described as offering the voters an alternative to Cumann na nGaedheal policy. The contentious issue of land annuities which featured in the election promises of the Agricultural League is nowhere to be seen in Farmers’ Party election literature.

By the beginning of 1932 The Farmers’ Party had enjoyed a close relationship with the Cumann na nGaedheal government, which resulted in a lost of electoral support over the years. Perhaps the word ‘Independent’ in the title of the party was proclaimed a little too shrilly, because it could also be described as a cadre party. Farrell noted that at this time ‘Cadre parties were organised on an ad-hoc basis by notable supporters and lacked a large-scale dependable branch network.’ Indeed Patrick Smith, Fianna Fáil TD for Cavan, chided the party for having no recognisable leader. The ad-hoc nature of the party was demonstrated by a resolution passed at their annual convention in Dublin in January 1932 which released the Party’s TDs from the control of their National Executive and encouraged them to act as they saw fit in the interest of their constituents. Evidence that this policy was adhered to was demonstrated on 9 March 1932 when the seventh Dáil met and the party’s Limerick deputy John O’Shaughnessy voted for Eamon de Valera for President of the Executive Council while his two colleagues, Timothy O’Donovan of Cork West and Daniel Vaughan of Cork North voted for Cosgrave. The Farmers’ Party, if it could even be defined as a party,

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215 *Anglo Celt*, 6 February 1932.
217 *Cork Examiner*, 9 January 1932.
219 *Irish Independent*, 8 January 1932.
220 *Southern Star*, 30 January 1932
221 *The Irish Times*, 10 March 1932.
entered the 1932 general election as simply two Independent TDs who shared common concerns in relation to farmers’ interests.

If the Farmers’ Party was an organisation in decline in 1932,\textsuperscript{222} then the two other organisations competing for Irish farmer’s votes, were on the rise. They were the Farmers and Ratepayers Association and the Agricultural League. They were what would be described today as pressure groups who represented the interest’s of the farming community mainly in Cavan, Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon, where The Farmers’ Party enjoyed little support.\textsuperscript{223} They were not organised as a political party but members saw the value of having representation in the Dáil. John F. O’Hanlon TD for Cavan and a former member of The Farmers’ Party was the sole representative of the Agricultural League in the Dáil in the run up to the election. There were plans to unite the two movements, in order to increase their support in the Dáil.\textsuperscript{224} The policies of the Agricultural League have already been examined\textsuperscript{225} with regard to its election policies, the League, like Fianna Fáil, proposed a moratorium on the payment of the land annuities.

The Farmers and Ratepayers Association, (FRA), was in a similar position. They were a single issue group who found the policies of The Farmers’ Party inadequate for the requirements of the farming community especially with respect to the annuities and tariffs. The association was looking for a way of furthering its cause by recruiting independent TDs to represent them in the Dáil. Both the Agricultural League and the FRA were rural based and the county branches operated independently of each other. There was no clear leadership of either group but negotiations with a view to a merger had progressed quite far by early 1932. At

\textsuperscript{222} Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, P.86.
\textsuperscript{223} Maurice Manning, \textit{Irish Political Parties} (Dublin, 1972), p.94.
\textsuperscript{224} Anglo Celt, 28 November 1931.
\textsuperscript{225} See Chapter Two.
a meeting in Cootehill, County Cavan, O’Hanlon of the Agricultural League had expressed the hope that with five or six TDs a new farmers organisation would be in a position to carry out its programme representing farmers interests in the north west of the country.\(^{226}\) A meeting of the FRA in Roscommon had received a message from the chairman of the Agricultural League, Patrick McGovern, indicating that the programmes of the two movements were ‘practically identical’ and suggested they amalgamate.\(^{227}\) While a new Farmers’ party could not be launched in time for the 1932 election, there were candidates prepared to openly support the policies of the FRA and the Agricultural League. An example was James Dillon, the son of Independent Irish Party MP, John Dillon. Dillon jnr had spoken at the launch of the FRA in Roscommon\(^{228}\) and in 1932 contested the eight-seat Donegal constituency. He announced he was in favour of Fianna Fáil’s policy on withholding land annuities.\(^{229}\) Another supporter of the ‘new Farmers’ Party’ was Frank MacDermot, brother of The MacDermott and scion of an old Gaelic family from Boyle, Roscommon who contested the four-seat Roscommon constituency for the FRA and expressed similar views on the annuities.\(^{230}\) The election programmes of both the Agricultural League and FRA centred on the removal of rates on agricultural land, cuts in public spending, a moratorium on the payment of the land annuities until such time as a re-negotiation of the deal could be carried out with the British government and the development of agricultural exports in conjunction with increased trade tariffs.\(^{231}\) While the three candidates in question would have been natural supporters of the government (all

\(^{226}\) Irish Independent, 25 January 1932.
\(^{227}\) Roscommon Herald, 9 January 1932.
\(^{228}\) Donegal Democrat, 6 February 1932; Brian Maye, Fine Gael 1923-1987, a general history with biographical sketches of leading members (Dublin, 1993), p.31.
\(^{229}\) Ibid, 30 January 1932.
\(^{230}\) Connaught Tribune, 6 February 1932.
\(^{231}\) Anglo Celt, 23 January 1932.

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three would merge with Cumann na nGaedheal within a year). In February 1932 their policies, particularly with regard to the land annuities were closer to Fianna Fáil’s. Indeed James Dillon proposed on 9 February that Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil merge to form a national government to deal with the economic crisis.232

This chapter now examines two more organisations which could not have been more different from the Agricultural League and FRA. The Irish Workers League, (IWL), and the Revolutionary Workers Groups (RWG) were both connected with one man. By 1932 James Larkin, once a towering colossus in Irish politics, had become a marginal figure. Upon his return from the United States in 1923 he had founded The IWL to replace the Communist Party of Ireland.233 Larkin was frustrated when he failed to regain control of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, (ITGWU) upon his return from the United States in 1923, and in 1924 founded the Workers Union of Ireland, (WUI).234 The latter organisation then replaced the IWL as the Soviet government’s contact in Ireland and Larkin ran as a WUI candidate in both the June and September 1927 elections. In 1930 Larkin broke with Moscow and in 1932 had reverted to the IWL and was running as an Independent communist candidate in the Dublin North constituency.235 In 1932 his son, James Larkin junior, who broke with his father, was a candidate for the RWG, one of the associations banned by the Constitutional Amendment the previous October.236 While Larkin snr was listed as an IWL candidate for the eight-seat Dublin North constituency, his son was listed for the RWG and fought a seat in the

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seven-seat Dublin South constituency as a communist.\textsuperscript{237} Joseph Troy another RWG candidate ran in the same constituency as Larkin snr.\textsuperscript{238} The scant primary source material covering the election programmes of the IWL can be found in the \textit{Irish Worker}, a political paper edited by Larkin snr. The IWL was determined to distinguish itself from the Labour Party. On 30 January 1932 the paper described Labour as 'No friend of the Irish working class' and it urged the voters not to give ‘even a number two (vote) to the party.’ The pro-Cumann na nGaedheal Independent TD and Lord Mayor of Dublin Alfie Byrne was also attacked.\textsuperscript{239} It appeared the message the IWL wanted to get to its supporters was to identify the enemies of the Irish working class rather than offer its own programme. The RWG as a banned organisation did not have its own newspaper because the \textit{Worker’s Voice} was discontinued in December 1931.\textsuperscript{240} However one of the last issues noted that the real danger to the Irish left was the Labour Party and Fianna Fáil who wished to ‘hold down the working class’.\textsuperscript{241}

It has already been stated that the Labour Party expelled two of its deputies, Richard Anthony and Daniel Morrissey for voting against the party whip in the Dáil in the division on the special Powers Act in October 1931.\textsuperscript{242} The two deputies went forward as Independent Labour candidates in 1932. Morrissey defended his seat in the seven-seat Tipperary constituency and Anthony his seat in the five-seat Cork City constituency.

\textsuperscript{237} \textit{The Irish Press}, 9 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{238} O’Connor, \textit{James Larkin}, pp. 96-97.
\textsuperscript{239} \textit{Irish Worker}, 30 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{241} \textit{Worker’s Voice}, 31 October, 7 November 1931.
Morrissey told a meeting at Terryglass, County Tipperary in January 1932 that he feared the threat of communism and was critical of Fianna Fáil’s policy to retain the land annuities. However his stand on the annuities appeared to soften after a few weeks campaigning, at a meeting in Toomevara County Tipperary on 13 February. Morrissey stated that the question of paying the annuities was not of any great importance and instead he emphasised his support for the small farmers against the big ‘ranchers.’

Richard Anthony spoke at a meeting in Blarney, County Cork in early February, and admitted that he would vote against Labour again if required but urged his audience to support the Labour Party. He said he would not criticise Labour and offered the party his support if elected.

The only other ‘block’ of Independent candidates, if they can be so-called were the ‘ex-Unionists’ as they were pejoratively known. They were professors William Thrift, Ernest Alton and James Craig who represented the three-seat Dublin City University (Trinity College) constituency. The three were elected unopposed in all the general elections from 1921 to 1932 except for the June 1927 election. The total poll for the latter election was 1,589. Thrift spoke at a meeting in Dalkey, County Dublin on 6 February to promote the candidacy of John Good, an Independent, standing in the eight-seat County Dublin constituency. Thrift urged the forging of strong links between Britain and Ireland. Thrift also referred to himself somewhat jokingly as ‘an ex-Unionist.’

With regard to the numbers and party affiliation of the candidates, the lists offered in the three national newspapers differed somewhat from each other.

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244 Ibid, 13 February 1932.
245 Leitrim Observer, 6 February 1932.
246 Cork Examiner, 2 February 1932.
248 The Irish Times, 8 February 1932.
249 Ibid.
The total number of candidates noted in the *Irish Times* was 203, while *The Irish Press*’ total was 263. This discrepancy might be explained by the fact that in *The Irish Times* the Cumann na nGaedheal candidates for the Longford-Westmeath constituency were not listed, and the Fianna Fáil candidates for the Leix-Offaly constituency were absent. The *Irish Independent* on the same day announced that there were 278 candidates and listed each one for all thirty constituencies including the Dublin University/Trinity College seats and the National University/University College Dublin constituencies. Of the three totals it appears the number chosen by Moody, Martin and Byrne in their *History of Ireland Volume XI*, came from the *Irish Independent*. Not all nominated candidates ran in the election an example was John Henry Murphy who was nominated to run alongside John O’Hanlon as an Agricultural League candidate in the Cavan constituency did not subsequently run. Michael McGrath, an Independent republican candidate for the Leitrim-Sligo constituency, acceded to a request by Éamon de Valera to withdraw his candidacy and leave the way clear for Fianna Fáil to run five candidates (all of whom were elected). It is not the intention of this chapter to analyse each Independent candidate or examine their respective election programmes but a few examples are useful to give an idea of what choice was offered to the voters in 1932. T. F. O’Driscoll, an Independent candidate represented the National Protection Party in the Dublin North constituency and John Cuffe represented the farmers of County Dublin. A new party, the New Republican Party was launched by T. Mullins in Dublin but failed to run a single candidate. Several candidates contested the election under the banner of Independent Labour: Edward Doyle in the Carlow-Kilkenny

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251 *Cork Examiner*, 27 January 1932.
252 *Irish Independent*, 12 January 1932.
253 *Cork Examiner*, 12 January 1932.
constituency, William Rollins in County Dublin and Patrick Clancy in Limerick City. It is not clear if this party designation was chosen by the candidate or the newspaper that listed them. Certain anomalies did exist such as listing James Dillon from Donegal as an ‘Independent Nationalist’ in *The Irish Times*, a ‘Nationalist’ in *The Irish Press* and simply as an ‘Independent’ in the *Irish Independent*. Andrew Mooney from Leitrim-Sligo was noted as an ‘Independent Business’ candidate in *The Irish Times* but simply as an ‘Independent’ in both *The Irish Press* and the *Irish Independent*. Similarly Frank MacDermot’s affiliation, is correctly given in both the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* as ‘Farmers and Ratepayers’ while he is designated as a Farmers’ Party candidate in *The Irish Press*.255

According to *The Irish Times* list there were thirteen purely Independent candidates on 9 February 1932, excluding the three Trinity candidates described as ‘ex-Unionist.’ If the smaller parties and organisation are included there were twenty and if The Farmers’ Party was included in this list there were twenty-eight candidates excluding Cumann na nGaedheal, Fianna Fáil and The Labour Party.256

The most famous of the Independent candidates was probably James Larkin snr, and the most colourful the pro-government Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alfie Byrne. These candidates both contested seats in the North Dublin constituency. It is a rather sad reflection of the time that of all the candidates contesting the 1932 general election only one woman appeared on the list, Margaret Collins O’Driscoll, the sister of Michael Collins.257 Subsequently however the widow of the murdered Cumann na nGaedheal candidate in Leitrim-Sligo, Patrick Reynolds, ran in her husband’s place.

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256 *The Irish Times*, 9 February 1932.
257 *Anglo-Celt*, 13 February 1932.
in the postponed election for that constituency. Mary Reynolds won her husband’s seat in the delayed election on 2 March 1932.\textsuperscript{258}

**Conclusion:**

The opposition parties contesting the election were dominated by a party less than six years old. By 1932 Fianna Fáil was a powerful and well organised party, demonstrated by the large number of candidates it fielded. Every constituency was contested by at least two candidates and some with as many as five.\textsuperscript{259}

The party’s election programme had a businesslike tone which was reflected in its most common advertisement ‘Here’s what a Fianna Fáil Government will do for you.’\textsuperscript{260} The use of colloquially sounding slogans such as, ‘Fair Play for All,’ and, ‘Speed the Plough’ gave a sense of momentum and a feeling that the party was offering voters something new in return for their support. It is worth noticing that rarely did Fianna Fáil open any of their election literature with an attack on the government party itself, though the main opposition party was not slow to call Cumann na nGaedheal to task on the issue of the misrepresentation of their policies.

On the whole, however, the Fianna Fáil policies to abolition of the Oath, withhold the land annuity payments and at the same time build a self reliant economy offered an appealing balance between nationalism and pragmatic economics.

The Labour Party found itself entering the election as a party with the same message it had offered voters in the previous four elections. It was suffering disciplinary issues, having expelled two members from an already small parliamentary party, and there were at least three other candidates running under the

\textsuperscript{258} *The Irish Press*, 5 March 1932.
\textsuperscript{259} *The Irish Press*, 9 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid, 5 February 1932.
banner of Independent Labour in the election. In Tipperary the party had to use the title, ‘Official Labour Party’ to distinguish itself from the local Independent Labour candidate, Daniel Morrissey.\textsuperscript{261} The party was unwilling to engage with some of the main issues of the campaign, namely the question of the land annuities, tariffs and the abolition of the Oath. The main focus for Labour in the election was the tackling of unemployment and poverty.

By 1932 The Farmers’ Party had reverted back to the county-based organisations it had emerged from ten years previously. The candidates were selected by the county and were not compelled to obey the dictates of the national executive. The main issues the party wanted to deal with was the removal of rates on agricultural land and a reduction in government spending.

The Agricultural League and the Farmers and Ratepayers, (FRA), were organisations which in early 1932 were in exactly the same position as the Farmers’ Party had been ten years earlier. Loosely based county associations with parliamentary representation who were slowly coming together as a national political party. In the election the candidates who represented the associations, John F. O’Hanlon for the Agricultural League in Cavan and Frank MacDermott, running for the FRA, in Roscommon, offered platforms based on the Removal of rates on agricultural land, a cut in government spending and a moratorium on the payment of land annuities.

The Irish Workers League, and the Revolutionary Workers Groups were the political parties who represented left-wing politics in Ireland in 1932. The person of James Larkin snr dominated the IWL and his son James Larkin jnr was a leading

\textsuperscript{261} \textit{The Irish Times}, 9 February 1932; \textit{Nenagh Guardian}, 13 February 1932.
They were marginal parties who concentrated more on attacking the Labour Party than espousing their own political ideas.

The three Unionist TDs who represented the three seat constituency of Trinity College were elected unanimously and were irrelevant to the election. The other twenty Independent candidates were a scattered group, both geographically as well as ideologically. They represented every platform from republicanism to business interests. All, however, offered their voices to the voters as an alternative to the outgoing government as the general election campaign commenced. Many of the Independents such as Daniel Morrissey were pro-treaty, some such as Alfie Byrne were ardently pro-Cumann na nGaedheal and The Farmers’ Party were traditional supporters of the government. All the parties and Independents bar one directed their message toward a certain section of the electorate and offered little that was new. Fianna Fáil was unique in that it attempted to appeal to every sector of Irish society.

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262 *Irish Worker*, 20 February 1932.
Chapter Four

Newspaper coverage of the final week of the election campaign,

8-16 February 1932

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it attempts to examine the newspaper coverage of the election and the issues the different parties focussed on in the last week of the campaign, 8-16 February. The examination will highlight the issues that formed the basis of the election: The Anglo-Irish Treaty, the land annuities, unemployment, the economy, and law and order. Second, it will examine how the political perspective of the newspapers may have influenced their readers and a useful comparison is provided between the national dailies and the provincial newspapers. The messages in election advertisements are also analysed along with examples of two election posters from the two main parties. In 1932 the overwhelming source of domestic information for most people in Ireland was the newspaper. An article from the Connaught Tribune noted that: ‘A notable fact in connection with the contest is the increasing recognition of the value of the newspapers for reaching the electorate.’ Radio was in its infancy and no Irish film studios existed to cover and distribute news. Newspapers therefore had a monopoly over other media, (radio and cinema newsreels), in the Irish Free State in 1932.

