

PATRICK J. HOGAN, TD, MINISTER FOR  
AGRICULTURE, 1922 - 1932

A STUDY OF A LEADING MEMBER OF THE FIRST  
GOVERNMENT OF INDEPENDENT IRELAND

JOAN M CULLEN

## ABSTRACT

JOAN M CULLEN, PATRICK J HOGAN TD, MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, 1922-1932 A STUDY OF A LEADING MEMBER OF THE FIRST GOVERNMENT OF INDEPENDENT IRELAND

This dissertation deals with the ministerial career of Patrick Hogan, who was Minister for Agriculture in the first governments of independent Ireland. His ten years in office spanned the creation and consolidation of the new state, and he set his mark upon the development of the country's largest industry, agriculture.

The dissertation analyses Hogan's career in terms of his role in national politics, his influence on agricultural policy and his relations with his civil servants, his contribution to the general business of the Cosgrave governments, firstly as an external minister and after 1927 as a member of the executive council, and his activities in matters including the quality control of agricultural produce, land ownership, rationalisation of the dairy industry, and the development of the first sugar factory. It also discusses the gradual shift towards a policy of protection. Finally, it casts some light on the political style of the Cumann na nGaedhail party.

The dissertation is based principally upon research in the records of the Department of Agriculture, and in the surviving papers of ministers of the time.

Submitted to Dublin City University in respect of the requirements for the award of the degree of PhD

This thesis is based on research conducted while in receipt of a studentship from the Dublin City University Business School, Dublin City University

Supervisor Dr Eunan O'Halpin

Head of Department Prof Anthony Walsh

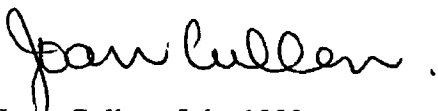
August 1993

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification of thesis	i
Abbreviations	ii
Foreword	iii
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER 1</u> Patrick Hogan and Irish Politics 1891-1936	19
<u>CHAPTER 2</u> 1922-1925	75
<u>CHAPTER 3</u> 1925-1926	128
<u>CHAPTER 4</u> 1927-1932	188
<u>CHAPTER 5</u> The Resolution of the Land Question	240
<u>CHAPTER 6</u> Hogan's last years 1932-1936 and Conclusion	294
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	303
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	309

## CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I certify that this thesis is my own work, conducted and presented under the supervision of Dr Eunan O'Halpin in the Dublin City University Business School, Dublin City University

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joan Cullen" with a small flourish at the end.

Joan Cullen, July 1993

## ABBREVIATIONS

AG1\	Department of Agriculture files
CD	Commons Debates
DD	Dail Debates
DF	Department of Finance
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DJ	Department of Justice
SD	Seanad Debates
FA	Franciscan Archives, Killiney, Co Dublin
JB	Joseph Brennan Papers
NA	National Archives
NL	National Library, Dublin
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin archives
ACC	Agricultural Credit Corporation
BGA	Irish Beet Growers Association
CDB	Congested Districts Board
Con	Conservative
CCA	County Committee of Agriculture
DATI	Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction
Far	Farmers' Party
FF	Fianna Fail
IAOS	Irish Agricultural Organisation Society
IFU	Irish Farmers' Union
ICMA	Irish Creamery Managers' Association
IRA	Irish Republican Army
Lab	Labour Party
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
NCIDC	North Cork Industrial Development Committee
UDC	Urban District Council
TB	Tuberculosis

## FOREWARD

Throughout this thesis I have used 'Ireland' or Irish rather than Saorstát or the Free State to describe the twenty six counties after independence. Where I refer to the minister, the secretary or use any other official designation it can be taken as a rule that this refers to the Minister for Agriculture or officials of the Department of Agriculture unless it is otherwise indicated.

I would like to express my thanks to Monica Duffy for allowing me to use letters and other documents which belonged to her father, Patrick Hogan. Thanks are also due to his daughters Bridget, Nora and Margaret and his old friend John Joe Broderick, who all made me so welcome when I interviewed them in Kilrickle, Co. Galway and Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. I would also like to mention Tom Duggan of the Department of Agriculture who was very instructive on the workings of the Land Commission, Una O'Higgins O'Malley and the late Mrs Patrick McGilligan, whose fond memories of Patrick Hogan brought him to life for me. I would also like to thank the former Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave for giving me so much of his valuable time. The staff of the National Archives in the Four Courts where I spent almost five months reading the Department of Agriculture files deserve a word of thanks for the hard work they did on my behalf producing the hundreds of files which I examined. I would also like to mention the staff in the National Archives in Bishops Street, who were always pleasant and helpful. Throughout the past five years I have been sustained by my fellow post-graduate students in DCU who have listened without audible complaints to my less than exciting revelations about policy making in independent Ireland in the 1920s and are in receipt therefore of my undying gratitude, and Eileen Colgan whose skill made the completion of this thesis possible. A special word of thanks to my supervisor Dr O'Halpin for his patience and encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank Peter for his cooperation and support over the last five years.

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the ministerial career of Patrick Hogan between 1922 and 1932 as a member of the first functioning government of Ireland. This period has been characterised by commentators and historians as one of consolidation and conservatism. Given the turbulent time in which Hogan operated it would have been quite an achievement even to have consolidated and conserved. But he did more than that and it says a lot about attitudes towards Ireland's most important industry that this has been largely ignored. There are historical and political reasons for this neglect. After 1932 politics and economics became entangled through the so called economic war. The Fianna Fail government's actions have been represented as Ireland making a stand against the Empire in order to establish the sort of economic independence which Griffith had proposed, namely, self-sufficiency. In contrast the preceding decade is portrayed as one in which the governments were pro-British, slavishly following policies which Britain approved. Criticism of government during the 1920s has been coloured by this attitude which has tended to discount the achievements which were made by all its branches while concentrating on the dead hand of conservatism which is seen to pervade every policy and activity. One of the main objectives of this study is, therefore, to determine if these criticisms are justified or if the unpopularity of Cumann na nGaedheal was the natural consequence of being in government during a particularly difficult decade.

There have been few scholarly studies of how the first governments actually operated on how cabinet government in Ireland worked in the 1920s. Very little attention has been paid to the working relationships of ministers and their civil servants which played a key role

in preventing the breakdown of the administrative system which would have threatened the stability of the new state. Recently there has been some work carried out in this area. Valiulis' biography of Richard Mulcahy, **Portrait of a Revolutionary, General Richard Mulcahy and the Founding of the Free State** might have thrown light on these areas. However the work concentrates on the army crisis which took place in 1924 and which was an extraordinary event rather than on the more mundane years which Mulcahy spent as Minister for Local Government and Health and says nothing about Mulcahy's relations with his officials. Seamas O'Buachalla's interesting work on **Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland** does look at Cumann na nGaedheal ministers for Education as part of his study of policy making and the politics of education in Ireland. Neither study supplies enough material from which to draw any broad conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Hogan is a good candidate for a study of this kind. His ministry, Agriculture, embraced the most important industry in the country in which more than fifty per cent of the population were directly engaged. Farming also covered a wide variety of groups ranging from agricultural labourers, small farmers, and comfortable farmers to the remnants of the old landlord class. The addition of Lands to his portfolio in 1922 put him in charge of the dangerous area of land distribution and reform. The violence and lawlessness associated with the land question had again become endemic during the civil war. This put Hogan at the forefront of the drive to restore law and order in the countryside at a particularly sensitive time. He was, therefore, involved in a significant number of areas which touched the lives of the majority of Irish people.

Hogan's agricultural policies were not influenced to any great extent by constitutional issues. This is important as before independence the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI), established in 1899, built an identity of its own. While its early years were dogged by controversies, after the ousting of its founding minister, Sir Horace Plunkett in 1907, DATI carried out its legislative and regulative work away from the political limelight and without much of the bureaucratic friction it had initially encountered. This appears to have remained the case during Hogan's ministry as there is little evidence of any other departments becoming involved in the business of the Department of Agriculture between 1922-1932. Under Hogan, a gifted and energetic minister, autonomy was reinforced and its resources were never used to increase employment or to implement social policies. On the contrary, Hogan did nothing to improve the pay and conditions of farm labourers who made up a large section of the industry. His main concern was how to export the maximum amount of agricultural produce at the best possible price because Ireland was 'exceptionally dependent on foreign trade' <sup>2</sup>

In 1930 the department summed up its policy succinctly in a statement to the Department of Industry and Commerce

The agricultural policy of the Government has been largely directed to helping the farmer make the most productive use of his land and to secure for him against world-wide competition a remunerative market for exports of agricultural produce which constitute the main source of the country's trade <sub>3</sub>

Hogan's policy appears to have depended to a large extent on what seems to have been a naive belief in the judgement of the farming community to decide what was best for agriculture. He gave the farmers credit for understanding their own industry. He was not, however, blind to its defects in the area of quality control and livestock breeding. At the heart of his policy was the objective of supplying the almost insatiable British market by producing food at prices which could compete with those of the Danes and commonwealth countries. Ireland had a geographical advantage over other exporters because of its proximity to Britain and its well established trade routes and business contacts developed during the Union. Hogan was determined to exploit that advantage.

This became the most controversial part of Hogan's policy: his concentration on agricultural exports to Britain. It reinforced the belief amongst Fianna Fail supporters that Cumann na nGaedheal were pro British even though it could be demonstrated that Britain was the most lucrative market in Europe and the most convenient for Ireland. As early as 1924 the opposition were suggesting that 'an extension of [Ireland's] trade with Britain would bring economic bondage' though this was not taken seriously by the press who dismissed it as 'sheer nonsense'.<sup>4</sup> Fianna Fail could not come to terms with the fact that independence had not altered the pattern of trading. This led to de Valera questioning whether, as he saw it, the 'strategic object of the Agriculture Department' ought to be to run the country 'simply in order to supply food for the British'.<sup>5</sup> Four years later the Fianna Fail manifesto acknowledged the reality that 'the people of Britain and ourselves are each other's best customer' and that 'geographic and other factors' made 'it unlikely that this close relationship' would 'rapidly change'.<sup>6</sup>

Economic nationalism, which Fianna Fail embraced, was based on self-sufficiency and had its roots in the pre-1916 period. It also fitted neatly with new ideas for protecting national economies. It had a two pronged appeal, one based on simple economic issues, the other on its association with the thinking of those who fought for independence in 1916. This has clouded issues which have not been debated, until recently, without the patriotism of those who wished to examine the Cumann na nGaedheal governments' record dispassionately being impugned. F S L Lyons makes an important point when he says 'by one of those familiar ironies of Irish history the men who repudiated Griffith's political settlement inherited his economic ideas'<sup>7</sup>. No matter how tenuous this connection may have been or how difficult it would have been to sustain in fact, it existed in the minds of a sufficient number of electors to make it a useful plank in Fianna Fail's 1932 manifesto and a genuine alternative to what already existed. This supports the argument that the developments of the 1920s have been overshadowed by the linkage of economics with nationalism encouraged by Fianna Fail.

There are various interpretations of the effectiveness or potential effectiveness of Hogan's export based agricultural policy. Lee suggests that even if his policy had succeeded it would not 'have fulfilled the hopes it inspired', that is, 'a healthy and prosperous agricultural industry would not automatically have led to a healthy and prosperous agricultural community'<sup>8</sup>.

Girvin takes a similar line stating that although

agriculture performed well throughout the 1920s, especially the export sector

Policy makers outside Industry and Commerce had assumed that development would occur spontaneously, with linkages deepening as a consequence of growth in agriculture

However, the profits which were made by farmers were not reinvested in industrial development, or in farming but in increased consumption<sup>9</sup> Girvin regards the 'cautious approach' of the government to new policies as understandable. Their reluctance was, in his opinion, caused by the fear that changes could have 'endangered' the benefits from the agricultural sector<sup>10</sup>

Daly is critical of the lack of vision in the 1920s and 1930s, but does not think that there was any simple answer available. She suggests that 'there were alternative policies which could have been followed, though options were limited in the difficult circumstances of the twenties and thirties'. She believes that some types of intervention would have had some measure of success

devaluation of the Irish currency against an over-valued sterling would have reduced deflation with considerable benefit to agriculture while offering a measure of protection to industry. However, such a programme would have entailed major intervention in banking and financial matters, something that even Fianna Fail fought shy of doing<sup>11</sup>

This was probably because both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail were in thrall to the existing structures which continued 'to influence the overall direction of policy choices' They had therefore given priority to solving the existing difficulties which farmers were experiencing <sup>12</sup>

Daly concludes

given the strong wish for stability it can be argued that the modest and slightly confused economic achievements of the twenties and thirties met the dominant needs of Irish society <sup>13</sup>

There are several areas which can be examined to see what influenced Hogan's policy decisions, how they were received and what was their lasting effect These are (1) The legislation which he introduced, (2) how he worked behind the scenes with his department, (3) how he operated in the Dail, (4) how he was rated by his colleagues and opponents, and (5) how and for what he is remembered The acts for which he was responsible cover almost every aspect of agriculture regulatory, educational, and financial In general they were uncontroversial with criticism confined to the particulars of the bills rather than the necessity for their introduction They fitted into the overall policy of the government, found acceptance within the farming community in general and rarely elicited any response from the rest of the community Hogan's reluctance to intervene except as a last resort gives the impression that he was a reactive minister In spite of this the legislation which he did introduce brought about a quiet revolution in the quality of

agricultural exports while measures such the Agricultural Credit Act 1927 demonstrated his willingness to intervene actively when conditions demanded

His work with the department shows the effect of an enthusiastic and informed minister who managed to bring to fruition many of the proposals and schemes which the department had been discussing and examining over the previous twenty years. There appears to have been a high degree of mutual confidence between the minister and his officials which can be seen in the smooth way the department was run and the way in which legislation that had been in preparation for almost a decade was brought forward and passed. The departmental files from which these impressions are gained have some shortcomings, however, which make them less effective as sources of information than they might have been. Notes on discussions with the minister are few and where they exist they are usually formal accounts prepared by participants in departmental conferences. There appears to have been no informal correspondence between the minister and the secretary of the department or

senior officials. Any contact of this sort was carried on through the medium of his private secretary. It is very likely that interviews between the minister and his senior officials when they did take place were not seen to require official minutes or aide memoirs. Neither the minister or his officials thought it necessary to make notes or if they did to put them on the files. Another disappointment is the lack of any rough drafts of memoranda or letters written by Hogan which would have given an insight into how his thinking on particular issues developed or changed as he committed his thoughts to paper.

Department records present a further difficulty. While an official of the National Archives stated that they had not removed any original documents from the Department of Agriculture files it is not true to say that no material has been taken out. This writer was informed that while the records were being prepared for public access large numbers of memoranda and printed material which were sent for the information of the department from other government departments were removed. It was believed that as they were not directly relevant to the business of the department and were still available in the departments where they originated they did not need to be kept. The decision was taken mainly because of a shortage of storage space. Unfortunately this gives a distorted view of the amount of communication there was between departments at that time. It could be inferred from the files as they now stand that there was almost no attempt made by departments to keep each other informed about issues which concerned them indirectly. This is a problem as it makes it impossible to say to what extent policy was influenced by actions and decisions taken in other departments. It also makes it look as if the work of the department was carried out in a vacuum.<sup>14</sup> This was not true. Even a cursory glance at the files of other government departments such as Finance, Industry and Commerce, Local Government and Home Affairs (later Justice) makes this clear. There was a considerable amount of correspondence and contact between the Department of Agriculture and these departments when their business overlapped. However, it does not automatically follow that this led to them coordinating their policies or adopting similar policy objectives. The departments seem to have stuck rigidly to their own areas of responsibility and to have guarded them jealously. For instance queries about legislation governing food and hygiene regulations in foreign exporting countries were directed through the Department of External Affairs who passed the replies to Agriculture.<sup>15</sup>

A very careful and close study of a large number of these files leads to the impression that the minister retained some documents and correspondence which never found their way into the archives. The 'minister's file', a separate set of documents included in the general file concerning the establishment of the first sugar factory, indicates that such files existed. Some but not all of the documents in the minister's file are duplicated in the general file. There is, however, nothing in the general file to suggest that relevant correspondence is missing. If, therefore, it is impossible to infer the existence of the minister's file from the other available material the same is probably true of other files where the minister retained copies of his own correspondence and the original letters and telegrams which he received, which have now been lost because the relevant 'ministers files' have disappeared. This is a serious deficiency which can give a misleading impression of the direct interest the minister took in the affairs of his department. Without the minister's file on the sugar negotiations it would not have been clear just how involved he had been at each stage or how much weight he gave to their political implications.

Another problem is the way that the files are labelled. They are not sub-divided under headings such as legislation, dairy, livestock or finance, for example. It was necessary, therefore, to search the complete card index in order to find files which were useful. As there were thousands of new files opened every year this made the task extremely slow and difficult. Nor were the descriptions of the contents of the files given in the index always accurate or helpful. Some of those with the least promising titles proved the most fruitful while those which sounded the most interesting turned out to contain only a blank sheet of paper bearing the index title. It was necessary therefore to decide which areas were the most important and look at all the files which made reference to them. This meant looking

at more than five hundred individual files some of which contained hundreds of documents. It was very tedious and it took some time before any clear picture began to emerge. Eventually it was possible to guess with a high degree of accuracy which files were worth ordering. However the niggling thought that something vital might have been overlooked was never quite removed.

Apart from these shortcomings the files were well maintained and communications between the officials of head office were recorded on the minute sheets and it must be supposed that officials in the 1920s would have found the labelling system perfectly adequate. Field staff were often asked to report on conditions in their areas which they did with creditable alacrity and their accounts of conditions in the country during times of distress were surprisingly objective. They gave considered and informed reports which quite often were at variance with the wilder speculations of the press and so far as can be judged were more accurate.<sup>16</sup>

Another useful source for Hogan's political career are the reports of the proceedings in the Dail. However, dipping into debates and reading only the opinions and statements of a few of the main speakers can give a false impression. Debates on controversial issues and legislation can be entertaining. They give the participants the opportunity to display their verbal skill and wit. While these show the deputies' abilities as debaters they often reveal more about their ignorance and prejudice than their competence as legislators. The passage of a difficult technical and uncontroversial bill can be a better indicator of the efficacy of a government and parliament. The examination of amendments to a regulatory bill which is not calculated to receive press attention or produce quotable quotes can,

therefore, be a more reliable guide to the opinions of deputies than the more spectacular pronouncements on constitutional or security issues which are directed at a wider audience than the Dail

In Hogan's case the Dail provided a stage where he could perform the roles both of party polemicist and technocratic legislator. When he dealt with issues and questions about agriculture his expertise was plain and he was confident enough to admit that he did not have the answer to every question or needed more time to consider the implications of an opposition amendment. Throughout his years in the Dail he was involved in some of the major contests on law and order, protectionism, and constitutional amendments where he was able to display his talent as 'the best platform speaker of his party' <sup>17</sup>. Although he had a sharp tongue and an unerring nose for 'humbug' his barbs were usually softened by his sense of humour and were generally reserved for those who were well able to defend themselves. It is important to look at the records of the Dail with a degree of scepticism in order to separate out the window dressing from the actual intentions of the minister.

Hogan was very careful to answer all written Dail questions exactly as they had been drafted by his officials and he also stuck very closely to the guidelines which they gave when answering supplementaries. This is somewhat surprising and at variance with the air of spontaneity which his speeches in the Dail had. He never appears to have been tempted away from this course even in the early days. This shows a political maturity which must have developed very rapidly. That he followed so closely the advice of his department should be remembered when attempting to decide how much his policy was influenced by his officials.

It is difficult to say how highly Hogan was rated by his colleagues and respected by his opponents because there are few written records of their opinions. Furthermore, despite his close friendship with the abrasive Kevin O'Higgins he apparently made few enemies in the government. Cosgrave thought enough of him to keep him in his government for ten years. He also valued his advice. In 1923 Cosgrave informed the Dail that when deciding who to appoint to the Finance portfolio he

consulted with the other ministers. It was within the period known as the Provisional Parliament in the Third Dail, and [I] got the advice and council separately of the ministers - I think more than any other that of the Minister for Agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

even though he was not a member of the executive council. Hogan and Cosgrave became close friends. Liam, W.T. Cosgrave's son, spent many happy holidays in Kiltrickle and Hogan often visited Cosgrave in his home.<sup>19</sup>

Cosgrave did not, however, move him to any of the more prestigious departments such as Finance or Industry and Commerce where other politicians were able to make their names. Ernest Blythe at the Department of Finance and Hogan's friend Patrick McGilligan at Industry and Commerce.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps Hogan wished to stay at Agriculture because of his interest in farming and his belief that it was the most important portfolio. All the evidence suggests that he was quite content with his position. It is unlikely that he was left there because of any deficiency in his personality. One contemporary of his said that everybody loved him, that when he came into a room it was as if somebody had turned on a light.<sup>21</sup>

This suggests qualities which are rather difficult to discern from photographs. These show a small slight rather unkempt man and not one whom it is easy to imagine doing verbal battle with some of the most venerated names in Irish politics. When Hogan was killed in a car accident in 1936 his obituaries were fulsome. So too were the tributes of members of the Fianna Fail government who had been some of his bitterest opponents. de Valera adjourned the Dail so that deputies could attend his funeral in Kiltrickle, which shows the high regard in which he was held. It was such that in the 1930s and in opposition he still retained the status of a national figure.

Protectionism swept away free trade which had been at the core of his export led policy. Today Hogan is remembered as a highly efficient Minister for Agriculture and a conservative politician. Mention his name to a member of the older generation and they may recite 'One more cow, one more sow, one more acre under the plough'. Those with an interest in the land question may recall that he was the Minister for Lands in 1923 when the first major piece of land legislation was passed by the Irish government and is credited with the suppression of the land issue. Few would know that he laid down the foundations for the quality control of Irish agricultural produce which halted the sharp decline of the export trade which had taken place after the end of the first world war and which led to a revival that saw Irish agricultural produce regain its place in the British market. This was achieved against fierce competition from the continental and commonwealth exporters. Hogan's career is, therefore, worthy of serious consideration.

## NOTES

- 1 M G Valulius, **Portrait of a Revolutionary, General Richard Mulcahy and the Founding of the Irish Free State**, (Dublin 1992) Seamus O'Buachalla, **Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland** (Dublin, 1988)
- 2 Dermot McAleese, 'Anglo Irish Economic Interdependence from excessive intimacy to a wider embrace', in **Ireland and Britain since 1922** edited by P J Drudy, (Cambridge, 1986) p 88 For a detailed account of DATI and the Department of Agriculture see Daniel Hoctor, **The Department's Story** (Dublin 1971) For a contrasting assessment of DATI's performance in its first years see Trevor West, **Horace Plunkett Corporation and Politics an Irish Biography** (Dublin 1986), pp 60-66, 71-82 and Eunan O'Halpin, **The Decline of the Union British Government in Ireland, 1892-1922** (Dublin 1987), pp 18-21
- 3 Statement from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Industry and Commerce, n d [September 1930] headed 'Measures initiated by the Government of Saorstát Éireann for the development of Agriculture', NA, Department of Agriculture, AG1\E2563\30
- 4 **The Irish Times**, 3 Sept 1924
- 5 Michael Moynihan, **Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera, 1917 - 1973** (Dublin and New York, 1980), p 157

- 6      *ibid* , p 189
- 7      F S L Lyons, **Ireland Since the Famine** (London, 1973), p 610
- 8      J J Lee **Ireland 1912-1985 Politics and Society** (Cambridge 1989), p 115
- 9      Brian Girvin **Between Two Worlds** (Dublin, 1985), pp 48 and 49
- 10     *ibid*, p 48
- 11     Mary Daly, **Industrial Development and Irish National Identity, 1922-1939**  
(Dublin, 1992), p 173
- 12     Girvin, **Between Two Worlds**, p 48
- 13     Daly, **Industrial Development**, p 182
- 14     This information was obtained during an informal discussion with a former member  
of the staff of the National Archives who had been involved in the preparation of  
the files for public use
- 15     Request for information on regulations regarding the import of animals and animal  
products into foreign countries made by the department of Agriculture to the

Department of Foreign Affairs, 22 Oct 1929 National Archives (NA), Department of Foreign Affairs Files (DFA), DFA32\27

\16 NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25 and AG1\G927\42

17 Maurice Manning, **The Blueshirts** (Dublin, 1971), p 5

18 Brian Farrell, **Chairman or Chief** (Dublin, 1971) p 19

19 Interview with Liam Cosgrave, 14 Jun 1993

20 Ernest Blythe was TD for Monaghan from 1922 to 1933 when he was defeated in the general election. He was Minister for Local Government in the first government until 1923 when he became Minister for Finance. He held that portfolio until the Cumann na nGaedheal government was defeated in 1932. Patrick McGilligan was a TD from 1923 to 1965, for the National University of Ireland from 1923 to 1937 and for various constituencies from 1937 to 1965. He became Minister for Industry and Commerce in 1924 when McGrath resigned. He was given the External Affairs portfolio in 1927 which he handled along with Industry and Commerce until 1932. Vincent Brown and Michael Farrell, **The Magill Book of Irish Politics** (Dublin, 1981), pp 45-6, 119. R F Foster, **Modern Ireland 1600 - 1972** (London, 1988), ff p 500

21 From an interview with the late Mrs Patrick McGilhgan, a close friend of Patrick Hogan 15 Jun 1989 Both of the McGilhigans were good friends of his though there may have been differences between McGilhgan and Hogan in their cabinet relations Patrick McGilhgan told an acquaintance during a conversation that he found it very difficult to relate to Hogan during cabinet meetings This, he said, in spite of the great respect and affection with which he regarded him Perhaps the differences were caused by Hogan's protective attitude towards agriculture He may have regarded Industry and Commerce as a rival ministry which could usurp some of the power and prestige of Agriculture

## CHAPTER 1

### PATRICK HOGAN AND IRISH POLITICS, 1891-1936

The singular style and ability of Patrick Hogan would have earned him a prominent position in Irish politics under any circumstances. His ministerial career is made more interesting, however, because it spanned the first decade after independence. He, with his fellow ministers and deputies, presided over the establishment of one of the most stable political systems of the twentieth century. Hogan's part in this is very important because he was Minister for Agriculture for the whole period from 1922 to 1932. Therefore, he was closely involved with the fluctuating fortunes of Ireland's most important industry, as well as with the potentially explosive question of land reform. It is hardly overstating the case to suggest that had agriculture collapsed at that time, the other institutions of the new state would have had little hope of survival. His policies and those advocated by his department were, therefore, of greater relevance than some of the more controversial constitutional issues to which so much time and attention has been devoted.

After independence the reconstituted Department of Agriculture continued to function effectively in spite of the difficulties surrounding the transfer of power and the subsequent civil war. There is no indication of a loss of momentum in the work of the department after 1922. On the contrary, a sense of urgency, which had been missing in the past, is evident in the way that proposals for regulating the quality of agricultural production and exports were given a higher priority. Under Hogan's leadership the Department of Agriculture retained the confidence of the farming community and became a solid pillar of the new state.

Patrick Hogan was born in 1891 in County Galway. His home, a well proportioned comfortable house standing on a large farm on the outskirts of the village of Kiltrickle,

would be more readily associated with the 'landed gentry' of East Galway than the home of the typical small farmers or 'congests' of that county <sup>1</sup> Michael Hogan, Patrick's father, a Clareman, 'married in' to the property in Kilrickle where his wife's family, the Glennons, had lived since the turn of the eighteenth century <sup>2</sup> However his family tree, which contains a significant number of professionals and religious of some standing, suggests that Bridget Glennon was not descending the social ladder with such an alliance - quite the opposite in fact <sup>3</sup> Patrick and his siblings maintained the high standards of previous generations two became solicitors, one a nun, one a professor of history and one an army colonel <sup>4</sup> The Hogans of Kilrickle could, therefore, fairly be described as a family of achievers

Hogan's middle-class roots were not exceptional in W T Cosgrave's government What was unusual was his particular suitability for the portfolio of agriculture This was because his background as the son of a substantial farmer and senior inspector with the old Land Commission, together with his genuine absorption in agricultural matters and his deep interest in politics combined to produce a highly professional and energetic minister Evidence of his early dedication to the subject and his efforts to keep abreast of the technical advances in agriculture and to be informed about what was going on in the world of farming can be gleaned from an anecdote in one of his obituaries It tells how he occupied himself in Ballykinlar internment camp in 1921 The writer recalled how, instead of drilling like the rest of the prisoners, Hogan spent his time reading Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI) literature, something that most people, including farmers, would probably regard as worse than incarceration by the British He put this knowledge to good use delivering to the camp Farmers' Union 'a very instructive

lecture at one of the meetings on the dead meat trade in its relations to Ireland' This bespoke an unusual degree of commitment to the subject, the more striking since he had already embarked on a career in the law<sup>5</sup>

Papers in his daughter's possession reveal that Hogan's interest in politics pre-dated the upheavals of 1916. He was interested enough to collect newspaper cuttings of the general election campaigns of 1910 and to paste them into a note book. It is an impressive collection which includes reports of speeches by the most important British and Irish politicians of the time, Liberal, Conservative, Unionist and Nationalist. The main issue of that campaign, limiting the power of veto of the House of Lords, was of particular significance to Ireland's hopes of securing Home Rule. For the first time it appeared that there was a chance of a Home Rule bill once passed by the Commons making its way onto the statute book. It can be assumed that Hogan's enthusiastic interest in the outcome of the election stemmed from his wish to see Ireland gain some kind of independence. He did not join Sinn Féin or the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), nor is there any suggestion that he became a member of the Gaelic League. It is not surprising that he did not become involved in the attempts to revive the language as he was critical of the movement. In the early 1930s he said 'There are two great rackets in Ireland, one is the Irish language, the other is the sweep!' Nothing has come to light on the development of his political ideas between 1910 and 1916. In 1917 he joined Sinn Féin after the Easter rebellion had destroyed the prospects of the Nationalist party<sup>6</sup>

Hogan's participation in politics is not regarded as unusual by his daughter Bridget who believes that politics were constantly debated and discussed within the family. Hogan also had family links with Fenianism, through his mother's people, the Glennons. A story is

told of one member of the family going to the United States to raise funds for the movement. On the evening of his departure his grandmother appeared at the leave taking with her lace apron filled with gold sovereigns valued at two thousand pounds. In the late nineteenth century this was a very large sum of money to donate to any cause, especially one which was proscribed by the Catholic church and was not usually supported by comfortable farmers. Hogan's brothers James and Michael became members of the Irish Republic Brotherhood and the Irish Volunteers, and they fought in the War of Independence. This confirms the family's association with physical force nationalism.<sup>7</sup>

Despite his lack of fighting record, his local connections made him a particularly good candidate in his home constituency of Galway. Unlike his brothers who attended Clongowes Wood College, Hogan had gone to St Joseph's College, or 'Garbally', in Ballinasloe. This was undoubtedly an advantage to him in his political life because it identified him more closely with the local people and the area he represented in the Dail. In his case this may have been especially valuable, because the party which he represented after the 1922 election gradually became associated in the public mind with a pro-British stance. While not necessarily true this could have been very damaging in the west of Ireland, where Sinn Fein and later Fianna Fail drew strong support from small farmers.<sup>8</sup> John Joe Broderick, a local man who was a constituency worker of Hogan's and knew him very well, recalls him leaning against the wall opposite to the church in Kiltrickle after mass on a Sunday morning talking to the other men who were likewise employed. This was seen by the villagers as a sign that in spite of his background, his undoubted talents and his early rise to prominence he had not lost the common touch. Nor, says Broderick, was his attitude regarded as patronising.<sup>9</sup>

Hogan's schooling at Garbally gave him another political advantage. It was a diocesan college, established partly to educate potential recruits to the priesthood. Some boys did take holy orders. Amongst the remainder were many future Galway lawyers, doctors, merchants and large farmers. These formed a network of men of influence, who were able to help Hogan achieve success at the polls. The assistance of his former schoolfellows more than made up for the lack of an extended family in the Galway constituency from whom he could have expected support. His father was a Clareman, while there were few cousins on his mother's side. The old school network had added significance given the very loose way in which Cumann na nGaedheal was organised in the 1920s and 1930s. There were no local branches. Party meetings were held once or twice a year with little attention paid to vote management, fund raising or canvassing. Contact between the local Cumann na nGaedheal TD and his constituents was maintained through 'key' men in each parish. These would act as go-betweens, relaying requests for assistance to the TD and probably advising him or them. It was vitally important, therefore, for a TD to have the confidence of leading men in the community through whom requests could be channelled and who would remind voters at election time where their allegiance should lie, especially in the absence of a well organised local party machine. Hogan's daughter Bridget Hogan O'Higgins only became aware of her father's support network when she first ran for the Dail in 1957. She received unsolicited help from his old school friends, including a number of influential local priests. As Fine Gael party organisation had not improved much since the 1920s, she felt their assistance was crucial to her success. Gallagher confirms this view quoting Moss.

Sometimes Cosgrave's opponents did not realize that his party was actively engaged in campaign work. Cosgrave's party, Cumann na nGaedheal, often carried its organisation into new areas by merely sending letters to influential men asking their aid. They went about quietly, often making use of social groups which already existed, and then by election time, they had an organisation.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of a formal organisation which was noted by Moss undoubtedly contributed to Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael's decline in the 1930s and 1940s.

It would be very illuminating to know to what extent the face Hogan presented to the local community was governed by political considerations or whether it was natural. Knowing which was the case could shed some light on his political nous, for instance just how conscious he was of the need to woo local voters to maintain his seat and to assist other members of his party into theirs. However, it would have taken someone of considerable acting ability to continue to fool the community in which he was born and raised for the twenty years he was active in public life, though he possibly did create a public persona with the right balance of informality and toughness with which to win local popularity. While there is no direct evidence to confirm either view, he was almost universally praised for his honesty and dislike of humbug and cant. This suggests that his appeal to all classes came less as the result of Machiavellian public image making than from his no nonsense personality and witty turn of phrase.<sup>11</sup>

His daughter maintains that he would have been well aware of his electoral strength at local level. She says that he would have known that those in the immediate neighbourhood of

Kilrickle whom he had helped most, often voted for the opposition. They did not find it difficult to approach him when they were in trouble but gratitude for his efforts on their behalf did not always translate into votes at election time. She suggests that it was a way for a small farmer to assert his independence and to prove that he was not beholden to the Hogans in the big house. When she stood for Fine Gael nearly twenty years later the same pattern of support still persisted.<sup>12</sup>

There is one overriding reason why Hogan was a successful politician, apart that is from his undoubted personal ability: he never broke his links with Kilrickle and east Galway. He was away for some years at college in Dublin and as an apprentice solicitor in Ennis, but they were temporary absences. When he qualified as a solicitor he set up his legal practice in Ballinasloe, later opening additional offices in the immediate area. He also helped to run the farm after his father's death. His continued association with his home village was natural and not contrived to curry support from local voters. Liam Cosgrave, who was a frequent visitor to Kilrickle, remembers the speed with which Hogan changed into his working clothes and went out to inspect the farm when he returned from Dublin. He testifies to his love of country life and his consuming interest in agriculture.<sup>13</sup>

Hogan's education after he left Garbally is also relevant to his role as politician and minister. He studied history at University College Dublin (UCD) for his BA degree. He was apprenticed to an Ennis solicitor, J B Lynch, a relative of his father, and qualified in 1914.<sup>14</sup> When asked why he had chosen the law as a career rather than farming which he loved, his daughter Bridget suggested three reasons. Firstly, farming did not offer sufficient prospects for a clever young man. Secondly, his father had had legal

qualifications which he used in his work with the Land Commission while still managing to work the farm in Kilrickle. Thirdly, both the Hogans and the Glennons regarded university education as the norm. Hogan's mother and her three sisters had been educated in a convent in Belgium and had attended the Sorbonne in Paris. Entering a profession was not therefore regarded as an unusual step to take. On a more practical level Patrick was the eldest son and there was a large family to be educated.<sup>15</sup>

However, it is not easy to say to what extent his education shaped his ideas or, if it did, what affect it had on him as a politician. It is tempting to speculate that his interest in history gave him a broader perspective on Irish national issues, which would have led him to set them in a global context. However, it is possible, if not highly likely, that those teaching and studying history in the early 1900s would have been most concerned with nationalist interpretations of Ireland's history, and would not, therefore, have been geared towards viewing its place in the world other than from the point of view of Ireland's unequal struggle with Britain over seven centuries. His pragmatic attitude towards Britain and the commonwealth when he was a minister suggests that his brain, 'packed with ice' in the words of one obituarist, had not been overly influenced by the nationalist analysis of Ireland's past.<sup>16</sup> He appears to have accepted the realities of Ireland's close economic and political links with Britain after 1922, and wanted Ireland to gain the maximum advantage from these in the future.

[Hogan] was one of the Irish Free State politicians who never made any secret of his belief that Ireland's future lay within the framework of the British

Commonwealth and all his policies as Minister for Agriculture and as a "political" statesman were directed towards that end <sup>17</sup>

His personal appraisal of Ireland's history combined with the received wisdom on British/Irish relations may have been instrumental in producing in him a strange dichotomy. This made his public utterances on dealings with Britain appear neutral and unencumbered with anti-British rhetoric while in private his opinions on 'England' and the 'English' conformed more closely to those of the stereotypical Irish nationalist. In early June 1922 he told his aunt that he was amused at

the general disgust in England over the [election] pact. We should have fought each other, that was the traditional and conventional thing to do. In fact we had no right to choose any other course. It would have been so nice for the English to come in to make peace and whatever else they could 'make' out of it.

They have great pity for the poor Orangemen. Certainly the English are cynical hypocrites. At the same time we are damn fools or at least some of us are. Some of our soft-headed people thought they could play the fool here forgetting that England was simply waiting her opportunity. However we will teach the Orangemen manners yet. They are making frantic efforts to break the treaty knowing that if the treaty gets working, they are finished <sup>18</sup>

Nor did his opinion of England alter dramatically over the years. In 1931 in another letter to his aunt he was sceptical of Gandhi's chances of victory over the British in India, writing that the

English are never really dangerous until they appear to surrender. Divide and conquer sums up what has happened. England is in India in her own (England's) interest but if she cleared out India would go to bits.<sup>19</sup>

His more benign public attitude towards Britain may reflect a belief that nationalism based only on aspirations and not on reality would produce the sort of results which would not lead to economic independence. This may account for the dichotomy. On the one hand he wanted an independent Ireland, on the other he realised that that was impossible without the British market for Ireland's agricultural exports. It may also account for his irritation, throughout his career, with those who over-emphasised the 'fighting records' of Irish politicians, regarding them as an irrelevance in political debate. However, he was never allowed to forget the period in Irish history when such records were established. This was particularly so after Fianna Fail entered the Dail in 1927. In one bruising encounter between Hogan and the opposition, when he was as guilty of resurrecting the past as any other deputy, he showed that he had not lost his sense of humour or his disdain for the Fianna Fail reverence for 'records'. When Patrick Little of Fianna Fail appealed to the Ceann Comhairle about the Minister for Agriculture going back over what someone had done or not done in the struggle against the British, Hogan responded 'surely I am entitled to that occasionally. I object to being barred out entirely'.<sup>20</sup>

Hogan's antagonism towards the raking up of what people had or had not done during the 'troubles' probably sprang from his knowledge of how large a part chance could play in the events of that time. With characteristic candour he contended that he had been arrested and interned in Ballykinlar camp in 1921 entirely in error. In response to a questioner at a meeting who wanted to know what sort of a record he had, Hogan said

'What's wrong with this country is we have too many people with records. Behold a man without a record! I was arrested by the British but that was a mistake. I am a man without a record. What have you to say to that?'

The British probably intended to arrest one of his brothers, both of whom were actively involved in the Anglo-Irish war. The fact that he was detained was nevertheless propitious for him politically as it gave him a 'record'. During the same exchange he responded to Gerry Boland's jibe that he had been trying to 'back a winner in 1921' with the question 'where were you? [at that time] I think you were the same as myself, fooling around Ballykmlar. These are the people who talk loudly.' His efforts to deflate those who paraded their heroic pasts by making little of his own efforts cannot have won him many friends amongst those who had built their political careers by broadcasting their patriotic exploits.<sup>21</sup>

Hogan's ability as a clear, decisive and often witty debater both inside and out of the Dail may owe something to his training as a solicitor.<sup>22</sup> His skill was most apparent during the passage of the Land Act, 1923, which was a complicated measure that required a good working knowledge of property law, the procedures of the Dail, and political dexterity to get it through the Seanad, which was composed, to a very large extent, of landowners who were not naturally predisposed to the compulsory transfer of their land.<sup>23</sup> His facility in

debate showed itself throughout his career and was particularly well used when he was dealing with agricultural legislation. His deep background knowledge of the measures he was introducing was obvious and his confidence in his own mastery of his brief expressed itself in his willingness to examine the merits of amendments proposed by opposition and government deputies alike. Hogan's confidence and competence when dealing with the business of his department are easy to assess from even a brief examination of Dail proceedings in which he was involved. He did not, however, suffer fools gladly. Without quoting large passages from Dail debates which would need to be set in context, it is difficult to give specific instances of his impatience with what he regarded as quibbles. But his parliamentary style, in the face of what he saw as irrelevant argument, was sharp, abrasive and sometimes sarcastic. Throughout the following chapters there will be ample examples to illustrate what the **Irish Independent** called his 'vigorous invective' <sup>24</sup>

Editorial comment in the **Irish Statesman** in June 1926 shows that his ability as an effective speaker was appreciated by his contemporaries. Referring to the way that one of his speeches in the Dail was reported, it said

Mr Hogan's speech on the vote for the Department of Lands and Agriculture was given a better show in the daily papers than the majority of statements of the kind, and this was due in a large degree to the Minister's masterly and compelling presentation of his case. If other members of the Dail could handle agricultural questions with the vividness and force of Mr Hogan, the subject would soon become more than a peg on which back benchers hang dreary platitudes <sup>25</sup>

Hogan had a rather off-beat sense of humour which seems to have been the product of his personality rather than something which he acquired from his education or background. There was a black tinge to it which is reflected in a letter to his English-based aunt in 1924 outlining the growing stability of the new state.

What did you think of our loan? Its unqualified success left a lot of our enemies here and in England speechless. It has about finished the Irregulars. I don't think we'll ever hear of them again. The country is, at the moment, painfully quiet - in fact dull. We are suffering from 'ennui'. Mr Dooley defines 'ennui' as 'having no one in the whole weary world whom you don't love'. That is the terrible fate that has overtaken us. We haven't got even Foot and Mouth Disease as yet - though I touch wood when I write this. If we are to judge by all the signs the variety theatre seems to have been shifted over to your side. It is about time. We are all very much interested here to see what your labour government will do.

(The loan which was mentioned was the first national loan raised by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in the winter of 1923. It was deemed a great success as it was oversubscribed in spite of the fact that the country was regarded as being in 'a disturbed state'. This observation was made by the Governor of the Bank of England during a meeting which J J McElhogg, of the Department of Finance, had with the 'Big Five' joint stock banks in London in May 1923 to discuss the loan. On 9th January 1924 Irish newspapers reported an article in **The Times**, under the headline 'Certainly Remarkable' 'It is certainly a remarkable achievement for the Irish Free State Loan to be raised to within a fraction of the price of the British 5 per cent war loan'. R F Foster says that the already

strong position of the Department of Finance was reinforced by ‘the Department’s spectacular success in floating the National Loan in 1923’<sup>26</sup>

When Hogan became Minister for Agriculture in 1922 he was only 31 years of age, and had been a TD for less than two years. He had been elected in 1921 as a Sinn Féin candidate for Galway, the constituency which he served for the following fifteen years. He had built up a thriving legal practice and had not yet married. Unlike some of his colleagues he had not been a local government representative, something which would have given him an insight into the workings of the bureaucratic mind. Of course he was not alone in lacking practical knowledge of politics or of running a government department. None of the other ministers had held office before 1922 apart from those who had served in the largely symbolic Dail ministry from 1919<sup>27</sup>. And, while there was a powerful tradition of constitutional politics in Ireland which stretched back to Daniel O’Connell, there was no tradition of being in government on which to draw. Nevertheless, his considerable natural talents proved an excellent substitute for prior experience.

