Irish Immigration: Church State and Catholicism 1919-1929
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I declare that the work contained within this thesis is entirely my own unless otherwise referenced, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.
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Irish Immigration: Church, State and Catholicism 1919-1929

All is not well with our country. Our population is declining, we are losing some of the best of our race stock by emigration and their place is being taken by those, who, whatever their merits, are not Scottish.... Our Churches, perhaps, no longer have the same hold on the hearts of our people...and it seems to many, we are in danger of very soon reaching the point where Scotland will have nothing distinctive to show the world.

John Buchan, speech in the House of Commons, 22 November 1932

Introduction

As Scotland emerged from the Great War traumatised by its battle casualties and ill-equipped for an economic crisis, its certainties of moral, intellectual and religious superiority challenged, it turned anxiously in upon itself. There can be few examples amongst the victorious powers of that conflict where a sense of defeatism set in so rapidly amongst its middle and upper classes as they surveyed their country. Many of the fundamental convictions that had underpinned pre-war Scotland seemed to be disappearing. As a partner in the project of Empire, Scotland’s voice appeared to have been marginalised if not ignored, her loyalty and sacrifice apparently given scant regard in relation to the disloyal and rebellious Irish; her industries, converted wholeheartedly to the war effort, given little help to adjust to the post war conditions; her working class, seemingly unruly, disaffected and inclined to Bolshevism; her politics changed out of recognition with the collapse of Liberalism and the rise of Labour, and, lastly, her religion threatened by a resurgent Catholicism, a product of Irish immigration, and the apparent indifference of its own people, a product of the war. As Callum Brown has shown:

By the end of the war, the social Gospel of Christian Socialism which had brought a consensual approach to social politics in the 1890s and 1900s and which had brought church and Labour close together in the pursuit of a fairer society, was in tatters. Not only had the advent of rent strikes and “Red Clydeside” produced a politicisation of social improvement which alienated Church leaders, but the churches themselves took a surge to the political right...The First World War heralded a profoundly
confrontational era for inter-war Scottish religion, characterised by classism and eugenics, and incorporating an hostility to the Labour movement and Irish Catholics.¹

The ‘Grand Peur’ of the Scottish middle class was reflected in the Protestant panic of the Scottish churches. The Church of Scotland and the United Free Church filled with Jeremiashs pronouncing the impending doom of the land of Knox. Scotland appeared to some to be threatened on all sides, from prolific aliens within, to alien ideologies and religions from without. The idea took hold of Scotland as a dead or dying country, reinforced by writers like George Malcolm Thomson in *Caledonia or the Future of the Scots*² which provided a dystopian vision of a future Scotland in which it had become an Irish colony and the original inhabitants a minority in their own country: ‘The first fact about the Scot is that he is a man eclipsed. The Scots are a dying people. They are being replaced in their own country by a people alien in race, temperament and religion.’³ Scotland was neither dead nor dying but in an almost indefinable way it felt defeated. Such views were taken seriously by many in Scottish society and it will be the purpose here to show how that sense of defeat came to be directed against the Catholic Irish.

The experience of Scotland in the 1920s and 1930s has been described as a ‘sectarian crisis’ and the historiography in religious terms has tended to concentrate on the rise of militant Protestantism, particularly in the work of scholars like Handley, Gallagher and Walker. The Church of Scotland’s anti-Irish campaign of the 1920s has been considered as part of a long standing Scottish tradition of ‘No Popery’ and seen as of a piece with the later demagoguery of the Scottish Protestant League and Protestant Action led by Alexander Ratcliffe and John Cormack respectively. However, as Bruce has illustrated, the idea of the prevalence of Scottish anti Catholicism, particularly in the 19th century, can be and has on occasion been overstated: ‘in some places there was some sympathy for aggressive anti Catholicism but local preferences were invariably over-ruled by cosmopolitan elites who regarded social order as more important than local values.’⁴ It will be argued here that the

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² G M Thomson *Caledonia or the future of the Scots* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, London, 1927)
³ G M Thomson *Caledonia* in R Finlay *Nationalism, Race, Religion and the Irish Question in Inter War Scotland Innes Review*, Volumes XLII, No1, Spring 1991, p53
⁴ S Bruce, T Glendinning, Iain Patterson, Michael Rosie *Sectarianism in Scotland* (Edinburgh University press, 2004) p24
1920s represented a unique set of circumstances and was in fact a break with Presbyterian Church tradition and that of the ‘cosmopolitan elites.’ It will also be argued that to regard the anti-Irish campaign as simply a manifestation of ‘No Popery’ is to miss several fundamental points about post Great War Scotland. For example the impact of the Irish War of Independence on Scotland has not so far been assessed. The intelligence and police reports gave credence to the idea that there was an armed Sinn Fein presence of twenty thousand men in the West of Scotland and that the IRA were only waiting there moment to launch this ‘army’ against targets in Scotland. Groundless though those fears were in reality, it will be shown that the psychological effect of the Irish War impacted far more on Scotland than it did on the rest of the United Kingdom and consequently the perception of the Irish was radically altered. It should be noted that before the Great War the Irish Catholics were firmly rooted to the bottom of the economic pile. As Tom Gallagher puts it:

In Glasgow the Irish would dominate the unskilled labour market for generations, finding work...as casual construction labourers, coal heavers and as sweated labour in textiles....They were an indispensable mobile workforce whose contribution to the ‘Second City of the Empire’ went unappreciated by contemporary chroniclers.5

It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to describe the Irish Catholics in Scotland before 1918 as a coolie class. Derided and despised by the bourgeoisie and treated with resentment and suspicion they were still not a political or social threat. The restricted franchise before the 1918 Reform Act ensured that a sizeable proportion of their number did not have the vote and for those that did the Irish Home Rule issue could generally ensure their loyalty to the Liberal party. In any case the Labour party with certain significant exceptions was still in pursuit of the respectable working class. In 1909 the majority and minority reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws ‘the latter drafted by Sidney and Beatrice Webb and signed by George Lansbury were as one in their support for the forcible segregation of those inefficient parasitical elements, the so called residuum who were deemed incapable of improvement.’6 In 1914 you could not be more ‘residuum’ than be an Irish Catholic in Glasgow. In 1914 the Irish could be safely left as hewers of wood and drawers of

5 Tom Gallagher The Catholic Irish In Scotland in T M Devine (ed) Scotland in Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century (Donald,Edinburgh,1991)p21
water. Yet by 1924 John Wheatley would be one of the most effective cabinet ministers in the first Labour government, an Irish Free State had been created in twenty-six counties of Ireland and the 1918 Education Act in Scotland had ensured a place for state funded Catholic Education that was in advance of any other part of the United Kingdom. The Catholic Irish had lived in Scotland in considerable numbers since the 1850s but they arrived in the 1920s. Ironically this arrival coincided with the very moment at which they were ceasing to be ‘Irish’.

It was this new awareness of the Irish that prompted and fuelled the Church’s anti-Irish campaign. ‘No Popery’ was an element, but the reasons for the attack were more complex than simple religious bigotry. The Churches were not engaging in a proletarian crusade, this was a bid for moral leadership to be backed up by legislative sanction. The arguments employed, while discredited and distasteful by present standards, were at the forefront of intellectual discourse at the time. Race theory and Social Darwinism, while familiar concepts in the Nineteenth century, were reaching their height in debates over eugenics and ‘Race Suicide’ in the 1920s. The Church of Scotland would attempt to conduct its case as a racial rather than a religious issue and there will be an analysis of the intellectual justifications put forward by the leading Church advocate of immigration restriction, Dr John White. The work that has been done on the Church of Scotland campaign, most notably by Stewart Brown, has demonstrated that the aim of the Church was to place itself at the head of a nativist movement that would return the Church to its position of pre-eminence in Scottish society. At its root was the Presbyterian concept of ‘Twa kingdoms’, the idea that the nation consisted of two kingdoms Christ’s and the King’s, and that the state or ‘civil magistrate’ had a duty to be guided by the Church.

The Government response, as will be shown here, differed in Scotland to that of the United Kingdom. What has generally been accepted is that the Church case fell on the ‘Imperial’ issue of the position of citizens of the Irish Free State as British subjects. What has not been widely considered is how successful the Church was in winning influential adherents to its cause within the Scottish Unionist Party and how close they came in Scotland to successfully persuading the Government of their case. To the Scots the Irish War of Independence had been a defeat and the creation of the Free

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State effectively made the Irish foreigners. To the British, Ireland was still firmly within the Empire and citizens of the Free State were British subjects. The latter interpretation prevailed but it will be demonstrated that this was not without considerable resistance from the Scottish Office. The will be a re-appraisal of the roles of Sir John Gilmour the Scottish Secretary and Walter Elliot, his main lieutenant, and the evidence presented here will indicate that they both may have been considerably more in sympathy with the Church case than has been previously thought. Equally the politics of Scottish Home Rule and the issue of Irish immigration became entwined by the late 1920s with the creation of the National Party of Scotland. Richard Finlay has shown that the Irish question was a divisive one in the early days of Scottish nationalism but what has not so far been discussed is how the Unionist Party responded to the issue of Scottish home rule and how one of its leading strategists proposed using the restriction of Irish immigration as a means of splitting the nationalist movement.

Lastly there is the response of the forgotten people of the controversy, the Catholic Irish themselves. It is still an under researched area very probably because the archives of the Catholic Church in Scotland contain certain surprising lacunae concerning the 1920s. For example in the minutes of the meetings of the Catholic hierarchy throughout the 1920s there is no reference to the Presbyterian campaign, nor in the Archdiocese in Glasgow, does there appear to be any correspondence on the issue. This appears at first sight to be rather baffling but it will be seen that the Church did respond to the attacks on the Irish but that the concerns of the Scottish hierarchy were not necessarily those of the Irish Catholic community and that the chief spokesman for that community, Charles Diamond, was in many ways more of a hindrance to Irish integration in Scotland than a help.

There is one other observation to be made here and that concerns the primary sources for this thesis. There will be discussion of much evidence that has not previously been considered but the research has shown that the period is one of curious silences, Presbyterian historical silence and Catholic archival silence. It is in probing these silences that much work still needs to be done.

At this point it is necessary to examine the course of the Irish War of Independence as it was played out in Scotland. The events of the years 1919 to 1921 were to have a

8 R Finlay Nationalism, Race, Religion and the Irish Question in Inter-war Scotland The Innes Review, Volume XLII, No1, Spring 1991, 46-67
fundamental effect on the Scottish perception of its Irish population. The armed struggle between the republicans and the British Government, though it saw little in the way of actual violence in Scotland, profoundly altered the image of the Irish. It will be a central contention here that much of what followed in the 1920s in terms of anti Irish sentiment had it roots in that conflict.
Chapter One
Irish Disturbances

It is beyond all question that Republican Troops are in this city with the avowed object of taking part in hostile operations.9

Procurator Fiscal of Glasgow

In the academic work that has been done on this period comparatively little has been produced from a specifically Scottish perspective. It is perhaps natural that the ‘Anglo-Irish war’ has been seen as just that, a conflict between Ireland and England or even between Ireland and the British Empire. The Scottish experience has been something of an adjunct but there has been a general assumption in the light of James Handley’s seminal The Irish in Modern Scotland10 that the Irish Diaspora in Scotland made a significant contribution to Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army in terms of arms and financial support. ‘It was not until guerrilla fighting broke out in Ireland that sympathisers in Scotland had an opportunity of rendering effective service. That service in money and materials was given so generously that the contribution of Scotland to the Sinn Fein campaign far exceeded that of any other country, including Ireland, and was in the opinion of Mr de Valera the chief factor in its success.’11 However, later scholarship has questioned this assumption. Most notably Iain Patterson has argued that Sinn Fein activity was essentially minimal in Scotland and of little real relevance to the Anglo-Irish war.12 More recent work by Peter Hart13 and forthcoming works by Mairtin O’Cathain14 have inclined more towards Handley’s position. In order to establish as far as possible the reality that the lies between the two, or, more interestingly, if there is a position that reconciles the two, the object will be to re-examine the evidence from the viewpoint of Sinn Fein’s Scottish adversaries.

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9 Irish Disturbances Files National Archives of Scotland HH55/69
10 James Handley, The Irish in Modern Scotland, (Cork University Press, 1947)
11 Ibid, p297
12 Iain D Patterson, The Activities of Irish Republican Physical Force Organisations in Scotland 1919-21, Scottish Historical Review, Volume LXXII 1 No 193 April 1995
14 Mairtin O’Cathain, A Winnowing Spirit: Sinn Fein in Scotland 1905-38 and Mairtin O’Cathain, Michael Collins and Scotland, Both forthcoming 2009
There is a natural tendency in the historiography of the period to concentrate on the more ‘glamorous’ aspects of the Irish Republican Army and the political activities of Sinn Fein. What might be termed the ‘Ballad History’ of gun running, gun battles and jail breaks, or rather attempted jail breaks, like the ‘Smashing of the Van’ incident in Glasgow in 1921. Certainly the arguments have tended to emphasise the effectiveness, or otherwise, of actual military operations. However, the concentration here will be on the attitudes and perceptions of the actors primarily concerned with combating the ‘Sinn Fein threat’ as they believed it to exist at the time. This will be achieved by a detailed analysis of some of the official correspondence concerning Scottish Office policy. One factor to be borne in mind throughout is the psychological effect of an armed Irish rebellion on ‘official’ Scotland that is the main significance of the period. It is for this reason that much of what follows will draw on ‘The Irish Disturbances’ files in the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) (HH55/62-74) which cast an interesting light, not only on the activities of Sinn Fein, but into the official mindset of the period. These files were released in 1993-4 and while they have been studied and cited by students of the period this is the first attempt to examine them systematically in their own right. The analysis which follows seeks to provide an insight, not only into Government thinking of the time, its intelligence gathering and policy formulation, but into the attitudes of law officers, Chief Constables and even beat policemen.

This relatively brief period of Scottish history had a profound effect on Scotland that far outweighed the actual military and material support given to the Irish cause. Tom Gallagher has argued that ‘No evidence has emerged that Michael Collins in Dublin sought to ferment industrial unrest in Glasgow, so as to over extend the British. The Republican leadership had allotted a different and more crucial role to the Irish in Scotland: … to provide money and military supplies to keep the war effort going back home and safe houses for IRA men on the run.’ This, in purely military terms, may well be true but that did not mean that the Scottish authorities did not believe that this was his aim and, as will be shown here, there is evidence that suggests that Sinn Fein deliberately encouraged them in that opinion. What the evidence does reveal is the remarkable effect that the Irish war had on official and wider Scotland. It was certainly far in advance of any actual campaign. There was

15 Gallagher, pp90-91
infinitely more damage caused by the IRA in London and Liverpool than there ever was in Glasgow and yet in Scotland there was a readiness to believe in an enemy within which was not only well armed and organised but might join up with the presumed disaffected Bolshevik element of the working classes. It should be remembered that on 31 January 1919 during the ‘Forty Hours Strike’ the Government dispatched 12,000 troops, 100 Lorries and six tanks onto the streets of Glasgow. The Red Flag in George Square had raised the spectre of Revolution and, to a frightened middle class, there was not much to distinguish Sinn Fein from Bolshevism. There was also a sense of the perceived fragility of Scotland’s post war society and its particular economic vulnerability. Bombings and arson may have caused some economic dislocation in England but it could not bring the country to a standstill, whereas the geographical concentration of industrial Scotland implied that attacks on particular strategic locations could effectively paralyse an already faltering economy. In Scotland the majority of Irish immigration was concentrated in those very areas. Most large companies in West Central Scotland employed the men as labourers and many middle class families hired the women as servants.

II

At one o’clock in the morning on what was a fairly dank October night in Barrhead, Sergeant McKenzie encountered a sizeable group of young men apparently engaged in some kind of military ‘route march’. The report of this chance encounter subsequently rose through the various levels of Government and within four days made its way to the Cabinet. On its journey it acquired ever more sinister overtones having passed through the hands of the Chief Constable of Glasgow, the Special Branch, the Director of Intelligence, the Lord Advocate and The Secretary for Scotland. A close examination of the information the reports contain builds a picture of an intelligence source that was obviously believed by the Chief Constable and in turn was readily accepted by others in the chain. The actual source for the Chief Constable’s alarming assessment will be discussed later but the remarkable aspect at this stage is the credence to which experienced police, intelligence officers, civil servants and politicians were willing to give to the claims of the IRA’s capabilities.

16 Hart, p 92 Between October 1920 and July 1921 there were 58 cases of arson in London, 54 in Liverpool and 15 in Glasgow and 38, 41, and 5 cases of Telegraph sabotage respectively. On the other hand there were 16 cases of arms and explosives thefts in Glasgow in the same period compared to two in London and none in Liverpool.
Report of Sgt McKenzie 14/10/20

About 1 a.m. on Thursday 14th Oct, 1920 while patrolling Main St Barrhead, ...I observed a large crowd of men, numbering about 200 coming from Glen St into Main St where a halt was made for a minute or two, they then moved along Main St in the direction of Neilston. I followed after them and when near the junction of South Arthurlie Road I met a squad of them coming back again, and saw another number standing near the junction of Cross Arthurlie St. I went over to the second squad, and turning my light on, I asked if they were looking for any particular place, but I received no reply, and those on whom my light was shining turned away their heads. I saw that they were all young and respectably dressed men, and without any word being uttered they moved along Main St after the first squad. I followed after and kept behind until they made a halt opposite St Johns R.C. Chapel, Darnley Road. After remaining halted for about five minutes, I could hear them in the front moving off in the direction of Glasgow, and the squad in rear about 80 in number turned about and proceeded along Darnley Road...in the direction of Paisley.

There was little or no talking among them, nor did I hear any word of command being given, but they seemed to march and halt at some command, which I think was passed quietly from the front to the rear. They did not keep any regular formation of fours, but they had what looked like connecting files between groups, and they marched at a quick pace behind one another and it was quite evident they were on a route march.

I did not see any sign of arms. Some of them carried coats over their arm or shoulder. I did not recognise any of them ...and I am of the opinion that they were all strangers.

...The morning was very dark and a slight rain was falling which made everything very indistinct....

At this stage Sgt McKenzie had reported nothing more than 200 young men apparently on a 'route march' in Barrhead at one in the morning. Granted, two

17 NAS HH55/62 Police Reports on Sinn Fein activity and precautionary measures 1920
hundred young men walking around Barrhead at one o’clock on a wet night would be suspicious even now. On the other hand there was nothing to suggest that this was in any way a ‘combat’ formation. However, as far as the authorities were concerned this was another example of ‘illegal drilling,’ an issue that began to exercise their minds particularly in late 1920. There would appear to be no evidence of this being an armed group or, on the basis of the police reports, that the formation had a specific objective. So the question remains why was Sinn Fein indulging in what looks like a magical mystery tour of Nitshill and Barrhead on the early hours of a Thursday morning? Equally, how had they managed to attract two hundred young men to participate in such an exercise on a week night? Even in 1920 it is a fair assumption that many of the participants of this midnight march had work to go to in the morning. It was something of a feature of Sinn Fein activity, at least as far as illegal drilling was concerned, that it tended to take place at the weekend. The Chief Constable of Glasgow obviously reached his own conclusions. In a report to the Scottish Office the following day he recounted the events of the night and added how plain clothes policemen had followed a number of the party but were unable to discover any names of the men involved. He then added yet more alarming information

It is reported that many of the men ‘appeared to be carrying something bulky’ and that in one case what appeared to be a revolver was seen protruding from a man’s inside pocket.

This midnight marching has a sinister aspect. It looks as if the Sinn Feiners were preparing for action.18

Between Sgt McKenzie’s first report and the Chief Constable’s, the ‘route march’ has taken on a considerably more ‘sinister aspect.’ Originally the nearest the marchers had to anything resembling weaponry was that ‘some of them carried coats over their arm or shoulder’. This in the space of a few hours has been promoted to ‘appeared to be carrying something bulky.’ Not only this but ‘in one case what appeared to be a revolver was seen protruding from a man’s inside pocket.’ The key phrase of the Chief Constable’s is: ‘This midnight marching has a sinister aspect. It looks as if the Sinn Feiners were preparing for action.’ The reason for the Chief Constable’s conviction that military action by Sinn Fein was imminent became apparent in his

18 NAS HH55//62
letter to the Under Secretary of Scotland two days later when he reported on a secret Sinn Fein meeting that took place in Greenock on the 16th attended by representatives of 37 Sinn Fein clubs:

It was reported that the strength of the Sinn Fein Volunteers in Glasgow and the West of Scotland was 30,000, and that 20,000 had revolvers, and 2,000 had rifles all of the modern pattern, with unlimited ammunition; that they had plans of Maryhill Barracks and of all the Territorial Drill Halls in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, and Dunbartonshire.

The delegates were instructed to inform their several battalions that an order might be received at any time to mobilise, and to be ready to act either in Ireland or Scotland as might be required.

The Director of Intelligence, Scotland House, and the GOC the troops in the Glasgow area have been supplied with this information19

By now the military capability of Sinn Fein has risen to a potentially armed force of 20,000 men of whom 2,000 had rifles. 2,000 riflemen would have been approximately the size of a British brigade of the period and would have alarmed any responsible Chief Constable, and yet, as Hart points out the reality was somewhat different: ‘Glasgow began with fewer than a hundred volunteers in 1919, but reorganisation there and elsewhere in Scotland produced a potential force of 600 men by August 1920. …all told there were perhaps a thousand men enrolled in British IRA units in the crucial twelve months between July 1920 and July 1921. How many of these were actually available for duty or active at any given time was a different matter…Only very rarely were whole units mobilised for an operation, whereupon many so ordered failed to turn up.'20 The discrepancy between what Sinn Fein was, even theoretically, able to put into the field and what the Chief Constable believed to be the case is so marked that the question has to be asked what was the source of this ‘private information’ and why was such suspect intelligence believed, not only by a perhaps understandably panicky Chief Constable, but by Special Branch and also prompted no less a figure than Basil Thompson, the Director of Intelligence, to reinforce the message by reporting it independently to the Scottish Office the following day?

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19 NAS HH55/62
20 P Hart ‘Operations Abroad’: The IRA in Britain, 1919-23 The English Historical Review, Volume 115, No. 460 (Feb,2000) p73-74
In answering the questions posed above it is useful to examine a press report covering a Sinn Fein rally at St Andrew’s Hall Glasgow on the 12 September 1920:

Fully 8,000 Sinn Feiners took part in the proceedings ... the audiences were composed chiefly of women and young men and conspicuous among the platform party was a number of priests wearing Sinn Fein rosettes... The hall and passages were lined with young men described as Irish Volunteers The speeches were all in the same strain-violent denunciation of the Government and British democracy.... One speaker contended that Irishmen were justified in employing every weapon to secure their ends, and confirmed reports in the press that Sinn Fein had an army in Scotland and, he said it would be well to remember that that army was for use. (My italics)

This was obviously the hyperbole of a political meeting but it was nonetheless a sizeable demonstration of numbers if not necessarily of force. What is interesting is that Sinn Fein was proclaiming from a public platform that it had ‘an army’ in Scotland. In fact they had no such thing and they, or at least their leadership, knew it. This in itself would not be indicative of a deliberate policy on the part of Sinn Fein as inflated claims to martial prowess are part and parcel of the rhetorical currency of any political group with an armed wing. As such it would not warrant attention if it were not for one of the more remarkable documents from an ‘informer’ in the papers of Sir John Gilmour, later the first Secretary of State for Scotland. Then in the Whips’ office, Gilmour wrote to Robert Munro, Secretary for Scotland, one month after the mysterious route march described above. It is a rather anxious enquiry about the safety of Bonar Law, leader of the Unionists in the Cabinet and long time opponent

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21 Scotsman 13 September 1920
22 It should be pointed out that at this time the Government minister with responsibility for Scotland, Robert Munro, was Secretary for, and not of, Scotland and as such outside of the Cabinet. Equally, the Scottish Office was largely based in London therefore the civil servants charged with dealing with Sinn Fein did so at arms length. Both being outside the cabinet loop and being some geographical distance for the action proved to have been a considerable influence on the actions of the officials. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography referring to Munro’s actions during wartime and later labour unrest states that ‘It is easy to see the mixture of timidity and unimaginative overreaction in Munro’s role as Secretary for Scotland. However, ‘timidity and unimaginative overreaction’ as will be seen from the files were traits far from confined to Munro himself.
of Irish Home Rule, should he visit Edinburgh in December. There was considerable concern that the IRA were planning to kidnap key members of the Cabinet and that ministerial visits to Scotland may have provided the opportunity to put this plan into action. It should also be noted that Gilmour himself was an Orangeman who took a particular interest in the activities of Sinn Fein. There is in Gilmour’s papers no record of Munro’s reply but there is, however, the following report sent by the Secretary for Scotland. The format is two type written sheets with no indication as to the identity of the author. Nevertheless it could hardly have made comforting reading. The information it contains makes it worthwhile quoting in its entirety:

Report on Sinn Fein Activity sent by Secretary for Scotland to Sir John Gilmour MP Dated 28/11/20

On Sunday evening 27th inst, three of the Southside companies of the Irish Republican Army met for drill in St Frances Young Men’s Society Hall, Errol St, under the command of Thomas J Murray, John Ryan and P J Duffy, with their respective military drill instructors.