263 Connaught Tribune, 13 February 1932.
264 Adrian Redmond, (ed.), Central Statistics Office (CSO), That was Then, This is Now: Change in Ireland: 1949-1999 (Dublin, 2000), p.56-7.
There were three national daily newspapers available in 1932: *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Press*. The oldest of these *The Irish Times* was founded in 1859. 265 In 1932 its editor was John Healy.266 The paper was a limited liability company with the Arnott family holding a controlling interest. In the 1930s the circulation was about 25,500 having fallen from 36,500 six years earlier.267 Traditionally *The Irish Times* was regarded as the voice of Irish unionism.268 It had a pronounced sympathy for the Cumann na nGaedheal party.269

The *Irish Independent* was launched in 1905 by business tycoon William Martin Murphy. By the 1930s its circulation was 127,787 copies.270 In 1932 the chairman was Murphy’s son, the businessman, William Lombard Murphy who was also the chairman of Dublin United Transport and Great Southern Railways.271 The editor of the *Irish Independent* in 1932 was Tom Quilty.272 The publication was sympathetic to Cumann na nGaedheal and hostile to Fianna Fáil.273 O’Brien indicates that the reason for this was pragmatic as Murphy found Cumann na nGaedheal more ‘business friendly’ than Fianna Fáil.274 The third national daily newspaper, *The Irish Press* appeared just five months before the general election in September 1931.275 It was a limited liability company with controlling shares in the hands of Éamon de Valera. Its editor was a Fianna Fáil supporter and friend of de Valera, Frank

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265 Hickey and Doherty, *A Dictionary of Irish History*, p.263.
268 O’Brien, *The Irish Times*, p. 82.
269 Ibid, p.60
275 Ibid, p.35.
In its first few months the circulation figures varied between 86,825 and 90,000.\textsuperscript{277}

Among the regional newspapers was the \textit{Cork Examiner}. Founded in 1841 it was a daily paper and had a readership of between 30,000 and 32,000.\textsuperscript{278} It was extensively read throughout a large part of the country and was the only rival to the three Dublin based newspapers. It was described by Stephen Brown as: ‘Conservative and nationalistic’.\textsuperscript{279} The \textit{Connaught Tribune} was a local paper that served readers in the west and northwest of the country. It had begun publication in 1909. Its circulation when combined with its sister paper the \textit{Connaught Sentinel} was 24,180.\textsuperscript{280}

The \textit{Nenagh Guardian} dated from 1838 and had a circulation in the west-midlands and county Tipperary, an important seven-seat constituency in the election. In 1932 its circulation figures were in the region of 5,500. Richard Dunphy states that by 1932 many of the provincial papers had decided to side with Fianna Fáil the newest party on the Irish political scene. Fianna Fáil, as will be seen from the election results, were also the strongest party in rural Ireland.\textsuperscript{281} There were three party newspapers extant in early 1932. \textit{The Star} was the journal of Cumann na nGaedheal and based in 5 Parnell Square Dublin.\textsuperscript{282} Its former editor was Michael Sweeney a professional journalist who had defected to the \textit{Irish Independent} when \textit{The Star} went from a weekly to a monthly publication in 1930 due to poor sales.\textsuperscript{283} There was no issue of the paper published during the general election. The \textit{Watchword} was the newspaper of the Irish Labour Party. It was a monthly publication and there was an edition on sale

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid, pp. 30-5.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid, p.45.
\textsuperscript{278} Hickey and Doherty, \textit{A Dictionary of Irish History}, p.95.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid, p.189.
\textsuperscript{281} Dunphy, \textit{The Making of Fianna Fáil Power in Ireland}, p.83.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.
on 13 February 1932 which is analysed in this chapter. *The Irish Worker* was the paper of the Irish Worker’s League. It ceased publication in March 1932. There are no issues extant covering the final week of the election campaign.

Newspaper coverage of the campaign speeches highlighted for the readers the issues the candidates and parties wanted to focus on. There were no candidate debates during the election. Voters might judge a candidate’s performance by reading about their replies to hecklers in the audience at a campaign meeting or their reactions when two rival parties held meetings in the same location such as Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil in Clones town square, County Monaghan on 14 February.284

There was also the rare occasion when two members of rival parties spoke together in public, such as the impromptu debate in Smithfield, Dublin between Oscar Traynor, Fianna Fáil candidate for the Dublin North constituency, and Cumann na nGaedheal candidate for the same constituency, Richard Mulcahy.285 There was evidence that the main parties adapted their message to voters in response to what their rivals were saying. A good example of this is the use of the slogan ‘Fair play,’ firstly by Fianna Fáil in their speeches and later by Cumann na nGaedheal in that party’s political advertisements and campaign speeches.286 The purpose of using newspapers as a primary source may also provide the reader with a ‘1932 eye view’ of the election campaign, exploring the issues as they were presented to readers in 1932, often issues that are not dealt with in current historiography. Among the subjects to be examined are: what issues, what parties and which candidates were given coverage and how might this coverage have influenced the voters leading up to the polling day?

284 *The Irish Times*, 15 February.
Before commencing this analysis it may be useful to note the main personalities who featured in the newspaper coverage, W. T. Cosgrave the President of the Executive Council and leader of Cumann na nGaedheal, Éamon de Valera founder and leader of Fianna Fáil and the leader of the Labour Party, Thomas J. O’Connell.\(^{287}\) The first two leaders engaged in extensive tours across the country prior to the polling date and their activities and speeches were covered in all the papers often appearing in two or even three reports in the same edition.\(^{288}\)

T.J. O’Connell, on the other hand, did not travel and his speeches were reported only within his own constituency of Mayo South.\(^{289}\) A list of the Cumann na nGaedheal speakers in Table 4.2. (See page 81.) included most of the senior ministers of the outgoing government.\(^{290}\) Ernest Blythe was Vice President and Minister for Finance and Posts and Telegraphs, Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture, Patrick McGilligan, Minister for External Affairs and Industry and Commerce.\(^{291}\) Another prominent Cumann na nGaedheal speaker was Professor Michael Tierney who contested one of the three seats in the National University Constituency.\(^{292}\) The main Fianna Fáil speakers were Seán Lemass, the party’s director of elections.\(^{293}\) He contested one of the seven-seats in the Dublin South constituency. Seán T. O’Kelly, the party chairman was another prominent speaker for the main opposition party, contesting a seat in the eight-seat Dublin North constituency. Seán McEntee represented the party in the eight-seat County Dublin constituency and Frank Aiken

\(^{287}\) Puirséil, *The Irish Labour Party*, p.27.


\(^{289}\) Ibid.

\(^{290}\) See Table 4.2.

\(^{291}\) Hickey and Doherty, *A Dictionary of Irish History*, p.199.


\(^{293}\) *The Irish Press*, 11 February 1932.
held a seat for Fianna Fáil in the three-seat Louth constituency.\textsuperscript{294} All of the above speakers toured the country introducing candidates from other constituencies as well as supporting running mates within their own constituencies.\textsuperscript{295}

The Irish Labour Party relied mainly on its former leader Senator Thomas Johnson and another Senator John O’Farrell to bring the party’s message to the voters. William Norton the party chairman featured in many Labour Party meetings as he fought to regain the seat in the three-seat Kildare constituency which he lost in September 1927.\textsuperscript{296} The smaller parties and Independent candidates also held meetings but tended to remain within their constituencies and their coverage was mainly limited to the provincial papers.

**The Anglo-Irish Treaty and Oath of Allegiance**

The Treaty and the Oath of Allegiance issues found their way into the election debates early on with Cosgrave questioning why Eamon de Valera did not attend the Treaty negotiations in London in 1921.\textsuperscript{297} The government party was the strongest supporter of the Treaty and the baldest statement of support for the agreement came from Cumann na nGaedheal’s J.J. Byrne who said in Dublin North ‘We stand or fall by the Treaty.’\textsuperscript{298} Patrick Hogan the Minister for Agriculture warned that Fianna Fáil wanted to abolish the Oath of Allegiance\textsuperscript{299} and William Cosgrave wondered why Fianna Fáil was wasting its time with the Oath instead of concentrating on the economy. From the content of Cumann na nGaedheal speeches it is clear that defending the Treaty and maintaining good relations with Britain had one intrinsic

\textsuperscript{294} [www.elections.org](http://www.elections.org) [Accessed 3 September 2012]
\textsuperscript{295} Irish Independent; The Irish Times; The Irish Press; Cork Examiner; Connaught Tribune; Nenagh Guardian, 8–16 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{296} Puirséil, The Irish Labour Party, p.37
\textsuperscript{297} Irish Independent, 9 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{298} The Irish Press, 11 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid, 12 February 1932.
purpose, to preserve the British export market. William Redmond, Cumann na nGaedheal candidate for the four-seat Waterford constituency criticised Fianna Fáil’s economic policies as a threat to the British market.\(^{300}\) This opinion was echoed by Patrick McGilligan the Minister for External Affairs in Dublin on 11 February.\(^{301}\) Fianna Fáil speakers in response to charges that in government the party intended to alter the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, responded candidly by saying that it was indeed their intention to abolish the Oath of Allegiance. Frank Aiken said so directly at a meeting in Cavan on 12 February and so did Seán T. O’Kelly in Dublin on the same day.\(^{302}\) For Fianna Fáil abolition of the Oath was a simple matter of policy and an issue they felt needed little explanation.

### The Land annuities

The policy to retain the land annuities formed one of the main planks of the Fianna Fáil election programme.\(^{303}\) The agreement to continue paying them however formed one of the core policies of Cumann na nGaedheal. Captain Sydney Minch the government party candidate in the three-seat Kildare constituency spoke of the threat to withhold the payments as a source of potential rupture in the relationship between Britain and the Free State.\(^{304}\) In a report entitled ‘Twisting the Lion’s Tail’ in the *Irish Independent*, Ernest Blythe closely linked the threat to trade relations with Britain with the campaign to retain the annuities.\(^{305}\) In Nenagh on 13 February 1932 Cosgrave explained why in order to maintain good relations with Britain the payments

\(^{300}\) *The Irish Times*, 8 February 1932.
\(^{301}\) *Irish Independent*, 11 February 1932.
\(^{302}\) *Irish Independent*, *Cork Examiner*, 12 February 1932.
\(^{304}\) *The Irish Times*, 12 February 1932.
\(^{305}\) *The Irish Times, Irish Independent*, 12 February
must continue. John A. Costello the Attorney General to the government gave an interview in the *Irish Independent* on the eve of the poll explaining the legal agreement underpinning the payment of the annuities. Óonch de Valera speaking in Galway stated Fianna Fáil’s policy on the issue. If elected his party would retain the payments and use them to invest in the agricultural industry. During the campaign Cumann na nGaedheal appeared on the defensive, constantly offering the same explanation why the payment had to continue. This may have suggested that their message was not being well received by the electorate. Fianna Fáil by contrast, simply stated that in government they would terminate them.

**Unemployment**

The problem of unemployment had begun to take on serious implications in early 1932 with the Labour leader T.J. O’Connell quoting statistics as high as 80,000. The government, however, did not regard it as a critical issue in the election. In a speech in Tipperary, Patrick Hogan claimed that jobless figures were lower than previous years. Cosgrave stated that there was no cure for unemployment and the Minister for Fisheries, Fionan Lynch, declared that the government would make no wild promises to ease the problem. Cumann na nGaedheal saw the issue of unemployment less as an economic one and more a source of political instability. Professor Tierney worried that the threat of communism did not result from the unemployed but from middle class activists eager to exploit the issue. When

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308 *The Irish Times*, 13 February 1932.
309 *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 February, 1932.
310 *The Irish Press*, 15 February 1932.
311 *Cork Examiner*, 8 February 1932.
312 Ibid.
313 *The Irish Times*, 10 February 1932.
visiting the slums of North Dublin an area of poverty and high unemployment the
Minister for Local Government Richard Mulcahy was heckled so badly that the
meeting had to be abandoned.\textsuperscript{314} Cumann na nGaedheal speakers poured scorn on
Fianna Fáil’s attempts to cure the problem. In Cork, Cosgrave said the opposition
were becoming hysterical about the issue\textsuperscript{315} and if de Valera had a solution to
unemployment he should share it with the President of the United States a country
with far greater numbers out of work.\textsuperscript{316} De Valera told the voters that it was the duty
of the government to provide work for its citizens\textsuperscript{317} and when the Fianna Fáil
candidate in the Dublin North constituency Oscar Traynor visited the slums of inner
city Dublin and decried the conditions there, none of the papers carried reports of any
heckling or interruptions.\textsuperscript{318}

The Economy and trade

Economic issues were framed by the government in the context of the export trade.
The credit rating of the state therefore was of great importance. This was emphasised
by Cumann na nGaedheal candidates, Vincent White in Waterford,\textsuperscript{319} Patrick Hogan
in Galway\textsuperscript{320} and also by Henry Dockrell a candidate in the eight-seat County Dublin
constituency.\textsuperscript{321} The government placed free trade at the centre of its economic policy
and warned against anything that might threaten it. Cosgrave emphasised this on two
occasions a few days apart at meetings in Kilkenny and Offaly.\textsuperscript{322} Ernest Blythe,
Minister for Finance also reinforced this message at a meeting in Monaghan on 12

\begin{footnotes}
\item[314] \textit{Irish Independent}, 11 February 1932.
\item[315] \textit{Cork Examiner}, 13 February 1932.
\item[316] \textit{The Irish Times}, 12 February 1932.
\item[317] Ibid.
\item[318] Ibid.
\item[319] \textit{Cork Examiner}, 13 February 1932.
\item[320] \textit{Irish Independent}, 11 February 1932
\item[321] \textit{The Irish Times}, 11 February 1932.
\item[322] \textit{The Irish Times}, 8 February; \textit{Irish Independent}, 10 February 1932.
\end{footnotes}
February.\textsuperscript{323} It was a policy the voters expected from a party whose supporters came from the business classes, strong farmers and agricultural exporters. Fianna Fáil’s economic policy offered the voters a different approach. De Valera told his audience in Ennis that Fianna Fáil in power would immediately negotiate a new trade agreement with Britain.\textsuperscript{324} He spoke of the ‘Frugal life’ and economic ‘Self sufficiency’ leaving his listeners in no doubt that Fianna Fáil’s vision for the Free State’s economy would be markedly different from that of the government.\textsuperscript{325} Seán McEntee reassured voters that tariffs were necessary to protect the Irish market from the ‘dumping’ of foreign agricultural imports.\textsuperscript{326} Seán Lemass in Donegal warned that the new British tariffs were a threat to the Free State and demanded immediate reciprocal measures.\textsuperscript{327} Curiously this view was not shared by Labour who appear to have taken the government party’s line on trade with Britain. T. J. O’Connell spoke in County Mayo about the danger of a rupture in relations between the two countries possibly meaning a rupture in trade.\textsuperscript{328} Fianna Fáil had little to say on purely political relations with Britain other than to occasionally criticise the evils of partition, such as on 10 February in Kerry and 15 February in Donegal when de Valera spoke of his desire to ‘remove foreign rule in Ireland.’\textsuperscript{329} It appeared that from these brief references to partition de Valera wished to retain the party’s nationalist supporters while at the same time reaching out to more moderate supporters.

\textsuperscript{323} The Irish Press, 12 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{324} The Irish Times, 8 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{325} Irish Independent, 11 February; The Irish Times, 12 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{326} The Irish Times, 13 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{327} The Irish Press, 8 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{328} Irish Independent, 8 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{329} The Irish Times, 15 February 1932.
**Law and order**

The question of law and order was much debated during the final week of the campaign. On 11 February in Cork, Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Local Government expressed his desire to fight the election on economic issues alone but his party was forced by de Valera to fight it instead on what he called a ‘war issue.’ Patric Hogan tried to convince his audience in Galway that failure to return the government could result in a return to civil war. This theme of imminent danger and instability was further reinforced by James Fitzgerald-Kenny, Minister for Justice, when he warned that communists and gunmen were ready to take over power in the event of a Fianna Fáil victory. As if to respond to these accusations Seán Lemass stated on 9 February that Fianna Fáil was ‘fighting for peace’. The following week he said that in power his party would preserve law and order and that Fianna Fáil was a ‘constructive alternative to communism’. These statements provide a good example of the main opposition party’s ability to adapt its message in response to criticisms. By contrast there was little evidence of Cumann na nGaedheal altering its message in response to attacks from opposition candidates.

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334 *The Irish Press*, 14 February 1932.
335 *The Irish Times*, 15 February 1932.
Table 4.1: The number of times certain campaign issues appeared in the campaign speeches, 8-16 February 1932.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Newspaper</th>
<th>Irish Independent</th>
<th>The Irish Times</th>
<th>The Irish Press</th>
<th>Cork Examiner</th>
<th>Connaught Tribune</th>
<th>Nenagh Guardian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Irish Treaty/Oath of Allegiance</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land annuities</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>The economy</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Britain</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and order</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Comparative analysis of election issues presented to the voters by the parties

With regard to the election issues themselves, it is an interesting exercise to compare the different speeches particularly by the leaders of the two main parties during the last week of the campaign. Table 4.1, illustrates the election issues raised by the candidates during the campaign as reported in the newspapers. On 10 February Cosgrave warned that tariffs would ruin the economy while de Valera spoke of the need for the government to create employment. On 11 February Cosgrave complained about the danger of Russian influences in Ireland while de Valera again spoke about creating jobs. On 13 February Cosgrave declared that Fianna Fáil’s emphasis on the unemployment problem was ‘hysterical.’ De Valera, on the other hand, regarded unemployment as a fundamental problem. On polling day, 16 February, Cosgrave spoke of the importance of trade with Britain while de Valera spoke again about jobs.

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337 See Table 4.1.

