

THE SINN FÉIN POLICY.



By Arthur Griffith.

Delivered at the First Annual Convention of the National Council,
held at the Rotunda, November 28, 1905.

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**‘THE ACT OF UNION IS A NULLITY
WHICH NO MAN IN IRELAND IS
BOUND TO OBEY.’ – Lord Chancellor
Plunket.**

At the First Annual Convention of the National Council held in the Rotunda, on Tuesday, November 28th, 1905, under the Presidency of Mr. Edward Martyn. Mr. Arthur Griffith proposed as the policy of the National Council:

‘National self-development through the recognition of the duties and rights of citizenship on the part of the individual, and by the aid and support of all movements originating from within Ireland, instinct with national tradition, and not looking outside Ireland for the accomplishment of their aims.’

The Irish people are a free people, and must continue to possess the rights of a free people until, of our own free will, we renounce them. Any external power that attempts to control, or does by force control their free action, is a tyranny, and it is the first duty of the citizen to oppose and seek to end that tyranny.

In Ireland this tyranny styles itself ‘the Government,’ and to prevent its real character from being apprehended by the people, it has caused an educational system to be modelled and forced upon the people designed to make them oblivious of their rights as men and their duties as citizens. All departments of education in Ireland – primary, secondary, and university – are directly controlled by the British Government. The language of Ireland, the rights of Ireland, therefore find no place in its curricula. The only primary school system in Ireland which recognises Ireland is that of the Irish Christian Brothers, which affects, however, but a comparatively small portion of the population.

The primary school system controlled by Government nominees is as a system intended to perpetuate that ignorance which the British Penal Laws once made legally compulsory. The pupil is not taught as he is in every system elsewhere, to look out upon the world from his own country. It teaches him he has no country, and therefore no national standard of comparison and value. He is forced to accept instead the standard of England.

The secondary system of education in Ireland, controlled by a Board of British nominees, is designed to prevent the higher intelligence of the country performing its duty to the Irish State. In

other countries secondary education gives to each its leaders in industry and commerce, its great middle class which as society is constituted forms the equalising and harmonising element in the population. In Ireland secondary education causes aversion and contempt for industry and “trade” in the heads of young Irishmen, and fixes their eyes like the fool’s, on the ends of the earth. The secondary system in Ireland draws away from industrial pursuits those who are best fitted for them, and sends them to be civil servants in England, or to swell the ranks of struggling clerkdom in Ireland.

The object of secondary education is to fit persons of average ability for those pursuits for which they have aptitude. That is its object elsewhere than in Ireland, where one British Government Department excuses itself at the cost of another – where the Department of Agriculture defends its importation of foreigners to discharge the work which in other countries is discharged by the products of secondary education, on the ground that secondary education in Ireland produces no men or women capable of doing what its importations are asked to do.

University education in Ireland is regarded by the classes in Ireland as a means of washing away the original sin of Irish birth. It is founded on the inversion of Aristotle, as indeed the three systems of education in Ireland are. The young men who go to Trinity College are told by Aristotle that the end of education is to make men patriots; and by the professors of Trinity not to take Aristotle literally. Education in Ireland encumbers the intellect, chills the fancy, debases the soul, and enervates the body. It cuts off the Irishman from his tradition, and by denying him a country debases his soul, it stores his mind with lumber and nonsense, it destroys his fancy by depriving him of tradition, and enervates his body by denying him physical culture. Sir, this is the education which, as Aristotle says, ruins the individual and eventually the nation. If he lived in our times and our country, Aristotle would be a seditious person in the eyes of the British Government in Ireland, which makes him useful to it now by standing him on his head.

The funds provided out of the pockets of the Irish people for education in Ireland are invested to the children's moral and national destruction. Out of the primary schools come the recruits for the British armed forces. Turn to the advertising columns of the Dublin daily papers of a week ago and you will find this Government Board, which controls our primary schools, brazenly offering out of that Irish education money bribes to the boys of our primary schools to join the British navy. As the outcome of our secondary system of education, the men who should be captains of the nation's battalions are rendered unfit for service. As the outcome of our University system we have bigotry and distrust.

How are we to remedy these things? As to primary education, a friend of mine in London has made suggestions which I believe are practicable. If the control of primary education is not voluntarily transferred from the British Government in Ireland to the Irish people, let the Irish people take over the primary education system themselves. They can do this in the first place by transferring, where possible, the pupils of the 'National' schools into the schools of the Irish Christian Brothers, and where this is not possible, by founding voluntary schools, sustained in part by the contributions of the parents and part from a National Education Fund subscribed to annually by the Irish people throughout the world. Is this considered impossible? Hungary did it forty years ago – Poland did it but yesterday, and the one overthrew Austria, as the other is overthrowing Russian autocracy.

But our motto in this is *festina lente*. We cannot afford to withdraw in a mass the school-going children of Ireland from the National Schools. If we did so at present, we have no sufficient resources at hand to cope with the educational crisis that would be created. A period of educating public opinion on the vital importance of the matter, and of preparation for coping with the demand for a really national system of education, will place us in the position we require; and at the end of that period, if control of the primary education system be withheld, then we may, as the Nationalists of

Poland did within recent days, order a school strike, and replace the present system by one which shall teach the Irish child to glory in his country and desire to serve her.

As to the Irishising of the secondary system, I look with confidence for a beginning to the Irish Christian Brothers to throw over the Intermediate Board and substitute it by a system devised by themselves in conjunction with representatives of the Gaelic League and Irish educationists who are also Irishmen. Pioneers in primary education the Irish Christian Brothers were – let them gain again a noble distinction by pioneering a secondary system of education such as Ireland needs. We can promise them that the Irish nation which is coming into existence will see that they do not suffer as a consequence of cutting themselves clear from the Intermediate.

Two solutions of the University question are possible – one is the nationalising of Trinity College – the other the erection of a University of our own. By a National University I understand a Democratic one, a University to whose hall wealth is not the only passport. If we decided on founding a University of our own as the Hungarians did, we must do as the Hungarians did – largely support it out of endowments made by our sympathisers. I believe sufficiently in the patriotism of Irishmen abroad to believe that they would endow such a University. I believe within Ireland we could secure endowments from Irishmen or groups of Irishmen, and Father Coakley's scheme of scholarships provided by the County Councils—which I understand Sir Thomas Esmonde has elaborated and will bring before the General Council—would be of material assistance to such a University. The Irish people contributed annually and liberally to sustain a University when that University was not democratic. They will not contribute the less liberally to a University which will be open to the poor as well as to the rich.

To substitute the de-nationalising system of education in this country by a nationalising system rests with ourselves, not with the British Legislature. If it is worth having, it is worth making sacrifices to obtain, and if the same spirit which prevails in Hungary, Finland,

and Poland—the spirit of self-reliance—be evoked in Ireland, it must be obtained. Next in importance to the education question in this country is the question of our industries and the greatest of these is agriculture; but agriculture in Ireland is resolving itself into the cattle trade.

The tilled land of Ireland has decreased by one-fourth during the last generation. Over a million acres which were crop-bearing in 1871 are now grazing ground, and the cattle trade which has absorbed this is now threatened with destruction by the competition of Argentina and Canada. In this extremity we find County Councils devoting some of their funds for the encouragement of cattle-raising, and the Royal Dublin Society allocating funds to the same purpose. We can understand the Royal Dublin Society—it was an institution which after the extinction of the Irish Parliament was seized by the British Government, and has since been one of the agencies through which that Government works out its will in this country. Since through Lord Carlisle the British Government issued its order to discourage tillage-farming in Ireland, the Royal Dublin Society has done yeoman service in helping to sweep the people from the soil. The perverted education system may account for the action of the County Councils. If the soil of Ireland is again to be brought into cultivation—and it is vital this should be done—it is necessary that the County Councils, which now by premiums encourage grazing, should withdraw these premiums and allot them to tillage.