Given that both he and his party lacked experience, how well did he run his department? There can be no direct answer to this question as there is no obvious yardstick against which his or any other minister’s career in office can be measured. Unfortunately for the researcher, there are no contemporary records of what senior civil servants thought of him or his methods. Nor are there diaries or memoirs written by the minister himself which might shed some light on how he perceived his role and how he thought he had filled it. There is a story that Hogan did keep a personal diary, supposed to have been left in the care of the solicitors Arthur Cox & Company, along with other personal documents. If

the diary did exist it has disappeared. Liam Cosgrave doubts that he did keep a diary. He never heard any reference being made to it when he stayed at Kilrickle, nor does he think that writing a diary or journal was in keeping with Hogan's spontaneous personality.<sup>28</sup> However, there are other ways of assessing his years in office which may prove to be more objective than the subjective views of his civil servants, his political peers or himself.

To attempt to do this the role of a minister has to be examined on several levels. First, he is a politician and has to be elected. This means that he has to please his voters which requires him to spend time and effort working for the interest of his constituents. This can create difficulties, especially if national and constituency interests do not coincide. How he balances these sometimes irreconcilable interests may determine whether or not he is re-elected and by what margin. His support at the ballot box may influence the second dimension of his role, that is, his position within the party hierarchy. Better than average support from the voters can enhance his reputation and give him greater clout when dealing with other members and ministers. Establishing friendships and alliances within the party makes his job of promoting the interests and legislation of his department less difficult. Third, he has to work with his civil servants to achieve the policy objectives to which the government is committed. Unless he is very able and energetic the enormity of the task of running a large department can overwhelm him and he can succumb to the temptation to leave it all to his officials. The difficulty of interrupting work which has been in progress in a department for many years and replacing it with something new should not be underestimated, especially when those operating the system regard themselves as the experts. He needs to be what civil servants describe as "a good minister", that is, able to get government support and money in order to achieve his political objectives. It is also

vital that a minister can devote himself wholeheartedly to his ministry O'Buachalla who looked at the careers of ministers of education since the foundation of the State points to Eoin McNeill's absence from his department attending meetings of the Boundary Commission which 'diminished his direct involvement with educational policy' Therefore Hogan's dedication and expertise must have put him into the 'good minister' category <sup>29</sup>

The fourth area concerns public perceptions of his ability and achievements How a minister is seen by the public can affect the preceding three areas Performing well in the Dail has repercussions beyond the chamber itself To maintain his prestige in the party a minister must be seen to outwit the opposition and present the government's case in a favourable light If this can be done with humour and flair, so much the better, as ministers' replies and statements often form the bulk of political reportage in the press Bearing in mind that it is through such reports that the vast majority of the electorate gain their impressions of politicians, it is easy to see that a minister who can come up with pithy retorts will make the headlines more often than one who is lugubrious and dull Therefore, in the Dail a combination of wit and competence is often a winning one Public perceptions can also be influenced through contacts with groups interested in the areas under his control Meeting with these groups to explain proposed legislation and policy changes can often defuse potentially troublesome confrontations and eliminate unnecessary public criticism

The reverse is also true A minister may be a good constituency man, be respected by his fellow party members and have good relations with his civil servants, but if his public appearances and utterances give the impression of incompetence his image may be

damaged. Without the support of the electorate, which depends to a large extent on how he is seen to perform in public and how he is reported in the media, the fruits of his efforts to become a force within the government can be seriously damaged.

It could be argued that none of the considerations which were to become so important in later years were sufficiently established in the 1920s and 1930s to have played a leading role in choosing government ministers in either of the two major parties. However there was one characteristic common to those who made up the top political elites in post-independence governments in Ireland, their activities in either Sinn Féin or the IRA during the Anglo-Irish war. Therefore, it was this criterion rather than the more prosaic political considerations which grew in importance over the years that followed which at that time dominated the selection of the first generation of political leaders. Hogan's association with Sinn Féin and his connection with the IRA and IRB through his brothers, would have helped his advancement in Irish politics whatever his personal views on their relevance were. He made his contempt for those who harped on about 'records' perfectly clear in the Dáil. He, however, like the rest of his contemporaries could not divorce himself completely from the consequences of the previous six years. It is very likely that Hogan would not have achieved his prominent position in the politics of early independent Ireland without the associations which he so often discounted. **The Irish Bulletin** of June 1921 gave a list of all the republican members of the Dáil who were imprisoned.

Of the 130 Republican members

112 had served one term of imprisonment,

78 of these had been imprisoned twice,

41 had been imprisoned three times

18	"	"	"	four times
8	"	"	"	five times
3	"	"	"	seven times
2	"	"	"	eight times

These figures bear out how important active involvement in the independence movement was for a prospective TD <sup>30</sup>

## II

The unsettled state of the country in 1922 made the success of building up the institutions of the state crucial to its survival. Therefore the influence of the group of individuals who set the tone and ethos of government cannot be overestimated. The kind of lucky circumstance that had men of administrative ability in charge of the departments of state from the beginning merits consideration. This was especially true when the pressures which must have existed to reward the minority who had been actively involved in the upheavals of the previous six years are taken into account. Some of this pressure may, however, have been relieved because a good proportion of that minority had cut themselves off from the institutions of the state through their support for Sinn Féin and its policy of abstention from the Dail. The temptation to defuse difficulties during the civil war by being lenient with

those who committed crimes against the state must have been great since many of the perpetrators were old colleagues and comrades in arms. O'Higgins in his role as Minister for Home Affairs had no difficulty in deciding where his sympathies lay in January 1923

Only a small proportion of it [lawlessness] is due to genuine dissatisfaction with the Treaty. A good deal of it is due to reaction from the high standards which prevailed rather generally during the conflict with the British and to the idea that everyone who helped, either militarily or politically in that conflict is entitled to a parasitical millennium. Leavened with some small amount of idealism and fanaticism, there is a great deal of greed and envy and lust and drunkenness and irresponsibility. We are dealing with anarchy under cover of a political banner.<sup>31</sup>

After careful analysis of the situation he summed it up crisply: 'we must kill the active Irregular, tackle the passive Irregular, make friends with the rest'. This was to be done by putting 'our thirty thousand armed servants to work on the thing that matters most'.<sup>32</sup>

Hogan wholeheartedly endorsed O'Higgins's conclusions and supported the Enforcement of Law (Occasional Powers) Act, 1923, and the Public Safety Act, 1923, in the Dail.<sup>33</sup> As the minister responsible for Lands he was faced with compelling evidence of the need to counteract lawbreakers in the wake of the civil war: thousands of holdings had been illegally seized throughout the country. The reluctance of the military and of the Minister for Defence, Richard Mulcahy to use troops to combat such seizures revived deep divisions in the government early in 1923, divisions which never healed and which came to a head at the time of the army crisis in 1924. The Special Infantry Corps which was set up in

March 1923 specifically to deal with the threat which agrarian crime was posing throughout the country came about partly at the instigation of Hogan. In December 1922 officers at the highest level in the army had suggested that the Minister for Agriculture should deal with agrarian disputes. In January the Special Military Corps for the assistance of the civil authorities was suggested by Hogan and provisionally approved. In April 1923 he pointed to the success they had achieved in Galway which prior to the advent of the "Special Columns" as they became known, had been 'the worst county in Ireland from the point of view of agrarian outrage'. He wanted therefore to widen the limit the brief of the Special Columns to cover the whole country in order to stamp out agrarian crime before he introduced his land bill. However, there is some evidence that during the Army Mutiny the resolve to enforce the law rigorously, which became the hallmark of Cumann na nGaelheal governments, weakened. The law was used in an unusually ambivalent way because as Hogan put it 'they [the mutineers] could not be treated as mutineers would be treated in any other army'. This was done, bearing in mind the extraordinary circumstances which then existed in the army, in an attempt to prevent another outbreak of serious civil unrest <sup>34</sup>

Hogan's responsibility for lands led him to support the Enforcement of Law (Occasional Powers) Act 1923 which allowed for the seizure of cattle and other property from farmers by the sheriff with the assistance of the army in order to discharge debts. When critics suggested that this would increase tension in areas where there was already instances of agrarian crime Hogan remained sanguine. He did not anticipate any problems being caused by tenants with rent arrears, neither would he consider interfering with decisions made by the courts relating to judgement on farmers for unpaid debts.

### III

One of the earliest crises to test the Cumann na nGaedheal government can also be traced to the Anglo-Irish war the so-called 'army mutiny'. By failing to sanction the actions of the IRA during the war the Dail established a precedent which plagued the government until it came to a head in 1924. The autonomy enjoyed by some officers and men led them to look within their own ranks for solutions to their problems rather than to the Dail.<sup>35</sup> The more immediate cause of the discontent was the massive demobilisation which was taking place as an inevitable consequence of the ending of the civil war. It is not difficult to understand why men who were employed by the army did not relish the prospect of losing their jobs when there was little hope of getting any other work once they had been dismissed. These feelings were heightened, particularly amongst the officers, by increased recruitment of men who had served in the British army. Their practical skills and experience were regarded as necessary to increase the efficiency of the army once the civil war had ended in 1923. The mutiny, which was occasioned by this discontent, was serious enough to cause the resignation of Joseph McGrath, Minister for Industry and Commerce and force Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence, to pre-empt a demand for his resignation by resigning himself.<sup>36</sup>

Hogan was not actively involved in the affair. He did, however, make a statement in the Dail during the crisis denouncing the actions of those who had taken part. His role was that of supporter of O'Higgins. He was asked, as a result, to appear before the committee of inquiry set up to look into the debacle, in order to explain where he had received the information on which he based his conclusions.<sup>37</sup> Hogan read out an explanation of the

statement he had made to the Dail in response to this request before the Army Committee of Inquiry

His appearance before the inquiry offers a rare opportunity to see him in a public setting with his closest friend Kevin O'Higgins and his brother James Hogan, both of whom were influential figures in his life. Kevin O'Higgins was involved because he was Minister for Home Affairs and therefore concerned because of the law and order implications. He was also acting for President Cosgrave who was ill at the time. James had been asked to give evidence because he had been a high ranking officer in the army.<sup>38</sup> He had been aware of the decline in morale amongst the officers and men and had been asked by the government to suggest ways 'for the improvement of the army' and how it could be brought about.<sup>39</sup>

The evidence which Hogan himself gave added little to the inquiry. It contained very few concrete facts and was based mainly on hearsay, conjecture and impressions.<sup>40</sup> When questioned about how he knew that the IRB had been revived in the army he said that he had 'sensed' there were things happening and that 'the rumours were about for five or six months'. When he was criticised by a member of the committee for giving evidence about sensing things and talking about persistent rumours he explained that by their nature secret societies (the Old IRA and the revived IRB who had participated in the crisis in the army) were secret. Therefore, to give factual evidence about secret societies would be virtually impossible. However the similarity of the views expressed by Hogan, his brother James and O'Higgins is noteworthy. O'Higgins and James Hogan put forward carefully argued statements and answered questions on the army and its allegiance with the ease which came from long and considered analysis of the subject. While Hogan was not quite at home in

this area he was not, however, intimidated by the questioners, and was confident, like the others, of where the loyalty of the army should lie. When counsel for Richard Mulcahy, stated that 'the faction which we call the IRB never attempted mutiny or made any threat to disobey the Government', he replied

reviving the IRB was mutiny. Anything that weakens the allegiance that the soldier bears to the Government is mutiny and all the more serious if done officially.<sup>41</sup>

The moralistic tone of statements made by Hogan and O'Higgins which were critical of those who were involved in the crisis masks another less glorious aspect of the affair. O'Higgins with Hogan's help was able through skilful manipulation of the events surrounding the crisis to remove Mulcahy from the executive council and discredited him temporarily by denouncing him as a bad democrat. Mulcahy, one of the heroes of the Anglo-Irish war, had a significant national and military following and was consequently a threat to whatever hopes O'Higgins might have had of succeeding Cosgrave as president. Given Hogan's antipathy to the use of fighting records as a criterion for political preferment, it is easy to see why he allied himself with O'Higgins against Mulcahy on this occasion.<sup>42</sup>

Hogan's willingness throughout his ministerial career to consider pragmatic solutions to complex problems is mirrored by his brother's advice to the Inquiry. In his evidence to the Inquiry James described the difficulties surrounding demobilisation which had precipitated the crisis.

nobody has strictly the right to exploit the country's indebtedness to them and equally past services do not give any person a plenary indulgence to behave just as they like for the rest of their days, but with calm illogicality there are people who think they are privileged by reason of past services, and no matter how illogical such a frame of mind may be it is one that must be faced <sup>43</sup>

Even though he did not agree with the 'illogicality' of those concerned he accepted that something had to be done to prevent an even more dangerous situation developing. His suggestion was to give pensions to those who 'deserved' them. He reasoned that 'properly winnowed the number of pensions could not be so very considerable',<sup>44</sup> but could help detach the 'sensible elements from the Implacable within the Tobin organisation [the Old IRA]'<sup>45</sup> and so weaken support for the mutiny.

Hogan took a similar line when confronted with the clamour for rates relief on agricultural land in 1924. He accepted that some form of relief was unavoidable even though he did not believe in the efficacy of subsidies of any kind. Bowing to the inevitable, like his brother, he presented a scheme to the government designed to cause the least expense to the exchequer while giving assistance to the farmers who were under severe financial strain.<sup>46</sup> The same no-nonsense approach was used. Both were flexible in their response to difficult and complex problems. They discounted their natural reactions in order to defuse situations which had the potential to cause long term damage to the stability of the state. The pragmatism which Hogan exhibited in agreeing to give rates relief and later in the decade in allowing limited subsidies on agricultural produce were also important in ensuring that no unnecessary risks were taken with the loyalty of the farmers.

The lack of experience of ministers was noted at the time, as was their courage. Their capacity for making difficult decisions is reflected in qualified praise from their admirers.

Members of the Government have proved themselves good men to go tiger-hunting with, but as yet they have few of the parlour tricks of the professional politician, and their handling of the Dail has been marked by bad lapses both of tact and judgement.

This after what could be regarded the most consummate piece of chicanery by O'Higgins and his allies, who first condemned, then condoned, then - when Mulcahy and his generals had finally crushed it - again condemned the mutiny, though blaming Mulcahy for it. However, it is worth noting that government efforts to suppress and defuse discontent in the army worked even if its policy was not always clear or its members united.<sup>47</sup>

#### IV

Hogan's ministry was unusual. He, while holding a very important portfolio, was not a member of the cabinet but was an extern minister. Extern ministers were a constitutional experiment. The original idea behind the innovation was a Dail where there would be no rigid parties and a great deal of free voting; it was meant to 'weaken collective responsibility, enhance individual responsibility and subdue party'. But once a party system along British lines emerged the extern ministers rapidly became superfluous. The experiment was virtually abandoned after a constitutional amendment in 1927 and from 1928 onwards no more were appointed.<sup>48</sup> The supposed freedom from party constraints and direct accountability to the Dail which could vote them out of office was meant, in the case

of agriculture, to achieve a consensus amongst the farming interests and remove it from the arena of party politics. To a large extent consensus already existed even though there were obvious differences between the concerns of the large, medium and small farmers. This was evident in the way that legislation relating to the breeding of livestock, credit for farmers and regulations concerning standards for agricultural exports were debated both before and after the abstentionists took their seats. The weakening of the consensus towards the end of the 1920s was caused to a very large extent by external economic conditions. The fall in agricultural prices coupled with increased competition on the British market shook the confidence of many farmers. Fianna Fail supported the policy of protectionism, subsidies for cereal growers, increased rates relief on agricultural land, and the refusal to continue paying land annuities to Britain. These policies won the support of a large number of small farmers who did not see their immediate interest lying in the export market.

The part Hogan played in supporting legislation on law and order and his close alliance with Kevin O'Higgins must have reinforced his position within the ruling group of the party and so enhanced his ministerial status. This would have helped him when he was looking for support for his less than dramatic agricultural legislation. In the hands of a minister with limited ability and determination it could have been denied the time necessary to see it through the Oireachtas when there were so many other areas demanding attention. Because he was a central figure in the government and because of the stress he laid on the place of agriculture in the economy of Ireland, it must have been easier for other ministers to see these bills as mainstream issues and therefore worthy of being given priority.

Not everybody was convinced that agricultural legislation was given the attention it deserved. An editorial in the **Irish Statesman** in 1924 put forward the view that agricultural bills should have 'precedence over five sixths of the measures discussed in the Dail'. It believed that it was vital to deal with agriculture first because all other problems were fed by the economic trouble which in turn was caused by problems in agriculture. The **Irish Statesman** almost always gave Hogan a good press. However, they were moved to call on him to exert his independence as an external minister elected by the members of the Dail, if the executive council did not give him the finance or facilities which he needed to implement the recommendations of the commission on agriculture. They put their case strongly.

we have waited for a long time for measures absolutely necessary to secure efficient agricultural production and marketing. One would hardly gather from the legislation this year that this was a country entirely dependent upon agricultural enterprise.<sup>50</sup>

Although there was some criticism of the tardiness of agricultural legislation the measures he initiated were, at a time of tension and uncertainty, very positive in nature. The land act of 1923, usually referred to as the 'Hogan Act', was instrumental in completing the transfer of land ownership which had begun in the 1880s. His work in agriculture was equally, if not more, important. And, while the legislation which he guided through the Oireachtas in this area can be divided into several categories, all were concerned in some way with improving the image of Irish agriculture, especially in export markets. Marketing, a term in common use to-day, was at the heart of his efforts on behalf of the agriculture industry. He wanted to improve the quality and standard of produce which was sold,

particularly on the British market. Giving purchasers what they wanted was the best way, in his opinion, to secure good prices for the farmer.<sup>51</sup>

Hogan's instincts, as a conservative, were to encourage self-help and to minimise state intervention. But he was well aware that self-help and voluntary efforts had not been effective in the past and that Irish goods were often regarded as sub-standard, especially in Britain. He made this abundantly clear in the Dail

...failing the efforts of the farmers' organisations it was necessary for the State to step in to do work which the Irish farmers should be doing for themselves.<sup>52</sup>

He was forced to bring in legislation in key areas of agriculture, much as quality control of export produce and regulations to improve the livestock breeding, because it was evident that the department's voluntary schemes had failed.

Hogan's attitude to farming was based on the conviction that it was a business which would benefit from investment. He condemned the point of view of farmers who would not improve their farming practices because it meant spending money. It was his belief that

the sooner they [got] away from that point of view, look[ed] at their business rationally as business men, and [thought] of their business along the lines of getting a good return for the money spent, the better. Deputies who [had] the interest of the farmers at heart should [have] endeavour[ed] to turn their point of view in that direction - to show that money well spent and economically spent, after full

consideration, may be well worth spending and may be far better for their business than keeping that money in their pockets <sup>53</sup>

He attempted through legislation to give the farmers access to much needed capital in order that they could put his policies into practice The Agricultural Credit Act 1927 and subsequent amending legislation promoted the idea of farmers borrowing money to better their holdings, without the necessity of having to produce security at the level which the banks demanded <sup>54</sup> Facilitating credit to farmers was very much in keeping with Hogan's philosophy of self-help Under the scheme farmers borrowed money instead of receiving grants which would not necessarily have given them the incentive to increase production they got from the need to repay their loans The scheme was, therefore, a way of giving farmers the opportunity to work their farms in a business like way

Of indirect assistance, and of no less importance to agriculture as a whole, was his creation of faculties of agricultural science in both University College Dublin (UCD) and University College Cork (UCC) There were already institutions dealing with agricultural education and research such as Albert College in Glasnevin, and the College of Science in Dublin However, the creation of separate university faculties attached to their work a status it had previously lacked <sup>55</sup> Similarly, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1931, 'an act to make provision for the registration and control of veterinary surgeons', <sup>56</sup> showed that there was a wish to bring all branches of agriculture and its ancillary areas under some sort of regulation, however much Hogan was devoted to the idea of self-regulation and self-help

Hogan showed himself capable of understanding and allowing for the difficulties which large scale development of agricultural industries could pose. He was aware that private investors were not going to take risks in areas which had no history of success in Ireland. In 1925 an act was passed which allowed subsidies to be paid on sugar beet grown in Ireland in order to establish a domestic beet sugar industry. It was a joint effort at ministerial level, the result of an interdepartmental committee set up in September 1925 to consider the subject of sugar production in Ireland.<sup>57</sup> Blythe, the Minister for Finance, introduced the bill, but Hogan was in charge of its progress from the second reading. The policy of subsidising the development of the new sugar processing industry is interesting because it showed that the state had accepted the necessity to supply financial assistance to specific industries in special circumstances without any serious debate on the principle involved. The industry concerned had recently been introduced in Britain and was proving successful. The special circumstance was the need to attract an industrialist with the expertise and experience to build and to operate the first sugar factory because there was no body or group in Ireland capable of undertaking the task in 1925. The complexity of the venture is shown by the need to involve three departments in the negotiations.

Hogan did not see this type of funding and government involvement as an alternative to private enterprise. Rather, he called it as an experiment, 'pioneering' work. He did not want it to be regarded as a way of increasing employment or tillage, or even a good investment. 'I want to indicate, if I can, how we hope that this business will become self supporting in the long run'. It is clear that he did not want the bill to be thought of as a precedent. The irony of the free trade party speaking in favour of such a measure was not lost on Thomas Johnson, the Labour leader. In response to P. J. Egan's welcome for the

bill, which he compared to the Shannon Scheme, Johnson quipped ‘even though it is a further departure from Free Trade?’<sup>58</sup>

Sugar is a classic example of how the state became involved in manufacturing industry and has remained so (though the sugar industry was privatised in 1991). It shows the limits of the free trade ethic in a country which did not have either the confidence or the tradition of investing in high risk or large domestic projects. It also illustrates how ministers, no matter how wedded to a principle, in Hogan’s case free trade, could not ignore the economic realities which existed and had to compromise for practical reasons. But it is interesting to note that no matter how many compromises Hogan had to make in the years which followed, he always tried to give his decisions a free trade complexion and never quite let go of his belief in his overall agricultural policy, which put simply meant keeping prices and taxation low in order to keep the farmers’ production costs down so that they could compete successfully in the export market.

Hogan found rates relief difficult to reconcile with his views on agriculture and the economy as a whole. The necessity for some assistance for farmers was accepted as early as 1924, with the Local Government (Rates on Agricultural Land) Act. Hogan understood that the conditions which prevailed in 1924, that is the immediate rates arrears owed by farmers plus the build up of arrears carried forward, were caused to a great extent by the Anglo-Irish war and the ‘rebellion of 1922\23’<sup>59</sup>. Throughout the remainder of the decade it continued to be a live issue. It grew in importance with the deteriorating international economic situation in 1929 which put further pressure on farmers’ incomes, until with the

assistance of the Fianna Fail opposition, it assumed a position at the centre of the political stage<sup>60</sup>

Hogan's conversion to the idea of giving the farmers some relief on agricultural rates came in 1924, before he was faced with a powerful opposition in the Dail. It is an early indication that he was not completely doctrinaire and could be flexible within the limits of the overall policy of free trade. It is unlikely that he was pandering to the farmers when he acknowledged their case, as he was never accused even by his fiercest opponents of being a man who courted popularity. Indeed he was aware that his actions were not always politic. Donal O'Sullivan, the first clerk of the Seanad, in his book **The Irish Free State and its Senate**, an interesting though highly partisan account of the first decade of independent government, says Hogan 'was a realist, who consistently preached the value and necessity of hard work, and disdained to flatter the multitude', and was, therefore, very critical of those who did. Into that category he [Hogan] put de Valera and the Fianna Fail party, claiming, on the defeat of Cumann na nGaedheal in 1932, that 'cant has beaten us but the people are sound'

Between Fianna Fail and such a man [Hogan] there could be no bridge of understanding. They put the soul of Ireland first, he held the immediate need was to put our people on their feet financially. Fianna Fail and Hogan hardly spoke the same language.<sup>61</sup>

Hogan's dislike and distrust of de Valera, which he did nothing to conceal, was public knowledge. In private he referred to him as 'a criminal lunatic' <sup>62</sup>. When alluding to his role in the events which led to the civil war he said

I listened to Deputy de Valera in these debates. Not once, but twice and three times, he suggested that unless they got their way on these bills trouble would ensue. Of course he did not say that he was going to bring it about. He never does and when I compare these statements with another of his on another occasion, when I used to hear day after day dinned into my ears "Is your Treaty worth civil war?" and other statements which I will not probe now, it does make me think that there is one thing I am quite sure of anyway, and that is that when it is all over again he will be looking at it through a wall of glass <sup>63</sup>.

Although his contempt for Fianna Fail and its leader was evident he did not cease to make clear to them his belief in the democratic process which could put them in power. After suggesting that the opposition had attempted to impose a dictatorship in 1922 he went on to say that 'the will of the people had been well expressed in the last six or seven years', continuing

there is going to be only one dictatorship in this country, and that is the dictatorship of the majority - do not misunderstand me when I use the word 'dictatorship', do not play on the word, it has been used - and that dictatorship of the majority must prevail and there must be no question of whether the majority is made up of people who have a national outlook or who have not, or who have this, that, or the other

There is only one doctrine that must apply to those people, and that is that they be Irish people <sup>64</sup>

And, even more directly, he said

but supposing you do get a majority, I am absolutely satisfied You are then the majority party It means that you are then the masters of this country You will find nobody on your flank I will be a good looker-on <sup>65</sup>

It is ironic that these and other ringing declarations of support for the institutions of democracy were made during a series of debates which related to controversial amendments to the constitution which the opposition denounced as an attack on 'the great safeguard which minorities have under this constitution' It is pertinent to ask to what extent those who were strongly supporting democracy on both sides of the Dail in 1928 were committed to all its ramifications Hogan at least took a practical line when he said that 'you have only one safeguard in this country and that is the character of the people, and the character of the Deputies', while Fianna Fail who had strongly defended the articles which were being amended made no attempt to restore 'the great safeguard' of minorities when they had the opportunity after the election of 1932 The Round Table remarked wickedly that

all this pother comes from allowing our constitution to be drafted by a committee of doctrinaire lawyers and professors who seem to have searched the world for all

the latest democratic stunts quite regardless of whether they were suitable for the peculiar genius of our people <sup>66</sup>

Hogan's active participation in the democratic process waned when he was no longer a minister. His appearances in the Dail became rare although he was still able to command an attentive house when he spoke on the issues with which he was most closely associated: agriculture and land. His frequent absences from the Dail may have been partly because he was a solicitor in a large practice in the west of Ireland, but also because he was 'sick at heart and thoroughly disillusioned' <sup>67</sup>. It is, furthermore, likely that the role of an opposition TD, even on the front bench, was not challenging enough for someone who had been so energetically engaged at such a high level for a decade <sup>68</sup>.

## V

One area of Hogan's life which invites investigation is his attitude to the church and more particularly to the catholic hierarchy. His private beliefs would not have been relevant but his public acquiescence with the church in matters of morality could have been important. In a government 'which was willing to use the power of the State to protect Catholic moral values' it would be useful to know where Hogan stood in relation to other members of the government, like Cosgrave and O'Higgins, whom Whyte says were known as 'fervent catholics' <sup>69</sup>. There does not appear to be any public record of Hogan criticising the hierarchy. This is hardly surprising, even for someone as outspoken as Hogan, if he wanted to remain in the mainstream of politics in Ireland where 'by the late twenties, in the opinion of some observers, there was a revival of this influence [the Catholic church]' <sup>68</sup>. There is a hint in a letter to his aunt that he is less than enamoured with church leaders.

I'll begin to lose all respect for the Church if the Pope is condemning boxing I wonder if he condemned bull-fighting which is a cruel, decadent, form of sport Boxing is a fine masculine harmless sport People are never really hurt at boxing I know because I have seen a great many first-class fights

The bishops here issued a pastoral recently they are very concerned about short skirts, they don't seem nearly so concerned about perjury or murder, but there you are

I think the Pope was quite right to condemn the Actione [sic] Francaise That was an attempt by a minority to bring about a revolution by violent means I have always been taught that that is immoral Moreover, I believe that it will increase the influence of the Catholic church in France The church has never lost influence by taking a definite line, on the contrary they have lost influence by attempting to be on both sides of everything <sup>70</sup>

This letter is quite revealing in several ways The first is the open way he criticises the Irish bishops and to a lesser extent the Pope in a letter to his aunt, a nun This suggests that he took for granted a degree of broad-mindedness on the part of his aunt which is rather surprising given her age - she was in her late fifties - and her calling Perhaps this gives a clue how he developed his independent and highly individual personality which gave his career its distinctive style It may also show why he had such a strong dislike of cant and humbug His openness with Mere Wilfreda suggests that he came from a background where there were few restriction on what was discussed and with whom <sup>71</sup> The

letter also suggests his disenchantment with the church was not something which had happened recently

Hogan's criticism of the bishops was not unconnected with the general election which had recently taken place. He would have wanted the church to come out strongly in favour of Cumann na Gaedheal, or at least to condemn Fianna Fail. His comment about the church needing to take a definite line rather than attempting to remain neutral seems to confirm Whyte's contention that

with the end of the Civil War, and the adoption of constitutional politics by most of the defeated republicans, it became possible for the hierarchy to take an attitude of neutrality between the two main parties in the state, and the government could no longer count so confidently on the bishops' good will. And as the decade went on, it [the government] needed support increasingly from whatever quarter it came 72

Hogan's criticisms were based more on political rather than theological considerations and as a result say very little about his personal faith which is, of course, not relevant to this thesis. But it would be interesting to know if they were widely shared within the government and if other members voiced them as frankly as Hogan when speaking to close colleagues

There is one issue on which he took a line which was different from the majority of his government and opposition colleagues: that was censorship of publications. Michael Adams in his work on Irish censorship says the view taken by proponents of censorship: 'The

Vigilance Association and other persons and groups represented a large body of opinion within the country' The campaign for a bill was accelerated by the intervention of the Catholic bishops O'Higgins gave their suggestions a sympathetic hearing and a "Committee on Evil Literature" was set up in 1925 to examine the matter The Bill which resulted was 'a fair reflection of its report' By the time it was produced, deputies on both sides of the house accepted the principle of the bill but were concerned about the way it was to be implemented However, by this time the adamantyne O'Higgins had been succeeded as Minister for Justice by the less assured James Fitzgerald Kennedy Significant changes were made Despite his reservations the section which proposed setting up local associations to vet periodicals was dropped and it was left to individuals to complain if they thought the law had been broken <sup>73</sup>

During the second reading of the Censorship of Publications Bill, 1928, Hogan criticised some of its provisions However his lack of support was not necessarily based on a belief that there should be no censorship but rather on the belief that it would be impossible to implement He cites three reasons one, that censorship would lead to a 'double circulation of these books in this country', two, 'our proximity to a neighbouring country', and three, the likelihood that he would 'be extremely difficult to get anyone in this country fit to censor books' <sup>74</sup>

The debate also gave him a chance to lash out at those on all sides of the Dail who indulged in double standards Referring to public morality other than sexual morality he said

I listened to the debate very carefully We were all very virtuous and anxious to make the other fellow virtuous, and I presume having finished the debate, having made honest men of ourselves so to speak, we will revert and begin to discuss nice little subtleties whether commandeering is a proper word for robbery or theft, and I suppose the next time we are taking the oath we will push the Bible two feet away, and the next time under certain conditions it may be the proper course under certain conditions to embezzle the money lent All these are questions of public morality and as the Bill stands at present all these come within the scope of the Bill

He continued

I am quite clear that Thomas or Pat Murphy, who live anywhere between Donegal and Cork, is not likely to read either Balzac or Aristophanes even in translation, but unfortunately he is likely to read the publications where moralities I have mentioned are expounded, and unfortunately he understands them and all the suggestions and innuendoes I am anxious to limit this Bill as much as possible, for this reason only, that I think the Censorship Bill should be limited as much as possible The more it is limited the better I want to say that it is my settled opinion that there has been more harm done during the last four or five years by the sort of moral poison I have mentioned than would be done by all the pornographic literature that would come from France or England within a hundred years <sup>75</sup>

While his position on censorship contains some ambiguities he did not adopt the usual stance of Irish politicians on sexual morality on this occasion. Nor does he appear to have had any fears about expressing his misgivings in public. It was described at the time as 'the most caustic and sensational speech' which was made by Hogan who 'rated the Pecksmffs in no uncertain manner and indicated that he at least had doubts about the Bill'. He was courageous to do so in a parliament where there was almost complete unanimity between both the government and the opposition on the issue. The only discordant note from the opposition was struck by Sean Lemass who was critical of the government because they 'ha[d] been too slow and too cautious in introducing a measure of this kind' <sup>76</sup>

Hogan's stand on censorship may have been instrumental in convincing the Minister for Justice reluctantly to take on board several changes to the bill. His position on censorship brings out another facet of his personality, his independence in matters of conscience. The proposed bill on censorship had been initiated by O'Higgins. However, this did not deter Hogan from speaking out and voting against it, even though he continued to revere his memory <sup>77</sup>

The easy and open way he corresponded with his aunt and lack of reference to anything of a religious nature in his letters indicates a religious man who could not be regarded as pious. His laconic account of his life in internment camp contrasts sharply with the most devotional tones of another detainee, who recalled how the men

had Mass every morning and the Blessed Sacrament always in the Camp. The Rosary was said in the huts every night, and many of the huts - perhaps all of them - were in time formally consecrated to the Sacred Heart <sup>78</sup>

Allied to his stand on censorship the evidence suggests that he could not be numbered amongst Cumann na nGaedheal's 'fervent catholics'

Hogan died tragically in a motor car accident in July 1936 when his car struck a bridge in Aughrim, Co Galway, late at night when he was returning home. He was forty-five years of age. He was mourned by his widow, four young daughters and a step-son. He left a prosperous law firm with branches in Ballinasloe, Ballygar, Athenry and Gort. His death also left a serious gap in the leadership of Cumann na nGaedheal. Cosgrave said on hearing of his death 'our best man is gone'. It was a loss which the party could ill afford in 1936. His death was greeted with regret even by the Fianna Fail party. De Valera, his most 'implacable opponent', paid him what the **Irish Independent** called 'a graceful tribute in the Dail'

Many of us differed profoundly from Deputy Hogan on matters of public policy, but I am sure that there is no member of the Dail who did not admire his courage and frankness in stating his views, his energy as an administrator, and his rare effectiveness in debate. His death is a loss, not merely to his party but to the house and to Irish public life.<sup>79</sup>

It is a measure of the esteem in which he was held that the government saw fit to adjourn the Dail because of the large number of deputies who wished to attend his funeral. It is, therefore, armed with the knowledge of how he was respected by his contemporaries, 'though he never was exactly popular, even in his own party',<sup>80</sup> and regarded as a national figure by the press at the time of his death that we shall look more closely at the policies

which caused Walter Elliott, the British minister for Agriculture from 1932 to 1936, to call him the greatest minister for Agriculture in the world. He was regarded by his friends as

a delightful and entertaining friend who in his private relations was just as outspoken and as free from cant as he was in his public capacity.

The late Ann McGilligan referred to him in sincerely affectionate terms. She described him as 'cynical' but at the same time 'lovely' and 'full of fun' and was delighted that he was at last getting the attention which she believed he deserved.<sup>81</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 "Congests" was a term used to describe small farmers who lived on uneconomic holdings in areas designated congested districts, these were situated mainly west of the Shannon and in the north and south west of Ireland. The congested districts were defined by Section 46 of the Land Act, 1909 as 'Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway, Kerry and the six rural districts of Ballyvaughan, Ennistymon, Kiltrush, Scariff, Tulla, Kildysart, in the County of Clare and the four rural districts of Bantry, Castletown, Schull and Skibbereen, in the County of Cork' **Report of the Irish Land Commission for the period from 1st. April, 1923 to 31st March, 1928, and for the prior period ended 31st. March, 1923 p 4**
- 2 In the report of Hogan's death he was referred to as 'son and nephew of popular Claremen' **The Clare Champion** 25 Jul 1936 Interview with Bridget Hogan O'Higgins in the family home at Kilrickle, 18 Mar 1993
- 3 John Joe Broderick, a publican in the village of Kilrickle, who knew Hogan very well, said that the Glennons had been comfortable publican-farmers. Monica Duffy, Hogan's eldest daughter, believes that the Glennons may have been protestants at one time, which she thinks may account for their being comparatively wealthy. Interview with John Joe Broderick in Kilrickle, 12 Oct 1989 Interview with Monica Duffy in her home in Kilbeggan, 12 Oct 1989

- 4 Patrick and Bridget were solicitors, James was Professor of History in UCC, and Michael was a regular officer in the Free State Army
- 5 Hogan's obituary in the **Sunday Independent** 19 Jul 1936 Louis J Walsh, **On my keeping and in theirs** (Dublin, 1921) p 73
- 6 The notebook contains newspaper cuttings of important speeches made by leading British and Irish politicians during the two 1910 British general election campaigns, including Asquith, Balfour, Churchill, Chamberlain, Lord Dunraven, Lloyd George, Birrell, Redmond, and Healy It is in the possession of Hogan's daughter, Monica Duffy Interview with John Joe Broderick, 12 Oct 1989
- 7 Interview with Bridget Hogan O'Higgins at Kilrickle, 18 Mar 1993 Tom Garvin,
- 8 'The 'Free-Staters' were represented in republican propaganda as puppets of London, and Fianna Fail leaders appear to have genuinely believed this' Tom Garvin, **The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics** (Dublin, 1981), p 158 See Michael Gallagher, **Electoral Support for Irish Political Parties 1927-1973** (London 1976), p 19
- 9 John Joe Broderick made numerous references to Hogan's natural and unpretentious manner which he had no doubt was genuine Interviewed 12 Oct 1989 Ann McGilligan told how he gave a red setter as a wedding gift to herself and her

husband The dog was young and wild and found no difficulty in jumping over the garden walls of their Landsdowne Road home and causing havoc by killing the fowl which were kept by the house-holders in their large back gardens in those days The dog had to go Mrs McGilligan gave the impression that this incident was typical of Hogan Indeed he did not seem to have had much luck with the dogs he gave as presents Una O'Higgins O'Malley, daughter of Kevin O'Higgins, told of how he gave her family a St Bernard puppy The St Bernard turned out to be a sheep dog, which caused great amusement This story had a happier outcome 'Ben' became a dearly loved family pet who remained with the family for more than fifteen years She also told of his attempts to annoy their rather stiff nanny He coached Maeve, the eldest O'Higgins child, to say when presented with a glass of milk at the Sunday lunch table 'I'll drink every bloody drop' Telephone interview with Mrs Ann McGilligan, 14 Jun 1989 Telephone interview with Mrs Una O'Higgins O'Malley, 20 Aug 1989

- 10 Interview with Bridget Hogan O'Higgins, 18 Mar 1993 Gallagher, **Electoral Support** p 10
- 11 A general consensus emerges from his obituaries which gives credence to this assertion Here is a selection of quotations 'no Irishman has ever hated cant as he did', and District Justice Cahall at Athenry Court who said that he was admired and respected by everybody 'because he was straightforward and open in all his dealings' **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936, 'A man who could not tolerate humbug', **The Irish Times** 16 Jul 1936 'He was a man who could not tolerate

humbug or hypocrisy, a man whose standards were the standards of realism and stark honesty of thought' Quoted in **The Irish Law Times and Solicitors' Journal** 25 Jul 1936 George O'Brien attributes to him the 'courage to be unpopular' in 'Patrick Hogan' **Studies** Vol 25 - 1936, p 354

- 12 Interview with Bridget Hogan O'Higgins, 18 Mar 1993
- 13 Interview with Liam Cosgrave, former Taoiseach and son of W T Cosgrave, 14 Jun 1993
- 14 His family are not sure in what year he graduated from UCD A request to UCD for information about the date was fruitless
- 15 Interview with Bridget Hogan O'Higgins, 18 Mar 1993
- 16 **The Times**, 16 Jul 1936
- 17 *ibid*
- 18 From a letter Hogan wrote to his aunt Mere Wilfreda on the 10 Jun 1922 She was a member of a religious order who was living in England when this letter was written She moved to a convent in Rome towards the end of the decade Hogan wrote to her about once a year After his death she returned the correspondence to his daughter Monica

- 19     **ibid** , 18 Apr 1931
- 20     **DD** vol 24, cols 1407 - 1422, 26 Jan 1928
- 21     **ibid**   **Sunday Independent** 19 Jul 1936
- 22     Terence de Vere White, **Kevin O'Higgins** (London, 1948)
- 23     'Sixteen of the thirty [senators nominated by the government] might be described as belonging to the class formerly known as Southern Unionists' Amongst their number were 'Lord Dunraven, Lord Mayo and Sir Hutcheson Poe' who 'had been members of the landlords' convention of 1903' Mr Jameson who 'was a leader of the Southern Unionists' Donal O'Sullivan, **The Irish Free State and Its Senate** (London, 1949), pp 90-1
- 24     **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936
- 25     **The Irish Statesman** 12 Jun 1926
- 26     Hogan to Mere Wilfreda, 9 Jan 1924 Foster, **Modern Ireland** pp 521-2
- 27     Cosgrave had been a member of the Dail cabinet and held the Local Government portfolio O'Higgins had been his vice minister outside the cabinet They did not have direct access to the administration, which was still controlled by Britain, and

could not, therefore, be regarded as having experience of running a department Farrell, **Chairman** p 18, suggests that Cosgrave was chosen because of his national record which stretched back before 1916 and his long experience in politics He was one of the earliest victors of the Sinn Fein by-elections and a member of the Dail from the outset His assessment differs from that of Andrews, who says that Cosgrave "had been chosen for the post for no better reason than he was the senior survivor amongst the Free Staters of the old pre-Treaty Cabinet" Andrews, **A Man of No Property** p 13

- 28 Interview with Liam Cosgrave, 14 Jun 1993
- 29 Eunan O'Halpin, "Policy Making", **Politics in the Republic of Ireland** (eds) Coakley and Gallagher, (Dublin, 1993)
- 30 **Irish Bulletin** Vol 5, No 20, 29 Jun 1921 Franciscan Archives, Sean McKeon Papers, CSD 93-5/20 Hogan was well aware that he owed his seat in Galway, at least initially, to his involvement with the events of the period He did not try to hide the fact In 1921 he said 'I happen to have been in Ballykinlar when the last election was fought - otherwise I suppose I would not be here ' 2nd Dail (Private Session) p 236, 17 Dec 1921 In 1927 the **Irish Statesman** reported that 'the spectacle of the mild and deprecating Mr Fitzgerald Kenny [Minister for Justice] being baited by a Fianna Fail member for his omission to qualify properly for his job by serving a term behind bars sent the Dail into fits of laughter **The Irish Statesman** 19 Nov 1927

31 O'Higgins to the executive council Memorandum of a conference held on 11 January 1923 'to discuss the present situation and the most effective means of dealing with the lawlessness prevailing throughout the country' Mulcahy Papers P7b\96 (7)-(9) Bew et al back up the connection between Irregularism and agrarian unrest

In May 1923 the defeated Republican forces dumped their arms Although the occasion of the split in the nationalist leadership was purely political ("the oath") there was clear evidence too that certain forms of agrarian radicalism were simultaneously defeated in Meath, Clare and Waterford pro-treaty forces physically repressed small farmers' and labourers' militancy

**The Dynamics of Irish Politics** Bew et al, (London, 1989), p 25 A contrary view is given by Emmett O'Connor in, **A Labour History of Waterford** (Waterford 1989) who says that 'the Waterford Farmers Association's inability to rely on military intervention was crucial to the strikes [Waterford farm labourers] relative success' p 171

32 O'Higgins to the executive council, 11 Jan 1923 Mulcahy Papers, P7b/96(7)-(9)

33 See chapter 5

- 34 Commandant General Murphy to the Commander in Chief, 20 Dec 1922, NA, Ddepartment of the Taoiseach [DT] G2\1 C1\13, Item (5) Executive Council Meeting 17 Jan 1923 G2\1 C1\31 Hogan to the President 7 Apr 1923, NA, [DT], S 3192 DD vol 6, 24 Mar 1924, col 2378
- 35 Maryann Gialanella Valuhs, **Almost a Rebellion. The Irish Army Mutiny of 1924** (Cork, 1985), p 19 This state of affairs had not gone unnoticed In 1922 ‘non-military politicians like Griffith or Kevin O’Higgins were demanding that the Army in every shape or form should be brought properly under civil control’ Lyons, **Ireland** p 457 ‘Mulcahy underestimated his civilian colleagues’ concern with the power the army had accrued during the civil war and, with the advent of peace, with their desire to vindicate the principle of civil supremacy’ Maryann Gialanella Valuhs, **Portrait of a Revolutionary** (Dublin, 1992) p 234
- 36 Lee, **Ireland** 1989, p 96
- 37 DD Vol 6, col 2371 - 2391, 26 Mar 1924
- 38 Hogan’s evidence to the army enquiry, 24 Apr 1924 Mulcahy Papers, P7\C\24
- 39 James Hogan resigned his temporary post as director of intelligence in August 1923 with the rank of Major-General He had been general officer in charge of inspection, a post from which he offered to resign in May because he was ‘dissatisfied with the appearance of general unrest and suspicion in certain places

in the army' Mulcahy Papers, P7\C\6 He held the chair of history in University College Cork from 1920 to 1963, and published many historical papers and two books, **Modern Democracy** (1941) and **Elections and Representation** (1945) He stood as a candidate in the by-election in Galway caused by the death of his brother in 1936 **The Round Table** gave an interesting insight into his campaign James wanted to 'outbid Mr de Valera for republican support' for a united Ireland He rejected the declaration of a republic for the Free State alone which would, he believed, make it impossible to realise an all-Ireland republic **The Round Table** Vol 105, December, 1936 He failed to win the seat

40 Professor James Hogan to the Chairman, Army Committee of Inquiry, 9 May 1924  
Mulachy Papers, P7\C\19

41 Hogan's evidence to the Army Committee of Inquiry, 24 Apr 1924 Mulcahy  
Papers, P7\C\24 D 5

42 *ibid*

43 *ibid* , Professor James Hogan to the Chairman of the Army Committee of Inquiry  
9 May 192, P7\C\19, p 10

44 *ibid*

45 *ibid* , p 8

- 46 See chapter 2, pp 105-106
- 47 **The Irish Statesman** 21 Apr 1924 **The Irish Statesman** still held this view in 1927 In an editorial supporting the government they said that ‘it was rare that political revolution turns up men of constructive capacity’ 21 May 1927 This analysis of the manoeuvring surrounding the mutiny bears heavily on the accounts in Lee, **Ireland**, pp 96-105
- 48 Lyons, **Ireland** pp 375-6
- 49 **DD** vol 3, col 1503, 6 Jun 1923
- 50 Irish dairy produce and eggs were not getting the premium prices, which Danish produce were achieving, because of their low status in the British market **The Irish Statesman** 22 Mar and 7 Jun 1924
- 51 These acts include The Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act 1924, The Dairy Produce Act, 1924, The Live Stock Breeding Act, 1925, Creamery Act, 1928, Agricultural Produce (Fresh Meat) Act 1930, and the Agricultural Produce (Potatoes) Act 1931
- 52 **DD** Vol 9, col 957, 22 Oct 1924
- 53 **DD** vol 8, col 1976, 23 Jul 1924

- 54 See chapter 4, pp 204-207
- 55 University Education (Agriculture & Dairy Science) Act, 1926
- 56 Veterinary Surgeons Act, 1931
- 57 The committee was made up of representatives from the Departments of Finance, Agriculture and Industry and Commerce
- 58 **DD** vol 12, cols 902, 916, 12 Jun 1925
- 59 Report of the committee set up to investigate rates relief This was composed of the ministers for Finance, Local Government and Agriculture and signed by Patrick Hogan, 22 Mar 1924 NA, DT, S 3629
- 60 De Valera put down a motion in the Dail on 6 Mar 1931, requesting an additional special grant of one million pounds for relief of rates on land NA, DT, S 3629  
**Irish Independent** 27 Mar 1932, reported that 'crowds thronged gallery of Leinster House' to hear the debate on rates relief in which Hogan was to speak
- 61 O'Sullivan, **The Irish Free State and its Senate** p 475 **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936 Family and friends all agree that there was no love lost between de Valera and Hogan

- 62 Hogan to Mere Wilfreda, 28 Dec 1922
- 63 **DD** Vol 24, cols 1791-2, 28 Jun 1928
- 64 *ibid* , cols 1404-5, 1410, 26 Jun 1928
- 65 *ibid* , cols 1410-1413
- 66 *ibid* , col 1785 **Constitution of the Free State of Ireland** (Dublin, 1922) **The Round Table** Vol 70, March 1928
- 67 O'Sullivan, **The Irish Free State** p 475
- 68 **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936
- 69 John Whyte, **Church and State in Modern Ireland** (2nd ed , Dublin, 1980) p 36
- 70 *ibid* , p 35
- 71 Hogan to Mere Wilfreda, 18 Oct 1927
- 72 See note 18
- 73 Whyte, **Church and State** p 35

- 74 Michael Adams, **Censorship The Irish Experience** Dublin, 1968, pp 16, 39, 44
- 75 **DD** Vol 26, col 829, 24 Oct 1928
- 76 *ibid* , cols 830 - 31
- 77 **The Irish Statesman** Vol 75, June 1929 **DD** Vol 26, col 637, 24 Oct 1928
- 78 Walsh, **On my keeping in yours** p 46 Hogan to Mere Wilfreda, n d , c Jan 1921
- 79 **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936 'The Fianna Fail party was indeed foolish enough to raise the question by a motion in the Dail, which gave Mr Hogan, Minister for Agriculture a splendid opportunity of riddling Mr de Valera's position both legally and morally '
- 80 **The Round Table** Vol 75, Sep 1929, p 821
- 81 **Irish Times** 16 Jul 1936 **The London Times** 16 Jul 1936 Telephone interview with Mrs Patrick McGilligan, 14 Jun 1989

CHAPTER 2

1922-1924

Public administration in Ireland before independence can be characterised as inefficient and complex. The day to day business of running the country devolved to the under secretary in Dublin Castle who 'had [his] hands full with the routine business of exacting an acceptable minimum of efficiency from the creaking machinery of Irish government. Fortunately for Hogan and his fellow ministers the administrative system which they inherited in 1922 had been completely reorganised. It consisted of over twenty thousand personnel from heads of departments to typists, and unskilled labour. One of the most important changes which occurred was in the way public officials were selected, that is candidates were chosen and promoted on merit rather than through personal influence and patronage. The reforms instituted in 1920 were continued and strengthened in the early years of the State with the establishment of a Civil Service Commission in 1923 and the Local Appointments Commission in 1926'<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand Hogan's work as Minister for Agriculture, it is important to examine the administrative legacy left by the British in 1922. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Training was *sui generis*. It had been set up by act of parliament in 1899 to oversee all facets of agriculture in Ireland. Its first ministerial head was Sir Horace Plunkett, promoter of the co-operative movement and founder of the Irish Agriculture Organization Society, who had been instrumental in its creation.