On this same evening groups of the Irish Citizen Army in the Anderston district appeared to be unusually active. About a dozen of them visited the Workers International Union Hall, 550 Argyle Street and had an interview within the hall with Thomas L Smith, the Communist leader of the International Workers of the World. They subsequently left and went round to Laughran’s Public House at Elderslie St. The employees of this spirit shop are all Sinn Feiners and the charge hand is an official of the ‘Thomas Ashe’ Sinn Fein Club, Anderston and the ‘Patrick McDonough’ Club, Partick. Nelson who is on the run probably now in Dublin and McCann who is in HMP Glasgow are members of the before mentioned clubs.

On Sunday evening at 6.30 Mr Jack Leckie was the lecturer at a meeting held under the auspices of the Communist Labour Party (Anderston section) in the Socialist Hall, 569 Argyle St. The hall was crowded. Mr Robert Fleck, Partick, occupied the chair. Leckie’s subject was: - ‘Irish Martyrdom’ and he delivered an extremely violent speech in which he advocated physical force as the only effective means to adopt to obtain their rights. They had nothing to loose (sic) but their chains, etc. etc.
At 10 o'clock on Saturday morning a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in St Joseph's R C Church, 40 North Woodside Road, for the repose of souls of the Rev Father Griffin and Rorin (sic probably Kevin) Barry murdered by the order of the British Government in order to drive terror into the hearts of the Irish people and kill the soul and spirit of the Irish nation. The Rev Joseph Reilly, was celebrant and the Rev James McConnell, delivered the panegyric. The mass was arranged by the 'Anne Devlin' branch of Cumma-Na-Ban, whose members wore dark armlets. Two companies of the Irish Volunteers were present wearing Sinn Fein favours and Volunteer badges.

There were present about fifteen hundred persons – a record attendance in this parish for a downright wet morning.

The writer desires to point out that the callous and deliberate murders, the burning of creameries and houses, is exasperating the Irish people of Glasgow to the utmost limit of human endeavour and is straining the bonds of discipline to breaking point. The Irish Volunteers are one of the best disciplined and one of the biggest forces in Scotland and may break out of hand at any moment. 23

It is the language and nature of this report that gives an inkling to the 'private information' referred to by the Chief Constable. Intelligence is an inexact science and is dependent on the reliability of its sources. It would appear that the Glasgow Police and indeed the Scottish Office believed that they had a reliable source of information within Sinn Fein. For this source to trouble the upper echelons of Government the informant would have to have at least some standing within Sinn Fein and be above the level of the usual police spy. The description of the Greenock meeting implies that it was held at Commandant level which in turn suggests that the Government believed that it had an informer in Glasgow who was at least an IRA company commander. Now this is not in itself evidence and without explicit confirmation of an identity in the files at a distance of nearly ninety years must be a matter of conjecture. However, it is possible, using the evidence available, to tentatively posit a logical hypothesis and test it against what is known about Sinn Fein at the time.

It is reasonable to assume that the anonymous source quoted above was regarded sufficiently seriously for this report to be forwarded by Munro to Sir John Gilmour.

23 NAS GD383/14/7 Gilmour Correspondence
Gilmour’s original request for information, while semi-official, is not that of a back
bencher but of a rising politician in the government with a position in the ‘Whips’
Office regarding the safety of the second most important member of the Cabinet. The
evidence that Munro took this request exceptionally seriously is in the fact that he
instituted enquiries, as will be shown below, with all the Chief Constables in Scotland
likely to have a Sinn Fein presence about the conditions in their areas. In these
circumstances it lends credibility to the theory that the report was considered as
genuine intelligence.

The content of the report quite firmly places it in Glasgow but it is the information
it reveals or perhaps the lack of it that is interesting. The first paragraph gives the
names of the company commanders of the Southside of Glasgow, and yet in the trial
records of Sinn Fein in Scotland, the names of Duffy, Ryan and Murray do not
appear. That in itself is not that unusual but it does seem that the informant is giving
or confirming information already known to the police. The slightly contemptuous
references to the Irish Citizen Army and left wing speakers are also instructive. There
was tension in Scotland concerning arms shipments to the Irish Citizen Army which
was largely dormant during the Anglo-Irish war. Patterson cites a member of the
Citizens Army describing his organisation as failing ‘to play a worthwhile role in the
fight against the British forces during the period 1919-21.’ 24 As O’Cathain states:
‘There was also an outmanoeuvring of the Volunteers though this may also have been
related to the penchant among some of that number to collect and send arms to the
remnants of the Irish Citizen Army. Neither Vize nor Collins had serious leftist
sympathies and their joint fear of communist or socialist influence (a difficulty in
itself in a country where socialist ideas had growing support) may have affected their
actions.’ 25 It would appear that the informant shared in that opinion in which case
given the antagonistic relations between some Republican factions, especially in
Glasgow, the inclusion of this information may have been a deliberate attempt to
interest the authorities in the activities of groups considered as hindering Republican
operations rather than providing assistance to the British Government.

The files concerning Sinn Fein in this period have more than their fair share of
curiosities including a crude forgery claiming to be the oath of the Knights of
Columba, an almost illegible scrawl addressed to Lloyd George and the idiosyncratic

24 Patterson, p47 citing E. Robbins Under the Starry Plough (Dublin,1977) p206
25 O’Cathain Michael Collins and Scotland p8
correspondence of Captain Despard, the Chief Constable of Lanarkshire. None are quite so curious as the last three paragraphs of this report. The style is obviously literate but it appears like a cross between a parish magazine and a speech from a Dublin soapbox. (It does raise the intriguing possibility that Munro’s informant was a priest). It is less than complementary to its intended audience and there can not be many instances where an informer actually threatens his employer with the very people upon whom he was presumably asked to spy. Nevertheless this report must have been taken seriously. The reason for this lies in the final sentence, ‘The Irish Volunteers are one of the best disciplined and one of the biggest forces in Scotland and may break out of hand at any moment.’ There is a recurrent theme here on the concept of Sinn Fein having in its possession a heavily armed, disciplined, military force. It would appear both from Sinn Fein’s public pronouncements and in the information that it seems to be providing the Government through ‘other channels’ the message is constantly being reinforced. In the preceding eight weeks the Scottish Authorities had received information, publicly and privately that Sinn Fein has a substantial force of armed men in the west of Scotland who were ready to strike. The information was coming from inside Sinn Fein so the question remains, why were they so willing to give this credence? No one seems to have asked the first question of intelligence, ‘why are we being allowed to know this?’ The almost inescapable conclusion is that influential figures in the political, legal and law enforcement establishment believed in these reports because they had already convinced themselves. In that case any report of an IRA army in Scotland was eagerly seized upon as further proof of an already decided position. This is apparent in some of the responses the Scottish Office received in their request for situation reports in response to Gilmour’s letter. For example the Procurator Fiscal of Glasgow was in no doubt of Sinn Fein’s intentions, the nature of the threat or the remedy required. In a lengthy report to the Secretary of Scotland he detailed his apprehensions:

…I have the feeling that in Glasgow we are on the point of having some serious outbreak of Sinn Fein activity and the week-end happenings in Liverpool strengthen me in that view. It is known that this hostile organisation is in some strength in this district and it is reasonable to suppose that active steps involving disorder will early ensue. All our information points in this direction.
From the public press I gather that it is now accepted that a state of war exists at least in some parts of Ireland and these parts are practically under military control. The Government of Ireland are now apprehending the leaders of this hostile movement and interning them and this course seems fully justified.

... It is beyond all question that Republican Troops are in this city with the avowed object of taking part in hostile operations both in Ireland and here. That seems to me to be intolerable position of matters. It is neither fair to the law abiding citizens here who are or might be victims of these men’s violence at any moment, nor is it fair on those in Ireland who are responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

I have already pointed out that I can see no means of dealing with these Sinn Feiners in our Civil Criminal Courts and it occurs to me that the Government of Ireland should instruct the Glasgow Police to apprehend and hand over the most active Sinn Feiners in this City who would then be interned. The justification for this would be that the persons apprehended are engaged in levying war on the Irish Executive. Such apprehensions would be quite in accordance with the declared policy of the Irish Executive and the facts, so far as Glasgow is concerned appear to fully justify such a course...²⁶

Again we have the Fiscal’s assertion of 'authentic information.' On the basis of this information the Procurator Fiscal was calling for the effective suspension of Habeas Corpus (Wrongous Imprisonment in Scotland) and an official recognition that a state of war existed in Ireland. The policy implications for the British Government of such an action were unacceptable. Any move that hinted of belligerent status for the IRA would legitimise the Sinn Fein case of being the Government of Ireland particularly in American, and equally important, Empire eyes. As Lloyd George had already pointed out to Lord French in May 1920 ‘you do not declare war against rebels.’²⁷ Such niceties of policy were causing difficulties for those closer to the ‘front line’ who tended to view things in more black and white terms.²⁸ In fairness to the Procurator

²⁶ NAS HH55/69 30033/26
²⁷ S Lawlor, Britain and Ireland 1914-23 (MacMillan, Dublin, 1983) p56
²⁸ It is probably for this reason that there is a note appended to the Procurator Fiscal’s report in which the civil servants in the Scottish Office display an anxiety about the calls for independent action to be taken in Scotland. Note for the Secretary for Scotland (unsigned)
Fiscal he was writing in the aftermath of 'Bloody Sunday,' and only two days earlier the IRA had burned seventeen warehouses in Liverpool. Coupled with this ‘Several key figures in the Collins network were picked up before the November burnings...In fact had a raid not driven Mulcahy (IRA Chief of Staff in Dublin) to escape across rooftops ...leaving his papers behind...very large scale operations would have taken place in Liverpool and Manchester during April 1921. These would have included the destruction of all British shipping in Liverpool and of Manchester’s electricity supply.’29 In view of what had happened elsewhere, and given what the Glasgow police believed about the IRA it was a not unnatural assumption that what was planned for Liverpool and Manchester could well be planned for Glasgow. The report from Chief Constable of Glasgow, prompted by Gilmour’s letter to Munro, appeared to confirm anxieties about the existence of a kidnap plot.

We have information that the question of kidnapping was discussed and that it was decided to kidnap the Prime Minister, Mr Bonar Law and other important members of the government and Home Office officials. This information was at once communicated according to arrangement to the Director of Intelligence, London. We have also information that a party of six was appointed to carry out reprisals in Scotland and supplied with £250 for the purpose.

If any important member of the Government should come to Glasgow special precautions will be taken to ensure his safety but it might be well if none came for the present.30

The response of Captain Despard, the Chief Constable of Lanarkshire was no more comforting: 'There is always a danger of trouble in this County as the Sinn Fein and Orange parties are fairly well balanced, with the natural consequence that if Sinn Feiners are in the majority in one place they molest the Orangemen and vice versa,

PF’s report ... raises a question of policy. The active Sinn Feiners in Glasgow are known to the police. There seems to be some ground for apprehension that the Sinn Feiners may resort to violence (as at Liverpool) & PF suggests that the leading Sinn Feiners might be arrested and handed over to the Irish Govt for internment.
The same question arises in England. I think the arrests could only proceed in virtue of the DORA regulations.
I am averse to the exercise of these powers but I suggest that the cabinet should deal with the question as a matter of general policy. NAS HH55/69 30033/26

29 T P Coogan, Michael Collins (Arrow, London, 1991) p153
30 NAS HH55/69 30033/26
there is always a danger of conflict between the two parties, large numbers of young men habitually carry pistols and at any time there may be trouble.\(^{31}\)

By late November 1920 the Government as a whole was in a state of some panic. Bloody Sunday and the captured Sinn Fein documents revealed an organisation that was far more formidable than the Government in Westminster had been willing to admit. The privately expressed views of the Chief Constable of Glasgow that he could not guarantee the safety, not only of the leader of the Conservative party, but of a Glasgow M.P. in Glasgow, and his recommendation that major politicians stay away says much about police’s belief in the strength of Sinn Fein. Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary of Ireland, stated in the House of Commons on 24\(^{th}\) November 1920 that ‘the organisation has spread to this country and £3,500 had recently been sent to Scotland, particularly in Glasgow to buy firearms for assassins.’\(^{32}\) Strangely this particular piece of information does not feature in the Scottish Office files. Presumably they thought to let Munro know. In any case the idea of Sinn Fein attacks on the British mainland had now taken hold in Scotland is shown in an examination of two cases, one of a private company and another of a major military installation.

III

The press publication of the captured plans for the destruction of the Manchester Power Station obviously had an effect on the board of the Clyde Valley Electrical Power Company. In December 1920 the board wrote to the Secretary for Scotland requesting a military guard for their three power stations pointing out their importance to the economy: ‘These stations, …serve an area of 730 square miles, embracing most of the important shipbuilding and engineering works of the Clyde and the Lanarkshire coalfields. Upwards of two hundred industrial works and forty collieries derive their power from our power stations, in addition to Tramways and other public services... Having regard to the disastrous consequences which would result from damage to our stations, we submit that a Military Guard should be provided forthwith, at each power station’.\(^{33}\) What is instructive is the picture of vulnerability that it presents of the

\(^{31}\) ibid
\(^{32}\) The ‘Scotsman’ 25\(^{th}\) November 1920
\(^{33}\) ibid
industrial heart of Scotland. The Scottish Office was aware that there was little chance of maintaining a regular military guard for industrial sites in Scotland but the suggested solutions raised the possibility of what would in effect be an armed militia being formed to guard strategic sites. The police were, in the opinions of the Chief Constables, far too overstretched to provide the type of protection requested and yet both Despard and Harding (Chief Constable of Renfrewshire) were agreed that the installations were vulnerable. The officials were caught between their apprehension of a Sinn Fein attack, something they have been warned about for the last two months as has been shown by the previous files, and the desire to avoid any extra expense. At the same time the solution of arming the workers is almost as alarming as Sinn Fein itself.

On the 7th December 1920 the Scottish Office wrote to the Chief Constables concerned asking for their observations on this request. In their replies both Harding and Despard forcefully made the point that they were in no position to protect the power stations adequately. Despard pointed out that although ‘Arrangements have been made by which it is hoped that the nearest Police Stations will get warning, even if telephonic communication is interrupted, if an attack is made on the works. If such a warning is received, an armed body of Police will be sent, ...The Secretary for Scotland will notice that all the Police can hope to do is to arrive on the scene as soon as possible after an attack has been made, as, however constant the visits may be, it is unlikely that an attack will be made when the Constables are actually visiting.’ Harding was even more pessimistic in his assessment:

I can only give them extra police protection which they do not consider sufficient, and, as a matter of fact, if this place or police stations were invaded by armed Sinn Feiners the occupants would nearly be powerless against them.

I ought to mention that during the whole of the war we kept rifles and ammunition at the more important police stations, but since then these were recalled by the Military Authorities without the instructions, so far as I am aware of the Scottish Office.
I may also add that a large number of employees at these works are either Irish or of Irish extraction.34

The Policemen were in no doubt about the power stations' vulnerability and their own lack of resources and were taking the opportunity of going on record to stress the point. Harding's observation that he had been disarmed by the military without the sanction of the Scottish Office implied that any attack on the facility at Yoker would be partly the fault of the army. The last, rather ominous sentence, on the ethnic origins of the employees at the power station was that of a Chief Police Officer displaying his deep concern in the face of an armed attack. It may well indicate that the Renfrewshire Constabulary would have been more wary in tackling the IRA. It is remarkable that Lanarkshire seems to have had a mobile armed force on call but Renfrewshire did not. Even so, Despard held out little hope of being able to prevent any attack on the power stations in his area.35 Following these gloomy assessments from the Chief Constables efforts were made by the Scottish Office to find a solution.

In December 1920 a Scottish Office official named Rose, later Sir John Gilmour's Private Secretary, reported that there had been a Home Office conference to consider the protection of stores for the Ministry of Munitions. The dilemma was identical to that faced by the Scottish Office in providing military guards for strategic sites. The War Office refused military protection, however, it is the suggested alternatives, that provide the most interesting example of government thinking at the time:

34 ibid
35 Interestingly on the same date Despard wrote to the Scottish Office suggesting that the policy of internment be adopted in Scotland. This was dismissed by the Advocate Depute and the Lord Advocate's Office.

Letter from the Chief Constable of Lanarkshire Constabulary to the Scottish Office
Captain H Despard Irish Disturbances File NAS HH55/62 No 30033/8
9/12/20
The A D is under the impression that the L A does not meanwhile approve of any action being taken on the lines suggested by Captain Despard. No such action is, the A D, understands being taken in England. The matter being one of policy is submitted for direction. Advocate Depute.
The proceedings at this conference make pretty clear what could be the attitude of the W.O. (War Office) towards this request for a military guard. They also throw doubt on the expediency of a suggestion that has sometimes been made that the factory workers should be enrolled as Special Constables 'provided with arms'.

There is a suggestion by the Secretary of State that if the C.Cs think the arrangements for protecting the Ministry's depots are not satisfactory they should, after consulting the managers, appoint themselves appropriate watchmen and swear them in as Special Constables. The Secretary of State could defray the cost. It may be assumed that the Secretary's objection to arming ordinary factory workers could not apply to the arming of these picked men.

This particular correspondence highlights the problems facing the Scottish Office. They had a threat which they believed to be substantial but there was little likelihood of obtaining any extra help from the British Government. As the report on the Home Office conference reported above shows, even the Ministry of Munitions could not ensure a military guard for its installations. The suggestion that the factory workers be provided with arms received short shrift. It is an intriguing thought, although the idea of providing weapons to workers on Clydeside must have seemed to the Scottish Office akin to the US Cavalry running guns to the Apaches. Nevertheless it was the War Office in the shape of the Navy that came back to the Scottish Office with an almost identical problem the following year. This correspondence again highlights the problem of protection for vulnerable installations and the perennial inter-departmental problem of who was financially responsible. Rose was this time consulted by the admiralty concerning protection of the oil pipeline which ran along the Forth Clyde canal:

I said that we could of course ask the police of the counties where the pumping stations are, to give special attention to the stations, but that they could not provide continuous watching. There were objections to increasing the police forces for temporary purposes and the appointment of police would be expensive. I suggested that the Chief Constables might be asked by the
Admiralty to select men as watchmen and have them sworn in as Special Constables. 36

The Admiralty made a formal request for assistance but the Scottish Office was in no real position help and they were determined that they would not incur the cost of recruiting extra police. However, in their reply to the Admiralty in January 1921 Munro made a suggestion, which, had it been taken up may have had far reaching consequences:

It would probably be possible to engage a force of Special Constables for the duty under the general control of the Chief Constables. Such a force would cost less than an equal number of ordinary Constables. It is understood however, that it is intended that the men would be armed, and the Secretary for Scotland would have great difficulty in assenting to the arming of Special Constables in such circumstances.

In all the circumstances, the Secretary for Scotland would suggest that their Lordships should consider whether their object could not be attained by the recruiting of a special body of watchmen – possibly army and navy pensioners – who would form a uniformed and disciplined force and would be armed.

Sir John Lamb37

What in effect Munro had proposed was the formation of a uniformed and armed militia to guard a military installation. The rather vague notion that they would be found from navy and army pensioners would very probably not have reflected the reality. Considering that the Orange Order made frequent representations to be allowed to do this sort of work it is not hard to envisage the take up of posts in this force. At any rate it is highly unlikely that anyone from an Irish Catholic background would have been recruited. The idea of Special Constables or picked watchmen had connotations of the B Specials in Ulster. Had Scotland gone down this route it is difficult to see how any force recruited to guard against Sinn Fein could have been anything other than wholly Protestant, if not entirely Orange.

As it turned out the Admiralty apparently did not reply to the Scottish Office’s letter very probably because the Truce and Treaty negotiations rendered them redundant. In which case it is possible that Scotland escaped what could have been a very divisive development especially in view of what was to come with the

36 NAS HH55/62 30033/14
37 NAS HH55/62 30033/14
emergence of growing sectarian tensions in the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless there were those in senior positions in Scotland that believed they were in a war situation and that the enemy was capable of deploying a considerable force in the middle of Scotland. They had had in fact an almighty fright that ranked alongside the threat of Bolshevik revolution from Clydeside workers.

IV

The Irish War of Independence between 1919 and 1921 must have been profoundly unsettling when viewed from the perspective of Presbyterian Scotland. It is perhaps difficult, from the standpoint of the secular twenty-first century, to conceive how much of Scotland’s identity was a Presbyterian identity at that time, certainly for the middle classes. If one considers the family background of Robert Munro for example, he was the son of a Free Church minister and his maternal grandfather was also a Church of Scotland minister. His first wife was similarly a daughter of the manse. The civil service and the legal establishment consisted of men of a similar stamp, in many cases church elders as well as professionals and they would have had access, directly in some cases, and through connections in others, to at least some of the information contained in the documents examined here. They were also men who had in a comparatively short space of time seen all the assumptions of superiority with which they had grown up profoundly challenged. Three hundred years of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland collapsed as a British Empire, which had emerged victorious at phenomenal cost from the greatest conflict in history, had been apparently fought to a standstill by the despised Irish. Not only that but their co-religionists, who had loudly proclaimed their loyalty to that Empire had been reduced to ruling a laager of six counties still with a dangerously disloyal element, while a Catholic state had been set up not only a short journey away but within what had been a unitary state. This war had also been fought on their own territory. At any time there might have been an ‘outrage’ on the streets and certainly the authorities believed that at one stage there was an Irish Army in the West of


39 I use the term men advisedly here. This is not to say that middle class Scottish women did not share these views, they most certainly did. It is simply because the political, legal and church establishment at the time was almost exclusively male.
Scotland. These dangerous and disloyal ‘aliens’ now appeared to be making common cause with the socialists.

By May 1922 the brief post-war boom was ending and Scotland was entering what would be an almost twenty-year economic slump. The immediate hopes of the post-war period were waning and the country entered a crisis as the pre-war confidence gave way to uncertainty and mass unemployment. At the same time the Church of Scotland General Assembly took its first steps in a concerted campaign that was not only anti-Catholic but specifically anti-Irish. That this was to be a racial as well as religious campaign can be seen from the speech of the Rev Duncan Cameron who asserted in the General Assembly of 1922 that: ‘Roman Catholics of Irish origin were not only alien to Scots in religion; they were alien in race. They had come to Scotland to take jobs from Scottish workers to exploit Scotland’s welfare system and to stir labour unrest. Their presence had a still more sinister aspect....There was a conspiracy on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to bring Scotland under Roman domination.’

Essentially Cameron was claiming that the established church was facing a threat on a level unseen since 1745. The General Assembly took that threat seriously enough to appoint a committee of leading churchman to examine the problem of Irish Catholics in Scotland. The result in 1923 was the report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on the ‘Irish Problem’ entitled *The Menace of the Irish race to our Scottish nationality*. The irony about this document is that the Irish, even during the ‘war’ were never much of a menace and certainly were not during the twenties and thirties when immigration had reduced to a trickle, but the language used in the General Assembly of 1923 suggests that they were a ‘menace’ to be combated. The *Scotsman* report of the speech of the Rev. William Main who introduced the report illustrates the political as well as the religious anxieties:

The problem was both a political and religious one. The political influence in this (Irish) immigration was already seen in the West. It was very largely due to that fact that they had in the House of Commons... men who represented or were supposed to represent constituencies in Glasgow and the West but who did not represent them really. (Applause). They had been elected...just by the fact that they had this enormous Irish Roman Catholic population in this area. And

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hence the type of men they had there were bringing disgrace and scandal on the House of Commons.... When it came to pass in certain localities that the Irish population were in the majority both in religious influence and in respect of the control of the polls those men and women held the balance of power. That was the danger that was the problem that was before the country at the present time.41

It was not a long step from an armed Irish 'army' of 30,000 in the West and the fears of the Chief Constable of Glasgow, to the idea of an Irish political 'army' in the West electing the dangerous Bolsheviks of the ILP. The fact that the men bringing 'disgrace and scandal on the House of Commons,' included the Rev James Campbell and The Rev James Barr and in fact ten were members of the Church, as was vehemently pointed out by the ILP two days later, mattered not.42 Truth in politics tends to be what is believed by the majority at any given moment.

The Scotsman leader of the following day concurred with the report’s analysis. Entitled The Irish in Scotland: A Serious Problem the fears of an Irish take over had gone from a military to a social and political threat.

the Irish form the most solid bloc among the newcomers. They are bound together by religious ties, which are preserved in their attitudes to social and political questions. They vote practically as one man, and their numbers are such that they virtually hold the balance in municipal and parliamentary polls in certain districts. It was largely due to the Irish vote that so many Socialists were elected to the present parliament by the West of Scotland.43

By 1923 it was obvious that large and influential segments of Scottish society had come to fear the Irish in their midst and it is reasonable to suppose that the roots of that fear may lie in the events of the Anglo Irish war and its specific effect on the leaders of a significant section of Scottish opinion. An educated elite, many of whom who would have considered themselves liberal (with a small l), all of whom would have considered themselves Christian, lent support and crucial respectability to a campaign of effective demonisation of the Catholic Irish in Scotland. To middle class Scotland the creation of a Catholic Irish Free State was a defeat for the Empire, it was

41 The 'Scotsman,' 30th May 1923
42 The 'Scotsman,' 31st May 1923
43 ibid
a defeat for previously unassailable Protestantism and it was a defeat on their own doorstep.
Chapter Two
The Protestant Panic

'With the census report of 1871 the Committee hold that this' invasion of the Irish is likely to produce far more serious effects upon Scotland than even the invasion of warlike hordes of Saxons, Danes and Northmen.'

