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# Newfoundland Responses to the Easter Rebellion and the Rise of Sinn Fein, 1916-1919

PATRICK MANNION

ON 24 APRIL 1916, at the height of World War I, members of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army occupied key locations in Dublin and began a six-day rebellion against British rule. British forces suppressed the armed insurrection and it was condemned across the English-speaking world. Subsequent executions of its leaders, however, instigated a dramatic shift in Irish popular opinion. Many of those who had previously identified with non-violent, constitutional nationalism were converted to a more militant brand of Irish republicanism. The British government's attempts to enact conscription in Ireland in 1918 enhanced such sentiments, and the shift in opinion was reflected in the victory of the republican Sinn Fein party in that year's general election.

There is a substantial literature on popular reactions to Irish affairs among members of the Irish diaspora. Generally, historians have argued that while many of the Irish abroad held esteem for the land of their forefathers, reactions to events in Ireland were tempered by new identities.<sup>1</sup> Despite their much-heralded connections to the homeland, the reactions of Catholic Newfoundlanders, who were overwhelmingly of Irish descent, to the Easter Rising and its aftermath have not been studied. I suggest that while Irish-Newfoundlanders maintained a keen interest in Irish affairs throughout World War I and after, their reactions were characterized by a strong loyalty to the British Empire. Writing in 1919, Governor Sir Charles Alexander Harris noted to Colonial Secretary Walter Hume Long that the Roman Catholics in Newfoundland were "generally loyal," but were "coloured by that tendency to lament the 'wrongs of Ireland' which seems to have become inherent in the Irish character, especially on this side of the water."<sup>2</sup> Newfoundlanders of both

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Irish and English descent generally favoured Irish Home Rule within the British Empire, but sympathy for an Irish Republic, Sinn Féin, or revolutionary Irish nationalism was rare.

This essay's principal source is the newspaper and magazine press. Both editorials and letters to the editor provide valuable insights into how Newfoundlanders, Protestant and Catholic, responded to the Irish Question, the variety of opinions that existed, as well as how their attitudes may have been shaped. Several official bodies also discussed the Irish Question. The House of Assembly, the Legislative Council, and the St. John's Municipal Council all responded to the Easter Rising and the Home Rule debate. The reactions of institutions such as the Benevolent Irish Society and the Roman Catholic Church also reveal the views toward Irish Home Rule of Newfoundlanders of Irish descent.

### HISTORIOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT

The period covered here is from the outbreak of the Easter Rising in the spring of 1916 to the end of 1919, when the transition of popular opinion from favouring constitutional nationalism to republicanism in Ireland was largely complete.<sup>3</sup> Before the Easter Rising, the Irish Parliamentary Party, or Nationalist Party, dominated the Home Rule movement. Led by John Redmond, it called for an Irish parliament within the British Empire. In the tradition of Charles Stewart Parnell and Daniel O'Connell, it espoused non-violent, constitutional nationalism.<sup>4</sup> At the outbreak of World War I, Redmond's party and the majority of Irish Catholics, including the Catholic press and the clergy, rallied behind the Allied cause.<sup>5</sup> Despite Ireland's enthusiastic reaction to the war effort, there were small groups of revolutionary nationalists, in particular those involved with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the Irish Volunteers, who were determined to ensure that "England's difficulty" would be "Ireland's opportunity."<sup>6</sup> By 1916 the IRB had come to dominate the Irish Volunteers and its members agreed that they would stage a rebellion against British rule. The Easter Rising began on 24 April 1916, was largely confined to Dublin, and lasted six days. By the time the rebels surrendered, over 450 people had been killed and more than 2500 wounded.<sup>7</sup>

There is significant historical debate as to how Irish popular opinion shifted following the Rising. Initially, most Irish people did not approve of the violent uprising, but that changed when General John Maxwell began executing the leaders. Over ten days beginning on 3 May, 15 rebel leaders were shot by firing squads. Judging by newspaper and police reports and private letters, the executions were deeply resented by most Irish people. As one commentator noted, "a few unknown men shot in a barrack yard has embittered a whole nation."<sup>8</sup> The hanging of Sir Roger Casement on 3 August, despite widespread calls for his life to be spared, fanned the flames.

Shortly after the Rising, the British government moved to solve the Irish Question, giving David Lloyd George the task of mediating a settlement between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Ulster Unionists. The Unionists vehemently opposed any arrangement by which Ulster would be governed by a Dublin parliament, and a compromise could not be reached. By the end of the summer of 1916 subscriptions to the Parliamentary Party, and Redmond's influence, were waning.<sup>9</sup> An increasing number of Irish people sympathized with the Rising, and their political support for Sinn Fein became obvious in early 1917. In February the newly reorganized Sinn Fein party won the first of a string of by-elections when George Noble Plunkett easily defeated the Nationalist Party candidate. As support for Sinn Fein in Ireland increased, the government organized an Irish Convention to try to solve the Irish Question through compromise. Sinn Fein boycotted the convention on the grounds that full Irish independence from Britain was not on the agenda.<sup>10</sup> Nationalists and Ulster Unionists could not agree on the position of Ulster in a self-governing Ireland.

Spring 1918 was dominated by the Irish conscription crisis which pushed popular opinion even further towards Sinn Fein. Increasing Allied casualties on the Western Front forced the British government to consider implementing conscription in Ireland. Late in March the government announced a Military Service Bill, to be accompanied by a Home Rule Bill. They were opposed not only by virtually all nationalist factions, but also, crucially, by the Catholic Church.<sup>11</sup> The Irish Convention collapsed. Nationalists were united as never before. Sinn Fein party membership exploded, nearly doubling from January to December 1918.<sup>12</sup> The 1918 general election saw Sinn Fein's campaign glorifying the Easter Rising. The Parliamentary Party seemed on its last legs: it failed to field candidates in 25 seats which it had won unopposed in the previous general election.<sup>13</sup> Sinn Fein won 73 seats, compared to the Nationalist Party's six. The triumph of Sinn Fein and Irish republicanism was essentially complete. After 1919, Irish affairs took another turn, as revolutionary nationalism came to the fore. The War of Independence prompted new directions in popular opinion in Ireland and abroad.

To talk about the "Irish" in Newfoundland in the early-twentieth century presents problems, in part due to Newfoundland's unique place in the Irish diaspora. The Irish came to Newfoundland primarily in the first third of the nineteenth century. By the onset of the great potato famine in 1845, which brought waves of migrants from Ireland to North America, the migration of the Irish to Newfoundland had virtually ceased.<sup>14</sup> Censuses for the period confirm that the emigrant generations had died off long before the outbreak of World War I. According to the 1911 census of Newfoundland, there were only 330 Irish-born residents on the island.<sup>15</sup> The number had been steadily decreasing in each census since the mid-nineteenth century. By 1921 the number was down to 187 out of a total population of just over 263,000.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, the number of Scottish-born residents of Newfoundland, who had never formed more than three per cent of the population in

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the nineteenth century, surpassed that of the Irish-born for the first time in the 1921 census with 439 Scots recorded.<sup>17</sup> Irish-born residents of Newfoundland were also largely centered in the St. John's area. Of the 187 Irish-born individuals recorded in 1921, 136 lived in the electoral districts of St. John's East and St. John's West.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that many of these were Irish-born churchmen and nuns. Communities on the southern Avalon Peninsula, where nineteenth-century Irish settlement had been predominant, were virtually devoid of Irish-born residents. The electoral district of Ferryland, for example, had only ten Irish-born residents in 1921. In 1911, Placentia-St. Mary's had only 22, down from 35 in 1901.<sup>19</sup>