The purpose of the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, was defined in DATI's first annual report as being

to establish an Irish department of state so constituted as to be representative at once of the crown, the recently created local government bodies of the country, and those classes of the people with whom its work is chiefly concerned, and to give this authority the function of aiding, improving and developing the agriculture, fisheries and other industries of Ireland in so far as may be proper to such a department, and in such manner as to stimulate and strengthen the self-reliance of the people ,

DATI was similar in many respects to any department of state in Great Britain Sir Horace Plunkett, who was the first vice president of the department, lost his parliamentary seat a year after it was set up However, he remained vice president of DATI for a further seven years which meant in effect that DATI was not directly represented in parliament by its senior minister Plunkett's absence from the Commons did not lessen his commitment to DATI and his enthusiasm contributed to it developing a strong character of its own T W Russell, MP, succeeded Plunkett in 1907 Paradoxically, the restoration of parliamentary accountability and the disappearance of Plunkett, detested by unionist and nationalist politicians alike for his idiosyncratic views, took DATI out of the political firing line The department's standing and activities never became controversial again, although Russell was himself out of the Commons between 1910 and 1911 when a safe seat was found for him <sup>3</sup>

DATI's junior executive and clerical staff were graded and remunerated in much the same way as their counterparts in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) in Whitehall Differences between DATI and MAF did not come from the its internal structure but from its constitution Its most characteristic feature was its representative advisory council and boards The Council of Agriculture consisted of one hundred and four members and was

made up of appointees from county councils and representatives of agricultural and industrial organisations in the provinces. Its meetings were held in public and one of its central functions was to discuss matters of public interest in connection with any of the purposes of the Act. It also elected members to the Agricultural Board and representatives to the Board of Technical Instruction.<sup>4</sup>

The function of the Agricultural Board was to give advice to the department whenever it was requested. Their agreement was required for the expenditure of funds allotted to the department under part one of the Act. There was, therefore, an attempt made to have some element of local input in policy and decision making through these layers of public representation. It is true that those who represented the rural and farming interests on the Council and Board were not directly elected to their positions, but they were drawn from groups which would have had support within their communities and/or industries. This may account for the wide acceptance which the department gained in a comparatively short time.

By 1922 the department's structure and pattern of operations were firmly established and there is little to suggest that they were radically changed when the British departed except for the disappearance of the Council of Agriculture. The channels of communication between its various branches had been set up so that information flowed easily from the agricultural instructors, agricultural overseers and the other field workers throughout the country to the central office in Merrion Street. Through files, on which minute sheets were kept, details of work in progress was passed to those who were involved or who needed to be kept informed. The minute sheets were a record of how different issues were handled, containing, as they did, the remarks and initials of those through whose hands

they passed. It was a simple and efficient way of keeping track of a sequence of events and its eventual outcome. The files were ultimately kept in the registry department which looked after the documents and produced them on request. This system was still being used when Hogan left office in 1932.

When Hogan became minister he did not have to build up his department from the ground unlike some of his colleagues. The personnel who made up DATI remained unchanged and the transition from British to Irish control went remarkably smoothly. Issues which had been given priority and schemes which were administered by the central office bear surprisingly few signs of the great political upheaval which had taken place. There was evidently no hostility specifically directed towards the department or its officials during the Anglo-Irish war. In a memorandum on the collection of agricultural statistics for the 1920, 1921 and 1922 period, it was stated that 'it was not found practicable to obtain particulars of either crops or livestock on all farms in Ireland'. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) were the census takers, which amply explains this. Nevertheless it goes on to say that the department had been able to produce reliable estimates due to the generous response of a very large number of farmers in each district who posted signed returns to the department. This rather phlegmatic description or more correctly lack of description of conditions at that time reinforces the impression that it was exempt from the attacks which were being made on other departments of state. At a time of serious civil unrest and lack of co-operation with the administration this suggests that it was regarded more as an Irish institution than an arm of the British government. A simple explanation for this phenomenon may be that it had succeeded in winning the confidence of the farming community. Sir Horace Plunkett's early involvement with its foundation and 'his

enthusiasm and naivety' may also have played a part in its acceptance. Therefore, when the department was taken over after independence the retention of pre-independence staff and practices never became an issue. This is quite significant in DATI's case because so many of its employees were in close contact with the farming public and could therefore have been targets for resentment and complaints when the new government was in place. 'The best proof of its value [was] that almost alone among administrative bodies it did not go to wrack and ruin in the chaos of the Anglo-Irish conflict'<sup>5</sup>

The very success of DATI could have been a problem for whoever was appointed Minister for Agriculture in 1922. Given that department officials had worked well together and that they had been used to a fair degree of autonomy because they were at a remove from the control of Westminster, there was no reason to suppose that they would have welcomed a minister who would be closer both to them and the centre of government. Hogan's appointment at that juncture was fortuitous. Because of his genuine interest in agriculture and practical involvement in farming at his home in Kiltrickle he did not come to the department as an innocent and therefore was not at a disadvantage when discussing the basic issues of farming. He was a countryman, well able to distinguish a heifer from a bull and to tell the difference between oats and barley without briefings from his civil servants. As a prominent member of the Farmers Union he must have had dealings with DATI and have been acquainted with the workings of some of their schemes. With this background he was free to concentrate on the administrative side of the department and to tackle much needed legislation. In a department where technical knowledge was vitally important and an understanding of the every-day problems facing farming essential, Hogan's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject must have been received with some relief.

Hogan had no experience of running a large organisation. Like the rest of his ministerial colleagues, he had never held high political office. He had not been a local government representative, and had no first hand knowledge of the bureaucratic mind. However, he and with many of his peers proved themselves remarkably talented administrators in taking over what 'was essentially an old country setting up for itself a new state'. Despite its unsettled condition, they prevented it from sliding into administrative and political anarchy.<sup>6</sup> His experienced senior civil servants were able to provide the background and experience which he lacked. If Ireland was fortunate to have had such a talented group of young men in its first government, the government were equally fortunate in having civil servants who handled the transition to independence with great skill.

One of the key officials Hogan inherited was Dr J H Hinchcliffe, an exceptionally efficient and imaginative man. In 1925, while chief inspector, he served on the inter-departmental committee on the sugar beet industry as the representative for the Department of Agriculture. With R C Ferguson from the Department of Industry and Commerce, he visited industrialists in Europe interested in the possibility of setting up a sugar beet factory in Ireland. The enthusiasm with which he approached his task was evident. He kept the minister and his department well briefed about his contacts abroad. The accounts which he gave about the technical and business capabilities of the industrialists he visited were of a high quality. Therefore, the information which he sent and his contribution to the discussions of the committee must have made the task of choosing the right group to start the industry relatively easy.

It is clear from the correspondence between Hogan and Hinchcliffe that they had confidence in one another. Hinchcliffe made sure to forewarn Hogan of any difficulties which might occur, he advised him to have the good test results on beet grown in trials double checked by the 'Chief State Chemist or analysed by Lippens in Belgium' so that there would be no doubt about them.<sup>7</sup> When the site for the factory was being considered he advised Hogan to allow Lippens to make the final decision, shrewd counsel as numerous towns were vying with each other for the prize of the first sugar factory. If Hogan had decided the matter he would have been applauded by the town and area which had succeeded but damned by those who were disappointed.<sup>8</sup> Hinchcliffe was not above suggesting a little subterfuge. In order to prevent stalemate in a dispute between the Beet Growers Association (BGA) and the Irish Sugar Manufacturing Co Ltd, (ISMCL), he asked Hogan to wire him to the effect that he and Lippens had agreed not to insist on 'this year's growers', towards whom the BGA were hostile, being represented at the first meeting of the conference to resolve the dispute. This he believed would make the Irish directors less likely to push for their inclusion. Hogan and Lippens had made no such agreement. However, Hogan took his advice and the ploy proved successful.<sup>9</sup>

There was a degree of informality between Hinchcliffe and Hogan. In September 1925, when Hogan was at home in Kilrickle, he was kept abreast of developments by him in considerable detail. Hinchcliffe took M Lippens to see O'Higgins in Hogan's absence and arranged to entertain him. O'Higgins and Fitzgerald were to join the party along with Blythe when he returned from Cork that evening. They were all to meet that night, Hinchcliffe added cryptically 'I need not say where!' While Hogan was at Kilrickle during the Christmas recess he kept him well briefed about topics such as the provision of

a level crossing for the ISMC in Carlow and the appointment of Irish directors to the board of the ISMC. These were areas with the potential to cause him political embarrassment if they were not handled sensitively. Hinchliffe concluded one letter with

all good wishes for the New Year and hoping that you may, next New Year's Eve, be using Irish grown and manufactured sugar in your - well, shall I say coffee.<sup>10</sup>

Hinchcliffe was a notable civil servant. His rapport with Hogan was good and Hogan certainly depended upon him and used his talents extensively. His hand and style can be detected in many of Hogan's letters and memoranda. However it is not always possible to know for certain whether Hogan's correspondence, particularly with Lippens, was drafted by him, because of there are so few first drafts in the files. However, while Hinchcliffe was an unusually gifted man and dedicated to his work he was not alone in his dedication. The interest which many of the field staff, both at agricultural instructor level in Ireland and those involved in the inspection of exports and market intelligence in Britain displayed was quite impressive. The result of this dedication by field staff and those employed in Merrion Street was a vast amount of information flowing in and being recorded and analysed. It is of course debatable whether the information was used by senior officials and government to the best advantage.

It is worth recording that the staff of the department treated the farming community in a way which could be represented as helpful and unpatronising. This opinion is impressionistic rather than scientific and is gained from reading many hundreds of departmental documents. The best way of describing the atmosphere is to say that all the

important issues were treated by both field and head office staff in a serious and thorough manner. There was great awareness of the difficulties facing Ireland's many small farmers and the lack of available resources with which to cure them. This was expressed in the patient way that continuous infractions of the rules and disregard for regulations were handled. Tolerance of this sort may be regarded as weakness. However, the department was created to deal with the special difficulties of Ireland's agriculture and the failure to deal with them by the previous regime. By 1922 the department had gained the confidence of the farmers and began after independence under the leadership of Hogan to implement in a gradual way the changes which they had known were needed.

Hogan may have been an inexperienced politician but he managed to promote a positive image of himself which led to his being regarded internationally as an excellent minister for agriculture.<sup>11</sup> Whether he deserved such an accolade depends to a large extent on the qualities of the other ministers for agriculture with whom he was being compared. However, circumstances did not help him to earn such respect and he faced serious difficulties from the moment he took office in 1922. Agriculture was in the grip of a recession which appeared all the worse because it followed a period of relative prosperity. During and immediately after the first world war the price of agricultural products was high and demand was good, for example exports of poultry produce rose from £4.4m in 1914 to £18m in 1919. However from 1920 on prices began to fall due to increased competition from imports into Britain from the continent and other countries of the Empire. 'in 1919 co-operative members were realizing a shilling a gallon for their milk - some were getting as high as 14d a gallon. In 1921 they were back to 7d or 8d.'<sup>12</sup> Farmers had borrowed heavily during the buoyant conditions caused by the first world war and were in 1922

feeling the burden of high interest rates and falling prices. The civil war itself which had been preceded by six years of civil disruption of varying intensity, compounded the problems which he faced. It would not appear, therefore, to have been a suitable time to impose new regulations on the industry.

Regulative legislation had been discussed and investigated by the department from its inception. The Agricultural Produce (Ireland) Bill, 1920, which had been prepared by the department, was intended to improve the quality of livestock, dairy produce and all other agricultural exports. It was conceived in an effort to end the complaints of British importers. It was hoped that the autumn session would probably offer a good opportunity for endeavouring to get through a short measure giving the department 'full powers to inspect and grade all agricultural produce whether intended for export or for sale in Ireland'. However, it did not become law, and the problems with which it had hoped to deal had not been addressed. Reporting on the condition of Irish eggs being sold in Britain in 1920, one of the department's inspectors said 'on the whole it is one continual grumble in every town I call and I trust the matter is receiving the attention it deserves'<sup>13</sup>. In 1922 the same British food importers who had complained in the past were still clamouring for something to be done, otherwise, they threatened they would switch to produce from Denmark, Holland, Canada, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia, which would have made an already serious situation worse. The attitude of British importers is encapsulated in a letter written by an irate London dealer.

To me, who looks upon business as something more than a means of livelihood it is tragic that the finest article of its kind in the world - the Irish egg - should be rendered a by word for filth and manure - as you know it is - merely because of carelessness, unscrupulousness and dishonesty on the part of shippers and crass negligence and apathy of the carrying companies,

concluding that through complaints from customers he had been 'victimised enough th[e] last year for the rest of [his] life' At the same time a similar situation existed in the butter export market In a letter to MAF about adulterated butter from Ireland being sold in his area, the Town Clerk of Ramsgate Borough Council asked if the government could take steps either to stop such butter coming into England or take proceedings against Irish firms who exported it <sup>14</sup>

Apart from the need for legislation to improve export performance there existed another major problem which required technical expertise There were serious deficiencies in the quality of the animals in the national herd which were obvious to those who were involved in the livestock business Cattle, sheep, and pig breeding had to be improved even to regain Ireland's share of the British market, let alone increase it Dairying in Hogan's opinion was the foundation stone of Irish agriculture, so improving the quality of breeding stock would have a two-fold effect, it would increase milk yields and produce store cattle which would achieve good prices in the markets in Britain The elimination of the so called 'scrub bull' was the first task if a government sponsored breeding scheme was going to be a success This huge undertaking could easily have brought the department into conflict with farmers who did not wish to enter the scheme or who wanted to keep their unlicensed bulls to

service their own cows and those of their neighbours. They might have seen such legislation as interference with their traditional farming practices. In the following chapter we will see how Hogan piloted the Live Stock Breeding Act through the Oireachtas to tackle this problem.

A similar situation existed in the potato industry: poor quality produce was being exported and was damaging the market for Irish potatoes in Britain. The Seeds Act, 1920, had attempted to deal with sale and distribution of seed potatoes in Britain and Ireland. However, potatoes continued being sold and transported from one area to another regardless of the damage this caused through the spread of infection. DATI had tried in 1921 to get the British authorities to stamp out this practice by banning all imports of potatoes from Ireland into England except from exporters who were licensed by the department. They hoped that it would stop the movement of potatoes with black scab and encourage growers to plant varieties which were disease resistant. The problem of disease was common to both countries but its effects were more serious in Ireland where potatoes were an important crop. Both agricultural departments made efforts to improve the situation: in 1923 the British drafted an order which prevented the planting of any potatoes grown in Ireland unless they had a certificate showing they came from disease free stock, and in 1924 there was an attempt at a joint approach. It was not, however, until 1931 that a comprehensive act was passed, the Agricultural Produce (Potatoes) Act, 1931.

The obstacles to legislation were as much social as technical. Small farmers, especially in the old Congested Districts, relied on the potato as a source of food for their families and livestock and in many cases it provided them with a cash crop. Any legislation, therefore,

which introduced restrictions on the movements of the crop could have been seen as an attack on the poorest members of the farming community. Consequently it had to be introduced gradually and with sensitivity. During pre-independence years members of the department's staff and county committees of agriculture (CCAs) had been trying to educate the growers about the need to plant disease resistant varieties and to use better methods of cultivation so that by the time the act was passed much of the ground work had been completed<sup>15</sup>

There are contrasts and similarities in the way in which livestock and potatoes were treated in the early 1920s. Both were in obvious need of attention but priority was given to livestock because it was Ireland's largest single export. Legislation was put on the statute book three years after Hogan took office. It was clear that the necessity for an act had been appreciated by the majority of farmers and farming associations in the case of livestock. Therefore, resistance to its implementation was not strong or organised, whereas in the case of potatoes although the need for action was known it took almost ten years to bring it about. However, a quotation from the guide to the Livestock Breeding Act shows that a gradual approach was also used in its early stages. This demonstrates that the same realistic approach was used in both cases, avoiding a sudden raising of standards which would have been impossible for the farmers to achieve and for officials to police.

While the standard will not be unduly high when the Act is first put into operation it is intended to aim at a progressively higher standard in the future<sup>16</sup>

This policy was a success. Registration of bulls increased steadily in spite of worries, expressed at the time, about the suitability of some of the breeds prescribed by the scheme to produce dual purpose animals which would increase milk yields and produce good quality beef cattle. However, the figures speak for themselves, in 1922 one in forty bulls was registered, in 1925 one in twenty five and in 1928 one in nine <sup>17</sup>

The introduction of separate legislation for the dairy and poultry industries in the early years of Hogan's ministry reveals movement in areas which had long been under consideration by the department. Initially the minister wanted to deal with both in the one bill <sup>18</sup>. However, it is quite clear from the length and complexity of both the Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act, 1924 and the Dairy Produce Act, 1924 that it would have been almost impossible to steer these measures through the Oireachtas if they had been part of a single bill similar to the Agriculture Produce (Ireland) Bill, 1920. The 1920 Bill not only sought to cover eggs and dairy produce but almost everything else which the farmer produced for sale both at home and abroad. Such an unwieldy bill could have had little hope of becoming law especially as it had to pass through the House of Commons where the time available was limited and the enthusiasm of MPs was hardly likely to be aroused by a measure which was only of indirect interest to them. The fact that the only Irish MPs to take their seats at Westminster after the 1918 election were Unionists and the Irish Parliamentary Party made the situation even worse. Because of lack of support at Westminster it is probable that DATI officials thought they had more chance of getting one single bill which covered everything through parliament rather than a series of separate bills which would have needed more parliamentary time.

While the breaking up of the 1920 bill and the introduction of separate legislation for eggs and butter by Hogan may not seem to be of great political importance it shows more clearly than any nationalist rhetoric the value to Ireland of having its own parliament whose prime concern was the self-interest of Ireland, and in this case, Ireland's farmers. DATI, which had been set up by the British government to deal with the specific problems of Ireland's agriculture which differed from those of the rest of the United Kingdom, had only managed to get one act relating to Ireland's special needs passed in the twenty two years before independence, the Bee Pest Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1909.<sup>19</sup> It also shows the limits on the power of department officials to bring their work to a successful conclusion when the political will and means to carry it through was denied to them.

The legislation on dairy produce and eggs was based largely on the findings of the interim report of the commission on agriculture.<sup>20</sup> The commission was set up by Hogan in November 1922 to examine conditions in the industry so that decisions could be taken and policy made with the help of up to date information. An interim report was produced in 1923 and was signed by all members of the commission. It covered tobacco growing, the marketing and transit of eggs and dairy produce, licensing of bulls, and agricultural credit. With the exception of tobacco, all these areas had been dealt with by 1927.<sup>21</sup> The final report, which was issued in 1924, was not unanimous. The majority report reflected the views of the Cumann na nGaedheal government by stressing the importance of self help and voluntary efforts to stimulate the industry. Emphasis was also placed on education and it was suggested that agriculture might be taught as a subject in secondary schools, something which never attracted widespread support.<sup>22</sup> One of the findings on education which was implemented was the creation of university faculties of agriculture. However,

its major concern was the livestock industry, which was hardly surprising, since this produced, between beef and dairy produce, the largest volume of exports. Suggestions about increasing the acreage under tillage were regarded with a degree of pessimism and were, therefore, in line with Hogan's view and the view of the department. The minority report was signed by the two Labour members. With its ideas for expanding tillage through some form of compulsion or subsidies and encouraging industries based on agriculture it was in line with their agricultural policy. It also fore-shadowed policies which began to grow in popularity towards the middle of the 1920s. They were adopted by Fianna Fail and became the policy of their government after they won power in 1932. The hope was that more tillage would increase employment on the land and that state intervention would do the same in the agri-industries.<sup>23</sup>

In his book on the **Economic History of Live Stock in Ireland**, which was published in 1940 long after the commission had reported and the policy of protection had been introduced by Fianna Fail, John O'Donovan defended the majority report. He reached this conclusion because the 'predominance of small holdings' tended 'to support the existing system' in which livestock played the most important role. He also pointed out that Ireland's climate 'made the pasture lands particularly productive' and that an integrated system based on livestock had developed which was in the interest not only of the large ranchers but the small farmers who 'carry on supplementary occupations', and therefore kept 'on their small farms, a cow or two' and 'the calves until' they were 'twelve months old'. O'Donovan's thesis was that these farmers could not benefit from increased tillage and that large increases in tillage could remove the market for their year old calves. In

other words the traditional structure of farming based largely on the raising of livestock, dictated from the beginning the way that decisions had to be taken <sup>24</sup>

The commission on agriculture heard evidence from those who were most closely concerned with the agriculture industry. Apart from describing conditions, many of those giving their views put forward schemes and proposals on how they thought new legislation should be framed. For instance the Irish Dairy Producers & Shippers Association and the Irish Creamery Manager's Association (ICMA) both made detailed submissions for a bill on the dairy industry. The department put forward their own proposals which were along broadly similar lines. The differences of emphasis between those putting their cases reflect their special interests and shows how useful this exercise was as a method of gathering all shades of opinion, before actual decisions were taken. The ICMA was critical of the plan put forward by the department's man, Poole Wilson, the chief inspector of dairying, which they regarded as a defence of the dairy policy which the department had pursued in the past and which they believed had fallen short of what the industry needed <sup>25</sup>. In a document published by the central council of the ICMA, they listed as their priorities a national brand for butter with strict controls and examination at the ports. They dismissed as 'having little material effect on quality' compulsory inspections of creameries. They wanted all the assistance which was given to butter making directed towards improving it at the source of production <sup>26</sup>. The ICMA were, not unreasonably, stressing the areas with which they were primarily concerned. The department, on the other hand, which would have responsibility for implementing any legislation, pointed out that it would require more money to employ the extra instructors and inspectors who would be needed to make the legislation work <sup>27</sup>.

The department had been working on proposals to regulate the dairy industry since before the first world war, and a butter bill had been drafted in 1912. However, it had been dropped. Strong objections came from the butter factory owners and the IAOS, who were afraid of its effects, contributed to its demise. The minister wanted to know why the bill had run into such difficulties. The department responded that the factories' main objection had been to the term "creamery butter" being reserved for the produce of a creamery. They believed, however, that the IAOS, who had opposed the 1912 bill, were unlikely to object to the 1924 bill. Their objections in 1912 had been based more on the difficulties which they had experienced with the vice president of the department, who had been instrumental in discontinuing the society's grant, than on any deeply held conviction about the classification of factory butter. The problems which they had with DATI at the time did not dispose them to co-operate with its proposals.<sup>28</sup> Another unsuccessful attempt at regulation had since been made under the Agricultural Produce (Ireland) Bill, 1920. This indicates that the department was already well versed in the arguments for and against its proposals when Hogan's bill was drafted. The department had also looked at the controls used by other countries who were exporting agricultural produce to Britain and was thus in a very sound position to advise the commission on agriculture on the shape of the dairy bill.<sup>29</sup> A pleased assistant secretary wrote to the secretary

The recommendations of the Commission follow closely those advocated by the department. This is all to the good as it gives those who would be engaged in the administration of any new work that full confidence which is so helpful in getting on with a scheme of this kind.<sup>30</sup>

Given that the commission and the department were in agreement on the measures to be taken for the dairy industry, it would have been difficult for the minister to make substantial changes in the bill, even if he thought them desirable. Hogan did, however, keep himself well informed about how the officials in his department were handling the bill. His private secretary sought information from the secretary about areas which might prove to be contentious, such as inspection and grading at the ports, objections from factory owners and the IAOS, how much butter was exported in the various categories which were being examined and the expected cost of administering the scheme.<sup>31</sup> It is probable that these were topics on which the minister anticipated being questioned in the Dail.<sup>32</sup> Hogan knew, however, that when he introduced the bill he would not face any serious opposition. During a debate on the report stage of the bill, he expressed mock surprise at what he regarded as Deputy Milroy's suggestion that 'this was simply interference by the state for the pleasure of interference' and countered the allegation by pointing out that he had been asked by deputies from every party in the Dail when the bill would be introduced and what were the reasons for its delay. He also pointed out that it was not just in the Dail that agitation for a bill had taken place 'for the last four years practically every organisation connected with the industry had been asking for a bill'.<sup>33</sup> This was because, in the early 1920s, of the major farming areas, the dairying districts probably improved on balance the least. Irish butter experienced more acute competition on the British market through the appearance of its Danish rival.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, they needed government assistance to help to fight off their better organised competitors and recover from the post-war recession.

In one specific area the department went further than the changes recommended by the commission, which dealt mainly with the conditions for a national brand, general powers

of inspection and the enforcing of regulations on cleanliness. They had come to the conclusion that more could be gained from the elimination of low class butter from the export market than by any other measure. This would mean exporting only butter which met a set standard and so would reduce the risk of second class Irish butter being sold in the shops in Britain with consequential damage to the reputation of first class butter. The department sought the minister's approval for this measure. They advised him to meet the various interests who would be affected by the bill. Prior to meeting them he had a conference with those who were concerned with its preparation and was briefed on the technical reasons for the greater complexity of the new proposals<sup>35</sup>

They convinced the minister of the validity of their case. Removing second class butter from the export market would give the department complete control of the quality of Irish butter. The proposed changes did not go unnoticed. On 2 April 1924, the minister for Finance, Ernest Blythe, wrote to Hogan questioning him about the bill. He was concerned about the degree of state intervention which was involved and asked if they, the Department of Lands and Agriculture, were going to control the whole export business. Hogan replied that the bill was directed towards the improvement of the whole Irish butter trade in Great Britain. He said that the establishment of a national brand was not sufficient and that there was more to be gained from the elimination of the export of low class butter than by branding the best. He cited the case of New Zealand whose regulations prohibited the export of any butter unless branded. The minister set out the department's case and made it his own. Undoubtedly it was a good case and deserved his backing. The Department of Finance agreed with the points in his analysis and thereafter raised no substantial objections<sup>36</sup>. That they sought reassurance from one of the staunchest proponents of laissez-

faire economics shows the suspicion with which any measures which smacked of state intervention was viewed by other departments, particularly Finance, and the degree of commitment the government had to free trade and to preventing their policy being gradually eroded.

Hogan introduced the bill in the Dail on 6 June 1924. His opening statement contains what might be called his credo:

Dairying is the foundation of Irish agriculture. Any weakness in dairying is immediately reflected in every aspect of agriculture, and if by any mischance the dairy farmer should go out of business the wheels of industry would immediately stop short.<sup>37</sup>

In the 1920s when so many people depended on dairy and livestock exports for their living either directly or indirectly this could hardly be called empty rhetoric, and it probably accounts for his readiness to accept state regulation. However he insisted on the industry paying some of the costs of inspection.<sup>38</sup> He did not see why measures which would benefit the dairy industry should be paid for by the general public especially as he believed it was the failure of 'the efforts of farmers' organisations' which made it 'necessary for the State to step in to do the work which the farmers should' have done 'for themselves'.<sup>39</sup> Acceptance of what was in effect the department's bill was not confined to the minister or the Cumann na nGaedheal government. The opposition, in the form of the Labour Party and the Farmers' Party, raised only minor technical objections. Denis Gorey, TD, leader of the Farmers' Party welcomed it at its second reading saying 'this is the Bill we have been

agitating for for years' <sup>40</sup> The only contentious areas were whether butter should be graded at the ports or the creameries, and who should pay the costs of administering the scheme, the industry or the exchequer. Neither of these issues were, however, a real threat to the passage of the bill through the Oireachtas.

In a review of the working the Dairy Produce Act in 1928 **The Round Table** was very optimistic. It said that it had achieved its aim of delivering 'clean milk to first class creameries making first class butter'. It was also impressed by the administrative costs, £17,000, which it regarded as 'a small price to pay for the saving of a trade worth at present £5,000,000'. It went on to highlight the success of the scheme and the part that Hogan had played in it.

butter and cream exports have increased by £1,500,000 and at the same time we have reduced our winter imports of butter from £687,000 to £333,000. Very wisely Mr Hogan refused to permit the introduction of the national mark on Irish butter until the quality was definitely high. Already Mr Hogan states that seventy per cent of the Irish creameries would qualify so much have things improved since the Act was passed <sup>41</sup>

Hogan's dislike of compulsory regulation had previously been shown during the second reading of the Agricultural Products (Eggs) Bill. He said

This particular [bill] is, if I might use the expression, a sort of voluntary compulsion, and the point I wish to stress is that there would be no need for a bill

like this if both sides of the trade, that is, both the producers and exporters, were properly organised for the purposes of their own business <sup>42</sup>

The department would have agreed with Hogan on this point. The previous four years had seen determined efforts on their part to improve the egg trade. They were conscious of the areas which needed attention: testing, cleanliness, packing and transport. However, there was no way to prevent dirty and bad eggs reaching the British markets so whatever progress they made was being brought to nothing by a considerable number of producers and shippers who ignored their advice and persisted in exporting shoddy goods <sup>43</sup>. In common with the dairy produce bill, the Agricultural Products (Eggs) Bill corresponded closely to the findings of the interim report of the commission on agriculture, which in turn followed the line which the department had adopted. The problems had been discussed by the department with various interested parties and voluntary methods to reform the offenders tried. Discussions had been held with representatives of the Irish egg merchants at the department's offices as early as June 1919 in an effort to improve matters <sup>44</sup>.

However, reports continued to come in from both Irish and British shippers and merchants about the poor quality of some of the produce which was being exported <sup>45</sup>. Some producers and shippers found the temptation to hold back eggs in times of shortage, in order to get higher prices, impossible to resist especially when the department had no sanctions to use against them. The egg trade does not appear to have had confidence in their own ability to regulate themselves and pressed DATI to do something about it. The department were well aware of the trade's misgivings. The vice president recorded them in a memorandum

during the last three months Irish egg merchants have been requesting the department to obtain powers to enable them to licence each egg exporter. The conditions to be imposed before a shipper would qualify to be licensed would probably be a matter for discussion between the department and the trade. The marketing section are in entire sympathy with this request as they feel that it will require something more than voluntary effort to effect a change which is necessary at once in view of the fact that foreign competition is making every effort to capture the trade of the British market.<sup>46</sup>

Both bills, which proceeded through the Dail almost simultaneously, are interesting from the point of view of policy making because they were passed in the early years of the new state.<sup>47</sup> In 1922 the Cumann na nGaedheal government were as close to a fresh start as it was possible to be. With no Irish antecedents with whom they could be compared, they were apparently in a position to decide their priorities and set the policy agenda. The preceding description of how the legislation on the dairy and the egg export industries gives some inkling of how a policy can gradually become accepted and entrenched without any conscious decision being taken by the governing party or administration. It suggests that this happened because they were under the same constraints as the previous administration. They were therefore forced to adopt the same policies. In both of these industries a situation had developed which caused and which would have continued to cause huge losses in export revenues both to the country and to the individuals concerned in these businesses. Something had to be done. DATI had tried to eradicate the bad practices by education and through suggesting and promoting voluntary schemes. These worked in some cases, but in many others they did not. Therefore, the image of Irish

agricultural produce in the United Kingdom continued to suffer. Failure to improve the quality of goods allied to the decline in their share of the British market forced all parties to the conclusion that compulsory regulations would have to be tried.

To Hogan state intervention and regulation of industry was anathema. He believed in the self-regulation of industry and commerce and in the individual working hard and looking after himself. Free trade was fundamental to his economic outlook. However, when confronted with the deteriorating situation in the export market in 1922-23, there was very little which he could do except go along with the bills which his department drafted. The calls for legislation were loud and clear from all who were concerned in the export sections of these industries. The commission on agriculture set up by Hogan in November 1922 heard evidence from all the interested parties and came to the same conclusion as the department. One of the main considerations which spurred the department must have been the legislation which was being implemented in other countries who exported to Britain. In 1920 when they were drafting the Agricultural Produce Bill DATI had examined measures taken by Canada, Denmark, Holland and Argentina<sup>48</sup>. Ireland, after the Treaty was signed, was no longer an integral part of the United Kingdom. Therefore it was even more important to improve and maintain high standards. Although a member of the British Commonwealth it did not enjoy the same trading position which had existed before the Treaty was enacted even though this had not immediately brought about new restrictions on Irish agricultural imports.

In 1923 the **Irish Independent** contrasted Ireland's declining position in the British butter market with Denmark's ascendancy and wondered if Ireland could 'survive competition

from the Danes', whose eggs and butter were date stamped, guaranteed and graded. It asked why Denmark, a smaller country than Ireland, was able to supply Britain with larger quantities of agricultural produce. The inroads which Denmark, along with other continental and commonwealth countries, were making into traditional Irish markets were due to several factors. Chief amongst these was a major export drive by other countries to increase their share of the lucrative British market using quality control as an important part of their export strategy. This was very serious since Irish produce was at a grave disadvantage in the post war period because of the damage done to its reputation during the war.<sup>49</sup> It was unfortunate from the point of view of food exporters that at this critical time Ireland's position vis a vis Britain had changed to that of a foreign country albeit one which still occupied a special position. In response to a request for clarification on the legal position of warranties given in respect of butter from Ireland exported to Britain the department noted the opinion of the attorney general that 'Ireland' was 'not now regarded in legal measures as part of the United Kingdom'. These were external pressures which could not be ignored, as the butter and egg trades were just too valuable. There had to be some way of assuring British customers, both at the wholesale and retail levels, of quality and a fair deal which would do away with the necessity of their seeking redress in the Irish courts if something went wrong. Because 'many merchants had given up dealing in Irish butter if they could possibly avoid it' the chief inspector for dairying believed that 'our guarantee should be made good'. Therefore, voluntary regulation, which was Hogan's preferred solution, would not have been sufficient to repair the damage done during the war years or quieten the fears of importers about the legal position. Ultimately it was the British consumer who decided how Ireland's export policy for butter and eggs would be framed. They were the real arbiters of the quality and dependability of Irish food produce.<sup>50</sup>

It was ironic, in view of the stress put on branding and marketing, that in 1929 when Irish eggs were marked, it initially led to a drop in price. Reports from the Commission for Trade in London gave as one cause the practice of selling unmarked Irish egg as new laid English eggs for which the sellers could get a higher price. Another factor was increased continental supplies and the cotton strike which was 'beyond the control of the trade'. However it was the inferior quality of the eggs which was a major factor in the differential in prices between Irish and Danish eggs. The report went on

it is stated by traders and it is also the experience of this office that about this time of the year [August] the quality of our eggs tends to fall off

The reporter did not think it was a coincidence that when the price of eggs rose the quality dropped. He questioned whether they were being held up by importers rather than shippers. He gave an example of this happening in Glasgow. Branding, therefore, could cause difficulties if the quality control was not enforced. It meant that the poor quality branded product could be more easily identified with the producer<sup>51</sup>. There is an interesting contrast here between the success of the dairy legislation and legislation on eggs. The two industries were structured in different ways. The dairy industry was largely controlled by the co-operative creameries whose produce bore their names. It was easily identifiable. Therefore offenders against the act could be traced and penalised. The egg industry was made up of many small licensed exporters who were in turn were supplied by thousands of small scale producers who did not have a large stake in the industry and were as a result more difficult to police.

Once the bills were drafted Hogan pressed both the Attorney General and the Department of Finance to allow them to be brought in as soon as possible. He got his way. His performance in the Dail was of a high quality both in his mastery of the technical details and in his ability to see off those who wished to obstruct with minor quibbles. Given the enormous amount of legislation which was before the Oireachtas that year,<sup>52</sup> Hogan must have had the support of the executive council in order to have priority given to these bills.<sup>53</sup> His task was made easier, of course, because the department had been examining both problems for many years and therefore had a huge amount of information with which to brief him. It was not difficult, therefore, to persuade the executive council that there was a broad consensus in favour of government action. The agreement between the minister and the department on the methods to be adopted must therefore have been mutually advantageous. With Hogan pressing for the early introduction of the bills the department's representations were given extra weight and vice versa. Early in 1923 in a memorandum marked 'pressing' to the acting secretary of the executive council, F J Meyrick, secretary of the department, informed him that the British wanted imported goods marked 'imported'. He gave the department's opinion that compulsory marking in the case of eggs would stimulate an improvement in the quality of Irish produce and ultimately prove an advertisement for the goods of the Free State. Meyrick saw fit to keep the executive council up to date with developments which affected Irish agricultural exports to Britain and so prepared the way for early action.<sup>54</sup> It is noteworthy that department officials were always confident that they could manage to operate new regulatory legislation successfully even though they had not had experience of enforcing large scale compulsory schemes.

Introducing and steering these acts to a successful conclusion cannot have damaged Hogan's reputation either nationally or in his own constituency. There can be little doubt from contemporary sources that both laws were almost universally welcomed. Approval of his policies was given by the Galway electorate in August 1923 when he received 7,563 votes from a valid poll of 48,375, with twenty four candidates standing and nine seats at stake, an increase in his personal vote <sup>56</sup>. In subsequent elections his vote fell. However although he was closely associated with free trade policies which had become very unpopular he did not lose his seat.

Neither of the 1924 regulatory acts created any difficulties for Hogan in his Galway constituency. Unlike legislation on potatoes which would have involved the small farmers throughout the country those who were most affected by the new regulations farmed mainly in the dairying areas of Munster and Leinster where the land was more suitable and the farms were larger. The organization of the egg trade meant that there were thousands of egg producers who sold their eggs to dealers. The majority of egg producers were farmers' wives who kept a small number of hens to earn some cash. Therefore, the effect of the legislation on these small scale producers was marginal as it was the shippers, who exported the eggs, who were being scrutinised by inspectors from the department. There was, however, a political bonus from this legislation, it managed to satisfy almost all the interested parties and made Hogan look like an efficient and decisive minister while farmers in his own electoral territory were hardly touched by the inevitable, if slight, disruption which the changes did cause.

This was in contrast to the crisis which developed because of mounting rates arrears which affected farmers throughout the country. It was to be one of the most intractable problems of Hogan's period in office. Throughout the decade there were calls from every interest connected with farming, varying in intensity with the economic situation, for the relief of rates on agricultural land.