A necessary organisation is an agricultural and manufacturing union—a union of manufacturers and farmers, classes who at the present time, through an extraordinary delusion, are unfriendly to each other, and fail to realise their interdependence. The farmer is indifferent about the industrial revival, failing to realise the increased market an Ireland with a manufacturing arm means to the agriculturist: the manufacturer is indifferent to the agricultural interest, failing to realise that the extension of agriculture—the extension of tillage—means the extension of the market for his products. It is one of the worst anomalies in this country that our

manufacturing population should be largely subsisting on foreign food. There is no reason whatever for such a state of things. It is due to the ignorance of elementary economics.

I am glad to see that the Industrial Conference in Cork declared with practical unanimity against the British-made economic policy which has been thrust upon this country to its commercial injury. The Anglicisation of the Irish mind is best exhibited in its attitude towards economics. The system of economics which Adam Smith and his successors invented for the purpose of obtaining control of the world's market for England, is taught in our educational system and believed by the people to be the quintessence of wisdom. It does not matter that all Europe has rejected it. England still holds on, and because England holds on, Ireland, under the British system of education, perforce concludes the 'as-good-and-as-cheap' shibboleth must be a gospel. Well, with the remainder of English impositions and humbugs we must bundle it out of the country.

I am in economics largely a follower of the man who thwarted England's dream of the commercial conquest of the world, and who made the mighty confederation before which England has fallen commercially and is falling politically—Germany. His name is a famous one in the outside world, his works are the text-books of economic science in other countries—in Ireland his name is unknown and his works unheard of—I refer to Friedrich List, the real founder of the German Zollverein—the man whom England caused to be persecuted by the Government of his native country, and whom she hated and feared more than any man since Napoleon—the man who saved Germany from falling a prey to English economics, and whose brain conceived the great industrial and united Germany of to-day. Germany has hailed Friedrich List by the title of Preserver of the Fatherland, Louis Kossuth hailed him as the economic teacher of the nations. There is no room for him in the present educational system of Ireland.

With List—whose work on the National System of Political Economy I would wish to see in the hands of every Irishman—I reject

that so-called political economy which neither recognises the principle of nationality nor takes into consideration the satisfaction of its interests, which regards chiefly the mere exchangeable value of things without taking into consideration the mental and political, the present and the future interest and the productive powers of the nation, which ignores the nature and character of social labour and the operation of the union of powers in their higher consequences, considers private industry only as it would develop itself under a state of free interchange with the whole human race were it not divided into separate nations. Let me continue in the words of this great man to define the nation. Brushing aside the fallacies of Adam Smith and his tribe, List points out that:

‘Between the individual and humanity stands, and must continue to stand, a great fact—the Nation.’

The Nation, with its special language, and literature, with its peculiar origin and history, with its special manners and customs, laws and institutions, with the claims of all these for existence, independence, perfection, and continuance for the future, and with its separate territory, a society which, united by a thousand ties of minds and interests, combines itself into one independent whole, which recognises the law of right for and within itself, and in its united character is still opposed to other societies of a similar kind in their national liberty, and consequently can only, under the existing conditions of the world, maintain self-existence and independence by its own power and resources. As the individual chiefly obtains by means of the nation, and in the nation, mental culture, power of production, security and prosperity, so is the civilisation of the human race only conceivable and possible by means of the civilisation and development of individual nations. But as there are amongst men infinite differences in condition and circumstances, so are there in nations—some are strong, some are weak, some are highly civilised, some are half-civilised, but in all exists as in the unit the impulse of self-preservation and desire for improvement.

It is a task of National Politics to ensure existence and continuance to the Nation to make the weak strong, the half-civilised more civilised. It is the task of national economics to accomplish the economical development of the nation and fit it for admission into the universal society of the future. I now take List's definition of a normal nation such as we desire to see Ireland. 'It should,' he says,

'...possess a common language and literature, a territory endowed with manifold natural resources, extensive and with convenient frontiers and a numerous population. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce and navigation must be developed in it proportionately, arts and sciences, educational establishments, and universal cultivation must stand in it on equal footing with material production. Its constitution, laws, and institutions must afford to those who belong to it a high degree of security and liberty, and must promote religion, morality and prosperity. It must possess sufficient power to defend its independence and to protect its foreign commerce.'

Sir, in the economy of Adam Smith, there is no place for the soul of a nation. To him the associations of its past possess no value; but in the economy of the man who made out of the petty and divided States of the Rhine the great Germany we see today there is a place, and it is the highest. True political economy recognises that prompt cash payment, to use Mitchel's phrase, is not the sole nexus between man and man—that there is a higher value than a cash value, and that higher value nationality possesses. When the German Commercial League 60 years ago exhorted all to stand together for a Germany such as we see today, it appealed to what its great economist had taught it was the highest value in economics—nationality. Can we imagine our manufacturers addressing our people as these German manufacturers did? Perhaps we can; but we can only imagine it as occurring at some distant period when they have realised the value of a national spirit. Listen:—

'Every misfortune that we have suffered for centuries past may be traced to one cause; and that is that we have ceased to consider ourselves a united nation of brothers, whose first duty is to exert our common efforts to oppose the

common enemy.... More beautiful than the spring of nature – more beautiful than any picture created by poetic imagination – more beautiful even than the death of the hero resigning his life for the benefit of his country, is the dawning of a new and glorious era for Germany. That which has been gradually vanishing from us since the days of the Hohenstauffen Emperors – that which is indispensable to enable us to fulfil the destiny marked out for us in the history of the world – that which alone is wanting to render us the mightiest of all the nations of the earth – viz: the feeling of national honour – we are now about to recover. For what object have our honoured patriots been striving? To imbue the people with the feeling of national honour.’

I shall detain you with Friedrich List, because he is unknown in the country which now needs his teaching most. We in Ireland have been taught by our British Lords Lieutenant, our British Education Boards, and our Barrington Lecturers, that our destiny is to be the fruitful mother of flocks and herds—that it is not necessary for us to pay attention to our manufacturing arm, since our agricultural arm is all-sufficient. The fallacy dissolves before reflection – but it is a fallacy which has passed for truth in Ireland. With List, I reply: A nation cannot promote and further its civilisation, its prosperity, and its social progress equally as well by exchanging agricultural products for manufactured goods as by establishing a manufacturing power of its own. A merely agricultural nation can never develop to any extent a home or a foreign commerce, with inland means of transport and foreign navigation, increase its population in due proportion to their well-being or make notable progress in its moral, intellectual, social and political development; it will never acquire important political power or be placed in a position to influence the cultivation and progress of less advanced nations and to form colonies of its own. A mere agricultural state is infinitely less powerful than an agricultural-manufacturing state. The former is always economically and politically dependent on those foreign nations which take from its agriculture in exchange for manufactured goods. It cannot determine how much it will produce—it must wait and see how much others will buy from it. The agricultural-manufacturing states on the contrary,

produce for themselves large quantities of raw materials and provisions, and supply merely the deficiency from importation. The purely agricultural nations are thus dependent for the power of effecting sales on the chances of a more or less bountiful harvest in the agricultural-manufacturing nations. They have, moreover, to compete in their sales with other purely agricultural nations, whereby the power of sale in itself is uncertain—they are exposed to the danger of ruin in their trading with agricultural-manufacturing nations by war or new tariffs, whereby they suffer the double disadvantage of finding no buyers for their surplus agricultural products and of failing to obtain supplies of the manufactured goods they require. An agricultural nation is a man with one arm who makes use of an arm belonging to another person, but cannot, of course, be sure of having it always available. An agricultural-manufacturing nation is a man who has two arms of his own at his own disposal. Again, List points out that the relative cultivation of the agricultural and manufacturing arms of a country possessed of an ample and fertile territory will give that country a population twice or three times as large as it could secure by the development of the agricultural arm alone, and maintain this vastly increased population in a much higher degree of comfort. Surplus agricultural produce, as he points out, is not necessarily capital in an agricultural country. Countries which produce such a surplus and remain dependent on manufacturing countries are often obliged to purchase these manufactured goods at an enhanced price. To warn his countrymen of the effects of the as-good-and-as-cheap policy which England was endeavouring to thrust on Europe, he pointed to the fate of Poland, which, as Montesquieu has said, would have become prosperous and stable if it had developed its manufacturing arm—by, even if it could do so by no other means, introducing foreign manufacturers and foreign capital. Poland did not do this; she lived indolently on her agriculture and like Ireland produced no middle class. She exported the fruits of her soil to obtain the goods which she could have manufactured on it. As a consequence she fell like a house of cards when organised nations attacked her. List

considers that had she developed her manufacturing arm, besides retaining her national independence, she would have exceeded any other European country in prosperity. To the advocates of as-good-and-as-cheap economics he turns from the contemplation of Poland, and says,

‘Go to fallen Poland, and ask its hapless people now—whether it is advisable for a nation to buy the fabrics of a foreign country so long as its native manufacturers are not sufficiently strengthened to be able to compete in price and quality with the foreigners.’