Report of the Joint Committee of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches on Immigration 19th July 1928\textsuperscript{44}

I

The 1920s should have been a triumphant period for the Church of Scotland. It achieved union with the United Free Church ending in large part the schism of the 1843 ‘Disruption.’ It successfully piloted two bills through Parliament establishing a new system of church finance and squaring the circle between establishment and disestablishment giving the ‘Established Church’ in Scotland far greater powers than its counterpart in England for it was “recognised” by the state to be independent in doctrine and government\textsuperscript{45}. It had, as its most eminent churchmen, Dr John White, a skilled political operator as well as a considerable scholar with undoubted powers of leadership and Lord Sands one of the foremost Scottish judges and lay churchmen of his day. The decade, in the opinion of many contemporary ministers, would see the return of the Church of Scotland to the centrality of Scottish life, not only spiritually, but also in cultural and political terms. The Kirk would regain its place as the leader and arbiter of Scotland. In effect there would be a new ‘covenant’ where all sections of society would coalesce around a Scottish identity that was paternal, Protestant and led by the ‘Auld Kirk’. On the other hand, as Callum Brown points out, the war had changed society profoundly:

Churchmen were shaken by what appeared to be public indifference to the churches as institutions, but they were also racked with doubt concerning the theological implications of the war...the war had severe consequences for the social vision of the Presbyterian churches. Initially filling them with self-confidence regarding their place in a society that required moral and spiritual direction in the midst of crisis by 1916 and

\textsuperscript{44} John White Papers 'Irish Immigration' Box 103 New College Library, University of Edinburgh

\textsuperscript{45} J G Kellas \textit{Modern Scotland: The Nation since 1870} (Pall Mall, London, 1968) p63
1917 the experience of war had led to a failure of hope for a religious revival in Scotland.\textsuperscript{46}

Much of what has been written about Scotland in the inter-war period refers to a crisis of confidence amongst the Scottish middle classes. In the case of the Presbyterian Churches this crisis may also be considered as something of a Protestant panic. Brown cites John Wolff on the effects of the Great War on religious organisations:

> Much of what has been written about Scotland in the inter-war period refers to a crisis of confidence amongst the Scottish middle classes. In the case of the Presbyterian Churches this crisis may also be considered as something of a Protestant panic. Brown cites John Wolff on the effects of the Great War on religious organisations:

> British society during the war, and religious organisations in particular evoke the image of a fitness and health food fanatic who, after a long period of life afflicted by nothing worse than colds and migraines, has to face up to the awareness that he has a disabiling cancer.\textsuperscript{47}

Scottish Presbyterianism, despite its tendency to split over matters of a doctrinal and administrative nature, had not had cause to doubt its pre-eminent position for almost two centuries. The war had forced it to consider the idea that it may have lost its hold on the nation. The effects of trench warfare and the prospect of imminent death may have turned the soldiers thoughts towards God but not in the manner hoped for by the Church, A report published in 1919 entitled The Army and Religion the Rev David Cairns, Professor of Dogmatics and Apologetics at the Free Church College in Aberdeen noted ‘that the men who had been in the trenches had experienced an awakening of the primitive religious convictions- God, Prayer, Immortality, but they did not associate these with Jesus Christ, that their thought of God was not Christianised.’\textsuperscript{48} Or as another observer noted, ‘The soldier has got religion, I am not so sure that he has got Christianity.’\textsuperscript{49} In any case the post war world was not one in which Protestantism, never mind the Church of Scotland, could take its position for granted. This realisation prompted the Churches for the first time to take serious note of their Catholic neighbours. Faced with dwindling attendances and what appeared to be an increasingly secularised, and indeed paganised, pleasure seeking society the apparent loyalty of the Catholic Irish to their church stood as something of a rebuke and a threat. If the Protestant Churches could not hold onto Scotland then there

\textsuperscript{46} C Brown Piety, Gender and War in Scotland in the 1910s in \textit{Scotland and the Great War} C M MacDonald and E W McFarland (eds) (Tuckwell, East Linton, 1999) p174
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid p 174
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid pp178-9
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid p179
appeared the possibility, even if it was no more than a possibility, that they could be supplanted by Catholicism.

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter the events of the Irish War of Independence had a marked effect on the upper echelons of Scottish society but why was that effect so profound on the Presbyterian churches? After all as far as the political classes were concerned the Irish problem was off the agenda with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the setting up of the Free State. Prior to the First World War the Church itself had had little to do with extreme anti Catholicism. The Disruption of 1843 may have altered the centrality of the Established Church in Scottish life but did not alter the perception that Scottish Presbyterianism was a matter of national and international import and whatever its form, it was the settled religion of the country. The Catholic Church in Scotland was not considered a threat to that order. Thomas Chalmers, who was to become leader of the Free Church, had been the main speaker at a rally in 1829 in favour of Catholic emancipation. Even the massive numbers of Irish immigrants that flooded into Scotland in the 19th century, in the wake of the famine and to provide the manual labour for industrial Scotland, while undoubtedly provoking clashes with native Scots, and particularly with Protestant Irish immigrants, did not promote Catholicism to the level of a challenge to Protestant Scotland. As Steve Bruce has pointed out ‘In class terms, the strongest opposition came from the skilled manual working class in those areas where it competed with Irish Catholics. But what is most significant, and what underlies the whole subsequent development of anti-Catholicism in Scotland, is the absence of any active anti-Catholicism from a large part of the leadership of the Churches.’50 Essentially the Irish Catholics in Scotland were not worth the notice of a Presbyterian Church embroiled in its own controversies and the religion of navvies and parlour maids were of no concern to a Scottish middle class growing rich on the proceeds of Empire. If Irish Catholic labourers and Irish Protestant labourers wished to belabour each other in the working class districts of the West of Scotland, that was deplorable, but nonetheless an issue for magistrates not ministers.

The central questions of the ‘sectarian issue’ of the inter-war years are why the Irish, why then and why did the Church persist in a campaign for so long in the face of apparent public indifference? It has been suggested by Gallagher and Walker that

50 S Bruce No Pope of Rome (Mainstream, Edinburgh, 1985) p31
this was a continuation of a Scottish tradition of 'No Popery'. 'Strongly worded attacks on the Catholic Irish presence in Scotland became a feature of the annual General Assembly of both the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church during the 1920s as senior clergymen, like the Very Revd Dr John White, perhaps the most eminent Scottish churchman of the first half of the century, quietly endorsed the bitter critique of inveterate No Popery campaigners.'51 Undoubtedly there were elements of this in the campaign but the Church, particularly in the person of White, vehemently, and none too 'quietly' asserted that the anti Irish campaign was a racial and not a religious issue. Professor S.J. Brown has pointed out that 'leading churchmen sought to place the national Church of Scotland at the head of a nativist anti-Catholic movement and to make the Church the defender, not only of the Reformed Faith but of the Scottish 'race' as well'.52 Scholars of the period have generally made reference to the racial nature of the campaign and the particular demonisation of the Irish. The Irish had been a threat to the peace, they appeared to be a threat to the political and social order, and in the Church's case for the first time in over three hundred years Catholicism was a credible rival, not simply because the Irish had suddenly become more assertive but because Presbyterianism in comparison appeared to be in decline. How then was Presbyterianism to respond? An attack on the Catholic Irish purely on grounds of religion would have begged many questions about the validity of an Established Church and of the place it claimed in Scottish society, questions it was not at all confident it could answer. Besides such an attack would lay them open to charges of religious bigotry and reduce the effectiveness of any appeal it made to government and the wider public. An argument had to found that would be based on wider considerations than the purely religious and that could be presented as a defence of the national interest.

It is for this reason that this chapter will focus on the intellectual justifications behind the Church's campaign. The notes in the John White papers held in New College Library on the subject of Irish Immigration and on the concepts of race and class in general provide an insight into the mental processes of the Church and its leading figures at the time. Much scholarly time has been spent in Scotland on the question of 'identity.' Here, however, we have a national institution that not only

51 G Walker and T Gallagher Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Culture in Modern Scotland (Edinburgh University Press,1990) p97
considered itself, but proclaimed itself, the guardian of Scottish identity while seeking to re-establish an identity for itself at the same time. This may sound like the paradigm for a peculiarly Scottish form of schizophrenia but to understand the Church’s quest for an intellectual base for its position in the 1920s is to understand the larger question of Scotland’s view of itself and its position in the larger world in the inter war period. It is also important to make a distinction between the arguments of the 1920s and the 1930s. It should be remembered that at this stage this was an argument of an elite, for an elite. White would never have considered himself a demagogue in the later Ratcliffe and Cormack mould. He genuinely believed he was making a philosophical, scientific, political and moral argument and that this argument was one with which he believed that the political and social elite of Scotland would have, or should have, been in sympathy.

The more spectacular, if brief, events of the 1930s can tend to overshadow what was for the best part of a decade a discussion between a particular intellectual, social and political stratum in Scotland, and between men who were largely intimately acquainted with each other. More fundamentally it was an argument about what Scotland was and what it would become conducted, not just by a church, but by a class who had lost the certainties of the past and were fearful of their position in the future. What did it mean to be Scottish for the middle and upper classes when the economic conditions had undermined the country’s position as partner in Empire and where the loyalty and massive sacrifices of the Great War seemed to count for little? (White’s own son had been killed while serving in the Royal Flying Corps). The Catholic and inferior Irish seemed to be taken more seriously by the British Government than the loyal, Protestant and self evidently superior Scots. It would have to be proved, and proved scientifically, that the Irish were of an inferior ‘type’ to the Scots and that toleration of Irish immigration was risking the social, moral and economic stability of the country.

II

At this point it is necessary to discuss the main primary sources for this chapter, the John White papers, and their context. The Very Reverend Dr John White (1867-1951) is described by S. J. Brown in the Oxford dictionary of National Biography as ‘outspoken with a forceful personality ... a dedicated pastor who embraced the social
gospel ethos of the 1890s and was committed to restoring the social influence of the National Church of Scotland. In his correspondence he appears to have been a personally kindly man but no sufferer of fools and with an almost ruthless ambition for his Church. There is a telling passage in his papers where he quotes from an unnamed American source:

The preacher should enter politics for politics is the business of every American (sic). The politicians fear the influence of the pulpit on politics. A Texan ‘statesman’ has recently said ‘we must drive the preacher back into his pulpit.’ But he won’t stay there; he is going to help purify politics.

The law of conscience should be applied to parties as well as individuals. Government after all is only a committee of citizens. We must be sure that they are on the right side, that is the side of right....I believe that it is possible to get conscience into politics and that things are gradually to shape themselves to that end. The polls should be made the most sacred place on earth.54

Despite the obviously American context of the quote it is a reasonable summation of White’s personal position. His was a ‘political’ church and there is a ‘Melvillian’ attitude to what its relationship to the state should be. J H S Burleigh, Principal of New College and author of a Church History of Scotland described White’s reunited Church of Scotland in which ‘the “civil magistrate” for the first time since the Reformation acknowledged in the fullest sense the freedom of a Church in matters affecting its own spiritual life and work.’55 He also added tellingly ‘The only freedom that Andrew Melville could have asked for in addition would be the freedom to require the civil magistrate to compel all of his subjects to obey the judgements of the church courts!’56 This was not altogether unreasonable in a Presbyterian minister but it will become apparent what the church would require from the ‘civil magistrate.’

The actual course of the campaign will be examined in the following chapter but it is important to understand the nature of those conducting it and most particularly White himself. Without the support and active leadership of the most eminent churchman of the period it is doubtful whether lesser lights like The Rev. Duncan

54 John White Papers ‘Irish Immigration’ Box 103
55 J H S Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland (Oxford University Press, 1960)pp 402-403
56 ibid pp 402-403
Cameron of Kilsyth could have carried it as far as the Scottish Office. Indeed the original overture on Irish Immigration to the General Assembly of 1922 was only passed by the deciding vote of the Moderator. It is unlikely that, without White, the other Scottish Presbyterian Churches could have been persuaded to participate in a joint campaign against Irish immigration. It was largely down to the determination of White that the reunification of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church was made possible and as this was in the teeth of some fierce internal, and indeed Parliamentary, opposition. It was White who had the extensive political connections, particularly in the Conservative party, that persuaded him and others that the Government could be made follow the Church’s lead on vital matters of social policy for what the Church was seeking to define was what constituted the desirable and undesirable citizen even to the extent of allowing them residence and exercise of the franchise, in other words who was and was not a Scot. The government would then be required to give that definition legislative force, a Melvillian ‘freedom’ indeed. For the Church to arrogate such a significant role to itself in national life suggests either arrogance or a fear that its influence was in terminal decline. The reality was a combination of the two but it needed as forceful personality as White’s to even consider that the Church could take on such a role. It was an ambitious attempt for the leadership of Scottish society which would need a modern intellectual basis that could be argued on more than theological grounds.

It should be pointed out here that there is a curious gap in the White papers concerning the anti immigration campaign in the 1920s. These papers were deposited in the Library of New College at Edinburgh University by White’s official biographer Augustus Muir in the 1950s. Muir’s biography of White appeared in 1958 and, significantly, it nowhere makes mention of the anti Irish campaign and yet there is a large amount of material in the form of notes for speeches and pamphlets, most unfortunately undated, in the papers. Neither for that matter does Burleigh’s Church History make any mention of the immigration campaign. The collection contained in box 103 of the papers also seems to follow no chronological pattern and it is therefore largely through inference that it is possible to make an estimate of the actual time

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57 See John White Papers Boxes 6-10. There was opposition to the two Bills required to clear the legal obstacles to reunification. The Second Bill required a wholesale restructuring of Church finance from the system of heritors, generally local landlords in rural communities and rate payers in urban areas that financed, for example, minister’s stipends. This opposition was largely led by the Labour members which may account for some, though not all, of White’s antipathy to that party.
when they were written. However, White’s correspondence which is catalogued chronologically contains practically no reference to Irish Immigration. For as prolific a correspondent as White this is unusual. Most of the correspondence take the form of letters to White and yet it would appear that no one wrote to him on the subject. A chance mention in the press that Stanley Baldwin smoked White’s personal tobacco mixture\(^5\) elicited many requests for the address of his tobacconist but on the other burning question of the day there is no correspondence either official or unofficial. It would appear that White’s biographer had carefully edited out any such correspondence in the 1950s. Why should he do this and yet retain White’s notes for speeches and articles, many of which make for uncomfortable reading? It may be that in the 1950s many of the principal actors of the 1920s and 1930s were still very much alive and holding senior positions in the Church (Burleigh for example) and government, and may have been uncomfortable if their previous racial views were made public. This can of course be no more than a supposition in the absence of the evidence but it does suggest that the Church of Scotland contracted a case of selective amnesia in the 1950s. Perhaps because it became uncomfortable with this episode in its past and with 400\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Reformation on the horizon it was less than keen to have its own brush with racism discussed. It would not have sat well with its championing of the emerging African states in the era of decolonisation.

III

Whatever the position had become by the 1950s in the 1920s the Church was unequivocal in what it saw was a threat. White, in a note entitled ‘Is restriction right,’ sets out the position of the state and ‘inassimilable’ minorities, in this case the Irish:

The state...exists not only for immediate administrative purposes, but also for the obtaining of its citizens the highest attainable political, economic and social well being and thus has an undoubted right to exclude through any such legislative and executive action as it from time to time judge expedient.

... We discover here a sound political principle which rightly controls all state action upon the immediate question before us. The state may exclude dangerous, ignorant, criminal and vicious persons from its

\(^5\) White papers Box 7
borders- it may go further- it may justly exclude entire classes whose presence would be fatal to its homogeneity as a nation, which would introduce elements impossible of amalgamation with its people and thereby possibly subversive of its political institutions, whether such fears be well grounded or not. (My italics).59

Apart from the inference that he considered the Irish ‘dangerous, ignorant, criminal and vicious’ the concept that a state may exclude entire classes that it considered ‘fatal to its homogeneity, impossible of amalgamation’ and ‘possibly subversive of its political institutions’ was a particularly authoritarian statement but one not altogether out of tune with rising ideologies in Europe. It should be emphasised that here White was saying something fundamental about his view on the relationship between the state and its citizens. In effect any minority could be legitimately ‘excluded’ if in the opinion of the state they constituted a threat at any given moment. Who would decide the nature of the threat were, in this case, the self appointed guardians of national identity, the Church of Scotland. The implication was that the Church was seeking something more formal in its relationship with government. A form of blood and soil patriotism which was peculiarly Scottish would be allied to peculiarly Scottish executive action. This is not to say that White was necessarily advocating a kind of Caledonian proto fascism, however, as Owen Dudley Edwards has commented on the Irish Menace report, ‘If a comparable document from such a body had appeared in Bavaria discussing the Jews in the same year, no historian would hesitate for a moment in seeing it as an origin of the Third Reich….That Scotland avoided pogrom and bloodshed does not mean that such good fortune was inevitable.’60 Had the Church successfully convinced the government of the kind of restrictive measures on Irish immigration it was promoting in 1926 they would have formed a new relationship between Church and State. The Church would have established a right to be consulted on Scottish legislation. It is yet another irony, in an era that abounds in irony, that the Church of Scotland was seeking to form the type of relationship with the Scottish Office that the Catholic Church later enjoyed with the DeValera Government in Ireland.

59 White papers box 103  
60 Owen Dudley Edwards The Catholic Press in Scotland since the Restoration in Modern Scottish Catholicism 1878-1978 David McRoberts (ed) (Burns, Glasgow, 1979) p167
If there appears something incongruous in a churchman arguing for such an authoritarian position it should be remembered that in Scotland democracy as presently understood was still a novel concept. Up until the outbreak of war the franchise was not even universal for adult males never mind females. For example in Glasgow in 1911 three out of the seven parliamentary divisions there was an enfranchisement rate of less than 50% and that for Glasgow as a whole the proportion of adult males enfranchised was only 53.9%. The answer is that neither White nor many of his contemporaries saw any conflict in their assertions with that of their position of churchmen. They were the Church of Scotland and it was their Christian and moral duty to protect the people of Scotland. In a note headed somewhat disingenuously, ‘No race hatred no religious bigotry,’ White stated:

There is no desire to shut out any immigrant solely because he will be a competitor in the labour market, if there is work to be given, because he is of a different religion to the bulk of the community.

Our case against undesirable immigration is based on high moral grounds. We are not willing to run the chance of seeing a people educated, intelligent and moral corrupted by a horde of immigrants whose habits of life, whose standards of morality and whose standards of comfort are far below that of the existing population.

The question remains why should the Irish be seen as such a uniquely morally corrupting force from which the Scots required the Church’s protection? As far as White was concerned it was the Irish inability to assimilate:

The Irish do not readily assimilate our habits and become good Scotsmen. As they come so they for long remain, amongst us, yet not of us.

The Irishman, notwithstanding many virtues, seem to bring a sort of social contagion with him, which has the effect of seriously deteriorating the life of those of our own people who are compelled to be his neighbour. It is a painful thing to write but truth compels the statement that whenever

62 ibid
the Irish immigrant comes in any number the neighbourhood in which he settles speedily drops in tone, in character and in morals.

It may be difficult to explain the fact but fact it is. The statement of it may give offence in some quarters. That is to be regretted. But the existence of the fact is an offence, and a grave offence, in our city life and in our national morals.\footnote{ibid}

In effect the Irish, in the eyes of the Church, were akin to a disease infecting the morals and habits of virtuous Scotsmen. The logical inconsistency of how this infection was supposed to take place if the Irish had no social contact with the native Scot and was ‘amongst us and yet not of us’ does not seem to have troubled White. It was ‘difficult to explain’ but still a ‘fact.’ Nor does this argument say much for the idea of the moral superiority of the Scottish neighbour as surely contact with this example would have lifted the depraved Irishman to a higher moral plane.

The racial theories to which White subscribed were not in themselves new but why did a Scot subscribe to them in the case of the Irish? The idea of a ‘Teutonic’ lowland Scotland superior to the Celtic races was one that had enjoyed much popularity in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Colin Kidd has shown that race was also viewed as a determinant of religion: ‘nineteenth century anti-Catholicism became tinged with racialism which rendered it even more potent, for race lent a pseudo-scientific justification to Protestant bigotry, deepening and hardening traditional confessional prejudices. Why, nineteenth century commentators asked, were Teutonic peoples more susceptible to Protestantism and Latin and Celtic peoples so reluctant to abandon the old superstitions of Catholicism?’\footnote{Colin Kidd, The Forging of Races, Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World 1600-200 (Cambridge University Press, 2006) p192}

White was a product of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Between 1883 and 1891 he had studied Political Economy under Edward Caird, later Master of Balliol, at Glasgow University and taken an MA Honours in Mental Philosophy as well as training for the ministry.\footnote{Stewart J Brown , White John, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Oxforddnb.com} He and his contemporaries did not view the Irish as fellow Celts. Lowland Scotland defined itself in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century as ‘Teutonic’ and the ‘Celtic label was one that most 19\textsuperscript{th} century Scots would have vociferously rejected.’\footnote{Colin Kidd, Race Empire and the Limits of 19\textsuperscript{th} Century Scottish Nationhood, Historical Journal 46 2003 p 874}
Apart from the particularly Scottish concepts of racial identity the White papers demonstrate the extent to which he was influenced by American sociologists who were at the forefront of racial theory at the turn of the century. It is particularly interesting that a man from a nation with a centuries old tradition of out migration should turn to the scholarship of a nation made up almost entirely of immigrants. Three figures feature at length, Richmond Mayo-Smith (1854-1901), Franklin Henry Giddings (1855-1931) and Edward Alsworth Ross (1866-1951). Mayo-Smith was a pioneer of the use of statistics in sociology and published Emigration and Immigration in 1890, in which he demonstrated his belief ‘that the enormous number of immigrants with disparate sociocultural habits then entering America threatened to overwhelm the political institutions of the United States and would generate economic disturbances.’67 It was the methodology of Mayo-Smith that would materially influence the Church’s written submissions to the Scottish Office and yet it was on the basis of the Church’s statistics where their case collapsed. F H Giddings, considered to be one of the ‘four founders’ of American sociology, propounded a theory of four stages of human evolution: ‘zoogenic, anthropogenic, ethnogenic and demogenic. He asserted that the lower stages were more susceptible to emotional forces. Modern society (demogenic) is not totally free of these forces but uses reason and critical reflection in determining its own destiny. Societies could not exist without certain inequalities. Inequality was a result of constitutional or genetic differences forming the basis for class divisions ... that these divisions were natural and led to permanent conflicts.’68 The last of this triumvirate, E A Ross, had a particular influence on White in his article ‘The Causes of Racial Superiority’ (1901) in which he coined the phrase ‘race suicide’ and in his book Foundations of Sociology (1905).69

The White papers contain an extensive quotation from Ross’s Foundations concerning immigration in the United States which obviously resonated with the Scottish position as he saw it:

The newcomer counts as one at the polls, and hence it is in our politics that the sag is most evident. The higher types of men are prompted to act together, because they believe in the same principle or love the same ideal. The inferior pull together from clannishness or allegiance to a

67 Richmond Mayo-Smith, UXL Encyclopaedia of World Biography BNET online
68 F H Giddings, American Sociological Society, www2.asanet.org
69 E A Ross American Sociological Society, www2.asanet.org
leader. The growing disposition to rally about persons and the rising value of the saloon keeper, the ex pugilist and the boss in controlling city voters would indicate that the electorate has been debased by the too free admission of political incapables.\textsuperscript{70}

The terms saloon keeper, ex pugilist and boss were synonyms for the Irish in Scotland and America. The influence of the American arguments on the way in which White presented his own case is apparent from the following, again from White’s notes for speeches and articles:

Many of our immigrants are out of sympathy with our institutions. They form a large percent of our voting population in our large towns. As a rule their votes are under the control of a few leaders...there can be no question as to the moral right to restrict immigration. It is our duty to develop our institutions and our national life in such a way that they will make the largest contribution to the good of humanity then it is manifestly our duty to exclude from membership elements which might prevent our institutions from reaching the highest and best development. All restrictions to immigration it must be admitted must be based, not upon national selfishness, but upon the principle of the good of humanity; and there can be no doubt that the good of humanity demands that every nation protect its people and its institutions from elements which may seriously threaten their stability and survival.\textsuperscript{71}

It was, therefore, not only for the good of Scotland that the Irish be excluded but for the good of humanity. White essentially maintained that the economic, social and political problems of Scotland could be defined as a racial problem. Having made that diagnosis it followed that the solution to these problems was a racial one: in the first instance the restriction of Irish immigration.