The Irish-born were inconsequential in Newfoundland at the time of the Easter Rebellion, yet the term "Irish-Newfoundlander" may be employed to refer to the descendants of the early-nineteenth century migration. Several scholars of the Irish diaspora, most notably Donald Akenson, have called for a multi-generational definition of "Irishness."<sup>20</sup> Akenson maintains that the Irish diaspora consists of all those who emigrated from the island of Ireland, Protestant or Catholic, and their descendants. In Newfoundland, thanks to the lack of any other major Catholic migration, the formula "Catholic = Irish" generally holds true. Moreover, the links between Newfoundland Catholicism and Ireland have been particularly important since the 1830s, when Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming forged a unified, assertive Irish Catholicism.<sup>21</sup> By 1921, there were just under 87,000 Catholics in Newfoundland, up from 81,000 in 1911, or about one third of the population.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, much of the Catholic population of the island was centered on the Avalon Peninsula. In 1921, the two St. John's electoral districts had a combined Catholic population of 26,000 compared to approximately 25,000 Protestants.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, Newfoundlanders of Irish descent were prominent in the capital city. The districts of the southern Avalon were overwhelmingly Catholic during this period. In 1921, only 141 Protestants of any denomination were recorded in the district of Ferryland, compared to 5,873 Catholics. Almost a century after the initial wave of Irish immigration, the religious composition of the Avalon Peninsula continued to reflect a strong Irish Catholic presence.

By the early twentieth century, intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants had diluted the formula. One must ask the question, if an individual is the child of an Irish-Newfoundlander and an English-Newfoundlander, do they qualify as "Irish"? Moreover, should one take into account how many generations removed from Ireland a person is? Based on Mark McGowan's research on Irish identity and responses to the Irish Question in Toronto, as well as Timothy J. Meagher's analysis of second-generation Irish identity in Worcester, Massachusetts, the number of generations removed from Ireland is essential in determining how people may have reacted to events in the land of their forefathers.<sup>24</sup> Finally, it is worth pointing out here that there was arguably never a unified, homogenous "Irish-Newfoundland." Ethnic identity was just one way by which Newfoundlanders defined themselves. A sense of "Irishness," if expressed at all, could be superseded by class or local and

regional identities. The urban versus rural divide has long been an important one in Newfoundland; those who dwelled in the outports have had a considerably different historical experience than the residents of St. John's. Because the sources used in this study are overwhelmingly centered in St. John's, reactions from off the Avalon Peninsula are virtually impossible to gauge. The extent to which Catholic Newfoundlanders identified with Ireland has been the subject of historical debate, and it is my hope that this article will contribute to resolving the question.<sup>25</sup>

## NEWFOUNDLAND RESPONSES TO IRISH AFFAIRS, 1916-1918 — EVIDENCE FROM THE PRESS

In his analysis of Irish-Canadian identity in nineteenth and early-twentieth century Toronto, McGowan refers to the Catholic newspaper press as "the most direct and influential monitor of public sentiment."<sup>26</sup> Most studies concerning expressions of early-twentieth century Irish nationalism have relied heavily upon evidence from newspapers. The Newfoundland newspaper and magazine press provides evidence which, when analyzed critically, can help us understand the ways in which ordinary Newfoundlanders responded to Irish affairs. This study relies primarily on five daily St. John's papers: the *Evening Telegram*, the *Daily News*, the *St. John's Daily Star*, the *Evening Advocate*, and the *Evening Herald*. I also examined weekly papers such as the *Plaindealer* and the *Harbour Grace Standard*. Although the press was no longer engrossed in sectarian divisions, as it had been in the nineteenth century,<sup>27</sup> it still pursued partisan politics. The outbreak of war in 1914 tempered newspaper rivalries as editors generally rallied around the cause of recruitment.<sup>28</sup> Distinct editorial positions were maintained, however, and, as we shall see, personal rivalries and animosities played a role in how coverage of Irish affairs evolved in Newfoundland. The flow of information out of Ireland was strictly controlled, so most Newfoundlanders would have relied on local newspapers as their primary source of Irish news. Many documents mailed from the United Kingdom were subject to censorship, and there are indications that republican newspapers such as the *Irish World* were banned from Newfoundland.<sup>29</sup> Reports of Irish events in Newfoundland newspapers were therefore significant agents in the formation of public opinions.

The news of the Easter Rebellion, which began on 24 April, broke in St. John's two days later. All the major papers carried extensive reports on the fighting, based mostly upon censored cablegrams issued by London's Press Bureau.<sup>30</sup> These reports were generally the same in each paper. The *Daily News* carried the headline "Dublin Rebels Seize Post Office,"<sup>31</sup> while the *Evening Telegram* proclaimed "Disturbance in Dublin" above an identical report. Other daily newspapers contained similar headlines and the same stories. Coverage of the Rising revolved around British attempts to quell it, and subsequent Parliamentary debates on how to

address the Irish Question. Because they emanated directly from London, the news dispatches were written in an anti-rebel tone, with dramatic headlines such as “Is [Roger] Casement a Lunatic?”<sup>32</sup> and “Traitors Shot”<sup>33</sup> after the executions of the Rising’s leaders in early May. These early press reports turned popular opinion against Sinn Fein and the Rising. As the Dublin crisis unfolded, and the Irish Question came to the fore throughout the English-speaking world, press coverage of Irish affairs began to diversify. Some papers printed detailed biographies of those involved in the insurrection; others provided extensive histories of the Sinn Fein movement. Articles from newspapers across North America were included to supplement locally-written editorials and Press Bureau news dispatches. The *Evening Advocate* reprinted the full text of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.<sup>34</sup> Though it generally contained less Irish news than its counterparts, the *St. John’s Daily Star* provided photographs of the Dublin carnage. In sum, the rebellion itself, the trial of Roger Casement, and the British Parliament’s attempts to deal with the problem through the summer of 1916 were well covered in Newfoundland newspapers.