338 _The Irish Times_, 10 February

339 Ibid.

340 _Irish Independent_, 11 February 1932.


342 _Irish Independent_, 16 February 1932.
The issue of emigration was mentioned by the Fianna Fáil leader in Kerry and by Seán Lemass and Frank Carney in Donegal on 15 February. Emigration was not mentioned by any Cumann na nGaedheal speaker in any of the speeches covered in any of the selected newspapers in the final week of campaigning. Another interesting observation with regard to emphasis is the fact that the issue of trade between the Free State and Britain was mentioned twelve times by Cumann na nGaedheal speakers but only six times by Fianna Fáil candidates. Stability and law and order was raised sixteen times by the government party while Fianna Fáil only mentioned the issues three times. The personality of the Fianna Fáil leader cannot be assessed from the reports of his speeches but the charisma of de Valera may have been a factor in the election. At meetings he was described as being capable of arousing ‘emotions and enthusiasms like those of Adolf Hitler.’ He was also described as being ‘very attractive to women,’ and Moss ascribes him with an appeal to youth where he was able to instil in them an energy and enthusiasm and hope for the future. By contrast W.T. Cosgrave was described as ‘cold and unromantic, with no attraction for Irish youth.’ The different styles of campaigning by the government party and Fianna Fáil are striking and the conclusion that Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil were addressing two distinct sections of Irish society is not difficult to arrive at.

During the final week of campaigning the Labour Party speakers raised more or less

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343 The Irish Press, 11 February 1932.
344 Irish Independent, 15 February; The Irish Times, 15 February 1932.
345 Maurice Manning, James Dillon, A Biography (Dublin, 1999), pp. 50-1.
347 Moss, Political Parties in The Irish Free State, p. 184.
348 Manning, James Dillon, pp. 50-1.
the same issues as the two main parties. The question of unemployment appeared on a few occasions, mentioned by Senator O’Farrell in Dublin on 13 February\textsuperscript{349} and by Henry Broderick in Offaly on 11 February.\textsuperscript{350} That party’s message for most of the campaign, however, was its hope that once the votes were counted that it would hold the balance of power. Throughout the week this message repeated on many campaign platforms.

Table 4.2 The number of reports of the main speakers in the final week of the election, 8-16 February 1932\textsuperscript{351}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Newspaper</th>
<th>Irish Independent</th>
<th>The Irish Times</th>
<th>The Irish Press</th>
<th>Cork Examiner</th>
<th>Connaught Tribune</th>
<th>Nenagh Guardian</th>
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<tr>
<td>W.T. Cosgrave</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
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<td>Eamon de Valera</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>T.J. O’Connell</td>
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<td>Ernest Blythe</td>
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<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
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<td>Speakers</td>
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<td>Seán T. O’Kelly</td>
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<td>William Norton</td>
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\textsuperscript{349} The Irish Press, 13 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{350} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{351} Irish Independent, The Irish Times, The Irish Press, Cork Examiner, Connaught Tribune, Nenagh Guardian, 8-16 February 1932 Note the Connaught Tribune and Nenagh Guardian were weekly newspapers and the information provided comes from just one issue of each of those newspapers.
Table 4.2 shows the number of reports of the main speakers in the newspapers. It can be seen that articles covering the election activities of Cosgrave and de Valera dominate, with articles on the Labour leader T.J. O’Connell in the single figures. However other Labour Party speakers featured in the final week’s campaign. The party’s message was however the same, Senator Johnson in Dublin on 16 February, William Norton in Kildare on 16 February and Senator John O’Farrell in Dublin on 13 February all told their supporters that the Labour Party would decide who would form the new government.

Other issues that received little attention during the final week of the campaign

Among the issues that are often written about in relation to the 1932 general election was the case of the County Mayo librarian Letitia Dunbar-Harrison whose appointment caused controversy in the area as she was not only a Protestant but also a non-Irish speaker. As noted above it was an important episode in the history of Catholic-Protestant relations in twentieth-century Ireland but outside of County Mayo it played no part in the election and even had little influence in the results of the Mayo South constituency. Another incident that did not appear on the hustings was the prosecution of Frank Gallagher the editor of The Irish Press before the military tribunal established by the Special Powers Act in October 1931. Gallagher was prosecuted for suggesting that members of Án Garda Síochana had abused prisoners in their custody. The prosecution may have been indirectly raised in a few

353 Cork Examiner, 16 February; The Irish Press 16 February; The Irish Press, 13 February 1932
354 See Chapter Three, pp. 50-1.
357 The Irish Press, 29 December 1931; The Irish Press, 9 January 1932.
speeches by Labour Party candidate John Devitt who called the government autocratic\textsuperscript{358} and Patrick Hogan Minister for Agriculture may have been replying to this criticism when he said that the government was not ‘imperialistic.’\textsuperscript{359} Otherwise the issue did not appear in any election literature in the last week of the campaign and while the middle of a general election may not have been the ideal time to prosecute the editor of a national newspaper there is no evidence that it had any effect on the results. Outside of Ireland’s trade relations with Britain there was no mention of the Free State’s external affairs in any of the speeches covered in the selected newspapers.

A final point worth mentioning were the notices placed by the editorial staff in the national papers prior to the election giving instructions to the voters on how to use the proportional representation voting system. The method had been introduced in 1920 but came into its own in the first decade of the Free State’s existence.\textsuperscript{360} In the advice carried in all the newspapers, voters were instructed not to place an ‘X’ on the ballot paper but instead place numbers from 1 to 8 opposite the name of the candidates whom they wished to vote for.\textsuperscript{361} This may indicate an electorate growing in sophistication with the new voting system and using their votes in a ‘spread’ or ‘transfer’ method which was to have significant results for certain candidates when the votes were counted after the election. This will be examined in the following chapter.

With regard to the newspaper coverage of the election campaign, overall the accuracy in reporting events, locations and persons is impressive and the voters in

\textsuperscript{358} Irish Independent, 10 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{359} Irish Independent, 16 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{360} Hickey and Doherty, A Dictionary of Irish History, p.492.
\textsuperscript{361} Irish Independent, 13 February 1932.
1932 were well served by the professionalism of the journalists whose job it was to report on the speeches and activities of the candidates.

The political perspectives of the newspapers

According to O’Brien the Irish Independent, The Irish Times and the Cork Examiner were the favoured daily paper of the middle and business classes especially The Irish Times. Frank Gallagher, the first editor of The Irish Press wrote a few years earlier that most, if not all, Fianna Fáil supporters took no daily paper before the appearance of his newspaper. Indeed few Fianna Fáil advertisements appeared in those newspapers, and no front page advertisements for the main opposition party appeared at all. These newspapers talked directly to the supporters of the government party. The editorials in the three papers on polling day mirrored the tone of the Cumann na nGaedheal manifesto especially with regard to the responsibility of the voters when deciding the fate of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Free State’s links with the British Commonwealth. The combined readership of the three newspapers would have been in the region of almost 200,000. If these figures had translated into votes the government party would have been assured an election victory and returned to government.

Articles on the speeches and activities of individual candidates and the tours of the party leaders occupied two to three pages in the selected papers each day of the campaign in its final week. The political views of the Irish Independent, The Irish Times and the Cork Examiner can be judged by the placement of their coverage of the activities of the two main party leaders. Reports on the tours and speeches of W.T.

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364 The Irish Times; Irish Independent, 16 February 1932; Sunday Independent, 7 February 1932; Cork Examiner, 16 February 1932.
365 See Chapter Four.
Cosgrave were more prominent and always preceded those of de Valera but the number of reports of both leaders were more or less equal in the *Independent* and *The Irish Times*, though the number of articles on the Cumann na nGaedheal leader were slightly less in *The Irish Press*.\(^{366}\) The number of columns on the speeches of the Labour Party leader, T.J. O’Connell, were equal in all three national daily papers.\(^{367}\) The editorials of the three pro-government papers displayed a marked bias in favour of the government party and against Fianna Fáil. The *Irish Independent* on 9 February told its readers that the government had defended the people from communism and chaos.\(^{368}\) *The Irish Times* editorial on 13 February praised Cosgrave’s defence of the Treaty.\(^{369}\) The *Independent’s* editorial on 11 February scorned Fianna Fáil’s economic policies\(^{370}\) and on 15 February warned the voters of the danger of another Anglo-Irish war ignited by de Valera’s rhetoric.\(^{371}\) The *Cork Examiner*’s editorial on 12 February dealt with the potential damage that de Valera’s abolition of the Oath might do to Anglo-Irish relations.\(^{372}\) On polling day, 16 February it told its readers that serious questions hung over Fianna Fáil’s economic policies.\(^{373}\) There were nineteen letters on the subject of the general election during the final week in the three pro-government newspapers. Many of them praising the policies of Cumann na nGaedheal, some critical of Fianna Fáil. However there was not one letter in support of the main opposition party in any of those papers.\(^{374}\)

The question of the placement of election advertisements is significant as a newspaper on sale would display its front page to the bystanders on the street and any

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\(^{366}\) See Table 4.2.  
\(^{367}\) Ibid.  
\(^{368}\) *Irish Independent*, 9 February 1932.  
\(^{369}\) *The Irish Times*, 13 February 1932.  
\(^{370}\) *Irish Independent*, 11 February 1932.  
\(^{371}\) Ibid.  
\(^{372}\) *Cork Examiner*, 12 February 1932.  
\(^{373}\) Ibid.  
\(^{374}\) *Irish Independent; The Irish Times; Cork Examiner*, Editorial columns, 8-16 February 1932.
advertisement would be as effective as a bill poster or placard. The three papers in question each carried a full page Cumann na nGaedheal advertisement on each of the last seven days of the campaign on their front pages.\textsuperscript{375} Also on the question of bias, certain reports in these papers concerning the Fianna Fáil leader may have helped to undermine his image. On 9 February during a speech in Feakle, County Clare, a speech delivered by de Valera was interrupted by the braying of an ass.\textsuperscript{376} On 11 February in Kerry during a snowstorm, the Fianna Fáil leader was forced to give his speech from under the shelter of a rug held over him by party members.\textsuperscript{377} By contrast reports of the election by the pro-Fianna Fáil \textit{Irish Press} omitted those unedifying pictures of the leader. Instead it noted a reply given by Richard Mulcahy to a member of an audience at a meeting, where the minister said he didn’t give a ‘Tinker’s curse’ for that particular voter’s opinions. The Cumann na nGaedheal candidate for the Meath constituency Arthur Matthews was quoted as describing Fianna Fáil members as ‘Blackguards.’\textsuperscript{378} These reports did not appear in either the \textit{Irish Independent} or \textit{The Irish Times}.

\textit{The Irish Press} carried a political cartoon by its resident artist ‘Bee’ on the front page for most days of the final week. These cartoons consistently ridiculed the government party. Two examples in particular are worth noting. On 10 February a cartoon showed Cumann na nGaedheal speakers during the election campaign delivering speeches which were no more than repetitive rants against their opponents rather than offering constructive policies of their own. On the eve of the election another cartoon showed a meeting of Irish Unionists congratulating the government.

\textsuperscript{375} \textit{Irish Independent; The Irish Times; Cork Examiner}, Page One advertisements, 10-16 February 1932
\textsuperscript{376} \textit{The Irish Times}, 9 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{377} \textit{The Irish Times}, 11 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{378} \textit{The Irish Press}, 12-13 February 1932.
party for their services in defaming Fianna Fáil and suggested that Cuman na nGaedheal was merely a puppet of the Unionist party.\footnote{Ibid, 10-15 February 1932.}

The editorial columns of The Irish Press reflected its support for Fianna Fáil by carrying an endorsement of that party’s policy to retain the land annuities on 10 February, criticising Cosgrave’s economic policies on 11 February and describing the outgoing government as coercive in an editorial on polling day.\footnote{The Irish Press, 10-11, 16 February 1932.}

The coverage of the Labour Party over the six papers was fair and balanced and reflected that party’s limited ambitions to be an alternative to the two main parties as announced by John Devitt who was contesting a seat for Labour in the eight-seat County Dublin constituency.\footnote{The Irish Press, 11 February 1932.} The most striking aspect of the coverage of The Labour Party was the few appearances of the party leader T.J. O’Connell.\footnote{Table 4.2.}

Compared with two or three reports on the respective Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil leaders’ activities in each edition throughout the week, there are only four reports on O’Connell in the entire newspaper coverage during that week.\footnote{Irish Independent; The Irish Times; The Irish Press; Cork Examiner; Connaught Tribune; Nenagh Guardian, 8-16 February 1932.} The message that Labour wanted to hold the balance of power after the election was repeated so often that eventually it attracted criticism not only from Cumann na nGaedhel’s Minister for Justice James Fitzgerald-Kenny in Mayo on 10 February,\footnote{Cork Examiner, 10 February 1932.} but also Fianna Fáil’s Seán Lemass in Dublin.\footnote{Ibid, 16 February 1932.}

Even on the eve of the election O’Connell tried to convince the voters that there was no pact with the main opposition party and that Labour supporters had not been instructed to cast their second preference vote for Fianna Fáil.\footnote{Irish Independent, 15 February 1932; The Irish Times, 15 February 1932; The Irish Press,} With regard to
criticisms delivered by the various speakers of their opponents, the newspapers gave
the different candidates an opportunity to attack their opponents with the knowledge
that their words would be read by a much wider audience than those within earshot of
their speech. Most of the criticisms emanate from Cumann na nGaedheal speakers
against Fianna Fáil and the newspaper that carried most of these attacks was the *Irish
Independent*. Attacks by Fianna Fáil speakers on Cumann na nGaedheal appear far
less frequently and though Labour Party speakers criticised the government party
there were no attacks on Fianna Fáil by Labour. The criticisms by Cumann na
nGaedheal of the main opposition party fell into two broad categories; attacks on
Fianna Fáil’s economic policies and attacks on its attitude to security and the
legitimacy of the state. On 11 February in Donegal, Senator Milroy of Cumann na
nGaedheal accused de Valera of starting the Civil War. On 12 February in
Roscommon, Cosgrave despaired of Fianna Fáil’s attempts to abolish the Oath. On
15 February at a meeting in Cavan Patrick McGilligan warned his listeners that a
Fianna Fáil government would open the prisons. On 13 February the Cumann na
nGaedheal leader described Fianna Fáil’s focus on unemployment as ‘hysterical.’
Criticisms by Fianna Fáil speakers of the government party tended to focus firstly on
its record and secondly, attacks on government party’s misrepresentation of Fianna
Fáil’s policies. At a meeting in Sligo on 8 February Seán Lemass criticised Cumann
na nGaedheal speakers’ attempts to traduce Fianna Fáil’s message to the voters.
Seán McEntee repeated this charge in Dublin on 9 February. McEntee also

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389 Ibid, 12 February 1932.
390 Ibid, 15 February 1932.
392 *The Irish Press*, 8 February 1932.
attacked the government’s record on the economy in Dublin on 16 February.\textsuperscript{394} Lemass was critical of the Labour Party’s stated aim of holding the balance of power after the election in a meeting in Dublin on 15 February\textsuperscript{395} and was joined in this criticism by McEntee.\textsuperscript{396} The attacks on Cumann na nGaedheal by the Labour Party tended to concentrate on criticism of the Special Powers Act\textsuperscript{397} and the government’s economic policies. On 16 February the party’s former leader Senator Tom Johnson expressed his hope that Cumann na nGaedheal would be removed from office.\textsuperscript{398} Archie Cassidy, Labour candidate in the eight-seat Donegal constituency blamed the government for the drop in wages for workers and Martin O’Sullivan from the Dublin North constituency accused Cumann na nGaedheal for being responsible for the high rise in unemployment.\textsuperscript{399}

**Provincial newspapers**

Not surprisingly the feature that differentiated the provincial papers from the national dailies was their focus on local candidates. The *Nenagh Guardian* for example drew the reader’s attention to the candidates for the Tipperary constituency and carried two election notices for the out-going Independent TD Daniel Morrissey.\textsuperscript{400} The paper also carried the Labour Party manifesto and as Morrissey, a former Labour TD ran as an Independent Labour candidate, the party used the title ‘Official Labour Party’ in its notices.\textsuperscript{401} With regard to the political views of this paper the editorial echoed *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* in emphasising the grave responsibility of the

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\textsuperscript{394} Ibid, 16 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{395} *Irish Independent*, 15 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{396} *The Irish Press*, 15 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{397} Hickey and Doherty, *A Dictionary of Irish History*, p.90.
\textsuperscript{398} *The Irish Press*, 15 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{400} *Nenagh Guardian*, 13 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{401} Ibid, 13 February, 1932.
electorate in the coming election. The *Connaught Tribune* on the other hand, while generously attributing the stability of the country following the Civil War to Cumann na nGaedheal, reminded its readers that Fianna Fáil had made great strides since its foundation and may even be considered suitably fit for government.\(^{402}\) Reports of the party leaders’ speeches differed also in the *Connaught Tribune*. On 13 February W.T. Cosgrave was assigned a smaller column on the far right hand side of a page devoted to de Valera’s election activity.\(^{403}\) The *Cork Examiner* with its much larger circulation, covered election meetings in Limerick, Tipperary and occasionally Dublin.\(^{404}\) It concentrated particularly on the four Cork constituencies, Cork Borough (Cork City), Cork North, Cork East and Cork West. As Cork was the stronghold of The Farmers’ Party the paper carried extensive coverage of that party in the last week of the campaign.\(^{405}\)

**Advertisements**

Hugh Oram wrote that Cumann na nGaedheal retained the services of the advertising agency O’Kennedy Brindley for the 1932 campaign, with Frank Padbury writing much of the party’s election literature.\(^{406}\) Warner Moss, who covered the election extensively confirms this but does not mention the firm.\(^{407}\) Ciara Meehan describes the election literature produced by O’Kennedy Brindley as ‘attack advertising’.\(^{408}\) A good example of this would be the advertisement carried on the front page of the *Irish Independent* on 15 February entitled: ‘The Communists and the Gunmen are

\(^{402}\) *Connaught Tribune*, 13 February 1932.  
\(^{403}\) Ibid.  
\(^{404}\) *Cork Examiner*, 8-16 February 1932.  
\(^{405}\) *Cork Examiner*, 9-11 February 1932.  
\(^{408}\) Meehan, *The Cosgrave Party*, p. 120.
voting for Fianna Fáil.’ Having delivered this piece of alarming information the advertisement posed the crucial question: ‘How will you vote to-morrow? ‘The ‘sensible’ voter was urged to vote for ‘peace and prosperity’ and ‘increased markets abroad’ by voting for the ‘government party’.’ It is not difficult to accept that this advertisement was directed at Cumann na nGaedheal’s middle-class property-owning voter. A section of the advertisement read, ‘The gunmen’ and “communists” ‘want a free hand in Ireland.’ This was both a threat and a warning. As noted earlier the fear of militant chaos must be seen in the context of the recent civil war and IRA raids on business premises barely nine years earlier.