Lower down the ecclesiastical ladder there was more probably the desire to ‘throw prudence to the winds and put in some strong ginger re the R Cs’\textsuperscript{72} What is notable is that in their public utterances most ministers followed the White party line. The issue was primarily racial and not religious. For example in the meeting held with Sir John Lamb the Under Secretary of State at the Scottish Office on September 24\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{70} White papers Box 103
\textsuperscript{71} ibid
\textsuperscript{72} Rev J N Ogilvie, letter to White 19\textsuperscript{th} May 1921 White papers Box 6
1926 and not attended by White the Rev John Maclagan put the case in the following way: 'It was as custodians of the fine traditions of Scotland that the committee approached the Secretary of State and not at all in the narrow religious sense. They approached the problem as loyal Scotsman who loved their country and wanted to do what they could to ensure that the heritage handed down to them would be handed down to the next generation.' The White line was the Church line and it was a line held not only by the Church of Scotland but by the United Free Church as well. This is something of a tribute to the esteem in which White was held that throughout the 1920s that it was the race issue as defined by White that was official Church policy.

Of course it was a subtle distinction that was probably lost on the wider public. Abusing the Irish for their racial origins was tantamount to abusing them for their religion. Irish meant Catholic and Catholic meant Irish however hard White tried to make the distinction but then this was not intended, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, to be an argument for the man in the street. He was to be protected and led by the Church. Indeed, the Church considered itself the genuine voice of the Scottish working class as the remarks made by the Rev Duncan Cameron at the same meeting with Scottish Office show:

During the General Strike in the industrial areas nearly all the leaders were Irish. In course of time instead of a Scottish proletariat there would be a body of people who had no regard for the United Kingdom and who were prone to revolutionary ideas. From the point of view of the interest of the United Kingdom and the existence of the Empire it was important that the Government should tackle the question. No political party should be afraid of tackling the question. The 'Glasgow Herald' and the Scotsman did not give a true reflection of the working classes in Scotland. There was great bitterness among them against the growing numbers of Irish immigrants.

This was plainer language than White's scholarly and scientific sociology. The Irish were potentially dangerous revolutionaries, they were becoming the proletariat and,

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73 Minutes of the meeting between the Joint Church of Scotland and United Free Church Committee and Sir John Lamb at the Scottish office 24th September 1926 White papers Box 103
74 ibid
for the existence of the country and the Empire, the Government had better do something about it.

IV

It can be seen from the foregoing that the leadership of the Church of Scotland, as epitomised by White, went to considerable lengths to make an intellectually coherent case for the restriction of Irish immigration into Scotland on the grounds of Irish racial inferiority. It also made strenuous efforts to distance itself from any suspicion that it was motivated by any religious consideration although this was, even then, scarcely credible. The fact that the effort was made is important. It suggests that the Church at the highest levels was uncomfortable with simple ‘No Popery’. Certainly it had a tradition of distancing itself from the more rabid proponents of that cause. The career of the 19th century controversialist Jacob Primmer is a case in point. Primmer was a tub thumping anti-papist who ‘loved the thrill of the outdoor meeting’ and conducted a fourteen year series of meetings around Scotland in which he luridly described the imagined exploits of nuns and priests and the pagan symbols of Romanism. At the same time he was consistently in conflict with his own presbytery in Dunfermline and with the General Assembly which frequently voted to withhold a proportion of his stipend. The Church of Scotland had a distaste for vulgar anti-Catholicism and ‘No Popery’ street preachers were vulgar. As Bruce has pointed out they were a form of popular entertainment and Ratcliffe and Cormack would carry on in that tradition in the 1930s. Dr White was not a public entertainer.

Aside from naturally wishing to have its arguments considered on a higher plane the Church was engaging with the intellectual debate of its day. Eugenics and race theory were concerns of individuals like H G Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Marie Stopes and Dean Inge of St. Paul’s. The carnage of the First World War had made questions about the survival of the ‘race’ topical as never before. As that carnage had been so marked in Scotland it is not all that surprising that the Church engaged in that debate using the terms current at the time. There had been a long nineteenth century tradition in Scotland of commingling racial and religious ideas These were fearful times and the Church of Scotland was a frightened institution in which case it was not

75 S Bruce Sectarianism in Scotland p19
76 Ibid pp18-19
77 Ibid p19
unnatural, if inexcusable, that it turned to authoritarian solutions to its perceived problems or, given recent events, that the Irish were that perceived problem.

However, was this Scotland’s ‘fascist moment?’ As Owen Dudley Edwards pointed out it is not difficult to see elements of fascism in much of the Church’s public and private pronouncements on the Irish.78 Yet, as Stephen Cullen has shown recently, the British Union of Fascists never really made much progress in Scotland in the 1930s partly because of its inability to understand the religious and identity dimensions in Scotland.79 It is probably more accurate to describe it as an attempt to re-imagine Scotland, a Scotland secure in its racial homogeneity and Presbyterian identity led by a reunited Established Church. In effect it was an attempt to turn the clock back to a safer and less threatening pre-war world. In some ways the Irish were almost incidental to the whole campaign. They were a convenient, visible, tangible expression of an insecurity that had more to do with a sense of national loss, loss in terms of men on the battlefield, loss of direction and loss of self esteem. The movement for re-unification of the Presbyterian churches was part of that process, as Burleigh put it: ‘Into the re-united Church in 1929 were gathered the great majority of Presbyterians...The Chief rival was the Roman Catholic Church consisting largely of Irish immigrants settled in the industrial areas and increasing in numbers an consequently political influence. In numbers alone the Church of Scotland in 1929 might justifiably regard itself as the Church of the Scottish people....More important, however, is the fact of its acknowledged responsibility for the spiritual life of Scotland.’80 Certainly this was the Church’s aim in the 1920s but how far was it successful in achieving it? In answering this question it is necessary to explore its relations with the ‘Civil Magistrate’ in this case the Scottish Office.

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78 O D Edwards Modern Scottish Catholicism p167
79 S M Cullen, The Fasces and the Saltire: The failure of the British Union of Fascists in Scotland 1932-1940 Scottish Historical Review LXXXVII, 2 No.224, October 2008
80 Burleigh A Church History of Scotland p405
Chapter Three
The Civil Magistrate

What is sometimes lost in the history of Scotland of the 1920s is how intensely Conservative a period it was. Naturally enough with the effects of the Great War, the rise of the Labour party, the General Strike, mass unemployment and the development of a class-based political system it is perfectly reasonable to see it as a time of political ferment. Yet the indisputable fact is that between 1919 and 1929, with only a brief hiatus, the Conservative party, whether in coalition or on its own, was the dominant political force in Britain. It was a Conservative party, moreover, benefiting from the flight from the Liberals of a frightened middle class, that clung to many of its more reactionary principles. The defence of the Empire, a bulwark against Bolshevism and the maintenance of the pre-war social system were the certainties that its MPs could understand and promote. It was not that they did not recognise that things had changed. It was because things had changed that there was a need for the Conservative party to stick to its traditional strengths, if only to ensure that things did not change any further. This required vigilance against perceived threats to the political and social order. God, King and Empire were to be defended at all costs from enemies foreign and domestic, especially domestic.

Why then was the Unionist party so apparently reluctant to support the Church of Scotland over an issue that was almost guaranteed to unite them, the ‘threat’ of the Catholic Irish in Scotland, surely an enemy within if ever there was one? As has been pointed out in Chapter One the Scottish establishment in particular had had an almighty fright by the events of the Irish War of Independence. Now these newly enfranchised ‘subversives’ were apparently making common cause with the socialists. At the very least no more of these undesirables must be allowed to flood into Scotland to take the bread from the mouths of honest Scotsmen who were suffering from high unemployment and forced to leave the land of their birth for America where they were lost to their homeland and the Empire. All this was good tub thumping stuff for the constituencies especially when it was to be backed up unimpeachable scholarship, modern scientific theory and the imprimatur of the respectability of the Church of Scotland.

Yet the campaign had all but run out of steam by the end of the twenties in the face of a refusal by a Conservative Government to contemplate the imposition of
restrictions on Irish immigration. There is even evidence to suggest that that self same Government may have been instrumental in assisting in the public demolition of the Church’s case by the Glasgow Herald in 1929. The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss the reaction of the Government, and particularly the Scottish Office, to the Church’s demand for the restriction of Irish immigration to Scotland. It should be pointed out that the Church did have its supporters in Government, notably Major Walter Elliot Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland for most of the period. The Secretary of State, Sir John Gilmour, fought more of a battle for restriction inside the Government than has been recognised. Bruce, Glendinning, Paterson and Rosie have pointed out that when the Scottish Churches met Gilmour and the Home Secretary, Joynson-Hicks, in 1928: ‘The delegates were to receive a rude shock…they were handed government data that flatly contradicted their case. With what must have required a considerable amount of self control for a Unionist MP and member of the Orange Order’s Grand Lodge, Gilmour told the petitioners that even if it had been the problem they asserted, migration from the Irish Free State could not be prevented because it was not a foreign country: it was part of the British Empire!’ Nevertheless, it will be demonstrated here that as late as February 1929 Gilmour was still attempting to persuade the Cabinet of the merits of some form of restriction and Joynson-Hicks himself was also suggesting employment restrictions on Irish-born labour that would be policed informally by employers rather than by legislative action by the Government. Equally, Elliot was arguing at the same time that in party political terms it would be to the Conservative advantage to use the Irish issue to split the new nationalist movement and head off demands for Scottish Home Rule presented by Labour and the Liberals.

II

In order to understand the development of the debate it is necessary to return to the earlier years of the decade. Even before The Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland produced its report on The Menace of the Irish Race to Our Scots Nationality in 1923 J S Phillimore, Chair of Humanities (Latin) at Glasgow University, in a perceptive article for the Dublin Review in 1922 analysed the tensions within the Protestant churches in Scotland. (Phillimore himself was a Catholic convert

81 S Bruce, Tony Glendinning, Iain Paterson, Michael Rosie Sectarianism in Scotland (Edinburgh University Press, 2004) p43
and had outraged some Protestant opinion in a speech to St Aloysius Academy in 1921 in which he suggested that the universities were open to capture and a means for converting Scotland to Catholicism). The Holy Coalition had evidently a predisposition to work upon, and here we see it displayed. The perilous equation, "Irish and therefore Catholic"= "Catholic and therefore Irish" had been indiscreeetly obtruded...One or two ill-calculated attempts by Sinn Feiners at criminal violence in Glasgow produced great indignation. They were promptly denounced and reprobated. But the legacy of "war nerves" and the present "tax nerves" form a very irritable diathesis for such alarms and outrages to work upon. But behind the Irish complication which is our Nemesis, there is the deep growing uneasiness at the failure of Protestantism to keep up in the race. The movement for Presbyterian re-union (which looks likely to succeed) is not principally a revulsion against the fissiparous instinct so deeply ingrained in Scottish Protestantism...but a policy of shortening the front against "the growing menace of Romanism and Socialism." We must think not only of the - quite natural-resentment of a threatened caste...but of a peculiarity in Calvinism - its fitness for a small homogenous bourgeoisie.

His was a not unreasonable survey of the underlying attitudes that would be borne out in the Church and Nation Report, even if its drafters would likely have indignantly rejected it.

By 1924, however, the Labour party was in power and the barbarians were not just at the gate. 'Romanism and Socialism' no were longer a menace but an apparent reality. Although it was a somewhat abbreviated administration the Church was unlikely to obtain a sympathetic hearing to combat these twin evils during Labour's period in office. However, circumstances were to change drastically during the General Election of 1924. As David Cesarani has shown:

What has been less generally noted by historians is the current of anti-alienism that underlay the Conservatives campaign and the anti-alien, anti Jewish furore that accompanied the formation of the new Government.

82 Gallagher Glasgow The Uneasy Peace p135
The leader of the Conservative Party, Stanley Baldwin, gave the green light to the extremists in his own ranks-men like Joynson-Hicks-in the course of his election broadcast on 16 October 1924 and in other speeches. Adverting to domestic unrest and the activity of 'alien' subversives, he announced that “we cannot afford the luxury of academic socialists or revolutionary agitation”... He told the nation on radio that should he become Prime Minister, “I want to examine the laws and regulations as to the entry of aliens into this country, for in these days no alien should be substituted for one of our own people when we have not enough work at home to go around.” The Association of British Chambers of Commerce passed a resolution a few days after the installation of the new Government urging it to take measures against “undesirable aliens”. The anti-alien theme was pushed hard by The Times, which began a series of articles on “Alien London”....The reports concentrated almost exclusively on the Jews in the East End...”They stand aloof -not always without a touch of oriental arrogance- from their fellow citizens. They look upon us with suspicion and a certain contempt. Mixed marriages between orthodox Jews and Gentiles are forbidden. These people remain an alien element in our land.84

In this febrile atmosphere it is not difficult to imagine the reaction of those in the Church of Scotland who held similar views about the alien inassimilable Irish. If the Jews were a problem in the East End of London how much more so were the Irish in the East End of Glasgow? The Jews had at least not been in direct rebellion against the Crown a mere three years previously and were furthermore unlikely to swamp the indigenous population. It has also to be pointed out that some Irish Catholics did their cause little favour. As Owen Dudley Edwards has stated 'The difference lies in that the Jews had given far less evidence of considering themselves a separate people...than had the chosen spokesmen of the Scottish Catholics of Irish Origin. Scotsmen who read the Catholic press might indeed wonder whether the Irish had any loyalty to Scotland.'85 Politically, therefore, it may well have appeared that the tide

84 D Cesarani Joynson-Hicks and the Radical Right in England after the First World War in Traditions of Intolerance Historical perspectives on fascism and race discourse in Britain T Kushner and K Lunn (Eds) ( Manchester University Press, 1989) p128
85 Owen Dudley Edwards The Catholic Press in Scotland p167
was running with the Church and encouraged them in the belief that any approach to Government would be met sympathetically.

This opinion was not without foundation. On the 17th July 1925 Major Elliot circulated a note on the issue of Irish immigration in the Scottish Office. The statistics that he quotes were, even then, suspect but it instigated research by the Scottish Office into the true state of affairs and would be frequently cited in departmental discussions:

I have had this matter under consideration for some time and referred guardedly to it while introducing the Board of Health Estimates, 1925. The Board of Health have since been collecting figures and estimate at present that a surplus of 4,000 Irish per annum remains as balance of immigration over emigration. We are at present supporting in Scotland some 10,000 paupers of Irish birth

In view of the very greatly overcrowded state of the Scottish labour market and the numbers who annually emigrate from Scotland only to be replaced here by Irish I suggest that the position cannot be allowed to remain.

I see no objection to framing a general statute limiting immigration from Dominions in the same way as they limit immigration from us. This in practice comes down to a reasonable prospect of employment with or without possession of a capital sum.

If England is not willing to do this Scotland should consider proceeding independently (My Italics)

Note that the present situation will be greatly aggravated when the new American quota system comes into effect which restricts further Irish immigration and will have the effect of damming it back on Great Britain.86

Elliot it should be noted had considerably more influence than his position as a junior minister would suggest. He was something of a right wing intellectual and party strategist. As Hutchinson has illustrated 'A ...Scot who had an audience throughout Great Britain was Walter Elliot. He was an inveterate writer of newspaper articles for both the London and Scottish press. In 1927 he wrote a book on Conservatism, (Toryism in the Twentieth Century) as part of a series of books designed to state the

86 National Archives of Scotland Irish Immigration Files HH1/541
right wing viewpoint on contemporary politics. That Elliot should be invited to define the central theme of the whole series indicates the weight he carried.\textsuperscript{87} Certainly his memorandum would haunt Scottish Office thinking on the Irish issue for the rest of the decade.

In terms of the statistics, he was being selective with the material with which he was provided. A Scottish Board of Health document dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1925\textsuperscript{88} stated that the total number of Irish born persons, including dependents, receiving poor relief on 15\textsuperscript{th} May 1924 was 9,342. This figure did not differentiate between Free State and Northern Irish citizens and the Board of Health's survey of the inspectors of Poor in the parishes of Coatbridge, Govan, Greenock, Bothwell, Glasgow, Motherwell and Port Glasgow concluded that 'so far as the Parish Councils are concerned, the question of immigration from Ireland during the past three years has not been a serious matter.'\textsuperscript{89} His assertion that there was a surplus of 4,000 Irish per annum was based on information provided confidentially by the Steamship Companies which estimated the excess of numbers arriving in Scotland in 1924, over the numbers leaving, to be 3,966.\textsuperscript{90} These figures did not take into account that the majority of the ferry traffic was between Ulster and Scotland and not the Free State and Scotland. There was no way using these figures to establish that the final destination of these travellers was the West of Scotland. This may appear to be a somewhat arcane point but the discussions between the Church and the Government throughout the 1920s was to be primarily a battle of statistics. What is of particular interest in the Elliot note is his assertion that if England was not willing to restrict Irish immigration then Scotland should proceed on its own independently. At first glance it appears remarkable that a minister of the Crown, and a Unionist one at that, was advocating a quasi nationalist idea of Scotland 'proceeding independently' on the issue. However, Elliot's thinking on the subject was influenced, as will be shown, by particularly Scottish political considerations.

By December 1925 the Church of Scotland Committee increased the pressure on the Government for action and produced an open letter to Sir John Gilmour which it published in pamphlet form (See appendix 1). This opened in rather sonorous tone:

\textsuperscript{87} I G C Hutchinson Scottish Unionism Between The Two World Wars in \textit{Unionist Scotland 1800-1997} C M M MacDonald (Ed) (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1998) p74
\textsuperscript{88} NAS HHI/541
\textsuperscript{89} ibid
\textsuperscript{90} ibid
In accordance with a remit from the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church, and the Free Church, and after consultation with other Churches, we desire to approach His Majesty's Government upon a question of vital importance to our Scottish people — viz., the serious situation that has arisen in Scotland owing to the influx during the last number of years of many thousands of Irish immigrants, and to the emigration of many thousands of the native population.\footnote{Print of the Church and Nation Committee pamphlet Open Letter to Sir John Gilmore NAS HH1/541p1} The pamphlet itself was an updated version of the Irish Menace report of 1923 and contained the usual references to the supplanting of the indigenous population by the inferior Irish. ‘It has been stated in the House of Commons that 9,000 persons immigrated into Scotland in 1924 and yet there were as many as 70,000 unemployed persons in Glasgow alone.’\footnote{Ibid p2} As has been pointed out above this figure of 9,000 was not rooted in reality.\footnote{Ibid p2} The Church had no doubt to the cause of this unemployment and it also introduced what was to become something of a bogey figure for the twenties, the infamous ‘Irish foreman.’

‘We know of a recent case where an Irish foreman was dismissing Scotsman and engaging Irishmen, and was even bringing men over from Ireland and putting them on the job.

We have known cases where public schemes undertaken to provide work for our own unemployed have been partially recruited from immigrants of a few weeks and months standing.’\footnote{The pamphlet unfortunately makes no reference and gives no date for the author of this figure. Possibly given the Elliot note quoted above it might be a misreading of the numbers of Irish paupers in receipt of poor relief, or perhaps more likely a random figure.}

It is possible to discern how the Government was now being hoist with the petard of its own pre-election language of only a year before. The letter itself, signed by the Rev. John White, concluded with a request that the Government institute an inquiry into the issue and then take whatever action was necessary. The Church followed this up at the end of the year with a formal request for a delegation to meet Sir John Gilmour in person to discuss the issue. It was a request that created some consternation within the Scottish Office.

\footnote{Ibid p2}
In early January 1926 the rather invidious position of the Scottish Office was recognised by officials. Rose, Gilmour’s Private Secretary, minuted the department regarding the Church’s request and immediately pointed out that the Dominion status of the Irish Free State made any solution problematical but ‘The reception of a deputation might be of advantage in that seeking to get a policy of restriction adopted Secretary for Scotland could point to feeling of responsible persons in Scotland as evinced by the deputation.’

It should be noted here that the Church was in some haste to arrange the deputation before the annual General Assembly in May. This was probably because White was ending his first period in office as Moderator and to secure government assurances on action on the Irish issue would have been a considerable boost, not only to him personally, but to the re-unification process between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, the anti Irish campaign having been very much a joint venture. Not all of the Scottish Office officials were keen to oblige the Kirk, however, as can be seen by the replies to Rose’s minute:

The question of Irish immigration to Scotland is a difficult and delicate one. For facts in support of the menace within it would be necessary to consult a number of departments – Ministry of Labour, Registrar General, Scottish Board of Health perhaps the Prisons Commissioners …

Before reaching a final decision as to receiving a deputation it would be desirable to confer with the Dominions Office as it is not impossible that the ventilation of the subject by the rather conspicuous method of a deputation from an influential body, who moreover are not particularly reticent in their presentation of the case would be regarded as embarrassing.

In view of the notice which the subject has already received (See in particular Captain Elliot memo) Secretary for Scotland should probably see before any action is taken

Patrick Laird 2nd January 1926

The importance of the problem is undoubted. Any remedy is necessarily difficult. Presumably it could only take the form of legislation restricting
immigration from the Irish Free State or from the Dominions generally. If such a measure were undertaken it would require careful steering. Judging by the print enclosed I am apprehensive that the spokesman at the suggested interview might increase the difficulties by precipitating opposition from the FS and perhaps other Dominions. Quiet consideration by the Government might be better than an advertised deputation and public inquiry as suggested.

John Lamb 2\textsuperscript{nd} January 1926\textsuperscript{97}

The use of language by these senior civil servants is interesting. Laird's description of the Church as 'an influential body who are not particularly reticent in their presentation of the case' was a piece of masterly understatement. He was obviously fully alive to the possibilities of 'embarrassment'. A thing in civil service terms to be avoided at all costs. At the same time the Elliot memo had made the issue one which the Scottish Office could not entirely ignore although Sir John Lamb's suggestion that it was a problem that required 'quiet consideration by the Government' implies that he hoped it might be. To accede to the Church request would not only appear as though the Church was making policy but also had the potential to drag the Scottish Office into potential conflict with other departments. As far back as 1923 there had been a suggestion to the Dominions Office that there be a reciprocal arrangement for the repatriation of those charged to the Poor Law between Scotland and Ireland. This had already received a dusty answer: 'it would be possible for HMG (His Majesty's Government) to suggest to the Government of the Free State that the previous power to remove paupers from Great Britain to their area should be re-enacted on the understanding that legislation should be introduced providing that paupers could similarly be removed to from the Free State to Great Britain but His Grace (the Duke of Devonshire) doubts whether the Government of the Irish Free State would be prepared to concur in such a proposal; and as present advised, therefore, he does not see his way to make it.'\textsuperscript{98} If the Dominions Office did not see its way to making such suggestions in 1923 it was extremely unlikely that they would consider any more radical solutions at the behest of the Church of Scotland in 1926. Especially in view of the fact that the Boundary Commission of 1925 had just confirmed the borders of

\textsuperscript{97} ibid
\textsuperscript{98} Letter to the Scottish Board of Health from the Colonial Office (Irish Branch) 6 November 1923

NAS HH1/540
the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland to the disappointment of many in the South. Creating unnecessary difficulties for the Cosgrave Government just as DeValera was re-entering Irish politics was not to be countenanced.

There was a recognition that the Scottish Office had to be able to examine the actual position rather than the somewhat unsubstantiated figures being employed by the Church. Sir John Gilmour, recognising that procrastination was the better part of valour, suggested putting the Church off on the grounds ‘that as this is a UK question I think it undesirable to meet them at the present time’.

Between the months of January and March 1926 the Scottish Office consulted The Scottish Board of Health, the Registrar General and the Prisons Commissioners of Scotland. The Registrar General on January 27th in his report to the Scottish Office hammered in the first of many nails to come in the coffin of the Church’s case. He found from the census return of 1921 that the number of Irish born persons in Scotland was lower than in 1911. He went further: ‘The fact that the number found in Scotland in 1921 is the lowest since 1851 certainly does not support a view of there being within recent years any increase in the amount of immigration from Ireland.’

He also examined the numbers of Irish marriages, another statistic often cited to ‘prove’ the increase in Irish immigration. His conclusions were no more helpful to the Church and Nation Committee:

...these percentages tend to show some, though not great increase in the frequency of Roman Catholic (i.e. Irish) marriages but this percentage cannot be credited with demonstrating increased immigration of Irish for there are good grounds for presuming that the children of Irish immigrants adhere to the Roman Catholic faith and when they grow up and marry tend to increase the number of Irish marriages. Thus the figures obtained from an examination of the Marriage Registers, like those obtained from an examination of the census returns at least fail to show any evidence of any increase in the number of Irish immigrants.