The quantity of the reporting on Irish affairs decreased dramatically thereafter. In the days after 10 July 1917, when Eamon De Valera won his by-election as a Sinn Fein representative in East Clare, for example, no Newfoundland newspaper reported the victory. Instead, news cablegrams reported optimistically on the progress of the Irish Convention. The rise of Sinn Fein in 1917 and 1918 received little attention. There was, however, no escaping the fact that the face of Irish nationalism had changed after the December 1918 election. Although the election results were printed in full, few reports, either news cablegrams or locally-written pieces, dealt exclusively with the fall of the Nationalist Party. One *Evening Telegram* report on the election mentioned that the Nationalists were “hopelessly beaten by Sinn Fein” in Ireland, but the rise of Sinn Fein and Irish republicanism was not the subject of sustained reporting in Newfoundland.<sup>35</sup>

Most daily papers published editorials about the Rising on the day the news broke in St. John’s. Like the other editorials, the *Daily News* bitterly condemned the Rising, and attempted to implicate Germany:

The madmen who are striving to undo the work of O’Connell, Butt, Parnell and Redmond, are not only traitors to the Empire, but traitors first and before all, to Ireland. It is incomprehensible that any can be found so infamous as to join in thought or deed with the assassins of Belgium, the murderers of Priests and Nuns, the destroyers of Louvain. Irishmen, the world over, will to-day, bow their heads in sorrow.... It will give heart to the Prussian barbarians, but it will bring sorrow to their dupes. The Home Rule that Ireland’s friends have worked and striven for, has received a set-back that it will take long to recover.... But we refuse to believe that the participants in this greatest treachery of the ages are many. German gold may have bought the worst elements to its side; but the heart of Ireland beats true; and the hands of her sons go out in pride and greeting to the thousands of her sons who are risking their lives, that religion, humanity and honour may endure.<sup>36</sup>

As frequently occurred in newspaper editorials throughout the period, Ireland's loyalty to the Empire and the Allied cause was highlighted. Blame was put squarely on German intervention, rather than on the Irish people. Irish loyalty was emphasized. These initial editorials, and virtually every piece local editors wrote about Ireland in the months that followed, were coloured by World War I. The conflict came at what was perhaps the height of Newfoundland's "British" identity. There was a growing tendency to "think imperially."<sup>37</sup> As the war progressed, a sense of "duty overrode all."<sup>38</sup>

When commenting on the wave of executions that followed the Rising, the *Evening Telegram* of 12 May 1916 adopted a more hard-line stance than many North American newspapers. At a time when editorials in many American newspapers were condemning the British executions,<sup>39</sup> the *Telegram* proposed that while mercy should be shown to many of the Rising's participants, its leaders should be made examples of, and those loyal to Britain should work together:

The obvious policy is to make the gulf wide and impassable between those who are enemies of the British flag and those who are loyal to it, and to bring together the latter no matter whether they are Redmondites or Carsonites, no matter whether they dwell in the North, South, East or West of Ireland or whether they are Green or Orange.<sup>40</sup>

Editors were also keen to emphasize Redmond's loyalty:

One of the towering personalities of the Empire to-day is John Redmond, Ireland's truest friend. He stands out as a colossus amongst the few political pigmies, Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Nationalist, who are ever helping Germany by hurling their little poisoned pellets against the weary Titans, who are bearing on their shoulders the burden of this great world war. And this is the John Redmond that men, unfit to tie his shoe latchet, were wont to call a traitor. Well may the Empire thank God for its Redmonds.<sup>41</sup>

Similar pieces praising Redmond were repeated throughout the period. Glowing tributes were published following his death in 1918. As the leader of the moderate Nationalist Party, Redmond espoused a vision of Irish nationalism that kept it well within the British world. He had spoken out in favour of the war effort, and had encouraged young Irishmen to join up and fight for the Allies. For editors primarily interested in the strength of the British Empire and the Allied war effort, this type of nationalism would have been appealing. It is possible that they wished to encourage those Catholic Newfoundlanders who still had an interest in the land of their forefathers to embrace this loyal brand of nationalism, as opposed to outright republicanism.

When it came to the issue of conscription for Ireland there was considerable diversity in editorial opinion. In its 7 October 1916 editorial, the *Telegram* argued that conscription should be enacted in Ireland, since it, like Canada, Australia, and



New Zealand, was a part of the Empire. By accepting conscription, Ireland would prove itself worthy of self-government.<sup>42</sup> The *Daily News*, perhaps in a direct response to the *Telegram*'s editorial, maintained that until Home Rule was granted to Ireland, it should not have been subject to the same expectations as the colonies which already enjoyed self-government such as Newfoundland, Canada, and Australia.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, much of this discussion occurred in the autumn of 1916. As the Irish conscription crisis unfolded in the spring of 1918, Newfoundland's newspaper editors devoted little space to this important issue. This was partly because at the time the conscription crisis was going on in Ireland, a similar situation was unfolding on the domestic front. It became apparent that conscription would be necessary to keep the Newfoundland Regiment alive. When it was proclaimed on 11 May 1918, the Act caused a great deal of debate and generated opposition.<sup>44</sup> During the spring of 1918, this crisis dominated the Newfoundland editorial columns. As such, there was less room for commentary on Irish affairs. Moreover, writing about Irish opposition to conscription would not have been in keeping with the strategic, pro-war editorials that permeated Newfoundland newspapers during the period.

Personal ethnoreligious background seems to have had little effect on how editors responded to Irish affairs. Support for Irish self-government within the British Empire was universal, irrespective of denominational differences, while sympathy for Sinn Féin or an Irish Republic was, by contrast, almost nonexistent. *Daily News* editor James Alexander Robinson, a Scottish-born, English-educated Methodist, was described by one observer as "a home-ruler of the first water."<sup>45</sup> The Protestant editor of the *Harbour Grace Standard* commented that the paper had "long believed" that Home Rule would "be an immense blessing to all Ireland, and to the Empire...."<sup>46</sup> Catholic editors also supported Home Rule. P.T. McGrath, editor of the *Evening Herald*, was a product of the St. John's middle class. He was staunchly loyal to the British Empire, was president of the Legislative Council, and the honorary secretary of the Newfoundland Patriotic Fund. In 1918 McGrath was knighted in recognition of his contribution to the war effort.<sup>47</sup> His paper carried relatively few editorials on Irish affairs, and those it did carry expressed support for Irish Home Rule. The *Plaindealer* was also edited by a Roman Catholic of Irish descent, W.J. O'Neill. It catered to a largely Catholic readership, and specialized in covering Irish affairs.<sup>48</sup> O'Neill was particularly vociferous on Home Rule, maintaining that "Ireland's right to self-government is inalienable. If it does not come now, it will later, and, when it comes, it must be real self-government, and not based on any undemocratic principle of representation which would perpetuate and intensify the unfortunate divisions which are the legacy of alien misrule."<sup>49</sup> Like the other St. John's papers, the *Plaindealer* frequently emphasized the loyalty of the Irish to the Empire.

We must consider why editors adopted such views. When one examines these editorials as active agents in the formation of popular opinion, minimizing the importance of the Rising would likely have been an important strategy. Patricia O'Brien

suggests that the Easter Rising, and in particular the subsequent executions of its leaders, cast a shadow over recruitment for the Newfoundland Regiment.<sup>50</sup> Although such a claim is impossible to verify quantitatively, if reactions in the months following the Rising did affect Newfoundland's war effort, then it is natural that patriotic newspaper editors would embrace loyal, Redmondite nationalism in an attempt to sway popular opinion. Editorials, however, give the historian little insight into what the majority of Newfoundland's people thought and less still about the opinions of Irish-Newfoundlanders.

Letters to the editors of newspapers provide a more direct link into what we may term "popular opinion." Although they cannot be seen as being completely independent of newspaper editorial policy, in letters one does encounter opinions that were written by the "common man," and that reflect mentalities that existed amongst at least some members of society. There were 18 letters pertaining to Irish affairs published in Newfoundland newspapers during the period. They demonstrate a wide range of opinion. Explicit debates carried out through letters on matters such as the position of Ulster in a self-governing Ireland indicate that in addition to varying degrees of support for Irish Home Rule, there was also outright opposition to it. A number of letters to the editor allude to opposition to Home Rule in the community. One published in the *Evening Herald* condemns this hostility:

Many good people in our midst, who have enjoyed all the benefits of Home Rule for nearly a century and who would fight to the death before they would give it up, oppose Home Rule for Ireland.