During the Civil War, raids on banks and business premises and the ‘commandeering’ of private property were common. Cumann na nGaedheal was exploiting the real fears of its supporters. Visually the advertisement contains no illustrations and has the appearance of a bill board advertisement poster, textual, plain and direct.

Fianna Fáil’s election advertising was aimed at a broader section. An advertisement carried in The Irish Press on 15 February informed its readers that ‘Fianna Fáil has a plan.’ It listed various sections of Irish society and offered each an incentive to support the main opposition party. To the worker, it offered higher wages, to the farmer a guaranteed market, to the shopkeeper, better trade, to the manufacturer, protection and security from what the advertisement called ‘unfair competition.’ The readers were promised less taxation, more security and ‘better

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409 Irish Independent, 15 February 1932; See Appendix III, Cumann na nGaedheal front page newspaper election advertisements, p. 154.
411 The Irish Press, 15 February 1932; See Appendix III, Fianna Fáil newspaper election advertisement, p.155.
times.’ Beneath the text was a picture of a factory worker oiling industrial machinery captioned with the slogan ‘Speed the Wheels.’\footnote{Ibid, 15 February 1932.} This advertisement combined large text with an eye-catching illustration. It displayed none of the aggressive ‘attack’ tone of the government party advertising. In an attempt to respond to this mode of election literature, Fianna Fáil issued an advertisement carried in the national daily papers which stated: ‘If it appears in a Cumann na nGaedheal advertisement, it’s not true.’\footnote{Irish Independent, 9 February 1932.} The advertisements of the Labour Party were tamer. Their posters concentrated on The Labour Party’s election programme or notices from trade unions urging support from their members. An example of the latter would be a piece carried in the \textit{Irish Independent} on 9 February from the National Executive of the Railway Clerks Association requesting its members to vote for The Labour Party.\footnote{Ibid.} Other advertisements emanated directly from the party itself appealing for support from the National Teachers Union.\footnote{Ibid, 15 February 1932.}

A more common theme toward the end of the week was The Labour Party’s oft-repeated mantra on campaign platforms: that after the election the party would hold the balance of power.\footnote{The Irish Times, 15 February 1932.} Another advertisement based on that same theme urged Labour Party supporters to ‘Change the government certainly, but control the successors.’\footnote{Cork Examiner, 13 February 1932.} Another interesting development in Labour Party strategy was the use of questionnaires by the party’s director of elections P.T. Daly.\footnote{Ibid, 12 February 1932.} These were issued to Labour supporters and returned to the party with the promise that responses would be forthcoming. A report in \textit{The Irish Times} stated that the answers to the questions posed by The Labour Party’s supporters would, ‘be adopted by the party candidates

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{413} Ibid, 15 February 1932.
  \item \footnote{414} \textit{Irish Independent}, 9 February 1932.
  \item \footnote{415} Ibid.
  \item \footnote{416} Ibid, 15 February 1932.
  \item \footnote{417} \textit{The Irish Times}, 15 February 1932.
  \item \footnote{418} \textit{Cork Examiner}, 13 February 1932.
  \item \footnote{419} Ibid, 12 February 1932.
\end{itemize}
It is interesting that reports of Labour holding the balance of power and having no pact with Fianna Fáil were increasingly prominent after notices of these questionnaires appeared in the papers.

With regard to advertisements carried in the newspapers, it is difficult to ascertain the value of their effectiveness. The advertisements placed by the two large parties tended to reflect their election message. They were noticeably textual with Cumann na nGaeheal’s ringing the alarm bells of impending doom while Fianna Fáil’s election advertisements attempted to appeal to voters with offers of something better. As for the smaller parties and Independents, newspaper advertising may not have had the impact the candidates had intended. For example the Independent candidate Joseph Xavier Murphy who stood in the County Dublin constituency placed an advertisement in *The Irish Times* during the final week of the campaign with a different version of the advertisement each day. Sadly his effort bore no fruit as he did not win a seat.

**Posters and election literature not displayed in the newspapers**

Election posters in 1932 gave the political parties a creative licence not permitted in either their verbal speeches or their comparatively sober newspaper advertisements.

An example of two posters designed for exterior display can be found in Appendix IV. Examples are provided from Cumann na nGaedheal and also from Fianna Fáil. The posters give an impression of the aggressive advertising used by both sides not so much as promote the message of their own party, but instead attempt to

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420 Ibid, 12 February 1932.
422 See Appendix IV, Examples of election posters. pp. 159-60.
smear their opponents. The first example in Appendix IV is, ‘His Master’s Voice’\textsuperscript{423} depicts a figure recognisable as Ėamon de Valera with a label bearing the words ‘Fianna Fáil’ hanging from his wrist being pushed forward helplessly by a sinister gunman with a gun in each hand. A label hangs from each gun, the first with the words ‘IRA’ written on it, being prodded into de Valera’s back, the second held in reserve has the words ‘Saor Eire’ written on it. The message is clear. Fianna Fáil under de Valera would be a mere puppet of militant republicanism and the aggressive edge of extreme communism. The poster bears the slogan ‘His Master’s Voice,’ a joke on the brand name of the phonographic recording company. At the bottom, the text reads ‘Make your voice heard by voting Cumann na nGaedheal.’\textsuperscript{424} The poster is two and a half feet by eighteen inches and was printed by Temple Press in Dublin and published by McConnell’s Advertising Services at 10 Parnell Square Dublin 1.

The second poster also in Appendix IV was produced for Fianna Fáil and shows a figure probably intended to be Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, denying charity to a diminutive starving widow and her children. The ‘Blythe’ figure states ‘I have nothing for you my good woman, the country cannot afford it.’ His head turns to a wealthy man standing below him on his right. To this figure ‘Blythe’ proffers a bag of money and says ‘This is to help rear your family my good man.’ The message printed at the top states ‘Government by the rich and for the rich.’\textsuperscript{425} This poster has the same large dimensions and was printed by Cahill and Company Dublin and published by the National Executive of Fianna Fáil at 13 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2.\textsuperscript{426}

\textsuperscript{423} Appendix IV, Examples of election posters. National Library of Ireland, Ephemera Collection, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{424} Appendix IV, NLIEPH, ‘His Master’s Voice’, ELE/1930-40/29, p.159.
\textsuperscript{425} Appendix IV, NLIEPH, ‘Ernest Blythe’, EPH/F58. p.160.
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid.
Both posters attempted to smear the opposing party. According to Cumann na nGaedheal, Fianna Fáil were a front for chaos and political revolution. From Fianna Fáil’s point of view Cumann na nGaedheal were the party of the wealthy and privileged.

**Conclusion**

The importance of the role of newspapers in covering a major event such as a general election is highlighted by the existence of approximately sixty newspaper publications in Ireland in 1932.\(^\text{427}\) Six of them were daily papers and three had a national circulation. Based on its coverage of events nationwide, the *Cork Examiner* was sold in five counties, Limerick, Waterford, Kerry and Tipperary and of course County Cork itself. All of these publications gave coverage to the general election and may have helped inform the opinions of their readership.

There is no study on the effect of newspaper reportage or election advertisements on the 1932 general election. As has been mentioned, the figures of radio ownership were very low and there was no domestic cinema offering news reel coverage of the election. Most people interested in following the campaign would have read about it on the newspapers. The readership figures for the three newspapers, the *Cork Examiner*, *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* would have been in the region of almost a quarter of a million as opposed to those of *The Irish Press*.\(^\text{428}\) The fact that the former newspaper readership figures did not translate into votes demonstrated that newspaper readers did not necessarily purchase a paper for its political views. With regard to the broader question to what extent did the newspapers and election literature affect the outcome of the election, the question must be a simple, we do not


\(^{428}\) See Chapter Four, pp. 69-70.
know. They are virtually the only extant primary source material for the campaign itself and as such are vitally important to this work. However their effect on the choices of the voters, is an impossible question to answer. Their primary usefulness to this thesis is as vehicles to deliver the campaign messages of the contesting parties in the election.

A collective summary of Cumann na nGaedheal election policies based on reports of candidates’ speeches suggest that the party had chosen to fight the election on two basic strategies: firstly, defending government policy and secondly, attacking the opposition parties, mainly Fianna Fáil. Preserving the Anglo-Irish Treaty meant a refusal to countenance any alterations to its terms. Effectively protecting the Treaty and the Oath were the same thing. Continuing to pay the land annuities was justified on the basis that it was a legal agreement from which the state could not extricate itself. Government party speakers stressed that the rationale for these policies was the maintenance of good trading relations with Britain and the Commonwealth which was a crucial factor for Cumann na nGaedheal’s core supporters, the big farmers and agricultural exporters. In pursuing these policies the government party was being completely loyal to its supporters.

Attacks on Fianna Fáil featured in most of the speeches and election literature of Cumann na nGaedheal. The narrative was that the main opposition party would seek war with Britain, re-start the Civil War and offer a general licence to militant republicans and communists to do as they pleased. The link between Saor Eire and both communism and the IRA was used to paint Fianna Fáil as a left-leaning extremist front for the forces of anarchy and chaos in the country. This message may have resonated with some voters who remembered the destruction of the Civil War especially those of the property-owning professional classes who had the most to lose.
but whether this election tactic convinced voters that Fianna Fáil were waiting to plunge the country into a state of anarchy is impossible to say. It may have been that Cumann na nGaedheal’s Cassandra like protestations turned away more supporters than they gained.

The issue of unemployment and emigration were not seriously addressed by government party speakers or in party election literature. It would appear that Cumann na nGaedheal regarded it as a problem outside of its control and over which they had little influence. The issue of emigration was not dealt with at all as neither question would have been of much interest to the party’s middle-class support base. What is increasingly clear from newspaper coverage of Cumann na nGaedheal’s campaign was the focus on that section of society from which it drew its support.

Fianna Fáil’s election strategy was largely based on holding onto the nationalist vote the party had won from Sinn Féin in the two election in 1927 while at the same time expanding its support base by offering a combination of patriotic autarky and economic self-sufficiency. The party’s task in this regard was made easier by the economic crisis and Britain’s intention to impose tariffs in 1932. The all important trade link with Britain appeared to be slipping from the Free State’s grasp. The futility of pursuing a good neighbour policy in light of Britain’s tariff policy was emphasised by several Fianna Fáil speakers during the campaign, such as Seán McEntee in Dublin on 13 February. The same speaker laid out the opposition party’s policies on finance and banking thus convincing the middle class voter of Fianna Fáil’s soundness as a ‘businessman’s party.’ The party’s nationalist policies were reflected in the promise to abolish the Oath and to cease the payment of the land annuities to the British Exchequer. This may have been an expression of popular

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429 Doherty and Hickey, *Chronology of Irish History*, p. 211.
patriotism as well as a means of securing extra revenue for the state. Fianna Fáil speakers usually attacked the government party on its policies rather than directly, the one exception being the question of misrepresentation. On the issue of traducing its policies the main opposition party was not slow to paint Cumann na nGaedheal as mendacious and underhand.

Labour Party speakers focussed on two main issues, a desire to unseat the government and to hold the balance of power in the new Dáil. The number of attacks on the government party by Labour speakers made it obvious that the party would not support Cumann na nGaedheal but a refusal to admit its support for Fianna Fáil may have sent a confused message to its supporters. A Labour advertisement in *The Irish Times* on 15 February declared, ‘Change the government certainly, but control the successors’ may have been the clearest indication of the extent of Labour’s ambitions in 1932. The smaller parties and Independents fought the campaign mainly on ‘one-issue’ policies and were too small to have any effective influence on the outcome of the election.

An examination of the editorials of the two main national daily newspapers, *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*, as well as the *Cork Examiner*, indicate a bias in favour of Cumann na nGaedheal. These three newspapers had an impressive daily readership of close to a quarter of a million. That these figures did not translate into votes for the government party is not at all surprising as not all readers bought a newspaper for its political views but certainly the support they offered to Cumann na nGaedheal cannot be discounted and may well have garnered the party votes when the ballots were cast.
Chapter Five

The election results: An analysis of the ten seats lost by Cumann na nGaedheal

This chapter has two basic aims: firstly to analyse the results of the 1932 general election and secondly to focus exclusively on the ten constituency elections where Cumann na nGaedheal lost seats. Voter turn-out was over 75.3 per cent\textsuperscript{431} compared with 67.7 per cent in September 1927 and 66.2 per cent in June 1927.\textsuperscript{432} As this thesis is primarily concerned with analysing reasons for the defeat of Cumann na nGaedheal, attention is focussed mainly on that party’s electoral performance. Cumann na nGaedheal lost ten seats in the election. The methodology used to analyse the constituencies where these losses took place is to examine the votes transferred to Cumann na nGaedheal from other parties and the second preference votes their supporters gave to other parties. This analysis may provide a clue to the voting strategy employed by the government party and why that strategy failed to deliver votes and ended up costing Cumann na nGaedheal ten seats and the election. In certain constituencies, the losses revealed the absence of any voting strategy whatsoever which may also explain Cumann na nGaedheal’s defeat. An examination of the voter transfers to and from the Farmers’ candidates particularly the

\textsuperscript{431} Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.189.
\textsuperscript{432} Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, pp.115-84.
Independent Farmers candidate James Myles in the Donegal constituency and the pro-treaty candidate Richard Anthony in the Cork City constituency provoked the question why Cumann na nGaedheal did not court ‘fellow traveller’ candidates whose policies were largely sympathetic to the government.

On 29 January when the sixth Dáil was dissolved Cumann na nGaedheal had sixty six seats. Sixty-two of them had been gained in the 15 September 1927 general election. However two of those seats were held by the same TD, the party leader W.T. Cosgrave, who had won a seat in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency and another seat in the Cork City constituency. In October 1931 he resigned his Carlow-Kilkenny seat, which was won by former Farmers’ Party leader, Denis Gorey on 3 November 1931. In addition to this victory, the party won three more by-elections during the life of the sixth Dáil. On 3 April 1928 one of the TDs representing the Dublin North constituency, James Larkin was declared bankrupt and was compelled to resign his seat. The subsequent by-election was won by Cumann na nGaedheal’s Vincent Rice. On 14 March 1929 upon the resignation of the Independent TD Alfie Byrne also in the Dublin North constituency, T.F. O’Higgins won a seat for the government party. On 7 June 1929 in a by-election following the death of Fianna Fáil TD Samuel Holt, Seán MacEoin won a seat for Cumann na nGaedheal in the Leitrim-Sligo constituency.

Five TDs joined Cuman na nGaedheal during the period of the sixth Dáil: John White, former Farmers’ Party TD (Donegal), Michael Heffernan (Tipperary) and Michael Jordan (Wexford). Two others, Michael Brennan Independent from Roscommon and former National League TD William Redmond

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433 Ibid, pp. 130-127.
434 Doherty, and Hickey, A Chronology of Irish History, p.211.
435 [http://www.electionsireland.org/results/general/06dail.cfm](http://www.electionsireland.org/results/general/06dail.cfm) [Accessed 18 September 2012]
436 Hickey and Doherty, A Dictionary of Irish History, p. 297.
437 [http://www.electionsireland.org/results/general/06dail.cfm](http://www.electionsireland.org/results/general/06dail.cfm) [Accessed 20 September 2012]
from Waterford both joined the government party.\footnote{Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.180.} When the sixth Dáil was dissolved there were two vacant seats: Carlow-Kilkenny, caused by the death of Cumann na nGaedheal TD Peter de Loughrey, the 1916 veteran who effected de Valera’s escape from Lincoln Jail in 1919 and the second in Laois-Offaly, caused by the death of Cumann na nGaedheal TD, William Aird.