Let the Irish people get out of their heads the insane idea that the agriculturing and manufacturing industries are opposed. They are necessary to each other, and one cannot be injured without the other suffering hurt. We must further clear their minds of the pernicious idea that they are not entitled or called upon to give preferential aid to the manufacturing industries of their own country. Sir, if that idea were not met and combatted there would be an end to all hope of the development of an Irish manufacturing arm.

‘My object,’ said List, ‘is at all costs to save Germany from the destruction which the commercial policy of England designs for her.’ Our object is, at all costs, to save Ireland. ‘On the development of the German protective system,’ List wrote,

‘...depends the existence, the independence, and the future of German nationality. Only in the soil of general prosperity does the national spirit strike its root, produce fine blossoms and rich fruits—only from the unity of material interests does mental power arise and again from both of them national power.’

The fruit of List’s teaching is the Germany of to-day.

It is part of the policy of the National Council to bring about that unity of material interests which produces national strength—to convince the manufacturer that every improvement in agriculture will increase his home market, and the agriculturist, that every extension of the manufacturing industry will promote his welfare—convince

both that there can be no permanent prosperity for either unless the nation as a whole is prosperous.

We must offer our producers protection where protection is necessary; and let it be clearly understood what protection is. Protection does not mean the exclusion of foreign competition—it means rendering the native manufacturer equal to meeting foreign competition. It does not mean that we shall pay a higher profit to any Irish manufacturer, but that we shall not stand by and see him crushed by mere weight of foreign capital. If an Irish manufacturer cannot produce an article as cheaply as an English or other foreigner, only because his foreign competitor has larger resources at his disposal, then it is the first duty of the Irish nation to accord protection to that Irish manufacturer. If, on the other hand, an Irish manufacturer can produce as cheaply, but charges an enhanced price, such a man deserves no support—he is, in plain words, a swindler.

It is the duty of our public bodies, in whose hands the expenditure of £4,000,000 annually is placed, to pay where necessary an enhanced price for Irish-manufactured articles, when the manufacturers show that they cannot produce them at the lesser price—that is Protection. It is also the duty of the individual; but it is contrary to the principle of Protection and the interests of the country that a manufacturer in Ireland who can produce as cheaply as his foreign competitors should receive an enhanced price. The movement is one to give Ireland back her manufacturing arm, not to make fortunes for dishonest manufacturers. With the development of her manufacturing arm will proceed the rise of a national middle-class in Ireland and a trained national democracy—and—I here again quote List against the charlatans who profess to see in a nation's language and tradition things of no economic value:—

‘...in every nation will the authority of national language and national literature, the civilising arts and the perfection of municipal institutions, keep pace with the development of the manufacturing arm.’

How are we to accord protection to and procure the development of our manufacturing arm? First, by ourselves individually; secondly, through our County, Urban, and District Councils and Poor Law Guardians; thirdly, by taking over the control of the inefficient bodies known as Harbour Commissioners; fourthly, by stimulating our manufacturers and our people to industrial enterprise; and fifthly, by inviting to aid in our development, on commercial lines, Irish-American capital. In the first case, every individual knows his duty, whether he practises it or not—it is, unless where fraud is attempted, to pay if necessary an enhanced price for Irish goods, and to use wherever possible none but Irish goods. As to our public elective bodies, which annually control the expenditure of our local taxation, their duty is the same. The duty of our harbour bodies is to arrange the incidence of pot dues so that they shall fall most heavily on manufactured goods coming into the country, and to keep and publish a table of all goods imported and to whom consigned. In all these respects our Harbour Boards at present fail. They are in most cases composed of English shipping representatives and Irish traders in competing foreign goods, whose interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the Irish nation.

With some difficulty the Dublin Port and Docks Board has been forced to publish an annual return of the foreign goods imported into the capital of Ireland by sea, and the return has appalled all who read it; but the Cork Harbour Board has declined to do the same thing for Cork, and the other Harbour Boards around Ireland do as Cork does. Sir, is this to be tolerated? We want to know what the foreign goods are which come into every port in Ireland, we want to know whence they come, and we want to know who receives them—we want to know what it is open to every citizen of a free country to know, but which we are insolently denied. We want the port taxation removed from raw materials and placed on manufactured goods. We are told that this taxation is so small that it would be inappreciable. Small it is, I know, but not inappreciable. A few years ago some of us sought to

have the incidence of port taxation altered in Dublin; and the Port and Docks Board, so far from considering the matter insignificant, fought as fiercely as ever it fought to prevent increased dues being placed upon manufactured goods brought into the port of Dublin—very small, indeed, the increase in taxation would have been, but it would have given Ireland the principle of protection.

Our Harbour Boards must be manned for Ireland by men who desire to benefit Ireland, not by the shipping agents of English firms and importers of ready-made goods, a general scheme of port taxation must be adopted throwing the bulk of our port dues on manufactured goods, and a perfect tally must be kept at our ports of such goods, whence they come, to whom they are consigned, and the tally must be published once a month. Let this be done, and the dullest of our people will be forced to realise what is taking place in the country industrially, and, perhaps, the spirit of nationality will stir them to draw forth some of that £50,000,000 lodged in the so-called Irish banks—which in turn lodge it in the British and Colonial funds—and invest it in the industrial enterprises of their own country.

As to the introduction of foreign capital, let me say at once we don't want British capital, but we want, if possible, Irish-American capital. On this point I shall merely say what I have said before: That we ask no charity from the Irish-American, but we say to him, 'If you have money to invest outside America, then this is the country for you to invest in.' What can we offer to the wealthy Irish-American with money to invest? A rich and unexploited field—yes, but something more. Our proposal is this: That the General Council of the Councils should have the country surveyed with a view to the profitable development of its natural resources, and having had the cost and return estimated as accurately as possible, should then invite the Irish-American millionaires to do what, as the St. Patrick's banquet in New York, several professed themselves anxious to do—develop this country industrially.

We can offer them 174,000,000 tons of coal, the finest stone in Europe, and an inexhaustible supply of peat to operate on, and we can offer them all the facilities possessed by the County Councils and Rural Councils of Ireland, and the assistance and goodwill of the Irish people in turning our coal, our stone, and our turf into gold. They can offer us in return profitable employment for our people, and an enormous increase of strength socially, politically, and commercially. There are in the United States to-day thirty Irishmen, or men of Irish [blood]. Few of these men take any public part in affairs, but all of them profess a desire in private to help Ireland in the direction I have indicated—on business lines. The General Council of the County Councils, in the manner I have pointed out, can put this matter in terms of business before not only these men, but the Irish abroad at large. We are making no eleemosynary appeal to wealthy Irish-Americans. We invite them as men of business to undertake a work which will be mutually profitable to themselves and to Ireland, and as men of Irish blood we have a right to expect them, the security being as good, to sink a portion of their money in developing Ireland rather than in developing Mexico or the Philippines.