They have never considered the merits of the question, and they oppose it on principle. Their opposition is based on ignorance, and I might add, that is in many cases intensified by blind prejudice.<sup>51</sup>

The suggestion that prejudice or bigotry was a reason for opposition to Home Rule is important. A long history of tension between Catholic and Protestant communities existed in Newfoundland, and it is possible that remnants of nineteenth-century sectarianism influenced Protestant reactions to the Irish Question. Certainly, some members of the community believed that prejudice was to blame for local opposition to Home Rule:

No person, Mr. Editor, who values the liberty for which our sons and brothers are dying on the battlefields of Europe, or who is not blinded by prejudice, can fail to see the justice of Ireland's cause, and of her right to self-government, and yet it is nothing unusual, right here in our own little country, to meet a man who is ready to offer his all to help beat the Huns and safeguard the liberty of Serbia, Belgium, Roumania [sic], and other small nations, but who, when it comes to the question of applying the very principles of which he is such an ardent champion to Ireland, cannot find words strong enough to give vent to his disapproval of such a course.

Such men give, as an excuse for their hostility to Home Rule, their opinion that

Irishmen are not united enough to take charge of their country's affairs, and therefore, to grant self-government to Ireland would be a great mistake.

What a sorry excuse, Mr. Editor, to hide their true reasons....<sup>52</sup>

— A lover of Liberty.

"To hide their true reasons" implies that the opposition to Home Rule was motivated by an anti-Irish or anti-Catholic mentality. Although the extent of such sentiments is impossible to gauge given the documents available, it does seem possible that this was so, especially since the election campaigns in Newfoundland following the war were generally characterized by a heightening of ethnoreligious tensions.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the realities of denominational education, churches, and organizations such as the Orange Order and Knights of Columbus served to enhance sectarian divisions.<sup>54</sup>

A number of explicit debates on Irish events were carried out through letters to the editor between 1916 and 1919. These further demonstrate the gulf in opinion present in Newfoundland society. A letter to the *Daily News* in March 1917, signed "Irish Descent," lamented the treatment of the Ulster Unionist leader, Sir Edward Carson:

Some writers in the local papers in discussing the Irish Home Rule question have been abusing and holding up to contempt the leader of the Anti-Home Rulers, Sir Edward Carson. While this course may meet with the approval of a few, there are a large number in the community who do not agree with them and who do not relish having the First Lord of the Admiralty subjected to terms so obnoxious and unjustifiable. Of course, Sir Edward would not care even if he knew, but in this 'ancient and loyal colony' just now it is pre-eminently unbecoming on our part to be directing newspaper assaults at the head of the Great British Navy. Sir Edward Carson is a very clever man, and is now using his great abilities in a task which calls for all the resourcefulness of strength and genius and in the short period in which he has been in office we find the result of his administration in reports issued by the Admiralty....<sup>55</sup>

A response that focused on Carson's Unionism, signed "Irish Dissent," appeared two days later:

I do not think with 'Irish Descent' that a large number in this community approve of the conduct of Sir Edward in his threatening attitude over the Home Rule Bill. A great many may dissent from the Bill, but not many would be ready to dismember the Empire and rend her to pieces if Home Rule had followed the passage of the Act by Parliament, after overcoming the obstruction of the Lords and after it had received the Royal Assent. This Sir Edward undertook to do. He said in effect, you may give Ireland Home Rule, but you do so at the peril of the Empire. I am prepared to resist it even to the extent of calling in the forces of the German Empire, and with this end in view he interviews the Kaiser who is so pleased with the prospect that he supplies Carson with arms and ammunition to carry this threat into effect.... I must condemn conduct

which was traitorous and revolutionary. He encouraged the German people in the idea that civil war was imminent in the Empire: he threatened disruption of the Empire and this was seditious.<sup>56</sup>

Both writers claim that public opinion was on their side. The piece defending Carson does not attack Irish self-government directly, but suggests that sympathy for Ulster Unionism may have existed in Newfoundland. The reply shows how an attack on Carson or Ulster Unionism and a defence of Irish Home Rule may have co-existed with a strong sense of loyalty to the British Empire.

Two rival St. John's papers, the *Daily Star* and the *Evening Advocate*, carried out a similar debate. The exchange began in the *Advocate* with a letter praising Alex W. Mews, the paper's editor, for his editorials on Irish affairs:

I hasten in all sincerity to extend to you my most heartfelt congratulations on the independent and manly pronouncement made by you in the *Evening Advocate*, on Tuesday afternoon, in relation to Home Rule for Ireland. I beg to inform you, sir, and without fear of contradiction, that the thousands of the offsprings [sic] of the Irish race in Newfoundland are with me in my praise of your noble action. It may seem to you, sir, an ambiguous proceeding on my part to have proffered you this tribute, because you, no doubt, believe that you have spoken the true sentiments of your soul. But, sir, you will see that it is not an unjust tribute when I tell you that such a pronouncement in favour of Home Rule as you have made, tastes ambrosial to all lovers of Erin, especially so since none of the other journals in our midst seem to believe that her woes need amelioration. Again, sir, thanking you individually, and also on behalf of your readers of Irish extraction.

An Irishman's Son.<sup>57</sup>

This letter, as well as a piece written by "Irishman's Grandson," prompted a response signed by "Erin Go Bragh" bitterly condemning Home Rule in the *Daily Star*.

Now, to be an anti-Home Ruler is not necessarily to be antagonistic to the Irish. What I have written here is in the interest of the Irish, and with the best of wishes for Ireland. But what I do want is to put in their proper place those so-called 'patriots' such as 'Irishman's Son' and 'Irishman's Grandson' and their editorial friend who seems to regard the cause of Ireland as an integral part of the solar system.

The effusion of 'Irishman's Son' make it at once plain that he knows as much about Ireland as a parrot knows about phrenology, and the grandson's place is in the much depleted ranks of the Irish Division.

Every sane person knows that Home Rule for Ireland is impracticable politically, financially, and commercially. I will only lightly touch on the events of last Easter as these are but all too fresh in everyone's memory. The treacherous blow of the Irish aimed at England's back when she was fighting for her life will never be forgotten. Never will England forget, though she may forgive that dastardly and cow-

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ardly attempt at her life....

Do these misguided 'patriots' think that England has played a tyrant's part in Ireland? Did England ever act the oppressor towards Newfoundland? No, and her wise and just government in India and elsewhere will shed a lustre round her name as long as the waves lash her hospitable shores.<sup>58</sup>

The debate continued several days later, as "Irishman's Son" had another letter published in the *Advocate*:

Little did I imagine, Mr. Editor, when I had congratulated your efforts on behalf of the cause of Erin, when you expressed your liberty-loving sentiments, that any person would be so base as to attack the Irish in such an ignorant manner as 'Erin Go Bragh's.' It pains me also to know that such a person breathes the air, treads the soil and has his being in a land for which the Irish exiles have wrought by their perseverance, their learning and courage, a path of justice which is now our happiness to enjoy.<sup>59</sup>

Bitterness towards Ireland is evident in the *Daily Star* piece. While many Newfoundlanders of Irish descent condemned the Easter Rising, they were generally keen to emphasize the loyalty of Irish soldiers fighting on the Continent. The writer of the anti-Home Rule letter showed no such leniency as he condemned the "treacherous blow of the Irish." This apparent suggestion of Irish disloyalty would have angered Irish-Newfoundlanders who retained great affinity for Ireland without compromising their loyalty to Britain. The offence is evident in the reply, where a multi-generational Irish-Newfoundland identity is again in evidence. The pseudonyms "Irishman's Son" and "Irishman's Grandson" further suggest that some Newfoundlanders of Irish descent maintained a keen interest in the land of their ancestors.