...I in no way desire to state that the information supplied by the Committee of the Church of Scotland is erroneous, but I feel it right to

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99 NAS HH1/541, Sir John Gilmour 5/1/26
100 ibid
point out that the information at my disposal from the census reports and from the marriage statistics fails to provide corroboration.\textsuperscript{101}

There was some succour given to the Church by the statistics provided by the Prisons Commissioners but the figures did not give numbers for those of Irish birth as opposed to those of Irish extraction. As Milroy, the civil servant tasked with compiling the reports pointed out in his summary, the assumption was that those prisoners classified as Roman Catholic were either Irish or of Irish extraction in which case there appeared to be a disproportionate number of ‘Irish’ prisoners\textsuperscript{102}. It should be remembered that this was not what would be considered a scientific breakdown of the figures and that the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners was one Lord Polwarth, who was also a prominent member of the Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland. The Board of Health reported that: ‘The number of Irish born persons in receipt of ordinary poor relief has not grown recently; it is less than it was in 1910 and the same is true as regards the percentage of the total number chargeable including destitute able bodied unemployed.’\textsuperscript{103} The statistics thus obtained by early 1926 were far from supporting the Church’s case and went a long way in refuting it although the Scottish Office were cautious in their conclusions. Milroy put the position thus:

\begin{quote}
There has been no serious (sic) increase recently in the Irish population but there may have been some displacement of Scottish Labour by Irish.
\end{quote}

...In the circumstances I should be disposed to defer consulting the Dominions Office – one does not want to throw fuel on the flame of racial strife until we have consulted the Ministry of Labour and see what they have to say. If there really be a problem of recent growth it would seem to lie in the displacement of Scottish labour by Irish.\textsuperscript{104}

Milroy assiduously pursued the Ministry of Labour for statistics that might prove or disprove the assertion that the Irish were in fact displacing Scottish labour. His reply, finally received in June, was that the Ministry did not have any information that was relevant to that in the Church’s pamphlet. By this time Milroy at least had concluded that: ‘the Irish ‘danger’ (sic) is not appreciably increasing and does not justify any

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] ibid
\item[102] ibid
\item[103] ibid
\item[104] ibid
\end{footnotes}
action by the British Government. Apart from the desirability of action, restriction of
Irish immigration would raise thorny questions with the Dominions."\(^{105}\)

After what must have been much wearisome toil and, judging by the amount of
material produced by the various departments, considerable departmental time, there
was by the middle of 1926 no single statistical confirmation of the Church’s case. The
Church, however, unaware that the Scottish Office had been scrutinising the figures,
renewed the mandate of the Church and Nation Committee and evidently undeterred
by the earlier polite refusal, renewed their request for the reception of a delegation by
the Secretary of State to discuss the issue. Gilmour was politically in somewhat of a
difficult position. Any further refusal to meet a delegation of the Church of Scotland
may have been construed as a snub, especially as the position of Secretary of State for
Scotland had been elevated to Cabinet rank that summer. The first Secretary of State
for Scotland in the Cabinet since the eighteenth century, refusing, almost as his first
official act, to meet a delegation from the Church of Scotland to discuss an issue that
was being portrayed as a matter of national survival would hardly be considered an
auspicious beginning, especially in the Scottish Unionist Party. On the other hand as
Milroy pointed out in a memo that while he agreed that the Irish immigration question
was 'highly controversial and delicate, ... In these cases I think that, if the request for
interview on these subjects were acceded to, no useful purpose would be served. On
the contrary harm might ensue inasmuch as S of S’s agreement to receive a deputation
might be construed by the ordinary layman -bonus paterfamilias- as an indication of
concurrence with the Church’s views and of putting his weight in their favour.'\(^{106}\)

In the event a meeting was arranged with the Church’s delegation which took place
on the 24\(^{th}\) September 1926 but without Sir John Gilmour who was called away at the
last moment on urgent business elsewhere. In view of the advice he had been
receiving from his officials this may have been a diplomatic absence. It is also notable
that the Rev John White was another absentee. The Church’s case was presented by
the Reverends MacLagan and Cameron while the Government was represented by Sir
John Lamb and Mr Jeffrey from the Board of Health. It was not an altogether
satisfactory occasion for the Church side. The usual iniquities of the Irish were
rehearsed in which they were accused of taking the jobs from unemployed Scotsmen
while apparently at the same time idling on the dole, the Unemployment Insurance

\(^{105}\) ibid
\(^{106}\) Note from Milroy to Laird NAS HH1/541
Act being, in the words of one delegate, the Reverend Patterson 'a terrible curse on the country.'107 When not engaged in these activities they were, according to the Rev Duncan Cameron of Kilsyth, plotting the downfall of the Empire.108 The delegation called for a public inquiry which was deflected, rather than refused by Sir John Lamb on the grounds 'that it would be difficult to get a body which would be recognised as impartial to enquire into the matter.'109 Mr Jeffrey also refuted the claim that temporary workers from Ireland working on the harvest then stayed in Scotland to collect the dole. The Board of Health had monitored the position and found that nearly all such workers returned to Ireland and in any case while: 'It might be regrettable when there was so much unemployment in Scotland that such a field of labour should not be kept filled by Scottish workers. It was nevertheless a fact that Scottish workers did not feel attracted to that class of work.'110

The reverend gentlemen might have been a little more encouraged had they been able to read some of the general conclusions contained in the briefing note for the meeting prepared for Sir John Gilmour. The note itself (see Appendix 2) quotes the figures given in the earlier reports and was not entirely unsympathetic to the Church although the suggestions for remedying the situation fell far short of what the Church was seeking and the tone was far from the apocalyptic.

It would appear that although the figures cited above supplied by the Scottish Departments do not reveal a very serious state of affairs, there is certainly an Irish problem in the South West of Scotland, and that there has been for some time. There is no doubt that the Irish impose an undue burden on the poor law authorities and that too great a proportion of the prison population is of Irish birth or extraction: and further it seems that Irish, whether by accepting lower wages and worse conditions or through the action of compatriot foremen, obtain employment in the face of serious unemployment among Scotsmen.111

As a matter of fact the Scottish Office had absolutely no figures or evidence to justify the existence of 'compatriot foremen' and as has been pointed out above the prison

107 Minutes of the Meeting between the Scottish Office and the Church and Nation Committee 24th September 1926. John White Papers box 103 New College Library University of Edinburgh
108 ibid
109 ibid
110 ibid
111 Note for The Secretary of State for the meeting of the Church and Nation Committee NAS HH1/541 Appendix 3 p3
statistics had a certain dubiety about them. Crime levels in the West of Scotland tended to be higher than elsewhere and one could have equally have made the argument that Glaswegians made up 'too great a proportion of the prison population.' Nevertheless the government were sufficiently concerned by the churches allegations to set up an interdepartmental conference on the issue.  

IV

The inter-departmental conference on Irish immigration took place on the 28th June 1927 chaired by Major Elliot. Present were representatives of the Dominions Office, the Home Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, the Scottish Board of Health and the Scottish Office. Elliot was still anxious to reach some sort of agreement to restrict Irish immigration. The issue was beginning to bedevil more than the correspondence pages of the Glasgow Herald. Even the lady Unionists at their conference in October 1926 had debated and overwhelmingly passed a motion demanding the restriction of immigration of Irish manual workers into Scotland and 'that any such immigrants requiring poor relief within five years of their arrival be deported.' These were sentiments with which Elliot found himself in sympathy. It is apparent from the minutes of the conference that Elliot was hoping to influence it towards a policy of restriction of immigration even if this had to be applied in general terms to all of the Dominions.

Elliot opened the conference with a restatement of the points made in the briefing note prepared for the meeting with the Church delegation the previous year (see above). He immediately ran into difficulties with the representatives of the English departments who had not 'received complaints on the subject of Irish immigration comparable to the complaints in Scotland' and whose inquiries 'did not appear to show any justification for proceeding on the line proposed.' The Dominions Office representative Mr Whiskard was particularly discouraging drawing attention to what he described as a fundamental principle that 'persons described as of Irish Free State nationality were British subjects by birth in one of His Majesty's dominions and as such could neither be excluded or deported from this country. Apart from legislation

112 ibid
113 The Scotsman 26th October 1926 p9
114 Note of Proceedings at an Inter-departmental Conference held at the Scottish Office, Whitehall, S.W.1, on Tuesday, 28th June 1927 at 5.30 p.m. on the subject of Irish Immigration. NAS HH1/541
no power existed to restrict immigration of British subjects from the Irish Free State into Great Britain’. The Home Office representative agreed stating that: ‘the Department would object to any proposal having for its purpose the sub-division of British nationality, and it would be a complete reversal of immemorial policy for the Government to take power to keep or send out any British subject from this country.’

Elliot was unabashed and carried on his argument that the situation could not be allowed to continue and that there was ample precedent in that Canada and Australia imposed restrictions on the immigration of Britons and in any case the policy would have no effect on them. As proof of his case Elliot cited figures from the Inspectors of Poor in Glasgow which averred that in 43 parishes ‘mainly in the West of Scotland, the number of persons born in the Irish Free State who entered Scotland in the years ended 31, March, 1926 and 1927 and became chargeable on the rates were 418 and 431 respectively.’ This figure was immediately countered by Irons of the Ministry of Labour who pointed out that: ‘according to a census taken at the exchanges in and near Glasgow only for four weeks ended 25th April, 1925, showed that of all applicants for unemployment benefit during that period only ten had at one time or another been resident in the Irish Free State. The Ministry were not aware of any powers that could be invoked to regulate the entry of Irishmen into Great Britain, even if such regulation were considered to be necessary.’ It was apparent that Elliot’s, and by extension the Church, case was not standing up to the scrutiny of more dispassionate observers and Elliot was forced into the uncomfortable position of admitting ‘that the statistical information which had been collected from several sources had not assisted materially in providing a satisfactory basis for the examination of the problem’ nonetheless ‘although no precise figures were available to indicate of the influx of Irish into Scotland there was evidence that an influx was taking place.’

It is probable that it was at this conference that any realistic possibility of restricting Irish immigration ran into the sand. At the end of the conference the Dominions Office made the position clear: ‘As at present advised Mr Whiskard could

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115 ibid
116 ibid
117 ibid
118 ibid
119 ibid
hold out no hope that the Dominions Office would undertake to support any proposal having for its object the exclusion of Irishmen from this country. Such a proposal impinged upon the important question of the status adhering to British nationality and was one which could not be proceeded upon without a decision by the Cabinet.' It was not, however, the end of the affair. Sir John Lamb wrote on behalf of Sir John Gilmour to the Departments concerned on the 14th of September restating the case that the Irish were undesirable immigrants. The reply from the Home Office was a firm non possumus:

... As at present advised, Sir William Joynson-Hicks would be opposed to any suggestion that an attempt should be made to regulate immigration of natives of the Irish Free State into the UK...he would point out that natives of the IFS are in the contemplation of British law British subjects and could not under any circumstances be excluded from the UK.

Save on the grounds of urgent necessity he would deprecate the introduction of legislation with a view to making such exclusion possible.120

The Church of Scotland was in the meantime unaware of the internal discussions of the Government and carried on its campaign. On the 19th July 1928 there was a meeting in London with the joint church committee on Irish immigration and the Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks and Sir John Gilmour. As has been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter the Church delegation was shocked to find that their proposals had been dismissed and were taken aback by the figures that contradicted their case. By this time, by virtue of constant re-iteration, the Church and Nation Committee were convinced that their collection of figures and anecdotal evidence made an irrefutable case. The meeting sparked considerable correspondence between the Scottish Office and the Reverends MacLagan and Cameron demanding further evidence.121 The impeccably Unionist Scotsman chimed in with an Editorial the day after the meeting. It allowed that the 'Irishman is a born agitator...on the Clyde and elsewhere there is a spirit of agitation and revolt which may owe something to Irish inspiration.' Yet the article concluded that 'we have never had a barrier upon the

120 Reply from John Pedder Home Office HH1/547 19th November 1927

121 NAS HH1/547
immigration of British subjects...such a policy could not be applied to Scotland alone or to Irish immigration alone.\textsuperscript{122} It would appear that by the middle of 1928 the issue had become effectively dead in political terms. This, however, was not the case.

V

In the early months of 1929, which was to be a General Election year, the Irish issue once again intruded into Scottish and British politics. There was also a new dimension in the emergence for the first time of an avowedly nationalist party in Scotland which had secured the support of luminaries like the Duke of Montrose, R B Cunninghame Graham, Compton Mackenzie and R E Muirhead. The political circumstances were not favourable to the Conservatives and the Church of Scotland, about to be triumphantly reunited with the United Free Church later in the year, was once again to have John White as Moderator. The indefatigable Elliot, by this time considered an influential party strategist, surveyed the political scene and found that it was not good. In response to this he produced in February 1929 a lengthy strategy document for the Scottish Unionist Party (See Appendix 4). This is the first reference to the consequences of a serious ‘Home Rule’ challenge to the Unionists. The timing of the document is crucial for in March 1929 there was a scheduled Cabinet discussion on Irish immigration in Scotland which would be based on a paper produced by the Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks. Elliot suggested that for the first time the Unionists might be facing the possibility of legislation for a Scottish legislature being proposed within the next eighteen months and produced what can be best described as a Unionist Nationalist solution:

A re-examination of Scottish government and its relation to the United Kingdom Parliament is imminent....It is not within the range of practical politics to suppose that this situation will be altered to the Conservative advantage in the forthcoming election.

... Do we recognise, however, that this means that the establishment of a Scottish legislature is thus brought forward as a possibility not of the next ten years, but as a possibility of the next eighteen months? Both Liberal and Labour parties are deeply pledged to the proposal of such a measure, and resolutions in its favour have been repeatedly carried in Parliament,

\textsuperscript{122} The Scotsman 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1928 p8
with their official support, over many years. I do not know that the Conservative party has recently made any clear statement of policy on the matter.\textsuperscript{123}

In Eliot’s view the existence of the Scottish Grand Committee meant that even were the Conservatives to retain power at the election they would be outnumbered in the Committee that would make managing the Government’s Scottish business almost impossible. He cited his own experience during the Bonar Law Government: ‘The difficulties in the first year were dealt with by ‘tacking’ carried to almost absurd lengths. (The prolongation of payments of relief to Scottish able-bodied unemployed for instance, was tacked to a bill regulating London inter-borough finance.) I do not think that affairs could thus have continued for a whole Parliament, and in fact the then Secretary for Scotland had had to consider the only logical step. That is, the abolition of the Scottish Grand Committee.’\textsuperscript{124} Eliot recognised that such a step would be hugely unpopular. ‘Scottish Members will readily realise the extreme difficulty of taking any such step in the 1929 Parliament, as practically the first proposal of the new administration towards the Scottish people.’\textsuperscript{125} There were in his view only two possible steps that Government could take to avoid chaos in the House of Commons and disastrous unpopularity in Scotland. It could set up a Royal Commission on Scottish Home Rule which would in his opinion recommend the setting up of a legislature in Scotland. This would in effect commit the Conservatives to bringing in a Home Rule Bill of their own. Eliot was of course well aware how the words Home Rule would send a shudder down the collective spine of his party. The alternative would be to suspend Irish immigration into Scotland. In Eliot’s analysis of the nationalist movement:

It seems to me possible that the anti Government swing of the pendulum may lead to a certain number of the disgruntled finding in the ‘Nationalist’ label a handy compromise, of the same kind as that which leads to the return of independent Members when discontent is about ...

The Nationalist movement however contains two elements naturally opposed whose temporary union has given them strength. These elements

\textsuperscript{123} Scottish Government Factors which must be considered before the General Election
Major Elliot NAS HH1/556 Feb April 1929

\textsuperscript{124} ibid
\textsuperscript{125} ibid
are the ‘Gaelic-Irish’ and the ‘Edinburgh Protestant’. The ‘Gaelic Irish are
the literary men and some of them, such as Compton Mackenzie, preach
the re-constitution of Scotland on a Roman Catholic basis. Needless to say
this is an anathema to the East-country men and the Kirks. It would be
easy to split these two. The steps hereafter detailed would do so. But it is
probable that Unionist action along the lines previously considered might
consolidate them.

... These facts seem to me the justifiable basis for suspending overseas
immigration altogether at present, (that is to say Irish immigration). As all
Scots Members know this goes much deeper than any surface or
temporary questions and indeed accounts for a large proportion of the
autonomist movement.126

Having presented his party with the Scylla of Home Rule and the Charybdis of
restricting immigration from the Empire he proceeded to suggest how the objections
to the latter policy may have been circumvented. Using the unemployment insurance
system he proposed that new books should only be issued to home born workers. This
he believed would sidestep the need for an ‘Ellis Island’ type control system, while at
the same time leaving immigration open to all countries within an unemployment
insurance scheme which would ‘obviate difficulties with England and Northern
Ireland.’127

As a purely party political solution went it was neat and attractive for the Unionists.
Elliot had managed to put restriction back onto the agenda and it was an issue,
whatever its merits, he had consistently supported since 1925. It was a ‘Scottish’
solution to the problem and there is little doubt that Elliot believed he was shooting
the nationalist fox. In this he may well have been influenced by two letters that
appeared in the Scotsman on 10th January 1929 from the Duke of Montrose and R E
Muirhead respectively. Both argued the Nationalist case but Montrose’s point that a
legislature was needed to control immigration while Muirhead dismissed a suggestion
that Home Rule in Scotland would be ‘Irish Home Rule in Scotland’ by pointing out
that the whole Irish immigration issue had been greatly exaggerated in the first
place.128 Whatever the case it was obvious that Elliot was prepared to persevere in

126 ibid
127 ibid
128 The Scotsman 10 January 1929 p7
championing restriction despite his experiences of the last five years. Incidentally this is somewhat at odds with Hutchinson’s evaluation of him as a ‘progressive Unionist.’

Be that as it may it would appear that Elliot was making something of a last ditch appeal to his party in terms of political self interest to reconsider the merits of restriction in advance of the Cabinet meeting of March 1929.

This appeal was not without its effect. In advance of the discussion of a Cabinet paper on Irish immigration produced by the Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks (See appendix 5), Gilmour wrote to the Cabinet out lining his objections:

As regards Scotland the main facts, as shown from the enquiries which have been made, would appear as follows:-

In each of the years 1925-6 and 1926-7 over 800 poor persons born in the Irish Free State became chargeable in 43 Scottish parishes, mainly in the West of Scotland.

In each of the years 1925, 1926 and 1927 the Irish born (covering Northern Ireland as well as the Irish Free State) convicted prisoners, borstal inmates and Criminal lunatics amounted to between 22% and 25% of the total for Scotland.

In each of the years 1925 and 1926 the number of convictions of persons of Irish extraction (including both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland) at Glasgow Sheriff Court was about half the number of persons of Scottish birth and extraction similarly convicted.

In view of these facts I should not be prepared, without further discussion, to agree with the conclusions drawn in the first paragraph of the Home Secretary’s Memorandum, and I should reserve the right to state my own views as to policy at the meeting at which the matter is considered.

The Cabinet discussion took place on Wednesday 6 March 1929. The significance of this date will be examined later. Joynson-Hicks himself was an old party ‘die-hard’ and of all the Cabinet the one who was most likely to be in favour of the case for restriction. However, the first paragraph of his report. The one to which Gilmour

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129 I G C Hutchinson Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century (Palgrave, Houndmills, 2001) p49
130 Secret Cabinet Paper 46 Irish Immigration Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland 21/2/1929 NAS HH1/556
objected, concluded that the results of his inquiries ‘...strongly suggest that the mischief of which the representatives of the Scottish Churches who came to see me in July last complained, has already been done and that the immigration of natives of the Irish Free State to Scotland is not now such as to affect materially the position created by the presence in Scotland of a large body of persons of Irish extraction.’ In effect the horse had long bolted and in his opinion: ‘It is in fact the Irish and their descendents already in Scotland who present the real problem and, failing wholesale repatriation, which I take to be out of the question the only measure of alleviation which commends itself as being both just and practicable is the repatriation of those who within a fixed period of their arrival in Scotland become a charge on the rates....’

It was not that Joynson-Hicks did not think that the Irish could not exert an ‘undesirable’ influence in their own localities or that no action should be taken. It is in the light of developments in the 1930s that the final paragraph of his paper takes on an added significance:

I think also that the help of Scottish employers should be enlisted. Unless there were a demand for Irish labour there would be little encouragement for either Irishmen to enter Scotland or for those who have arrived to remain. Moreover if Scottish employers showed a decided preference for Scottish Labour the Irish elements now in employment would eventually be forced onto poor relief and might, subject to whatever arrangements are made, become eligible to repatriation. The suggestion that the Secretary of State for Scotland should address a circular based of course on the gravity of the unemployment situation to the employer’s organisations in Scotland is perhaps worth considering.

After 1929 the Church concentrated on making its case directly to Scottish employers rather than to the Government. By the early Thirties Labour were once again in power and a change of emphasis may have been necessary. In this case, though, we have a senior Cabinet Minister suggesting that employers be encouraged to operate a specifically anti Irish employment policy. Joynson-Hicks was doubtless referring to a

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131 Secret Cabinet Paper C.P. 45(29) 20/2/1929 Cabinet Irish Immigration Memorandum by the Home Secretary NAS HH1/556

132 Secret Cabinet Paper C.P. 45(29) 20/2/1929 Cabinet Irish Immigration Memorandum by the Home Secretary NAS HH1/556
policy that would affect only the Irish-born labour but in a Scotland where the distinctions between Irish and Catholic were blurred it is not difficult to see how this injunction could have been interpreted.

Nevertheless a Cabinet decision having been agreed that no action on restriction would be taken all members of the Government, including Elliot, were bound by the principles of collective responsibility. This still left the Scottish Unionists with the political problems outlined in the Elliot paper. The preferred solution was finally off the agenda and so how were the Unionists to deal with the issue in the upcoming election? If one is unable to use a political issue to one's advantage then it is obviously to one’s advantage if the issue disappears. It was not in the Government’s interest to release the huge volume of information it had gathered over the last five years itself, especially as for most of the time they had been claiming that they had not got it. If the Irish issue could be discredited it would possibly remove an incentive for their own disgruntled supporters to flirt with the new National party and at the same time remove an embarrassing bone of contention with Church. It would have had the added bonus of removing possible sources of friction, not only with the Free State but with the other Dominions as well, not to mention Irish opinion in the United States. It is at this point that the *Glasgow Herald* came conveniently to the Unionists’ rescue.

**VI**

Discerning Government inspired journalism, if it is done well, can be a difficult process. In these more cynical times when the public is more familiar with the dark arts of politics there tends to be more suspicion about the motives of journalists. The 1920s were a more deferential society and journalists, of the ‘respectable’ newspapers at any rate, could still, without irony be referred to as the ‘gentlemen of the press.’ This did not mean that they were without bias and the *Glasgow Herald* of the period, like the *Scotsman*, was soundly Unionist. It was in the correspondence pages of the *Herald* that much of the arguments concerning Irish immigration had been aired, naturally enough as this was always an issue of more concern in the West than in the East of Scotland. What is interesting is the tone of an editorial in the *Glasgow Herald* of the 22nd February 1929 in advance of the Cabinet meeting and at approximately the same time as the Elliot document was circulated. The United States was
introducing a new quota system that would drastically cut the numbers of Free State Irish it would admit:

...What then, is likely to happen when the 50% reduction takes place four months hence? Is it not more than possible that a goodly proportion of the surplus, will think of trying their fortunes on this side of St Georges Channel, especially in Scotland, like so many of their fellow countrymen in the past?

...we are perfectly certain that if it were attempted on any scale it would give rise on the part of the Scottish people to feelings of profound resentment. As it is, the great increase which has already occurred in the population of Irish descent has produced an acute uneasiness which has only failed to lead to a resolute call for restrictive measures because it is believed that the influx has fallen to small proportions in the past few years. Any sign of a recrudescence of the flow ... would provide great bitterness and lead to an irresistible demand for legislative action. It is not in the interests of anyone either here or in Ireland that such a situation should arise. Yet arise it probably will, unless the possibilities of the position are appreciated and timely provision made.

The alarm at the possibilities of an influx of Irish prompted the *Glasgow Herald*, if in more restrained manner than that of others, once again to raise the possibility of immigration restriction without actually advocating it outright. As has been pointed out above on March 6th the Cabinet met to discuss the issue of Irish immigration and decided that no legislative action would be taken, On March 8th the *Glasgow Herald* initiated an investigation that resulted in a series of five articles published between 20th and 25th March. This was a considerable feat of research within the timescale seeing that it took whole Government departments months to collate similar material and they had been involved in the exercise for nearly five years. It is perfectly within the bounds of possibility that the Herald man, and it appears from the articles that only one journalist was involved in the investigation, could have amassed the information he did within the time but it is remarkable that he acquired much of it in the same format as the Government. As has been stated by Gallagher these articles, 'may have had a salutary effect on middle ground opinion, made uneasy by recent demographic changes but prepared to take its lead from the premier reading outlet of
the middle class in Scotland. So the Glasgow Herald may have done a singular service for community relations at the end of the 1920s.\textsuperscript{133} It may be the case that the Glasgow Herald was at least assisted in that contribution.

In reading these articles it is difficult not to be struck in the similarity in tone and in the use of statistics to that of the debate conducted inside the Government. The chronology itself is instructive. On the first page of the Scottish Board of Health Memorandum produced in response to the Church’s open letter points out that the number of English born in Scotland exceeded the Irish in 1921 and that the English born had been rising steadily as a percentage of the population while the Irish had been declining.\textsuperscript{134} The same statistics appear in the first of the Glasgow Herald articles.\textsuperscript{135} It is a figure that seems to have made an impression. To extract the same set of figures in exactly the same manner raises the question that the research may have been directed. In the first article the Herald correspondent states: ‘After an extensive, painstaking and impartial examination...I am satisfied that the current Irish immigration is not large, that compared with the stream of the past it is the veriest trickle and that it is barely negligible in bearing on the development of the Irish community in Scotland. That development proceeds almost entirely from the multiplication of the Scoto-Irish – natives of this country but of Irish extraction.’\textsuperscript{136}

This is something of a paraphrase of the first paragraph of the Joynson-Hicks paper (see above). It is of course unlikely that the Herald would have seen a Secret cabinet document but the sentiments expressed would have been common enough in Whitehall and Scottish Office circles and, as has been demonstrated, current as long ago as 1926.