An Irish-American syndicate developing the peat, coal and stone resources of Ireland, with a capital of 100,000,000 dollars would end the emigration drain from this country. I shall pass from this phase of our situation, by quoting the words List addressed to Germany in its making:—

‘Let us only have courage to believe in a great national future, and in the belief, march onward. Above all, let us have national spirit enough to at once plant and protect that tree which will yield its richest fruits to the future generation. First, let us gain possession of the home market, so far at least as respects articles of general necessity, and secondly, let us try to procure the goods of other countries direct from those countries and to pay for them with our own manufactured goods.’

Naturally, the question of a mercantile marine arises in this connection. Ireland has practically speaking no mercantile marine. A

few coasting and cross-Channel vessels and three small lines of steamers running to Continental ports is all that is left of the once great commercial fleet of Ireland. The mercantile marine of Ireland at one time was one of the greatest in the world. Between the end of the sixteenth century and 1777, it dwindled as the consequences of the laws directed against it by England—until at the latter date it was of no importance. The Volunteer movement, by compelling England to cancel all her restrictive laws on Irish commerce and shipping, brought again into existence a powerful Irish mercantile marine, and its growth was so rapid that within five years—in 1785—Tucker, the well-known Dean of Gloucester, counselled English shipowners to fit out their vessels, under the Irish national flag, since the Irish marine was ousting the English out of the ports of Europe.

Sixty years ago Germany had little or no mercantile marine, and shipped its goods in foreign bottoms. Friedrich List urged upon his countrymen that it was vital they should possess a marine of their own, and laid the foundation of the magnificent marine which Germany possesses to-day. The importance of a mercantile marine cannot be minimised—without the carrying-trade England would be bankrupt and Norway non-existent. Norway with a population of less than half our own possesses a mercantile marine of 1,500,000 tons. Belgium, with a coast line scarcely as long as that of Dublin, is building up a great mercantile navy. The American Government at the present times feels it so essential to build up a great mercantile marine that it has resolved to prohibit all commerce between the United States and its foreign possessions except in American ships. Through the lack of a mercantile marine we are debarred from our best markets, deprived of our share in the world's carrying-trade, and are lost to Europe's interests. We lost sixty years ago one of the greatest opportunities—a share in the China trade, because we had no mercantile navy and as a consequence the China market knows nothing of our linens, and we procure our tea through England. We lose for the same reason to-day our share in the Indian trade, which would be gladly given us if we had only a marine to work it, and we

are losing yearly our share in the European and American trade for the same reason. What is our share—let us put it at the lowest and say one per cent. The countries from which we import outside England comprise the Republics of Argentina, Chile, and the United States and the Dominion of Canada in America, eastward Australia and Japan, and within Europe, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Italy, Austro-Hungary, and Russia. The total annual imports of these countries represent £2,000,000,000 sterling—one per cent of that trade would mean an increased revenue of £20,000,000 annually to Ireland. Let us create an Irish marine and we shall obtain it.

Why have we not this marine? We have the finest naval situation and the best and safest harbours in Europe. We have the material in abundance out of which sailors are made. We have £50,000,000 of money lying idle in our banks. It is because we have not the spirit of a free people—because we are taught to be dependent and look to and trust in a foreign Parliament where the people of another nation are taught to look to and trust in themselves. To establish such a marine, however, involves no extraordinary expense upon the nation. The great marine of Norway has been builded up by its own people. There is scarcely a man in the towns and cities of Norway who is not part owner of a ship. Instead of hoarding up their savings in banks, the workingmen of Norway and the shopkeepers of Norway invest it in ships. I have met many Norwegians—mostly workingmen—but I cannot remember that I have ever met one who was not part owner of a ship. Through the patriotism of her people, Norway has built up her great commercial navy, whose flag is familiar in every port in the world. A nearer country, Scotland, also possesses a very fine marine. Once in the Mediterranean I counted seventeen Scotch vessels of the ‘tramp’ type. But I have never yet seen an Irish ‘tramp’ steamer. Are there any Irish shipowners with enterprise to fit them out?—if so, they will enrich themselves whilst they benefit their country. A tramp line, for instance, between Ireland and South America, calling at French, Spanish, and other ports, *en route*, could not fail to pay its owners

whilst it would open up for Ireland a lucrative trade and lower in Ireland itself the prices of those goods non-competing with our own which we now import *via* England. At the present time Ireland has little trade with any outside country, not because she does not produce many things which they require and which they buy, but because England blocks the way with her middleman's profit.

So long as Ireland has no mercantile marine of her own and no consular representation abroad, this must remain the case. The British Consular service is run solely in the interests of Britain, but Ireland is taxed to pay for its upkeep. The British Consul, of course, announces on his brass door-plate that he represents the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The proportion he represents Great Britain and Ireland in the following figures show:—Last year the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland' exported over three hundred and sixty million pounds' worth of goods; of that total Great Britain exported three hundred and fifty-nine million pounds' worth, and Ireland one and a-quarter million pounds' worth—that is, of the exports of 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,' Great Britain claims 99 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent and Ireland the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$. Of the total trade of the same 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland' during the year, Great Britain's share was represented by 98.3 per cent and Ireland's by 1.7—which means that out of every £100 worth of business done, as the result of the year's trading, Great Britain received £98 6s., and Ireland £1 14s., a result which equally exhibits the benefit Ireland derives from her connection with Great Britain and the efficiency of the Consular service—for Great Britain.

The remedy for this state of affairs is for Ireland to appoint her own Consuls—to send Irishmen to act as Consuls in foreign countries, instead of sending them to orate in the British Parliament, and to devote a portion of the £25,000 she at present expends in keeping eighty Irishmen in London to keeping about half that number of Irishmen stationed in the capital and commercial centres of foreign countries, where a market may be found for Irish produce. At the present time Argentina procures one-third of her total imports from

Great Britain, North America one-fifth, France one-seventh, Germany one-tenth, Spain, Russia, and Japan one-fifth each, Scandinavia one-fourth, Holland one-fourth, Hungary one-twelfth, Belgium one-twelfth, Australia one-third, and South Africa and India two-thirds. In return for giving Great Britain so much trade we in Ireland import from these countries, and consume, millions of pounds' worth of their goods. We propose that in return for our consumption of the goods of the countries named, we should take our share in exporting goods to them. For this purpose, then, the National Assembly should choose and appoint from year to year competent men of business training, character, and linguistic knowledge to form an Irish Consular Service, and to act in all respects—save those which require the special *exequatur* granted to Consuls of independent nations—as the consular servants of other countries do. The countries in which the appointment of Irish Consular representatives would, in all reasonable probability, lead to the opening up of profitable and extensive markets for the Irish producer are Argentina and Chile in South America, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Russia, Japan, Denmark, Italy, and Austro-Hungary. There are possible fields for the Irish producer in every one of the countries named. One per cent of the trade of these countries would, as I have said, mean an increased revenue of £20,000,000 annually for this country, and enable us to look forward to the near approach of a time when the population of Ireland would again reach the figure it stood at it in 1845. The maintenance of a Consular service of thirty or forty men would cost Ireland annually about half the sum the maintenance of an Irish Parliamentary Party in London at present costs, and under no circumstances could it fail to repay the outlay on it. So much for oversea transit.

Our internal system is as bad as ignorance and selfishness can make it. Owing to the attitude of our railways the development of the country is materially hampered. The Arigna coal mines, for instance, produce as good a coal as the best that Great Britain can produce, but owing to the railway rates it is impossible to place it generally on the

Irish market. We cannot make up for the deficiency of the railways, but we can certainly do much to alleviate the present situation by the proper utilisation of our semi-derelict canal system. In this connection Ireland suffered a distinct loss by the death of Mr. James McCann. A well-devised scheme of canal and river service under the control of the Country Councils of Ireland will, however, go a considerable distance in the direction of properly distributing the products of the country, and I am aware that a rough scheme is at present being considered.