This exchange also demonstrates how editorial policy may have influenced the printing of letters to the editor. Editors deliberately chose the letters that they published. Although members of the community wrote the above letters, those that editors selected for publication often reflected a particular paper's editorial policy. The fact that the debate occurred between the *Daily Star* and the *Evening Advocate* is significant because the two papers were bitter rivals. The *Advocate* was the press organ of William F. Coaker's Fishermen's Protective Union, and was particularly important in influencing and reflecting outport opinion. Although Alexander W. Mews edited the paper in 1917, Coaker himself likely wrote many of the editorials. Harris Mosdell edited the *Daily Star*. Formerly editor of the *Advocate*, Mosdell fell out with Coaker and began editing the *Star*. Because of this bitter personal enmity, both papers routinely attacked each other's editorial policies on a variety of topics.<sup>60</sup> Mosdell was generally just as kind to the cause of Irish Home Rule as other Newfoundland newspaper editors, but through editorials and letters to the editor, the paper bitterly attacked almost any stand taken by the *Evening Advocate*. This

debate may be more indicative of the intense rivalry between local newspapers than intense debate between Newfoundlanders over the Irish Question. Moreover, there are a number of reasons why the *Evening Advocate* would have been keen to emphasize sympathy towards the Irish cause. During this period, the Fishermen's Protective Union Party in Newfoundland faced opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore struggled to receive support from Catholic Newfoundlanders. By showing support for Home Rule, the editor of the *Advocate* likely wished to downplay the party's reputed association with Protestantism and the Orange Order in an effort to gain Catholic support.<sup>61</sup> The publication of such a letter would have been consistent with this type of strategy. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that people in the community recorded these sentiments, so the anti-Home Rule attitude displayed in the *Daily Star* letter is genuine. It is the extent to which such sentiments were reflected in the wider community that is substantially more difficult to reconstruct.

Noticeably absent from the Newfoundland press are any letters to the editor defending Sinn Fein or radical Irish nationalism. Surprisingly, one of the few sympathizers with full Irish independence came not from a newspaper, but rather from *The Cadet*, the magazine of the Catholic Cadet Corps, in the shape of an anonymous article on John Dillon, who succeeded Redmond as leader of the Nationalist Party in 1918:

It is unthinkable that so numerous a body as the Sinn Fein party should contain a majority of extremists like Professor De Valera. If he does not see that an armed rising under present conditions means annihilation, we may be sure that plenty of his followers do; and that without any diminution of their devotion to the Sinn Fein ideals — which are the ideals of the nation. Similarly, there must be plenty of Nationalists who regret the petty hedging and trimming, the feeble and illogical “provincial” policy, which has disgraced some elements of the Parliamentary Party in recent years. Ireland's best hope is that these two elements — sane Sinn Fein and aggressive Constitutionalist — will meet on a broad national platform, rejecting reckless violence and “West British” subservience alike, and standing under the banner of an independent Irish Ireland. Sinn Fein has made Ireland an international question; the new party could hold it there and wring justice from the nations, while avoiding all rash and unthinking violence. Such a party could gain an authority that neither Sinn Feiner nor Nationalist can hope for, and for such a party no better leader could be found than John Dillon. All well-wishers of Ireland will fervently pray for that outcome.<sup>62</sup>

*The Cadet* published numerous articles on Irish affairs during the war, and they generally displayed strong loyalty to Redmond and constitutional nationalism. By 1918, popular opinion in Ireland had shifted in favour of Sinn Fein, as evidenced by their victories in a number of Irish by-elections. For the most part, this shift in opinion was not reflected in Newfoundland, and the emergence of Sinn Fein received little coverage in the press. The support seen here for moderate Sinn Feiners

shows sentiments that were seldom observed amongst Newfoundlanders. While the article is still very much within the constitutional framework, and rejects violence, it acknowledges Sinn Féin's prominent position in Ireland, suggesting that popular opinion in Newfoundland may not always have been strictly on the side of the Nationalist Party.

The call for an "independent, Irish Ireland" is perhaps the most interesting part of the above passage. The language is unique in that it does not bitterly condemn Sinn Féin nationalism, arguing only for unity and a rejection of violence. No other document published during the war called for a scheme other than self-government within the British Empire. It is particularly baffling that a piece calling for Irish independence was published in a magazine directly connected with the Allied war effort. The rest of the magazine was peppered with obituaries for fallen soldiers who had once been members of the Catholic Cadet Corps. Although this document is not direct evidence that there was genuine sympathy for Sinn Féin nationalism and an Irish republic, it does suggest that members of the Newfoundland-Irish community were aware of such ideas.

Letters written in the months following the war allow us to better understand the ways in which the wartime context influenced Newfoundland reactions to Irish affairs. In 1919 there were fewer editorials and letters to the editor on Irish affairs, but one important letter to the *Harbour Grace Standard* shows a more anti-imperial tone than was seen during the war:

It is all very fine to talk about the solidity of the Empire, but if an Empire owes its existence to injustice inflicted upon a nation which it holds by conquest, then the foundation stones of that Empire are insecurely placed.

No fair minded man can truthfully make the statement that Ireland's attitude is not founded only on claims that history must substantiate. The people of Ireland never consented to the Act of Union no more than the people of Belgium consented to German occupation. It makes no difference whether England has held Ireland against its will for seven hundred years and Germany occupied Belgium for only four. The principle is the same. Had Germany not been conquered by outside forces, she would still be in Belgium and that unhappy nation would still be part and parcel of the German Empire. The English as a people are just and they must see that Ireland's agonized fight for freedom are simply the accumulated yearnings of the centuries during which Erin has never lost the hope of a final vindication of her claims.

W.M. Dooley.<sup>63</sup>

It is safe to say that during the war few would have likened the British presence in Ireland to the German occupation of Belgium. Although this observer may not have been endorsing an Irish republic, his portrayal of Britain as a foreign occupying power is different from the Irish nationalism observed in Newfoundland during the war. Observers of Irish affairs, though they advocated self-government for Ireland, were always keen that Ireland remain within the British world. One letter is



not enough to conclude that a discernable shift in opinion was occurring as imperial enthusiasm waned, but suggests that not all Newfoundlanders of Irish descent were keen on maintaining Britain's links to Ireland.