In 1924, Hogan described the genesis of the problem thus:

The fact is that the problem which this state of affairs presents is an abnormal problem from every point of view, (1) it commenced with the dislocation caused by the Dail local government decrees of 1919\20. Even though the policy of the Dail, while fighting the English Local Government Board, was to have rates paid, it could not be expected that the processes which took place during these years would not result in a certain amount of disintegration of that particular service. (2) The Anglo-Irish war of 1920\21 and the rebellion of 1922\23, re-acted on the economic position of the farmers and on the efficiency of the machinery for collection of rates by local authorities. Some local authorities, and some rate collectors, deliberately encouraged the non-payment of rates. (3) The rate for 1923\24 was an entirely extravagant rate. Extravagant, not only for the reasons set out in Nos. 1 and 2, but also because Local Bodies elected at the last Election not for purposes of administering local government economically and efficiently, but for other reasons connected with the circumstances of the times, could not be expected to attend to their proper business. (4) Moreover, the 75% of the ratepayers who are farmers have gone through far the worst times they have experienced within

living memory, and there is no sign of these times getting any better While farming has been collapsing the rates which farmers are being asked to pay are mounting These are some of the reasons which make the present rating problem an entirely abnormal problem The total rate for 1913\14 was £1,617,000 There were practically no arrears, and in that year farming was prosperous <sup>57</sup>

The minister played a leading role in persuading the executive council of the need for rates relief on agricultural land In a series of memoranda he set out a strong case in its favour His main proposal was that the banks would lend the local authorities two million pounds which they could repay over a four year period in order to remove the extra burden which arrears were causing to ratepayers A committee was set up by the executive council to examine his proposition, made up of officials from the departments of Finance, Agriculture and Local Government However, they were unable to present a unanimous report <sup>58</sup> Hogan addressed his response to the conclusions which Joseph Brennan, the powerful and abrasive secretary of the Department of Finance had reached He obviously regarded Brennan as the most important member of the committee He went through Brennan's memorandum and answered all the salient points which Brennan had raised and did so with a degree of aggressiveness which bordered on contempt

To Brennan's assertion that there was no revenue from which to increase the agricultural grant he said

That present recurrent expenditure absorbs not only the whole of but more than present revenue was, of course, known to every member of the Executive Council

when the scheme containing, amongst other items, a proposal to increase the Agricultural Grant, was referred to the Committee <sup>59</sup>

He went on to agree with Brennan "that the pressure of taxation is already so severe as to be of serious prejudice to the economic welfare of the country" but suggested that an inquiry into the tax system would be necessary and that

such an enquiry raise[d] questions of fiscal and economic policy which could not be decided by the Ministry of Finance alone, and which obviously require[d] the co-operation of the Ministries of Industry and Commerce, Local Government and Agriculture, and [was] long overdue <sup>60</sup>

He conceded nothing to Brennan and systematically demolished his argument that "that in fact the balance of evidence appear[s] in favour of the opinion that the farmers are distinctly the privileged class in this respect [rates and taxes]" by demonstrating that through the rates on land farmers paid for services from which they did not benefit. He also reminded Brennan of the most important element of the argument which was that 'the problem comprised not only rates that' would 'be current in 1924, but arrears amounting to £2,200,000, practically all owed by farmers'. On income tax he was equally clear that the farmers were not getting "preferential treatment". It did not follow that, because 'farmers' produce 'something less than 75 per cent of the National wealth', they should pay an equivalent amount of income tax. On the contrary he made the point that 'income tax is a tax on profits' and as farmers had not made profits because of the economic

conditions in the previous three years there was nothing on which to levy a tax. He maintained, therefore, that

to point out as evidence of the privileged position of the farmer that he pays no income tax, [was] about as relevant as to point out that he pays no super tax.<sup>61</sup>

There appears to have been some antagonism between Brennan and the Department of Agriculture. In the correspondence on increasing the agricultural grant to relieve rates Hogan addressed Brennan in a very sharp manner. Brennan likewise took a critical attitude towards the department and Hogan when they failed to reply to queries he had made about requests to finance the deficit of the IAOS. Brennan did not wish to finance the deficit in full and seems to have been annoyed that Hogan had given a commitment to the IAOS about the matter without consulting the Minister for Finance. Blythe on the other hand had no hesitation in granting the money. Brennan questioned if any state aid should be given to the IAOS. Again he criticised Hogan for not replying to his minute requesting information about his proposals for the future of the IAOS. Instead, Hogan had nominated six representatives to serve on the committee of the society. Brennan was clearly irritated by Hogan's handling of the affair. He wanted Blythe to make a response to his minute of 15 August 1924, 'an indispensable condition of' his 'considering a provision in the Estimates of 1925-26' for the IAOS grant. Brennan had asked for information on the re-organisation of the society throughout the autumn of 1924 without success. His continuous requests for information finally elicited a very curt response from Meyrick of Agriculture who told him that the society reorganisation had not been completed and that when it was he would let him know. The tone of the exchanges between Brennan and the department

do not suggest that an amicable relationship existed. It is also worth noting that on the issue of the agricultural grant, the financing of the IAOS and later on financing credit societies Blythe did not take his secretary's advice. This tallies with other evidence of the strained relationship between Brennan and Blythe, which ultimately led to Brennan's resignation in 1928.<sup>62</sup>

Having disposed of all Brennan's objections to special assistance for the farmers Hogan came back to his own position which will be quoted in full

agriculture is in a critical and urgent condition how much can we afford to borrow to relieve it so that the inflation caused thereby will not be a greater danger than allowing agriculture, our main industry, to go bankrupt? The proposal - there will be others - is that two millions be borrowed. It is stated that the resort to borrowing for the purpose of giving effect to this proposal "is immediately and necessarily inflationary in its effect." It is, but it would be about as inflationary in its effects as pouring a bucket of water into the North Sea.<sup>63</sup>

Although Hogan defended the farmers and fought for assistance for them he did so without discarding all his free trade principles. His plan was to allow the local authorities to borrow money to reduce the burden of rates. In the long run the rate payers would have to repay it.<sup>64</sup> However, in the meantime the impossible position in which both the government and the local authorities found themselves would be alleviated. It was a nice solution to what was a very serious problem. On the one hand it avoided giving direct handouts to one section of the community and on the other it made the job of collecting

rates a manageable enterprise once again. The immediate relief felt by the farmers would redound to Hogan's credit, although they would hardly think it sufficient. He won a victory over the all powerful Department of Finance. From the tone of his memorandum it is clear that he did not feel over-awed by them. In fact the opposite seems true. There was great assurance in the way he put his case which points to his confidence in the scheme and his ability to implement it. Instead of adopting a defensive approach, he attacked Finance and won.<sup>65</sup> In the event it was decided to increase the amount of the Agricultural Grant.

The Minister for Finance realised by 1925 that doubling the Agricultural Grant in order to relieve some of the rates burden on farmers was likely to become a permanent policy. He asked Brennan to find out what had been done in the North of Ireland and Great Britain.<sup>66</sup> Brennan contacted the Department of Finance in Belfast which told him that although the agricultural grant had been doubled and was likely to be doubled in the following year there was no legislation on the statute book which made it permanent. This correspondence gives an interesting insight into a meeting of minds amongst Finance officials on both sides of the border. The Belfast official gave what can only be described as an analysis based on wishful thinking in his reply which was for Brennan's 'private information'.

I may say that in official circles it was considered that far better use would have been made of the money if it had been expended on schemes for the development of the agricultural industry, but the Farmers' Union took an opposite view and they got their way. They have, however, recently asked for some extension of our agricultural schemes, and in doing so have suggested that the cost might be deducted

from this temporary grant which would seem to indicate that they are coming around to our Agricultural Department's point of view <sup>67</sup>

The application of the Agricultural Grant to cover arrears and annuities exacerbated the situation. In a minute to the Department of Local Government Brennan stated that the system which had been designed for the relief of rates had not envisaged the abnormal situation which existed in the early 1920s. This, however, was not completely true as George Wyndham, chief secretary for Ireland from 1900 to 1905, had written that the reason why the agricultural grant was connected to repayment of annuities was to 'provide against a combined refusal to pay'. They had not envisaged a large number of farmers in arrears with both rates and annuities and a native government in charge. What had been designed as a punitive measure by the British administration became unworkable in independent Ireland. The pressure which was exerted by all the farming interests on politicians made it impossible to continue to withhold the grant. They had to double it and make it de facto a permanent arrangement. It was a far from equitable solution to the problem. The net result of the policy was to give greater relief, in monetary terms, to the larger farmers who had bigger rates bills. There was some logic, therefore, behind the Northern Ireland finance department's wish to see the money spent on improving agriculture practices rather than alleviating short term difficulties, even if it was just a pious hope <sup>68</sup>

Hogan's stand on rates relief and the way in which he conducted his campaign is in marked contrast to his handling of the agricultural produce bills. They had taken many years to develop. They grew and were improved and extended as circumstances changed until

eventually there was a consensus which ultimately became law. The bulk of the work was carried out by the department who had been monitoring the situation for years. It was left to Hogan to put the bills before the Dail and make sure they got through with as little amendment as possible. He accomplished his task very successfully. The Local Government (Rates on Agricultural Land) Bill was different. It came in response to a crisis and the opposition which it generated came from within the government, that is, the Department of Finance, rather than from political opponents. Hogan dealt personally with the emergency, possibly because of the political implications of failure. They would have been immediate for himself and his party if he had not found an acceptable solution. Delaying his regulatory legislation, however necessary it was, would not have had the same political impact. It may have been because rates and rates relief were outside the normal competence of the Department of Agriculture that they had no established departmental view on the subject. This was a problem more naturally associated with the departments of Local Government and Finance. Rates, always a contentious area, would have caused particular difficulty in Hogan's own constituency where the vast majority of ratepayers were small farmers. He would therefore have been well informed about the hardship that rates and rates arrears collection were causing and presumably was anxious to do something about it. In this case he was in a position to take the lead and make his own decisions based on his analysis of the situation rather than on the well rehearsed opinions of his departmental officials. He took that opportunity.

In three areas we see the minister operating decisively. Firstly he was determined to protect the interests of his farmer constituents and farmers in general. With this in mind he drew up his proposals in a memorandum of February, 1924. Secondly he proved himself well

able to deal with the Department of Finance. He rejected their assessment of the situation and persuaded his government colleagues to adopt his more sympathetic line. In this he was undoubtedly aided by the popularity of the cause amongst the farming community. Thirdly, he pushed the bill swiftly through the Oireachtas to have it on the statute book two months after it was introduced in the Dail. In the introduction to this dissertation it is suggested that Hogan may have been a reactive rather than a creative minister. However the rates relief legislation shows him in both modes, that is reacting to a crisis and coming up with a creative solution which did not offend his conservative ideals.

This review of Hogan's early years in office shows him as a capable and responsive minister carrying out policies under the limits set by the overall government policy of free trade. There is no evidence that he disagreed with the general policy or that he contemplated acting in any other way, in fact the opposite was true. However, there is no reason to suppose that there was any inevitability about the economic policies which the first government of Ireland would pursue. Griffith, who was elected president of the Dail in January 1922, was the originator of the Sinn Féin doctrine of a self-sufficient Ireland. It was he who appointed Hogan Minister for Agriculture, he was also Minister for Agriculture in the provisional government, yet there is no hint that Hogan held the same views as Griffith or intended to instigate a self-sufficiency policy in agriculture. 'Griffith with that power and incisive leadership which came so naturally to him' failed to make any impression on the policies of his protege, Hogan.<sup>69</sup>

The speed with which the Cumann na nGaedheal government developed a coherent and consistent economic policy is interesting. Perhaps the lack of any detailed economic plan

on the part of Sinn Fein deputies who were elected in 1918, 1921 and 1922, and the concentration on the fight for independence, created a vacuum which allowed Ireland's bureaucracy to set the agenda McAleese says

The economic arguments in favour of political independence were regarded as of subsidiary importance in the build up of national sentiment They were not therefore very well articulated and were not subject to much debate in the period immediately preceding independence <sup>70</sup>

Hogan's experience at Agriculture seems to lend credence to this view, he took over the department and immediately began to tackle the problems which had been high on their list of priorities Yet on the issue of rates Hogan acted in a very decisive and independent way which suggests that he would not have been pushed into actions with which he fundamentally disagreed, especially if there were alternatives available However the take over of power went so smoothly, considering the unsettled state of the country, that it raises questions about the cleavage in Irish politics which, it is generally accepted, was caused by the disagreement over the Treaty The cohesion and agreement amongst the group which formed the elite of Cumann na nGaedheal and the government on economic policy cannot be attributed solely to the so called split It is possible to accept that they would have remained united during the civil war but it is not clear why they did not disintegrate when the immediate threat to the state was over in mid-1923, unless, that is, they agreed on areas other than the constitution

It would have been a remarkable coincidence if the deputies who supported or opposed the Treaty held views on the economic future of Ireland which divided conveniently along pro- and anti-Treaty lines. However Hogan's ten year period in office shows few signs of major disagreements over government policies and reinforces the idea that pro Treaty deputies had more in common than their wish to end the conflict with Britain. There was one notable exception to this rule, J J Walsh, the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, who took a completely different line than his government colleagues on the issue of protection for industry and agriculture. He, however, was a hybrid. Pro-treaty and pro-protection he did not fit comfortably into either of the main political parties. During his time as minister he earned the scorn of the Farmers' Union over his stance on increasing tillage. He was told to mind his own business before he commenced 'to plough his neighbour's plot'. He was categorised by its paper **The Irish Farmer** as a 'strong protectionist' when farmers were not certain that it would do them any good, 'in fact', it said, 'they [were] diametrically opposed to tariffs'.<sup>71</sup> Walsh fell from favour and took little part in electioneering for Cumann na nGaedheal in the run up to the second general election of 1927. In fact, he was out of the country. **The Irish Statesman** makes it clear that this was not surprising because for a long time it was obvious that Walsh was a protectionist of the extreme kind and that the policy of the Government in this respect was too moderate for him.<sup>72</sup> He did not stand in the September 1927 election. There was speculation at the time that he would join Fianna Fail. It is unlikely that he would have been well received in that party either as the only area where they would have agreed was the need for protection. **The Irish Statesman** encapsulated his political philosophy thus

we believe the basic fact in the consciousness of Mr J J Walsh is his conviction of the necessity of high protection - that and nothing else <sup>73</sup>

In his memoirs Walsh blamed the failure of Cumann na nGaedheal to fight off the challenge from Fianna Fail on the abandonment of protection for native industries and castigated the Farmers' Party

Then a small party of alleged farmers in the Dail, in reality ranchers never lost an opportunity of denouncing industrial development <sup>74</sup>

In undisguised bitterness towards his former party he maintained that 'its complete eclipse would long since have been a national gain' <sup>75</sup>

Walsh certainly seems to have been a man who swam against the tide of public opinion During the Second World War he came under the scrutiny of military intelligence They became aware of him because of his 'rather blatant pro-German sympathies' and his 'attempts surreptitiously to gam favour with certain Germans by passing to them information of a military nature concerning Northern Ireland' Walsh seems to have taken to the German cause as obsessively as he had adopted the mantle of protectionist He supported the Germans to such an extent that he was 'regarded in British circles as one of four potential Quislings in Ireland' <sup>76</sup> He remained what he had been in government until 1927 a maverick, whose views were never taken very seriously by colleagues or opponents <sup>77</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 Eunan O'Halpin, 'The civil service and the political system', **Administration**, 38, 4 (1991), pp 283-9
- 2 From a memorandum entitled the 'constitution and powers of the department' drawn up for the information of the Commission on Reconstruction and Development, which was sent to the secretary by the assistant secretary, 26 Apr 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G6871\23
- 3 Eunan O'Halpin, **The Decline of the Union British government in Ireland, 1892-1920** (Dublin and Syracuse, 1987), p 68
- 4 As in note 2 above
- 5 **The Irish Statesman** 24 Nov 1923
- 6 James Meenan, **George O'Brien. A Biographical Memoir** (Dublin, 1980), p 125
- 7 Hinchcliffe to Hogan 10 Oct 1925 NA, DA, AG1\G927\42 Lippens were the industrial group who set up the Irish Sugar Manufacturing Company in Carlow
- 8 See Chapter 3, pp 163-164

- 9 Hinchcliffe to Hogan, 10 Mar 1925, NA, DA, AG1\E4261\25 Hinchcliffe to Hogan, 17 Aug 1928 NA, DA, AG1\E15571\28
- 10 Hinchcliffe to Hogan, 10 Oct 1925, 14 Sept 1925, 31 Dec 1925, 2 Jan 1926 NA, DA, AG1\G927\42
- 11 **The Irish Times** 16 July 1936 **The Times** 16 July 1936
- 12 Departmental minute, 25 Sept 1920, NA, DA, AG1\A1742\23 Patrick Bolger, 'The Dreadful Years', in Carla Keating (ed ) **Plunkett and Co-operatives, Past Present and Future** (Cork, 1983), p 111
- 13 The intention of this bill was to regulate exports of livestock, meat, milk and milk products, poultry and poultry products, potatoes and grain in order to bring to an end complaints from British importers Memorandum from a department inspector in Liverpool to the assistant secretary, 20 Oct 1920, NA, DA, AG1\A1742\23 Departmental memorandum to the secretary, 30 Sept 1920, *ibid*
- 14 20 Oct 1920, *ibid* Report from a department inspector to the assistant secretary, 26 Oct 1920, letter to inspector from an egg importer 20 Oct 1920, NA, DA, AG1\A1742\23 Letter to Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries from the Town Clerk, Ramsgate Borough Council and forwarded to DATI, 16 Dec 1921, NA, DA, AG1\G27(NA) 9\22

- 15 Before independence there were consultations between DATI and MAF about the problems of disease in potatoes, through the potato advisory committee. Afterwards MAF and the department kept each other informed of developments. Correspondence on the topic from 1918 to 1924 is contained in NA, DA, AG1\A11762\22
- 16 Quoted in John O'Donovan, **The Economic History of Live Stock in Ireland** (Cork, 1940), p 408
- 17 *ibid* , p 389
- 18 'The Minister proposes to proceed with legislation on the lines recommended in the reports on the Commission on Agriculture dealing with butter and eggs. He desires that both are dealt with in one Bill' The secretary to the assistant secretary, 17 Jul 1923, NA, DA, AG1\A11752\22
- 19 Bee Pest Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1909 (8 Edw 7 c 34)
- 20 In answer to a question raised in the Dail by Michael Heffernan, TD, on proposed legislation on eggs and butter exports, Hogan said that it was based on the interim report of the commission on agriculture, 3 Dec 1923, NA, DA, AG1\A14231\23
- 21 In a memorandum to the Department of Industry and Commerce in 1928 the secretary said that there was 'no tobacco growing industry in this country'. He went

on to say that since 1923 the acreage under tobacco had steadily declined so that in 1927 there were only two statute acres and one grower Nor had there been any official returns of tobacco trials since 1923 25 Jan 1928, NA, DA Files, AG1\G157\28

- 22 Although there was not much interest in agricultural education in the national press the farming journal, **The Irish Homestead**, **The Irish Statesman**, and **The Irish Farmer** carried on a very detailed debate on the subject
- 23 The commission on agriculture (Drew Commission) was set up in November 1922 by Hogan to examine the needs of agriculture and suggest how it could be improved Its members were, James McNeill, Chairman, Sir John Keane, Professor J P Drew, R Butler, M Doyle, TD, E Mansfield and Sean Hales, TD After a couple of weeks McNeill resigned and Drew took over as chairman Sean Hales was assassinated and Mansfield resigned The minister added Charles Byrne TD, Michael Duffy, Dr George O'Brien, and Joseph Johnston of Trinity College Thomas Johnson, Labour, was also a member of the commission Daniel Hootor, **The Department's Story - A History of the Department of Agriculture, Dublin**, (Dublin, 1971), pp 134-5
- 24 O'Donovan, **Livestock in Ireland** pp 424-5

- 25 From a summary of evidence to the commission on agriculture on behalf of the Irish Creamery Managers' Association, (ICMA) February 1923, NA, DA, AG1\A2527\24
- 26 A copy of this document entitled 'Grading of Butter' was sent to the minister by the secretary of Thurles Co-operative Agriculture and Dairy Society on 5 Feb 1924  
ibid
- 27 In a minute dated June 1923, the chief inspector for dairying pointed out to the assistant secretary that the department would need more money for instructors and "surprise" butter inspectors because of the extra work which the bill would generate  
NA, DA, AG1\G2133\24
- 28 Hogan's private secretary to the secretary, 3 Oct 1923 Memorandum on the points raised by the minister, no date, but probably between 16 Oct and 26 Oct 1923  
ibid
- 29 In the file labeled 'Agricultural Produce Bill' (1920) there are details of evaluations of schemes being used in many other countries, such as Denmark, Holland, Canada, Sweden and Argentina NA, DA, AG1\A1743\23
- 30 The assistant secretary to the secretary, 4 Jul 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G2133\24
- 31 The minister's private secretary to the secretary, 3 Oct 1923, ibid

- 32 See note 28 Hogan asked for the department's observations on,
- (1) Objections from the factory owners and the IAOS
  - (2) On whether the commission on agriculture had reported on a scheme for improving factory and farmers butter
  - (3) What arrangements were required for inspections at ports
  - (4) The quantities of, (a) creamery butter exported (i) Co-op creamery, (ii) Proprietary creamery (b) Factory butter exported
  - (5) Whether there was an alternative scheme to grading at the ports
  - (6) The cost of administration
- 33 **DD** Vol 8, cols 1974-5, 23 Jul 1924
- 34 Cullen, **Economic History** p 154
- 35 A minute from the secretary to Hogan, 26 Oct 1924 and a memorandum from the assistant secretary to the secretary, 3 Dec 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G2133\24
- 36 Minister for Finance to Minister for Agriculture, 2 Apr 1924 Minute dated 5 Apr 1924, to the secretary of Finance from the minister referred to in a letter from the secretary of Finance to the secretary, 3 May 1924 *ibid*
- 37 **DD** Vol 7, col 2032, 6 Jun 1924
- 38 **DD** Vol 8, cols 1973-5, 23 Jul 1924

- 39     **DD** Vol 9, col 957, 6 Nov 1924
- 40     Denis Gorey, TD, was president of the Farmers' Party and represented the Carlow\Kilkenny constituency **DD** Vol 7, col 2677, 19 Jun 1924
- 41     **The Round Table** Vol 70, March, 1928, p 375
- 42     **DD** Vol 7, col 1926, 5 Jun 1924
- 43     During a conference with egg merchants in Monaghan on 17 Feb 1921 a department inspector 'mentioned that traders by testing eggs, could themselves deal with the question of the sale of stale eggs' NA, DA, AG1\A10549\23
- 44     From a report of a conference held at the department's offices, 19 Jun 1919, with representatives of the egg trade NA, DA, AG1\A1588\22
- 45     Throughout the files relating to the egg trade there are constant complaints about the condition and quality of imports into Britain For example a department inspector gave a very critical account of the trade with Britain and wrote of a letter which he had received from the Scottish Egg Trade Association about the 'loss through breakage and pilferages' and asking the Irish shippers to 'put their house in order now' NA, DA, AG1\A1742\23 and AG1\A10549\23
- 46     Memorandum by the vice president of DATI, 4 Oct 1920 *ibid*

47. The Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act, was introduced on 29 May 1924, and became law on 30 Jul. 1924. The Dairy Produce Act, 1924, was introduced on 6 Jun. 1924 and became law on 18 Dec. 1924.
48. 'Interim Report of the Agricultural Commission, on Marketing and transport of Irish agricultural produce - Eggs', Jan. 1924, NA, DA, AG1/A7134/24. During the drafting of the Agricultural Produce Bill, 1920, the department examined schemes which were being operated by other countries. They continued to taken an interest in developments overseas after independence. NA, DA, AG1/A1742\23; AG1/G3226\24.
49. **Irish Independent** 25 Sept. 1923.
50. A note addressed to Dr. Smith on the cover sheet of the file, 16 May 1924. Memorandum to the secretary from the chief inspector, dairying, 1 Jun. 1923. NA, DA, AG1/G1230\23.
51. Reports of the Free State Trade Reporters in Great Britain, 18 May 1929, 25 May 1929, 1 Jun. 1929, 16 Aug. 1929. NA, DFA, GR725\1929-30.
52. In 1923 fifty acts of the Oireachteas were passed and in 1924, sixty two.
53. The secretary, Department of Agriculture to the Revenue Commissioners, 20 Feb. 1924, asking that the dairy and eggs bills be expedited. The secretary to the

Attorney General, 26 Apr 1924, re the Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Bill the minister would 'be glad if the preparation of a Bill on the basis indicated in the draft can be regarded as very urgent' NA, DA, AG1\G2016\24

54 Secretary to the acting secretary of the executive council, no date but probably early in 1923 NA, DT, S 3047

55 **Connaught Telegraph** 10 Mar 1923

56 Browne and Farrell, **The Magill Book of Irish Politics** pp 201-203

57 Memorandum by the minister of Agriculture, 25 Feb 1924 This was probably drawn up for the information of the executive council, as shortly after it was written a committee was set up to examine its proposals for rates relief for farmers NA, DA, AG1\G316\31

58 Joseph Brennan, Department of Finance, to the secretary of the executive council, 15 Mar 1924 NA, DT, S 3629

59 Memorandum by the Minister for Agriculture, 22 Mar 1924, probably for the information of the executive council NA, DA, AG1\G3161\31

60 *ibid*

- 61     ibid
- 62     Brennan to Blythe, 20 Mar 1925     Brennan to Blythe, 29 Jan 1925, Brennan to Hogan, 15 Aug 1924, secretary, Agriculture, 11 Nov 1924     NA, DF, F024\0004\24
- 63     Memorandum by the Minister for Agriculture, 22 Mar 1924, probably for the information of the executive council     NA, DA, AG1\G3161\31
- 64     ibid
- 65     The Local Government (Rates on Agricultural Land) Act, 1924, was introduced in the Dail on 18 May 1924 and became law on 1 Aug 1924
- 66     Minute from the minister for Finance to the secretary for Finance 5 May 1925     NA, DF, F103\0002\25
- 67     Department of Finance, Belfast, to Brennan, marked personal, 12 May 1925     ibid
- 68     Minute from Brennan to the secretary, Department of Local Government, 15 Nov 1923     ibid     George Wyndham, "The Completion of Land Purchase" in S Rosenbaum (ed), **Against Home Rule, The Case for the Union** (1st ed , 1912, Port Washington, 1970) p 254

- 69 Lyons, **Ireland** p 453 See Richard P Davis, **Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein** (Dublin, 1974) pp 127-144 for a detailed discussion on the background to Griffith's economic nationalism He suggests that there are many contradictions in the policies of Sinn Fein which were compounded by 'that lofty intransigence which declines to make terms with society as it is' concluding 'The economics of Ireland were secondary to his [Griffith's] hatred of England', (p 144)
- 70 McAleese in Drudy (ed), **Ireland and Britain since 1922** pp 88-89
- 71 **The Irish Farmer** 19 Jun 1925
- 72 **The Irish Statesman** 3 Sept 1927
- 73 *ibid* , 15 Oct 1927
- 74 J J Walsh, **Recollections of a Rebel** (Tralee, 1944), p 70
- 75 *ibid* , p 71
- 76 Bryan to Walsh, 17 Sept 1941, NA, DFA A8
- 77 James Meenan, "The Historic Perspective" in James Meenan, **The Economic and Social State of the Nation** (Dublin, 1982), p 8

## CHAPTER 3

1925-1927

The years 1922 to 1925 covered some of the most difficult times for Ireland and Irish farming. The post-war international economic situation improved only gradually and Irish farmers were at an additional disadvantage because civil unrest had flared up in 1919 just when the war in Europe had ended. 'First tram for three months reaches Maam Cross' was the headline in **The Irish Times** in September 1922 and in January 1923, Kevin O'Higgins presided at a conference to 'discuss the most effective means of dealing with the lawlessness prevailing throughout the country'.<sup>1</sup> Despite these unsettled conditions, however, Hogan had begun 'what was thought to be almost revolutionary at the time', his regulatory legislation.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the next two years he continued to make progress starting another minor revolution, in livestock breeding, and playing a large part in the introduction of the beet sugar industry into Ireland.

Hogan's legislation heightened amongst farmers the awareness that individual efforts to improve their industry, however laudable, were insufficient. They looked on Denmark which had a population of comparable size and a dependence on agriculture which was similar to Ireland's. The Danes were regarded and still are, as the epitome of efficient agricultural production and marketing. In October 1925 **The Irish Times** produced an agricultural supplement. It marked a visit organised by the County Cork Association of the Irish Farmers' Union (IFU) to Denmark. The purpose of the visit was to find out how the Danes had managed to become one of the most efficient and prosperous agricultural countries in the world. The majority of the delegates were IFU members from Cork with some representatives from Dublin and an official of the Department of Agriculture. The visitors and the journalists who accompanied them were impressed by what they saw. They

were wholehearted in their praise not only of the courtesy and civility of the people but of their evident prosperity and the way it had been achieved <sup>3</sup>

Throughout the supplement several themes recurred. The most constant was the education system on which it was believed the whole success story of Denmark had been built. Danish schools gave a high priority to agriculture because it was the most important industry in the country. Practical skills were taught at all levels and it was not unusual for farm labourers to attend agricultural schools in order to make them more proficient in the work which they carried out for their employers. This was in marked contrast to Ireland, where agricultural education was regarded as separate from primary and secondary schooling. Another theme was the way in which the Danes had organised themselves into co-operatives to buy supplies and to market their goods. Cleanliness with its consequential good effect on the quality of farm produce was referred to throughout the supplement with evident envy. The inference was that Irish farmers and creameries did not share the Danish devotion to hygiene. However, the overriding impression given by all the writers and commentators was of a country where the people were independent and had organised themselves into co-operative groups not because of 'overhead propaganda' which the assistant secretary of the IAOS believed was the case in Ireland. 'Danish co-operation', he said 'springs from beneath - from the very soil itself, one might say - from the soul of the nation.'

Legislation was not the first tool the Danes reached for when they wanted to improve and regulate their industry, whereas one writer complained that in Ireland 'we have put all our money on the efficacy of this method of social salvation. More important to the Danes is

the creation of an "economic man" by education and training' <sup>4</sup> However, the department's experience with self regulation for agriculture had been a failure since it was established Voluntary schemes had been tried but with little success Hogan was forced against his instincts to introduce regulation but with the support of all farming interest groups

Hogan would have agreed with the sentiments expressed in the supplement His dislike of legislation as a means of controlling farm production was well known The Danish experience was living proof that it was not always necessary for the state to intervene to make an industry profitable Denmark believed, as he did, in free access to world markets and so did not give direct subsidies to farmers or exporters They had to take their chances against foreign competitors both on the world and the home market Therefore, they had to give good quality and value for money Otherwise they would not have been able to retain their customers at home or abroad However the reason the Danes were so strongly in favour of the philosophy of free trade may have been the knowledge that their exporters were equal to any competition from any source and did not need the protection of tariffs or subsidies The Irish experience was different The independent spirit and the well established education system geared towards agriculture which the Danes had established in the less competitive days of the nineteenth century did not exist in Ireland The endemic poverty particularly in the congested areas of the west coast had created conditions where self-help at the level at which it took place in Denmark was a pious hope and difficult to make a reality The co-operative movement in Ireland flourished in areas which were already comparatively prosperous, namely in the counties where dairying was well developed This suggests that there was a correlation between the economic conditions of the farmers and the degree of co-operation which took place <sup>5</sup>

Educating the farming community was one of the original objectives of DATI and it remained part of the department's brief after 1922. However, their brief did not cover primary or secondary schools. It covered agricultural colleges which took school leavers and ran full time courses. It also provided part-time instruction and assistance at local level through a network of agricultural instructors and their assistants at county level. Specialist instructors were also employed in areas such as poultry rearing and butter making. This system remained virtually unchanged throughout the 1920s and 1930s. During the winter months series of lectures were organised by the field staff, which local farmers were invited to attend. These contacts allowed department policy on the various aspects of animal husbandry, tillage and marketing to be disseminated, helped by official publications giving advice and general information. Most of the instructors and inspectors were well qualified in agricultural science. To their number were added more inspectors to police the agricultural acts and report to the department on their progress<sup>6</sup>

Unlike Denmark, however, agriculture was not integrated into the curriculum in primary and post primary schools. The low priority given to the study of subjects concerned with farming in Irish schools was due almost certainly to the influence of the British educational system which did not have a vocational bias. However it was not inevitable that after independence agriculture should continue to be regarded as a specialist subject. That it remained outside the mainstream of primary and post primary education cannot be blamed altogether on the educational traditions of the previous century. Hogan and the department are at least partially to blame for not tackling the reform of agricultural education. It was a missed opportunity, especially at primary level, to educate the future generation of farmers and increase their knowledge of the importance of fundamentals such as hygienic

production methods and simple accounting. This neglect caused Irish exporters financial loss and allowed other more customer conscious countries to establish themselves in what had been part of Ireland's home market, Britain. The secretary of the department reinforced the traditional line on agricultural education. In his submission to the committee on technical education, he suggested that a sound general elementary education would develop a taste for informative reading. He thought that entry to agricultural classes might be deferred until a student was twenty years old. In other words he believed that agricultural education should be a thing apart and confined to those who would make their careers on the land. Given that the majority of the population were involved in agriculture and that only a tiny minority went on to secondary school, it seems an odd recommendation. He must have known better than anybody that farmers and farm labourers who had left school at the age of fourteen were unlikely to return to formal classes on farming when they were twenty.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently it is hardly surprising that it was not until 1926 that an act establishing faculties of agriculture and dairy science was passed. Agricultural education had been spread over a large number of institutions throughout the country such as the College of Science and Albert College in Glasnevin.<sup>8</sup> This cannot have been an adequate way to support agriculture, and would not have compared favourably with practices in other mainly agricultural countries. There may have been historical and administrative reasons for the unco-ordinated appearance of the third level and vocational tier of agricultural education.

The educational ethos which prevailed in the British Isles did not give priority to vocational education. It was unlikely, also, that those who administered the system at local level in

Ireland, the boards and the clergy, would have relinquished their responsibility or have been dictated to by DATI before 1922. After independence the Department of Education does not appear to have made any attempt to include agriculture in the curriculum for students of all ages.

The attitude of government departments and of Irish people in general towards agricultural education may have been influenced by their attitudes towards agriculture. In an article in 1925 on Irish education policy Eoin McNeill, Minister for Education, summed up this point of view:

It is a curious fact an effect partly of former conditions of land tenure but partly also of education, that Irish people in general do not like agriculture. Their desire for possession of land is sometimes a fierce passion, but the love is not for the land but for the possession of it.

McNeill did not however convert his concern to promote interest in agriculture into practical measures for the improvement of agricultural education, eschewing any idea of vocational teaching which he regarded as 'simply slave education, an insult to human nature and a menace to society'.<sup>9</sup> This was hardly surprising since small farms were usually equated with poverty and a struggle to make a living. Consequently the families of those who wished to better themselves and who had access to education wanted it directed towards professions such as the law, teaching and medicine.<sup>10</sup> Education and agriculture were not regarded as necessary to one another. Hogan was a prime example of this attitude: education was for most farmers' sons and daughters a way of escaping from the

drudgery of farm life. This situation gave rise to an interesting paradox. Irish agriculture was regarded by almost every farmer in Ireland as well as the vast majority of the non-farming community as Ireland's most important industry. However it had a very low status compared with other industry, commerce and the professions. The reason is simple: collectively farming was a formidable industry, but its component parts were small and not always efficient or economically viable. The statistics said that almost all Ireland's foreign income came from agriculture, that is the earnings which allowed Ireland to trade with the rest of the world. At local level, however, it must have been difficult to realise that the economy of the whole country depended on the production of so many small and uneconomic holdings.

Hogan's defence of Ballyhaise agricultural school in County Cavan gives an insight into the department's attitude towards some of their own educational institutions, and it also shows that he sometimes went against official advice. In a memorandum to the secretary a senior official was harshly critical of Ballyhaise agricultural station. He regarded its educational output as 'trifling' and suggested the best course would be to 'get rid of it'.<sup>16</sup> Hogan visited the school in September 1924 and came to radically different conclusions. He looked at Ballyhaise from a completely different angle. He regarded the poor results of experiments as a consequence not of a badly run institution but of the kind of conditions with which farmers on the difficult lands of Cavan and Leitrim were confronted daily. He was not of the opinion that Ballyhaise had no useful future. On the contrary, he said that there were

enough farms where with first class land, by buying the best stock and feeding and manuring regardless of expense, we can inevitably produce, say 800 gallons per cow, per lactation period <sup>17</sup>

While he understood that such experiments were necessary and useful, he thought that their results should be checked against the results of corresponding experiments in places like Ballyhaise,

where conditions, such as climate and soil etc , cannot be changed, are not ideal, but at the same time are typical of a large area of the country <sup>18</sup>

He concluded that Ballyhaise should be run with a view to solving, as far as possible, the special problems of Cavan and Leitrim and could provide short courses for farmers from the area

The department snapped into action after the minister had intervened. A report was produced which went into the points which he had raised, in great detail <sup>19</sup> Hogan analysed the problem from the stand point of a farmer who was interested in the practical application of research carried out by agriculturalists. The department had lost sight of the purpose for which such agricultural stations/schools had been set up, that is, not just to produce high returns per se but the best possible results given the local conditions. Hogan, by his intervention, caused a radical re-think. This led to a departmental conference where a number of imaginative suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the

performance of Ballyhaise were made<sup>20</sup> Ballyhaise agricultural station remained, thanks to Hogan's decisive intervention, and is now Ballyhaise College

Apart from Hogan's interest in the application of agricultural experiments under local conditions there may have been a degree of political interest involved He wrote to P F Baxter, a Cavan TD, in October 1924, telling him that he had no intention of closing Ballyhaise but had given instructions for the development of work in certain directions<sup>21</sup> It is not possible to say if it was at the prompting of Baxter that he began to take an interest in the future of Ballyhaise, or if Baxter became worried about its closure because of the sudden interest of Hogan and the department It would seem out of character for Hogan to expend so much time and energy on a cause with which he did not agree, especially as closure would have saved state funds However, Hogan was a politician, and so was not averse to passing on good news and associating himself with it whenever possible

This was just a small incident in the administration of the *Department of Agriculture* However, it illustrates how a minister can impose his will, particularly in an area with which he is familiar The official's statement that the station should close down was unequivocal and he gave good reasons for this assessment The minister's analysis was quite different and destroyed the case for closure The department did not argue with the line which the minister took and quickly got down to producing a plan for Ballyhaise based on Hogan's suggestions for the farm Perhaps they took this attitude because this was an issue which could not be fudged, and because the minister had shown that he had a complete grasp of the situation The incident is interesting as it shows the extent of a minister's power once he is convinced that what he wants is correct and has the energy to

pursue it. It also shows that one action does not automatically lead to a re-think of overall policy. Ballyhaise was an isolated incident which did not disturb the settled ideas on which the system was based or lead to a review of the relevance of the work carried out by the department's educational institutions. It may, however, have affected future judgements which were made when the work of similar institutions was being evaluated.<sup>22</sup>

There was a strong belief amongst commentators in the farming press that agricultural education was being neglected. They had no compunction about airing their views on the need for more agricultural education at all levels in the schools. A good flavour of contemporary opinion can be gained from an editorial in the **Irish Homestead** in 1922. The Farmers' Union had raised the need for the teaching of agricultural science in primary schools. **The Freeman's Journal** expressed fears of the 'undue preponderance of agricultural education' if such a policy were adopted. This idea was firmly put in its place by the **Irish Homestead**.

the Southern towns live on the farmers, and that being so, it is unreasonable to talk about undue preponderance of agricultural interest in a programme for the primary schools where there is no mention of agriculture at all, and where rural science is an optional subject. 11

Throughout the decade the **Irish Homestead**, **The Irish Statesman**, and **The Irish Farmer** covered the topic of agricultural education. **The Irish Statesman** was outspoken on many occasions about the need for a change in the education system which it believed would lead to greater efficiency in farming. It referred to a speech by Hogan which been critical

of the lack of progress made by farmers. Praising him for his directness, it asked why twenty-five years after the organisation of agriculture had begun was it necessary for him to air home-truths which should have been the indisputable commonplace of rural thought:

It is, we think, because education in the rural districts in the past had but little bearing on rural life. Our farmers read but little ... we doubt if more than five per cent of Irish farmers subscribe to any agricultural journal ... we are being driven out of markets we depend on. We cannot say that we blame farmers so much as the regime which left them half illiterate.<sup>12</sup>

This theme was discussed and developed throughout the following years. The stand which papers like **The Irish Statesman** took seems to have had very little influence on the way that primary and secondary education developed. Hogan was aware of the necessity for education as a way of improving farming methods. He tartly remarked that some people believed that it would be possible to devise a system under which the Irish farmer could be educated 'without the necessity of having to think.' The speech, according to **The Irish Statesman**, was widely reported but it pointed out that it was 'characteristic that sub-editorial blue pencils were wielded on the sections in which the Minister expounded his policy in regard to rural education'.<sup>13</sup> The paper was aware that it was not a topic which was regarded as newsworthy. Hogan believed in educating the farmer but he did not attempt to change the thinking of the Department of Education or those of his colleagues in government. He never suggested any radical changes which would have brought agricultural education to the fore and put Ireland's schools on a par with those of the Danes. The praise which was lavished on the Danish system of education in the farming

and national press brought no practical results in Ireland. The status quo remained secure. There was no upsurge of public opinion demanding a similar system of high quality vocational education.<sup>14</sup>

The Irish education system was well established and very much in the control of the Catholic church by 1922. The church would probably not have been in favour of a system like the Danish Folk Schools because they encouraged a spirit of individualism and self-reliance, which was at variance with the tradition in Ireland. However, it does not appear that they were ever seriously challenged on the issue, debate on the subject being confined to a few farming journals. It is more likely that a sense of pessimism about the prospects for farming prevented any consensus on the need for change developing. The lack of confidence in the future of rural Ireland led to what **The Irish Homestead** called the 'cream-separator' effect

which separated the cream of the intelligence of Ireland and manufactured it for export, or for urban consumption, while the skin milk of the intelligence was returned to the rural areas. <sup>15</sup>

Nothing was done to encourage the education system to give a higher priority to agriculture and agricultural science, even though Hogan remained quite definite in his opinion that the prosperity of Ireland would be based on agriculture for the foreseeable future. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that he did not pay attention to the way in which the rural community were being educated. The department files which relate to all types of agricultural produce are filled with references to the damage being done to the export trade

not because the basic produce was inferior but because of poor handling This included packaging, hygiene and the conditions under which livestock were transported In chapter two reference was made to legislation to improve the quality control of poultry and dairy produce, due in no small way to the criticism and complaints from British wholesalers and retailers Livestock exports were also coming under pressure from commonwealth and South American competitors This focused attention on the quality and presentation of animals which were being sold to British buyers

Like the dairy and poultry trade the livestock industry was being made aware that what had previously been regarded as the 'common and inseparable interests' of Britain and Ireland had altered as a result of the Treaty and also as a result of growing export penetration from other countries of the Empire In an attempt to prevent disease restrictions against Irish cattle being made permanent, the secretary suggested to the Colonial Office that the disadvantages which Ireland would suffer under new cattle regulations would be used as an argument in favour of a republic 'it will be said that it could not be worse than a republic Ireland might indeed be treated with more respect' However, a not unsympathetic official at the Colonial Office pointed out to him

I fear it is inevitable that Ireland will find that autonomy of any kind is inseparable from certain disadvantages You may rest assured that we here shall do everything in our power to minimise these difficulties But Irish autonomy will inevitably mean British autonomy in matters which previously were treated as common and inseparable interests

My deepest regret is that the provisions establishing permanent free trade were struck out of the Treaty. We shall always now be faced by the possibility that the agricultural interest here will use their power to obtain protection against the most formidable competitors.<sup>24</sup>

This was an early indication of what could reasonably be expected in the future. But while the market for Irish cattle might be eroded by new competitors, Ireland had been for many years a major and convenient supplier who was unlikely to be abandoned without good cause. It was important, therefore, not to increase the threat through careless marketing, something which was within the control of the trade.<sup>24</sup>

The minister, his department and the industry feared the consequences of Ireland being treated as a foreign country for the purposes of the cattle trade. They were not alone in their fear. The Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland was similarly preoccupied. There was a continuing community of interests between the Agriculture departments north and south which transcended politics. It may be that such amiable relations were possible precisely because they were maintained by "semi-official" correspondence and contacts between civil servants, many of whom would have worked together before independence. No evidence has come to light of contacts at ministerial level which would obviously have raised political difficulties. However, Hogan was kept informed of the lobbying efforts of both the northern and southern representatives in London. In May 1922 he wrote to the British Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries saying that the Provisional government was going to improve the quality of livestock. He made a case against the admission of Canadian cattle giving the risk of disease and unstable supply as reasons for maintaining

an embargo against them <sup>25</sup> He was obviously fearful of the inroads which they could make into Ireland's traditional market

It is not easy to say to what extent the new trading position was appreciated by the government or the country at large In a press release Hogan gave the background to their attempts to maintain the easy access which livestock had had to the British market in the past He had asked to be represented at the discussions between Britain and Canada but his request was turned down on the grounds that they were not dealing with Irish cattle In November 1922 he was informed that whatever regulations applied to Canadian cattle would also apply to Irish He concluded bluntly

the moral of the story is plain and is, number one - that business is business and that in business matters England will do what suits her because the Irish economy was 'exceptionally dependent on foreign trade' <sup>26</sup>

This episode must have been worrying for Hogan for it showed how vulnerable Ireland's largest industry was to decisions made in Britain A minister less dedicated to free trade might have been tempted to intervene with promises of support for the cattle trade His response, however, was to implement measures to improve the product so that it could withstand the increased competition and achieve consistently high prices However, fears about competition from Canadian cattle proved unfounded

It was soon found that store cattle from Canada could not compete seriously on the British market with store cattle from Ireland and this trade in live cattle continued to be quite prosperous<sup>27</sup>

Hogan remained concerned about disease restrictions. The livestock export trade could be brought to a halt during foot and mouth epidemics. Exporting dead meat was a way of overcoming the regulations. He called for the department's observations on how the trade was progressing. The department looked at two centres where efforts to start a dead meat industry had been made before independence: Drogheda and Wexford. Neither had been a success. In Wexford heavy freight charges were the main cause of the failure to fulfil 'the success it at one time gave promise of'. The Louth factory was hit hard by the war when 'conditions hampered the transport of carcasses' and the price of cattle was high. There was one other obstacle to the trade which could not be ignored, competition from countries like Argentina and New Zealand who were already strong players in that market.<sup>28</sup>

The difficulty of securing adequate and regular supplies of livestock hampered not only the dead meat trade. Developing alternative markets to lessen dependence on the British trade was subject to the same problem. The establishment of trade with continental countries would require a steady supply of animals to make the investment in suitable sea transport worthwhile for the carriers. In 1922 Ireland's trade representative in Brussels saw exporting to Belgium as a 'most promising outlet for surplus Irish cattle'. He wanted to have the transport costs defrayed in order to give the trade a chance to become established.<sup>29</sup> An Irish trading corporation which wanted to become involved in exporting to Belgium asked if the government would guarantee them against loss and grant whatever facilities and

assistance might be necessary. But even this corporation in their submission to the department did not hide the fact that the 'English' trade in spite of its 'slackness' at the time still produced considerable profits<sup>30</sup>. The departments of Agriculture and of Industry and Commerce examined the proposition. A year later Industry and Commerce were quoting a Belgian importer who wanted two hundred head straight away and was 'anxious to be the first in the field'<sup>31</sup>. Later that year Hogan came up with his proposal for exporting to Belgium. He ignored the requests for subsidies and guarantees and suggested instead a propaganda campaign in the Belgian press to alert importers to 'the fact that we can supply'<sup>31</sup>.