The Second Article on 21\textsuperscript{st} March on ‘Insurance and the Dole’ points out that on March 8\textsuperscript{th} there was ‘not a single native of Ireland on the Glasgow roll of out door relief.’\textsuperscript{137} Again these are exactly the sort of figures and sources used by the Government. For example the Ministry of Labour provided the following statistic for the Home Secretary’s report: ‘Number of persons whose last place of employment was in Ireland attending at the local office for the first time in October and November 1928 National Insurance book 50 Irish Free State Book 12 in Glasgow Greenock and

\textsuperscript{133} T Gallagher Glasgow the Uneasy Peace (Manchester University Press, 1987) p167
\textsuperscript{134} Scottish Board of Health Memorandum, NAS HH1/541.
\textsuperscript{135} Glasgow Herald 20\textsuperscript{th} March 1929 p15
\textsuperscript{136} ibid
\textsuperscript{137} Glasgow Herald 21\textsuperscript{st} March p11
Lanarkshire'. This was the same point made by the Ministry of Labour at the inter-departmental conference two years before.

What is interesting is where the Scottish Office had figures that were not included in the article, for example on the Steamship returns, the Herald displays a guarded scepticism. 'About two years ago it looked as if the Government had the intention of collecting the relevant data. It was then unofficially reported that a Government Department had applied for returns ...Similarly significant was it at a meeting of his constituents in...January 1927 Major Elliot made the statement after pointing out "that accurate statistics were practically nonexistent"138 that he was attempting to collect district figures on the subject'. In fact the Government had steamship returns as far back as 1925 but on a basis of confidentiality (see above). Those figures did not show any great numbers of Irish immigrating to Scotland and it only took a quiet word with the companies to confirm it.

In essence the argument was fully formed by 1929. The Glasgow Herald articles are intriguing in that, whether it is Roman Catholic marriages or birth rate it follows the path already trodden by the Government. This is not unreasonable since the arguments had been given an extensive airing over the past decade. The Glasgow Herald, in the space of a twelve day investigation appears to have been remarkably well informed and relaxed for a paper that only two weeks before was ringing the alarm bells about a possible fresh influx of Irish immigrants.

VII

The history of the Government's handling of the issue of Irish immigration throws up some interesting anomalies. Why, for example, should it have taken the best part of a decade to refute the Church's case when it probably could have done so as early as 1926 by releasing the information it already had? Indeed why did it take an investigation by the Glasgow Herald to do so? It is obvious from a reading of the files that there was little prospect of convincing the Dominions Office about the necessity of introducing restrictions on Irish immigration or indeed that the Irish were aliens in the first place. Equally, despite Elliot's proposed solution, was there any realistic likelihood of there being any independent Scottish initiative that could be taken. Both Gilmour and Elliot were highly experienced politicians who would go onto hold high

138 Glasgow Herald 20th March p15
office in the 1930s and yet they both allowed this issue to run longer than necessary creating political problems for the Unionists. There was a natural disinclination to be seen to be publicly disagreeing with the Unionist party at prayer, the Church of Scotland, but it would appear that as far as the leading Scottish politicians were concerned the evidence suggests that they were more in sympathy with the case made by the Church than has previously been acknowledged. The advice both Elliot and Gilmour received was sceptical as to the seriousness of the problem and yet Elliot, who had initiated the inquiry, was attempting to persuade an inter-departmental conference of 1927 to impose restrictions on Irish immigration. Notwithstanding his failure there he made a direct appeal to his party to make Irish immigration an election issue in 1929. It has been held, by Bruce and others,\textsuperscript{139} that the Church campaign failed on the Imperial issue of the status of Free State citizens as British subjects and on the statistical inadequacies of its case. It was a fact that large scale Irish immigration was a thing of the past by the 1920s. Elliot and Gilmour were well aware of these facts as they had been supplied with the information in considerable detail by their own and other Government officials. However, the evidence presented here suggests that both men were prepared to go to some lengths behind the scenes to convince the wider British Government of the need to impose restrictions on Irish immigration even at the risk of alienating opinion in the Dominions, the Irish Free State and very probably Irish American opinion as well. Not only that, they were prepared to pursue this despite the misgivings of senior civil servants in the Scottish Office who were understandably anxious about the possibility of throwing ‘fuel on the flame of racial strife.’\textsuperscript{140}

It would appear then the Church, despite obvious flaws in its argument, did persuade influential opinion in the Unionist party of their case. It was the failure of their allies in Government to persuade their colleagues that the issue was one which should take precedence over wider Imperial concerns that proved to be the stumbling block. However, it was only after the Cabinet endorsed the Joynson-Hicks paper in 1929 that the issue was finally off the agenda for Scottish Unionists. It was also only after that endorsement that a Unionist paper, the \textit{Glasgow Herald}, produced a detailed refutation of the Church case using much of the material built up over the years by the Scottish Office. It was the speed and efficiency with which the issue was effectively

\textsuperscript{139} S Bruce et al \textit{Sectarianism in Scotland} p43
\textsuperscript{140} NAS HH1/541
removed from Scottish politics that is remarkable, especially considering the years it had been allowed to provide the mood music for all the other anxieties that plagued the nation in the immediate post war period. The Church found itself almost ruthlessly dropped by the Unionists and despite carrying on with the campaign until 1938 it would never again have the support it had previously enjoyed in Government circles. The ‘civil magistrate’ in the end was not prepared to allow the Church the freedom to ‘compel all of his subjects to obey the judgements of the church courts.’
Chapter Four

The Service of Slander

*If no Popery orators and writers do for us individually, what heresies do for the Church at large; that is make us look to our defences we may almost thank God for... the service of slander*  \(^{141}\)

The *Clydesdale Catholic Herald* on the 13\(^{th}\) March 1926 relates a story of two Scots, one a Catholic the other a Protestant, discussing the Catholic Church in Scotland. The Protestant asks his friend what Catholicism in Scotland would be without the Irish? The answer given was ‘Aye we would be sma’ but we would be an eeminently (sic) respectable body.’  \(^{142}\) The humour of this anecdote probably does not translate so well now but in its way it answers one of the conundrums of the period for scholars. Why does there appear to be so little official Catholic reaction to the Church of Scotland’s anti Irish campaign in the 1920s. The archives of the Archdiocese of Glasgow and the Catholic Archives in Columba House are bafflingly bereft of official comment and in the minutes of the Hierarchy in Scotland there is not a single mention of the burning, to the Church of Scotland at any rate, issue of the day.  \(^{143}\) Equally the absence of correspondence on the matter was described to the author by the archivist of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, an area containing the largest Irish population in Scotland, as ‘tantalising’.  \(^{144}\) It was not as though the issues were not hotly debated in the correspondence columns of the press, on the floor of the General Assembly, in the pages of the Catholic press or even, as has been demonstrated, within the Government itself. Yet were one to rely exclusively on the information contained in the official archives it would seem that the whole controversy was studiously ignored by the leaders of the Catholic Church in Scotland. This was not entirely the case and it will be the intention here to provide some explanation of how the Church responded to what was to all intents and purposes an attack on itself, even if the motivations were officially racial and not religious. This

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\(^{141}\) *Clydesdale Catholic Herald* Current Comment 27\(^{th}\) February 1926 p10

\(^{142}\) *Clydesdale Catholic Herald* 13\(^{th}\) March 1926 p6

\(^{143}\) Minutes of the Catholic Hierarchy 1920-1929, Scottish Catholic Archives, Columba House, Edinburgh

\(^{144}\) Dr Mary McHugh Archivist of the Archdiocese of Glasgow in conversation with the author May 5\(^{th}\) 2009.
has been something of an under researched area in the historiography of the period which has concentrated on the louder noises made by the Protestant extremists. It is not within the scope of this chapter to comprehensively cover the whole controversy from the point of view of the Catholic Church and its defenders whether conducted in the press or elsewhere. What is proposed here is to analyse how the Catholic Church in Scotland viewed itself in the 1920s, its mission in Scotland and how it viewed its Presbyterian detractors. Equally important, is how that those views differed from those of the most vocal of the defenders of the Catholic Irish, Charles Diamond.

I

The position of the Catholic Church in Scotland in the 19th and early 20th century is somewhat further from that of an embattled minority than it has sometimes been portrayed. Certainly the need to provide for a massive injection of adherents strained, almost to breaking point, the slender resources of the native Catholic Church. However, from the restoration of the Scottish hierarchy in 1878 it is not unreasonable to consider Catholicism in Scotland to be a religion on the move. The proliferation of Catholic societies and sodalities in the later nineteenth century display a confident and growing institution. Despite its well documented difficulties with providing Catholic education before the 1918 Education Act and the undoubted poverty of many of its members many of the Church’s problems could be attributed to its success. The Irish influx may have been a mixed blessing but considering the logistical and financial problems that it had largely successfully overcome by the end of the Great War, it was not the Catholic Church that was facing a crisis of confidence. The war itself could be seen in some ways to have been ‘good’ for the Catholic Church. For the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, John Maguire, the war brought a new lease of life. This virtual recluse, who had languished in a sick bed since 1910, became an enthusiastic recruiting sergeant in both sermons and pastorals. Large numbers of Irish Catholics served in Scottish regiments and bore comparable losses. After the war those of Irish Catholic descent began to play an increasing part in public life and, while this undoubtedly was one of the reasons for Presbyterian complaint, it was nonetheless a source of pride for other Catholics. In fact the 1920s were, in retrospect, something of a golden era for Catholicism in

Scotland and the attack when it came, but for the events of the Irish War of Independence, may have been as from a clear blue sky.

The initial Catholic response to anti Irish agitation was one of pained surprise. A letter to the Glasgow Herald reprinted in the Clydesdale Catholic Herald on the 7th April 1923 from a Scottish priest, (See Appendix 6) illustrated the feeling:

Before the Great War we had been getting along comparatively smoothly together. In due course our brave men went forth and fought and bled and fell, inspired by the conviction that their sufferings were to lead to the abolition of all wars. Hardly did they think that other wars of camouflaged cruelty and religious hate might eventuate. But it has evidently done so, as shown by the agitation going on in certain clerical circles.

...The general waning of belief in Protestant forms of Christianity rendered people all the more ready to give some heed to those admirable sentiments which if not counteracted by adverse or retrograde influences, would cause a vast improvement in our social fellowship, a noble sympathy with, and respect for, the religious convictions of all, however they might differ from our own. But such a state of matters was most alarming and detestable to some of our Presbyterian clergy. I say some because the higher type of clergyman never descends to such levels. The steady, though slow, increase of the Catholic Church in Glasgow is gall and bitterness to those partisans; and with a cunning worthy of a better cause, taking advantage of the fact that this increase is mainly due to the Irish element in our midst, they are making determined efforts to inflame the basest passions of their hearers against the Catholic Irish...What a spectacle of petty bigotry! What a horrible pose for professional teachers of Christ who came in love to save us all! Thank God a more Christian laity has already expressed indignation at their barbarous conduct.

John Charleson, Holy Cross, Croy, March 31 1923

It is apparent from a reading of Father Charleson’s letter that he at least was taken aback by what at that stage was an attack on the Irish by the Presbytery of Glasgow

146 Clydesdale Catholic Herald April 7 1923 p3
prior to the General Assembly of 1923. He was to be disappointed in his assessment that the higher type of clergymen ‘never descends to such levels’ as the Church and Nation Committee were to produce their report on ‘The Menace of the Irish Race’ within two months of his letter. However, his tone of more sorrow than anger, does suggest that the Catholic Church was somewhat surprised by the vehemence of the Protestant Churches sentiments. What is also interesting is his observation on ‘the general waning of belief in Protestant forms of Christianity.’ It was something of an article of faith for the Catholic Church in the 1920s that Protestantism was in terminal decline and that it was only a matter of time before it was replaced by Catholicism. Or, in strictly more Catholic terms, before Scotland returned to its true adherence from the heretical error into which it had fallen at the Reformation. This was more than a theological point. The Church of Scotland feared the very same thing, if not couched in those terms, and loudly and repeatedly proclaimed the danger. If the Established Church feared it was in decline while at the same time in the process of ending the schism of 1843, and was constantly warning of the possibility of a Catholic takeover spearheaded by the Irish it is hardly to be wondered that the Catholic Church was inclined to take them at their word. Scotland did not lack for Jeremias, ecclesiastical and secular, in the 1920s. However, it was this perception of Protestant decline that was to have a significant bearing on the upper levels of Catholic response to the anti Irish campaign.

The Catholic Press under the combative Charles Diamond was inclined to take a less considered view. On the same date as it reproduced Father Charleson’s letter it printed an article entitled ‘The Glasgow Presbytery’s Jehad (sic): “Holy War” against the Irish.’ In a vehement refutation of the arguments of what are described as an ‘aggregation of Protestant Church of Scotland ministers who in their collective capacity are styled “The Glasgow Presbytery” Diamond was not reticent to the possible consequences of the Church having its way on the immigration question:

‘If, however, it should occur in the remote future that the British Parliament should be so ill advised as to meet the wishes of the Glasgow Presbytery some other things would happen. The Free State would certainly reply by reprisal decree which would exclude Scotsmen from Ireland...The Glasgow Presbytery should also consult the heads of some

147 Ibid p10
148 ibid
of the big Glasgow trading firms ...who have and have always had an immense volume of business in Ireland. Irish America would hardly remain quiescent on the matter and Irish influence is one of the strongest influences in American life. Scotsmen themselves now and then emigrate. You get a great many Englishmen and Americans to tell you that whenever there is a good job worth collaring the Scotsman has got it. The public works of England and of America are flooded with Scotch foremen who are never “blate” about welcoming compatriots...The Glasgow Presbytery...may succeed also in raising a worldwide question and may fashion a weapon that in the long run may prove to be a very boomerang.¹⁴⁹

Having delivered this warning he rather obscurely ended with a diatribe on the ills of birth control or ‘Race Suicide’ as it was termed which was apparently a direct result of Protestantism. (It is interesting that he used the example of the ‘Scotch foreman’ when the Irish foreman was be such a bogey figure in Presbyterian propaganda in the rest of the decade). Diamond returned to the attack in a speech to his shareholders on the 23rd May 1923. By this time the Church and Nation Committee had delivered its report on the ‘Irish Menace’

The Chairman said it could not be considered inappropriate if he made some reference to the recent attacks on the Irish people in Scotland...It was true that the words Irish and Catholic in Scotland were not entirely synonymous. But the Catholic population in so largely Irish the two could not be well separated. There was no doubt that the recent attack was inspired more by religious intolerance and bigotry than by national rancour though the grounds of the attack were notionally national...

The Irish Catholics in Scotland had a great deal more in common with the history of Scotland for a thousand years than those who represented an apostasy from the faith from their ancestors, who had a supreme contempt for their national history and who replaced a noble national spirit by a profession of subservience to another country and attachment to the crude

¹⁴⁹ ibid
religious beliefs of a mushroom growth that was everywhere disappearing.\textsuperscript{150}

Diamond further averred that while they were not looking for a fight with their neighbours attacks on the Irish population would not be ‘taken lying down’ and to this end he proposed to reduce the price of the \textit{Glasgow Observer} and increase the efficiency of its distribution.\textsuperscript{151} An attack on the Irish was an attack on Catholicism but it was still an attack on the Irish. The difference in Diamond’s response to that of some of the senior Catholic clergy is what makes the Catholic reaction so interesting.

II

As Gallagher has pointed out there was something of a vacuum in the leadership of the Catholic Church during the First World War ‘Glasgow and St Andrews and Edinburgh...were administered by two ageing prelates who did not have the strength to perform many of their customary duties never mind issue political instructions to their flock. When Archbishop Maguire of Glasgow died in 1920, Rome did not appoint a successor until 1922....In Edinburgh, Bishop Henry Grey Graham was placed in effective charge of the Archdiocese after 1917, but, as a convert, he may not have enjoyed the familiarity with his flock that would have enabled him to make \textit{ex-cathedra} statements on politics and be listened to.’\textsuperscript{152} At the same time the Church was preoccupied with the implications of the 1918 Education Act. Again as Gallagher states ‘In no other predominantly Protestant country did Catholics enjoy such latitude in the educational sphere\textsuperscript{153} and yet the Church was initially hesitant to accept its terms. It took the intervention of Vatican in the shape of the apostolic visitor to Scotland to convince a reluctant Church to accept the legislation and in Glasgow it would not be until the end of the decade before the terms were fully implemented.\textsuperscript{154}

The Catholic Church at the beginning of the 1920s had its own ecclesiastical concerns and in Archbishop MacKintosh of Glasgow it had a man who had been rector of the Scots College in Rome and more at home in that city than in the rough and tumble of

\textsuperscript{150} The Scotsman 23\textsuperscript{rd} May 1923 p 5
\textsuperscript{151} ibid
\textsuperscript{152} T Gallagher \textit{Glasgow the Uneasy Peace} (Manchester University Press, 1987) p104
\textsuperscript{153} ibid p102
\textsuperscript{154} ibid
Glasgow politics. He was equally a managerialist whose primary concern was the financial well being and stability of his Church. Intemperate outbursts in the General Assembly or even Church and Nation Committee reports did not frankly have first call on his time.

It was largely left to lay Catholics and to individual priests like Father Charleson, quoted above, to respond. One of the most effective of those priests was Father McGettigan of Musselburgh. On the 22nd May 1923 the Scotsman printed his detailed rebuttal of the Committee report. In a lengthy letter Father McGettigan attacked the ‘facts’ produced in the report refuting the Committee’s contentions that priests in Ireland encouraged their flock to emigrate to Scotland and that all emigrants from Scotland were Scots fleeing the Irish influx. He also took the Assembly to task on the assertion that Scots and Irish did not mix:

The “notable fact” is not at all complimentary to the grit of the Scottish people, and is besides a gratuitous assertion as any one who knows who lives in the midst of Scottish and Irish workmen. They work as harmoniously when together as they do when separate and if there is friction it is usually due to some cause which is neither racial nor religious. If racial or religious it is imported into Scotland by Orangemen who...have never fused with their fellow countrymen. But away from these, the Irishman in Scotland, as elsewhere, takes on the colour of his surroundings and in two or three generations becomes more Scottish than the Scot.\(^{155}\)

He also pointed out the logical inconsistency in the Irish having both the ‘restless ambition to rule’ while at the same time being intemperate and improvident and he ‘trembled’ for the man who made the charge that ‘the Irishman never hesitates to seek relief from charity organisations’ in the presence of the average Irishman.\(^{156}\) He similarly took issue with the concept of the Irish as ‘aliens:’ ‘The statement is one which bristles with controversy of an ethnological and historical character, it ought not, to say the least, to have been made part of a document which it was to be expected would present only bedrock facts...even granted its accuracy to speak of a highly gifted people...as aliens. Would we parade the offensive term before the eyes of the Canadian or Australian? And what if the Irish at home took us at our word and

\(^{155}\) The Scotsman 22nd May 1923 p11

\(^{156}\) ibid
when the next Great War broke out (quod Deus avertat), and we were in difficulties, gently reminded us that they were aliens.157 (In this case the good Father spoke truer than he knew). His response to the charge that "the Roman Catholic Church has definitely committed herself to the task of converting the Scottish nation"158 was indicative of how the Catholic Church in Scotland viewed its role. 'But that surely is not an improper proceeding in the case of a missionary Church. (My italics) The Church of Scotland claims the same right when she sends her missionaries to Ireland and foreign parts. If a Church has a right to live, she has a right to propagate her spiritual species, and the fact that one Church is more successful than another does not abrogate that right.'159

Father McGettigan was an interesting character in the Catholic Church of the 1920s. Born in Fauldhouse in 1868 he attended Blair's College in 1883 and the Scots College at Valladolid in 1886 and ordained Priest in 1893 when he became Priest of the Church of Our Lady of Loretto and St Michael in Musselburgh and he was also a member of the Midlothian Education Authority. He was promoted to the position of Canon and Administrator of Edinburgh Cathedral in November of 1923. This promotion certainly implies official approval, indeed sanction, of the opinions he published in the press as it would have been unthinkable that the hierarchy would have promoted to such a prestigious post a parish priest publicly proclaiming a position of which they disapproved. He was in fact described in the Catholic press as 'one of the warmest champions of Catholicity in the country.'160 The hierarchy themselves did not remain as silent as it appears from the official records though they couched their language in more coded terms and it does require a certain reading between the lines. As can be seen from the following 1924 Pastoral letter from Archbishop Mackintosh:

It is a peremptory duty ... to pray frequently that our blessed Lord may gather these men and women of good will - and they are not a few - who in this country of Scotland have been robbed of their Christian birthright - the Catholic faith. I am quite well aware that those men and women may not, and probably do not, recognise the existence of this duty on the part of Catholics, or further that they may vehemently resent the fact that we

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157 ibid
158 ibid
159 ibid
160 Clydesdale Catholic Herald December 8th 1923 p5
Catholics find a place for the existence of a duty to pray for non Catholics. There can be nothing to surprise one in such a situation. The attitude in question is not unlike the attitude of Nathaniel to Our Lord. It is based on irrelevant assumptions and often honest prejudice, "Can anything good come from Nazareth" (St John 1.46). Besides St Paul when he was yet Saul was consenting to the death of Stephen the first martyr...It was probably with deep resentment that Saul heard the dying prayer of St Stephen 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' (Acts 7.59) What if it does – as it surely does – need a miracle of Grace to bring a non Catholic into the Faith? Who can say that in God’s Providence it was not the prayer of St Stephen that obtained for Saul the miracle on the road to Damascus (Acts 9.3) Who can say that our prayers and our good works are not awaited by God in order that he may turn many a Saul into a chastened and humble St Paul.

It is certain that we are bound out of charity to pray for the spiritual welfare of our non Catholic fellow citizens. It is also certain that this duty is incumbent upon us on account of the circumstances of the country in which we live. And besides praying there are other means we must use towards the same ends. We must support the Catholic Truth Society, support the Catholic press and spread its publications.161

As the Archbishop himself recognised praying for non Catholics would provoke resentment amongst non Catholics. In fact it probably provoked sterner reactions than that amongst some members of the Presbyterian Churches. The importance here is the tone of the pastoral and of Father McGettigan’s letter. It was a theme of the Catholic Church in Scotland that the aim was to return Scotland to the Catholic fold. Prior to the reintroduction of the hierarchy the status of the Church in Scotland had been that of a mission. In fact that had been its status since the Reformation. The reintroduction of the hierarchy had been recognition of the numbers of Catholics in Scotland due to Irish immigration. The aims of the Scottish Catholic Church did not change. Its primary purpose was still the conversion of the Scots not the adherence of the Irish. It had a duty in the educational sphere to provide Catholic education and so prevent apostasy but, on the principle that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who

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161 Clydesdale Catholic Herald March 15th 1924 p3
repents, then conversion was a Scottish priority if not an Irish one. It also has to be examined from the perspective of Rome, a perspective Mackintosh would have shared, that in global terms the Church of Scotland was a small northern heretical sect, however slighting that may have been to the pretensions of the land of Knox but its conversion would be a prize worth obtaining. On the other hand Scottish Catholics knew their fellow countrymen and had no illusions as to the long term nature of the task. This theme was carried on by Father McGettigan in a sermon at Fauldhouse:

Another account stands against the Protestants of Scotland. Not only did they forsake the faith: they made it their business to misrepresent it and to bequeath this misrepresentation to their children. Their children have been faithful to their trust, and so their religious teaching has consisted not in presenting their own beliefs and practices but defaming ours to that campaign their leaders dedicated their gifts...Abuse of us no matter how wanton and gross formed the stock in trade of their religion and an intense conviction on their part of the truthfulness of it all, whilst it guarded them against contamination was a sign of predestination.

...These then my brethren are a sample of the forces which have stood in the way of Catholic expansion, and if when we look back we are not gladdened by the sight of large additions to the Church from without, let us bear in mind that the obstacles we had to face were well nigh insurmountable."162

The essentially Scottish nature of the response was reinforced by Bishop Henry Grey Graham in an address to the Caledonian Catholic Association in June 1925. He began by lamenting the numbers of Scots applying for the Priesthood. 'Until they had a Priesthood produced by this country the work would not be satisfactory-priests who knew the condition of the people and felt at home...None could do the work so well as those who were native to the soil. They must have priests, else they might close up their churches. The priesthood should be recruited from our own boys... in that way it would be another step towards the greatest of their objects-the restoration of Scotland to the Catholic faith.'163 In a tacit recognition that the Catholic Church in Scotland had some diplomatic work to do in order to preach the Faith to non Catholics 'It was a delicate matter. In other countries men were specially trained to expound Catholic

162 Clydesdale Catholic Herald June 30th 1924 p3
163 Ibid June 27th 1925 p3
doctrinal in a non controversial manner and with great results. Until something was
done in that way they would not make any great progress.'164 Graham was at pains to
point out that there was no contradiction between being Scottish and being Catholic
and that the Church had always been the true upholders of the national spirit rather
than ‘the real traitors...who were under financial obligations to their masters in
England.’ This was an unsubtle dig at the reformers of the 16th century but he went on
to urge the Scottish Catholic laity living as they did ‘amongst a largely non Catholic
population and mixing intimately with their non Catholic friends’ to remove anti
Catholic prejudice. As was pointed out in the opening lines of this chapter they would
be ‘an eminently respectable body.’