Two TDs resigned their seats before the election to fight in different constituencies, Desmond Fitzgerald resigned in the County Dublin constituency to fight for a seat in Carlow-Kilkenny and Seán MacEoin resigned from the Leitrim-Sligo constituency to contest a seat in the Longford-Westmeath constituency.\footnote{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, pp. 101-126; 137-145.} Consequently the total number of TDs in the government party on 29 January 1932 was sixty-six including the Ceann Comhairle Michael Hayes representing the National University (University College Dublin) constituency. His return to the Dáil was automatic. In 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal ran 101 candidates.\footnote{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.148.}

The position of the main opposition parties in January 1932 was as follows, Fianna Fáil won fifty-seven seats in September 1927. The party lost a seat to Cumann na nGaedheal in Leitrim-Sligo in 1929 as mentioned above, and on 29 June 1931 following the death of Labour Party TD, Hugh Colohan, Thomas Harris won a seat in the Kildare constituency for Fianna Fáil.\footnote{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.144.} Between that date and January 1932 the party suffered no defections and received no additional TDs. Fianna Fáil entered the 1932 election with exactly the same number of seats it had won in the previous general election. It fielded 104 candidates as opposed to eighty-eight in September 1927.\footnote{Ibid, pp 116-48.}

\footnotetext[438]{Meehan, \textit{The Cosgrave Party}, p.180.}
\footnotetext[439]{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, pp. 101-126; 137-145.}
\footnotetext[440]{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.148.}
\footnotetext[441]{Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.144.}
\footnotetext[442]{Ibid, pp 116-48.}
The Labour Party had fared less well in the period between September 1927 and January 1932. In addition to the death of Hugh Colohan, two TDs, Edward Doyle in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency and Patrick Clancy in the Limerick constituency both left the party and stood as Independent Labour candidates in 1932. The Cork City TD, Richard Anthony, and the Tipperary TD, Daniel Morrissey, were both expelled from the party in 1931 for voting against the party whip during the division on the Special Powers Act in October 1931. Labour entered the election with eight TDs. The party contested thirty-three seats, an increase of five from the previous general election.

By 1932 The Farmers’ Party had virtually collapsed. Having won six seats in September 1927 it bled elected members over the next few years. Richard Holohan who represented the party in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency had left to run as an Independent, Michael Heffernan, John White and Michael Jordan had all joined Cumann na nGaedheal. Meehan speculated that the party’s almost unconditional support for the government may have been instrumental in its loss of support (and members). In 1932 it entered the election with just two TDs, Timothy O’Donovan in Cork West and Daniel Vaughan in Cork North as well as contesting a new seat in Limerick with John O’Shaughnessy.

The electoral performance of the smaller parties such as the Revolutionary Workers Groups and the Irish Workers League and significant Independent candidates will be examined in so far as it affected or contributed to Cumann na nGaedheal’s loss of seats in 1932.

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444 Puirséil, The Irish Labour Party, p.35.
446 Doherty, and Hickey, A Chronology of Irish History, p.211.
449 http://www.electionsireland.org/results/general/06dail.cfm [Accessed 22 September 2012]
Table 5:1. List of constituencies and numbers of seats held by each party, Dáil Éireann, 1927-32.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>Cumann Na nGaedheal</th>
<th>Fianna Fáil</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Farmers’</th>
<th>Independents &amp; Other parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

Total Seats 153 57 72 7 3 15

Election Results

Table 5.1 shows the number of seats won by each party and the Independent candidates out of the 153 seats in the thirty constituencies contested. The three-seat Dublin University constituency (Trinity College) had three Unionist TDs, Professors Ernest Alton, William Thrift and Sir James Craig. As they were unopposed they were deemed elected without contest.\footnote{Ibid.}

These results illustrate a number of points about the government party’s performance. Firstly, Cumann na nGaedheal enjoyed support in County Dublin, an area inhabited by a prosperous farming community and also in the Dublin South constituency, an area largely made up of middle class professionals. Secondly, the party was able to match Fianna Fáil in the number of seats it won in all four County Cork constituencies and beat the opposition party into second place in the National University constituency. Third, Cumann na nGaedheal held its own in Galway coming one seat behind Fianna Fáil. Outside of those results the table tells a tale of losses for the outgoing government. The party entered the election with two TDs in Waterford, one of whom was William Redmond and the other, Dr Vincent White. After the election it emerged with two TDs, one of whom was Redmond, the other John Kiersey. In spite of Redmond’s popularity his inclusion on the ticket did not help Cumann na nGaedheal gain any extra seats.\footnote{Meehan, The Cosgrave Party, p.181.}

Voter turnout

The turnout in the 1932 general election was the highest vote cast in any Free State election. Among the reasons for this increase may have been new voters who had not been eligible to vote five years previously and had subsequently registered between

\footnote{Ibid.}
the years 1927 and 1932. Another possibility may have been that people who were eligible to vote in previous elections had not done so for political reasons or because they felt no party represented their views. A further reason for the large voter turnout in 1932 was Gallagher’s statement\(^{452}\) that Sinnott had mentioned that was the electoral registers in the provinces of Ulster and Connaught had been highly inflated, which did not reflect the actual numbers of voters in those provinces.\(^{453}\) Sinnott did not say this, but he does provide graphs indicating the low numbers of votes won by Cumann na nGaedheal in the three elections prior to 1932. And another graph showing a sharp rise in voter turn-out in the 1932 election as opposed to the previous election in September 1927.\(^{454}\) Gallagher also demonstrates that the government party did poorly in the provinces of Connaught and Ulster in both the 1923 and June 1927 elections, with a small increase in votes in September 1927.\(^{455}\) However neither Sinnott nor Gallagher provide any further information and apart from the conclusion that Cumann na nGaedheal did not enjoy support in the north and west of the country it is difficult to place any major significance on these facts. In any case larger numbers of Free State citizens cast their ballot in 1932 and Fianna Fáil was the main beneficiary.

The STV voting system

An analysis of proportional representation is necessary in order to have an understanding of the transferable voting system in use in the election. Transferred votes often made the difference between a weak candidate winning a seat or a popular candidate having what is termed a ‘surplus’ of votes to pass onto other candidates in their constituency and thus effecting the outcome of an election. The proportional


\(^{454}\) Ibid, p.119.

\(^{455}\) Gallagher, pp. 47, 86, 117.
representation or single transferable voting system (STV) was introduced in Irish
elections in 1920.\footnote{See Chapter Four.} The method involved the voter receiving a ballot paper
containing the names, though not the party affiliation of the candidates. The voter
placed a number next to their chosen candidate depending on the order of their
preference. Thus their favourite candidate received number ‘1’, their second favourite
the number ‘2’ and so on down the list depending on the number of candidates
contesting seats in a constituency. When the votes cast were counted, a quota was
decided upon. This was calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes by the
number of seats and adding one. Candidates attaining this quota were deemed elected
and their excess or surplus votes divided among the candidates who received their
number ‘2’ or number ‘3’ votes etc. Thus, as the count proceeded, the candidates with
the lowest number of votes were eliminated and their votes divided among the
candidates still in the contest. These votes divided among other candidates were
known as transferred votes or ‘transfers.’ Transfers would usually come from
candidates from the same party though sometimes from other parties or on occasion
from the votes of any eliminated candidate when a presiding officer deemed it fit to
do so. When all the candidates received sufficient votes to fulfil the quota all the seats
were filled and the count was ended.\footnote{Cornelius O’Leary, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.2.}

The ten seats Cumann na nGaedheal lost will be the subject of the next section
of this chapter. They were in the constituencies of Cork East, Donegal, Dublin North,
Kerry, Leitrim-Sligo, Limerick, Meath, Roscommon, Tipperary and the National
University (University College Dublin). The only seats the government party won
were in Carlow-Kilkenny where Desmond Fitzgerald held the vacant seat left by Peter
de Loughrey and in Leix-Offaly where Thomas F. O’Higgins held the seat left vacant by William Aird.

Table 5.2. Votes cast in the Cork East constituency, 16 February 1932.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seats Candidates</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Turnout</strong></td>
<td>75.97%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quota</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fianna Fáil</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Cumann na nGaedheal</strong></td>
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<td>Broderick, William</td>
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<td>+117</td>
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<td>6,018</td>
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<td><em>Carey, Edmund</em></td>
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<td>+79</td>
<td>+486</td>
<td>3,598</td>
<td>3,677</td>
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<td><em>Daly, John</em></td>
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<td>+396</td>
<td>+134</td>
<td>+650</td>
<td>+2,122</td>
<td>4,873</td>
<td>5,007</td>
<td>5,657</td>
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<td><em>Michael Hennessy</em></td>
<td>2,703</td>
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<td>+170</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2,862</td>
<td>3,032</td>
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<td><strong>Labour Party</strong></td>
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<td>2,167</td>
<td>2,167</td>
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<td><strong>Farmers’ Party</strong></td>
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<td>O’Gorman, David</td>
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<td>-1,746</td>
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<td>Brasier, Brooke</td>
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<td>+213</td>
<td>+287</td>
<td>+963</td>
<td>+528</td>
<td>+705</td>
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<td>-679</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1001</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>749</td>
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**First Preferences**

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<th>Changes from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Changes from Sept 1927</th>
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</thead>
</table>

107
Table 5.2 details the voting pattern in the five-seat Cork East constituency. This was a constituency where the government party had won three seats in September 1927. They contested five seats with four candidates in 1932, the three sitting TDs, Edmund Carey, John Daly and Michael Hennessy were joined by William Broderick. The seats were contested by ten candidates. The four government party candidates, three Fianna Fáil candidates, one Labour candidate, one from The Farmers’ Party and one Independent, Brooke Brasier, who was a former Farmers’ Party member.

The first issue that strikes an observer was the number of transferable votes Brooke Brasier received from the unsuccessful Cumann na nGaedheal candidates, Carey and Hennessy as well as the successful newcomer William Broderick. The total first preferences of the government party exceeded those of Fianna Fáil but the main opposition party received more transfers from the unsuccessful Labour candidate Eamonn Lynch and from the unlikely source of Cumann na nGaedheal’s Edmond Carey. After the final count the party ended up with just two seats. Cumann na nGaedheal tried to find a winning strategy by including the newcomer Broderick alongside the three incumbents. Instead Carey and Hennessy lost and Broderick won Cumann na nGaedheal’s second seat. The former Farmers’ Party candidate, Brooke Brasier, received quite a few transfers from The Farmers’ Party candidate, David

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458 Ibid, p.98.
O’Gorman, and also from unsuccessful Cumann na nGaedheal candidate Edmond Carey. Essentially the government party lost to poor choice of fourth candidate, the failing Hennessy whose first preferences were less than half of Broderick’s. To add insult to injury the government party had spent £867 on fighting this constituency, whereas Fianna Fáil spent just £236.\textsuperscript{460} There may have been some significance to the fact that during the campaign, W.T. Cosgrave made a point of touring the constituency. He personally addressed meetings at Cahir, Midleton, Youghal, Cove, Fermoy and Mallow. Such an extensive canvas may suggest that for Cumann na nGaedheal this part of Cork required special attention. This is backed up by advertisements carried in the \textit{Cork Examiner} on the final three days of the campaign and on polling day. The notices listed the government party candidates for Cork East whereas no such advertisements appeared for Cumann na nGaedheal’s candidates in any of the other Cork constituency.\textsuperscript{461} To say that the government party received a poor return for its money is an understatement. Cumann na nGaedheal’s amateurism when fighting elections is illustrated in K.T. Hoppen’s words where the party is described as not being prepared to, ‘soil their hands in cultivating anything as soil-encrusted as grass roots.’\textsuperscript{462} The fact that they did not court the up and coming Brooke Brasier to hold the third seat indicated poor strategic thinking. Brasier was a ‘fellow traveller’ of Cumann na nGaedheal and did eventually join Fine Gael in time to fight the 1938 general election.\textsuperscript{463}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[460] \textit{The Irish Press}, 13 April 1932.
\item[461] \textit{Cork Examiner}, 13-16 February 1932.
\item[463] Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.221.
\end{footnotes}
Table 5.3. Votes cast in the Donegal constituency 16 February 1932

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Myles</th>
<th>Dillon</th>
<th>Blaney</th>
<th>Sweeney</th>
<th>Cassidy</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>P. Doherty</th>
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<td>Quota:</td>
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<td>Count 3</td>
<td>Count 4</td>
<td>Count 5</td>
<td>Count 6</td>
<td>Count 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seats:</td>
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<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnout:</td>
<td>74.15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electorate:</td>
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<tr>
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**Fianna Fáil**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Brady Brian</th>
<th>4,955</th>
<th>+15</th>
<th>+31</th>
<th>+148</th>
<th>+30</th>
<th>+384</th>
<th>+19</th>
<th>+556</th>
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</table>
*Blaney, Neal | 7,416 |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |
| 4,990 | 5,001 | 5,149 | 5,179 | 5,563 | 5,582 | 6,138 |
*Carney, Frank | 3,874 | +14 | +27 | +35 | +34 | +637 | +20 | +1,604 |
| 3,888 | 3,915 | 3,950 | 3,984 | 4,621 | 4,641 | 6,245 |
*Doherty, Hugh | 4,691 | +11 | +17 | +9 | +34 | +244 | +62 | +836 |
| 4,702 | 4,719 | 4,728 | 4,762 | 5,006 | 5,068 | 5,904 |
*Patrick, Doherty | 3,370 | +13 | +9 | +37 | +127 | +37 |
| 3,383 | 3,392 | 3,395 | 3,432 | 3,559 | 3,596 | -3,596 |

**Cumann na nGaedheal**

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<th>+91</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>+37</th>
<th>+403</th>
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<td>5,082</td>
<td>5,911</td>
<td>5,978</td>
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<td>*Law, Hugh</td>
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<td>+22</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*McFadden, Ml Og</td>
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<td>+43</td>
<td>+1</td>
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<td>4,467</td>
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<td>5,521</td>
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| 5,870 | 5,892 | 5,892 | 5,970 | 6,111 | 6,572 | 6,676 |      |

**Labour Party**

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**Others**

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**Non-transferable**

| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 30 | 656 | 686 | 275 | 961 | 332 | 1293 |
In the Donegal constituency, Cumann na nGaedheal entered the election with five candidates, four outgoing TDs, Eugene Doherty, Hugh Law, Michael McFadden, and former Farmers’ Party TD John White. They were joined by former National
League member, Daniel McMenamin.\textsuperscript{464} Fianna Fáil also fielded five candidates, two of whom, Blaney and Carney were sitting TDs. The Labour Party put forward two candidates and James Dillon, son of John Dillon, the former Independent Irish Party MP, ran as a Nationalist candidate.\textsuperscript{465} James Myles went forward as an Independent. The government party’s leadership was probably hoping to retain their four seats and maybe add a fifth. They therefore matched Fianna Fáil’s five candidates with five of their own. Cumann na nGaedheal controlled half the seats in the constituency and seemed to enter the contest in a strong position. This appearance was deceptive. In a speech on 6 February 1932 Captain F. Scott, County Councillor and District Health Board member exhorted the voters of Donegal to give their first preference vote to James Myles and their second preference to John White.\textsuperscript{466} Myles was sure of being elected; he had comfortably exceed the quotas in both the June and September 1927 general elections, increasing his first preference each time.\textsuperscript{467} White was a government party candidate and for Scott, an important local figure to suggest that he needed the help of an Independent TD to secure his seat spoke of a weakness in the Cumann na nGaedheal camp. The other Independent candidate in the constituency, James Dillon shared Fianna Fáil’s policy on the land annuities and on that issue could be said to be closer to the opposition party than to Cumann na nGaedheal.\textsuperscript{468} Donegal was not a county where farmers engaged in raising cattle for export in any significant numbers\textsuperscript{469} therefore small farmers may have been opposed to the land annuities. In any event Cumann na nGaedheal’s first preferences were considerably lower than that of the main opposition party and in accordance with

\textsuperscript{464} Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, p.60.
\textsuperscript{465} \textit{Donegal Democrat}, 30 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{466} Ibid, 6 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{467} Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, pp. 60-99.
\textsuperscript{468} \textit{Donegal Democrat}, 30 January 1932.
\textsuperscript{469} Desmond, Gillmor, ‘Land and People, c. 1926,’ Maps 1-3, in Jr. Hill (ed), \textit{A New History of Ireland}, p. 81.
Scott’s wishes John White received transfers from James Myles which helped him to be elected. Two of his running mates however were not as fortunate. Law and Mc Fadden lost their seats. Fianna Fáil received transfers from Labour Party’s Archie Cassidy though The Labour Party’s gesture was not reciprocated by Fianna Fáil and few transfers went from the main opposition party to The Labour Party. Puirseal quotes Reynolds and Moss in stating that in 1932 Fianna Fáil returned The Labour Party’s generosity with regard to transfer votes. Certainly in the ten constituencies, examined here and in many other constituencies in the election, this study found very little evidence that Fianna Fáil candidates transferred surplus votes to any other party but its own.  

As in the case of Cork East a strong Independent farmers’ candidate took votes away from the government party. In this case it was two farmers’ candidates as both Myles and Dillon was elected, exceeding the quota with their first preference votes. Gallagher states that the Farmer’s Party lost a seat in Donegal. However as can be seen from the table The Farmers’ Party did not run any candidates in the constituency.

---

Table 5.4. Votes cast in the Dublin North constituency, 16 February 1932.