This was, perhaps, as shortsighted a policy as the lack of urgency in promoting the dead meat trade. The difficulties associated with encouraging growth in either area should not, however, be underestimated. It would have been difficult to divert exports from the still profitable British market which was taking 743,000 head compared with a estimated requirement of 20,000 for the Belgian market which was untried and would pay in a currency which was likely to fluctuate in value<sup>33</sup>. Criticism of the minister and the livestock exporters for their tendency to concentrate on the British market and ignore the alternatives should be tempered with the knowledge that they were choosing to sell where they got the best price. They would have been open to far greater criticism if they had not availed themselves of a convenient market which every livestock exporting country in the world was doing its best to penetrate.

Hogan's disinclination to intervene in the cattle trade by subsidising innovation did not extend to his ideas on improving the national breeding stock<sup>34</sup>. The act which he was

instrumental in framing reversed the emphasis of the schemes which had been in operation under the supervision of DATI since the turn of the century. They had concentrated on the payment of premiums for registered cows and grants to cow testing associations which monitored the milk yields and general performance of the animals. Farmers who participated received a small fee for keeping records. The Treasury had suggested to DATI in a note in 1919 that it would be better if grants were given to bull societies<sup>35</sup>. However, DATI disagreed, believing that more staff to supervise cow testing and registration would lead to the kind of progress which they had been trying to achieve<sup>36</sup>.

A more realistic assessment of why the scheme had not succeeded was given by an official of a cow testing association in County Cork. In his opinion the reason he could not get farmers to join, even though he was local secretary of the Farmers' Union, was because they regarded the work involved as too troublesome and therefore not worth the effort<sup>37</sup>. It was also true that because the DATI schemes were voluntary there was a considerable element of self selection in the composition of groups who took part. This meant that those who were most likely to undertake the work involved in cow testing and registration were the same farmers who would be interested in breeding good stock. A report of an inspection of Kerry cattle in 1914 bears this out.

the want of success is due to the fact that the scheme has in practice proved unsuitable to the conditions which obtain in the districts where Kerries are bred. The holdings are, almost without exception, small and the farmers are not in good circumstances. They see no immediate prospect of deriving any immediate benefit from the registration scheme, they think it offers no inducement, or no hope of

ultimate profit to repay them for in the first place retaining their most saleable animals and secondly for the trouble involved in the keeping of records - a matter which appears to them burdensome <sup>38</sup>

This was the attitude which Hogan had to overcome

The policy to eliminate the so-called 'scrub bull' for which the 1925 Act was implemented seems to have been a more direct and less complicated way of raising the quality of the national dairy and beef herds. It may appear difficult, with the benefit of hindsight, to understand why this simple solution had not been adopted in the first place. 'Cow-testing', says Hootor, 'was encouraged and by 1929 the membership of cow-testing associations was three times what it was in 1923 - even then only 6.8 per cent of the total cow population was under test'. Ending a practice which had existed for generations, that is keeping a bull to service the farm's cattle, was not easy either for the farmers or the department. Deteriorating export markets gave the introduction of the scheme a better chance of success. Like all changes in agriculture it had to be demonstrated that it would give the farmer a greater return for his investment and labour. However, the failure of the efforts of the previous twenty years must have made the introduction of compulsory registration and licencing of bulls easier to present to those farmers who had reservations, especially since the evidence of that failure had grown over the preceding years <sup>39</sup>. Whatever farmers may have thought on an individual basis, Hogan was convinced that it would meet with general approval. During the second reading he said

the principle of this Bill is approved by the agriculture commission by, I think, all the county committees of agriculture, and by, I think, every organisation or association of farmers throughout the country <sup>40</sup>

Nor was any opposition to the principle offered in the Dail. It was welcomed by Denis Gorey on behalf of the Farmers' Party and accepted as a necessity by his colleague Michael Heffernan <sup>41</sup>

In the years immediately following the introduction of the act there were questions in the Dail about the numbers of animals rejected by inspectors enforcing the act. Hogan, in an answer to a question on the subject in 1927, said that 'on average about 45 per cent were rejected' <sup>42</sup>. It is interesting to note that officials of the department suggested when preparing the answer to this question that

figures for each inspection are supplied but it may be better not to give them, as the point might be raised that rejections at the latest inspection were proportionately high. This is due of course to the raising of the standard <sup>43</sup>

He took their advice, as he invariably did when answering Dail questions, and did not break down the figures. What makes this worth noting is the attitude which the department had adopted when enforcing the newly introduced regulatory legislation (referred to in chapter two) which was gradually raising the standard of the animals to be registered. It shows a commendable flexibility which is not often associated with the civil service and a degree of pragmatism which may be attributable to the influence of the minister. Not

everybody agreed with the way the department were handling the act one deputy said his complaint was not with the inspectors or the act but the way the department were trying to advance too quickly This was, in his opinion, the cause of protests against the number of animals being rejected <sup>44</sup>

At a Derry Rotary Club meeting in 1927 members of the Chamber of Commerce blamed the Northern Ireland and Irish governments for the depressed state of the Irish cattle trade Both governments had adopted similar restrictions on licencing and registration of bulls A local shipping agent protested that small farmers would not pay high fees to have their animals serviced and this was leading to a shortage of young cattle He used export figures to back his argument more than one million head exported in 1924, down to 781,000 in 1925, and to 721,000 in 1926, with worse figures projected for 1927 It seems to have escaped his notice that the numbers exported had begun to decline before the act had begun to take effect, making it unlikely that the Live Stock Breeding Act and its Northern Ireland equivalent could have been the main cause The decline was the result of conditions already described, greater competition and the British demand for good quality beef at a reasonable price <sup>45</sup>

Hogan alluded to the cause of the drop in exports in his answer to a question from another TD in the Dail He said that the cattle trade was facing 'serious opposition' which made it essential to upgrade livestock to meet the opposition successfully <sup>46</sup> The competitiveness, particularly of Canadian livestock, forced those concerned with the trade to look at areas which had been ignored because of Ireland's hitherto privileged position in the British market Now that those privileges were being eroded existing flaws were being uncovered,

which it was accepted were contributing to the drop in prices for Irish cattle. One such problem was the ill-treatment of animals at fairs and during transit. The result of such treatment was not just the suffering of the animals. Bruising caused by careless droving when loading and unloading reduced the value of carcasses. A deputation to the department told the minister that the price of Irish cattle was ten to twelve shillings per cwt less than for Canadian cattle and blamed the conditions under which Irish livestock were being transported. Hogan accepted the contention that animals were ill-treated but suggested that there was exaggeration in the press. He also suggested that there were other reasons why Canadian cattle were achieving higher prices, the main one being that their cattle were better finished. It was noted at the time that it was the drop in prices which had brought about the public concern for the welfare of cattle for export.

So long as it was the immortal soul of the drover that was in danger because of its cruelty there was no particular stir, but when it was proved that the cattle deteriorated in value by from twopence to fourpence per lb because of the bad treatment they received on their way to market and that yearly losses to Ireland ran into millions, business woke up.<sup>47</sup>

Hogan in his time at agriculture was not easily seduced by simplistic arguments, such as the connection between falling cattle prices and ill-treatment. He realised that when demand for Irish cattle had been strong and competition weak, considerations about the treatment of animals in transit had been ignored by British customers. Therefore he would not allow himself to be associated with the notion that if ill-treatment was stopped the trade would instantly improve.<sup>48</sup>

There had undoubtedly been considerable disquiet about the treatment of live animals for export, if newspaper reports are used as an indicator of public opinion. The press connected the cruelty issue with the drop in Irish cattle exports. Mr Ganley of the Salesmasters' Association summed up the feeling of the deputation of representatives from all branches of the cattle trade which met the minister when he said 'the animals suffer from first to last' <sup>50</sup> Hogan, however, pointed out during the course of discussions at the meeting the difficulties which would be involved in eliminating hardship for cattle from the system. It was not just a matter of one body or of one set of facilities being regulated. There was the treatment by the farmers who brought their cattle to markets, the provision of suitable fair greens, co-ordinating railway time-tables with those of the shipping companies, improving the accommodation on trains and vessels and preventing gratuitous violence by drovers and others handling the animals. Most of these elements fell outside the ambit of the department and were the concern of Local Government, Justice and Industry and Commerce. He told the deputation that 'the matter is not so simple as it may appear' <sup>51</sup> He did, however, agree to a committee of enquiry into the marketing of livestock 'to find out where the trouble' took 'place and how it' was 'to be removed as far as possible' <sup>52</sup> This was made up of representatives of those directly concerned with the transportation and marketing of livestock, members of animal welfare associations and officials of the department <sup>53</sup>

The committee drew up a report which covered many of the main areas of contention. Some of their recommendations such as the speeding up of rail transport and the reduction of overcrowding on cattle ships would have been costly for private interests to implement, Others would have borne more heavily on the public purse, particularly the rate payer who

would have had to provide suitable fair greens, enforcement inspectors, and all night street lighting around markets where cattle arrived the evening before a sale. There were other issues which might be called humanitarian, such as dehorning cattle, providing adequate food and water for animals in transit and the licencing of drovers. However, the committee responsible for the report do not appear to have followed up many of its recommendations with action. Implementing them completely would have meant a co-ordinated effort by all the interests represented on the committee in co-operation with government departments. Predictably a decline in public pressure, and the indifference of farmers, meant that action was limited <sup>54</sup>

The department issued the Animals (Transit & Exportation) Order in the hope that this would improve the conditions for Irish livestock. The order did not make any immediate difference. Glasgow importers still complained about the bruised state in which cattle arrived <sup>55</sup>. Port inspectors in Britain blamed drovers for the bruising which they observed had become less frequent. However, they did admit that injuries were not always visible until after the animals were slaughtered <sup>56</sup>. The department was conscious of public disquiet about the issue. Newspaper cuttings of major articles 'deploring' the 'ill-usage of Irish cattle' and connecting this with the downturn in the cattle trade were collected and kept in the department's files. The department seems to have taken a rather sanguine view of the complaints from Britain and in the Irish press, preferring to accept the reports of their inspectors who said that 'damage' was 'rare' <sup>57</sup>. The ill-treatment of animals in transit may have decreased, or at least the more obvious abuses became less apparent as by the end of 1926 it was no longer a major cause for concern in the press. It is certainly not true to say that it had stopped. Campaigns to improve the lot of livestock exports or to ban them

completely have continued to the present day. However, as far as the department and Hogan were concerned they had dealt with the matter. The interest which they had taken, encouraged by a campaign in the press and the suggestion that it was contributing to the depressed state of the cattle trade, seems to have wrought sufficient changes, short of legislation, to defuse public concern and increase awareness of the problem among those who handled animals for export.<sup>58</sup>

Concern about the ill-treatment of cattle was replaced in 1926 by worries about the numbers of cattle being rejected as unfit for export because they appeared to be suffering from bovine tuberculosis (TB). The British authorities introduced a Bovine Tuberculosis order in 1925 to enable them to screen cattle imports. Irish officials began to inspect animals due for shipment in an attempt to stop those with obvious signs of disease being carried to ports where they would either have to be slaughtered and sold at a loss or returned at the expense of the owner. Deputies were concerned that veterinary inspectors 'on the other side of the water' were not always correct in their diagnosis and believed they were far too strict when interpreting the rules for entry. There was a very real conflict of interest between Irish farmers, their representatives and the British government. One TD put the British side of the argument in the Dail.<sup>59</sup> In response to Michael Heffernan's assertion that farmers would not pay £2 2 0 to have their cows undergo a test for TB acceptable to both the Irish and British authorities, he said

I know it is expensive, but the British Government put some value on the health of their people, and I do not think it would be in the least influenced by the question of saving the Irish owner two pounds.<sup>60</sup>

It may be significant that the speaker was a medical practitioner

Hogan took a practical stand on the issue in the Dail. He denied the implication that Irish cattle were being singled out for special attention. He pointed out that they were being treated no differently than cows in England, that is any cow which appeared to be suffering from TB of the udder had to be reported without delay. The problem in the Irish case was that animals so adjudged would have to be returned at the expense of the owners. Although there had been considerable tightening up as a result of representations from the British there had been constant complaints that Irish veterinarians had been allowing diseased animals through. Hogan said that the British ministry appeared to be saying

we are tired writing you letters to say that you must stop any animal that has a tubercular udder, that appears to have a tubercular udder, or that has an indurated udder, and if you do not stop them promptly we are going to send back all such animals in the future <sup>61</sup>

Hogan was right. The leniency which the Irish government had shown had not succeeded. The industry had not used the time to adapt themselves to the new situation brought about by the restrictions <sup>62</sup>. In July 1927 the British Diseases of Animals Act received the royal assent. When the bill was first introduced it caused the agriculture departments on both sides of the border to confer on the approach they should take to the proposed legislation. (As has already been seen, relations between the two departments were quite close). Both were anxious that Ireland should not even appear to lag behind Great Britain in the eradication of disease and 'for this reason the conference agreed to recommend legislation

for the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland on the same lines', that is, it was to follow the lead on penalties given in the British act. The difficulty arose from section three of the bill which would allow veterinary officers at the importing ports to slaughter animals which did not pass their inspection for TB. The experience of exporters since 1925 did not fill them with confidence that their cattle would be treated fairly. However there was little they could do to prevent the legislation going through. The Ministry of Agriculture in Northern Ireland accepted by the end of March that MAF would not agree to any amendments which would permit payment of compensation for animals slaughtered under section three. They regarded it as a waste of time pressing for protection for the owners of the animals slaughtered which proved to be healthy. Without the support of the Northern ministry it was useless for the department to try to lobby the British parliament for special treatment.<sup>63</sup>

The difficulties which were anticipated became apparent very quickly. The main sufferers were exporters of cows because TB was detectable by induration of the udder. Hogan used occasions and issues such as these to remind the Dail and the general public of the change in the position of the country since independence. 'This is a hardship to the cow trade', he said, 'but it is an example of one of the English markets being closed to us. The English have a right to close their markets to us if they wish'. But he admitted to Deputy French that the situation had changed. British inspectors were more strict 'and there' was 'quite a serious situation as a result'.<sup>64</sup>

Irish cattle exporters were vulnerable to British legislation and had no say in Britain when it came to disease control and inspection of livestock exports. This was a particular problem as there was a huge onslaught from other beef producing countries on Ireland's

established and only export market. However, it is important not to underestimate the strength of the Irish cattle trade with Britain. There had been a long and fruitful association between the two countries which was capable of absorbing the changes which twentieth century legislation brought about.<sup>65</sup> The confidence of the trade in its right of entry to that market is underlined by the shock which was expressed when a very small number of cows, a tiny proportion of annual exports, were slaughtered in Britain under the 1927 Act. The **Cork Evening Echo** headlined the slaughter of twelve in-calf cows at Birkenhead on 31 October 1927. The **Irish Independent** referred to this again under strongly worded headlines on 22 November 1927. That the slaughter of twelve animals should cause such controversy in the press suggests that it was not a very common occurrence. It is quite clear that those involved in the trade had no intention of allowing the practice to become widespread because they watched developments very keenly and raised the question with the minister if they thought it was becoming a serious problem. The damage which was expected did not materialise. This was probably due to the increased vigilance of the department's veterinary inspectors, to the hard line taken by those of the ministry in Britain, and to a growing acceptance of the view expressed by the minister that the British had the right to close their markets if they wished. In the end the only practical response was to improve standards.<sup>66</sup>

The early years of the state were not easy for the producers of beef, the country's largest export. There were some fundamental problems, starting with the quality of the animals being produced. The need for the Live Stock Act and the other measures which had been taken to improve the national herd by the CCAs and the department's instructors bears testimony to the perceived need for improvement. However, it appears that the drop in

livestock exports from 1924 was not caused solely by either the quality of the product or the changed position of the Ireland vis a vis Great Britain. It was probably due to economic conditions in Britain and the assault on the British livestock market by other foreign suppliers. The worries expressed by those who drew attention to the ill-treatment of cattle in transit and those who feared the strict enforcement of disease regulations about how these issues would affect sales to the British market were not confirmed by events. Where, in the case of dry cows, regulations did bite, the effect was only marginal. The producers managed to deal with this problem by persuading the minister to introduce a bill which would give financial compensation to those whose animals had been slaughtered in Britain. Hogan originally took the view that he should not be involved in this arrangement as he believed that it was an ordinary trade risk 'which should be met by mutual or ordinary insurance' arranged by the trade. This was also the view of the department, who were 'fearful that if such a scheme were set up the department would be asked to expand or set up a similar scheme to cover other risks'. They suggested that if the livestock trade really wanted a scheme they ought to promote a bill by private legislation. However, pressure grew for government action<sup>67</sup>

The bill which Hogan eventually introduced was in effect a compromise. The legislation sanctioned a compulsory levy on cattle exports, to be administered by a board of trustees. In that way administration of the scheme could be kept at arms length from the department. Although Hogan did not concede all that the trade wished, he and the department did change their minds and persuaded the executive council to give the legislation priority<sup>68</sup>. This testifies to the strength of the livestock lobby. They are shown here having a significant effect on the department's policy on an issue on which they were united.

Accepting that neither ill-treatment of animals nor disease control measures, which were mitigated by the compensation scheme, had a substantial effect on livestock exports it follows that it was the international trading situation at the time that had the greatest impact on cattle sales. Therefore, once Hogan had brought in his act to improve the quality of livestock, his ability to influence the situation was limited.

Hogan's reluctance to commit state aid to the well established livestock industry can be contrasted with his wholehearted involvement with the setting up of the beet sugar industry in Ireland. The former was well supplied with champions in the form of the farming organisations and the cattle dealers and shippers. The latter did not exist in Ireland, north or south, and therefore had no formal representation. In Britain and continental Europe beet sugar was in its infancy. It is reasonable, therefore, to ask why a government dedicated to free trade, at least in theory, should become so attached to the idea of subsidising such an untried industry. Unlike the cattle trade, beet sugar could hardly be classified as essential to the economic health of the state. Nor could it have been equated with the Shannon hydroelectric scheme which was to become an important part of the national infra structure to provide services which had to be supplied from within the country.<sup>69</sup>

Patrick McGilligan, the Minister for Industry and Commerce from 1924 to 1932, in an interview in 1976 called the 'Carlow sugar beet factory a child of the Shannon scheme'. He maintained that Hogan had experienced difficulty in persuading his officials, who were 'not sweet on the introduction of sugar beet', that it was a new crop which would be additional to the ordinary rotation. However, if there had been resistance to the introduction

of beet sugar it was short lived Hogan, who was, according to McGilligan, convinced of its potential must have put a very strong case to his department When the interdepartmental committee on sugar was set up in September 1924 to examine the potential of a sugar beet initiative, the members from Agriculture and Industry and Commerce must have become immediate converts, as there is no hint in the reports of any serious doubts about the basic principal of growing beet and refining sugar in Ireland <sup>70</sup>

The idea of growing and refining beet sugar in Ireland was not new In 1851 a factory was built in Mountmellick and went into production The experiment proved that beet sugar could be produced in Ireland even if it did fail though a combination of difficulties including beet procurement The belief that sugar could be grown and refined locally did not disappear completely According to one writer, 'it was Sinn Féin in Leabhair na hÉireann in 1908 which helped fan the first sparks' Trials were carried out from 1911 but the results were not followed up However it was probably the growth of the sugar beet refining industry in Britain which gave the greatest impetus towards setting up an industry in Ireland This combined with support for sugar beet in the interim report of the commission on agriculture soon gained it acceptance within the department <sup>71</sup>

This acceptance by Hogan and the government of the need for state assistance to the beet sugar industry was assisted by the experience of other countries In fact Ireland would have been the exception if it had not helped in its foundation with some capital investment or financial incentives The report of the interdepartmental committee on the beet sugar industry said 'most, if not all, European countries have found it necessary to assist the beet sugar industry in its early stages' The committee came down on the side of a subsidy

and pointed out that some British factories had been unable to get enough roots because the price paid to farmers was not high enough 'until excise duty on home-grown, home manufactured sugar was remitted, whilst customs duty on imported sugar was maintained at the rate of 25\8d per cwt '<sup>72</sup> Even the United States had to offer some help to the beet sugar industry in the form of import duties on foreign sugar and farmers and producers made local arrangements to facilitate each other so that the industry could establish itself <sup>73</sup>

The need to subsidise the beet sugar industry may have been well documented, but why did Ireland need a sugar industry when there were sufficient supplies of refined sugar readily available? During the second reading of the Beet Sugar (Subsidy) Bill, Hogan made a clear statement which covered both issues

The important thing is to prove that Ireland can grow these beets - that the farmer can grow them of the required amounts and quality After the factory has been operating for some years we will be fair judges of whether or not the game is worth the candle, or whether there is anything in this, whether we ought to subsidise seven or eight factories and what chances there are of those factories ultimately paying for themselves We cannot do that without the experience gained from this factory Then we shall have increased tillage and increased employment In this scheme, so far as the factory is concerned, we do not claim any merit on the grounds that it is a good investment, that it will increase employment or bring increased tillage We only hope it will be the beginning of a scheme that will have these possibilities, and, in addition, provide a lucrative crop to the farmer <sup>74</sup>

In essence he was saying that this was an industry which provided a basic commodity that would always be in demand. It would also have the merit of increasing tillage which in turn would increase employment. Increasing tillage in order to give employment to farm labourers had always been mooted by politicians and trade unionists. Suggestions that tillage schemes be made compulsory had always caused divisions amongst the political parties. In a debate in 1922 the Farmer deputies wanted to know how the extra crops grown could be disposed of when they were already making a loss of two pounds an acre on barley and oats.<sup>75</sup> Sugar beet had one great advantage. It would not affect the market for crops which were already being grown and cause prices to drop. It had two additional attractions: it would provide industrial employment in rural areas where the beet was grown, and reduce sugar imports.

The antagonism of Hogan and his Cumann na nGaedheal colleagues towards government subsidies was lessened in the case of sugar beet because it was envisaged as a temporary arrangement. By paying the subsidy to the factory they had some control over the amount of sugar beet grown, as the factory would contract with local farmers to grow specific amounts. A subsidy on sugar beet was not like a subsidy on barley, wheat or other cereals which would have involved almost the whole farming community without necessarily producing the required result of expanding employment in rural areas. A cereal subsidy would have been very difficult to administer, even if the government were inclined to introduce one, and would have spread the available funds very thinly over the whole country. Beet growing, on the other hand, would be concentrated in areas convenient to the factory and the factory itself would provide both permanent and seasonal employment for a large number of workers in its catchment area.

A locally based sugar industry seemed to answer a number of problems the most important of which was rural unemployment. However, the enthusiasm which Hogan and his fellow ministers showed for its creation seems rather out of character with the way in which other decisions and policies were pursued where fears were expressed that if they were to assist in one area they would create a precedent which would be used as an argument for further help in others.<sup>76</sup> In the case of sugar they seem to have ignored these considerations. Nevertheless, Hogan must have been pleased when R C Ferguson, the Industry and Commerce member of the interdepartmental committee on the sugar beet industry, reported to a colleague at Agriculture on his negotiations in Europe

I might say that my visit here has absolutely convinced me of the security of making a start on beet - it is risky financially at all times apparently but it is the basis of agriculture here and might mean a big thing for us in other ways than securing dividends.<sup>77</sup>

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Hogan and the other ministers involved were influenced by what was happening in other countries which had similar economic policies rather than by domestic pressure to establish the industry. Inevitably, once they had let it be known that they were contemplating setting up a beet sugar industry there was an immediate and enthusiastic response. Once the interdepartmental committee had set their investigations in motion the interest generated would have made it impossible to abandon the idea without causing serious political damage to the government and the ministers who were most involved.

The political implications of the attempt to introduce the industry were quickly realised by those who wished to have the factory sited in their area. North Cork Industrial Development Committee (NCIDC) sent a deputation to J J Walsh, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, telling him that they had asked 'a big financial house to investigate the possibilities of beet sugar manufacture in the area' and requesting the government to facilitate them in every possible way.<sup>78</sup> A Mallow solicitor wrote to Kevin O'Higgins, indicating the support which the government party would receive at a local by-election if they backed the NCIDC schemes. Conversely the 'Republicans', he believed, would gain electoral advantage if the government did not 'counteract' their 'propaganda' that the NCIDC scheme would collapse 'by reason of departmental ineptitude'.<sup>79</sup> Hinchcliffe, Agriculture's representative on the interdepartmental committee, advised Hogan that assistance should be granted to one factory as an experiment which, if successful, would lead to more factories being built and more beet being grown. He also suggested in a minute to Hogan that the best course to take is to allow selection of the factory site to the group whose terms are accepted, in order to avoid the kind of situation which the Mallow solicitor Sullivan had foreshadowed.<sup>80</sup>

Hinchcliffe's advice was followed. The Belgian group Lippens, headed by the a one-time Governor of the Belgian Congo and Belgian cabinet minister, Sir Maurice Lippens, was chosen to set up a factory and to decide where it was to be located. They also won the concession that no other sugar company could build and operate a factory within a wide radius of the site which they chose. By allowing the 'experts' to decide where the factory would be located the government disposed of a potentially thorny problem. However, even though it was Lippens who selected Carlow as the site, the Carlow Urban District Council

(UDC) telegraphed the minister thanking him for the beet sugar factory <sup>81</sup> There is nothing in the records to indicate that the minister replied to the UDC reminding them that it was Lippens who had made the decision. Even for so severe a critic of campaign promises as Hogan, politics was still politics.

Prior to the announcement of the location of the factory, local business people mounted a campaign to promote Carlow as a possible site for the factory. A committee was set up to coordinate local efforts when it became clear that other areas such as Kildare, Laois, Kilkenny, Wexford and Cork were being considered. There was disappointment in the centres which were unsuccessful, particularly in Athy which had been confident, so much so that there were bonfires ready in anticipation of the good news <sup>82</sup>

Hogan was actively concerned with all aspects of the negotiations. He was involved from the initial stages when there were several firms bidding for the right, with government assistance, to set up a factory and organise the growers. His efforts were ably supported by Hinchcliffe who, with Ferguson from Industry and Commerce, visited the various applicants on the continent. They kept the minister fully informed of their discussions and researches and it was on their recommendation, as part of the interdepartmental committee on beet sugar, that the Lippens group was selected. Both were very well briefed in their own areas, agriculture and industry and commerce, and appear to have had a good understanding of the sugar industry. They do not seem to have had any difficulty in presenting Ireland as a suitable country in which to invest in a sugar factory. In fact their difficulty was not a lack of applicants. For instance M. Maurice Goor, a Belgian diplomat who had asked to be posted to 'the new Free State', saw the potential for investment in agriculture in Ireland.

‘He knew what Belgium could do. Discreetly he interested the influential Lippens family in Ireland’ The chief difficulty which faced the government was choosing the contender who would be the most efficient and the most financially sound and therefore likely to make a success of the venture. Their dealings were probably made easier, because they had the advantage of the British experience on which to draw.<sup>83</sup>

An interesting difference of approach appears to have existed between the secretary of the Department of Industry and Commerce, Gordon Campbell, and members of the interdepartmental committee. Campbell believed that the matter was being looked at in the wrong way and proposed a bolder approach. He suggested that the government should set out its conditions and then advertise them widely. In that way they could attract bids from many companies. He was afraid that secret negotiations would lead to corruption. Nor did he believe that setting up ‘one small factory in one place only in the whole Free State [was an] adequate test at all’. In a memorandum on discussions about his objections which took place between Hogan, Campbell, Ferguson and Hinchcliffe, it was made clear that the government were open to offers for the establishment of a beet sugar industry from anyone who wished to put one forward. And, in the opinion of the inter-departmental committee Lippens had put forward the best proposal. Hogan made it plain that he was in favour of one factory and believed that Campbell was under a misapprehension about the capacity of the factory which would be considerable.<sup>84</sup>

Campbell’s suggestion would have meant greater state involvement in the industry. It would have put the onus on the government to step in to deal with the problems of the industry on a regular basis and to undertake a greater degree of investment. By contrast,

the less ambitious plan which was adopted was more in keeping with the government's minimalist attitude towards state intervention. The way the system actually worked kept the government away from the day to day running of the factory and left the majority of decisions to the management. This of course did not stop political pressure being brought to bear on the government who in turn brought pressure on the company. It did, however, minimise the areas in which they, the government, could interfere. They were in effect confined to the issue of the price of beet and the amount of subsidy to be paid each year of the ten year subsidy period.

Campbell remained interested in the fate of the sugar industry despite his early misgivings. McGilligan said that Campbell had been fearful of the idea in the beginning but later became 'very, very enthusiastic' about it. This is borne out in the way he assisted Hogan in negotiations to resolve the dispute over sugar prices in April 1929. He describes in a rather whimsical way how he wielded a 'white wash brush' in order to preserve the Department of Agriculture's reputation for impartiality. He was prepared to act as arbiter again saying that 'Hinchchffe looked saintly in white wash' and expressing his amusement at being treated as a 'senior person by two of the Irish directors, Col Gibbon and J McCann' <sup>85</sup>

Campbell may have been worried initially because he believed that negotiations were being rushed. Ferguson wrote to Campbell in November, 1924 saying that there was no possibility of a crop in 1925 and suggesting that ministers should not raise hopes. It appears that there was growing pressure to have the factory established in the following year. Late in 1924 this would have precluded the type of action which Campbell had

suggested His intervention may have been a caveat entered to cover his department in the event of criticism had the venture failed, an attempt to slow down the momentum which had developed towards choosing the group, or a genuine call for a broader and more ambitious approach to state promotion of a new industry <sup>86</sup>

Hogan and his colleagues were optimistic about the introduction of the sugar industry into Ireland They had accepted, as already noted, that the factory which they sanctioned was experimental in nature However, it is clear from the confident way they proceeded that they believed it would not fail Failure and its consequences were never directly alluded to in any of the correspondence The belief was that once the right industrialist was chosen it would have every chance of success Their optimism must have been reinforced by the number of large scale European industrial groups who asked to be considered for the enterprise <sup>87</sup>

Mr J L Lynd of Finance wrote to the three departments agreeing with their report <sup>88</sup> In a report from the interdepartmental committee dated October 1924, the terms which were to be offered to the industry were discussed They used the British terms as a yardstick and concluded that they would have to offer bigger inducements, for reasons including (1) Not enough data on yields in Ireland, (2) technical facilities for the repair of factory machinery were not as good as in Britain, (3) a higher proportion of foreign technical staff would be needed, (4) coal prices were higher, and (5) it would be difficult to attract capital to the beet sugar industry as the British had already discovered

In March 1925 the committee representatives of Agriculture and Industry and Commerce reported:

- (1) that the terms [of the Lippens group] are, in our opinion, on the whole more advantageous to the government than those submitted by any other group of standing and also guarantee a price for beet which should secure an ample supply of roots for a factory:
- (2) the standing of this particular group is such as to give us confidence that they will leave nothing undone to secure the success of the enterprise.<sup>89</sup>

Hogan's long-held and much-trumpeted conviction that subsidies were ineffective and wasteful seem hardly to have entered the equation when it came to sugar. The arguments which he and other government ministers used when fending off calls for assistance for various interest groups were not made in this debate. However, to say that there had been a debate on the principle of state assistance for the beet sugar industry would be misleading. It was only on matters of detail that there were any questions raised during the passage of the subsidy bill through the Dail. Hogan was questioned regarding the siting of the factory and the criteria which would have to be met. He responded that it would depend on the 'results of a year or two's working of the initial factory at Carlow'. However, behind the scenes the department maintained its opinion that the siting of further factories must be left to the discretion of those who invested in the industry. Deputies from many constituencies lobbied and questioned the minister in the hope of securing the establishment of a sugar factory in their area. The need for an industry which would employ a considerable number

of people silenced many TDs who otherwise would have been critical of government intervention and it would be safe to say that no member of the Oireachtas would have turned down the opportunity of having a sugar factory in their area <sup>90</sup>

When asked by Heffernan what government policy was regarding allocation of sites and areas for factories and what circumstances would be taken into consideration in that regard, Hogan said that the general policy on sugar beet factories was that which had been announced in the budget statement of 22 April 1925, when he said ‘that consideration of that question must pend the results of a year or two’s working of the initial factory at Carlow’ In a note for the minister’s private information the policy that the site and district for a further factory must be left largely to the discretion of those who invested capital in buildings and equipment, was reiterated. Inquiries about further factories came from Deputy Frank Carney, who asked the minister if a sugar factory could be established with a view to increasing employment in Donegal, Mallow UDC wrote to the minister requesting a meeting to discuss suitable sites for a sugar factory, and North Cork Development Association passed a resolution about the establishment of a sugar factory <sup>91</sup>

The problems which Hogan had predicted when refusing subsidies to other sectors of agriculture manifested themselves in the sugar industry in a very short time. After its initial success, the owners of the Carlow factory began to experience resistance to the prices which they offered the growers, and complaints were made about the amounts of beet which were to be grown each year. The Irish Sugar Beet Growers Association (BGA) with whom the factory negotiated contracts quickly established themselves as a powerful group. They were determined to maintain the high prices which had been paid when the factory

was opened Hogan, because of his initial involvement in the industry, was drawn into the disputes and was asked to act as an arbitrator He was caught between the BGA and the factory owners In 1931 he was forced to enter into very detailed negotiations with Lippens in Belgium to try to get them to improve their price offer <sup>92</sup> He was working against a background of militant action BGA members refused to plant beet until their terms were accepted Garda reports from 1931 tell of incidents of beet and turnip crops being damaged and intimidation used against growers who did not support the association's tactics <sup>93</sup> At least one farmer received a threatening letter

Take notice if you thrash for any person that has beet soad [sic] you will mark the consequences You may be preparing for 6' x 3' <sup>94</sup>

There was no evidence that the BGA was directly involved, but it can be assumed that the incidents were carried out by its members who were refusing to plant sugar beet until they got the price they demanded This was not the first time that the sugar factory had been under threat from the growers Lippens were particularly annoyed since they had given the BGA every encouragement, they built an office for them at their factory and collected their membership contributions from the beet growers free of charge They regarded the BGA's attitude as less than appreciative In 1929 the BGA had been involved in a poster campaign which referred to the company as 'Foreign Blood Suckers', and called on growers to 'Starve the Factory Out', and which promised their supporters that 'after the sugar kings would come the malsters, the bacon curers and the rest of the crew' Lippens asked

what other firm would tolerate their premises to be made the head-quarters of an organisation from which to direct flying squads of motor cars bent on a campaign of the most violent intimidation <sup>95</sup>

The difficulties which the sugar industry experienced in the late 1920s and early 1930s were not unconnected with the deteriorating international economic situation. If Ireland had not been a producer the benefits of the collapse of sugar prices would have been felt by Irish consumers. Instead, the growers were pressing for higher prices, protection and for all the sugar consumed in the country to be grown 'at home' <sup>96</sup>. When Hogan's government was defeated at the 1932 election the problems of the sugar industry had not been resolved. It is probably one area of agriculture which he was glad to hand over to somebody else. His experiences with sugar subsidies can have done little to convince him that his convictions about subsidies in general were wrong. Hogan, for once, had willingly promoted the practice. It must, therefore, have left him with a mixture of feelings about the experiment. On the one hand his instincts about direct intervention in the economy had been proved correct. On the other he saw an area which had great potential both for agriculture and industry failing to achieve it under his guidance.

The years which followed the 1925 subsidy act saw increasing pressure for tariff protection and agricultural subsidies. Fianna Fail took their seats in 1927 and brought the debate into the Dail. This turned the predictable slide towards international protectionism into a party political issue in Ireland. Accepting its inevitability must have been difficult if not humiliating for Hogan. He had to concede that Ireland's agriculture had to follow the lead of every other country and put up trade barriers. He did not give in gracefully.