III

The ‘official’ response to the anti Irish campaign in many ways reflected traditional
Scottish Catholic concerns but as has been stated above the attack nevertheless was on
the Irish. It is to the champion of the Irish, Charles Diamond that we have to turn for a
more visceral response. There is in his newspapers a remarkably revealing article that
more than any other sums up Diamonds attitude not just to the controversies of the
day but how he, and no doubt many other Irish Catholics in Scotland viewed their
position. It is worth quoting extensively from it especially if it is read in contrast to
the foregoing comments from the Church. In March of 1926 Diamond responded to a
letter to the Glasgow Observer which complained of the Catholic press’s pro-Irish
bias and suggesting that the ‘Scotch Catholic press should be primarily Scottish-
strongly Scottish in tone and matter first and only secondarily warm towards the Irish
and things Irish.’165 This criticism seems to have touched Diamond on the raw.

But it is impossible for us to carry on Catholic papers ...without leaning
chiefly on the Irish people who by birth or descent form an overwhelming
majority of Catholics of Scotland.

...We do not quite know what our correspondent means by saying our
papers in Scotland should be primarily Scottish and strongly Scottish.

The Catholics of Scotland are a minority and purely Scottish Catholics
are a greater minority still. To be strongly and vigorously Scottish seems

164 ibid
165 Clydesdale Catholic Herald March 13th 1926 p6
to us to involve the support of views and policies which are not only non Catholic but anti Catholic.

At this point Diamond appears to be advocating a position for which he had castigated others: to be Catholic was to be Irish and compounding it with the notion that to be Scottish was to be anti Catholic. Certainly given the climate of the times it is not difficult to have some sympathy with his view but it demonstrates an air of persecution and retreat into the Ghetto. Owen Dudley Edwards has contended that part of the responsibility for the attacks made on the Irish Catholics were brought upon themselves and while 'this does not discharge the conscience of the General Assembly...some part of the responsibility for their proceedings is owing to the evident contempt of Irish Catholic journalists for their duties to the country that had given them a home.' Diamond illustrated that contempt succinctly in the following passage:

Our critic would have some difficulty in explaining how we are to be strongly Catholic and at the same time strongly Scottish.

...We have taken up the position...that the Irish Catholics of Britain have as much right to their national sympathies, to their political and their convictions as any other section of the catholic community. Why should they cease to be Irish?

We have never admitted the right of any of the anti Irish elements in the land...we dared to stand up for the rights of the Irish people at home and in Britain because in fine (sic) we are too Irish!

...It would be very difficult to conduct Catholic newspapers and make them strongly English, Scottish or Welsh because England Scotland and Wales are primarily and above all things non Catholic and even anti Catholic countries.

In their politics, their social life and their outlook the people of these Islands are either indifferent or hostile to the Catholic cause and to Catholic principles.

Where not frankly pagan they are anti Catholic. How then are we to make our papers strongly and entirely English, Scottish or Welsh?

166 Owen Dudley Edwards The Catholic Press in Scotland p167
...it is in the general attitude of the people as a whole that hostility is to be found to the Catholic cause.

Leaving aside the fact that his correspondent never said that Catholic papers should be exclusively Scottish, Diamond’s response was instinctively defensive and returned to the justifications of the persecuted. His conflation of Catholicism and Irishness seemed to deny the title of true Catholic to anyone in Britain who was not Irish. The very existence of his papers was being predicated on the continuance of there being a sort of Irish Ghetto of the mind. The Irish in Britain, no matter how long they were settled or how far back their ancestry, were to remain Irish and outsiders amidst a racially, religiously and politically hostile people, a clan of the perpetually oppressed. It was a curious position for a serial Labour candidate and who exhorted his co-religionists to become involved in politics but then this was a man who threatened to sue for libel anyone who called him a socialist when he stood for Labour in the 1922 elections. In the conduct of his papers throughout the 1920s his defence of the Catholic Church against the assaults of the Presbyterians made much, and rightly much, of their bigotry and yet it contrasted oddly with the frequent anti Semitic articles which appeared alongside them. Nevertheless Diamond is important in the Catholic reaction to the anti Irish campaign but as has been shown here he was not necessarily the best advocate the Irish could have had.

IV

The researching of Catholic archives for the 1920s can, as has been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, be tantalising and frustrating. Rather in the way that the White papers show some surprising omissions the Catholic Church seems to have been, at the very least, inconsistent with its record keeping for the period. For example, there are no records for the Catholic Caledonian Society before 1950 and yet as shown above Graham was addressing them in June 1925. Equally there are no records in the Catholic Archives for the Catholic Truth Society before 1930 and yet, as also shown above, Mackintosh was urging Catholics to support its activities in his pastoral letter of 1924.167 The Archdioceses of the Catholic Church were required to submit five yearly reports to the Vatican commenting, amongst other things, on their

167 Scottish Catholic Archives Columba House
relations with other churches but the sole ‘Quinquennial report’ for the period was produced in 1932 for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, and while it expresses concern about the morals of their flock, makes no overt mention of the Presbyterian Campaign. It should be pointed out here that these reports, prior to 1947, were produced in Latin and to a specific format, it may well be that there is more research to be done in this area. Even the minutes of the hierarchy, as pointed out in the introduction of this thesis, contain no references to the campaign. However, recent discoveries in the archives include material concerning the ‘No Popery’ campaigns of the 1930s as well as correspondence and legal papers referring to the Morningside riot of 1935. This material, which has yet to be examined in detail by scholars, may provide much new information on the thinking of the Catholic Church in the 1930s. Unfortunately this is outside the time period of this thesis but it is intended that it should form the basis for future research.

The full history of the Catholic Church and its relations with Protestantism in the 1920s has yet to be written. What can be said with a fair degree of certainty is that while the Catholic Church had some staunch and redoubtable defenders, as an organisation it did not appear to see the need to launch a counter attack to the Church of Scotland or even an official rebuttal. McGgettigan’s letter to the Scotsman being about as close as it got. This raises several intriguing questions, the most obvious being why not? It may simply be that the Catholic leadership at the time were not personally equipped or inclined to become involved in this sort of controversy. Certainly neither Mackintosh nor Graham was a political animal in the same way as White or Sands. It may be that they judged that the Church of Scotland had no chance whatsoever of succeeding, especially in view of the fact that by 1926 most of the few remaining laws restricting Catholic practice were in the process of being repealed. It may well be, of course, that as Mackintosh and Graham were Scots that they did not take attacks on the Irish quite so personally as they might otherwise have done and yet Father Charleson’s letter suggests that Scottish priests were quite as ready to take umbrage at the Church of Scotland’s language as any other Catholic. It is also just as likely that the hierarchy considered it had quite enough on its plate with the implementation of the 1918 Education Act without becoming embroiled in

168 Scottish Catholic Archives DE52/1 Quinquennial Report 1932 Caput XI Paragraph 84
169 I am indebted to Miss Kate Wane, postgraduate student of the Classics department of the University of Edinburgh for her assistance with the translation
controversies of this nature which were no more than they had come to expect from the Presbyterian Churches. Being sensible men they may have realised that to take on the Church of Scotland on this issue would be to inflate the whole affair into a direct confrontation with the Church of Rome and the Church of Scotland with incalculable consequences for civil peace. They, like the Scottish Office civil servant Milroy, may not have wanted 'to throw fuel on the flame of racial strife.' They may indeed have taken the Christian option and decided to turn the other cheek and pray that God would show the Presbyterians the error of their ways. It may have been all, a combination of some, or none of the above. Without hard and fast documentary evidence this must remain an area of speculation. It is one of the reasons that the period remains so fascinating. On balance it would appear that the Catholic Church in Scotland had a long tradition of keeping its head down politically unless it was directly attacked. The anti Irish campaign of the 1920s was not ostensibly aimed at the Catholic Church or it at least had a certain amount of plausible deniability. The Church would become considerably more vocal when its members and property were physically threatened in the 1930s.
Conclusion

The research for this thesis was prompted by preliminary undergraduate work done on the Irish Republican Army in Scotland and by a conversation with Dr Michael Rosie on the possible origins of the of the *Glasgow Herald* articles of 1929. In the past twenty years there has been considerable scholarship built up concerning sectarianism in Scotland in the inter war period amounting to almost a cottage industry. What has been attempted here is to examine Scotland in the 1920s as a specific case. The idea has been to trace the possible origins of the Churches anti-Irish campaign to the Irish War of Independence and then to follow its reasoning and course to the end of the Conservative Government in 1929. At the same time there has been some attempt to consider the period from the perspective of the Catholic Irish. In the process much of what has been discussed has been covered by other scholars but also much of what has been uncovered has been surprising and new, sometimes by its very absence. For example the apparent editing of the John White papers and the curious silences in the Catholic archives suggest that there is still much work to be done before a truly comprehensive picture of the period can be drawn. Nevertheless some of the evidence discussed here points to a possible reconsideration of the understanding of Scotland in the immediate aftermath of the Great War. That war itself was undoubtedly the catalyst for all that followed, but the particular Scottish circumstances were unlike any other part of the United Kingdom and the reactions it provoked were profoundly different.

It has been argued here that the Irish War of Independence materially affected the perception of the Irish in Scotland. Certainly the evidence reproduced from the Irish Disturbances files points to a governing elite taken aback by the events and willing to believe in the potential of Irish military prowess in the west of Scotland that the IRA did not, and could not possess. Unlike in England, the Irish did not leave the political agenda with the setting up of the Free State, that, for some in the Church of Scotland, is when they became the political agenda. If there was one instance that raised the profile of the Irish in Scotland it was the events of 1919-1921. More so than the electoral reforms of 1918 or even the 1918 Education Act, important as they became in the longer term, it was the prospect of an alien armed and organised underclass that shook middle class Scotland out of its contemptuous indifference to the Irish. If they
were no longer ‘route marching’ in Barrhead it certainly appeared that they were route marching to the polls and that in many ways was an equally frightening prospect.

For the Church itself the whole issue of Irish immigration was about more than anti Catholicism or even anti Irishism. It is not difficult to be repelled by the arguments and language used especially in the light of later events. Auschwitz changes everything. Possibly this has led some in the past to dismiss the whole episode as either part of a Scottish tradition of no Popery (Handley and Gallagher) or an aberrant turn into ‘eugenics and classism’ (Callum Brown). Both of the views have much to commend them but it is not the whole story. The Church was seeking to redefine its place in Scottish society. In many important ways it succeeded. The healing of the schism of 1843 was a considerable success but the process of reunification may have encouraged it to overreach itself with the anti Irish campaign. The process was a long and complicated one, but one in which it achieved a status that was as near to the Presbyterian ideal as possible. It was free in doctrine and governance and it could still claim to be the national Church of the Scottish people. It was almost like a second Reformation and it only needed the removal of the inconvenient Irish and Scotland would be returned to a state of racial, religious and political purity. The working classes would return to their natural loyalties and away from socialism and the Church would be the voice of the Scottish people. The moral, social and economic challenges of the day would be overcome and it would be as though the Great War had never been. The Church was, of course, deluding itself but it was a delusion that had a great deal of Presbyterian logic on its side that naturally appealed to men brought up that tradition.

Equally, it has not been appreciated exactly how far certain influential individuals in the Unionist party supported the Church campaign even in the face of the evidence provided by their own officials in Government and how far the failure of the campaign changed the face of Scottish Unionism. If the matter had been for the Scottish Unionist party alone to decide, there very probably would have been restrictions on Irish immigration into Scotland. In practical terms this would have made little difference as there was precious little immigration in the 1920s but the symbolic effect on the Irish Diaspora in Scotland may well have been significant. It would at the very least have strengthened a sense of exclusion from Scottish society and probably raised sectarian tensions to a level they did not achieve in the 1920s. Perhaps Sir John Gilmour was more of an Orangeman than he has been portrayed and
Walter Elliot less of a liberal. In the event the issue fell due to the intractable opposition of the Dominions and Home Office but it still took a Cabinet decision. The almost immediate appearance thereafter of the Glasgow Herald series of articles on Irish immigration was serendipitous. If, as seems possible from the evidence, the instigation of the articles came from within the Scottish Office then it changes our understanding of the period.

As Michael Lynch has pointed out ‘In the 1920s all three major parties for their own reasons became more firmly thriled to British politics. The politics of semi-independence, which had marked the period up until 1832, were long gone but so was the Victorian equipoise, in which loyalties to both a reawakened sense of Scottish nationhood and the Empire had kept the British state at arms length.\(^\text{170}\) If there is an issue at which it is possible to point to the death of Unionist Nationalism then surely it is with the anti Irish campaign, and if there is a date, it is the 6\(^{th}\) March 1929 when the Cabinet finally ended all possibility of the Church winning Government support. In 1926 Elliot had seriously proposed that Scotland should consider ‘proceeding independently on the matter’\(^\text{171}\) and in 1929 he had proposed that the issue was one on which the Unionists could split the nascent nationalist movement and at the same demonstrate their Scottish credentials to the electorate without the need to consider any measures of Home Rule. Neither proposal found favour with his English colleagues and Imperial and British concerns prevailed. Suddenly the Church, newly reunited, found itself left dangling in the air by the Unionists and worse, its case demolished by a staunchly Unionist newspaper. If the Scottish Unionists were willing to abandon their natural supporters, the Church of Scotland, in this manner and over an issue that was ostensibly about the survival of Scottish identity, it surely marked the moment when they became a firmly British political party. If, as seems likely, the Church’s case was deliberately demolished in the press, possibly in order to remove it as an issue prior to the 1929 General Election, then the Unionists were making a firm decision about where their loyalties and priorities would lie in the future. This does not mean that the 6\(^{th}\) March 1929 is the birthday of the British Conservative party or anything like it. What it does show is that the decade of the 1920s marked a very specific change in the political and religious condition of Scotland and deserves to be considered in that light.


\(^{171}\) National Archives of Scotland Irish Immigration Files HH1/541

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So too for the Irish Catholics in Scotland, does the 1920s mark a particular change in their status and possibly in their nationality. The vast majority were by now second or even third generation. They were firmly established in their country of adoption and there was no chance of mass repatriation, voluntary or otherwise. It would appear that the attack on the Irish by the Established Church took the Catholic Church somewhat by surprise. It is perhaps wise to be cautious in assuming that there was no concerted attempt to rebut the Presbyterian charges simply because the evidence thus far uncovered does not suggest so. As has been pointed out there are gaps in the archives. Certainly the hierarchy were aware of the campaign, they could have not have been otherwise, but the tone of the pastoral letter of Archbishop Mackintosh quoted in chapter four suggests that they were not willing to become formally engaged in the debate but rather pray for their opponents. Who is to say that this may not have been the wisest course at the time? For the Catholic press under Diamond there remained the combative instincts of earlier times but as the economic crisis engulfed both Protestant and Catholic workers re-fighting old battles and attempting to hold an exclusively Irish dimension to Catholicism was becoming outdated by the end of the 1920s. The Irish Diaspora, whatever the opinions of Diamond or White, were becoming Scottish.
Appendix One
Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland Pamphlet on Irish Immigration in Scotland open letter to Sir John Gilmour December 1925
National Archives of Scotland HH1/541

Church of Scotland.
Committee on Church and Nation.

To The Right Honourable
Sir John Gilmour, Bart.,
Secretary of State for Scotland,
Whitehall, London.

Sir,

In accordance with a remit from the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church, and the Free Church, and after consultation with other Churches, we desire to approach His Majesty's Government upon a question of vital importance to our Scottish people – viz., the serious situation that has arisen in Scotland owing to the influx during the last number of years of many thousands of Irish immigrants, and to the emigration of many thousands of the native population.

While migration under normal circumstances may be a good thing, we are convinced that the situation in Scotland to-day is such that there is urgent need for the regulation thereof in the interests of the Scottish nation.

Our reason for this is that the process of unregulated migration out of and into Scotland in the past has brought about a situation where there is the danger of the control of the affairs of their own country passing out of the hands of the Scottish people, and even to the endangering of the continued existence of Scottish nationality and civilisation.

If this were for the good of Scotland, if it were the case of an inferior race being supplanted by a superior race, however unpalatable it might be, we would be compelled to resign ourselves to it.

But we are convinced that the very opposite is the case; that a law abiding, thrifty and industrious race is being supplanted by immigrants whose presence tends to lower the social conditions, and to undermine that spirit of independence which has so long
been a characteristic of the Scottish people, and we are of the opinion that, in justice to our own people steps should be taken to prevent the situation becoming worse.

We recognise the fact that the presence of the immigrants referred to was due originally to a demand for their labour. They accepted lower wages and were satisfied with poorer conditions of life and work, and by doing so have doubtless helped Scotland to win her present place among industrial nations. We have no desire to do anything in the nature of injustice to those whose services the country has accepted, and who have now settled down and made their homes in our midst. With the question of the price Scotland has paid for these services, in the drain on her public and philanthropic funds, in the creation of slums in her large industrial centres, and in the increase of the legal machinery necessary to deal with this immigrant population, not to mention the demoralising effect on her own people, we will deal later. The point that we would draw attention to here is that, though there is now no longer any demand for immigrant labour – in fact there are many tens of thousands walking the streets idle – they are still coming in. It has been stated in the House of Commons that 9,000 persons immigrated to Scotland in 1924, and yet there are as many as 70,000 unemployed persons in Glasgow alone. And it is a fact that, thanks to the influence of Irish foremen, recent immigrants are often able to secure a job which there are thousands of Scotsmen competent and willing to take.\footnote{We know of a recent case where an Irish foreman was dismissing Scotsman and engaging Irishmen, and was even bringing men over from Ireland and putting them on the job. We have known cases where public schemes undertaken to provide work for our own unemployed have been partially recruited from immigrants of a few weeks and months standing.}

Apart from the financial aspect of the question, this constitutes a very grave injustice to our own working people, who are beginning to feel that the position is growing hopeless that their only chance of a decent livelihood is to emigrate, with the result that the industrial areas are being largely recruited from a people whose whole social, mental and moral outlook is on a lower plane than that of the stalwart sons and daughters of our native hills and glens. Already many of the larger towns in this industrial area are one third Irish. We refer you to such towns as Coatbridge, Wishaw, and Dumbarton, which are examples of what is happening all through the populous and wealth producing counties of Renfrew, Dumbarton and Lanark, where there seems unfortunately only too good reason to believe that in the not very distant future
the Scottish race may actually be in the minority. For wherever the Irish population tends to dominate, the Scottish population will not stay.

The Scot, who as a colonist is eagerly sought after by all the Dominions and by America, is being driven from his own shores and his place taken by an immigrant who makes a very much less satisfactory citizen. That is not only our own opinion, but finds striking corroboration in an official inquiry in the United States of America. The Congressional Committee that conducted that inquiry furnished statistics which proved that, while the Balkans and Russia provided undesirable immigrants, Ireland provided the most undesirable of all. Under the heading of "Dependence on the Community or Pauperism" Ireland contributed nearly six and a half times its normal quota.

The result of this inquiry is seen in recent legislation with regard to immigration into the United States. At present the British quota is 34,000 and the Irish quota 28,367. In 1927 the British and North of Ireland quota is to be 83,000 and that of the Irish Free State only 8,000. America is anxious to have a larger number of British (including Scottish) immigrants, but she has determined ruthlessly to cut down the number from the Irish Free State. What the result of this will be on Scotland is only too manifest. It means large numbers of those refused admission to the United States will come to Scotland. The 8,000 to be admitted from the Irish Free State will, we may be sure, be the best of those who apply, and Scotland will get those that America does not want. If the situation is bad at present, it promises to become very much worse before very long.

The following are some of the figures upon which our conclusions are based:-

Between 1881 and 1901 Irish population increased by 32 1/4%
" " " Scottish " " 18 1/4%
" 1901 1921 Irish " " 39%
" " " Scottish " " 6% (sic)

And since 1921, as is manifest from the returns of the Registrar-General for Scotland, the same tendency still prevails. There is evidence of a persistent decrease in the numbers of the Scottish race, and a steady increase in the numbers of the Irish race.

This disproportion cannot be explained by the difference in the birth rate. Our inquiry leads us to believe that the birth rate among the Scottish working class is as high as among the Irish.
As regards the general thriftlessness of the Irish people, and the readiness with which they seek financial relief, we have made extensive enquiry from those who administer parochial, municipal and philanthropic funds, and the opinion is unanimous that, out of all proportion to their numbers, they are a heavy financial burden to the community. In Glasgow, for example, where they number about 25% of the population, they account for about 70% of the relief funds. And the anomalous position is that, though recent immigrants from the Irish Free State become chargeable to the parish, no claim can be made against their native parish. In theory they may be repatriated on a Sheriff’s warrant, but in practice the law is ineffective, as they just come back again.

From judicial statistics it is clear that this immigrant population is responsible for crime again out of all proportion to its numbers. Those describing themselves as “Irish” contributed 33% to the “convictions” in 1920, and 29% in 1921. It does not seem clear whether in these returns the term “Irish” means “born in Ireland” or “of Irish extraction”. Those “born in Ireland” constitute about 3 1/3% of the population of Scotland: those of “Irish extraction” about 14%. So that in either case this immigrant population is proved to be excessively productive of crime. In fact, we are convinced that, if anything it is an underestimate to say that in proportion to their numbers, they are three times as productive of crime as the rest of the population.

Such are the people who are gradually taking possession of our native land. Meanwhile what is happening to our own people? In 1922, 31,014 left our shores for lands overseas: on 1923, 71,042; in 1924, 80,000. It might be argued that what is Scotland’s loss is the Empire’s gain. But that is not wholly true. From July to November 1924 it is estimated that, while 25,000 Scots emigrated to Canada, 30,000 went to the United States of America. America was the chief gainer and not the British Empire.

These tens of thousands of emigrants, representing some of the finest young manhood and womanhood of Scotland, have left our shores for good; and the tragedy of it is that many of them might have been kept at home, and found ample scope for their Scottish grit and stamina in our industrial areas. Instead of which this great race movement is allowed to continue, and Scotland is being gradually divided into two great racial camps, different in ideals, with different traditions, and with widely diverging characteristics. These two races do not fuse to any appreciable extent. The tendency is the very reverse. The Irish race in Scotland keep largely by themselves,
and their habits are such that our Scottish people do not readily mingle with them. The condition is such as to make the danger of racial strife and hatred very real.

We wish it to be understood that our criticism of the Irishman in this statement refers to the unsatisfactory type of immigrant into this country, and is not meant to apply to the Irish people as a whole.

In view of the above considered statement, we would respectfully urge upon His Majesty’s Government to institute an inquiry into the whole subject, and thereafter to take such action as may seem to them to be necessary or desirable.

We remain

Sir,

Your humble Servants

John White, Joint-Convenor

J. M’N. Frazer, Hon. Secretary
Appendix Two
Briefing Paper for the Secretary of State for Scotland 24 December 1926
National Archives of Scotland, HH1/541

Note for the Secretary of State’s use at Deputation from the General Assembly’s Committee on Church Nation with regard to Irish Immigration – Edinburgh 24 September, 1926.

Previous history of the question

The question has not so far had much Parliamentary prominence. In February, 1925, Mr Stephen Mitchell asked for statistics as to the number of immigrants from the South of Ireland to Glasgow and the West of Scotland and was told that the information was not available; and in July, 1925, Sir Alexander Sprot called attention by a question to the fact that Irish Free Staters, their country having acquired Dominion status, could not be deported nor the cost of their maintenance be recovered.

Memorial of the Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation.

In December 1925, the Church of Scotland Committee on Church and Nation forwarded a memorial on the subject and asked for a reception of a deputation. The main points put forward were as follows:-

I. The proportion of Scottish folk in Scotland is decreasing and that of Irish increasing, since Scots emigrate largely to places outside the British Empire, and the Irish immigrate.

Apart from other reasons immigration of Irish into Scotland is increased by –
(a) the practice of Irish foremen to give jobs to compatriots;
(b) the restriction of Irish immigration into the United States of America.

The proportion of Irish in the population is especially noticeable in large industrial towns such as Coatbridge, Wishaw and Dumbarton.

II. The results are:-
(a) general lowering of social conditions;
(b) competition with Scottish unemployed;
(c) heavy burden on poor, etc., funds without the possibility of deportation or recovery of cost of maintenance;
(d) filling of prisons;
(e) danger of social strife;

Information on the subject from Government Departments etc.

I. The Registrar General reports that –
(a) at the 1921 Census there were fewer born-in Ireland persons enumerated in Scotland than at the 1911 census;
(b) the percentage of Roman Catholic marriages is growing, but only slowly

II. The Prison Commissioners report that, while the criminal statistics do not distinguish persons of Irish extraction as opposed to persons born in Ireland, the number of Roman Catholic prisoners who may be taken to be for the most part of Irish birth or extraction is a high proportion of the total, and they say that there is no doubt that a very large section of the criminal population is Irish.