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<th>Count 3</th>
<th>Count 4</th>
<th>Count 5</th>
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<th>Count 7</th>
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<td>Mulcahy</td>
<td>O’Kelly</td>
<td>Traynor</td>
<td>Troy</td>
<td>Cullen</td>
<td>Leonard</td>
<td>Kirwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout;</td>
<td>71.54%</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Votes</td>
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<td>3,970</td>
<td>3,945</td>
<td>4,379</td>
<td>4,980</td>
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<td>-2,015</td>
<td>8,042</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>1,930</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>-2,015</td>
<td>8,042</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates;</td>
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<td>Mulcahy</td>
<td>O’Kelly</td>
<td>Traynor</td>
<td>Troy</td>
<td>Cullen</td>
<td>Leonard</td>
<td>Kirwan</td>
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**Fianna Fáil**

<table>
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<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<th>Votes</th>
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<td>+434</td>
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<td>+7</td>
<td>+620</td>
<td>+16</td>
<td>+27</td>
<td>+187</td>
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<td>+1,010</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+5</td>
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<td>+8</td>
<td>+14</td>
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<tr>
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**Cumann na nGaedheal**

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<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<th>Votes</th>
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**Labour Party**

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**Others**

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**Non-transferable**

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**First preference summary**

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<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
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<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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<td>4.82</td>
<td>+0.66</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>24,216</td>
<td>33.89</td>
<td>+0.24</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallagher Irish Elections, p. 131.
In the final week of the election campaign Cosgrave had written to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alfie Byrne, appealing to him to stand as an independent candidate in the Dublin North constituency. Cosgrave’s letter was published in *The Irish Times.*\(^{472}\)

The reasons for Cosgrave’s appeal are evident from the election results in Dublin North, Table 5.4.\(^{473}\) Byrne received 18,170 first preference votes, more than twice the quota, From Cumann na nGaedheal’s point of view the number of transfers from the Lord Mayor were vital to the party’s results. The government party contested the eight-seat constituency with six candidates, five of them outgoing TDs including the government minister Richard Mulcahy and the sixth, Sylvester O’Farrell a newcomer. Fianna Fáil fielded five candidates and The Labour Party put forward two. Four Independent candidates contested seats including the Lord Mayor and James Larkin Snr. Mulcahy won his seat in the first count but it was Alfie Byrne’s transfers that helped the election of John Byrne and Margaret Collins-O’Driscoll. However Leonard and O’Farrell both lost their seats. The Independent Patrick Belton’s transfers also helped Byrne and Collins-O’Driscoll. Fianna Fáil’s first preferences with the exception of those of Oscar Kirwan were larger than those of Cumann na nGaedheal and the sitting TD, Leonard’s first preferences were a very poor 830. Fianna Fáil’s transfers stayed mostly within the party with those of Seán T. O’Kelly, who polled lower first preferences than Mulcahy’s, transposing much higher second preferences to his Fianna Fáil running mates than Mulchey’s second preference votes to his fellow candidates. There were several indications that this constituency may have been a difficult one for the government party to replicate its 1927 votes. In the adjournment debate on unemployment on 17 December O’Kelly spoke of the desperate poverty in

\(^{472}\) *The Irish Times,* 9 February 1932.

\(^{473}\) See Chapter Five.
this constituency and blamed government policy for the scandal. During the campaign itself a number of Cumann na nGaedheal election meetings were broken up by violent interruptions some of which required the Garda to be called. The most significant indication that Cumann na nGaedheal was in trouble was the spectacle of the President and party leader publically begging an independent to stand for election knowing that he would take votes from his own party simply because Cosgrave knew Cumann na nGaedheal would lose seats and Byrne’s transfers might ameliorate the losses. When the results are examined it appears that Cosgrave was right.


Table 5.5 Votes cast in the Kerry constituency, 16 February 1932.

| Electorate: | 79,465 |
| Valid votes: | 60,310 |
| Turnout: | 75.90% |
| Quota: | 7,539 |
| Seats: | 7 |
| Candidates: | 10 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count 2</th>
<th>Count 3</th>
<th>Count 4</th>
<th>Count 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>Trant</td>
<td>Kissane</td>
<td>Lynch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fianna Fáil**

*Crowley, Fred* 7,134 +172 +369 7,306 7,675

Flynn, John Eamonn, 7,638

Kissane 7,364 +95 +927 7,459 8,386 -847

*Mc Ellistrim Thomas* 6,930 +132 +671 7,062 7,733

*O’Reilly Thomas* 6,691 +232 +350 +362 6,923 7,273 7,635

**Cumann na nGaedheal**

*Crowley, James* 4,644 +556 +872 +193 +225 5,200 6,072 6,265 6,490

*Lynch, Finian* 6,266 +1,146 +655 7,412 8,067 -528

Moore, John 3,409 -3,409

*O’Sullivan, John M.* 5,686 +654 +806 +35 +299 6,340 7,146 7,181 7,480

**Farmers Party**

Trant, Patrick 4,548 +306 4,854

Non-Transferable 116 116 +204 320 +257 577 +4 581

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First preference summary</th>
<th>votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>35,757</td>
<td>59.29</td>
<td>+7.38</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
<td>20,005</td>
<td>33.17</td>
<td>-6.70</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Party</td>
<td>4,548</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>-0.68</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumann na nGaedheal had three seats upon the dissolution of the Dáil in the Kerry constituency. Minister for Fisheries, Finian Lynch, John O’Sullivan and James Crowley. These three out-going candidates were joined by newcomer John Moore. Fianna Fáil put forward five candidates, three of them out-going TDs and the Farmers’ Party fielded one hopeful, Patrick Trant. Fianna Fáil’s first preferences were much higher than those of the government party. Table 5.5 indicates that Trant received 4,548 first preference votes and his transfers went to both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, 5.5. The transfers from the two parties went mostly to each other. Cumann na nGaedheal emerged with only two elected TDs, Lynch and O’Sullivan. County Kerry was a dairy and cattle rearing county and an article in The Kerryman on 13 February expressed concern about the imposition of duties by the British government earlier the same month. Another article mentioned the stagnant state of the cattle markets and an auctioneers’ report advertised four farms of 100 acres or more for sale. Another issue that may have worked against the government party can be read from the election results of Farmers’ Party candidates from two different counties; Patrick Trant in Kerry and John O’Shaughnessy from Limerick, also a big cattle raising county. O’Shaughnessy called for a moratorium on the payment of the land annuities. Trant merely called for a settlement for those in arrears. O’Shaughnessy was elected, Trant was not. The government party advocated the payment of the annuities as opposed to Fianna Fáil who wanted them retained. The voter’s decision on the two Farmers’ candidates illustrates how people felt on the question.

476 Ibid.
478 The Kerryman, 13 February 1932.
479 The Kerryman, 13 February 1932.
Table 5.6 Votes cast in the Leitrim Sligo constituency, 2 March 1932.

| Electorate: | 71,762 |
| Valid votes: | 55,108 |
| Turnout: | 76.79% |
| Quota: | 6,889 |
| Seats: | 7 |
| Candidates: | 13 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count 2</th>
<th>Count 3</th>
<th>Count 4</th>
<th>Count 5</th>
<th>Count 6</th>
<th>Count 7</th>
<th>Count 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seats:</strong></td>
<td>Carty</td>
<td>Roddy</td>
<td>Maguire</td>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td>O'Donnell</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Gilbride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidates:</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fianna Fáil**

| | Browne, William | 3,490 | +870 | +15 | +23 | +28 | +500 | +212 | +2391 |
| | +4,360 | 4,375 | 4,398 | 4,426 | 4,926 | 5,138 | 7,529 |
| * Carty Frank | 8,145 | -1,256 |
| Flynn, Stephen | 4,988 | +109 | +3 | +353 | +230 | +136 | +505 | +471 |
| +5,097 | 5,100 | 5,453 | 5,683 | 5,819 | 6,324 | 6,795 |
| Gilbride, Eugene | 2,979 | +143 | +5 | +30 | +34 | +129 | +79 |
| *Maguire, Ben | 7,356 | -467 |

**Cumann na nGaedheal**

| | Armstrong, Thomas | 3,266 | +42 | +85 | +1 | +10 | +208 | +71 | +45 |
| | +3,308 | 3,393 | 3,394 | 3,404 | 3,612 | 3,683 | 3,728 |
| *Dolan, James | 3,699 | +18 | +27 | +3 | +57 | +63 | +160 | +53 |
| +3,717 | 3,744 | 3,747 | 3,804 | 3,867 | 4,027 | 4,080 |
| *Hennigan, John | 3,378 | +10 | +219 | +3 | +27 | +199 | +67 | +184 |
| +3,388 | 3,607 | 3,610 | 3,637 | 3,836 | 3,903 | 4,087 |
| Reynolds, Mary | 5,317 | +8 | +106 | +23 | +354 | +379 | +715 |
| +5,325 | 5,431 | 5,454 | 5,808 | 6,187 | 6,902 |
| *Roddy, Martin | 7,382 | -493 |

**Labour Party**

| O'Donnell, Hugh | 1,934 | +35 | +22 | +3 | +20 |
| +1,969 | 1,991 | 1,994 | 2,014 | -2,014 |

**Others**

| Carter, Michael | 1,984 | +16 | +7 | +18 | +266 | +76 |
| +2,000 | 2,007 | 2,025 | 2,291 | 2,367 | -2,367 |
| Mooney, Andrew | 1,190 | +5 | +4 | +10 |
| +1,195 | 1,199 | 1,209 | -1,209 |

**Non-Transferable**

<p>| +0 | 0 | +0 | 0 | +183 | 183 | +324 | 507 | +558 | 1,065 | +265 | 1,320 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count 9</th>
<th>Count 10</th>
<th>Count 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Browne</td>
<td>Flynn</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Votes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fianna Fáil**

Browne, William  
Flynn, Stephen   
7,409            
520

**Cumann na nGaedheal**

Armstrong, Thomas  
*D* Dolan, James    
*Hennigan, John    
4,096            
3,735  
4,090  
4,096

**Non-Transferable**

+0 1,320  
+494 1,814  
+907 2,721

Note: This election was held on 2 March due to the killing of Cuman na nGaedheal candidate Michael Reynolds. His place on the ticket was taken by his wife Mary.

The election in Leitrim-Sligo was postponed from 16 February due to the murder of the Cumann na nGaedheal candidate Patrick Reynolds by a constituent in an altercation about the man’s police pension.\(^{481}\) His place on the ballot paper was taken by his wife Mary and the election was held on 2 March 1932.\(^{482}\) Along with Reynolds the government fought this constituency with five candidates including three outgoing TDs: Martin Roddy, James Dolan and John Hennigan. Seán MacEoin had won a seat in this constituency in the by-election of 7 June 1929 but resigned to

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\(^{482}\) Irish Independent, 29 February 1932.
fight in the Longford Westmeath constituency in 1932. His place was taken by Thomas Armstrong. Apart from Mary Reynolds’ votes, Fianna Fáil’s first preference votes were much higher than those of Cumann na nGaedheal. The transfer votes from Carter and Mooney described respectively as ‘Independent Farmer’ and ‘Independent Business’ candidates went to the Fianna Fáil candidates as well as to the government party. Many of the candidates’ transfers including those from Labour’s Hugh O’Donnell went to Mary Reynolds, possible as a sympathy vote, although she was a strong candidate in her own right. Fianna Fáil won an extra seat and the government party lost two. The atmosphere in this constituency may have been tense in February due to the tragedy of Patrick Reynolds’ death and even allowing for a two week postponement of the election this situation may have obtained on 2 March when the poll was held.

However another issue may have been at play in Leitrim-Sligo. On Christmas day 1931 a young local man James Vaugh died of wounds he received in Garda custody where he had been held since 5 December under the Special Powers Act. An issue of the Leitrim Observer on 13 February 1932 devoted two full pages (out of eight) to cover the Coroner’s inquest into Vaugh’s death. The evidence was described in the parlance of the time as ‘Amazing’ Vaugh’s father gave evidence describing his son’s time in custody and how he was ‘stripped naked’ and ‘left in a cell for three hours.’ He was beaten ‘every four or six hours.’ A Garda Superintendent who had been present during the detention stated that Vaugh was in perfect health when released. Vaugh died on 25 December 1931. Given the amount of coverage in the local newspaper on the inquest, and its emotive subject, it is possible it might have influenced voters in this border county when deciding to vote for government party

484 Leitrim Observer, 13 February 1932.  
485 Ibid.
candidates. The same paper reported on Fianna Fáil’s victory celebration on 27 February and an article on a protest meeting held outside Mountjoy prison addressed by Maude Gonne MacBride in solidarity with the political prisoners, many of whom had been detained under the same Special Powers Act.\textsuperscript{486}

In the west of the constituency, Sligo Corporation added its concern on the prisoners issue when it passed a resolution demanding an enquiry into the conditions of all political prisoners just prior to the election.\textsuperscript{487} The poor party organisation of Cumann na nGaedheal in the constituency was evidenced by a report in the newspapers. A public meeting for the government party was advertised in Ardara for Sunday 7 February 1932. A crowd duly assembled but no one from Cuman na nGaedheal arrived to speak to them.\textsuperscript{488} In the final week before the delayed poll on 2 March there were no reports of electioneering in the constituency by any Cumann na nGaedheal candidates.\textsuperscript{489} Also in light of Fianna Fáil’s victory (all the votes had been counted in the general election by the end of February) It may have been the case that Cumann na nGaedheal just threw in the towel and let the constituency go as it pleased.

\textsuperscript{486} Ibid, 27 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{487} Ibid, 13 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{488} Leitrim Observer, 13 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{489} Leitrim Observer, 20,27 February 1932.
Table 5.7 Votes cast in the Limerick constituency, 16 February 1932.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate:</th>
<th>76,959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid votes:</td>
<td>61,813</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnout:</td>
<td>80.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quota:</td>
<td>7,727</td>
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<td>Seats:</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates:</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Count 2</th>
<th>Count 3</th>
<th>Count 4</th>
<th>Count 5</th>
<th>Count 6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Bourke, Daniel</td>
<td>7,677</td>
<td>+98</td>
<td>7,775</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Colbert, James</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>+170</td>
<td>+101</td>
<td>+72</td>
<td>+391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Crowley, Tadgh</td>
<td>4,966</td>
<td>+58</td>
<td>+58</td>
<td>+30</td>
<td>+365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Brian, Donnchadh</td>
<td>3,334</td>
<td>+31</td>
<td>+48</td>
<td>+40</td>
<td>+83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryan, Robert</td>
<td>6,645</td>
<td>+22</td>
<td>+41</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>+489</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Bennett, George</td>
<td>5,919</td>
<td>+32</td>
<td>+347</td>
<td>+351</td>
<td>+177</td>
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<td>Madden, David</td>
<td>2,045</td>
<td>+22</td>
<td>+111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Nolan, John</td>
<td>3,325</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>+96</td>
<td>+720</td>
<td>+82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*O’Connell, Richard</td>
<td>3,573</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+37</td>
<td>+267</td>
<td>+111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reidy, James</td>
<td>5,088</td>
<td>+54</td>
<td>+66</td>
<td>+287</td>
<td>+42</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Clancy, Daniel</td>
<td>1,486</td>
<td>-1,486</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keyes, Michael</td>
<td>3,101</td>
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<td>+88</td>
<td>+80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3,787</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,875</td>
<td>3,955</td>
<td>4,441</td>
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<tr>
<td>**O’Shaughnessy John</td>
<td>4,887</td>
<td>+16</td>
<td>+514</td>
<td>+230</td>
<td>+110</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,903</td>
<td>5,417</td>
<td>5,647</td>
<td>5,757</td>
<td>6,065</td>
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<td>2,105</td>
<td>+219</td>
<td>+44</td>
<td>+52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hewson, Gilbert</td>
<td>1,562</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>-1,585</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>**Clancy, Patrick</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>+219</td>
<td>+44</td>
<td>+52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Transferable

| Non-Transferable | +24 24 | +34 58 | +35 93 | +84 177 | +56 233 |

124
Note: There are no more details on further counts. Candidates elected were: Bennett, Reidy Cumann na nGaedheal, Bourke, Crowley and Ryan Fianna Fail and O'Shaughnessy for the Farmers Party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Preference Summary</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>28,722</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>+11.74</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
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<td>2.56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party</td>
<td>4,587</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>-7.93</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Party</td>
<td>4,887</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>+1.87</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3,667</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>+0.04</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Cumann na nGaedheal held three seats in the Limerick constituency prior to the election. All three outgoing TDs went forward for election along with newcomers James Reidy and David Madden. Fianna Fáil also held three seats and put forward two new candidates. The Labour Party fielded two candidates and The Farmers’ Party one with two Independent candidates. Table 5.6 indicates that the first preference votes for Fianna Fáil were almost 10,000 more than those of the government party who fought seven seats with five candidates and ended up with just two seats. Fianna Fáil’s transfers went largely to their own candidates. Independent Labour candidate, Patrick Clancy’s transfer votes also went to the main opposition party. The transfers of the other Independent candidate, Gilbert Hewson went mainly to Farmers’ candidate O’Shaughnessy and to Cumann na nGaedheal’s George Bennett. Otherwise the government party’s transfers stayed within the party. Apart from Bennett, Cumann na nGaedheal’s only victory in Limerick was newcomer Reidy. Both Nolan and O’Connell lost their seats. Among the reasons for the poor showing from the government party may be ascertained from a letter that appeared in the *Limerick Leader* on 13 February, three days before polling. It described the payment of the land annuities by the government as ‘An act of financial betrayal so gross in its callousness

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490 Ibid.
to the farmers.\textsuperscript{491} The next issue of the same paper, 15 February, carried a letter critical of the government's anti-tariff policies especially with regard to bacon exports to Britain. Commenting on the British government’s newly imposed duties on exports from outside the British Commonwealth, the letter writer stated ‘Farmers in the Irish Free State should not allow themselves to be delude into the belief that great advantages will accrue to them from the British import duty.’\textsuperscript{492} The Farmers’ Party candidate John O’Shaughnessy adroitly positioned himself at the vanguard of these protests. In a speech in East Limerick he expressed solidarity with dairy farmers who had no market for their milk. He described the response received by a farmer’s delegation from the government party when the farmers were, ‘Treated with silent contempt.’\textsuperscript{493} Another article in the \textit{Limerick Leader} reported on his extensive canvass of County Limerick and his criticisms of the salary of the Governor General and the payment of land annuities. The candidate also ran an advertisement where he pledged to reduce high salaries and implement measures for the de-rating of agricultural land and also to, ‘protect the home market.’\textsuperscript{494} The issues of land annuities and the protection of the home market may have been crucial in this constituency, as the Limerick constituency encompassed both an agricultural and rural electorate. Limerick city also was home to one of the biggest bacon curing industries in Ireland which had suffered as a result of the economic depression.\textsuperscript{495} O’Shaughnessy was elected on the Farmers’ ticket and with his policies on annuities and tariffs close to those of Fianna Fáil it was not surprising that he voted for de Valera as President of the Executive Council when the seventh Dáil convened on 9 March 1932.\textsuperscript{496}

\textsuperscript{491} \textit{Limerick Leader}, 13 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{492} \textit{Limerick Leader}, 15 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid, 13 February 1932.  
\textsuperscript{494} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{495} \textit{Irish Independent}, 5 February 1931.  
\textsuperscript{496} \textit{The Irish Times}, 10 March 1932.
De Valera visited Limerick on 8 February and even by the hyperbolic descriptions of the period he was feted in a considerably ostentatious manner, mention is made of, a procession where many thousands took part. ‘Torch-light bearers, St Mary’s Fife and drum band. More than 10,000 roared themselves hoarse.’\textsuperscript{497} The Fianna Fáil leader was accompanied by Frank Aiken and he pledged to ‘protect farmers in their home market.’\textsuperscript{498} By contrast there was not a single report of a Cumann na nGaedheal meeting in the three issues of the \textit{Limerick Leader} prior to the election.\textsuperscript{499} With regard to The Farmers’ Party it is generally assumed that 1932 was a disastrous result. O’Halpin writes of the party having won ‘only three seats.’\textsuperscript{500} However an examination of the results show that The Farmers’ Party entered the election with just two TDs and emerged with three, an increase of fifty per cent.