With a proper transit system in Ireland the interdependence of manufacturing and agricultural industry would become manifest, and a larger market be created for each. By a proper transit system, as the maker of industrial Germany pointed out, not merely are the powers of labour of those who are employed in it brought into activity, not only is the agricultural population enabled to obtain from the natural resources which it possesses a greater return than before, but the wealth heretofore lying idle in the earth becomes useful and profitable. Articles such as coal, stone, salt, gypsum, marble, slate, timber, which the freight of a few miles rendered before unprofitable to work, become distributable over a whole country, and thus the formerly valueless resources of a country become, through good transit facilities, of a high importance in the total of national production. This is what transit means to our country. It is worth working hard to obtain.

Now, let us consider the poor law system of this country. Like the education system, it was forced upon us by England, and with an equally sinister object. It has been a potent instrument for pauperising and demoralising the people. From 1846 to 1849 it was used as a machine for forcing the small farmers of Ireland into the workhouse or into the emigrant ship by the imposition of a crushing poor-rate. Since that period it has been used to impoverish the country by expending its money on foreign goods and by subsidising emigration, and to debase the spirit of the people by stamping pauper on the brow of every honest man and woman whom circumstances may for a period render dependent on the assistance of their fellow-citizens. In no other

country in Europe—except in Great Britain itself—does such a degrading system exist. In France, in Italy, in Austro-Hungary, the State recognises the fact that periods may occur, and do occur, when industrious members of the community may, through circumstance for which they are not responsible, become impoverished, and it administers the necessary remedies without undermining the self-respect of the recipients. It does not strike them from the list of citizens or imprison them in a poorhouse. It fits them again to take a place in the industrial ranks. Neither do the Poor Law systems of the enlightened nations of Europe offer the poorhouse and a stigma to those who, after a life of honourable labour, are stricken by sickness or enfeebled by old age. They afford them, not as a charity but as a right, support in liberty. An ex-British Prime Minister last week declared amidst the cheers of his ignorant countrymen that in Germany the Government treated the poor as criminals. It is under the British flag that thing is done. The German system of Poor Law relief divides the poor into three classes—those who can and will work, those who are willing to work but are unable to do so, and those who can work and will not work. For the first class it finds work, for the second class it provides sustenance, not as charity, but as a right due to them; for the third class it provides the proper place, the prison.

In Ireland for all classes the British Poor Law system provides the same remedy. Now, the position in Ireland is this: we have 159 Unions and 8,000 Guardians of the Poor elected by the people. It is not these Guardians' fault that the system is what I have escribed it, but it is their fault if they do not seek to neutralise its intention. When they vote the money of the Irish people to help on emigration and to purchase foreign goods they vote to further pauperise their country. Is there any land but this in which the Poor Law Guardians would dream of expending the poor rate on purchasing foreign cloth to attire those who have been impoverished by lack of employment, and hire foreign tailors in foreign countries to make it up, or who would import from abroad the food to feed these people on, when their own country produced abundance of cloth and food? That which would be

inconceivable in any other country, is the fact in Ireland. Above all taxes the poor-tax in other countries is directed to be expended within that country. In Ireland, the Guardians in the majority of instances expend it abroad, and thus keep continually adding to the total of pauperism with which they have to contend.

As one of the means of extracting from the Poor Law system good for Ireland, we suggest that the 159 unions in Ireland, controlling the annual expenditure of a million and a-half of money, should in council draw up an official scale of union requirements, using uniform advertisements for goods of solely Irish material and manufacture, and print a scale of the various quantities necessary yearly for the collective unions. The action of the North Dublin Union in 1881 is an illustration of what could be done. In that year the Board decided to reverse the English as-good-and-as-cheap policy which it had heretofore pursued to the national injury, and to procure all its requisites, even though it had to pay an enhanced price, of Irish manufacture. When it could not procure what it exactly required of Irish manufacture, it procured something of Irish manufacture which served as a substitute. The result was, of course, that increased employment was provided in Dublin, and in the end the ratepayers gained to the extent of £800 a year. This year an attempt was made by the Local Government Board—one of whose primary duties is to push the interests of the British manufacturer in Ireland—to bluff the Irish Boards of Guardians into acceptance of tenders for the supply of drugs sent by an English ring of manufacturers, whose object is to crush out the Irish druggists. In an excellent letter addressed to the Board of Guardians, the Cork Chemical and Drug Co., Ltd., put the issue clearly. It wrote:—

‘It is a comparatively simple matter for English capitalists to crush out their Irish competitors, and we know that this has been too often the fate of Irishmen striving to promote the manufactures of the country, but once the obstacles are removed it is easy enough for them to advance prices, and thus obtain compensation for preliminary losses. It is to this system we, as Irish manufacturers and large employers of labour, object, but we are always ready to

meet the ordinary competition of business, so long as this is conducted on fair lines.'

Many of the Irish Boards of Guardians have responded to this letter, but, unfortunately, the bulk of the unions have fallen into the net spread by the English ring, and in consequence of a very large sum of Irish money, not a penny of which need have passed out of the country, finds its way this year into England's pocket. Under the Sinn Féin policy such a deplorable error could not occur. The action of the Boards would, of course, be a united one, and no possibility would be left so far as they were concerned for a syndicate of unscrupulous English capitalists to crush out the home manufacturer and the home trader.

Another example of what united action could achieve will suffice: If the 159 unions of Ireland decided to-morrow to use no flour but Irish flour, twelve months hence many of the idle mills in Ireland would be again in full work, and hundreds of our people would be provided with employment. Under a national Government there would be no room for pauperism in Ireland, because under such a government those unable, through no fault of their own, to work, would not be treated as paupers, and those able to work would be provided with it in plenty in reclaiming the four million acres of waste in this country. One-half the victims of our present Poor Law system are able-bodied men and women.

Did you ever hear of a free nation paying out its hundreds of thousands of pounds to keep in soul-destroying idleness tens of thousands of its able-bodied population whilst one-fourth of its soil remains awaiting reclamation? This is what occurs in Ireland, 24 per cent of the soil of this country awaits the plough or the tree, and meanwhile the people of the country are annually mulcted in millions to keep in soul-destroying prisons those who could carry out the work. The central plain of Ireland awaits only afforestation to raise the mean temperature of Ireland four degrees, and thus render the soil of Ireland doubly fruitful; and our people are taxed not to carry on so noble a

work, but to perpetuate pauperism. It lies, as I have shown elsewhere, within the powers of the County Councils to at least devote portion of the local taxation of this country to the purposes of such reclamation, and united actions on the part of our County Councils and Poor Law Unions can serve to some extent to divert a portion of our iniquitous Poor Law taxation to reproductive labour.

The Poor Law Boards of Ireland employ about 4,000 officials, the Urban Councils and County Councils must employ at least 2,000 more. Here we have the materials for the formation of a national civil service. Of this great army of officials, paid by the ratepayers, the appointment of 75 per cent is in the hands of men elected as Nationalists. At the present moment their appointment is determined, in the majority of cases, more by the amount of personal influence they can wield with the members of the Board under which they seek appointment than by any other consideration. The question of efficiency is often, though not always, a secondary consideration. It is evident such a state of affairs tends both to the impairing of efficient administration in our local government and to a lowering of the moral standard which should prevail in the conduct of our public bodies. These public bodies resent—and properly resent—any deprivation of their right of ‘patronage.’ We do not propose they should be deprived of it. What we propose is, that they should exercise it in the future, not in the interest of the individual, but in the interest of the nation.

Thousands of young Irishmen join the British Civil Service, and, unwillingly enough, help to run the Empire. In principle this is wrong, but in the present circumstances of Ireland it is inexpedient to place the same ban on the British Civil Service we place on the British armed forces. The Irishman who joins the British Army, the British Navy, the British ‘Royal’ Irish Constabulary, necessarily becomes from that moment the active enemy of his country. He has taken up arms against Ireland. The position of the Irishman who joins the British Civil Service is a passive, not an active one. He is not employed in keeping his own country down, but he is employed to an extent in keeping a hostile country up. It is objectionable and regrettable; but whilst we

must continue to deprecate Irishmen entering the British Civil Service, we must distinguish between the armed oppressor and the passive instrument of alien administration. The cleverest and ablest men in the British Civil Service to-day are Irishmen. If we can deprive England of their services and secure them for Ireland, we shall be dealing a double blow against the foreign rule of this country. In the consular service I have suggested, the abilities of many Irishmen who now fill positions in the higher grades of the British Civil Service would find adequate and congenial scope; for the host of young Irishmen who fill the secondary posts in the Civil Service, a National Civil Service under the local governing bodies of Ireland will provide scope. For the haphazard method of selecting the local officials in Ireland at present, let us substitute an ordered one.