## NOTES

- 1     **Irish Times** 18 Oct 1922    Memorandum to the executive council from Kevin O'Higgins, Jan 1923 (UCD) Mulcahy Papers, P7b/96(7)
- 2     Meenan, **The Irish Economy** p 95
- 3     Hoor, **The Department's Story** p 7, says that Denmark had begun to reorganise farming after 1869
- 4     These were views expressed by writers who visited Denmark with a group organised by the County Cork I F U in the autumn of 1925 and published in 'Agriculture' - a supplement to **The Irish Times** 13 Oct 1925
- 5     For a full discussion on the Irish co-operative movement see Patrick Bolger, **The Irish Co-operative Movement and Its Development** (Dublin, 1977)
- 6     In a reply to a question about the technical qualifications of the advisory and college staffs, asked by James Ryan, TD, the minister said that of the general technical staff of the department, five agricultural inspectors and two junior agricultural inspectors did not possess a degree or diploma in agricultural science. All itinerant instructors in agriculture and all those engaged in the teaching of general agriculture possessed diplomas or degrees. In a note for the minister's information it was added that there were persons employed under the various acts and in connection with flax growing

in the Congested Districts for which these qualifications had never been considered necessary **DD** Vol 33, cols 1247 - 1248, 5 Mar 1930 NA, DA, AG1\G715\25

7 A submission by the secretary to the committee on technical education, 7 Feb 1927  
NA, DA, AG1\G3050\26

8 In a memorandum to the secretary, 26 Apr 1923, the educational activities under the central control of the department were given as

Albert Agricultural College

Agricultural School, Athenry

Agricultural School, Ballyhaise

Agricultural School, Clonakilty

Mount Bellew Agricultural School

Munster Institute

Schools of Rural Domestic Economy

Poultry & Dairy Instruction at Domestic

Economy Schools

Agricultural Faculty, College of Science

Agricultural Scholarships

Veterinary College

Horticultural School

Botanic Gardens

Training, &c , of Teachers

NA, DA, AG1\G687\23

9      **The Irish Statesman** 31 Oct 1925

10     Eoin McNeill in an article in **The Irish Statesman** 24 Nov 1924

‘Our Irish farmers don’t let their sons and daughters avail themselves of the excellent facilities for technical training which the country has provided for nearly a quarter of a century under the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction’

11     **The Irish Homestead** 25 Mar 1922    George Russell was editor of **The Irish Homestead** which was the weekly journal of the I A O S    It ceased publication in September 1923 when it was amalgamated with the **Irish Statesman** with Russell as editor

12     **The Irish Statesman** 25 Apr 1925

13     *ibid* , 5 Jun 1925

14     *ibid* , 2 Jun 1927 and **The Irish Homestead** 28 Apr 1923

15     **The Irish Homestead** 18 Mar 1922

16     Memorandum from assistant secretary to secretary, n d , Aug 1924    NA, DA, AG1\E6066\25

- 17 Hogan to assistant secretary, 8 Sept 1924 *ibid*
- 18 *ibid*
- 19 Report on the progress of special schemes being carried out at Ballyhaise Agriculture Station, 18 Feb 1925 *ibid*
- 20 Report of departmental conference held 18 Sept 1924 *ibid*
- 21 Hogan to Baxter, 22 Oct 1924 *ibid*
- 22 James Ryan TD asked Hogan the cost to the state of the faculties of agriculture at UCD and UCC from 1924 - 1930 In a Dail reply, Hogan gave the figures which were available from 1926 to 1930 only The figures were  
UCD - £59,276  
UCC - £66,988  
*DD* Vol 33, cols 1247 - 1248, 5 Mar 1930
- 23 The secretary to the Colonial Office and Colonial Office to secretary, both 12 Dec 1922 Both letters concern the imposition of conditions for the detention of Irish cattle which were similar to those proposed for cattle from Canada in the Canadian Bill NA, DA, AG1\G3807\24

- 24 Hogan to MAF, 17 May 1922, *ibid* Memorandum to secretary from Hogan, 1 Jan 1923, *ibid*
- 25 *ibid* Memorandum to the secretary from Hogan, 1 Jan 1923, *ibid*
- 26 Press release by Hogan, 11 Jan 1923, *ibid* John W O'Hagan and Kyran P McStay, **The Evaluation of Manufacturing Industry in Ireland** (Dublin, 1981), p 13
- 27 O'Donovan, **Documents on Ireland** p 4
- 28 Chief Inspector Dairying to the secretary, 11 Jan 1923 Memorandum on the dead meat trade in Wexford and Drogheda, 8 Jan 1923, and the minute sheet, 10 Jan 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G3807\24
- 29 From a copy of a letter sent to Industry and Commerce, by the Irish and Foreign Trading Corporation Ltd , Dublin, 15 Dec 1922, in which they give their views and the views of Count O'Kelly, Irish trade commission representative in Brussels, who was in favour of opening up the trade and suggested that the government should defray transport costs NA, DA, AG1\G3961\24
- 30 General notes, Annex C, Department of Agriculture to Department of Industry and Commerce, 11th Jan 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G3867\24
- 31 Industry and Commerce to Hogan, 16 Jan 1924 NA, DA, AG1\G3961\24

- 32 A note by Hogan, n d , [Dec 1924], *ibid*
- 33 Press notice for Belgian farmers from the Department of Agriculture, 20 Dec 1924,  
5 *ibid*
- 34 The Live Stock Breeding Act, 1925, passed on 23 Mar 1925 Its full title was ‘An Act to make provision for the regulation and improvement of Bulls and other Live Stock used for breeding’ It sought to licence bulls in order to eliminate ‘defective or inferior progeny’ (Clause 3) and to ensure suitability of bulls for the districts they were to serve (Clause 5)
- 35 Treasury to DATI, 28 Jan 1919, confirming the allocation of monies for cow testing schemes NA, DA, AG1\A11338\22
- 36 Memorandum, 11 Nov 1919, of a meeting held at DATI offices on 30 Oct 1919, to discuss ‘Why cow testing was not progressing?’, *ibid*
- 37 Report by the supervisor of Kinsale cow testing association n d , Dec 1919, to DATI *ibid*
- 38 From a report by D Twomey, Dairy Inspector, and later secretary of the department, 10 Oct 1914 NA, DA, AG1\A657\22

- 39     Hoctor, **The Department's Story** p 150 In a letter to the department, 15 Jan 1923, asking for sanction for an increase in premiums paid to owners of bulls, the County Cork committee of agriculture, said 'We believe that one of the most effective ways of doing this [improving dairy stock] is to make ample provision for the supply of good dairy bulls ' NA, DA, AG1\A736\23
- 40     **DD** Vol 9, cols 387, 389,393 and 400, 20 Oct 1924
- 41     *ibid* cols 393 and 400
- 42     **DD** vol 18, cols 726-727, 11 Mar 1927 NA, DA, AG1\L921\27 1\27 Advice to the Minister, ND, Mar 1927
- 43     Advice which was given to the minister during the course of the preparation of the answer to the above question *ibid*
- 44     **DD** Vol 18, cols 1795 -1797, 11 Mar 1927
- 45     **The Irish Times** 28 Mar 1927, under the headline 'Future of Irish Cattle Trade' NA, DA, AG1\L939\27
- 46     **DD** Vol 21 col 1795, 11 Mar 1927 Hogan's answer to a supplementary question from Deputy Heffernan

- 47     **The Irish Statesman** 6 Jun 1925
- 48     Memorandum of the discussions of a deputation to the minister chaired by Lord Powerscourt, President of the RSPCA, including representatives from the DSPCA, the Port and Docks Board, the Railways and the Salesmasters' Association, which met the minister on 20 Jan 1925. Mr Leonard of the Port and Docks and the Sales Masters' Association representative pointed out the price differential between Irish and Canadian cattle which was according to him ten to twelve shillings per cwt in favour of the Canadian cattle. NA, DA, AG1\E5356\25
- 49     Here is a selection of headlines from the national press: **Irish Times** 8 Feb 1924, 'Irish Cattle Trade - Great losses through defective transport', **Belfast Newsletter** 7 Feb 1924, 'Value of animals impaired by ill-treatment', **Irish Independent** 3 Feb 1924, 'Menace to cattle trade', **Irish Times** 2 Jan 1925, 'Damaged Irish cattle' *ibid*
- 50     Mr Ganly was the representative of the Salesmasters' Association on the deputation to the minister, 20 Jan 1925. From the minutes of the meeting NA, DA, AG1\E5356\25
- 51     From the minutes of the meeting with the deputation *ibid*. The secretary to Kevin O'Higgins, 3 Feb 1926, asking him to insert a clause in the Dublin Traffic Act which would allow the Dublin Commissioners to licence all drovers. O'Higgins to the secretary, 10 Feb 1926, states that the Dublin Traffic Act was not the

appropriate place He suggested that Hogan should introduce 'special legislation'  
ibid

52 From the minutes of the meeting with the deputation, 20 Jan 1925 ibid

53 The committee of inquiry consisted of nominated representatives of the shipping companies, the railway companies, the Irish Farmers' Union, the Cattle Trade Association, Salesmasters' Association, the SPCA and the Garda Síochána plus department officials They met on twelve occasions and a report was drawn up and circulated, 5 May 1925 ibid

54 Report of the committee of inquiry into the marketing of livestock in the Free State, 15 May 1925 ibid

55 Letter to the secretary from The Glasgow United Fleshers Association, 4 Feb 1926  
NA, DA, AG1\L342\27

56 Reports of portal supervisor to chief inspector, 18 Feb 1926, quoted in a letter from the High Commissioner's Office, London, to the secretary, 24 Nov 1926 ibid

57 Letter to the department from the Glasgow Fleshers Association, 6 Feb 1926  
**Sligo Champion** 10 Sept 1925 **The Irish Times** 15 Sept 1925 ibid

- 58 Report of portal supervisor to chief inspector, 18 Feb 1926 *ibid* See note 56 above
- 59 The subject was raised on the adjournment by Michael Heffernan, DD Vol 18, col 116, 25 Jan 1926 Deputies Dwyer and Gorey, both of the Farmers' Party, questioned the diagnoses of the British veterinary surgeons, *ibid* , cols 118 - 120 Dr Hennessy TD, *ibid* , col 121
- 60 *ibid* , col 121
- 61 *ibid* , col 125
- 62 *ibid* , cols 121,123 - 125
- 63 An official report on the contents of the Diseases of Animals Bill was sent by the ministry of Agriculture, Northern Ireland to the Irish Department of Agriculture with a request for their observations, 3 Mar 1927 A conference was held at which the two departments were represented on 11 Mar 1927 The secretary wrote to the Commissioner for Trade in London, advising him of indications from the, Northern Ireland authorities that they would not be pressing for compensation for slaughtered animals, 1 Apr 1927 NA, DA, AG1\L1191\27
- 64 Hogan's reply to a question on the losses sustained by the farming and trading community owing to the operation of the Tuberculosis Order, 1925, **DD** Vol 21,

cols 1511-1531, 17 Nov 1927 His response to Deputy French's question about the peculiarity of recent cases, *ibid* cols 1512 - 1513

65 David Johnson, in **The Interwar Economy in Ireland** (Dublin, 1985) p 3, says that 'by 1917 British and Irish producers supplied 90 per cent of the country's beef needs compared to 60 per cent before the war'

66 In answer to a question on the number of cows slaughtered under the Tuberculosis Order in England, Hogan said 21 had been rejected and the post mortem showed that nine were tubercular **DD** Vol 21 cols 725 - 727 3 Nov 1927 *ibid* col 727

67 The act referred to was the Slaughtered Animals (Compensation) Act 1928 From a department minute sheet '[Hogan has] the view that this is an ordinary trade risk which should be met by mutual or ordinary insurance and that the trade should arrange to meet the situation' 16 Mar 1927 NA, DA, AG1\L2682\28 From a department memorandum dated 23 Nov 1927 *ibid*

68 Note on the minute sheet of a meeting between the minister and the secretary at which he said that he would bring in a bill at the earliest opportunity, 25 Nov 1927, *ibid* Note on a department minute sheet which said that the bill was given priority '1' for drafting purposes, 24 Dec 1927, *ibid*

69 One TD when welcoming the Beet Sugar (Subsidy) Bill compared it to the Shannon Scheme, **DD** Vol 12, col 916, 12 Jun 1925

- 70 From a taped interview between Padraic O'Halpin and Patrick McGilligan, 24 Nov 1976, in the possession of Dr Eunan O'Halpin
- 71 Michael Foy, **The Sugar Industry in Ireland** (Dublin, 1976), pp 28, 31, 32
- 72 The interdepartmental committee on the sugar beet industry was made up of one senior official from each of the three departments concerned, Finance, Industry and Commerce and Lands and Agriculture From a report by the committee dated 30 Sept 1924 They also stated that in Britain duty on imported sugar was reduced when it was found that the home industry could not expand and would be unable to survive This, they said, led the British Chancellor to pay a direct subsidy for a period of ten years in respect of sugar manufactured from home-grown roots NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25
- 73 From a report sent to the minister for External Affairs from Washington entitled 'Government assistance afforded to the Beet Sugar industry in the United States' for the attention of the Minister for Agriculture, 6 Dec 1924 NA, DA, AG1\G4008\24
- 74 **DD** Vol 12, cols 901 - 902, 6 Jun 1925
- 75 Deputy Nagle proposed a motion that some form of compulsory tillage should be introduced in order to increase employment **DD** Vol 1, col 440, 19 Sept 1922 Deputies Gorey and Doyle both raised the issue of disposing of increased production, *ibid* , cols 445 - 446 and Cols 456 - 457 Thomas Johnson of Labour

suggested that one way of increasing demand for tillage produce was to increase wages so that there would be more money to spend on a greater variety of food  
ibid , col 462

- 76 See above, p 171
- 77 A letter from R C Ferguson, Department of Industry and Commerce sent from Amsterdam to the assistant secretary, 12 Nov 1924 NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25
- 78 Report of a meeting between J J Walsh, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs and a deputation from NCIDC, 8 Oct 1924, which was sent to Hogan ibid
- 79 Barry O'Sullivan, Solicitor, Mallow, to Kevin O'Higgins, 7 Nov 1924, which was passed to the minister for Agriculture ibid
- 80 A minute to Hogan from Hinchchiff, 7 Mar 1925 Minute Sheet, 10 Mar 1925 NA, DA, AG1\E4261\25
- 81 M Colyer to M Lippens, 9 Jun 1925 He was in Ireland to select a suitable site for the sugar factory He said he was struck by the readiness and interest with which everyone was willing to discuss beet The Barrow valley, he said, impressed him favourably because of the suitability of the soils He wanted to know if the advantages of Carlow had been explored NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25 A telegram

was sent to Hogan by Lippens which read 'Experts decided for Carlow', 3 Sept 1925 *ibid* Carlow UDC telegram to Hogan, 3 Sept 1925, *ibid*

82 Foy, **The Sugar Industry** pp 33-34 From the draft of a speech which was to be delivered at the Carlow factory, 17 Jan 1927 DA, AG\G927\42

83 Foy, **The Sugar Industry** p 116

84 Campbell to Hogan, 5 Mar 1925, Memorandum by Hinchcliffe, n d , probably early March 1925, NA, DA, AG1\4261\25

85 Campbell to Hogan, 13 Apr 1929 NA DA, AG1\92\42 Interview with McGilligan by O'Halpin, 24 Nov 1976

86 Ferguson to Campbell, 17 Nov 1924, seen by Hogan 24 Nov 1924, NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25

87 The main groups bidding were from Britain, France, Belgium and Czechoslovakia

88 Lynd to departments of Agriculture and Industry and Commerce, 5 Mar 1925, NA, DA, AG1\E4261\25

89 Report of the inter-departmental committee on the sugar industry, 30 Oct 1924 and 5 Mar 1925, NA, DA, AG1\E8475\25

- 90 Draft of answer to Dail question prepared for Hogan, 4 Aug 1927 NA, DA, AG1\G2766\27
- 91 DD, Vol II, cols 29-38, 22 Apr 1925, NA, DA, AG1\G2766\27 Mallow UDC to the Department of Agriculture, 22 Dec 1927 NA, DA, AG1\G4217\27 North Cork Development Association to the Department of Agriculture, 24 Nov 1927, NA, DA, AG1\E704\28
- 92 Hogan entered into direct and detailed negotiations with the Irish Sugar Manufacturing Company and its Belgian chairman, M Lippens, from March to December, 1931 NA, DA Files, AG1\E15571\28 It may be worth noting that the interest which Hogan took in the smooth running of the Carlow factory may have been increased because Carlow/Kilkenny was the constituency of the President W T Cosgrave until 1927
- 93 Garda reports of incidents which took place between April and October, 1931 NA, DA, AG1\G2875\31
- 94 Garda report, 14 Oct 1931 ibid
- 95 Lippens to Hogan, 27 Aug 1931, in which he also referred to the general misconceptions of speakers in the Dail who saw the dispute as 'a challenge by the Factory Directors to the right of collective bargaining and the right of farmers to organise themselves for industrial purposes' and who claimed 'that the matter was

not so much a question of sugar beet economics as a deliberate attempt to smash the association' These remarks were made by Deputies Davin and Gorey **DD** Vol 39, cols 1935 and 1959, 10 Jul 1931 NA, DA, AG1\E15571\28

- 96 A resolution passed at the BGA's annual general meeting in Carlow, 30 May 1932, *ibid*

## CHAPTER 4

1927-1932

Nineteen twenty seven was a watershed in Hogan's political life. His best friend and cabinet colleague, O'Higgins, in whose home he lived while in Dublin, was assassinated on 10 July. Hogan's reaction when he heard the shots fired - 'he ran from the house, revolver in hand, in the direction of the shooting' - bears witness to the still unsettled condition of the country, as well as to his physical courage. The reintroduction of fierce emergency legislation outlawing the IRA and the requirement that candidates declare that they would take their seats if elected, caused by assassination, 'accelerated Fianna Fail's entry into the Dail' <sup>1</sup>. De Valera and his party took the oath and provided, for the first time in the Dail, an opposition which was determined to remove the government and take its place.

The loss of O'Higgins at this juncture was a serious blow to Cumann na nGaedheal. He was a man of 'great intelligence, great courage, great self-control, and powers of work which staggered his contemporaries' and therefore difficult to replace <sup>2</sup>. Hogan

was convinced that Kevin O'Higgins was the greatest man Ireland had ever produced and that in him lay the national salvation. From the moment he turned a white-faced tragic figure from the death bed of his great friend he was a changed man. Up to that date he had devoted himself almost entirely to his own Department, Agriculture, now he entered the arena of politics, and with fierce vehemence and energy he strove to fulfil the role Kevin O'Higgins might have played <sup>3</sup>.

Cornelius O'Leary cites as one of the reasons for Fine Gael's failure to make the pendulum swing back in their favour during the first six controversial years of Fianna Fail rule the

decline in the quality of the party elite through the premature death or defeat at the polls of its most dynamic leaders 'Kevin O'Higgins assassinated in 1927, Patrick Hogan, the brilliant Minister for Agriculture Killed in a car accident in 1936, Ernest Blythe and Desmond Fitzgerald who lost their seats in 1933-7' <sup>4</sup>

Hogan had been involved in areas other than agriculture in the early years of the state He had strongly supported legislation to put an end to widespread disorder and agrarian violence caused by the civil war and the years of disruption which preceded it He had spoken out during the 'army crisis' and appeared before the army inquiry as a result <sup>5</sup> His interest in law and order was caused not just by his friendship with O'Higgins, who was Minister for Home Affairs and later Minister for Justice, but because conditions in rural areas affected the implementation of his land legislation He made this clear in a memorandum to the President in 1923

all the information and evidence which I have at my disposal make it clear that as things stand in the country at present it would be quite impossible to pass anything approaching an equitable Land Bill which could be put into operation at present <sub>6</sub>

In January 1923 he informed the President that in his 'opinion two months more like the last months' would 'see the end of us and the end of the Free State He was 'in a position to get authentic information as to the trend of things and all the information which' he had led him 'to the conclusions' he had 'set out' <sup>6</sup>

It is likely that his statement on the 1924 army crisis and his support for O'Higgins's special powers bills were influenced to some extent by their friendship. He must have greatly missed his friend's confidence, advice and support. Though they agreed on important issues of government policy they had very different personalities. Hogan was very amusing, O'Higgins was more thoughtful and religious. They were opposites in matters of dress. Kevin O'Higgins was always smartly turned out while Hogan was distinctly scruffy. Liam Cosgrave tells of a remark which was overheard at a conference in London. One British official commented to another on the dreadful state of Hogan's clothes. The response of the other man was 'wait till you see his legal adviser'. He was Arthur Cox, a notoriously dishevelled figure.<sup>8</sup> Una O'Higgins O'Malley tells a story which highlights Hogan's lack of regard for the way he dressed. Hogan was due to attend the Spring Show in his official capacity. He happened to go into the kitchen of O'Higgins' house in Blackrock and saw O'Higgins' recently pressed suit hanging up in readiness for its owner. Hogan looked at his own crumpled clothes and decided Kevin O'Higgins' suit would be perfect for his visit to the show. He did not worry that O'Higgins was taller and larger than himself. On O'Higgins' return he found that the suit was missing. The garda who was on sentry duty was asked if he knew where it was or what had happened to it. He sheepishly replied that he had seen the Minister for Agriculture leaving the house wearing a suit which was obviously not his own. O'Higgins was hopping mad. He knew in what condition his good suit would be when Hogan returned it. Personal appearance was low down on Hogan's list of priorities.<sup>9</sup>

The two men obviously discussed the work of their departments. O'Higgins in Hogan's view knew the 1923 land bill so well that he could always deputise for him in the Dail

which he did <sup>10</sup> Their analyses of the law and order situation in 1923 were strikingly similar, for example their assertion that those who were involved in irregularism had a vested interest in chaos

[Hogan] the irregular war has definitely taken the form of a war by different sections, different interests and different individuals, with no common bond except this - that all have a vested interest in chaos <sup>11</sup>

[O'Higgins] A great deal of the support that Irregulars are receiving comes from people who have vested interests in chaotic conditions <sup>12</sup>

During the army inquiry hearing, Hogan referred to a detailed discussion which he had with O'Higgins about an army incident which had particularly sensitive implications <sup>13</sup> J J Lee maintains that O'Higgins, Hogan and Blythe made up one of three factions within the government 'O'Higgins', he says, 'strongly supported by Patrick Hogan , and Ernest Blythe, minister for Finance, represented vigorous social reaction All three came from comfortable rural backgrounds' <sup>14</sup>

While this is undoubtedly true, it is unlikely that their 'comfortable rural backgrounds' were the only things which they had in common Little had changed in the economy of Ireland or in its position in the international economic community with which it traded in the early years of the 1920s Hogan believed that the export trade in agricultural produce remained just as important as it had been up to 1922 For him, therefore, it was vital to see that peaceful conditions were restored in order to maintain the agricultural production which

supplied the export market. Radical policies were not contemplated. When he did express his reservations about the consequences for Ireland's economic and social development of continuing the land policy, introduced by the British, it was a momentary lapse. He accepted the situation and did his utmost to complete the task efficiently.

Blythe, as Minister for Finance, knew that to obtain foreign and domestic loans with which to fund the running of the country, Ireland would have to be seen as a stable and dependable place to invest money. It would have been impossible to achieve Hogan's or Blythe's goals without O'Higgins' commitment to the restoration of law and order throughout the country. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that it was their sense of realism and their belief in the need for stability as much as their backgrounds which bound them together on matters of policy, unless it could be argued that realism was a virtue attributable only to those with comfortable rural backgrounds. The evidence of agreement between Blythe and Hogan on general economic policy is based mainly on the absence of any real conflict between the two departments on financial matters. Joseph Brennan's attempts to reduce spending on the IAOS was overruled by Blythe and ignored by Hogan. Again when it came to rates relief Hogan was able to circumvent Brennan's objections and achieve an outcome which was favourable to the farmers. Nor does it appear that Hogan had prepared new programmes which were subsequently rejected by Blythe for financial reasons. This could mean that the two ministers were as one on how state funds were dispersed or that Blythe and the Department of Finance set a limit on spending with which Hogan was not prepared to argue. The former is probably true. Where disputes arose they were, as in the cases of the IAOS and rates relief, with Department of Finance officials rather than the minister himself.

If Hogan and his allies within the government party were realists, how did the entry of Fianna Fail to the Dail affect their attitude to contentious issues which until 1927 they had been able to get through the Oireachtas with comparative ease? Because of the abstentionist policy of Sinn Fein after 1922, those TDs who sat in the Dail and were opposed to government measures knew that they could not use the final sanction of bringing down the government with a vote of no confidence. Even if they had, there was little chance that the Labour Party, the Farmers' Party or independent deputies would have been in a position to form a government to take advantage of the situation. Hogan knew this and spelt it out in a memorandum to the President in April 1923.

the farmers's party in the Dail, however, are not too eager to beat a Land Bill introduced by us if they can avoid it. They know it will simply start them in a competition against the Labour Party for the Bolsheviks' vote. They want a Bill which will be so good that it will satisfy the tenants even in their present mood and at the same time give them a case strong enough to fight the Bolsheviks on. If they cannot get that they will simply make an alliance with the Bolsheviks, though it is the last thing some of them want. The farmers' party in the Dail know that if they oppose a Bill which I introduce there will be no half-way-house for them, they will have to go definitely as far as the most extreme section of the Labour Party or lose their political future and they are not likely to oppose any Bill which the tenants will regard as fair.<sup>15</sup>

The government as a whole was aware that this was the case and so were able to introduce some severe legislation in the area of law and order along with cuts in welfare spending.

and the pay of public employees. However, in spite of the lack of real Dail opposition Hogan did not take advantage of the situation by moving faster than public opinion in the area of agricultural legislation. When the majority of bills were introduced the opening statements usually referred to the consensus amongst the farming community for the particular bill. In the case of rates relief he was bowing to extra-parliamentary pressure from the farming community as well as demands in the Dail. It appears that once the necessity for legislation had been established a bill was drafted which incorporated the consensus which had been reached through consultation with those producers who would be affected. Hogan always managed to limit the amount of finance which would be made available by the state for the working of the regulatory acts and insisted on making them at least partly self-financing, thus ensuring that they reflected the free trade ethic in which he believed so firmly. During a debate on the agricultural estimates James Ryan pointed out that the regulatory acts were being administered 'at the expense of the agricultural community' <sup>16</sup>. It clearly differentiates the general thrust of his agricultural policy from the interventionism of Fianna Fail after 1932.

Opposition from the main protagonists for the farmers, the Farmers' Party, to fees for cattle licencing and testing was difficult for them to sustain because their case was weakened by their obvious interest in obtaining as much relief as possible for their supporters. Speaking on compulsory tillage in 1922, Denis Gorey said that if farmers were forced to adopt it the state would have to step in to subsidise them. To relieve unemployment he suggested that the government should improve the infra-structure of the country. That, he said would not encroach on the liberty of anybody <sup>17</sup>. Much the same could be said of the Labour Party.

who drew their support from specific sections of the community and as a result the force of their arguments were weakened <sup>18</sup>

When Fianna Fail entered the debate on agriculture in the Dail it spoke as a national party. It is true that in its early years, 'it retained' a 'very noticeable western bias, very like Sinn Fein in both 1918 and 1923'. It was never, however, exclusively the preserve of the small farmer in the way that the Farmers' Party was of the more substantial man, because it drew support from all classes and all counties. In 1927 the 'social and economic basis' of its support was not dissimilar from Cumann na nGaedheal <sup>19</sup>. In the Dail Fianna Fail brought the concerns of those small farmers who were not so directly involved with the export of agricultural goods to the fore. Lee quite rightly says that 'the interests of small and big farmers were in some respects as different as those of labourers and farmers'. He also says that Hogan equated 'the ordinary farmer' with the 200 acre man, which suggests that his sympathies lay with the larger farmer <sup>20</sup>.

De Valera was certainly of this opinion. In 1928 he expressed what seems to have been a widely held view in Fianna Fail during a debate on the Agricultural Credit Bill. De Valera asserted that Hogan was determined to reduce the number of small farms by stealth by denying them access to cheap credit <sup>21</sup>.

Hogan countered

Of the 8,000 applications for loans, which await the passing of this Bill, I should say that 90 per cent are in respect of loans to farmers with valuations of between £10

and £25 The big farmers are not affected by the Bill The big farmers can and ought to discharge equities<sup>22</sup>

Two years later the Fianna Fail TD Tom Derrig was making a similar point on expenditure on livestock

a great many farmers, no doubt, benefit by that expenditure, but in this as in other matters you will have complaints from the small farmers that a great many of these schemes are, in the long run for the benefit of a particular class, and that the ordinary small farmer is getting no advantage out of them at all<sup>23</sup>

There were of course, differences between the interests of the large and small farmers However, the regulations which made up the bulk of his legislation were imposed in order to improve the cleanliness of food stuffs and the quality of livestock These were necessary whether the produce came from a five acre or a two hundred acre farm

Hogan, as son of a large farmer in Galway, was a natural target for accusations of this sort Given Fianna Fail's reliance on the votes of small farmers in the 1920s it was in their interest to highlight anything which appeared to discriminate against their supporters Hogan had given his critics grounds for their disapprobation when he referred to the dangers which faced a society composed mainly of small farmers The logical conclusion which could be drawn from this remark was that it was better to have a smaller number of farmers with larger farms

Hogan, however, based his legislation not on his personal preferences but on the situation as it existed at the time. The policy of gradually raising the standards of dairy produce, beef and eggs was adopted to allow the less well off farmers to remain in business while changes were made. For instance, had Hogan introduced a national brand for butter, imposed very strict monitoring of bulls for licencing, or prosecuted eggs dealers for every infringement of the rules, it is very likely that many of the small farmers would have been forced from the land because they would have found it impossible to finance improvements which the legislation required.

There was however some justification for Fianna Fail's criticism. Given that larger producers of milk and beef were the main beneficiaries of Hogan's legislation simply because of their concentration on the export market this could easily have been interpreted as lack of concern for the small producers. However to go along with this view would be to ignore the integrated nature of the different areas of farming in Ireland. The small producers played an important role in the chain of milk and beef production. They were the group who reared small numbers of calves and sold them on to the cattle farmers who prepared them for export or home consumption. The removal of one link in the chain of production would have caused severe disruption. The health of the dairy and beef industry was dependent on the symbiotic relationship between its three component parts. A sound dairy industry provided the small farmer with a steady supply of calves which he sold on to the beef salesmen. A thriving export trade gave them all a ready market for their animals. It is doubtful if directing assistance towards one section of the industry would have been a success without a dramatic reorganisation of the farming industry, which was

based on the size, geographic location of farms and traditional farming practices. The small farmer without his part of the livestock trade would have found it difficult to survive.

There does seem to have been a consensus amongst all parties in the Dail on the need for legislation to regulate the quality of Irish agricultural produce. It managed to hold together until at least 1930. However, during the report stage of the Agricultural Produce (Fresh Meat) Bill, 1929, it showed evidence of strain. Hogan said:

I thought this was a non-political Bill. There was ample time between each of the stages for the consideration or introduction of amendments. It is now suggested that on the next report stage the Bill should be re-committed again. That shows that there is no use meeting people half way, even on a matter of this sort.<sup>24</sup>

Hogan's attitude suggests that the consensus on matters 'of this sort', that is legislation which was directly concerned with making laws to put some semblance of order into agricultural production, and which he regarded as 'non-political', had begun to break down. On the same day he responded sharply to Derrig's plea to leave business alone:

"Let business alone, do not interfere." That is complete laissez faire. He belongs to a party who advocate a control board for wheat, compulsory admixture of grain and state regulation for everything, but when it comes to this Bill, because I say certain factories have to be controlled, he says "Oh, no, let business alone, let there be no state interference." It is merely a question of his saying "No" when I say "Yes".<sup>25</sup>

This highlights the more adversarial type of parliamentary exchange which had developed with the entry of Fianna Fail, who for the first time provided an opposition which posed a real threat to the government. As stated above Labour and the Farmers' Party had shared a common weakness both were closely identified with special interests<sup>26</sup>. Therefore their arguments often appeared partisan and narrow and so could be disposed of easily. Fianna Fail represented a much broader constituency and were in a position to support a greater variety of viewpoints without appearing inconsistent. Consequently they caused government ministers a lot more trouble.

The optimism that bitterness between the two main parties caused by the Treaty and the Civil War was in decline expressed by the *Irish Statesman* in October 1927 was soon dispelled. It had hoped that with Fianna Fail in the Dail much of the atmosphere of Irish politics would improve. It reported an encounter between Hogan and Lemass in Carlow during the election.

We find Mr Hogan and Mr Lemass in the Carlow\Kilkenny election tossing to see which party would first address the meeting, and the political duel that followed was unexceptional in spirit<sup>27</sup>.

There was little sign in the Dail that past disagreements had been forgotten. Hogan's well known dislike of de Valera was always going to create tension and hostility between the two parties. His bitterness towards de Valera is summed up in a letter to his aunt. After telling her that he had been 'all over the country' during the July 1927 election campaign, he went on

We did not do well but we might have done a lot worse. There is no one so dissatisfied with the results as de Valera himself. His party apparently expected about seventy or eighty seats and they have come back with just the number they were going to get - 46. I think they have reached their maximum. There is only one hope for them and that is that times should get worse - prices fall and people get poorer. When people are poor and in debt they vote for confusion, for confusion can do them no harm but once the country begins to recover and farmers are making even modest profits they don't want confusion. Everything depends, however, on the conditions of the next two or three years. De Valera's programme is very ingenious. He tells the farmers that his government won't ask them to pay Land Commission annuities, he tells the farmers' sons that he will stop emigration and that he will find land for every single one in the country who wants it for nothing, and he tells the unemployed that he will find work for everybody but he tells nobody where he is going to get the money to do all this. Of course if he got a majority he would not get a loan, on the contrary everybody would withdraw their money from the present National Loan.

He does not want to come into the Dail. His present position is much simpler. His line is "I could get everything I have promised if I were in the Dail, but I am too patriotic to take the Oath hence I can't go in."

Taking the King out of the oath or out of the Constitution means going outside the British Empire, the English could bring us back in three months without firing a shot by economic pressure. We send 98 1/2 per cent of our goods to England and

our sales to England represent 98 1\2 per cent of our total export trade, [which] represents about five per cent of England's total purchases. If the English put an embargo on our cattle, butter, or bacon it would make quick conversions from the pseudo republicanism that exists here amongst greedy idealists at the moment.

He concluded his letter with a gleeful account of de Valera's discomfiture on the opening day of the Dail.

We had a great day on the opening of Parliament. De Valera turned out with his following, all looking very nervous. We showed him into a room in the front hall, which is about fifty yards from the hall in which the Parliament sits. The Clerk of the Dail inquired as to whether any of them were extremely anxious to take the Oath. De Valera replied that he, the Clerk, had no right to compel them to take the Oath.

The door of the Parliament House was then locked and they were left in the hall. They ambled about for about an hour and then wandered away disgusted.<sup>28</sup>

It is clear that Hogan had little more than contempt for de Valera and his 'followers'. This was reinforced in July 1927 by the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, probably at the hands of an anti-treaty individual or group. However, whatever his personal feeling about his new opponents, were the political qualities of the individuals with whom Hogan sparred in the Dail after the 1927 election were high. Eamonn de Valera, Sean Lemass, Frank Aiken, and his shadow minister Dr. James Ryan. His previous opponents Denis Gorey, Thomas

Johnson, Liam Davin and the like can hardly be compared with them when it came to national status. Hogan does not appear to have been overawed by his new and more illustrious antagonists. The tone of his statements and the way he presented his case in debate changed very little. He retained his faith in commonsense and flexibility of response and continued to oppose the creation of permanent rules to cover particular cases which could create more difficulties than they solved. His answer, during debate, to those who wished to give farmers a three year period before they had to pay back loans to the ACC is typical of this approach.

we all know that if I went out on a platform and said "We will give you all loans, and you need not pay a penny back for three years," everyone would cheer and throw up their hats. But it would be twice as hard to pay at the end of three years. It is in the interests of the farmer to tell him that he has to pay "with and with", to pay bit by bit as he can, and leave it to the good sense of the Corporation, in the genuine cases, to try and meet them without making it a general rule.<sup>29</sup>

In the same debate, on the Agricultural Credit Bill, Hogan was under sustained attack from Fianna Fail. They wanted it known that it was only because they were not in a position to put through their own bills which would 'cure the present situation' that they were accepting Hogan's bill. Aiken stressed that it was not to be taken for granted that in welcoming it they were admitting that the policy of the minister was 'the correct one for' the 'country'.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, while they accepted that they could not alter the legislation in any substantial way, it was plain that they were determined to make as many political points as possible. It was a good opportunity to press the case for the small farmer who

they said would be neglected by the legislation. They wanted more agricultural credit societies set up in order that 'small farmers could obtain loans to carry on their business'<sup>31</sup> The inference was that it was the two hundred acre 'farmer that' was 'going to get money through' the 'scheme'<sup>32</sup>

To this end they promoted the cause of agricultural credit societies and co-operative credit societies to serve the needs of farmers who needed small loans (under fifty pounds). There was a network of local societies already in existence, which had been chosen as the vehicle to distribute relief to farmers when stock had been badly hit by fluke in 1925 after a spell of very wet weather. The scheme was administered by the IAOS, who sent organisers to rural areas to explain the advantages of local credit societies and help set them up. Enthusiasm for the scheme seems to have been absent in both rural communities and the IAOS from the outset. Perhaps it was the disappointment of farmers who had hoped to receive free grants and not loans which initially caused resentment towards the societies<sup>33</sup>. It appears that the official representatives found great difficulty in persuading local communities to set up a society and getting 'qualified and reliable secretaries and committees to deal with the finance of credit societies'. The IAOS preferred to use their grant for the development of the creamery industry<sup>34</sup>. At the same time farmers were turning to the ACC for credit which they found more 'convenient' and which gave greater 'privacy'<sup>35</sup>. Fianna Fail ignored these trends. De Valera criticised the IAOS for 'not devoting themselves properly to the work' even though there was no evidence that farmers were anxious to use the societies<sup>36</sup>. What they really wanted was free grants.

De Valera's and Aiken's attacks on the minister's credit policy and the IAOS prompted a characteristic response from Hogan 'The Corporation could never attempt, nor was intended, to deal with the down and outs', he said 'It was to deal with the credit-worthy farmer' He did not believe that the majority of the farmers were 'down and outs' 'ninety per cent of the farmers were in a position to give security' for 'as much money as was good for them' He could offer no solution to the problem of a farmer with no security at all

if a man has no security and is absolutely down and out there is only one way of dealing with him and that is to ask the taxpayer for money and give it to him as a grant I know of no other way All this philanthropy for him is very fine All this concern for the man who is down and out is all very well I come from Galway, and the people whose stock died there are not down and out If a man lost five or six ewes and a few yearlings he is not down and out, but, if he is, it may be for other reasons I am not dealing with them [down and outs] Do not blame me for not dealing with them I never suggested I would<sup>37</sup>

It is worth noting that Hogan actually agreed with de Valera that credit societies were the best way of giving credit to small farmers

all the difficulties do not lie with the IAOS People are very slow to go into societies, as deputies know I doubt if credit societies will be the solution of it I know it is the sound solution, but I know it will be extremely difficult to get people to organise themselves into societies<sup>38</sup>

The difference between the two lay in Hogan's acceptance of the lessons learned from past experience of credit societies. De Valera preferred to ignore them. Hogan had persuaded the Department of Finance to fund the scheme in the first place. When he realised that it was not being taken up by farmers he modified it in order to make it more accessible. He changed the regulations of the societies at least three times in order to encourage local people to participate but with little long term success. Brennan did not favour providing further money in the 1926 budget for the scheme which had only a very small take up, £11,300 out of £100,000 allocated in 1925. He said that there could

scarcely be said to be a convincing case for the provision of a further £100,000, in the next financial year. The scheme is unpopular and I doubt very much whether the progress made up to the present justifies repetition of the provision made during the current year. I would suggest that provision of £50,000 would be adequate for 1926-27.<sup>39</sup>

In June 1926 the take up rate had increased and a total of £33,787.10.4 had been advanced. Hogan was, however, disappointed by the failure of farmers, particularly in the worst hit areas, to use the scheme to restock their land. There were two important reasons why the scheme failed; one, members were not making deposits and two, responsible people were not coming forward to serve on the committees of the societies. Hogan suggested modifying the scheme so that advances would be made to societies without the necessity for local deposits. The modified scheme would be in addition to the existing scheme. On 3 December 1926 Hogan wrote directly to Blythe looking for approval for the new scheme. On 13 December McElligott of Finance wrote to Blythe saying that

on the whole, I think a fairly good case has been made out for the extension of the scheme in the direction desired by the Department. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that funds for restocking, etc., in certain areas are urgently required. The only alternative to the present scheme in some districts would appear to be the making of grants instead of loans.<sup>40</sup>

The fear of making grants to distressed farmers made the Department of Finance act swiftly. The plan was approved by Blythe on 15 December 1926. It can be seen, therefore, that behind the scenes Hogan had tried hard to make credit societies work and had insisted on keeping them alive even when it was obvious that they were never going to achieve the hoped for results.

The importance of the Dail debate on credit societies lies in the way it exposed a fundamental difference between the two parties. Hogan did not express any sympathy for the demise of small farmers who could not get loans to enable them to stay in business, saying '75 per cent of the class who are down and out, you can take it, it is through their own fault'.<sup>41</sup> He was afraid that if unlimited credit was made available they would 'borrow money which undoubtedly' they 'would not be able to repay' and the state would have to accept liability.<sup>42</sup> The experience of the credit boom of the war years and its disastrous consequences for Irish agriculture made him cautious about lending without proper security. Fianna Fail saw his agricultural credit policy as one which was designed to suit 'the large farmers' who would be

the farmers that the minister has encouraged to stick to the very bad national policy of half-working their land, farmers who will go in for summer dairying and have their land half idle and not used to the fullest extent They are the 200 acre farmers <sup>43</sup>

Fianna Fail were trying, quite naturally, to make life as difficult as possible for the government by criticising the bill and what they saw as its lack of provision for small farmers There is, however, no escaping the conclusion that there was a very real difference of emphasis in the two parties Fianna Fail portrayed the small farmer as the saviour of Irish agriculture who through increased tillage would reduce unemployment and dependence on imported grain Cumann na nGaedheal was predisposed to the successful/hard-working farmer whether large or small In the long term helping the most efficient and hard working may have been the correct policy Promoting the interest of commercial agriculture was done for 'pragmatic reasons' and was 'based on the advice available' to the government, rather than a reflection of the dominance of the grazier <sup>44</sup> However, with the international economic position getting worse at the end of the decade it became difficult to retain farmers' support for the policy, when the majority of them did not see themselves as successful

Differences based on the best way of regulating the farming industry existed between the government and Fianna Fail They were slight and where they existed they rarely led to heated debates in the Dail This measure of agreement between the two major parties vanished when the issue of protectionism was raised Fianna Fail made protection one of

the main planks of their policy which they pursued with vigour after their members had taken their seats in 1927. They could not, however, claim sole ownership of the policy.

In 1923 Liam Davin, Labour, asked the President if an embargo could be put on imported grain because of the low prices which were being paid for barley. The department was against duty on imported grain which they said could contribute to higher prices because it raised the cost of animal feedstuffs on the home market. Putting a duty on imported barley would, they said, bring the government into conflict with farmers who did not grow barley and who were in as great a difficulty as those who did. The secretary was particularly concerned that placing a tariff on grain, which was a raw material for a number of Irish industries, would discourage exporters and bring about a rise in the cost of living. Neither did he agree with a guaranteed price which he said had not worked well in Britain during the war.<sup>45</sup> This appears to have remained the policy of the department at least until the effects of the Great Depression began to be felt in 1930\31. A report on the price of home grown grain in 1925 said that a subsidy on tilled land would have to be paid on all tilled land and the country could not afford it, otherwise farmers would simply switch to the crops which were being supported. It reaffirmed that the department was against singling out barley for a minimum price. In another report on the condition of the barley market in 1928, it was concluded that the suggestion that malsters be compelled to purchase barley whether they wanted it or not was 'an unwarranted interference with their business'.<sup>46</sup>

The debate on the necessity for tariffs to protect Irish industry after independence got under way as early as February 1922. It continued unabated for the following ten years. In 1922

**The Irish Homestead**, speaking for the farmers, took an ambivalent attitude towards protective tariffs. In June 1922 it was suggesting that a low tariff on all goods might be the best way to deal with the problem. It believed it would be a good way of increasing government revenues which would be needed by the new state and an alternative to raising taxes. A degree of protection would lead to increased production for the home market and reduce 'reliance on a threatened export trade'. In 1922 Britain and Ireland were still suffering from the post war depression. It believed that it was likely that when the new 'chief of the Irish Treasury was looking for ways of raising money the big import statistics and the sentiment in favour of protection' might lead to a 'general duty of five or seven percent'. This was seen as likely because of the extra revenue from duties which would be needed<sup>47</sup>. A month earlier they had asked farmers to consider any policy for protection agriculture carefully because

it [was] not enough to talk vaguely about protection for Irish agriculture. If they want[ed] protection they [had to] have clear ideas about what they want protected and what duties they desired imposed and they [had] to consider the effects not merely on themselves but on the townsmen and the possibility of retaliation.<sup>48</sup>

Blythe, who was Minister for Trade and Commerce in February 1922, did not share the popular sentiment in favour of protective tariffs. He thought that Ireland was not in a position to adopt protective tariffs because

to commit oneself to a protective policy means that finally you aim at a self-supporting country with a balance between rural and urban production and you are

much more concerned about your home markets than your foreign markets. There is a great deal to be said for this ideal. But what perils lie before a country like Ireland, which more than any other country in the world, depends at present on an import and export trade, if it makes hasty changes.

He illustrated his point by saying that it was estimated that £100,000,000 worth of Ireland's exports were agricultural, £2,000,000 were industrial, the majority of which went to Britain. Therefore the future prosperity of Ireland's agricultural industry lay not in home market but in the purchasing power of its neighbour.<sup>49</sup>

Agitation to bring in some kind of tariff or subsidy for barley continued throughout the years up to 1927. Deputies Davin and Heffernan were in the forefront when it came to raising the question in the Dail. They were particularly concerned because they represented constituencies which had a high proportion of arable farmers. Davin's interest in the fate of the barley growers is a good example of coincidence of interest in politics. The Labour Party was in favour of more tillage because they believed it would give more employment on the land. Laois\Offaly, the constituency which Davin represented, was one of the major barley growing areas. This led to the spectacle of a Labour Party deputy championing the large farmers who were barley growers, 'the much better off man', from the earliest days of the state. Unanimity did not exist in the Farmers' Party on how the problem should be solved with one deputy against a subsidy for the industry but in favour of either protection or a penalty on buyers of foreign barley, and another supporting a subsidy. In January 1926, the gram growers were demanding that an embargo be placed

on maize products and that no maize products should be sold unless they were blended with fifteen per cent of home-grown grain <sup>50</sup>

The crux of the matter for the growers seems to have been the monopoly position which Guinness held in the market. Guinness was an easily identifiable target. The growers and their representatives were aware that Guinness were producing large profits because of the drop in the world price of malting barley, a situation which they believed was unfair. Consequently they wanted some form of subsidy or tariff which would restore them to a more profitable position <sup>51</sup>. Hogan and the department rejected any attempt to make barley a special case, firstly because other cereal growers were also affected by the drop in world prices, and secondly because the land used for growing barley was suitable for other crops unlike soils where oats were grown. Therefore, barley growers had alternatives available to them. It was a difficult position for Hogan to defend, whatever its merits. It brought criticism which was particularly unwelcome from the Grain Growers Association, whose members could usually be counted amongst the government's strongest supporters. One deputy put it like this:

the Executive Council is not elected to look after the interests of one particular brewery here, but it would seem that they are concerned when the interests of that firm come right up against the interests of a large number of unfortunate people who are thrown out of employment through this importation of malt <sup>52</sup>

Guinness was the single most important firm in the country with an international reputation. They were acknowledged as good employers and were large scale exporters as well as

supplying the home market with porter and stout which might otherwise have been imported. Hogan regarded Guinness as one of the great success stories of Irish industry and commerce. He did not want to see their trading position damaged and was critical of those who 'dragged them in'. He thought it was 'humiliating to have members of the House constantly attacking Guinness's'. What is humiliating about it is that that concern would not think it worth its while to answer us'. Responding to the point about the role of the executive council he concluded that 'whatever the functions of the Executive Council are, they are certainly not to run a business such as a brewery'. However, during the same exchange he made it clear that he was 'not defending' Guinness's at all<sup>53</sup>. Behind the scenes, however, Hogan asked the department to check if there were any technical reasons why Guinness mixed foreign barley with Irish. The department were unable to give a definite answer based on information from Guinness. However they told him that they had 'good reason for recording the opinion that the St James's Gate brewery could get on quite well without one pickle of Irish grown grain'<sup>54</sup>.