## MOVING BEYOND THE PRESS: EVIDENCE FROM OTHER SOURCES

Many scholars have limited their analyses of expressions of Irish diasporic nationalism to studies of the press, but moving beyond that focus is possible. Although McGowan's work on Irish-Canadian identity in Toronto relies heavily on the press, he uses a wide variety of other sources such as Catholic Church records. He examines the impact of Catholic education, the role of lay Catholic associations such as the Knights of Columbus, and the involvement of the Irish in World War I to argue that Irish identity in the "Queen's City" was waning by the turn of the century and being superseded by a Canadian one.<sup>64</sup> The application of such methods in Newfoundland is difficult. Catholic educational records for Newfoundland are poor, and the personal papers of prominent Catholics are rare. We may turn, however, to government documents, records from Irish fraternal societies, as well as documents produced by the Catholic Church to supplement evidence from the press and provide us with a fuller portrait of how Newfoundlanders reacted to events unfolding in Ireland.

Official government statements, though not particularly useful in reconstructing popular reactions, are important in determining the perceived importance of events within a community. Both Newfoundland's House of Assembly and its Legislative Council witnessed lengthy speeches on Ireland in the days following the Easter Rising. Like the press, Newfoundland politicians were keen to emphasize the loyalty of the Irish both in Ireland and Newfoundland. Interestingly, neither the speech delivered in the House of Assembly, nor that in the Legislative Council, was given by a Newfoundlander of Irish descent. On 2 May 1916, shortly after the Rising was quelled and before the execution of its leaders, Edward Parsons, a People's Party member from Harbour Grace, delivered a brief speech on Irish loyalty to the House of Assembly:

We can only regard as traitors such men as Casement, Pearce [sic] and others, hire-lings who are hindering the Empire in her efforts for victory, and this feeling prevails all over the Empire. The Irish, the English, the Scotch and the Welsh fall side by side, and never was Irish patriotism so high.<sup>65</sup>

John Anderson, a Scot best known for his campaign to bring daylight savings time to Newfoundland, read a far longer statement in the Legislative Council. He lauded the loyalty of the Irish in Newfoundland:

I might be allowed, and I take the liberty on behalf of the Irish people of Newfoundland and their descendants to express their deep regret and sympathy with the British



Government on the recent trouble which happened in Dublin, the capital of Ireland, a few days ago....

Ireland's allegiance to the British Crown is stronger to-day than at any time during the history of the Irish nation. John Redmond, the idol of the Nationalist Party of Ireland, and the future peacemaker and Premier of a United Ireland under Home Rule....

In a recent cable, Sir Edward Carson said he would gladly join with Redmond in doing anything to put down the rebels now and forever more. So say the Irish of Newfoundland, and all their friends of the Empire.

In this House, we have Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Newfoundlanders. In no part of the British Empire will you find a race more loyal to the British crown than the Irish and their descendants in Newfoundland. In fact, my friend, [the Hon. J.D. Ryan], who, if he were to-day here, would be sitting on my left, is abroad on business. He is the respected President of the Benevolent Irish Society, a society which stands for the Irish nation and devotion and loyalty to the Mother Country....

I am certain the Imperial Government have the sympathy and support of the Irish nation, and the Irish people in all parts of the globe. This Colony has given a large contribution of our Irish friends who are now at the front fighting for King and Empire. I am proud to proclaim throughout the length and breadth of this country that a respected member of the Irish Society has been honoured by our King with the Military Cross, which was awarded to Lieut. J.J. Donnelly for conspicuous gallantry and determination on the night of the 4th and 5th of November, 1915, on the Gallipoli Peninsula....

Thousands of the true blood of the Irish Race are now fighting for King, Country, and Righteousness. Thousands of the loyal sons of Ireland are now sleeping the sleep of the just on the battlefield, who sacrificed their lives on the altar of Right, Justice and Honour for the British Empire and their King.<sup>66</sup>

Parsons and Anderson, like Newfoundland's patriotic newspaper editors, were keen to emphasize Irish loyalty. Anderson, however, went a step further by focusing on the descendants of the Irish in Newfoundland. Irishness in Newfoundland was still regarded by some as a multigenerational phenomenon, which is important if one is to characterize the twentieth-century Irish in Newfoundland as a distinct ethnic group.

The St. John's municipal government also passed resolutions on Ireland, sparking a small controversy in 1917. Newfoundland's Prime Minister, Sir E.P. Morris, who was himself of Irish descent, attended the Imperial War Conference, at which it was generally believed that the Irish Question would be raised. Accordingly, the municipal council drafted a resolution in favour of Irish Home Rule:

And whereas a majority of the people of the city of St. John's are of Irish birth or extraction, and are sincerely desirous of securing for Ireland such institutions as are in accordance with the wishes of her people, and will conduce to Ireland's hearty support and cooperation in the great Imperial partnership to be formed upon the conclusion of peace.... Be it therefore resolved, that the Municipal Council of the City of St. John's, the Capital of Britain's Oldest Colony, place on record their profound convic-

tion that the granting of self-government to Ireland at the earliest opportunity is essential to the unity and well-being of the Empire, and in accordance with the glorious principles of freedom and liberty for which the Empire and Allies are fighting.<sup>67</sup>

Drafted on behalf of the citizens of “Irish birth or extraction,” this resolution does suggest that members of the Catholic community in St. John’s still identified with Ireland, and were viewed as a distinct group. The tone of the resolution is understandably pro-British. It was being sent to an official Imperial body, so an anti-British tone would have proven counter-productive. It should also be noted that resolutions passed by political bodies were often affected by considerations other than broad public opinion. Nevertheless, Newfoundlanders commenting on Irish affairs frequently emphasized the idea of keeping Ireland within the British Empire, and the belief that Irish self-government would be beneficial for the Empire as a whole.

There was opposition to the council’s resolution, but it was not a product of sectarianism or anti-Home Rule sentiment in the community. Rather, a number of observers took exception that the council was devoting its time to passing resolutions on international events, rather than concentrating on the business of running a municipality. One sarcastic poem in the *Daily News* began:

John Redmond will surely throw up his hat  
and all Ireland will sing with delight  
when they hear that our council awarded Home Rule  
at their meeting on last Thursday night.

It concluded:

For goodness sake, council, stick to your job  
leave political matters alone;  
keep your talents employed in civic affairs  
and perhaps good results will be shown.<sup>68</sup>

The records of Irish fraternal and benevolent associations form the most reliable source for reconstructing a distinct “Irish” or ethnic reaction to events in Ireland. The Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) of St. John’s was Newfoundland’s only explicitly Irish ethnic society. Membership was restricted to males with at least one Irish ancestor. In keeping with much of the evidence examined so far, documents from the BIS suggest that the members of the society were loyal to the Empire and the Allied war effort. The society’s minute books are filled with resolutions for soldiers who fell “nobly upholding the cause of the Empire.”<sup>69</sup> It must be noted, however, that not all society members may have been content with the society’s pro-Imperial stance—at least in the years leading up to the war. In writing to commemorate the society’s centenary in 1906, an anonymous author discussed the toasts

which were recited at St. Patrick's Day dinners in the nineteenth century, and lamented their pro-English outlook:

[The toasts] breathe an intense loyalty to England and to everything English. There is absolutely nothing, save the toast to the memory of St. Patrick, to indicate that the gathering was one of Irishmen celebrating a day that is distinctively a festival of the Irish nation.<sup>70</sup>

In the same passage, the author went on to address the BIS's rule that the society has the obligation "to avoid all controversy in political subjects:"

Did they mean that only those opinions which flattered the pride of England could be expressed, whilst those which voiced the highest political aspirations of Ireland and all true Irishman were to be suppressed? That 'avoiding all political controversy' meant the unchallenged expression of one set of opinions, and that loyalty, patriotism, and nationality, in an assembly of Irishmen, consisted in glorying in the degradation of Ireland and triumph of England over the suppression of Irish nationality? Such were the only opinions which found voice at these dinners. They were not only un-Irish, but were actually anti-Irish.... The whole spirit of the gathering, in song and speech, proclaimed the dependency of Ireland — the absorption of Irish nationality by that of England.<sup>71</sup>

While this passage expressed one individual's sentiments, the society's executive had to approve it, suggesting that at least some of the society's members agreed with these opinions. The writing shows a keen appreciation for Irish ethnic identity, especially as it relates to Britishness. The anti-English tone of this piece further demonstrates how wartime jingoism could have influenced Irish-Newfoundland opinion. It is also likely that sentiments such as these would not have been tolerated during the war.

