

TONGUES OF ERIN WAG IN ROW OVER TWO LANGUAGES

English or Gaelic, Big
Irish Problem.

(This is the sixth of a series of articles on the Irish Free State by James O'Donnell Bennett, who recently returned from a visit of several weeks in the new Ireland.)

BY JAMES O'DONNELL BENNETT.

[Chicago Tribune Press Service.]
DUBLIN, Oct. 12.—Are the Irish of the new Ireland to become a bi-lingual people? Is a language of which the origin is so remote that it cannot be definitely traced and which for nearly a century has been a genuine vernacular only on the countryside to be put back into the accepted coinage of mankind's spoken tongues?

These are questions which are both vexing and inspiring a large number of Irishmen. They have created a national problem and are giving Irish zealots a warrant for what they must love—an argument.

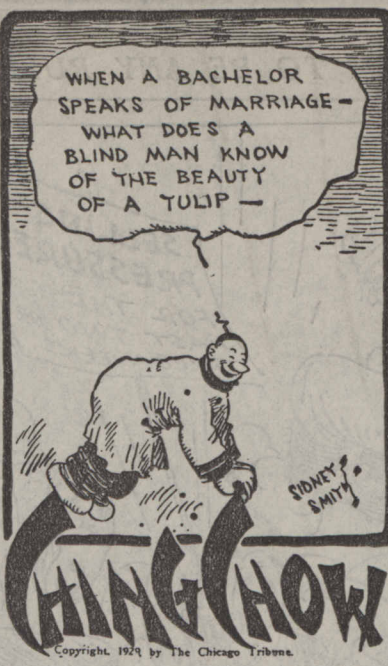
The Irish business man, with whom one falls into conversation in the railway train and who wishes to transact business with the outside world in the most expeditious way, is contemptuous of this language propaganda.

Waste of Money.
"Wasting thousands of pounds a year," he says, "on the compulsory teaching of an ancient and difficult language when the Irish have acquired a language which keeps them in touch with the most extensive buyers in the world—Britain, the United States, and the whole British commonwealth of nations! O, it's monstrous!"

"We must denationalize Germany," said Napoleon lightly in one of his letters. The enthusiasts for the Gaelic revival declare that, within the memory of men still living, the Irish people stood in deadly peril of denationalization, and they point to the ornate monuments to George II., Lord Nelson, Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, which still occupy the most impressive sites in Dublin, as proofs of the Anglicizing process to which the Irish mind was long subjected.

"The Scots and the Welsh," they say, "are now what we never have been and never will be. They are contented provincials."

The slogan of these enthusiasts is



"We must stabilize our nationality," De Valera insists that without a living native language no high degree of national consciousness can be maintained and his warning is "No language, no nation!"

De Valera Urges Gaelic Revival.
Irishmen, who are far from being partisans of De Valera, concede that from the nationalistic point of view his usefulness as leader of the opposition lies in the fact by his vehemence he is always forcing the party in power to widen the political separation between Ireland and England.

An effective Gaelic revival will, naturally, keep the Irish political consciousness stalwart, as the English well have understood since the time of Henry II., seven and a half centuries ago, when their first effort to stamp out the Irish language was made.

Desmond Fitzgerald, minister for defense, tells me that it is not true that the Gaelic is or ever has been practically a dead language in Ireland.

"Two-thirds of the population of Ireland," said he, "spoke the Gaelic as lately as the 1840s. The great collapse of the Gaelic came after the famine and the consequent enormous emigration. About the same time the strict regulations of the national schools established by British enactments of the 1830's were producing a devastating effect. A wooden tally was tied around a school child's neck, and every time the child spoke Gaelic the tally was notched and the culprit was punished. But in the face of such discouragements the language survived, and its survival is the justification for its complete restoration. Nationalism is the parent of civic virtue and the Irish language enriches the Irishman's sense of nationalism."

Presbyterian Gaelic Champion.
The most zealous Gaelic propagand-

ist in the intensely Roman Catholic Irish Free State is, curiously enough, not a Roman Catholic but a Presbyterian. He is Ernest Blythe, minister for finance, who is also vice president of the executive council and hence President Cosgrave's successor in case of his death or resignation. In his youth Mr. Blythe was so ardent a Gaelic enthusiast that he worked as a farm hand for many months amid the hills of Kerry that he might learn the Gaelic where it is truly a living language.