That barley became a major battleground for the debate over protection and subsidy is worth noting. The significance lies in the fact that barley growers were completely dependent on the home market. Growers were faced with competition which could not be met by improved efficiency or quality control alone. Unlike the dairy and beef industries, cereal growers suffered from natural disadvantages. They did not have a dependable climate, unlike Canadian and US growers, nor could they even achieve the economies of scale enjoyed by the prairie farmers of North and South America. The barley growers wanted to retain the high prices which they had enjoyed during and after the war. To achieve this would have meant paying them a subsidy or placing a prohibitive tariff on

imports Either way whether by means of tax increases to pay for the subsidy or by increasing the price of barley the dairy/beef farmers would be placed at a disadvantage vis a vis their competitors because of the increased price of animal feedstuffs and therefore the costs of production<sup>55</sup>

Farmers understood the ramifications of an agricultural policy based on protection By 1924 **The Irish Statesman**, which had succeeded the **Irish Homestead**, and was the voice of farming in the 1920s had hardened its attitude towards protection While other sections of the economy were still debating the merits of protection the ‘farmers ha[d] recorded their belief that, whoever else may stand to gam by protection, they st[ood] to lose’ The paper stated that it was neither ‘Protectionist nor Free Trade’ but it was already clear that they had come down on the side of the farmers and the government<sup>56</sup>

**The Irish Statesman** had an unusual approach to some of the important economic issues evoked by debate on protectionism Protection was often presented as a way of encouraging industrialisation and thus reducing unemployment The journal, however, wanted to know why it ‘seem[ed] to be assumed that a factory civilization on the English model was the ideal thing to aim at’ Encouraging industrialisation was tantamount to replacing ‘the departed English Government by an imported English civilization’ It suggested that there was another course, to follow the example of Denmark and other countries whose economies were dominated by agriculture It found the opportunity, given by the debate, to strike at Sinn Fein irresistible

By a curious coincidence it is the same people who are most anxious to revive the Irish language who are keenest on introducing the English factory town with its slums. It seems to be the aim of certain people who call themselves Irish-Irelanders to make Ireland as like Lancashire as possible.<sup>57</sup>

Their efforts to get debates of this nature going were not successful. The arguments about protection had polarised by the middle of the decade. On one side were those who believed in protective tariffs as a way of assisting home industries and creating employment. They included industrialists, the Labour Party and Sinn Féin, later Fianna Fáil, and the Department of Industry and Commerce which was 'from its origin, a committed advocate of an active government policy for industry'.<sup>58</sup> Against the proposition were the bulk of the farming community, large exporting companies such as Guinness and Jacobs, the Cumann na nGaedheal government and the Fiscal Inquiry Committee, set up in 1923.<sup>59</sup>

The period of greatest pressure for the introduction of tariffs and subsidies coincided with Fianna Fáil's entry into the Dáil. It is very likely, however, that even in their absence demands for some kind of protection from cheap imports would have been strong. Davin's and Heffernan's sustained interest in the plight of the barley growers from early in the decade is evidence of a continued belief in some quarters that government intervention was necessary to assist growers to compete with foreign imports. Fianna Fáil was echoing and amplifying calls for help from farmers which were being made by their organisations, county committees of agriculture and county councils.<sup>60</sup> Nor were these calls confined to opposition supporters, as an example, the members of the Garryhinch branch of Cumann

na nGaedheal passed a resolution which they sent to the minister calling on the government to impose a tariff of 10/- a barrel on all foreign barley to stimulate grain growing <sup>61</sup>

Increasing competition on the British market from European and Dominion countries was eroding the Irish farmers' share of the British market. By the end of the 1920s world recession was beginning to have a real if delayed impact on Irish exports <sup>62</sup>. Cumann na nGaedheal had never completely ruled out the use of protective tariffs in particular cases. In the 1924 budget they had been imposed on five categories of goods, although the Minister for Finance made it clear that it was not to be regarded as the beginning of a general protectionist policy.

the Government takes up no doctrinaire attitude on the question of free trade and protection. It regards the matter as one of expediency which may be variously decided in different circumstances. The Executive Council is convinced that the matter is one on which the country should feel its way <sup>63</sup>

The Tariff Commission was set up in 1926 to assist the framing of what President Cosgrave described as a policy of selective protection. Surprisingly, during its existence it received very few applications. However, the victory of the National Government in the general election in Britain in October 1931 was a turning point. The prospect of a general tariff in Britain led to a world-wide rush to export goods to the United Kingdom before it was introduced. That in turn caused deep concern in Ireland <sup>64</sup>. An editorial in **The Irish Times** in November was reporting the 'first move' towards a general tariff in Britain.

Britain, having lingered for some weeks on the brink of protection, at last has launched away. In the House of Commons yesterday the President of the Board of Trade, a sensible convert to necessity, announced his proposals for the stoppage of dumping. The bill will apply only to manufactured or partly-manufactured goods, since the Minister for Agriculture will have his own plans for the promotion of that industry.<sup>65</sup>

This was a particularly trying time for Hogan. His agricultural policy had been based on the belief that as Ireland had to export agricultural produce in order to survive. It was, therefore, an absolute necessity to keep the overheads of farmers as low as possible in order that their goods would remain competitive, especially in the British market. His policy had sheltered Ireland from the worst of the depression up to 1930. In April 1930 he wrote

this has not been a bad year at all for farmers. Cheap grain, oats, barley, maize, etc., is what we want, as our production is mainly live stock products which we sell on the English market. The cheaper our raw materials the more money we make. I don't know what will happen this year. One feature of the situation is that England is still in a bad way. Any lack of prosperity in England re-acts on us at once.<sup>66</sup>

O'Donovan confirms Hogan's view. He says that it was 'noticeable that the countries engaged in the export of protein foods did not feel the impact as soon as those engaged

in the production of primary commodities such as grain' Irish farmers at a time when the market for cereals was very weak were able to reap some benefits <sup>67</sup>

Hogan held out against opposition calls for protective tariffs, subsidies and price controls, which would have destroyed his export led policy. International trading conditions, however, challenged his adherence to a free trade economy in a way that domestic criticism and appeals from particular farming interests had never done. Although he agreed to the introduction of a tariff on butter in November 1930 it is clear that he remained unconvinced that it would produce anything but temporary relief for the dairy farmers

for the first time I find that after we have had an experience for about three months of a good swingeing tariff, the merits of which could be exactly measured, unlike the tariff on boots and clothes, at last some doubts are entering the minds of deputies as to the efficacy of tariffs to solve all our ills. I have considerable doubts as to what the ultimate effect of this will be, and I repeat that I want the House and the country to have every opportunity of examining every relevant consideration connected with this tariff before it is finally passed <sup>68</sup>

Hogan made this statement during the committee stage of the Finance bill at a time when he was supposed to be speaking in favour of the tariff which had been recommended by the Tariff Commission. His ambivalence was difficult to disguise, he questioned whether the tariff was 'going to be a benefit from the point of view of the country as a whole and from the point of view of the permanent interest of the farmer', while in the next paragraph

he said 'the one branch of agriculture where prices collapsed is dairying and we gave, if I may put it this way, a much needed stimulant to the industry by imposing this tariff' <sup>69</sup>

The irony of the 'doctrinaire free trader' struggling to justify his apparent volte face was not lost on the opposition. Sean McEntee remarked sarcastically that the minister's speech 'reminded' him 'of the manner of a man fixing cocktails in that he was quite obviously mixing his feelings in regard to this tariff'. However, he was not the only one to have doubts about the tariff and he made use of the inconsistencies in the arguments of the opposition to relieve his own beleaguered position. Responding to de Valera's criticism that the rise in the cost of living and production was damaging the farmer, he hit back by saying that the main cause of the rise in the cost of goods on which tariffs had been placed and whose index figure was 'considerably higher than the index figure for cattle and sheep which the farmer' was 'selling'. Therefore more tariffs on imports, the policy which Fianna Fail advocated, would worsen his plight. He continued forcefully

we heard from the benches opposite that the farmers were suffering from the great disadvantage of high prices for what they have to buy compared with the low prices for everything they have to sell. I have been saying that myself for years. The Deputies on the Fianna Fail side should come over amongst us at last <sup>70</sup>

Hogan managed, despite the weakness of his position, to forestall any outright triumphalism from Fianna Fail, who might have been expected to make him eat his words on protectionism and protective tariffs. The government held their own against stronger opposition in the Dail. Hogan was still as vitriolic as ever.

Mr Hogan aptly said that all this talk about protection and ruralization of industry is due to a vague idea that we are chosen people and have to be sheltered from the world and that we have not the courage or energy or brains to go out and take our place with the other Philistines <sup>71</sup>

**The Round Table** again reported Hogan pouring scorn on Fianna Fail's proposed policy for increasing tillage 'Hogan rightly describe[d] this wheat growing policy as an attempt to alter the trend of world prices by the aid of national capital, in other words to develop what pays least' <sup>72</sup> He did this by very cleverly exploiting their uncertainties and by trying to show that those who had been most in favour of tariffs had not realised where a policy of indiscriminate tariffs could lead On the same theme he attacked 'the costliness of endeavouring to encourage something which the country was not specially suited for' he was obviously referring to Fianna Fail's efforts to have wheat production increased with assistance from the government The subsidy necessary would have been large and there was no guarantee that the Irish consumer would find home grown wheat an acceptable alternative to the bread made from the whiter imported wheats Hogan was unrepentant about the 1931 tariff on butter

I make no apology for making the experiment I make no apology to the consumer - while I sympathise with him - because in this case he is well protected, far better protected than in the case of other tariffs introduced in this house Above all, I make no apology whatever to the people who have been advocating tariffs indiscriminately for the last four or five years In the past year it was taken as a matter of course that tariffs were inherently sound, that there was no reason on earth

- except a double dose of original sin from which every member of the government suffers - why tariffs should not be imposed automatically, without any examination, without taking the trouble to find out the reactions and understand their implications <sup>73</sup>

Fianna Fail were in almost exactly the opposite position to Hogan. After years of being in favour of tariffs they were now expressing doubts. Hogan referred to the tariff on butter as an experiment, suggesting that he did not regard it as a permanent fixture. From his point of view a tariff on butter was probably the least damaging and least likely to keep prices high, and he was sure that the benefits of the tariff would go directly to the farmer. Answering a question on whether the benefits of the tariff would go to the farmers or to dealers, he said

it is right to say that 92 to 93 per cent of the output of creamery butter is controlled at the present moment by farmers, and the benefits, if there are any, conferred by this particular tariff will go back straight into the farmers' pocket <sup>74</sup>

Butter differed from other commodities on which tariffs had been placed because for eight months of the year surplus quantities were produced which in the ordinary way were exported. The surplus would have the effect of keeping prices low because there would be no necessity to import butter. In the case of boots, by contrast, 'where the total requirements of the 'country' was about £2,000,000 worth, and the total production of the home industry for the last three or four years' was 'only £300,000 worth', he argued that a tariff would keep the price artificially high <sup>75</sup>

There was little doubt that in spring 1931 Hogan's agricultural policy was under severe strain. Nevertheless his nimble mind was able to cope with the criticisms which Fianna Fail raised in the Dail and on many occasions he managed to make them look foolish. He even had the benefit, in political terms, of the Labour Party retreating from their earlier support for the butter tariff. In theory he appeared to be winning the argument. Both Labour and Fianna Fail were obviously concerned for their own reasons about the effect of a tariff on the price of one of the staple foods of the Irish diet. Hogan, however, pointed out that the effects could not be hidden as they affected all consumers unlike duties which had been placed on manufactured goods. Had he been given points for his debating skill he would have been well ahead because, although he had to bring in a measure with which he did not agree, he managed to use the difficulties which it exposed to show the validity of his strongly held views on free trade. However, debating points could not alter the fact that there was a collapse in agricultural prices. 'We can do a lot, we have done a lot,' he said, 'but we cannot prevent world conditions' <sup>76</sup>

Hogan had been able to defend his policy during previous agricultural crises because although they were on occasions very severe they were seen as temporary phenomena which could be overcome through greater efficiency and more careful marketing. The Wall Street crash of 1929 heralded a period of severe world depression which could not be dealt with in the same way. The general loss of confidence in the ability of international trade to recover quickly from the depression led the vast majority of countries to throw up trade barriers in order to protect their domestic industries. Ireland was in a peculiar position. Firstly, almost all agricultural exports went to Great Britain, with no alternative markets available. While the British government had not reacted immediately to the slump by

introducing a general tariff their market for agricultural goods was being inundated with produce from their normal suppliers who found other markets being closed off. Secondly, Irish industry was already weak and incapable of supplying the home market with all the necessities of a modern state. With a few notable exceptions, neither was it export oriented. Therefore, even if protective tariffs were put in place there was not the domestic capacity to supply the home market with many of the commodities necessary to maintain the major industry, agriculture, without increasing prices and injuring exports still further. The flaws in Cumann na nGaedheal's free trade policy, with its concentration on agriculture, were beginning to show in a dramatic way while it had served its purpose well in the past it was not flexible or imaginative enough to deal with the extraordinary circumstances of the late 1920s and early 1930s. But what policies could?

In an odd way Hogan had been implementing his own protective policy for agriculture. He had tried to insulate it from what was happening in the rest of the economy. Unemployment, emigration and poverty had been given a lower priority in the interests of keeping agricultural production costs down. Even the introduction of the butter tariff had this effect. It helped the dairy industry, but it raised more tax revenue and increased the cost of living for the entire population, rich and poor. When it came to agriculture he appears to have ignored the basic rule of free trade economics which was that the market rules. There was, however, some logic in his approach, which might more correctly have been called pragmatic rather than free trade because it took into account the reality of Ireland's economic structure. Ireland's thousands of small farms, many of which lacked sufficient capital to make them profitable, still provided a living for more than half of the working population. They needed some kind of indirect assistance. Hogan's policy gave

them protection from high taxes and price increases at the expense of other sections of the community. This policy seems to have worked, if exports are used as a criterion. To quote Meenan

the volume of total exports (then almost entirely agricultural in origin) rose between 1926 and 1929 in the ratio of 87 to 104. Their value in 1929 was £47m, a figure which, incredibly enough, was not again approached until 1948, and then in a sadly depreciated currency.<sup>77</sup>

The depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s did not allow for subtle policies which had depended, to a very large extent, on self-help, encouraged through education and the direction of the regulatory acts. Ireland seven years after independence was not in a position to fight in the international trade war which developed after the 1929 stock market collapse. It is unlikely that it would have been whatever agricultural policies had been in place. The limited domestic market could not have consumed the surplus meat, butter and eggs which were being produced nor could many Irish consumers have afforded to buy them in sufficient quantities without either a drop in prices which would have injured the farmer or a massive subsidy which would have to be paid for by increased taxation. Altering the balance between cattle and dairy farming in favour of tillage would have required a fundamental shift of policy involving heavy government subsidies, compulsion, or both. The experience of the war years when tillage was increased through compulsion and guaranteed prices and the immediate decline which followed its removal graphically illustrates the preference of farmers for dairying and livestock which they regarded as more profitable because it suited the conditions in Ireland. As Meenan says, there was a

‘tendency in Ireland for the tilled area to contract except under the pressure of exceptional circumstances’<sup>78</sup>

As early as 1923, in response to calls for an embargo on barley imports, the department examined the question of tariffs and subsidies and came to the conclusion that duty on imported grain would lead to higher costs. On further examination they expressed the view that putting duty on imported barley ‘would only cause embarrassment to the government unless a policy of protecting agriculture generally’ was ‘adopted’.<sup>79</sup> There does not appear to have been any advice to the contrary given to Hogan by his departmental advisers up to the time he left office in February, 1932.

Almost immediately after Fianna Fail took office and James Ryan became Minister for Agriculture there was a reversal of this policy. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the advice which was given by the officials of the department to the new government, but it must be assumed that they gave their advice within the guidelines laid down by the policy of protectionism on which Fianna Fail had fought the election in 1932. Initially it appears that the new minister radically altered the direction which agricultural policy was taking in 1932.<sup>80</sup> This suggests that the new Fianna Fail minister had a dramatic effect on the policy of his department. However, the gradual drift towards tariffs on agricultural produce at the end of Hogan’s period as minister makes it likely that had he remained in office he would, like Ryan, have gone along with a general tariff together with subsidies. But it is just as likely that they would not have been regarded as a permanent solution by Hogan. Looking at the condition of Irish agriculture in the three years 1929 to 1932 makes the changes which took place after 1932 seem less abrupt. Hogan had been

forced to adopt policies which under normal circumstances he would never have considered. Because he did so under duress and against his own convictions, he gained very little advantage from their fruits in political terms. Fianna Fail had, by linking self-sufficiency and economic nationalism, hitched their political wagon to the rising star of protectionism. It was, therefore, they who reaped the rewards. They after all had been proved right.

In evidence given by the secretary of the Department of Agriculture, in a memorandum to the Banking Commission in 1935 on the over-dependence of Ireland's economy on livestock exports, it is clear that the department had begun to alter their opinion of how to deal with the problems which the slump in world trade had created for agriculture.

the defects of the system became apparent when the depression in the prices of livestock and livestock products set in followed by the imposition of Import Duties on such products and quantitative restriction of imports of certain of the commodities into Great Britain.<sup>81</sup>

This suggests that it was world trading conditions and not just the change of government which altered their view of the efficacy of protection. He pressed this point, that is the connection between prevailing conditions and agricultural policy, further during questioning by the Commission where he said:

I think, in the new set of circumstances that now exist, that the new agricultural policy is better balanced than the policy it succeeded. At the same time, I want to

make it quite clear that I consider the policy adopted in this country prior to the years 1930 and 1931 was suitable for the circumstances that existed at the time <sup>82</sup>

It may be, of course, that he felt that he had to defend the line which department officials, himself included, had taken in the past in order to maintain his credibility. He did not, however, venture an opinion on the probable condition of agriculture in 1935 if a policy of protection had been adopted in 1922.

The general election of 1932 saved Hogan from what might have been for him a very ignominious position. The British introduction of a general tariff made it increasingly difficult for Ireland to escape the same fate. It is not easy to suggest ways in which Hogan could have maintained some semblance of his original free trade policy, unless he could have persuaded Britain to make Ireland a special case and give Irish agricultural imports preferential treatment. Hogan had been due to visit London to discuss these matters when the election took place. It is impossible, however, to say if he could have secured concessions which would have allowed Ireland's agricultural trade with Britain to continue as before. Fianna Fail's policy of protection and the growing dispute over the payment of land annuities put an end to the hope of any kind of preferential treatment and presaged one of the most depressed periods in Irish agriculture.

Cumann na nGaedheal paid the price of being in Government during one of the worst economic depressions. They lost the 1932 election. Fianna Fail managed not only to harness the discontent caused by the international depression but the active nationalism associated with the fight for independence. When Mulcahy resigned as a result of the army mutiny

in 1924 Valhulis suggests that 'Cumann na nGaedheal was left without a national hero to rival Eamon de Valera, leader of the anti-Treaty group'<sup>83</sup> This was significant because it allowed Fianna Fail to project themselves as the inheritors of the 1916 mantle and to portray Cumann na nGaedheal as pro-British and supporters of the British Commonwealth

Hogan contributed to this impression. He continually played down his connection with the independence struggle. He minimised not only his role but also that played by opposition members. His impatience with those who wished to dwell on the achievement of independence was evident, particularly in the Dail. He wanted the Irish people to forget about 'records' and 'pedigrees' and concentrate on increasing agricultural exports in order to achieve prosperity. Debating the past would only divert attention from this objective and allow other countries to reduce Ireland's share of the British market.

Hogan the realist was unrealistic in thinking that the traumatic events of the pre-Treaty period would be easily forgotten and replaced by the prosaic issues which he regarded as more important. His no nonsense approach was admirable. However it would have been more politic to have taken into account the sensitivities of the time and covered his irritation with those who could not come to terms with Ireland's independence as easily as he had. **The Round Table** commenting on the reasons for Cumann na nGaedheal's poor results in the 1932 election may have Hogan in mind when it said

the Government itself did not act with much tact, and justified the humorous comment of a friendly cynic, that it contained several statesmen but only one politician, namely, Mr Cosgrave himself.<sup>84</sup>

Hogan relied on the 'good sense' and 'soundness' of the electorate to return the government in which he served. His prescription for prosperity was based on hard work and self-reliance. It may have been in his own words "sound" but it was a harsh message. He neglected the spiritual dimension. His late friend Kevin O'Higgins would have been proud of this omission. O'Higgins was scathing about traditional nationalists.

none of these fellows care a curse about the country or the people in the country. McGilligan, who wasn't "out in 16", has no particular "record" and no particular "Gaelic soul", has done more in two weeks than his predecessor [McGrath] in two years. I have come to the conclusion that men like Hogan, McGilligan could do more for the country in a year and (even for the realisation of all its ideals) than all the Clans and Brotherhoods could effect in a generation.<sup>85</sup>

Hogan and O'Higgins were the antithesis of extremist republicanism. De Valera and Fianna Fail were the synthesis of the two arguments. Fianna Fail brought together in a workable formula the idea that constitutional government did not preclude economic nationalism. In the deteriorating economic situation in 1932 this was a powerful mix. Fianna Fail offered protectionism as the new answer to Ireland's economic problems since the old panacea 'independence from Britain will cure all our economic ills' had proved a failure.<sup>86</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 de Vere White, **O'Higgins** p 240 K Theodore Hoppen, **Ireland Since 1800 Conflict and Conformity** (London, 1989), p 178
- 2 Lyons, **Ireland** p 486
- 3 **Irish Independent** 16 Jul 1936 From an obituary under the headline, 'Recollections of By-gone days' by D S
- 4 Cornelius O'Leary, **Irish Elections 1918-1977** (Dublin, 1979), pp 33-4
- 5 See above pp 40-44
- 6 Hogan to the President, 7 Apr 1923 NA, DT, S 3192
- 7 Hogan to the President, 11 Jan 1923 UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7b\96(1) NA, DT, S 3992
- 8 Interview with Liam Cosgrave, 4 Jun 1993
- 9 Interview with Una O'Higgins O'Malley, 20 Aug 1989
- 10 de Vere White, **O'Higgins** p 153

- 11 Hogan to the President, 11 Jan 1923, UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7b\96(2)
- 12 O'Higgin's memorandum of a conference held in January 1923 *ibid* P7b\96(7)
- 13 *ibid* , P7\c\24
- 14 Lee, **Ireland** p 97
- 15 Memorandum, Hogan to the President, 17 Apr 1923 NA, DT, S 3192
- 16 **DD** Vol 38, col 1978, 27 May 1931
- 17 **DD** Vol 1, cols 445 - 452, 19 Sept 1922
- 18 'Labour's support was predominantly rural until 1960, being concentrated in the heartland region and in central Munster areas with large numbers of rural labourers' Garvin shows a strong correlation between support for the Labour Party and support for the Farmers' Party Both were concentrated in areas where farms were large and therefore employed many farm labourers Garvin, **The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics** pp 170 and 168 See also Michael Gallagher, **The Irish Labour Party in Transition, 1957 - 1982** (Manchester, 1982), pp 1 - 3 and J H Whyte, 'Politics without social bases', in Richard Rose, **Electoral Behaviour A Comparative Handbook** (London, 1974), pp 621, 647 - 648

- 19     Garvin, **Irish Nationalist Politics** pp 165 and 163     Brian Girvin, **Between Two Worlds** (Dublin, 1989), p 15
- 20     Lee, **Ireland** p 115
- 21     **DD** Vol 24, col 2266, 6 Jul 1928
- 22     *ibid* , col 2267
- 23     **DD** Vol 38, col 2946, 28 May 1931
- 24     **DD** Vol 33, col 316, 12 Feb 1930
- 25     *ibid* , col 360
- 26     See note 18 above
- 27     **The Irish Statesman** 22 Oct 1927
- 28     Hogan to Mere Wilfreda, 11 Jul 1927     Kevin O'Higgins was assassinated on the 10 Jul 1927     The contents of this letter seem to confirm Ann McGilligan's description of him as 'cynical'     Interview with Mrs Patrick McGilligan, 14 Jun 1989

- 29     **DD** Vol 24, cols 2276 - 2277, 6 Jul 1928
- 30     *ibid* , col 2254 and 2253
- 31     *ibid* , col 2253
- 32     **DD** Vol 24, col 2254, 6 Jul 1928
- 33     Memorandum to the minister, 19 Oct 1925, gives the history of the scheme    The scheme was introduced in May 1925    NA, DA, AG1\G619\28
- 34     This was part of a brief prepared by the department for the minister    James Ryan had put down a question on credit societies for answer on 13 Jun 1928    NA, DA, AG1\G1707\28
- 35     From Agriculture to Finance, 2 Nov 1927    NA, DA, AG1\G619\28
- 36     **DD** Vol 24, col 2270, 6 Jul 1928
- 37     *ibid* , cols 2271 - 2273
- 38     *ibid* , col 2279    ‘The Minister for Lands and Agriculture has been disappointed in the failure of a number of areas to take advantage of the scheme’    Secretary of Agriculture to secretary of Finance, 12 Nov 1926    NA, DF, F145\0001\25

- 39 Brennan to McElligott, 13 Jan 1926 NA, DF, F145\0001\25
- 40 Secretary of Agriculture to secretary of Finance, 9 Jun 1926, secretary of Agriculture to secretary of Finance, 12 Nov 1926, Hogan to Blythe, 3 Dec 1926, McElligott to Blythe, 13 Dec 1926 *ibid*
- 41 **DD**, Vol 24, col 2273, 6 Jul 1928
- 42 *ibid* , col 2274
- 43 *ibid* , col 2254
- 44 Girvin, **Between Two Worlds** pp 15-16
- 45 **DD** Vol 4, col 1679, 31 Jul 1923 Memorandum to the secretary, 29 Jul 1923 Memorandum to Hogan from the secretary, 30 Jul 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28
- 46 Report to the secretary of a conference on the price of home grown gram, 29 Sept 1925 Report on the condition of the barley market, Oct 1928 NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28
- 47 **The Irish Homestead** 3 Jun 1922
- 48 *ibid* , 13 May 1922

- 49     **ibid** , 18 Feb 1922
- 50     **Irish Independent** 10 Jul 1924   **The Irish Times** 15 Jan 1926
- 51     A resolution from the Offaly Farmers' Association referred to the injustice of Guinness buying foreign barley and suggested an import duty of 5/- per cwt plus a minimum price of 30/- for all malting barley Sent to the minister, 13 Sept 1925  
NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28
- 52     **DD** Vol 36, col 714, 27 Nov 1930
- 53     **ibid** , col 714
- 54     Hogan to the secretary, 21 Feb 1924   Hinchcliffe to the secretary, seen by Hogan  
1 Apr 1924 NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28
- 55     D McCormack, 'Policy Making in a Small Open Economy Some aspects of the Irish Experience', in **The Central Bank Quarterly Bulletin** (Winter 1979), p 103
- 56     **The Irish Statesman** 12 Apr and 3 May 1924
- 57     **ibid** , 12 Apr 1924
- 58     Girvin, **Between Two Worlds**, p 22

59     ibid , pp 21-22

59     A note on a department minute sheet said that Laoghis CCA had circularised the CCAs in the barley growing counties on the question of making an application to the Tariff Commission. Four agreed, two decided to take no action and two had not dealt with the matter, 10 Jul 1928. NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28. Unanimity on the policy of free trade or protection does not appear to have existed in any group. **The Irish Times** 15 Jan 1926 reported that a

Mr Brooke Brazier (Shanagarry) handed in a notice of motion for discussion at the meeting of the County Cork Executive of the Irish Farmers' Union - In view of the urgent need that exists for protection for agricultural products and the adoption by the Government of protective tariffs for manufactured goods, we, the Executive of the Cork Farmers' Union consider the recent declaration of Congress of the IFU in favour of free trade as their policy as premature, and call upon Congress at its next meeting to have this declaration rescinded

61     Sent to the minister, 22 Feb 1927. NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28

62     Meenan, **The Irish Economy** p 94, says that the effects of the depression were mitigated to some extent by the fact that the fall in prices had been more severe in cereals than livestock, though livestock products suffered. The world wide glut was so great, however, that by the end of 1930 a prohibitive duty was imposed on butter

followed by a duty on imported oats and oatmeal in October 1931 See also Cullen, **An Economic History** pp 176 - 178 'The dominant feature in the deepening economic depression of 1930-1 was the collapse of agricultural and raw material prices' A G Kenwood and A L Loughheed, **The Growth of the International Economy** (London, 1983), p 204

62 **DD** Vol 7, col 40

63 Meenan, **The Irish Economy** pp 140 - 141

64 **The Irish Times** 9 Nov 1931

65 Hogan to I F Schurmans, Brussels 9 Apr 1930 Schurmans had been a senior executive with the Irish Sugar Manufacturing Company in Carlow He returned to Brussels late in 1928 and retired for 'personal reasons' Hogan had intervened to try to have Schurmans retained at Carlow and wrote to Lippens asking him to reconsider the move He regarded him as 'easily the most successful officer [they] had in this country' Lippens said that he could do nothing that it had been Schurmans' own decision to leave Hogan to Lippens, 18 Aug 1928 Lippens to Hogan, 22 Aug 1928 NA, DA, AG1\G927\42

66 O'Donovan, **Irish Documents** p 3

67 **DD** Vol 37, col 28, 22 Jan 1931

- 68     **ibid** , col 32
- 69     **ibid** , col 997, 5 Mar 1931 **ibid** cols 2267 - 2268, 26 Mar 1931
- 70     **ibid** , cols 2268 - 2269
- 71     **The Round Table**, Vol 8, Mar 1928, p 372
- 72     **The Round Table** Vol 75, Jun 1929, p 376
- 73     **DD** Vol 37, col 1073, 5 Mar 1931
- 74     **ibid** , col 27, 22 Jan 1931
- 75     **ibid** , col 33
- 76     **ibid** , col 1074, 5 Mar and col 2271, 26 Mar 1931
- 77     Meenan, **The Irish Economy** p 94 Cullen, in **An Economic History**, p 183 notes that ‘in 1960 the volume of exports from the Republic of Ireland passed the 1929 level for the first time’
- 78     **ibid** , p 117

- 79 Memorandum prepared in the department for the secretary, 29 Jul 1923 To the secretary, on the minute sheet, 5 Oct 1923 NA, DA, AG1\G3233\28
- 80 It is generally accepted that Hogan continued the policy which DATI had been pursuing before 1922 See, for example, David O'Mahony, **The Irish Economy** (Cork, 1964), p 160
- 81 Quoted in Meenan, **The Irish Economy** p 98
- 82 *ibid* , p 101
- 83 Vahulis, **Portrait** p 233
- 84 **The Round Table**, Vol 86, June 1932, pp The result was, Fianna Fail 72, Cumann na nGaedheal 56, Labour 7, Farmers' Party 4, Independents 13
- 85 Vahulis, **Portrait** pp 233-4, quoting a private letter written by O'Higgins after the resignation of McGrath and Mulcahy
- 86 **The Round Table** Vol 78, March, 1930, p 371

## CHAPTER 5

### THE RESOLUTION OF THE LAND QUESTION

Elizabeth Hooker, in the preface to her pioneering work on **Readjustments of Agricultural Tenure in Ireland**, divides the problem of land tenure into five areas (1) the regulation of landlord-tenant relations, (2) the transformation of tenants into owners, (3) special work for the congested districts, (4) the provision of holdings for men with too little land or with no land, and (5) aid to rural labourers <sup>1</sup> All five were important but it was the transformation of tenants into owners which dominated the debate on land policy to the virtual exclusion of all the others by 1922 It is a powerful example of a policy gradually capturing the support of the majority of interested parties, the tenants, and establishing itself as the new orthodoxy in the course of a generation It was not just the tenants who held this view In 1914 the administration recognised that it was 'the settled policy of all political parties to carry Irish land purchase through to completion' <sup>2</sup> There had grown up in Britain and Ireland a simple belief that 'in occupying ownership the cure for the ills of Ireland had at last been found' <sup>3</sup>

Irish landlords had not distinguished themselves as either good proprietors or businessmen so there was little sympathy for their proposed removal

the case against absenteeism was accepted on all sides and was particularly popular in England and the tenants, once they realised the advantages of annuity payments which were lower than rents, threw themselves wholeheartedly into the fight <sup>4</sup>

The tentative experiment with peasant proprietorship which began in 1870 developed into an unstoppable flood by the end of the century This swept away the landlords but it left the rest of the nineteenth century agricultural structure almost intact The direct

beneficiaries of the Land Acts were the tenants. Evicted tenants were, under specified conditions, able to recover their land. The numbers involved were small, 3,457 under the Land Acts up to 31 March, 1922. The number reinstated between 1 April, 1922 and 31 March, 1932 was 149. Along with tenants and evicted tenants, labourers who lost their jobs as a result of the break-up of large estates were 'a class which alone shared the coveted privilege of purchase with the farm tenants' <sup>5</sup> It was as if the clock had stopped and whoever was in possession remained in possession irrespective of their age or ability. Unfortunately the legacy of nineteenth century land hunger meant that 'the men who worked the soil were not the most able farmers but the men offering the highest rents' <sup>6</sup> Competence in farming did not become a consideration when land was transferred in the 1920s and 1930s. With 314,249 holdings either transferred or in the process of being transferred to their tenants in 1922 the heat had left the debate on land policy <sup>7</sup> Few questioned its efficacy.

The magic of ownership, it was declared, would work miracles, if any sceptical person declared that the spell would not work unless other formulae were added, he was denounced heartily as an economic heretic. But the magic of proprietorship did not work according to the prophecies of the political magicians <sup>8</sup>

This was the opinion of the editor of the **Irish Homestead**, who wanted the government to try experiments in co-operative farming, citing the success of cooperative farming in Italy. However, he was not foolish enough to advocate compulsion through legislation, believing that 'we ha[d] too little national common sense or economic experience to [have

made] such legislation work' He showed his frustration at the failure of the Irish farmers to embrace the co-operative ideal

We have no more learned how to work together in economics than we have learned to work amicably together in politics Ireland is the country par excellence of the self-opinionated individualist with a profound belief in his own invincible ignorance, though his standard of comfort is of the lowest and his reading of the most elementary character ,

The eventual outcome was a foregone conclusion that lands which remained in the hands of the landlords would be dealt with sooner rather than later The momentum to effect completion of tenant purchases was such that Hogan was left powerless to introduce any alteration in the general principles of the policy

In spite of this, Hogan was later accused by Fianna Fail of favouring the large farmer at the expense of the small man However, this claim is not borne out when the land acts for which he was responsible are examined Nothing in their composition suggests that such a policy was ever contemplated He was referred to as the 'Minister for Grass' by his critics, which implies that his contemporaries believed that he was not predisposed towards the small man Whatever his personal opinions about the number of small farms were, however, they were not translated into an active policy aimed at reducing their numbers On the contrary he and the ministers who succeeded him at the Department of Lands did nothing to alter the basic philosophy of the British land policy which they had inherited They worked diligently for almost a decade to implement it as quickly as possible

Hogan's reputation as a courageous politician begs the question why, if he believed there were too many uneconomic holdings in Ireland, did he not at least attempt to do something about it?<sup>10</sup> While it might appear that Hogan would have relished changes in the distribution of land it is unlikely that he ever considered seriously such a course of action. He was a practical man who would have appreciated the advantages of larger farms to the farming industry. However he was also a Galway man steeped in the lore of the land struggle and surrounded by constituents whose lives had been, at least temporarily, improved by the acquisition of their farms. Barely forty years after the foundation of the Land League it is almost unthinkable that he would have done anything which would have reversed the basic premises on which the policy had been established.

A close examination of the farming press during the decade reveals no pressure from any quarter for the reduction in farm numbers. The only references which were made to land policy was the slowness of the Land Commission in completing the legal formalities. In other words there was no group or individual who questioned the policy publicly.

The completion of land purchase after independence was never going to be an easy task even if it was accepted as inevitable. 'The remaining cases included hard knots it was difficult to disentangle under the voluntary system'<sup>11</sup> Hogan informed the President in a memorandum in April 1923.

a considerable amount of the estates remaining unpurchased are small estates owned by doctors, lawyers, old ladies and all that class of person who reside here in Dublin and elsewhere and not on the estates, their estates being entirely tenanted land

These are all poor estates and anything like the terms demanded by the tenants would leave the owners absolutely nothing, in fact, would leave the estates insolvent and unable to pay their charges <sup>12</sup>

The number of holdings still to be transferred in 1923 was underestimated. The Irish Convention of 1917/18 believed that the number of holdings 'must be less than 60,000, and possibly may not be more than 50,000'. In 1923 Hogan told the Dail that the figure was 70,000, still a serious underestimate. Between 1923 and 1933 more than 110,000 holdings were bought under the Land Purchase Acts <sup>13</sup>. The size of the task which the Land Commission had to perform was made clear by the parliamentary secretary to the Department of Lands and Fisheries, in 1931. The number of tenancies vested in the seven years since the 1923 Act was 15,971. In 1930 there were 80,000 holdings which came under the acts and 20,000 on estates purchased by the Congested Districts Board (CDB) awaiting vesting. Without an enormous and expensive increase in staff it would have been impossible to deal with more than 8,000 cases a year. The 1931 Land Act was introduced to overcome the difficulties caused by the delays and 'eliminated them at a stroke'. It achieved this by the simple expedient of publishing a list of holdings which were declared vested and correcting any errors or omissions and adjusting matters of detail which were subsequently found to be necessary <sup>14</sup>.

In the debate which followed the Governor General's address in 1922 Hogan said 'this [Land Purchase] is a question with a history and we must face the fact' <sup>15</sup>. The government was not dealing with "virgin land". By 1923 the process of land purchase had been well

established, so much so that it would have been virtually impossible to change the basis on which it had operated under the British land acts. Hogan admitted that he had sympathy with those who criticised this process because it gave unlimited control over land to one section of the community. He was unable, however, to translate this sympathy into an act which would fundamentally change the scheme.<sup>16</sup> This assertion seems to contradict his opening remarks on Irish legislation: 'we are left free to settle this and all other problems in our own way and to build up our own social future'.<sup>17</sup> It is quite clear from what he said about the historical nature of land purchase and remarks made by him and other deputies and senators in the debates on the 1923 land bill that he was not free to settle this problem as he wished. He was going to take a well trodden path and had to follow formulas which had been developed and refined since the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> He did make clear his misgivings about the establishment of a landowning class made up principally of small farmers, referring to other countries where land had been widely subdivided.

small farmers, small land-holders developed qualities of independence and thrift and other hard-headed qualities of that sort which make the countries that are based on the division of land, great and strong. But there is another side of the picture. I know in those countries where there is a very large percentage of small landowners they are very likely to colour the outlook of the whole nation and to make it a little aggressive, and the whole country seems to run on unenlightened individualism.<sup>19</sup>

Hogan was not greatly enamoured with the situation which left such large numbers of smallholders dominating the social, political and economic life of Ireland.

It is important to bear this in mind when looking at independent Ireland's first land bill. The minister who piloted it through the Oireachtas was not totally committed to the philosophy which lay behind it. Nor did he think, as some did, that it was the solution to all economic difficulties.<sup>20</sup> He took a very realistic view of what was happening and what had to be done. Land purchase had to be completed in the interest of justice to the estimated 70,000 unpurchased tenants who wished to be put on the same footing as the 400,000 who had already purchased their holdings. They were paying annuities which were lower than their original rents. There were two other reasons why it was important to complete the transfer of land. Firstly, Kevin O'Higgins and Hogan believed that the issue was being used by the Irregulars to stir up trouble, particularly in the west of Ireland.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, at the core of the bill was an attempt to solve the problems of the congested districts. On this point, the relief of congestion, Hogan did not hold out much hope of a complete solution, because 'after everything had been done, there' would 'still be a residue, a big residue of congests undealt with'. The difficulty was the limited amount of land available.<sup>22</sup> He saw the measures he proposed as the best way of maximising the use of land resources available in these districts.<sup>23</sup> Under the difficult circumstances of 1923 it was important to the stability of the government to be seen to act at least as decisively as the old British administration.

The lack of critical thinking by politicians on the issue can be seen in the way the Land Bill was debated in the Dail. In their initial statements most deputies welcomed its introduction. The ideological arguments which Thomas Johnson and other members of the Labour Party had put forward in earlier debates were so diluted during exchanges on the bill that they can hardly be detected at all. Johnson asserted that he did not care who owned the land so

long as it was properly utilised<sup>24</sup> This was hardly the line which would normally be expected from the leader of a party with socialist aspirations He had taken a more radical stance earlier when he said that it should be made known in the country 'that rights of property were conditioned by the amount of personal service given in the use of that property'<sup>25</sup>

There was obviously a lot of confusion in Labour circles about the distribution of land A clear enunciation of a policy of land nationalisation would have lost them any support they might have gained amongst the small farmers while outright acceptance of the bill could have alienated their support which 'was predominantly rural until 1960, being concentrated in the heartland region and in central Munster, areas with large numbers of rural labourers'<sup>26</sup> Everyone, particularly the Farmers' Party, was anxious to get the legislation through as quickly as possible and as a result moderated their criticisms All political parties were to a large extent under the same constraints as Hogan

The differences which did exist between Labour on the one side and the government and Farmers' Party on the other were easier to see when Labour attempted to introduce a compulsory tillage scheme in the autumn of 1922<sup>27</sup> Johnson believed the future of the country had to be based on the worker whether owner or not<sup>28</sup> It followed from this philosophy that the welfare of workers would come before short term goals such as farmers' profits and would lead the government into an interventionist role Labour wanted to treat the land as a resource with which to reduce unemployment amongst farm labourers, their main source of support The Farmers' Party regarded this policy as interference and ultimately a curtailment of liberty, that is the liberty of the owner to do with his property

what he thought best <sup>29</sup> The two sides were equally inconsistent Labour fudged the issue of exclusive private ownership for obvious political reasons, the Farmers' Party, their ideological opposites, were ambivalent about state intervention when they thought it might work in their favour They saw nothing wrong with using state resources to reduce unemployment by spending on other areas of the national infrastructure Their attitude prompted Liam Davin of Labour to say that Denis Gorey, leader of the Farmers' Party, was prepared to see laws made on everything in the country and vote money for drainage and land reclamation, just so long as it did not touch his farm, concluding 'Liberty Hall seems to be the only thing that disturbs the farmer deputies in this Dail' <sup>30</sup>

It was evident that there was a considerable gulf in understanding between government supporters and Labour deputies on this issue Even rural Labour members who were sympathetic to the difficulties which farmers were experiencing wanted tillage increased and were inclined to ignore the problems it could cause <sup>31</sup> Tillage was seen as a panacea, and not just by the Labour Party, which would cure growing unemployment amongst farm workers The scheme which the British government introduced in 1917 to boost wartime cereal production was cited as an example of how well it could work Hogan could see no real parallel between 1922 and the conditions which prevailed in 1917 the near famine caused by the war and subsidies in the form of guaranteed prices which made tillage profitable no longer existed <sup>32</sup> He saw an expansion in tillage coming in the wake of the completion of land purchase, which he portrayed as the real problem <sup>33</sup>

There was, however, one area where there was a meeting of minds amongst all groups in the Dail the undesirability of the large grazing ranches, particularly in the west of Ireland

While all parties were against large ranches they had diverse grounds for their distaste of this system of farming. Labour saw these huge tracts of land owned or rented by graziers contributing little to the state by way of employment. The Farmers' Party looked on this good land with covetous eyes, hoping that their members would be lucky enough to be included in the share-out when they were divided. Either way there was little support in the Dail for this method of land use during the passage of the land bill.

Hogan was probably right when he said that land purchase would bring about an increase in tillage in the Congested Districts, when the ranches were divided, although it would not necessarily increase the number of labourers employed as most of the holdings would be too small to employ labourers and were worked by the owners and their families. It is worth mentioning that Johnson did caution the Dail against expecting labourers who became the owners of small farms to become tillage farmers. He pointed out that labourers who had received land in the past were using it for grazing.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the following decade the question of how to increase the acreage under tillage was raised. Grazing and cattle rearing were always regarded, by those who did not earn their living from them as somehow not making proper use of the land, in some way unpatriotic. That 'the area under tillage (including fruit after 1906) fell almost continuously after 1851', with occasional interruptions such as a 'temporary revival during the First World War on account of the encouragement given to tillage', seems to have been regarded as some kind of aberration in Irish agriculture, even though

at no time in the period covered by statistics was the percentage of land under tillage very great. In the year of greatest recorded tillage, 1851, the percentage

ploughed was only 29 per cent, which is very low when set against the normal proportion tilled in continental countries. After the famine Ireland was never a tillage country in the sense in which that term is normally used. The tradition that it was such may be derived from the coincidence between the decline in the tillage area and the decline in population, and also from the fact that some of the best tilled counties in 1851 are in modern times, the grazing counties.<sup>35</sup>

It was an interesting debate as it showed that there were differences, however confused, between the government, the farming community and the working class which were being articulated. That part of the population which was not assisted by the land acts was trying to make itself heard. Socialism, in its least radical incarnation, the Irish Labour Party, might have given it a voice if it had not had to rely so heavily on one section of the working class, farm labourers, who were probably the least powerful group in the country in the 1920s. Against the conservatism of the farming lobby in all its manifestations - Cumann na nGaedheal, the Farmers' Party and eventually Fianna Fail who received a large portion of its support from small farmers in the west of Ireland - any party which hinted at land nationalisation or collectivism was lost. Subsidies and protective tariffs which were the policy of Fianna Fail were as much an answer to the serious condition farmers found themselves in after the slump of the late 1920s as an attempt at self-sufficiency. The idea of peasant proprietorship as a cure for the economic ills of Ireland had become deeply entrenched over the previous fifty years. Any policies, therefore, which did not take the interests of Ireland's 500,000 farmers into consideration and give them priority would not have had enough support to make them effective.