\textsuperscript{497} \textit{Limerick Leader}, 8 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{498} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{499} \textit{Limerick Leader}, 8, 13, 15 February 1932.
\textsuperscript{500} O’Halpin, ‘Politics and The State, in, Hill, (ed), \textit{A New History of Ireland}, p.124.
Table 5.8 Votes cast in the Meath constituency, 16 February 1932.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>15,393</td>
<td>55.95</td>
<td>+18.77</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
<td>12,118</td>
<td>44.05</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallagher, *Irish Elections*, p. 139.

Cumann na nGaedheal had two outgoing TDs in Meath constituency; Edward Duggan and Arthur Matthews. They both contested their respective seats with Matthews losing his. With no Independent or Labour Party candidates, the election in the Meath constituency was a straightforward contest between the government party and Fianna Fáil. The main opposition party’s first preference votes were ahead of the government Party’s candidates with James Kelly’s surplus going to his running mate, Matthew O’Reilly and both were elected. See Table 5.8. Arthur Matthew’s poor first preference
vote and desultory transfers from Fianna Fáil ensured that Cumann na nGaedheal lost.

Edward Duggan had topped the poll for Cumann na nGaedheal since he first won the seat in 1922. Arthur Matthews was added to the ticket for the September 1927 general election and only succeeded in being elected because of Duggan’s transfers. In that campaign Matthews attended only one election rally, delivered a short speech and admitted to the voters that he was a ‘novice’. Five years later his performance had not improved. There were no reports of any speeches he delivered or meetings he attended. Duggan by contrast spoke at Kentstown on 13 February and gave another lengthy speech in Oldcastle. During the latter address to the voters he described the numbers of ‘unemployed people as trifling.’ And on the question of the land annuities he said that ‘A great many people had paid nearly thirty years and at the end of another thirty-eight years they would hold their land.’ While the tone of these remarks may have sounded patronising it seemed Duggan knew his audience. They were not offended by his dismissal of the unemployment problem nor his attitude to the payment of the land annuities. He was comfortably elected for the government party on the first count. Arthur Matthews, whose name was not even mentioned at Duggan’s Oldcastle meeting, received no transfers from his running mate and lost his seat. Poor electoral strategy with regard to vote transfer or perhaps rivalry between the established candidate and the newcomer may have sealed Matthew’s fate.

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503 *Meath Chronicle*, 10 September 1927.
504 Ibid, 13 February 1932.
505 Ibid.
Table 5.9 Votes cast in the Roscommon constituency, 16 February 1932.

| Electorate: | 48,403 |
| Valid Votes: | 35,358 |
| Turnout: | 73.05% |
| Quota: | 7,072 |
| Seats: | 4 |
| Candidates: | 7 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count 2</th>
<th>Count 3</th>
<th>Count 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grogan</td>
<td>Brennan</td>
<td>Conlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fianna Fáil**

* Boland, Gerald 6,189 +41 +256 +118
  6,230 6,486 6,604

* O’Dowd, Patrick 6,314 +39 +68 +100
  6,353 6,421 6,521

O’Rourke, Daniel 6,606 +117 +56 +42
  6,723 6,779 6,821

**Cumann na nGaedheal**

* Brennan, Michael 4,077 +740
  4,817

* Conlon, Martin 4,715 +1,401 +3,661
  6,116 9,777 -2,705

Grogan, Michael 2,897 -2,897

**Others**

Mac Dermot, Frank 4,560 +490 +617 +1,823
  5,050 5,667 7,490

*Non-Transferable* +490 69 +159 228 +622 850

Note: There is no information available on the fifth count. Mac Dermot was elected as were the two Fianna Fáil candidates Boland and O’Rourke with the third Fianna Fáil candidate, O’Dowd’s surplus distributed among the successful Fianna Fáil candidates.

**First preference summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>19,109</td>
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<td>+11.47</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
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<td>33.06</td>
<td>+1.92</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4,560</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>-13.39</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130
In January 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal held two seats in the Roscommon constituency. Martin Conlon, government party TD was joined by Michael Brennan, formerly of The Farmers’ Party who had joined Cumann na nGaedheal and defended his seat for the government party in 1932. Frank MacDermot stood as a candidate for the Farmers and Ratepayers Association, and benefitted largely from transfers from both the unsuccessful Brennan as well as receiving the surplus votes of Martin Conlon who retained his seat. Table 5.9 demonstrates that Fianna Fáil’s first preference votes were considerably higher than those of the government party and two of its candidates were elected, Boland and O’Rourke, with O’Dowd being eliminated. The Independent candidate, Frank MacDermot received almost 2,000 transfer votes from Cumann na nGaedheal’s candidates which secured his election. MacDermott’s main election pledge was, if elected he would not accept his TD’s salary. At a time when there was concern on the question of government spending this may have worked in his favour. There was another factor which may also have worked for him. The policies of the Farmers and Ratepayers Association whom MacDermot represented were in the words of the association’s Chairman D Hayden, ‘Identical’ with those of the Agricultural League. The latter organisation called for a moratorium on the payment of the land annuities. The two associations would later join forces to form the National Centre Party in 1933.

Another issue that caused concern for farmers in Roscommon was the British government’s trade tariffs. A headline in the *Roscommon Herald* on 6 February noted,

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506 *Connaught Tribune*, 6 February 1932.
508 Ibid, 9 January 1932.
509 *Anglo-Celt*, 6 February 1932.
‘British Tariffs, doubtful benefit to Free State.’ The new duties imposed by the British government to protect its own agricultural produce signalled the abandonment of free trade by England and Irish farmers may have believed their traditional market was being closed off. Commensurately they may have decided that the Free State government should reciprocate by protecting the Irish agricultural market. Fianna Fáil had already declared its wish to impose tariffs and the FRA following suit. The Roscommon Herald was not a Cumann na nGaedheal supporter. The final issue of the newspaper before the election carried a report of a government party election meeting where the candidate Michael Brennan was subjected to a ‘Hullabaloo and din of shouting’ so that ‘none of his statements could be heard.’ By contrast the Ratepayers’ candidate (not named but presumably MacDermot) had an ‘attentive audience.’

The same issue of the paper reported extensively on the inquest of James Vaugh. There also appeared a satirical poem pointedly attacking the government party. It contained such lines as, ‘In Cork County, voters are shaking their fist at them (Cumann na nGaedheal) while Dublin is ready to pay off old scores.’ In 1932 the circulation of the Roscommon Herald may have been as high as 45,000 a week. With such an impressive readership in the county and such anti-Cumann na nGaedheal sentiments expressed, it was perhaps optimistic of the government party to run three candidates in this constituency.

511 Roscommon Herald, 6 February 1932.
513 See Chapter Five, p. 120.
514 Roscommon Herald, 13 February 1932.
515 Source, Current editorial staff Roscommon Herald, ciara.mccaughey@roscommonherald.com [Accessed 15 March 2013].
### Table 5.10 Votes cast in the Tipperary constituency, 16 February 1932.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate:</th>
<th>80,805</th>
<th>Valid votes:</th>
<th>64,958</th>
<th>Turnout:</th>
<th>80.39</th>
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<td>Quota:</td>
<td>8,126</td>
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<td>Count 3</td>
<td>Count 4</td>
<td>Count 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seats:</td>
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<td>Breen</td>
<td>Stapleton</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>Henehan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Votes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Fianna Fáil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>+68</th>
<th>+197</th>
<th>+34</th>
<th>+51</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breen, Dan</td>
<td>8,817</td>
<td>-697</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Davin, James</td>
<td>4,308</td>
<td>+369</td>
<td>4,745</td>
<td>4,942</td>
<td>4,976</td>
<td>5,027</td>
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</table>

*Fogarty, Andrew* 4,787 +103 +35 +561 +60 +79

*Hayes, Sean* 4,611 +89 +100 +272 +204 +50

*Ryan, Martin* 4,806 +32 +28 +166 +14 +78

*Sheehy, Timothy* 5,332 +15 +65 +20 +4 +93

#### Cumann na nGaedheal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>+91</th>
<th>+151</th>
<th>+770</th>
<th>+1,398</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourke, Seamus</td>
<td>8,056</td>
<td>+19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+1,398</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hassett, John</td>
<td>4,196</td>
<td>+15</td>
<td>+29</td>
<td>+151</td>
<td>+770</td>
<td>+1,398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Heffernan, Michael* 4,043 +6 +32 +65 +1,160 +962

Henehan, Patrick 3,111 +2 +47 +55

McCurtain Sean 3,517 +9 +37 +85 +538

#### Labour Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
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<th>-2,219</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kennedy, Daniel</td>
<td>1,632</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stapleton, Richard</td>
<td>1,354</td>
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#### Others

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<th>+556</th>
<th>+399</th>
<th>+1,390</th>
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<tr>
<td>Morrissey, Daniel 6,388 +14 +263 +719 +7,590 8,980 -860</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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*Non-transferable* +0 0 +26 26 +91 117 +32 149 +85 234

133
## Fianna Fáil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count 7</th>
<th>Count 8</th>
<th>Count 9</th>
<th>Count 10</th>
<th>Count 11</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morrissey Surplus</td>
<td>Davin Votes</td>
<td>Ryan Votes</td>
<td>Fogarty Surplus</td>
<td>Sheehy Surplus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davin, James</td>
<td>+19</td>
<td>-5,046</td>
<td>-5,046</td>
<td>+1,081</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fogarty, Andrew</td>
<td>+23</td>
<td>+2,355</td>
<td>+1,081</td>
<td>+9,084</td>
<td>-964</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,046</td>
<td>8,003</td>
<td>7,680</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Hayes, Sean</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+1,902</td>
<td>+435</td>
<td>+8,413</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7,680</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+239</td>
<td>-5,432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sheehy, Timothy</td>
<td>+66</td>
<td>+146</td>
<td>+3,336</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,193</td>
<td>5,741</td>
<td>9,077</td>
<td></td>
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## Cumann na nGaedheal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count 7</th>
<th>Count 8</th>
<th>Count 9</th>
<th>Count 10</th>
<th>Count 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hassett, John</td>
<td>+373</td>
<td>+161</td>
<td>+193</td>
<td>+42</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heffernan Michael</td>
<td>+293</td>
<td>+52</td>
<td>+92</td>
<td>+22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7,093</td>
<td>7,286</td>
<td>7,328</td>
<td>7,483</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+191 425</td>
<td>+295 720</td>
<td>+167 887</td>
<td>+739 1,626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### First preference summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>32,661</td>
<td>50.28</td>
<td>+16.05</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
<td>22,923</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>-1.61</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour Party</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>4.60</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6,388</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>+9.83</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The large Tipperary constituency was divided into seven seats. Cumann na nGaedheal had won two in September 1927 and acquired a third, when former Farmers’ Party TD Michael Heffernan, joined the government party following his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs.\(^{516}\)

In addition to the sitting Cumann na nGaedheal TDs, the party added two more candidates to the ticket, Patrick Henehan and Sean McCurtain. Table 5.10 shows that Cumann na nGaedheal emerged from the contest with only two seats. Fianna Fáil fielded three newcomers alongside their three incumbents and the party won four

seats. The additional gain being made by the War of Independence IRA leader, Dan Breen. The Labour Party put forward two candidates and the final candidate was Independent Labour’s Daniel Morrissey. Table 5.10 illustrates that Morrissey’s surplus votes went mostly to Cumann na nGaedheal, enabling Hassett to be elected.

With the exception of Morrissey’s votes, Cumann na nGaedheal received few transfers outside their own party. Fianna Fáil, however, benefitted from transfers from Labour Party candidate Daniel Kennedy.

In an issue of the *Nenagh Guardian* a few days before the election, Morrissey received a eulogy from an anonymous columnist under the nom de plume *Fear Dubh* (The dark or shady man). Morrissey’s fame, the readers were told, was ‘Like a prairie fire.’ And ‘It spread from end to end of North Tipperary.’ 517 Two advertisements, one a quarter of a page in size informed the voters that Morrissey had, ‘stood against the rule of the gunman, the bully and the robber.’ 518 Various articles reporting an election meeting in support of Morrissey stated the candidate’s support for the Special Powers Act. He also stated a willingness to compromise on the land annuities question and he offered his support to the small farmers. 519 The fact that a supporter of the government party was prepared to break ranks on the issue of the annuities may have helped his election prospects in Tipperary and also demonstrated the unpopularity of the government party’s policy in continuing to pay the annuities. An indication of Morrissey’s popularity as an ‘Independent Labour’ candidate in the constituency can be ascertained by the fact that The Labour Party were compelled to use the title ‘Official Labour’ in its advertisements in the local newspaper. 520 Considering Morrissey’s pro-Treaty views and local popularity it is strange that Cumann na

518 Ibid.
519 Ibid.
520 Ibid.
nGaedheal made no attempt to recruit him to their party. Perhaps the issue of the land annuities may have been the stumbling block.

Table 5.10 shows the transfer relationship of Morrissey’s votes with the government party, and it is almost certain he gained votes that would have gone to Cumann na nGaedheal. Morrissey’s candidature in the Tipperary constituency was probably a factor in the party losing a seat.

---

Table 5.11. Votes cast in the National University constituency, 16 February 1932.

| Electorate: | 4,200 |
| Valid vote: | 3,154 |
| Turnout: | 75.10% |
| Quota: | 1,052 |
| Sears: | 3 |
| Contested seats: | 2 |

Candidates for

- **Fianna Fáil**
  - Maguire, Connor | 1,396 |

- **Cumann na nGaedheal**
  - *McGilligan, Patrick* | 1,332 |
  - *Tierney, Michael* | 426 |
  - *Hayes, Michael* Returned automatically as Outgoing Ceann Comhairle

**First preference summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
<th>Quotas</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change from Sept 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>1,396</td>
<td>44.26</td>
<td>+14.62</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumann na nGaedheal</td>
<td>1,758</td>
<td>55.74</td>
<td>-1462</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Compared with his first preference votes in the September 1927 general election, Fianna Fáil candidate Connor Maguire’s 1,396 votes in 1932 represented a one hundred per cent increase.\(^{521}\) The fact that he exceeded the votes of a government minister emphasised the advancements Fianna Fáil had made in this constituency since entering the Dáil in 1927. It is worth noting that even by 1932 de Valera had a long association with the National University Senate. He had attained his primary degree at UCD and had received honorary awards from the NUI while in the United States in 1919 and 1921.\(^{522}\) In 1921 he had been unanimously elected chancellor, a post he was to hold for the rest of his life. McCartney describes his attendance at the National University Senate meetings as ‘exemplary.’\(^{523}\) The performance of the Cumann na nGaedheal candidates were mixed. Apart from McGilligan, the votes for Professor Tierney were very poor. He won fewer votes than the Fianna Fáil candidate had in September 1927.\(^{524}\) One possible reason for this poor performance may have been a speech he delivered in Dublin on 10 February. The candidate spoke about the link between poverty and left-wing politics, ‘It was not from the poor that Communism would come … but from the well-to-do, who have too much money and not enough brains to know what to do with it.’\(^{525}\) This remark probably did not endear him to the middle class students whose votes he was attempting to win. In September 1927 Tierney had depended on, and received vital transfer votes from Patrick McGilligan.\(^{526}\) Table 5.11 shows that Tierney received no transfers from McGilligan and failed to get elected. Fianna Fáil’s impressive performance may have

\(^{521}\) Gallagher, Irish Elections, pp. 112, 143.

\(^{522}\) Donal McCartney, The National University of Ireland and Eamon de Valera (Dublin, 1983), pp. 17-8.

\(^{523}\) Ibid, p.32.

\(^{524}\) Gallagher, Irish Elections, p. 112.

\(^{525}\) See Chapter Four.

\(^{526}\) Gallagher, Irish Elections, p.112.
been due to the work of the party, but very possibly, it was the party leader’s influence in the university.