III. A report by the Scottish Board of Health shows that –
(a) the number of Irish-born persons in receipt of ordinary poor relief has not grown recently; it is less than it was in 1910 and the percentage of the total number chargeable (excluding able-bodied unemployed) is also less.

The figures, as at 15.5.25, were:-
9,300 Irish chargeable, excluding able bodied,
= 7.1% of total
1,844 Irish able-bodied chargeable with 4,542 dependents = 8.4% of total able bodied + dependents

At the census of 1921 there were 159,020 Irish born persons in Scotland, about 3% of the population.

As regards the employment of Irishmen in Scotland, the Scottish Board of Health hold that there is reason to think that men from Ireland secure, in the face of serious unemployment in Scotland, some of the low paid work there, especially in industrial areas in the Clyde valley.

IV.
The Glasgow Inspector of Poor reports that the position is now much the same as it was in January, 1925, when figures for 20 parishes showed that there were therein
1,206 Irish Free Staters, who would have been removed to Ireland but for the
Dominion status of the Irish Free State. To check the influx of Irish the Glasgow
council decided to refuse to relieve Irish immigrants before they had been three
months in Scotland.

The Association of Poor Law Unions, after communication with the Scottish
Poor Law authorities, recently approached the Ministry of Health with a view to
reciprocal legislation with the Irish Free State for the repatriation of paupers.

The Dominions Office have told the Ministry of Health that they were ready to
recommend such reciprocal arrangements to the Irish Free State, but could not
guarantee that the Free State Government would agree; as a first step they suggested
investigation by English and Scottish departments and possibly an inter-departmental
conference.

It would appear that although the figures above cited supplied by Scottish
Departments do not reveal a very serious state of affairs, there certainly is an Irish
problem in the South West of Scotland, and that there has been one for some time.
There is no doubt that the Irish impose an undue burden upon poor law authorities and
that too great a proportion of the prison population is of Irish birth or extraction: and, further, it seems that Irish, (sic) whether by accepting lower wages and worse
conditions or through the action of compatriot foreman, obtain employment in the
face of serious unemployment among Scotsmen.

It is doubtful whether there has recently been any serious intensification of the
problem, but there are two important factors of which the influence may prove greater
as time goes on. These are –

(i) The acquisition of Dominion status by the Irish Free State and the consequent
    inability to repatriate pauper Irish:

(ii) The check put by the United States of America upon Irish immigration.

Any mitigation of (ii) is probably out of the question, but something may be done
with regard to (i). In the past pauper Irish could be repatriated from Scotland to
Ireland (but not vice versa). That is now impossible since the Free State was
constituted and the difficulty is that it is doubtful whether the Free State would agree
to reciprocal arrangements for repatriation, such as suggested by the Poor Law
Unions, for presumably more Irishmen would fall to be repatriated than Englishmen
or Scotsmen. It would appear to be desirable, as the Dominions Office suggest, for the
problem to be investigated first by English and Scottish Departments in consultation before the Free State Government is approached.

It is of course possible for immigration from the Free State either by itself or along with immigration from other Dominions to be restricted by Statute, and this possibility has been kept in view, as is shown by the attached copy of a memorandum by Captain Elliot dated 7th July, 1925.

The Deputation might be informed that the matter is receiving the careful consideration of the Secretary of State in consultation with other Departments interested, and it might be pointed out in this connection that the question affects England as well as Scotland.

Scottish Office
September 1926.
Appendix Three  
Scottish Board of Health figures on Irish Immigration National Archives of Scotland HH1/541 3rd March 1926

Scottish Board of Health

Notes on questions raised in Memorandum submitted by Committee of Church of Scotland

(a) Immigration into Scotland from Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>No. Born in Scotland</th>
<th>No Born in England and Wales</th>
<th>No. Born in Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>3,360,018</td>
<td>3,061,531</td>
<td>70,482 (2.10%)</td>
<td>207,770 (6.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>3,735,573</td>
<td>3,397,759</td>
<td>91,823 (2.46%)</td>
<td>218,745 (5.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>4,025,647</td>
<td>3,688,700</td>
<td>111,045 (2.76%)</td>
<td>194,807 (4.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>4,472,103</td>
<td>4,085,755</td>
<td>134,023 (3.47%)</td>
<td>205,064 (4.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>4,760,904</td>
<td>4,365,855</td>
<td>165,102 (3.47%)</td>
<td>174,715 (3.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>4,882,497</td>
<td>4,466,711</td>
<td>194,276 (3.98%)</td>
<td>159,020 (3.26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Of these, 88,397 were born in the six counties of Northern Ireland

The above figures may have been furnished by the Registrar General but it is well that they should be stated here in considering the relation of Parish Councils to Irish immigration. The fall in the number of Irish born persons is striking.

The number of Irish born persons (including dependants) in receipt of ordinary poor relief from Parish Councils at 15th May in recent years in all parishes was as follows
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9,715</th>
<th>9.8% of the total chargeable (excluding the destitute able bodied unemployed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9,664</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,664</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,697</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,257</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,877</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,992</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,868</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,294</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,476</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,735</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,444</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,150</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,281</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,243</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,008</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,717</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,628</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,994</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,342</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,300</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At 15/5/25 there were in all parishes 1,844 destitute able bodied unemployed persons of Irish birth with 4,542 dependants in receipt of relief, representing 8.4% of the total number of able bodied persons and dependants chargeable.

The above figures do not, of course, differentiate between those born in the Free State and those born in the six Northern Counties.
The main difficulty is to find whether there has been a serious influx of Irish into Scotland since the census year. Statements or suggestions have been made from time to time that the Scottish population is being displaced by the Irish. But such statements are not as a rule supported by facts or proved by verifiable details. The Board have made a number of enquiries during recent years regarding the alleged Irish incursions without obtaining any very definite information.

For instance, in the early part of 1922 when the condition of Ireland was disturbed, it was reported that large numbers of people were moving to Scotland from Ireland and were applying to the Parish Councils in the West of Scotland for relief. On inquiry in Glasgow, Govan and Greenock there had not been not been noticeably affected by any incursion of Irish (sic).

Further inquiries were made last year. Copy of a memorandum dated 3rd April, 1925 containing these enquiries is appended (appendix A.)

Copy of statement of information obtained from shipping companies regarding the number of passengers between Scotland and Ireland is also appended (Appendix B.)

It is understood that the Ministry of Labour also made some investigations regarding this subject last year. A census was taken by the officials at all the Employment Exchanges in the West of Scotland during the four weeks from 30th March to 25th April, 1925. It was learned from the Divisional Office of the Ministry in Edinburgh that, in that period, only 10 applicants for benefits had at some or other been resident in the Irish Free State.

Two statements are made on page 4 of the Church of Scotland’s memorandum, viz., (1) that it is anomalous for a Scottish parish not to have the right to claim on the Irish native parish, and (2) that it is possible to repatriate to Ireland on a Sheriff’s warrant. As regards (1) Scottish parishes can only claim against parishes within Scotland; they cannot claim against Irish or English parishes. There is, strictly speaking, no anomaly as neither Irish or English parishes have the right to claim on Scottish parishes. As regards (2), it was formerly possible to remove paupers under a Sheriff’s warrant to Ireland, but since the creation of the Free State the power is now restricted to cases belonging to Northern Ireland (i.e. being North Irish born) who, in certain circumstances, may be removed.

The whole question of the alleged increase in the Irish population of Scotland is one of difficulty owing mainly to the absence of data on which to base conclusions.
Such figures as are available refer to persons actually born in Ireland. It may be that
the Church Committee are concerned with an increase in the numbers of persons of
Irish descent but no information appears to be available to the numbers of this class.

On the point that there is no longer any demand for immigrant labour, there is
reason to think that, despite the large numbers of unemployed, men from Ireland are
in fact securing some of the low paid work in Scotland.

From enquiries that have been made, two points seem to emerge, namely:-

(1) That Parish Councils have not been affected to any great extent by Irish
immigration in recent years

(2) That Irishmen in numbers have been coming to Scotland and securing work in
the Clyde valley.

Emigration from Scotland

Figures in relation to emigration are not in the Board's possession. Parish
Councils are now empowered to assist emigrants in certain circumstances. For the
year ended 15th May 1925 the sums spent by all Parish Councils amounted to the
trifling figure of £1,163. In the Board's view looking to the prevailing amount of
unemployment, it would appear desirable to encourage emigration rather than to
"regulate" it, as the Church of Scotland Committee seem to suggest.

General

It is stated that many of the larger towns in the industrial areas are one third Irish.
Coatbridge, Wishaw and Dumbarton are specially referred to. This seems to be an
overstatement but the point could be specially enquired into if so desired.

Again it is a fact that in certain west country industrial parishes the number of Irish
cases on the rolls of poor is clearly out of proportion to the resident Irish population.
Undoubtedly these Irish cases lay a heavy burden on the relieving authorities.

Jeffrey, Edinburgh 3rd March 1926

Appendix A

Scottish Board of Health

Immigration into Scotland from Ireland during the last three years

The Board are unable to obtain even approximate figures as to the number of
persons who have moved from Ireland during the last three years. The following
information may, however, be of use.
Returns are received each year from Parish Councils in Scotland showing, inter alia, the number of Irish born persons (excluding destitute able bodied unemployed persons) in receipt of poor relief at 15th May. The figures for the years 1921 - 1924 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor Persons</th>
<th>Dependents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At 15th May 1921</td>
<td>4,208</td>
<td>2,509</td>
<td>6,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 15th May 1922</td>
<td>5,124</td>
<td>3,504</td>
<td>8,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 15th May 1923</td>
<td>5,287</td>
<td>3,707</td>
<td>8,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 15th May 1924</td>
<td>5,462</td>
<td>3,880</td>
<td>9,342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question of Irish immigration has been discussed by telephone with the Inspectors of Poor of a number of parishes in the West of Scotland which were likely to be affected by Irish immigration. The following information has been obtained.

Old Monckton Parish (Coatbridge): The Inspector of Poor has consulted with local officials, including the Police Authorities, and it is thought that from 200-300 persons from Ireland have come into the parish during the last three years. There is no information as to their subsequent whereabouts and some of them may have removed elsewhere. The Parish Council have, however, been very little affected by this influx of Irish. It is stated that Irish labourers are being employed by certain firms and there is a rumour that these firms are advertising for men in the Irish newspapers. This seems to be a matter that might be investigated by the Ministry of Labour.

Govan Parish: The Inspector of Poor has no information available but he states that the number of people arriving from Ireland and who have sought assistance from the Parish Council is very small. It appears that Harland and Wolff transfer workmen from Belfast to their Govan yards as occasion demands. These men, however, do not bring their families and they return to Ireland when their task is completed.

Greenock Parish: The numbers of Irish immigrants applying for poor relief is now small. The Parish Council have for some time pursued a deterrent policy by refusing relief or offering indoor relief only in such cases and the applicants, as a rule, either move elsewhere or are supported by relatives or obtain employment. The Inspector of Poor thinks, roughly speaking, 100 persons (excluding dependants) who have arrived
from Ireland have eventually become chargeable to the Parish Council during the past three years, usually after a period of residence with relatives or friends.

Bothwell Parish: The position is similar to that in Greenock. The Parish Council do not grant out-door relief to new arrivals. About 20 Irish persons (excluding dependants) have eventually become chargeable during the last three years.

Glasgow Parish: No information available

Dalziel Parish (Motherwell): Very few cases have become chargeable to the Parish Council. In the past three years the parish Council have had to relieve only six cases, five of these being relieved in the Poorhouse. The Inspector of Poor states, however, that a large number of young Irishmen have obtained work in the local steel and iron works but they have not sought assistance from the Parish Council.

Port Glasgow Parish: During the past three years the Parish Council have had to relieve 20 able bodied unemployed Irishmen with 27 dependants. In addition 10 persons from Ireland with 8 dependants have become chargeable on the ordinary roll.

It will be seen that, so far as the parish councils are concerned, the question of immigration from Ireland during the past three years has not been a serious matter. But it is evident that the numbers who have sought assistance from the Parish Councils do not represent the total numbers who have moved to Scotland. There appear to be strong grounds for the opinion that Irishmen in considerable numbers have been coming to Scotland and readily obtaining work in the various industries in the West of Scotland. It has been suggested that this is due to Irish foremen who make a point of reserving employment for their fellow countrymen. As stated above, this seems a matter on which the Ministry of Labour might have information.

It has not been thought expedient to attempt to obtain any information from the shipping companies.

Appendix B
No. of Passengers carried on Steamers sailing between Scotland and Ireland during 1924.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Steamship Company</th>
<th>From Ireland to Scotland</th>
<th>From Scotland to Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London Midland and Scottish Railway Company</td>
<td>51,038</td>
<td>45,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns and Laird Steamship Lines Ltd</td>
<td>110,544</td>
<td>112,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Shipping Company Ltd</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>162,528</strong></td>
<td><strong>158,562</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excess of number arriving in Scotland over number leaving Scotland...........5,966
London and Midland and Burns and Laird service via Stranraer only
Information private and not for publication
Scottish Government Factors which must be considered before the General Election

A re-examination of Scottish government and its relation to the United Kingdom Parliament is imminent. The governing fact of the situation is that two parties out of three are definitely committed to the proposition of a legislature for Scotland. These two parties have almost for twenty years or more, held a majority of Scottish seats, and even when they have not, as in the present Parliament, they practically balance the Conservatives. It is not within the range of practical politics to suppose that this situation will be altered to the Conservative advantage in the forthcoming election.

The imminence of the situation arises from the fact that Ireland is now out of the way. The existence of the Irish problem meant that the Scottish question was entirely academic. The Conservative party was opposed to Home Rule on principle, and the Liberal party recognised that, in fact Irish Home Rule would require all the power of at least one Parliament. Any establishment of a Scottish legislature was accordingly always at least one or possibly two General Elections away, and this meant that for all parties it was shelved indefinitely.

This ‘shelving’ factor does not now exist. Do we recognise, however, that this means that the establishment of a Scottish legislature is thus brought forward as a possibility not of the next ten years, but as a possibility of the next eighteen months? Both Liberal and Labour parties are deeply pledged to the proposal of such a measure, and resolutions in its favour have been repeatedly carried in Parliament, with their official support, over many years. I do not know that the Conservative party has recently made any clear statement of policy on the matter.

It is not necessary to consider the prospects of the General Election, save to say that in any election, there are three possibilities of a clear majority against the Government, or even with an indeterminate situation, it may be taken that the combined Labour and Liberal representation in Scotland would exceed the Conservative. In either of these cases a Scottish Home Rule Bill would almost automatically be brought forward in the first year of the new Parliament. I do not think that it is a matter on which English Conservative members feel themselves bound on principle. They would certainly demand a very clear and reasoned lead from
Scottish Conservatives, and they would attach more weight than usual to the attitude of non-party men and of the press.

But even in the event of a clear Government majority there are several factors which demand very close examination. The first is in the existence of the Scottish Grand Committee. This Committee is a constitutional anomaly of the first magnitude. It is a committee (so called) which does not represent the composition of its parent body. It is also a committee to which a mass of important business stands automatically referred, which business cannot be considered elsewhere, save by explicitly waiving the definite procedure laid down by the house. The Committee has the unfettered right of coming to decisions in conflict with the presumed wishes of the main body, and the main body has the equally unfettered right of overturning these decisions (on report). It is clear that this Committee has power without responsibility, and all the ingredients for friction are present and must at some time become active.

As has been pointed out earlier, the normal relation of parties in Scotland under present conditions is much closer to the Liberal Labour majority than is the case in England. The return of a purely Conservative administration at once makes this apparent. The most recent and most useful example was the return of the Bonar Law Government. Here the Conservative party had a majority of about 80, a comfortable working majority. The Scottish representation made Labour the largest single Scottish party (it approached in fact a majority over both other parties combined) and left the Government with such a negligible minority that it was impossible for it to face the Scottish Grand Committee at all.

That Parliament came to a sudden end and the full implications of the situation did not become apparent. Mr F C Thomson and myself, however, who with Mr Patrick Ford were at that time responsible for Scottish business in the Commons, had the precariousness of our position deeply impressed upon us. The difficulties in the first year were dealt with by 'tacking' carried to almost absurd lengths. (The prolongation of payments of relief to Scottish able-bodied unemployed for instance, was tacked to a bill regulating London inter-borough finance.) I do not think that affairs could thus have continued for a whole Parliament, and in fact the then Secretary for Scotland had had to consider the only logical step. That is, the abolition of the Scottish Grand Committee.

Scottish Members will readily realise the extreme difficulty of taking any such step in the 1929 Parliament, as practically the first proposal of the new administration
towards the Scottish. Only the Chief Whip can give any firm estimation of the possibilities of such a situation arising, but it would seem that unless we do better in 1929 than we did in 1924, it is certainly highly probable. (The added members reflect the proportion of the house, and cannot be relied on for so heavy a Conservative weighting in the next Parliament as this.)

English Members would certainly look askance at such a step. The arguments of congesting the business of Parliament would be urged with much force. They would also feel they are being led into an untenable position. It is therefore improbable that this step would be taken. The machine would no doubt be made to run for some time by tacking, by stringent use of financial resolutions, and by taking vital business in Committee of the whole House. But it would leave the Government open to all sorts of humiliations for its own business, and at the mercy of the Oppositions for any Private Members Bills brought in, of which a Scottish Home Rule Bill would be amongst the earliest.

In all this I have said nothing of the Nationalist movement in Scotland. It is undesirable to emphasise new developments unduly. All the factors which I have enumerated were present in 1923. But the new movement at least does not point to any weakening in the autonomist position. It seems to me possible that the anti Government swing of the pendulum may lead to a certain number of the disgruntled finding in the ‘Nationalist’ label a handy compromise, of the same kind as that which leads to the return of independent Members when discontent is about, and when no alternative Government exists.

The Nationalist movement however contains two elements naturally opposed whose temporary union has given them strength. These elements are the ‘Gaelic-Irish’ and the ‘Edinburgh Protestant’. The ‘Gaelic Irish are the literary men and some of them, such as Compton Mackenzie, preach the re-constitution of Scotland on a Roman Catholic basis. Needless to say this is an anathema to the East-country men and the Kirks. It would be easy to split these two. The steps hereafter detailed would do so. But it is probable that Unionist action along the lines previously considered might consolidate them.

In any case it is clear that several members will have Nationalist candidates run against them at the next election and that very clear pronouncements will be demanded from all of us.
The essence of the relationship between the two kingdoms is finance. It is for consideration whether Conservatives should not be prepared to set up a Royal Commission on the relationship between the two countries with special reference to finance. It would be no use, of course, to set up such a commission unless the Conservative party were prepared to accept fully its findings, and give legislative effect to them if desirable - in fact to envisage a Conservative Home Rule Bill - for that is what it might lead to.

But the proposal of a Royal Commission might be taken as simply a device to shelve indefinitely an awkward problem. It would not be so in fact, since, as has been shown, the permanent factors of the situation will remain and will demand some action. Is there any immediate line we can take for the coming campaign? I think there is. Consider the present situation of the labour market in relation to immigration. We have a mass of unemployed labour comparable to a refugee problem. We are appealing right and left for charity, and are quite rightly pleased with every dozen or so men we can transfer into other districts and other employments. We take advantage of the demand for seasonal labour in Canada to move 8,000 men to and fro across the Atlantic.

These facts seem to me the justifiable basis for suspending overseas immigration altogether at present, (that is to say Irish immigration). As all Scots Members know this goes much deeper than any surface or temporary questions and indeed accounts for a large proportion of the autonomist movement.

Hitherto it has been difficult to see what practical steps could be taken to give effect to any such policy. The administrative problem seems however capable of solution along the following lines

1. Use the machinery of unemployment insurance and refuse to issue a new insurance book to any save scheduled classes of applicants (home born). This at once gets rid of any 'Ellis Island' immigration control station difficulties, and gives a scale of penalties for contravention. Precedent exists for this in the present limitation of entry into the mines, and to some extent in limitation for entry into sugar beet factories.

2. Defend this on the basis that the insurance fund balances at some figure, (I believe 800,000, 900,000) but certainly far below the existing figure. Promise, if desired, to review the situation, or even to withdraw the embargo, when unemployment falls to that figure.
3. Leave immigration open to all countries within an Unemployment Insurance scheme. This obviates difficulties with England and Northern Ireland.

4. Introduce Scottish legislation making paupers chargeable to their country of origin and accepting the same responsibility for Scottish paupers overseas.

To sum up

1. The position of Scotland vis-à-vis England will come up for review at a very early date

2. The existence of the Scottish Grand Committee makes it impossible to allow things to drift

3. The Conservative Party must be able to make some clear statement of its position

4. Scottish members are hereby asked to consider the desirability of:-

A) A Royal Commission on the relations between the two countries, not blinking the fact that it might report in favour of some sort of autonomy.

B) An embargo on immigration worked through Unemployment Insurance, not blinking the fact that this would be an embargo on Irish immigration and would raise all the questions of race, religion and our own emigration overseas.

C) Legislation laying down reciprocal responsibility for paupers, again recognising that this would involve mainly the Irish Free State.
Pursuant to the Cabinet decision in August last (Cabinet 42(28) Conclusion 10), I have been making enquiries both independently and in conjunction with the Scottish Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, and the board of Trade, in an endeavour to ascertain more precisely the extent of immigration both from Northern Ireland and the Free State into England and Scotland. The results of these inquiries ... strongly suggest that the mischief of which the representatives of the Scottish Churches who came to see me in July last complained, has already been done and that the immigration of natives of the Irish Free State to Scotland is not now such as to affect materially the position created by the presence in Scotland of a large body of persons of Irish extraction.

Though the annual inflow of Irishmen from the Free State into Scotland does not constitute a serious threat to the continuity of Scottish life and traditions, the numbers of the Irish already there and their tendency to multiply at a rate disproportionate to the increase of the native population is a matter for serious concern, and this tendency is the more alarming when taken into conjunction with the figures relating to emigration from Scotland....It may be true that the numbers of Irish extraction throughout the whole of Scotland is small compared to the total population but if (as appears to be the case) they segregate themselves in a few localities, they can, locally, exercise a considerable and admittedly undesirable influence. It is in fact the Irish and their descendents already in Scotland who present the real problem and, failing wholesale repatriation, which I take to be out of the question the only measure of alleviation which commends itself as being both just and practicable is the repatriation of those who within a fixed period of their arrival in Scotland become a charge on the rates....The Sec for Doms has for some time been in communication with the IFS govt with a view to making reciprocal arrangements for repatriation of destitute persons but Mr Cosgrove has, not unnaturally, shown little inclination to assist. I would suggest that further endeavours should be made...

I think also that the help of Scottish employers should be enlisted. Unless there were a demand for Irish labour there would be little encouragement for either Irishmen to enter Scotland or for those who have arrived to remain. Moreover if Scottish employers showed a decided preference for Scottish Labour the Irish elements now in
employment would eventually be forced onto poor relief and might subject to whatever arrangements are made, become eligible to repatriation. The suggestion that the SoS should address a circular based of course on the gravity of the unemployment situation to the employer’s organisations in Scotland is perhaps worth considering.
Letter from Father John Charleson reprinted in the Clydesdale Catholic Herald

April 7th 1923

Sir, may I crave your indulgence for some remarks on the present clerical movement against what is termed the Roman Catholic Irish? Not an Irishman myself but Scotus Scotorum, the agitation presents a psychological problem intriguing and painful as it must be to all who pray for the coming of the kingdom of God. Before the Great War we had been getting along comparatively smoothly together. In due course our brave men went forth and fought and bled and fell, inspired by the conviction that their sufferings were to lead to the abolition of all wars. Hardly did they think that other wars of camouflaged cruelty and religious hate might eventuate. But it has evidently done so, as shown by the agitation going on in certain clerical circles.

...The general waning of belief in Protestant forms of Christianity rendered people all the more ready to give some heed to those admirable sentiments which if not counteracted by adverse or retrograde influences, would cause a vast improvement in our social fellowship, a noble sympathy with, and respect for, the religious convictions of all, however they might differ from our own. But such a state of matters was most alarming and detestable to some of our Presbyterian clergy. I say some because the higher type of clergyman never descends to such levels. The steady, though slow, increase of the Catholic Church in Glasgow is gall and bitterness to those partisans; and with a cunning worthy of a better cause, taking advantage of the fact that this increase is mainly due to the Irish element in our midst, they are making determined efforts to inflame the basest passions of their hearers against the Catholic Irish...What a spectacle of petty bigotry! What a horrible pose for professional teachers of Christ who came in love to save us all! Thank God a more Christian laity has already expressed indignation at their barbarous conduct.

Those Irish are they not our kinsmen in the British Isles? Most of them came over to us in abject poverty, and for generations have laboured with brain and muscle to build up our great city. They were our labourers, not
of choice but of necessity: for, too often for our credit their fidelity to their religion meant exclusion from the higher paid offices. It is these unfortunate and noble people that some Presbyterian ministers would actually drive mercilessly away, and actually use the foulest means to do so by appealing to hateful sectarian and race prejudice, quite in the manner of the Turks. The Catholic Irish believe in Christ with passionate faith: they believe that Christ died for all, that in him all true Christians are brethren. Do these Presbyterian ministers so believe? If so what account will they tender to the All Loving for their present propaganda of hate and calumny?
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