He has never lost his love for it. His belief in it as an essential factor in the perfecting of Irish autonomy is profound.

"We must continue this work," he said a few days ago at a Gaelic festival of singing and dancing in the civic guard barracks on the edge of Phoenix park, "so that in time if anybody meets one who does not know Irish he will regard such a person as a poor, ignorant being." There were cheers for that.

"A great change," he continued, "has taken place in the position of the Irish language in the last ten years, though I am not saying that it is out of danger yet. The work is so hard

that it is not possible for anybody to do it except a government, and a government itself cannot do it without the support of the people in general."

The Free State government is doing what Mr. Blythe says a government alone can do. It is forcing the learning of Gaelic. Gaelic, as indeed is English, is compulsory in the public schools. No man or woman can enter the civil service without knowledge of Gaelic, and there are certain new regulations the effect of which will be that in about ten years no person who is now under fifteen years will be allowed to practice law in the Free State unless he has passed a qualifying examination in the language.

That the movement is being forced, and rather grotesquely forced, is obvious. Signs giving the names of streets are printed both in Gaelic and English, but the equally essential information, "Dangerous curve," is in English only.

Translate Gaelic for Natives.
At the very festival where Mr. Blythe fulminated, all the many advertisements in the bulky program were in English. At the national library in Dublin the placarded Gaelic

word "Cúineas" is followed by "Silence," "Amach" by "Way Out," "Ná caittear tobac annso" by "Smoking is strictly forbidden," and "Leabhair Nua" by "New Books." The native language, in short, has to be translated for the native at this stage of the revival.

Most of the speaking in the Dail is in English, and a minister who makes a statement in Gaelic repeats it in English. But the business man forgets that the movement which gave birth to the Free State had its roots in the Gaelic revival begun by Douglas Hyde and his Gaelic league nearly 40 years ago. The league was nonpolitical, but, because it taught the people that English rule had almost extinguished the Irish language, its effect was to make the many enthusiasts it created pine for separation from England. Thus the Free State is largely the result of a slowly developed and carefully thought out movement with a philosophic basis resting on the Irish language. For a century other efforts to attain independence had not been movements but "risings"—volcanic and futile.

Rugby vs. Gaelic Football.
Like all enthusiasts, these Gaelic re-

vivalists are often wearing and sometimes ludicrous. They force the note and they meddle. The Gaelic Athletic association threatens with suspension those of its members who countenance foreign dances or play Rugby football instead of Gaelic football. The zealots are insistent that place names which though not strictly Irish in their origin have been made illustrious by a thousand years of history shall be changed.

But together with some extravagance, much judicious cultural work is being done. The Gaelic league has established county libraries and village dramatic and musical clubs. In 300 barracks of the civic guard, or national police, there is instruction in Gaelic two or three times a week. The Free State department of education has offered a prize of \$750 for the best novel in the Irish language submitted to it within the next twelve months. The daily newspapers, all of which are printed in English, give the movement some support by printing brief editorials and special articles in Gaelic, and a sprightly edited Dublin daily, the Irish Independent, is publishing Plato's "Apology of Socrates" serially in Gaelic.

ENGINEERS FOR 1933 WORLD FAIR CONSIDER PLANS

(Picture on back page.)

The specialized technical problems entailed in the construction of the buildings and layout of the 1933 Century of Progress exposition were given preliminary consideration yesterday at the first meeting of the World's Fair committee of the Western Society of Engineers. They conferred with Hubert Burnham and Harry T. Frost, World's Fair consulting architects, and officials of the Century of Progress organization.

Among the specialized problems to be solved in erecting temporary structures on the filled-in islands east of the Field museum are the resistance to waves and back pressure of the sand fill and proper anchorage; foundations for columns on sandy soil; floor construction and the development of long span supports, and the building of roads on the loose sand soil which must bear a highly concentrated bus and pleasure motor traffic.

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