I propose that the Irish National Assembly should arrange and classify the positions of officials employed by all public bodies in Ireland in three grades. In the lowest grades candidates would be required to pass an examination showing an elementary acquaintance with the Irish language, a knowledge of Irish history, and an acquaintance with Ireland's resources. In the second grade, the candidate should be required to show himself self-proficient in Irish history, proficient in the Irish language as a written tongue, and proficient in the knowledge of Ireland's resources and possibilities, political and commercial. For the higher grade the candidate should not only possess a full knowledge of Irish history, but full acquaintance with her early laws and institutions; he should be proficient in Irish both as a written and a spoken language; he should know her literature and understand her art; he should be thoroughly acquainted with Ireland agriculturally, industrially, commercially, and topographically; he should know what Ireland has achieved, and be able to show what she could achieve. In a word, he should be what an educated Frenchman, an educated German, an educated Norseman is, a man who *knows* his country.

The National Civil Service of Ireland will demand no more than the National Civil Service of any country on the Continent of Europe

does—that its members must know all about it. Institute a National Civil Service in Ireland, and the English education system of this country, designed to suppress in the breasts of its people the impulse of patriotism is revolutionised. If no position in the public service of Ireland can be obtained by those ignorant of Ireland, the schools must teach Ireland—and must teach their pupils Ireland’s history, Ireland’s language, and Ireland’s possibilities. A National Civil Service in Ireland will provide a bulwark to the nation—it will revolutionise the so-called educational system—it will save for Ireland thousands of men who unwillingly leave it—it will necessarily cause the uprising of the most Irish-educated generation Ireland has known for centuries. It means an educated Ireland, and an educated Ireland is the harbinger of a free Ireland.

And not less important to the nation than a National Civil Service are National Courts of Law. Hungary understood this and established arbitration courts which superseded the courts which Austria sought to impose upon her. Ireland, before O’Connell retreated from the proposal of erecting a *de facto* Irish Parliament in Dublin, had established such courts. The prestige, the dignity, the strength such a national legal system would confer upon a movement for national independence is obvious; but in addition it would deprive the corrupt bar of Ireland of much of its incentive to corruption, save the pockets of our people, and materially help in bringing about that spirit of brotherhood—of national one-ness in Ireland which all who love this country desire to see. The decision of an arbitration court is binding not only in morals, but in law, on those who appeal to it. I say to my countrymen as the *Nation* said to them in 1843,

‘You have it in your power to resume popular courts and fix laws, and it is your duty to do so. It is the duty of every Irishman to himself, to his family, to his neighbour, his bounden duty to his country to carry every legal dispute to the arbitrators, and to obey their decision. If you resort in any of your own disputes to any but your own judges, you injure yourselves and commit treason to your country.’

In one sentence the case may be put: Eighty per cent of the cases which are now heard in the Civil Courts of Ireland, involving the expenditure by the people of an enormous sum of money which is utilised to keep up a corrupt judicial system, could be equally as *legally* decided in voluntary arbitration courts at practically no expense at all. The proposal, then, is this: That the Irish National Assembly shall appoint those of its members who by virtue of their positions are Justices of the Peace, but who decline to act as such under British law, to act as judges in the National Arbitration Courts, together with such men of character throughout the country, and such Irish barristers who have not devoted their time to hawking their souls for sale in the Four Courts, as it may be necessary to supplement them with as assessors or judges. No barristers or solicitors should be permitted to practice in the National Arbitration Courts, without the sanction of the Assembly, and without renouncing their practice in the foreign ones; and the Assembly should retain the same power over the Arbitration Judges that the British Parliament retains to-day over the British and West-British Judiciary. Here, then, Ireland will have wrested the judicial system, now used to her detriment, and use it for her own protection. The course is legal and feasible—its advantages are great and obvious. Papineau took it in Canada, and Deak followed it in Hungary in the nineteenth century. Ireland can as easily follow it in the twentieth. Yesterday in Russia we beheld an autocracy which seemed but a year ago as fixed and immovable as the Northern Star, reduced to impotence by a strike—a strike of the people of Russia against work. In Ireland we cannot reduce England to impotence by cessation of labour, but we can seriously reduce her strength by strikes of another kind—strikes against using her goods, for instance, and against filling the ranks of her armed forces.

In the latter direction the anti-enlisting movement has done good, but a good deal remains to be done; there are less Irishmen now in the British Army than at any period during the last century, but there are still proportionately more Irishmen than there are Englishmen or Scotchmen. Thirty years ago, out of every 1,000 men

in the British Army, 248, or just one-fourth, were Irish—to-day, out of every 1,000 men in that army, 115 are Irish; but in proportion to its population Ireland supplies much more fighting men to England than England supplies for herself. Out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 years of age in England, 276 are soldiers. Out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 in Scotland 248 are soldiers, and out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 in Ireland 354 are British soldiers. Behold the work to be done. It is the duty of our public bodies to aid, by rendering ineligible for any post in the national service Irishmen who have—at least since the date of the Boer War—joined the army of England.

Then there is another kind of strike, and a very effective one—a strike against taxes. The people of Hungary struck against taxes, and compelled the Austrian tyranny to collect them at the bayonet's point. They suffered and were true. The people of Ireland have means of striking against British taxes which will not call for the exercise of a hundredth part of the spirit of self-sacrifice which the Hungarians displayed. The gross taxation of Ireland for British purposes represents over £11,000,000 per annum. Of this the only considerable direct tax is the income tax, which represents about £1,000,000, or one-eleventh of the whole. For obvious reasons a strike against the income tax could not be made general, and, even if it were, could not materially affect England, since, after she has paid all the charges for the maintenance of her Government in this country, she has still £3,000,000 profit. It is evident that if we are to hit England effectively by a strike against taxation we must reduce her revenue from Ireland below her expenditure in it. Out of the £11,000,000 which England annually lifts from this country, more than one-half is derived from the sale of drink, and especially of whiskey. Out of each threepence-halfpenny paid in Ireland for a glass of whiskey the British Government receives three-halfpence. Here, then, without a hundredth part of the sacrifices other countries have had to make is a means ready to the hand of Ireland for an effective strike against taxes—it was used by the United Irishmen a hundred years ago—it

can be used by us to-day. By the simple process of reducing by one-half their present expenditure on drink, by the man who drinks two glasses of whiskey a day now, drinking only one glass a day for the future, or the man who drinks two bottles of stout now contenting himself with one—Ireland can decrease the British revenue by £2,500,000 per annum, or practically the whole of the actual profit she now makes on her Government of Ireland. If there be any man calling himself an Irish Nationalist who is not prepared to sacrifice a glass of whiskey or a bottle of porter for Ireland, he calls himself by a name to which he is not entitled.

The fiscal system of this country is the complement of the land system, and was designed and is conducted in the interests of England alone. In England the Stock Exchange, although the most powerful of its buttresses, is uncontrolled by the British Government. In Ireland it is different. English statesmen naturally understood that an independent and national stock exchange in Ireland would connote a degree of prosperity incompatible with English financial, if not with English political, interests. They, therefore, placed the Irish Stock Exchange directly under Government control. Walk up Dame Street and you will find the legend, 'Government Stockbroker,' written on a dozen windows. In Ireland the stockbroker is part and parcel of the British Government. There are 93 members of the Dublin Stock Exchange. All of these 93 had to satisfy the British Lord Lieutenant, as representative of the British Government, of their loyalty to that Government and their devotion to *British* interests, before they were admitted to the Exchange.