Conclusion
An examination of Cumann na nGaedheal’s performance in the 1932 election reveals a number of trends. The party did not suffer a huge loss of votes, only a 3.4% reduction compared to the percentage it had secured in the previous general election in September 1927.\textsuperscript{527} The increased turnout of voters in 1932 may even have benefitted the government party as their first preference votes in eight constituencies surpassed those of September 1927, Cork East; Kildare, Meath, Tipperary, Wexford, Wicklow and particularly Waterford where the party secured 16,132 first preference votes as opposed to 5,595 in 1927. Closer analysis shows that these constituencies correspond to counties where the main agricultural output was cattle and pigs, largely for export to Britain.\textsuperscript{528} In securing an increased percentage of votes in those constituencies the government party’s anti-tariff, pro-British policies were rewarded by its core supporters, the large farmers and agricultural exporters. However Cumann na nGaedheal’s support was not confined to rural areas. In 1932 the number of first preference votes won by the party was higher in urban Dublin than the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{529}

Cumann na nGaedheal lost ten seats and an examination of the results reveal a strategy that depended on fielding a full ticket such as in Dublin North where Cumann na nGaedheal put forward six candidates for eight seats as opposed to Fianna Fáil’s five. Another example of this strategy was in Cork East where the party fought for

\textsuperscript{528} D.A. Gilmore, Map 3, Map 5 ‘Land and People, c. 1926.’ \textit{A New History of Ireland Vol VII}, pp. 81-2.
\textsuperscript{529} Sinnott, \textit{Irish Voters Decide}, Appendix 2, p.300.
five seats with four candidates. Another significant trend can be found in the transfer of votes primarily from the Independent candidates to government party candidates and vice versa. In Cork East for example where the first preferences of Cumann na nGaedheal exceeded those of Fianna Fáil, the government party nonetheless lost a seat to the Independent candidate Brooke Brasier who received huge numbers of transfers from Cumann na nGaedheal candidates. Brasier had been a member of The Farmers’ Party and was a supporter of the government and had spoken on government party platforms in the previous election. In the Kerry constituency Farmers’ Party candidate Patrick Trant received transfers from Cumann na nGaedheal candidate John Moore and in the Roscommon constituency future Fine Gael founder, Frank MacDermott secured enough transfers from government party candidates to win his seat. In the Tipperary constituency Independent Labour candidate Daniel Morrissey received a large number of transfers from the government party to ensure his election. These candidates almost certainly took votes from Cumann na nGaedheal and as they were supporters of the government party it is curious that they were not courted by the party prior to the election. To allow a significant number of popular pro-Treaty independent candidates to run against Cumann na nGaedheal in such an important election would not have been tolerated by de Valera. Perhaps the government party’s stance on land annuities and tariffs, two issues that were of particular importance in the rural constituencies, may have alienated the Independents from Cumann na nGaedheal. With regard to the land annuities it is worth noting that in Cork East The Farmers’ Party candidate who

supported the government policy, Patrick Trant, failed to win a seat. A poor voting strategy when it came to forming alliances with pro-Treaty candidates and benefitting from their transferred votes along with an equally poor inter-party voting transfer system may have cost Cumann na nGaeidheal seats in the election. Examples of the latter were the lack of co-operation with regard to transfers from Patrick McGilligan to Professor Tierney in the NUI constituency and from Edward Duggan to Arthur Matthews in Meath. With respect to the latter, Matthews received seventy nine transfer votes from the Fianna Fáil candidate James Kelly but none from his Cumann na nGaeidheal running mate.536 Duggan’s speech in Oldcastle, County Meath where he dismissed the unemployment problem and patronised the farmers who faced a life time of land annuity payments,537 demonstrated what section of society Cumann na nGaeidheal were addressing. Duggan’s insulting views obviously endeared him to his supporters as he was elected on the first count with almost 2,000 votes to spare.538

537 See Chapter Five.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

‘Was defeat inevitable for Cumann na nGaedheal in 1932?’ As mentioned at the outset of this thesis a number of research questions were chosen to help in the analysis of the policies on which the government party fought the election. They may also prove useful in attempting to answer the central question. Keogh’s statement that the timing of the 1932 general election had ‘considerable bearing on its outcome’\textsuperscript{539} is difficult to support. That there was some debate within Cumann na nGaedheal on exactly when an election should be called is not in dispute. The most egregious evidence of that was Patrick McGilligan’s letter to his secretary Joe Walshe on 18 September. McGilligan’s suggestion that resurgent IRA activity and the grim economic situation made an early election an imperative.\textsuperscript{540} However the party minute books show that any possibility of an early election was firmly ruled out by the leadership in November 1931.\textsuperscript{541} Research for this thesis shows that Cosgrave was waiting for a meeting to take place between representatives of the Free State government and the President of the British Board of Trade, Walter Runciman, in early 1932.\textsuperscript{542} A favourable outcome to this meeting would have given Cosgrave the encouragement to go to the country in early January 1932. As it happened no such hope was realised and the Dáil was dissolved at the end of January. The government’s economic policy based almost entirely on agricultural exports to Britain, while vital to

\textsuperscript{540} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{541} See Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{542} Ibid.
a section of Irish society, was inadequate to deal with the economic crisis gripping the world at the time. It is significant that Cumann na nGaedheal won its last by-election in June 1929, before the Wall Street Crash.\textsuperscript{543} Once the effects of the world-wide economic depression began to be felt in Ireland, Cumann na nGaedheal’s days were numbered. It mattered little whether the election was held in 1931 or at any time in 1932, the possibility of a Cumann na nGaedheal victory was slim.

When speaking about the relationship between Ireland and Britain Cosgrave had stated, ‘the Treaty and the Treaty alone is the basis of relations between the two countries.’\textsuperscript{544} To the government the Treaty was the birth certificate of the Free State and Cumann na nGaedheal, the nation’s mid-wife. The party and the state were practically born as twins, though Cumann na nGaedheal was founded in April 1923, over a year after the Treaty was endorsed by the Dáil, it seemed the party based its authority (and perhaps its existence) on the settlement between Britain and Ireland. Not surprisingly Fianna Fáil’s policy to abolish the Oath was met with abhorrence. This action, the party leader assured voters, would ‘tear up the Treaty.’\textsuperscript{545} Cumann na nGaedheal hoped that its supporters would be as appalled as they were with the prospect of removing the Oath. It appeared that during the election campaign the party felt that simply announcing Fianna Fáil’s intention would be enough to garner support for the government and generate outrage against the main opposition party. Increasingly however during the election campaign, Cumann na nGaedheal speakers found themselves defending the Oath. It would seem that the voters did not feel the same attachment to the settlement as their government. It may be useful to speculate that for many voters, both the Oath and the Treaty had served their purpose by 1932 and a majority of the electorate may have felt either ambivalence or even hostility to

\textsuperscript{543} See Chapter Five.
\textsuperscript{544} Fighting Points, pp. 67-70.
\textsuperscript{545} See Chapter Two.
this visible link with Imperial Britain. Perhaps the government party picked this up from the voters during the election campaign. Nowhere in Cumann na nGaedheal election speeches was the Statute of Westminster or any of the government’s other foreign policy achievements mentioned. It would appear that Irish voters, ten years after independence, wanted as little dealings as possible with their former ruler.

This question of the land annuities featured prominently in the election literature of the two main parties. Cumann na nGaedheal portrayed the payments in terms of a settlement between Ireland and Britain underpinned by a legal framework. However this was an argument that had to be communicated again and again to the voters. Fianna Fáil on the other hand offered the electorate an alternative. De Valera stated that in government, Fianna Fáil would retain the payments and use the money to fund projects such as the Shannon Hydro-electric Scheme. As with the question of the Oath, Fianna Fáil clearly stated its position on the land annuities at the beginning of the campaign and rarely found it necessary to defend it. Analysis of the results in Chapter Five showed that the government party lost seats in five constituencies, Donegal, Kerry, Limerick, Roscommon and Tipperary directly as a result of its support for the payments. The issue of the land annuities along with trade tariffs may have been the deciding factor for many voters in farming communities in 1932.

In a speech in Mayo on 5 February the leader of The Labour Party T. J. O’Connell claimed that as many as 80,000 people were out of work in 1932. The government surprisingly had little interest in this problem. The opposition party’s candidates spoke on the issue of unemployment on many occasions during the

546 Cumann na nGaedheal, Fighting Points, pp.18-25.
547 The Irish Times, 11 January 1932.
548 See Chapter Five.
549 Connaught Telegraph, 6 February 1932.
campaign. However beyond its policy of self sufficiency, Fianna Fáil did not offer any direct solution to the problem, though it is worth noting that the party did address the question while Cumann na nGaedheal appeared to regard it as unsolvable. For an answer to this insouciance the composition of the government party supporters provides an answer. It is unlikely that many of Cumann na nGaedheal’s middle-class, mercantile, professional voters were unemployed in 1932. The party adhered closely to the issues that exercised their core supporters and ignored those that did not.

In the opening speech of the campaign in Dublin, Cosgrave saw the reasons for the economic crisis as one caused by a fall in exports to Britain and the downward trajectory of the national income. He then went on to warn against any threats to relations with Britain. Given Cumann na nGaedheal’s loyalty to its large farmer, agricultural exporter supporter base may explain the rationale behind the government party’s economic policies and its determination to cling to the free market economic model even after Britain had abandoned its position. The message that economic salvation would come only from the maintenance of good trading relations with Britain was echoed many times by Cumann na nGaedheal candidates during the election campaign. Lee’s assertion that Cumann na nGaedheal tried to evade the issue of the economic situation during the election may not be entirely true. The party did have an economic plan. The problem was its narrow focus. Cumann na nGaedheal’s recovery plan was based entirely on rebuilding Ireland’s export market. This policy blinded it to any alternative economic position and the government party was either unable or unwilling to offer anything to voters not involved in cattle farming or exporting. This ‘blind spot’ effectively ended the party’s long run in

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550 See Chapter Four.
551 Irish Independent, 30 January 1932.
552 Ibid.
553 See Chapter Four.
government. Fianna Fáil offered the voters an opportunity to contribute directly to the Irish economy. This contribution would only be possible if the Free State was protected by tariffs and Ireland’s farmers and manufacturers had a captive market for their goods. Dunphy’s description of the typical Fianna Fáil supporter of the period, the uniquely ‘Irish bourgeoisie’ made up of ‘artisans, shop keepers and small farmers.’ They were not typically made up of big farmers and cattle exporters. It could be argued that on the question of economic policies both the government party and Fianna Fáil represented the concerns of their two very different constituencies. It would appeared however that in 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal’s constituency was shrinking while that of Fianna Fáil was growing.

The election strategy known as the ‘red scare’ employed by Cumann na nGaedheal during the 1932 election is generally accepted as having been a mistake. The purpose of this tactic was to alert the electorate to the fact that Fianna Fáil had links to both the IRA and to communism. The resurgent IRA activity in 1931 had served to focus the attention of the government on the militant republicanism and prompted the passing of the Special Powers Act. The acts of violence and any direct threat to the authority of the state had completely died out by early 1932 rendering Cumann na nGaedheal claims of civil war and chaos a little hollow.

The attempts to smear the main opposition party with the label of communism may have had its origins in a claim (never refuted) that de Valera attended the inaugural meeting of the anti-land annuity campaign in 1926. The campaign was launched by Peader O’Donnell, an IRA member and founder of the left wing organisation Saor Eire. Apart from Fianna Fáil’s support for the withholding of the annuity payments there was no evidence to link the party with communism. However

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556 See Chapter Two.
Cumann na nGaedheal’s attacks may not have completely fallen on deaf ears. In a speech by Seán Lemass in Offaly on 15 February the Fianna Fáil director of elections stated that his party would offer a ‘constructive alternative to communism.’ Perhaps Cumann na nGaedheal’s campaign had made sufficient headway with the voters to cause such a statement to be made. Or perhaps it was simply a case that Fianna Fáil had become more adept at countering the ‘communist smear’ campaign by then.

However the point may be borne in mind that the government party knew the minds of its supporters. The Civil War had ended less than a decade earlier and fears of a republican victory may have occupied their thoughts as they prepared to cast their ballots.

The support of the three main daily newspapers, two of them national, The Irish Times, the Irish Independent and the Cork Examiner, did not translate into votes for Cumann na nGaedheal. These were the favoured daily papers of the business classes and reflected the point of view of their readers and of the government party. But they did not reflect the views of the small farmers and labourers who were suffering the exigencies of the economic crisis. The editorial comment and reporting of the de Valera controlled The Irish Press countered the pro-Cumann na nGaedheal editorial direction of the newspapers mentioned above and this may have been an important feature in the election campaign for readers who were unable to attend the election meetings but wished to follow the speeches of the candidates. The papers displayed an undoubtedly biased view reflecting their differing political stance but the fact that The Irish Press was ‘outnumbered’ by three well established newspapers with a readership of more than twice its own did not seem to harm Fianna Fáil’s electoral performance. The provincial newspapers appeared to have been fairly evenly

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557 The Irish Times, 15 February 1932.
558 See Chapter Four.
split between those who favoured Cumann na nGaedheal or those that supported Fianna Fáil. The 1932 general election was very well covered by the newspapers regardless of their political views but their overall influence did not appear to have been decisive.

The Labour Party’s election policies centred on protecting the poor and attempting to ameliorate the unemployment problem. On the issues of the land annuities and tariffs the party’s policies appeared identical to those of Cumann na nGaedheal and therefore on those issues, Labour offered the voters no alternative to the government party. The Farmers’ Party policies were not surprisingly rural based and on the land annuities and tariffs the three Farmers’ TDs were split, with O’Donovan and Vaughan supporting the government line and O’Shaughnessy favouring Fianna Fáil’s approach. In any case both the Labour Party and The Farmers’ Party and the other smaller groups and Independents were not a significant force in 1932 and for a majority of voters the contest came down to a choice between Fianna Fáil and Cumann na nGaedheal.

Given the party’s tradition of support for the Anglo-Irish Treaty and its big farmer, agricultural support base it is difficult to see how Cumann na nGaedheal could have abandoned the unpopular policies that probably lost it the election. Trade tariffs were an essential component for free trade and the payment of the land annuities were vital to good relations with Britain. The public may have grown tired of the ‘Civil War’ party who defended a Treaty with perhaps a little too much enthusiasm and who promised security even when there was no war or the slightest threat of one. The party’s lack of interest in the unemployment problem and emigration may well have lost it support and certainly did not win it any. However Cumann na nGaedheals’ loyalty to its support base was rewarded as indicated by a decline of just 3.4 per cent
from the previous general election.\textsuperscript{559} It is not true to say that in 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal had nothing to offer the voters. The problem was that what it had to offer was almost entirely directed toward a section of Irish society who were not numerically large enough to ensure the party victory. Given these circumstances Cumann na nGaedheal therefore could not have done anything to retain power in 1932 and defeat was inevitable.

\textsuperscript{559} Gallagher, \textit{Irish Elections}, pp. 115-47.
Appendices
Appendix I

Map of Dáil constituencies of Ireland 1923-37
Appendix II

Dáil Constituencies of Ireland 1923-37

1. Donegal - 8 seats
2. Leitrim-Sligo - 7 seats
3. Cavan - 4 seats
4. Monaghan - 3 seats
5. Louth - 3 seats
6. Meath - 3 seats
7. Longford-Westmeath - 5 seats
8. Roscommon - 4 seats
9. Mayo North - 4 seats
10. Mayo South - 5 seats
11. Galway - 9 seats
12. Leix-Offaly - 5 seats
13. Kildare - 3 seats
14. Dublin County - 8 seats
15. Dublin North - 8 seats
16. Dublin South - 7 seats
17. National University of Ireland - 3 seats
18. Dublin University - 3 seats
19. Wicklow - 3 seats
20. Carlow-Kilkenny - 5 seats
21. Tipperary - 7 seats
22. Clare - 5 seats
23. Limerick - 7 seats
24. Kerry - 7 seats
25. Cork West - 5 seats
26. Cork North - 3 seats
27. Cork Borough - 5 seats
28. Cork East - 5 seats
29. Waterford - 4 seats
30. Wexford - 5 seats

Appendix II

Title page of *Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers*
Appendix III Title page of *Fighting Points for Cumann na nGaedheal Speakers and Workers*.
Appendix III

Newspaper election advertisements
Appendix IIV

Cumann na nGaedheal front page newspaper election advertisement.

*Irish Independent*

**HOW WILL YOU VOTE TOME MORROW?**

- THE GUNMEN ARE VOTING FOR FIANNÁ FAÍL.
- THE COMMUNISTS ARE VOTING FOR FIANNÁ FAÍL.

**IRISHMEN**

who want Peace and Prosperity
At Home and Peace, Friendship
and Increased Markets Abroad, will

**VOTE FOR THE**

**GOVERNMENT PARTY**

The Done are Hoping that you will
Vote for Fianna Fáil.
They Want a Free Hand in the
British Market.
They Would Like to See Ireland Losing
Her Ten Per Cent. Preference.

Irish Independent, 15 February 1937
Appendix ///

Fianna Fáil newspaper election advertisement.

THE IRISH PRESS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1937

FIANNA FÁIL HAS
A PLAN • • •

The plan is to employ Irishmen in Ireland, to grow our food, to make our clothes and our implements, to provide the materials for our houses, instead of getting that work done for us by foreigners in other countries.

To develop our country's neglected resources so as to enable it to support a larger population at a higher standard of life.

To give preference to Irish workers, protection to Irish agriculture and Irish industries.

That's our plan

Shall it operate on this island?

The decision rests entirely with you!

Whether you are farmer, worker, shopkeeper, or manufacturer you cannot afford to be indifferent about it. Your own prospects of better conditions in the future, your children's chances of being able to obtain a livelihood in their own country, the welfare of your friends, relatives and neighbors are all involved. You must make a choice one way or the other.

For all—it means less taxation, lower rates, better times . . . IT MEANS SECURITY

"Speed The Wheels!"

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Appendix IV

Examples of election posters
Appendix V  Election Posters.

‘His Master’s Voice’
Appendix V  Election Posters.

Ernest Blythe.

Source, National Library of Ireland, Ephemera Collection, Election posters, EPH/FS8
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