Despite the society's pledge to avoid political commentary, the BIS passed official resolutions on Irish affairs. At the same time that the Municipal Council passed its resolution in favour of Irish Home Rule, the BIS drafted a similar motion, moderate in tone, to be sent to Morris. On the evening of 26 March, with "a very large attendance in evidence," the society discussed the Irish Question and unanimously carried the following resolution:

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED,

That the Benevolent Irish Society, in meeting assembled in the 112th year of its existence, place on record the earnest desire of its members that the land of their fathers may be granted the boon of self-government for which its people have so long yearned.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Prime Minister of Newfoundland be asked to co-operate in any proposals made at the Conference which may tend to give effect to the wishes of the Irish people.<sup>72</sup>

In a letter published in several St. John's daily newspapers, Morris replied that he supported Home Rule for Ireland and would speak in its favour should the issue arise.<sup>73</sup> Such affirmative action by Irish-Newfoundlanders, in addition to the report of an unusually large attendance at the Home Rule meeting, points to a strong interest in Irish affairs.

The society's interest in events in Ireland continued after the war. As many prominent Irish Americans put pressure on President Woodrow Wilson to raise the issue of Irish independence at the Versailles peace conference, the BIS at St. John's drafted its own resolution to be sent to France. In loyal language the members of the society called for Irish "self-government," arguing that it would benefit the Empire as a whole.<sup>74</sup> It is interesting that even as the triumph of Sinn Féin was complete, the Society's resolution called for Home Rule within the British Empire, an idea that had been virtually abandoned in Ireland and Irish America. Even as wartime jingoism faded, at least some Irish-Newfoundlanders continued to think of Ireland as being part of the British world. At a meeting on 6 April, prominent BIS member James O'Neill-Conroy, who in 1921 wrote Roman Catholic Archbishop Roche and asked for a mass of thanksgiving to honour the Anglo-Irish treaty,<sup>75</sup> inquired as to why the "Home Rule Resolution" had not been voted on.<sup>76</sup> It was decided that the matter required further discussion, and it seems as though a vote on the matter was never held, and the resolution never made it to Paris.

Throughout the Empire, distinctive Irish-Catholic communities were often centered around the Church. In Newfoundland, the Church retained much of its Irish flavour, and was dominated by Irish-born or Irish-educated priests, as well as a large number of Irish-born Christian Brothers, some of whom were from a nationalist or republican tradition. There is, however, little evidence of the Church endorsing radical Irish nationalism or republicanism. Archbishop Roche, born in Placentia, consistently supported the war effort and praised the loyalty of Newfoundland's Catholic population on numerous occasions. For example, in a letter to a Mr. "Patrick N.H. O'York," agent for the republican newspaper the *Irish World*, Roche rejected a request that he subscribe to the paper, noting that:

More than one-third of the people of the Colony are of Irish extraction and have persevered amongst them the best and noblest traditions of the Irish race, but there is no disloyalty amongst them to the Flag under whose protecting folds we live in perfect freedom. Consequently, such publications as the *Irish World* are likely to find scant courtesy amongst the people of this colony.<sup>77</sup>

In 1917 Roche gave a speech that celebrated the British Empire's influence in Newfoundland, but also mildly defended a perceived lack of loyalty amongst the Irish in Ireland and abroad, though Newfoundland was not specifically mentioned. He concluded "England must naturally expect that whilst justice is denied to Ireland, the Irish people throughout the world whether in the Colonies or in the States will not put forth their maximum effort but rather their minimum effort consistent with the preservation of their own liberty and freedom."<sup>78</sup> This, however, was not in keeping with the general attitude adopted by the Catholic Church in Newfoundland. Generally, it was opposed to any disloyalty, and must be regarded as an important agent in keeping Catholic Newfoundland opinion on the side of the Allies as the situation in Ireland became increasingly serious.

In the United States and Australia, the Catholic Church had a significant influence on how the descendants of Irish immigrants reacted to Irish affairs. The American Church had a prominent role in the postwar upsurge in Irish nationalism witnessed in many Irish-American communities.<sup>79</sup> In Australia, which like Newfoundland was home to a relatively small proportion of Irish-born migrants, important figures in the church hierarchy such as Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne disseminated Irish republican sentiment through large segments of the Irish-Australian population.<sup>80</sup> As in those cases, the Newfoundland Roman Catholic Church could significantly influence Catholic opinion in Newfoundland. The fact that the church hierarchy, especially through Archbishop Roche, appears to have been wholly supportive of the Allied cause goes a long way in explaining why Irish Newfoundlanders did not support radical Irish nationalism or republicanism.

## CONCLUSION

Several facets of Irish-Newfoundlanders' reactions to Irish affairs between 1916 and 1919 are clear. First and foremost, they remained loyal citizens of the British Empire. At the outbreak of the Easter Rising, most Irish-Newfoundlanders supported Irish Home Rule within the Empire. So did those with little or no Irish ancestry. Irish-Newfoundlanders were seldom exposed to republicanism. The press rarely commented on the rise of Sinn Féin, and the Church, so important in conditioning opinion, generally remained loyal to the Empire and the war effort. While there is evidence that some moderate republican thought emerged towards the end of the period, between 1916 and 1919 there was no discernible shift in popular opinion in Newfoundland. Petitions sent to Europe by the BIS and other bodies continued to ask for Home Rule, and separation from the Empire was never considered. Opposition to Home Rule was evident among some conservative Protestants, and was perceived by some to have been influenced by bigotry. The extent of such sentiment is difficult to gauge. The great interest which many Irish-Newfoundlanders had in the Irish Question between 1916 and 1919 also suggests that a multi-generational Irish

identity existed. A more elaborate study over a longer temporal span could expand upon this finding. Although the Newfoundland-Irish continued to “lament the wrongs of Ireland,” affinity for Ireland existed alongside a strong sense of loyalty to their island home, and to the British Empire.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>See Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999); Robert McLaughlin “Irish Nationalism and Orange Unionism in Canada: A Reappraisal,” *Eire-Ireland*, 41.3&4 (2006), 80-109; David Shanahan, “The Irish Question in Canada: Ireland, the Irish and Canadian Politics, 1880-1922” (PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 1989); T. J. Rowland, “From Neutrality to War: Irish-American Catholics and World War I, 1914-1917” (PhD Thesis, George Washington University, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>CO 194/296 Harris to Long, 18 March 1919. Quoted in Patricia Ruth O’Brien, “The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: The Administration of the War Effort, 1914-1918” (MA Thesis, Memorial University, 1981), 134.