The Stock Exchange in Ireland has had no rival save the banks in ruining Irish industries in the interests of British ones, and in transferring to English pockets millions of Irish money. In every country except ours the primary function of the Stock Exchange is to create a market for local stocks, particularly the shares in manufacturing industries. In Ireland the primary function of the Stock Exchange is the reverse. Any limited liability company started in this country to create or develop industries or develop natural resources

will not secure a quotation on the Stock Exchange, unless it be backed by unusual and powerful influences. The result of this is to render the small investor in eighty per cent of cases unwilling to invest his money in Irish industrial companies.

To illustrate the reason, for the benefit of those who may not be conversant with financial matters, let us assume that the townspeople of Trim, anxious to promote the prosperity of their town, anxious to benefit themselves, and anxious to advance the general prosperity of the country, decide to start a woollen factory in their midst. A company is formed with a capital of five or ten thousand pounds, the workingman subscribes for a pound share and the well-to-do shopkeeper for £100. The company may go on prosperously, but a few months later the workingman may be in need of money and be anxious to dispose of his share or the shopkeeper may find it imperative to turn his £100 stock into cash. If the company possessed a Stock Exchange quotation, the shopkeeper would have merely to telegraph to a stockbroker in Dublin to sell, and receive in a few hours the cash for his shares at the prices current. But if the company be a small Irish Industrial company, there is no chance of the Stock Exchange quotation, and the shopkeeper *cannot* turn his stock into cash, unless by private treaty. His need for the money may be urgent—his £100 stock may be worth £150—but the market is closed against him by the *Government* stockbroker, and his only resource is to sell by private negotiation, involving delay and, invariably, loss.

This is the secret of why the small *Irish* capitalist will not invest in companies for the initiation and development of Irish industries, and will invest in the shares of gold mines eight thousand miles away, which he never saw, and never will see. The *Government* stockbrokers slam the gates of the money market in his face if he invests in the one—they open them wide if he speculates in the other. The small Irish investor may know, and he generally does know, that the local industry he is asked to invest in is a sound one: he may suspect that the Kalmazoo gold mine is anything but sound; but he knows that if

he buys Trim Woollens and needs the money in six months' time, he cannot sell his stock in the open market, whereas if he buys Kalmazoos, the *Government* stockbroker will turn them into cash for him at any moment. Shut out from the natural investment of his money, the small capitalist has been transformed by the *Government* stockbrokers of Ireland into a pure speculator—in other words, a gambler in shares, and has been fleeced in turn by every species of financial rascal England—fruitful mother—produces—‘Charterededs,’ ‘Tyres,’ ‘Volemites,’ ‘Fish Oils,’ and their kindred have, within the past decade transferred as many millions from the pockets of the small Irish capitalist to the pockets of John Bull as would have sufficed to set the idle mills of Ireland working, and have provided a means of livelihood in their own country for the scores of thousands who during that period streamed out of the Cove of Cork.

The position at the present, in a sentence, is that the British Government-controlled Stock Exchange in Ireland will not, as the Stock Exchange in every other countries does, make a market for local stocks, and that perforce the small capitalist is compelled to invest his capital outside Ireland, in ninety-five per cent of cases in British undertakings, to the immense financial advantage of England, and to the financial loss of Ireland. This is the cause of the difficulty of obtaining financial support for Irish industrial enterprises. Its removal, under the Sinn Féin policy, is a matter of comparative ease. If the Irish National Assembly, representing the public bodies of Ireland, demands the creation of a National Stock Exchange, that exchange must come into existence. The Irish National Assembly has but to order the public bodies it represents to transact all their business in the buying and selling of stock through brokers who are prepared to constitute themselves into a National Exchange, and to insist on the banks with which it leaves its custom supporting that National Exchange, to bring about the desired result. The Irish National Assembly will control the banking of some millions per annum in Ireland, and, consequently, the banks dare not, if they would, refuse to obey its mandates. The existence of a National Stock

Exchange, providing a market and a security for the investor in 'Irish industrials,' will entirely alter the financial position of the country, and place the present industrial revival on a basis too firm to be overturned. Neither ninety nor nine hundred British Government stockbrokers could withstand for a year a National Exchange backed by the public bodies of Ireland and performing the primary function of a Stock Exchange—the commercial development of the country for the benefit of its inhabitants and their children.

The banking system in Ireland, combined with the Stock Exchange, prevents the development of Irish resources and hinders the Irish industrial revival. The Irish people put £50,000,000 into the Irish banks, the Irish banks put the bulk of that enormous sum into British stocks at 2 ½ per cent or less. They have no money to put into Irish industrial enterprise, but they have millions to put into a war against the Boers. During the Boer War, the Bank of Ireland lent, free of interest to the British Government the money of its Irish depositors to help in the extirpation of the Boer people. At the outbreak of the same war, the other banks in Ireland bought up British Consols at £115 per cent—this stock is now worth less than £89 per cent—and for every £100 stock so purchased, the shareholders in the Irish banks have lost £26.¹ We may take the instance of an Irish bank which bought half-a-million Stock before the war. It paid for the half-million stock £575,000. The stock is now worth £445,000. Thus the bank has lost £130,000 on the transaction. It makes up its loss by squeezing its customers, and continues to lend to the British Government. The banks of Ireland, then, are willing to lend the money of the Irish people for British purposes, but not for Irish ones.

Sixty-three years ago Louis Kossuth in Hungary, when he had successfully inaugurated the National industrial movement, found himself face to face with a similar state of affairs. The banks of Hungary were under the thumb of the Government in Vienna, and the

¹ British Government stock has since fallen another 6 points—to 83 per cent. — 1907.

gold of Hungary was drawn thither to fill the gold-reserve chests in the Austrian Treasury. The banks in Hungary acted then precisely as our own do. They lent the money of the Hungarian people to the Austrian Government—that is they sent the *gold* coin of Hungary to Vienna, and took *paper* in exchange—at a low rate of interest, but they refused to lend money for the internal development of Hungary. Kossuth did not argue with the banks. He secured the support of the County Councils and the aid of those men of wealth who were true to the country, and founded a bank himself—‘The National Bank of Hungary.’ This bank lent its funds, not to the Austrian Government, but to the Hungarian nation. With it Kossuth burst up the fiscal conspiracy which oppressed his people, and he doubled the wealth of Hungary in five years. What was possible to Kossuth in Hungary in 1842, is possible to us in Ireland sixty-four years later. If the public bodies in Ireland unitedly demand that the existing banks shall play the part of National banks—shall cease lending Irish money for the benefit of England, and shall begin to lend it for the benefit of Ireland, I doubt that they will refuse. If they do, our public bodies have simply to agree to withdraw their accounts and a national bank will come into being. The bank in Ireland which has behind it the united support of the Irish public bodies, will be the premier bank in wealth and influence.

With the established of a National Stock Exchange and a National Bank, the financial jugglery which withdraws from the service of the Irish nation the enormous sum of £50,000,000 and locks it up in the British Treasure-chest, will come to an end, and the shrivelled veins of Irish commerce be refilled with the blood of life. I have referred to the withdrawal of gold from Ireland. At the present time while there is nominally fifty million pounds in our banks there is not four million pounds in gold in the whole of Ireland. The Irish gold deposited in our banks is sent to London and there exchanged for paper. But when the Irishman presents a Bank of Ireland or any other Irish note in a British Government office in London he is informed they cannot accept paper money. The late Edmund Dwyer Gray very

sensibly refused to accept payment in paper money from the banks in Ireland, and when the people individually and the public bodies in Ireland act with equal commonsense Ireland will retain her own gold within her own shores and permit England to sell paper for gold to some other country.