<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed analysis of the factors that influenced popular opinion in Ireland during the period, see Charles Townshend, “The Suppression of the Easter Rising,” *Bullán*, 1.1 (1994), 42-45.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>5</sup>David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56.

<sup>6</sup>Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 34.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition* (London: Routledge, 1998), 200.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>13</sup>Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 164.

<sup>14</sup>John J. Mannion, “Introduction,” in *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography*, ed. John J. Mannion (St. John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1977), 7. As early as 1857, fully 90 per cent of all residents were native-born.

<sup>15</sup>*Census of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1911, Recapitulation, Table I, Section B.

<sup>16</sup>*Census of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1921, Table XII.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, Electoral District of St. John’s East, Table I, Section B; Electoral District of St. John’s West, Table I, Section B.

<sup>19</sup>*Census of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1911, Electoral District of Placentia & St. Mary’s, Table I, Section B; Electoral District of Ferryland, Table I, Section B.

<sup>20</sup>Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Toronto: P.D. Meany Company, 1993), 9. Multi-generational Irish identity is also discussed in Catherine Nash, "Genealogical Identities," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20 (2002), 33-36.

<sup>21</sup>John FitzGerald discusses the links between Irish and Newfoundland Roman Catholicism, and their effects on Irish-Newfoundland identity in the nineteenth century at length in his "Conflict and Culture in Irish-Newfoundland Roman Catholicism, 1829-1850" (PhD Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1997).

<sup>22</sup>*Census of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1921, Table VIII.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Table XI.

<sup>24</sup>McGowan, *The Waning of the Green*; Timothy J. Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880-1928* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup>The question of Irish identity in Newfoundland has been addressed by a number of scholars. Salient works include: Willeen Keough, "Ethnicity as Intercultural Dialogue: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 31.1 (2005), 18-28; Patrick O'Flaherty, "Caught in the Nets: Growing up Irish Catholic in Newfoundland," *Canadian Forum*, 65.755 (1986), 6-10; Terry McDonald, "Where Have All the (English) Folk Songs Gone," *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14.2 (1999), 180-192; Johanne Devlin Trew, "The Forgotten Irish: Contested Sites and Narratives of Nation in Newfoundland," *Ethnologies*, 27.2 (2005), 43-77.

<sup>26</sup>McGowan, *The Waning of the Green*, 186.

<sup>27</sup>The sectarian nature of the nineteenth-century press is discussed extensively in Maudie Whelan, "Newspaper Press in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland: Politics, Religion and Personal Journalism" (PhD Thesis, Memorial University, 2003).

<sup>28</sup>Patrick O'Flaherty, *Lost Country: The Rise and Fall of Newfoundland, 1843-1933* (St. John's: Long Beach, 2005), 272.

<sup>29</sup>Governor Sir Walter Davidson in a letter to J.R. Bennett, suggested that the *Irish World* was "Antagonistic to Imperial affairs" and should be barred from the mail. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador [PANL], GN 2.14.40, Office of the Colonial Secretary Fonds, Davidson to Bennett, 17 March 1917.

<sup>30</sup>In 1916 alone, the London Press Bureau censored 343,668 press cablegrams. Any news "objectionable on political grounds; news, for example, calculated to injure the susceptibilities of the Allied Countries" was prohibited. See Colin Lovelace, "British Press Censorship During the First World War," in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, eds. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), 312.

<sup>31</sup>*Daily News*, 26 April 1916.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 28 April 1916.

<sup>33</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 4 May 1916.

<sup>34</sup>*Evening Advocate*, 12 May 1916.

<sup>35</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 16 December 1918.

<sup>36</sup>*Daily News*, 26 April 1916.

<sup>37</sup>O'Flaherty, *Lost Country*, 253.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>39</sup>M.P. Mulcrone, "The World War I Censorship of the Irish-American Press" (PhD Thesis, University of Washington, 1993), 134.

<sup>40</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 12 May 1916.

<sup>41</sup>*Daily News*, 29 March 1916.

<sup>42</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 7 October 1916.

<sup>43</sup>*Daily News*, 14 October 1916.

<sup>44</sup>S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 125.

<sup>45</sup>*Daily News*, 4 May 1916.

<sup>46</sup>*Harbour Grace Standard*, 19 April 1918.

<sup>47</sup>Melvin Baker, "Sir Patrick Thomas McGrath," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume 15, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 643-644.

<sup>48</sup>"W.J. O'Neill," *Newfoundland Quarterly*, 53.3 (1954), 58. Unfortunately, very few issues of the *Plaindealer* have survived. Those from our period may be found at the Archives and Manuscripts Division, Memorial University. Sir Robert Bond Collection, COLL-237, Box 37.

<sup>49</sup>*Plaindealer*, 25 May 1918.

<sup>50</sup>O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association," 133.

<sup>51</sup>*Evening Herald*, 5 May 1917.

<sup>52</sup>*Plaindealer*, 20 April 1918.

<sup>53</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 134-135.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>55</sup>*Daily News*, 13 March 1917.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 15 March 1917.

<sup>57</sup>*Evening Advocate*, 15 February 1917.

<sup>58</sup>*Daily Star*, 3 March 1917.

<sup>59</sup>*Evening Advocate*, 7 March 1917.

<sup>60</sup>Suzanne Ellison, *Historical Directory of Newfoundland and Labrador Newspapers* (St. John's: Queen Elizabeth II Library, 2001), 146-147.

<sup>61</sup>See Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 132.

<sup>62</sup>"John Dillon," *The Cadet*, 4 March 1918, 30.

<sup>63</sup>*Harbour Grace Standard*, 21 March 1919.

<sup>64</sup>McGowan, *The Waning of the Green*, 216.

<sup>65</sup>*Proceedings of the House of Assembly, Newfoundland*, 1916, 575.

<sup>66</sup>*Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Newfoundland*, 3 May 1916, 200-202.

<sup>67</sup>From *Daily News*, 7 April 1917.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 13 April 1917.

<sup>69</sup>PANL, MG 612, Reel 76, *Benevolent Irish Society Minutes*, 10 February 1917.

<sup>70</sup>*Benevolent Irish Society, Centenary Volume: Benevolent Irish Society of St. John's, Newfoundland* (St. John's: Benevolent Irish Society, 1906), 22.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>PANL, MG 612, Reel 76, *Benevolent Irish Society Minutes*, 26 March 1917.

<sup>73</sup>*Daily News*, 7 April 1917.

<sup>74</sup>PANL, MG 612, Reel 76, *Benevolent Irish Society Minutes*, 14 March 1919.

<sup>75</sup>Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, 107/15/31, Roche to O'Neill-Conroy, 23 December 1921.



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<sup>76</sup>PANL, MG 612, Reel 76, *Benevolent Irish Society Minutes*, 6 April 1919.

<sup>77</sup>Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, 107/14/8 Roche to O'York, 17 December 1915.

<sup>78</sup>Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, 107/30/1, n.d., 1917, Lecture given by Roche, 14.

<sup>79</sup>Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 362.

<sup>80</sup>Malcolm Campbell, "Emigrant Responses to the War and Revolution, 1914-1921: Irish Opinion in the United States and Australia," *Irish Historical Studies*, 32 (2000), 86.