The General Council of the County Councils of Ireland affords the nucleus of the national authority under whose leadership we shall achieve these results. We propose the formation of a Council of Three Hundred, composed of the members of the General Council of the County Councils and representatives of the Urban Councils, Rural Councils, Poor Law Boards, and Harbour Boards of the country to sit in Dublin and to form a *de facto* Irish Parliament. Associated and sitting and voting with this body, which might assemble in Dublin in the spring and in the autumn, could be the persons elected for Irish constituencies, who decline to confer on the affairs of Ireland with foreigners in a foreign city.

On its gathering in Dublin this National Assembly should appoint committees to especially consider and report to the general body on all subjects appertaining to the country. On the reports of these committees the council should deliberate and formulate workable schemes, which, once formulated, it would be the duty of all County and Urban Councils, Rural Councils, Poor Law Boards, and other bodies to give legal effect to as far as their powers permit, and where these legal powers fell short, to give it the moral force of law by instructing and inducing those whom they represent to honour and obey the recommendations of the Council of Three Hundred individually and collectively. Over all the departments of our national life to which I have referred this Council of Three Hundred should be the directing authority. Our Councils can levy 1d. in the £ for Technical Instruction, and then demand and receive half as much again from the Board of Agriculture. The valuation of Ireland—the rateable valuation—is roughly £12,000,000, which would yield an annual grant for technical instruction of £50,000, plus £25,000 for the Department. The Councils have also the power, with the

concurrence of the Rural Councils, to raise another 1d. in the £ for libraries, thus yielding another £50,000. Here, then, we have a total annual revenue of £125,000, which can be allocated, inside the limits prescribed in the Act, by direction of the Council of Three Hundred to objects intended to serve and strengthen the country, and aid in bringing about the triumph of the policy. Under the heading of Technical Instruction we can allocate money to train up the people in crafts useful to the country, and we can subsidise and offer bounties to new or struggling industries—this is of the utmost importance. Under the heading Libraries, we can allocate money to the foundation of *National* Libraries throughout the country, the instruction of adults in *national* history and national subjects, the establishment of local *national* museums and of gymnasiums in which they may be physically trained and taught discipline.

To illustrate: When the Council of Three Hundred meets in Dublin, it is proposed, let us say, that a certain fixed sum be devoted in that year in every part of Ireland to, we shall say, the physical training of the people and their instruction in Irish history; whereupon every County Council in Ireland levies the rate and allocates the portion as directed. Thus, uniformity of action and work is attained, and without in one iota infringing the British law, the *recommendation*—for these resolutions or *Acts* of the Council go forth as recommendations—is given the force and status of law. But we are threatened now with the withdrawal of the grant for technical instruction, which is paid by the Department of Agriculture. The British Treasury wants more money. One Castle Board—the ‘National Board of Education’—has surrendered to the British Treasury the monies which the Irish people are compelled to pay for their de-Irishising education. Another Castle Board hastens to surrender up to the same Treasury the money which comes out of Irish taxations for technical education.

It is in the power of the County Councils to control this Department of Agriculture, whose jobbery and incompetence have become a public scandal, and which is now attempting to plunder the

country for the benefit of the British Exchequer. The Agricultural Board, which controls the expenditure of the funds intended for promoting agriculture, fishery, and kindred industries, is composed of twelve persons, the election of two-thirds of whom is in the hands of the County Councils. The Board of Technical Instruction, which controls the expenditure of the money applied under the heading of technical instruction, is composed of twenty-one persons, the election of fifteen of whom is in the hands of the County and County Borough Councils. Technical instruction is intended to be applied to assist existing industries and to establish new ones in the country. Owing to the supineness of the County Councils the Department of Agriculture has been permitted for years to neglect carrying out its duties, both industrially and agriculturally. The County Councils hold the whip-hand over the Department of Agriculture, but they have not yet used the whip. The time has come to use it, and to use it with vigour. We propose to extend the control of the Council of Three Hundred over the Department of Agriculture. We propose to make the six and a-half million pounds which is annually dealt with by our Irish elective bodies dealt with solely with a view to Ireland's interest and honour.

Our policy, in a word, is to lead our people to reliance in themselves, and to establish in Ireland's capital a national legislature endowed with the moral authority of the Irish nation.

It is essential to the working of the Sinn Féin policy that its supporters in Ireland should secure their votes, and cast them for men who in Rural Council, Urban Council, and District Council will carry out the Sinn Féin policy and apply that policy in their local affairs as well as in the national field. In Dublin and other cities, the British Local Government Board, for instance, prevents our Corporation from providing those facilities for education and recreation which the municipalities in other countries are free to provide, by declining to sanction a rate struck for such purposes; but in many of our cities there is a borough fund, which, after a payment of certain fixed charges, is freely at the disposal of the representatives of the people.

But what do we find the state of these funds to be? I take the Dublin Borough Fund, which annually amounts to about £30,000, and find it overdrawn, because while the people of Dublin were keeping their eyes steadily fixed on London, corrupt men were throwing burdens on the fund which it should never have borne—and have thus rendered a fund which properly directed would prevent the herding of the poor in Dublin in fetid tenements and the consequent abnormal death-rate—would alleviate the distress which each recurring winter brings in its train—and would provide for the people means of rational enjoyment—have rendered that fund unavailable. Let us try to make these municipal funds again available for our people—and bring the policy of Sinn Féin into every department of our social lives.

I shall not dwell on local policy—which must be largely determined by local circumstance—further than to say, that I have seen the war vessels of Ireland's enemy welcomed to Dublin and entertained by the head of the municipality, whilst I have seen the war vessels of friendly nations—Argentina and Holland—enter our harbours unwelcomed and unnoticed by the municipality of Dublin. I pass from the stain upon our soul and the slur upon our character—and ask whether such a proceeding is calculated to advance the commercial interests of Ireland in Argentina and Holland; and whilst I behold British municipalities in order to further the commercial interests of Great Britain inviting the German and French municipal bodies to visit their cities, I can find no instance of an Irish municipal body exhibiting similar commercial instinct.

The policy of Sinn Féin proposes to change all this—to bring Ireland out of the corner, and make her assert her existence to the world. I have spoken of an essential; but the basis of the policy is national self-reliance. No law and no series of laws can make a nation out of a people which distrusts itself. If we believe in ourselves—if each individual in our ranks believes in himself, we shall carry this policy to victory against all the forces that may be arrayed against it. If we realise the duties and responsibilities of the citizen and discharge

them, we shall win. It is the duty of a free citizen to live so that his country may be the better of his existence. Let each Irishman do so much, and I have no fear for the ultimate triumph of our policy.

I say, ultimate, because no man can offer Ireland a speedy and comfortable road to freedom, and before the goal is attained many may have fallen and all will have suffered. Hungary, Finland, Poland, all have trodden or tread the road we seek to bring Ireland along, but none repine for the travail they have undergone. We go to build up the nation from within, and we deny the right of any but our own countrymen to shape its course. That course is not England's, and we shall not justify our course to England. The craven policy that has rotted our nation has been the policy of justifying our existence in our enemy's eyes. Our misfortunes are manifold, but we are still men and women of a common family, and we owe no nation an apology for living in accordance with the laws of our being.

In the British Liberal as in the British Tory we see our enemy, and in those who talk of ending British misgovernment we see the helots. It is not British misgovernment, but British government in Ireland, good or bad, we stand opposed to, and in that holy opposition we seek to band all our fellow-countrymen. For the Orangeman of the North, ceasing to be the blind instrument of his own as well as his fellow-countrymen's destruction, we have the greeting of brotherhood as for the Nationalist of the South, long taught to measure himself by English standards and save the face of tyranny by sending Irishmen to sit impotently in a foreign legislature whilst it forges the instruments of his oppression.

Following the illustrious thinker of antiquity whom Trinity College inverts, I liken a nation to a ship's company, to whom different tasks are allotted, but all of whom are equally concerned in the safety of the vessel, and in a saying of his great predecessor I find summed up the spirit of Sinn Féin:—

'It is the part of the citizen not to be anxious about living, but about living well.'

If we realise this conception of citizenship in Ireland—if we place our duty to our country before our personal interest, and live not each for himself but each for all, the might of England cannot prevent our ultimate victory.