On another level the matter illustrated an issue which is still relevant today. It raised the question who should decide agricultural policy. Should it be the farmers who were the 'experts', or government? Who should have the largest say in where the major investment in agriculture should go? It was a critical question: were farmers to invest in the areas which had proved successful and expand them, the production of livestock and dairying, or should self-sufficiency in all the basic farming commodities be encouraged even when many of these crops thrived less well in the Irish climate and were produced cheaper and better elsewhere? This debate has not yet been resolved and can still generate considerable heat. The roots of the controversy are to be found, not in socialism or in the Sinn Féin doctrine of economic independence, but in the difficulty of striking a balance between two conflicting needs: one, to produce what is likely to yield the best profit, the other to make sure that at all times and under every circumstance the country can feed itself. In the 1920s and 1930s a synthesis had yet to be achieved.

It was clear where Hogan's sympathy lay. In his opinion, even regulatory legislation was an imposition on the farmer, which he introduced as a last resort. Despite his belief in free enterprise, Hogan tried to steer a middle course between the two factions. He had to tread carefully, as unemployed labourers were likely to be troublesome and have connections with 'irregularism'.<sup>36</sup> However, his task was made easier because of the

decline in the number of farm labourers in post-famine Ireland which simplified the social pattern of rural Ireland. Without such simplification the transfer of land ownership to the tenant would have failed to act as an answer to agrarian unrest.<sup>37</sup>

The national situation in the autumn of 1922 made Hogan wary of deliberately antagonising the labourers or the trade unions which represented them. Denis Gorey put the farmers' case forcefully, allowing full rein to his prejudices against Irish labourers. 'why', he said, 'you would want a microscope to watch their movements' <sup>38</sup> This left Hogan free to play the role of the moderate ready to examine the situation in depth, even though he had his own serious reservations about the policy, before he came to a final conclusion. Hogan did not want what he saw as 'red herrings drawn across the path of land purchase in the form of fanciful schemes of tillage which would lead nowhere' <sup>39</sup> His moderate approach expressed itself in his agreement to set up the Agriculture Commission in 1922 to throw new light on the subject and on the needs of agriculture in general. This move cooled the debate and led to the tillage bill being withdrawn <sup>40</sup> All of the parties involved agreed to get together to decide on terms of reference for the Commission, and present them to the Dail <sup>41</sup>

The perceived necessity to get the land bill passed speedily caused the debate on this important issue to revolve around its technical machinery rather than differences of ideology or approach. The price of untenanted land and how it was calculated, rent reductions, rent arrears, together with the sensitive issue of whether the tenants or the landlords were getting the better deal attracted most comment. The question of whether landlords were entitled to anything at all was aired but not in an analytical way. The views expressed were emotional and quite obviously the legacy of many harsh years of campaigning for land reform. The implications of some of the proposals on evicted and displaced tenants were farcical. O'Higgins remarked sarcastically that if they were to take up Johnson's suggestion that they go back to the beginnings of the landlord problem they would end up bringing the

O'Donnells back from Spain. He also referred to a letter which he had received from a Mr P O'Rourke in New York who wanted to put in a claim for his ancestral lands in Cavan, Leitrim and 'certain other areas around there' <sup>42</sup>

One of the most interesting contributions to the debate came from Thomas Johnson, when he questioned the very legitimacy of the Dail. He referred to a propaganda poster which quoted a speech by the Minister for Agriculture pointing to the Dail as fully representative of all parts of the country and a place where all people had a right to express their views. He asked the minister if the parliament through which the bill was passing was the parliament he had in mind when he made the speech. At most sixty members attended and there were ten to twelve vacancies which were not being filled. He suggested that a measure of this kind ought to have a more representative body dealing with it <sup>43</sup>. It was an important point and acted as a counterweight to O'Higgins's often stated views on the duty of the state to act strongly against individuals who challenged its power, believing that Ireland had a government entitled to these powers because it had been elected by the majority of the people <sup>44</sup>.

Hogan would not have regarded the lack of representation as a hinderance to the introduction of the land bill. It was after all a continuation of a process which had been started by the British government. It had evolved during the second half of the nineteenth century and had received practical support from the large number of farmers who had used it in order to purchase their farms. He called the 1903 Land Act revolutionary and he ranked it above every other recent event except the revolution which led to the 1922 Treaty <sup>45</sup>. The 1923 bill was supposed to complete the revolution in landownership. Was Johnson not

right to ask if this was the sort of parliament to carry through such important legislation? It is clear from the debate which followed that the deputies who were present were not interested in such niceties but would rather engage the minister on more immediate issues such as the difficulties caused by landlords taking proceedings to recover the full amount of rent arrears.<sup>46</sup> Whether or not the missing deputies would have contributed anything substantially different to the debate is hard to say. There would most likely have been more venomous attacks on landlords and more colourful reasons given why they should not receive any compensation for the compulsory purchase of their estates if the Sinn Féin deputies had been present. Apart from a greater number of outbursts of this kind it is not easy to see where they could have had a real effect on the basic premises of the bill. It is also true that all the relevant groups were represented although in differing degrees. Hogan had taken up the cause of the congests and showed no signs of being deflected from it in spite of well organised attacks on compulsory purchase of untenanted land for that purpose, particularly in the Seanad. It was the most radical part of the legislation.

Gorey, "enfant terrible" of the Dail, was never shy about putting the case for the farmers he represented, the large comfortable men. Labour with the bulk of its deputies representing rural constituencies was well placed to voice the complaints and uphold the interests of the farm labourer and landless men even if it had little chance of success. In the Seanad the case of the large farmer and landowner was adequately defended. The one group which were somewhat neglected were those on farms which were just marginally above the level of the uneconomic holding: too small to be represented by the Farmers' Party and too large to benefit from Hogan's involvement with the relief of congestion and the upgrading of tiny holdings to make them economically workable. Therefore, apart

from additional anti-landlord rhetoric, it is unlikely that the absence of Sinn Féin deputies materially affected the main thrust of the debate or its outcome

Responding to Johnson's statement that 'landlordism is confiscation' and that if justice were done there would be very little coming to the landlords, O'Higgins put the case for dealing with them fairly into perspective<sup>47</sup> In his opinion the rights of the landlords had been recognised in law in Ireland and elsewhere for centuries. Land had been sold, mortgaged and transferred so that to challenge something which had become part of the 'woof' of the Irish social system would have caused reactions and repercussions which he was sure Johnson would not desire<sup>48</sup> In other words if the rights of landlords were ignored what was to stop anyone from questioning the rights of the thousands of tenants who had purchased those rights under the earlier land acts from the landlords

The anti-landlord bias in the opening debate and the committee stage of the bill, combined with the belief of those who spoke about the 'generous treatment which they [landlords] were getting', were probably caused by the raised expectations which some deputies had for Ireland's first land act. Gorey said that his followers were disappointed with the terms<sup>49</sup> An additional irritation to the farmers and their representatives in the Dail were the decrees for the recovery of rent arrears which were being enforced with the help of the military under the Enforcement of Law (Occasional Powers) Act, 1923. The Enforcement of Law (Occasional Powers) Act 1923 was introduced by O'Higgins in an attempt to prevent the problems envisaged if there was a breakdown in commercial credit. He expressed the rather extreme view that such a circumstance could lead to a 'breakdown in civilization'<sup>50</sup> The fact that it had been passed with their approval earlier in the year did

not make it any easier to bear at a time when they expected to be relieved of paying rent forever Hogan pointed out to deputies that while there were areas of contention in the bill, there had been no great campaign waged against it in the press <sup>51</sup> Deputies responded that the press was controlled by the landlords Hogan agreed that it might be so but suggested that Gorey knew that there was not an honest tenant in the country who would not jump at the terms of the bill The minister added that the only critical letters he had seen had been on arrears <sup>52</sup> It would have been surprising if there had been a concerted attack on the 1923 bill since it was so much in the image of those which had preceded it and had been seen to work well The principle of the bill was never in danger of being criticised as it had become the one unchanging tenet of Irish politics It was only on matters of detail that there was any debate in the press The **Connaught Telegraph**, which was a Mayo paper, but which was widely distributed in County Galway, expressed the concerns of its readers, many of whom lived in the congested districts

if it [the Dail] acts wisely it will first take up the congested districts, complete land purchase in them and finally deal with them the minister for Agriculture does not seem to grasp the effect of a land purchase scheme of the scope he adumbrated in his recent speeches and hard facts compel us to say that things are not ripe for the birth of his comprehensive scheme The Free State is not in a position to finance it <sup>53</sup>

In the Dail the same was true Gorey agreed that he had little quarrel with the price which tenants would have to pay <sup>54</sup> But he went on to attack the terms on arrears which he thought were harsh in certain cases <sup>55</sup> Not unnaturally Gorey wanted to improve the scheme which the minister was offering unpurchased tenants However the blustering attitude he adopted

probably owed a lot to what Hogan called 'political' reasons<sup>56</sup> Gorey said unequivocally that Hogan regarded his own bill as confiscation and it was forced on him by the unpurchased tenants, inferring that the Minister was on the side of the landlords. This was an interesting comment. Hogan may not have been on the 'side' of the landlords but from what he said in his opening remarks on the bill neither was he totally in favour of the situation which gave the small farmers considerable power in the community.<sup>57</sup> The exchanges between the Farmers' leader and the minister became heated and there was undoubtedly a 'political' element in Gorey's posturing. Hogan saw the small man hardly being affected by what Gorey saw as a major issue, the payment of rent arrears, because the amounts were so small.<sup>58</sup> In Gorey's opinion the richest element of the community, the landlords, were going to be satisfied at the expense of the unpurchased tenants. This would 'cripple and bring misery and starvation to a big proportion of the 70,000 tenants'.<sup>59</sup>

The minister defended his position by linking payments to landlords with foreign perceptions of Ireland's creditworthiness. He enlarged on this point when he explained that defaulting on debts by landlords would not just affect them but could weaken the state's ability to borrow money on the international markets at low rates of interest. Pragmatism was probably the most likely reason for the executive council's determination to be fair to all parties in the bill, but a wish to confound their enemies' belief that the Irish were unfit to rule themselves and would plunge the country into chaos cannot have been far behind in their list of objectives.<sup>60</sup>

That there was resentment and bitterness over real and imagined wrongs connected with the ownership of land was a fact in the 1922-1924 period. The vulnerability of certain sections

of the land owning community is clear from accounts of cases of land seizure, cattle driving, trespass and intimidation. The huge number of incidents of this kind which are recorded in the Department of Home Affairs files indicates that a state of anarchy could have developed if firm action was not taken.

It is not possible to draw exact conclusions about the nature of these events without a detailed examination of all the relevant files. However, after looking at a very large sample, it is possible to identify areas where cases differ and the elements which they have in common. There appears to have been four main reasons why a particular holding was attacked. Firstly, the owner was absent. Secondly, the owners were regarded as supporters of the Union. This can be extrapolated from the number of victims who had English sounding names. Thirdly, a large number were single women and widows. Fourthly, the land in question had been or was believed to have been acquired in the past by a 'grabber', that is someone who bought the land of an evicted tenant. There were hardly any attacks on the farms of large farmers per se. Large farms which were interfered with belonged as a rule to absentees or unpopular Unionists. There was however one factor which was common to all those who were attacked, they were people whose plight elicited little local sympathy.

Throughout the passage of the bill, Hogan sounded like the voice of moderation and reason in the Oireachtas. In emotive areas, such as the reinstatement of evicted tenants, deputies put forward demands and schemes with little consideration for their consequences should they be adopted. Speaking about the provisions for such tenants in the bill the minister said sarcastically

of course everyone loves evicted tenants If you have any sympathy to spare you always stand up and talk about evicted tenants and the wounded soldiers of the land war <sup>61</sup>

In no uncertain terms he told the Dail why he could not go back beyond 1878, it could have led to four or five claims on each holding Since 1878 there were nothing like the same number of evictions, therefore it was possible to deal with those who had been unjustly evicted since then <sup>62</sup> He showed the impracticability of an amendment put down by Liam Davin which would have given rights to tenants evicted prior to 1878 <sup>63</sup> This could have led to some of them being reinstated on farms of one to two hundred acres and might have interfered with the relief of congestion The experience of reinstatement under the 1903 Act had been that '50 per cent of the reinstated tenants' had 'sold their holdings' <sup>64</sup> Hogan did not want a situation to develop whereby anyone evicted for any reason would be in a position to resume ownership, it 'could go back to the time of Brian Boru' <sup>65</sup> This could have led to further agitation especially as Gorey wanted 'grabbers' evicted and the original tenants restored to their land This sensitive issue was brought down to size by Hogan who painted a dramatic picture of a 'grabber's' grandson being removed from his farm to make way for someone who might then sell the holding to another who had no claim to it <sup>66</sup>

Hogan was right to be cautious about widening for the scope for reinstating evicted tenants or their heirs Any weakening in the government's resolve to maintain the system of land ownership as it was would have led to other criteria for ownership being questioned In turn this could have led to chaos Violent incidents relating to ownership and possession

of land were not confined to the poorer western and north western counties. There was no county in Ireland during 1922-1924 without a large number of reported cases. The gardai and the courts were under severe pressure trying to exert control and arbitrate in land disputes. Any further pressure would have made their task impossible.<sup>67</sup>

Hogan's defence of his bill was skilful and reasoned. Criticism and opposition were often based on deeply rooted convictions which were connected with injustices in the past. Feelings about evicted tenants, landlords, ranchers and the Congested Districts Board, in other words all elements of the 'land question', were close to the surface and so easily stirred. There was always somebody or some group willing to use this sensitivity for their own purposes. Hogan probably had this in mind when he said that the government never intended to right all the wrongs done under the aegis of English rule for the past thirty to forty years in the bill. For one thing it would have been impossible, for another, if farmers were entitled to such treatment so would be the rest of the community.<sup>68</sup> In other words the act, when it was passed, was going to be difficult to work because of the very real and the imagined problems which history had bequeathed to land policy in Ireland. Therefore the arguments which both government supporters and the opposition used inside and outside of the Dail, would not always be amenable to reason.

If a distinction can be drawn between the Labour opposition and the government parties an even greater gap existed between the concerns of the Seanad and those of the Dail. Seanad objections centred around the issue of definitions: what lands came under the heading of untenanted land, what constituted an uneconomic holding? These questions had important implications for landowners and large farmers for they would decide how much and which

lands would be acquired compulsorily and what price would be paid for them. The looseness of the definition of uneconomic holdings in the bill led to the fear that in the name of relief of congestion, lands would be acquired and used for other purposes such as giving farms to landless men. Sir John Keane, an extensive landowner and member of Waterford County Council, was particularly concerned. He had been involved in a serious strike by farm labourers in Waterford in 1923. The strike was not unconnected with agitation for a fairer redistribution of land. Sentiments were being expressed by Irish Transport and General Workers' Union [ITGWU] representatives such as 'the farmers of Ireland' did 'not own the land they occupied' <sup>69</sup> Keane believed that the bill would not end agrarian violence and that the Land Commission's power to take land anywhere for the relief of congestion deserved 'on our part most careful consideration' <sup>70</sup> The concern was understandable even if it was not borne out by subsequent events.

Hogan would not tie himself to any specific definition of what constituted an uneconomic holding. He showed on this issue, as he had done on many others, a degree of flexibility. He did not regard valuation or farm size as adequate measures because they did not take into account the quality of the land <sup>71</sup> Bearing in mind the limited amount of land available for redistribution Hogan would have been foolish to have given a hostage to fortune by indicating the minimum size of an economic farm. When pressed to say what he meant by untenanted land he had no such hesitation. 'Untenanted land was land held in fee simple and not just land held by landlords' <sup>72</sup> Untenanted land in the congested districts would not be acquired compulsorily by the Land Commission but would vest with them automatically. It is not difficult to see why this section of the bill was exercising the minds of senators. If the powers of the bill were to be invoked in full it could destroy the security not only

of large landowners but of purchased tenants even in the Congested Districts. The broadness of the definition of untenanted land along with Hogan's reluctance to say what constituted an uneconomic holding led to a widespread uneasiness amongst landowners that land could be acquired by the Land Commission anywhere for the relief of congestion. This vagueness must have made it almost impossible for large landowners to work out whether or not their property was at risk of compulsory acquisition. Hogan, however, insisted that the power to take land outside the congested districts for relief would be used only in exceptional cases.<sup>73</sup> This could occur where no other land was available to make a large number of small holdings viable. A large farm in a congested district might be taken and divided amongst the surrounding holdings. The owner would then be migrated to a holding of a similar size, possibly outside the Congested Districts.<sup>74</sup> The complexity of such an operation made having a blanket power, such as this bill gave, imperative, as otherwise there would have been endless wrangles over every transaction.<sup>75</sup>

He had great difficulty in persuading his opponents in the Seanad that land would not be taken for purposes other than the relief of congestion. Throughout the debates in both houses he appeared to be explaining the bill not only in its legal form but in the form which he saw it taking when applied to actual cases. He agreed that he was taking wide powers but did not see them being abused, although he admitted that it could happen.<sup>76</sup> He did not, however, see the act as a forerunner to the 'nationalisation' of land. Senator Counihan said that some clauses of the bill 'savour[ed] very strongly of Karl Marx'.<sup>77</sup> In the Seanad, Hogan pressed home the point by comparing the 1923 bill to the 1920 bill which would have had similar effects and to which the landlords had agreed at the Irish Convention where they had been represented.<sup>78</sup> Hogan had to deal with the situation as it existed. He

was not, as he put it, 'legislating in a vacuum'.<sup>79</sup> His main fear appeared to be continual confrontations in the courts over decisions made by the Land Commission or the Judicial Commissioner. On price he was adamant that he would not allow decisions made by the Judicial Commissioner to be appealed. He did allow an amendment by Sir John Keane which attempted to define the expression 'relieving congestion' but this did nothing to alter the fact that all untenanted land would vest with the Land Commission on the 'appointed day'. It may however have relieved the minds of those senators, farmers, and landowners who had feared the wholesale redistribution of land taking place under the proposed act.<sup>80</sup>

On financing land purchase there was surprisingly little interest shown in either the Dail or Seanad. Some deputies commented positively that the minister was doing all he could for tenants under the circumstances. It does not seem to have occurred to either senators or deputies to ask exactly what those circumstances were. It is true of course that the scheme would to a large extent be self-financing but in the initial stages the government had to put up the money for Land Bonds with which to pay the landowners. The scheme would not cover the ten per cent which the government added to the purchase price to make it more acceptable to the vendors and the purchasers. Nobody asked how much this 'bonus' would cost the exchequer and what administration of the scheme by the Land Commission would add to the national tax bill. Johnson raised the issue of the ten per cent reduction and other costs involved in land purchase. He wanted a totally new arrangement whereby landlords would be given a terminable annuity. His opposition to the financial arrangements in the bill seem to have been informed more by his dislike for landlords than any principle of equity. Again he stated that he did not regard who owned the land as important. This could be interpreted as meaning it was not important to him who owned it so long as it was

not the 'landlords'. Johnson's attitude is criticised by Deputy Milroy who referred to himself as a 'landless man'. He had, he said, expected 'vigorous criticism and searching analysis' from Johnson but had been disappointed. He compared Johnson's dissertation to 'the teaching of a mystic Christianity which we heard the other night in the Mansion House'- clearly a reference to Sinn Fein - in a way which was obviously meant as a criticism.<sup>81</sup>

Hogan gave a glimpse of the condition of the national finances when he said that the civil war had been costing the country one million pounds a week, enough he suggested to finance land purchase.<sup>82</sup> He referred to the financial constraints on his policy but the point was not taken up or questioned. Deputies preferred to complain about the size of arrears reductions, or that the landlords were being treated too well. It was not the thought that the country could not afford a generous settlement with the landlords which caused the objectors to speak out but the fact that landlords belonged to a hated class and so were not deserving of 'fair' treatment.<sup>83</sup>

The lack of interest shown by the Oireachtas in the financial aspects of land purchase contrasts vividly with the singular lack of interest in the British House of Commons in anything other than the financial arrangements which were being made between Britain and Ireland. British MPs gave little consideration to the way future land purchase acts would work. All they wanted to know was how much it would cost the taxpayers in their constituencies and if the government had committed itself to any costly agreements.<sup>84</sup> During questions on Ireland MPs constantly asked if the British government were making payments to the Irish government in assorted areas including land purchase.<sup>85</sup> The

Chancellor of the Exchequer managed when answering questions on British and Irish financial arrangements to give nothing away which would have annoyed MPs or their supporters<sup>86</sup> British MPs were right to be surprised by the lack of information since the **Financial agreements between the British Government and the Irish Free State Government** was signed on 12 February 1923 Under this agreement the British government would continue to provide the stock and cash necessary to finance purchase agreements under the land acts passed by the British parliament They also agreed to guarantee the financing of the 1923 act even though to a parliamentary question the government replied that the 'opinion of the House would be sought' before a guarantee was given<sup>87</sup> When the Chancellor was asked in view of the assertion that the government of Ireland was 'able to meet their expenditure out of revenue', if that meant that he had no 'conversation with the President of the Dail on the question of finance' on his recent visit to London, he replied 'I think it meant nothing but what was in the answer' he had given<sup>88</sup> Throughout the spring and early summer of 1923, MPs continued to harry government spokesmen on how much disengagement from Ireland was costing The attitude of most MPs was summed up by Neil Mclean of Labour, who said 'it is rather peculiar that, in the winding up of the affairs of Ireland, this country is going to be asked to pay such enormous sums' What makes their efforts to get at the truth interesting is the fact the agreement covered all the areas about which the MPs were concerned That they did not find the question which would lead to the disclosure of the contents of the agreement shows not ineptitude on their part but, rather, great skill on the government side at evading difficult questions If the British government had been forced to disclose their involvement, deputies in the Dail might have taken a keener interest in how the act was to be financed and been astonished and perhaps dismayed by the degree to which the United Kingdom could have

been involved in the formulation of Irish land policy. The agreements stated that any new scheme of land purchase which the Irish government proposed should 'be subject to the concurrence of the British Government in consideration of the guarantee'.<sup>89</sup> It is almost certain that the British cabinet took no active part in drafting the 1923 bill. However, during an executive council meeting in April, Hogan mentioned that he was meeting the Duke of Devonshire in London to discuss the principles of the Irish land bill. He also told the council that Judge Wylie had already secured from the British government official acceptance of the 'main points'. At no time was there any suggestion that the British government tried or were likely to try to impose conditions which would prove unacceptable to Hogan or the Irish government. As far as the British were concerned once the financial arrangements would not cost them more than they had allowed they were quite happy not to interfere.<sup>90</sup>

The American writer Paul Canning believes that there was more behind the questions which some MPs raised than the interests of the British taxpayer. He makes the case that the 'diehards' who had been against the treaty were determined to see that it would not work

by December [1922] it was already clear that in the new year the major problems of the Free State Government would be not military but financial -indeed bankruptcy seemed imminent

They rallied around the demand for high compensation for damages incurred during the Anglo-Irish war in order 'that the Free State might yet be undone'.<sup>91</sup>

The Colonial Office was afraid of a financial collapse in Ireland. This may have been the reason for the adroitness with which the British government spokesmen handled the queries about the cost to the Exchequer of land purchase. The diehards

were determined to use his [Baldwin's] and their strength on the Cabinet's Irish Affairs Committee to wreck the Treaty. The target was the Irish Land Bill and the issue was the familiar one of "betrayal" of Irish Loyalists.

There was more at stake, therefore, for Bonar Law's government than taxpayers' money. There was fear that the diehards could destabilise relations between the new state of Ireland and the British government and undermine the treaty. The government believed that it would have led to a 'revolution in Great Britain if they had to set about the re-conquest of Ireland' <sup>92</sup>

This may be why there seems to have been a tacit agreement between the British and Irish governments not to disclose the financial arrangements for land purchase under the 1923 bill and why Hogan did not draw attention to conditions attached to the British Government's agreement to guarantee the funds needed to complete land purchase. The section concerning the payments of annuities to the British Government had been inserted in the Land Act 1923. However, the remainder of the agreement was not published until 1932, after Cumann na nGaedhael was out of power. A question had been put by Deputy Conor Hogan to the President in 1926 asking for information about the text of the agreement. W. T. Cosgrave suggested that Blythe say that 'it is proposed to have the Agreement printed and published at an early stage'.

Blythe responded that he was not keen on publication as it was

bound to lead to a certain amount of wrangling about the points involved. The question to be considered is, I think, simply one of whether publication or non publication is politically best.

Later Hogan tried to insist that because the section concerning the annuities had been published it was wrong to say that the agreement had been secret. It was disingenuous of Hogan to have taken this line when it was quite plain that the executive council had no intention of publishing the document unless they were forced. When the amendment to incorporate decisions made in the agreement into the bill was put before the Dail, Hogan played it down and never mentioned that the Land Act 1923 had been subject 'to the concurrence of the British Government'. He admitted the omission but did not try to excuse it.<sup>93</sup>

It may also have been the case that in the Dail deputies who took part in the debates were more interested in how the bill would affect their farmer constituents on an individual basis and so chose to ignore its possible political and financial implications. Perhaps, as Thomas Johnson suggested, it was the realisation that the bill had to be passed that muted Labour Party opposition. They shied away from outright criticism of the bill even though they recognised that tenant purchasers were receiving a disproportionate amount of scarce financial resources. Seventy thousand unpurchased tenants made a powerful lobby, especially when they held a strong trump card in the form of almost 400,000 tenants who had already purchased under the British land acts. They were expecting to do as well if not

better now that Ireland had its own parliament Hogan had been promising a bill since 1922 The need for it had increased because of the link between 'irregularism' and land seizures It was very important to show that the government was serious in its efforts to settle the land question, important also to show that they had gained control of all areas of civil administration Land Commission powers so feared by senators and some members of the Dail were important tools with which to demonstrate to the country and particularly those who had been taking the redistribution of land into their own hands that the government meant business<sup>94</sup>

The need for the government to show that it was in control is evident in non routine reports for district justices throughout the country, which give a far from peaceful picture Some district justices believed that it would take action from the military to restore order while others suggested that the presence of the Gardai would bring peace to their districts The difficulty of interpreting these reports and deciding on how much force would be necessary to restore order is vividly illustrated by two reports, one written in January and the other in February 1923 by different men but about the same county, Donegal In the first District Justice Louis J Walsh referred to the state of lawlessness in Gweedore which he described as 'strongly Irregular' He exonerates politics as the cause and blames the trouble on 'blackguardism' His verdict on the Gardai was that they 'should never have been sent to such a district But they were and were promptly burned out of it' A month later District Justice Padraig O'Sulleabhain gave a completely different picture of Donegal He illustrated how peaceful it was by relating an anecdote about a servant in the hotel in Carndonagh who was horrified when he heard that District Justice Louis Walsh was being sent to Dublin

Isn't it awful sir that they are taking you up to that wild country All we can do is pray that nothing will happen you And we'll do that May the Lord preserve you

O'Sulleabhain used this story to illustrate the

peace and order and perfectly normal life to which the people of North West Tirconaill have now become accustomed The presence of the Civic Guard has had an admirable effect in securing the respect for the property of others

He went on to instance a case of a Garda sergeant who singlehandedly arrested seventeen men who had been stealing timber He assured the Department of Home Affairs that 'there was no defiance of the law in the County', neither had he observed any feeling 'hostile to the Government' The two reports give two extreme versions of conditions in Donegal The truth probably lay somewhere in the middle However the general impression of the reports from around the country left no room for complacency It was vital that the rule of law be established as quickly as possible <sup>95</sup>

Hogan had, therefore, to pitch the appeal of his bill at the correct level in order to win the support of the landlords and the tenants and avoid antagonising the trade unions and landless men It was necessary to take a firm line with the two negotiating groups The 'drastic' nature of the compulsory element of the bill Hogan tried to defend in the Seanad by comparing it with the 1920 land bill He insisted that the provisions of the bill were almost the same <sup>96</sup> He also put himself in a strong position vis a vis the opposition in the Seanad by stressing at every opportunity the connection between compulsion and the relief

of congestion. To attack compulsion could be seen therefore as an attack on relieving the poorest tenants on the western sea-board. The need to improve their conditions had become an unquestioned policy even before the setting up of the Congested Districts Board in 1891. The only area of conflict was how best that help could be given.

Was the Minister of Agriculture correct when he said the 1923 bill and the 1920 bill were almost identical? Was it just a useful tactic to allay the fears of the landowning classes in the Seanad? Denis Gorey certainly believed it was the same.<sup>97</sup> Hogan caused much irritation in the Seanad by continually quoting the failed bill. He alluded to it when responding to criticism from senators about what they saw as confiscation of land. 'Cromwellianism is nothing to Hoganism'. He said that 'the land question, in one form or another', would 'never be settled', but he believed that the bill bore 'extremely favourable comparison from the landowners' point of view with the Bill drafted by the Land Conference of 1918'.<sup>98</sup> While senators were fearful of large scale confiscation, Hogan was conscious of the attitude of the tenants at the land purchase and arrears conference in April where they had threatened that they 'could take the land for nothing if they wished'.<sup>99</sup> The irritation may, of course, have come from the knowledge that the differences in the aims and intentions of both pieces of legislation were very small. Since agreement had been reached with the landlords prior to the 1920 bill there was little which they could say without repudiating their earlier assent and in so doing give the impression that it was not the substance of the bill which they disliked but the fact that an Irish government would be implementing it.

Senators did raise important issues of principle in connection with compulsory acquisition and the right to appeal decisions made by the Judicial Commissioner. It would be naive to suggest that they raised these queries only out of a spirit of altruism, but allowing for their more practical motives, chief amongst which was the wish to retain their lands, these were questions which did impinge on the liberties and freedoms of a citizen in any democracy. Dail deputies, on the other hand, had not seen fit to raise them in the lower chamber where they were more concerned with the mundane application of the bill rather than general ideas about liberty and freedom. O'Higgins did speak in the Dail of the right of the state to enforce its laws but his statements did not open up any serious discussion on the topic. Perhaps with so many other attacks on the liberty of the citizen during that period both from within and outside of the Oireachtas the right to acquire land compulsorily, especially since that right was going to apply in practice only to the class which was least popular in the state, landlords, makes it easy to understand why there were few champions to be found in the Dail to defend the rights of these unpopular fellow citizens.

Everyone was anxious to see the bill pass into law, even though some had misgivings. Each group had their own reasons. The landlords feared a deterioration in their position if no act were put on the statute book. They might have found themselves in receipt of a pittance if they waited too long.<sup>100</sup> Unpurchased tenants wanted their rents converted into annuities which were considerably lower. Congests just wanted relief as soon as possible. The rest of the population were, no doubt, pleased at the thought that it would bring an end to land agitation and agrarian violence which had been endemic for generations. It was clear from the outset that nobody was going to get everything for which they had been

looking The bill would be a compromise between the landlords' slight hopes of market value for their estates and the tenants buying their land for a ridiculously low price To have reached such a compromise under difficult circumstances is a tribute to the parliament which produced it and it is also a tribute to the main players outside parliament who agreed to accept it

The 1923 act was amended and improved over the following decades It brought to its conclusion the transfer of land to the tenants of Ireland and began what Hooker calls 'the period of universal land purchase' <sup>101</sup> Hogan had very little that was new to add to the legislation on land His main contribution was his ability to get all the parties concerned to agree to accept the financial aspects of the act This was no mean feat In a memorandum to the president in April 1923 he describes the attitude of the tenants at the land purchase and arrears conference which he attended

they informed the landlords in all moods and tenses that a great change had come, that they were now in a small minority, and an unpopular minority, that they could take the land from them for nothing if they wished, that the people meant to have the land cheaply, and if the present Government did not meet the wishes of the people in this respect they would put in a Government next time who would <sup>102</sup>

He regarded the landlords as 'in a sense' being unreasonable but they were forced to take up a 'non possumus position by the attitude of the tenants' <sup>103</sup> The tenants on the other hand had a strong case for preferential treatment by Ireland's first independent government which was reinforced by the precedent of earlier British legislation which recognised their special

position. However, neither group pushed their case to the limit. It is not always easy to say why a controversial measure is accepted without a major conflict developing between the parties concerned. In this case the reasons are quite clear. The landlords had accepted the 1920 bill, therefore it was almost impossible for them to demur from the contents of the 1923 bill. Hogan constantly reminded them of this fact. Many of them were in fear of physical attacks on themselves and their families and of arson of their property and were anxious for a settlement. The unpurchased tenants wanted to be put on the same footing as the thousands who had already purchased their farms. They were impatient and did not want to engage in a lengthy battle which was unlikely to achieve much more than they were being offered. The remainder of the population had no way of expressing any misgivings which it might have had since it had become generally accepted that the tenants should have their land. In any case they would have been no match for the farmers who were a strong force within Irish politics, with a tradition stretching back to the Tenant's League of the 1850s<sup>104</sup>. The successful passage of the bill can also be attributed to Hogan. He did not allow himself to be intimidated by either the unpurchased tenants or the landlords. His actions in support of O'Higgins' unpopular measures to enforce decrees to recover debts showed that he was determined to see the rural areas returned to law and order as well as to address the underlying roots of agrarian unrest.

Hogan, however, was the prisoner of nineteenth century British land policy based on the notion that the cure for Ireland's difficulties lay in the reform of land law. This view survives to the present day. Every Minister for Agriculture since independence has had to contend with the results of this policy. Agricultural policy in Ireland has, as a result, been dictated by a land policy formulated in an attempt to end endemic poverty and agrarian

unrest in Ireland Ultimately the government of the Union took the line of least resistance and gave in to popular pressure They also hoped that 'the creation of a stable peasant proprietary' would be the 'solution of the problem' of agrarian unrest and would put an end to pressure for Home Rule <sup>105</sup> The greatest deficiency of this policy was that it put too much stress on the positive effects of the transfer of ownership of land This policy ignored the landless labouring classes which made up the bulk of the population "the land for the people", despite Davitt's hopes, left no doubt as to who constituted the people' <sup>106</sup> Hogan feared that they would not continue to acquiesce as they had in the past He reckoned that there would be one and a half million acres left after the unpurchased tenants had had their holdings vested

This one-and-a-half millions represents demesnes and untenanted land in the hands of landlords At least half of it would be needed for the relief of congestion, and that is to say making uneconomic holdings economic The balance, about three-quarter million acres would be demesne lands All untenanted lands outside demesne lands being required for the relief of congestion by taking half the demesnes from the landlords - and the demesnes have not been touched up to this - there would be only thirty thousand holdings of twenty-five acres each available for landless men There are about five hundred thousand tenants in Ireland, there are about three times as many landless men as tenants, so that the fact is that you have about one-and-a half million landless men and only about thirty-thousand holdings for them, and these landless men are at present prepared to enforce their claims with the gun and the torch <sup>107</sup>

Hogan's fears that the agricultural labourers would press their claim to be included in the redistribution of land proved to be unfounded. Their leaders were probably able to work out that it was impossible to achieve land ownership for all their members; there simply was not enough land left to achieve this goal. Therefore they concentrated on getting them better wages and conditions.<sup>108</sup>

The 1923 act was the last major piece of land legislation.<sup>109</sup> However the powers of the Land Commission were increased by the 1933 Land Act. They were given the 'right of expropriating land required not only for the relief of congestion, but to furnish holdings to the persons of the classes made eligible for them in 1923, i.e. sons of tenants, agricultural labourers, evicted tenants, ex servicemen'. In 1936 Fianna Fail introduced another bill in favour of the landless man. The provisions of this bill led to charges that the new powers of the Land Commission were politically dangerous. The opposition asserted that local TDs had 'been called down to discuss with local Fianna Fail Cumainn the distribution of land in a particular parish' and that the TDs used their influence 'to get land divided ... Dozens of the members of the Fianna Fail party do it every time their influence is flagging in a particular part of the constituency'. Hooker concludes that 'the powers of the Land Commissioners were gradually extended so that they came to possess considerable political influence'. During the 1922-1932 period there was no suggestion that this was the case.<sup>110</sup>

The government's economic policy for Ireland which was based on agriculture which in turn was based on the hope that the general economic health of the country would improve when ownership was transferred to the tenants and increased numbers were living on the land had serious shortcomings. Hogan may have over estimated the number of

landless men in 1923 but they, along with women and children, still represented the majority of the population. This policy has left Ireland, since 1922, with the same system of land distribution that it had in the 1850s, minus the landlords. Ministers for agriculture have therefore many of the same problems which existed in the nineteenth century. It also failed to challenge the premises on which the policy was based. Making a dramatic change of direction was unlikely given the circumstances in 1923 when the bill was introduced. However, the lack of any serious questioning meant that land policy as an issue which had a significant bearing on agricultural policy and on national economic policy was ignored and continued to be ignored. Hogan referred to the negative side of the scheme in 1923 but he did not develop his criticism beyond a general warning of the consequences to the character of the nation if its land tenure system was based on large numbers of small farms.<sup>111</sup> This may have been because Hogan's views on land policy were not very different from the conventional ideas of the time.

De Valera suggested that Hogan was not committed to the small farmer. Speaking on the Agricultural Credit Bill 1928, he said

The minister for Agriculture hopes that time will solve everything for him. He will get his 200-acre farm in time by the simple process of driving out everybody from the small farms

by denying them access to cheaper credit.<sup>112</sup> However, it is probable that it was Hogan's farming background which made de Valera believe he was predisposed towards large farmers. De Valera was also interested in establishing his own credentials as the champion

of the small farmers of Ireland. There is not any evidence that Hogan had developed any formal policies to reduce the number of small farmers. On the contrary he seemed satisfied to leave things as they were. Hogan the realist appreciated the impossibility of disturbing the consensus on land policy, and therefore, he did not try.

## NOTES

- 1 E R Hooker, **Readjustments of Agricultural Tenure in Ireland** Chapel Hill, (1938)
- 2 Confidential report by the Irish Land Commission, Oct 1914, on 'The effect of the war on the financing of Irish land purchase' National Library of Ireland, Joseph Brennan Papers, MS 26133
- 3 Hooker, **Readjustments** p 77
- 4 Paul Bew, **Land and the National Question in Ireland** (Dublin, 1978), p 22, Hooker, **Readjustments** p 65
- 5 Hooker, **Readjustments** pp 140 and 152
- 6 *ibid* , p 31
- 7 *ibid* , p 103
- 8 **The Irish Homestead** 13 Jan 1923
- 9 *ibid*

- 10 Taped interview between O'Halpin and McGilligan in which McGilligan stressed Hogan's courage, 1976
- 11 Hooker, **Readjustments** p 103
- 12 Hogan to Cosgrave, 17 Apr 1923 NA, DT, S 3192
- 13 Hooker, **Readjustments** p 103
- 14 **Irish Times Supplement** January, 1932
- 15 **DD** Vol 2, col 610, 5 Mar 1923
- 16 *ibid* , cols 609 - 610 Hogan refers to the retention of control over mineral resources as one example of how the government had retained control over the natural resources of the country and so had not relinquished completely, control of the land
- 17 *ibid* , col 603
- 18 Hogan admitted this and asked that the merits of the scheme be taken into consideration *ibid* , col 610

- 19     **ibid** Hogan was referring to France and Germany In 1978, Ireland had the highest rate of owner occupation, 92 per cent, in the EC P W Kelly, **Agricultural Land - Tenure and Transfer** (Dublin, 1982) **The Irish Homestead** of 20 Jan 1923 was 'glad to see an Irish Minister conscious of the effect of an aggressive individualism on the national being'
- 20     **DD** Vol 2, col 628, 5 Mar 1923 Hogan agreed with Johnson that land purchase alone would not solve the problems of the Congested Districts
- 21     NA, DT, S 3192
- 22     **DD** Vol 3, col 1945, 14 Jun 1923 This remained the case Forty years later Michael O'Morain, TD, Minister for Lands, referred to the continuing problem facing the Land Commission of 'a limited amount of land an almost unlimited number of applicants' Land Commission Annual Report, 1959\60 (Dublin, 196 ), Appendix A, 'The sociological impact of the work of the Irish Land Commission' p 33
- 23     **DD** Vol 2, col 628, 5 Mar 1923
- 24     **DD** Vol 3, col 1962, 14 Jun 1923
- 25     **ibid** , col 1168, 28 May 1923

- 26     Garvin, **The Evolution of Irish National Politics** p 176
- 27     Thomas Nagle (Labour) put down a motion in the Dail that an order be made to enforce a minimum acreage of tillage on all farms    **DD** Vol 1, col 440, 19 Sept 1922
- 28     *ibid* , col 461
- 29     *ibid* , col 445
- 30     *ibid* , col 452
- 31     *ibid* , col 458
- 32     *ibid*
- 33     *ibid* , cols 462-4 Hogan's famous catch cry was 'One more sow, one more cow, one more acre under the plow', his formula for increasing production and prosperity
- 34     **DD** Vol 1, col 460, 19 Sept 1922
- 35     Meenan, **Ireland** pp 116-7
- 36     **DD** Vol 2, col 1472

- 37 L M Cullen, 'Irish Economic History Fact and Myth', in L M Cullen (ed), **The Formation of the Irish Economy** (Cork, 1969), pp 76-9
- 38 **DD** Vol 1, col 451, 19 Sept 1922
- 39 *ibid* , col 464
- 40 *ibid* , col 465
- 41 *ibid* , col 466
- 42 **DD** Vol 3, col 1969, 14 Jun 1923
- 43 **DD** Vol 2, cols 1166-7, 28 May 1923
- 44 *ibid* , col 1161, and **DD** Vol 3, cols 1971-3, 14 Jun 1923
- 45 **DD** Vol 2, col 1147, 28 May 1923
- 46 **DD** Vol 3, col 1949, 14 Jun 1923 Deputy Doyle of Wexford raised the issue  
It was returned to again and again during the debates on the land bill The  
government response was always the same, they could not interfere with the courts
- 47 *ibid* , cols 1958-9

- 48     **ibid** , cols 1969-70
- 49     **ibid** , col 1158
- 50     **DD** Vol 2, col 1035, 21 Jan 1923
- 51     **DD** Vol 4, col 1034, 18 Jul 1923   Hogan was putting forward the opinion that the  
bill would meet less opposition in the country than in the Oireachtas
- 52     **ibid** , cols 1034-5
- 53     **Connaught Telegraph** 16 Feb 1923
- 54     **DD** Vol 4, col 1035, 18 Jul 1923
- 55     **ibid** , col 1038
- 56     **ibid**   This was possibly because there was the prospect of an election later in the  
year
- 57     **ibid** , col 1038
- 58     **ibid** , col 1034

- 59     *ibid* , col 1040
- 60     This argument was also used in the Enforcement of Law (Occasional Powers) Act  
by O'Higgins and Cosgrave   **DD** Vol 2, cols 1033 and 1057, 21 Jan 1923
- 61     **DD** vol 4, col 2110, 19 Jul 1923
- 62     *ibid* , cols 2110 - 2111
- 63     **DD** Vol 4, col 1062, 18 Jul 1923
- 64     *ibid* , col 1063 and 1066
- 65     *ibid* , cols 1064-5
- 66     *ibid* , cols 1063-72
- 67     Non-Routine Reports from District Justices, Jan\Feb 1923 NA, Department of  
Justice files (DJ), H5\1307\23
- 68     **DD** Vol 4, col 1064, 18 Jul 1923
- 69     'Report of a conference held at the Ministry of Agriculture on Tuesday, 3 July  
1923 ' NA, DT, S 3110 'Persistence of the land issue was exceptional. Only in

North Kerry did the ITGWU [Irish Transport and General Workers Union] accord it a priority' according to Emmet O'Connor, **Syndicalism in Ireland 1917 - 1923** (Cork, 1988) p 38 O'Connor, in **A Labour History of Waterford** (Waterford, 1989) p 175, quotes the paper **The Irish Farmer** 8 - 15 Jul 1922 'It is only wages today, it will be land tomorrow, and it is indignity all the time'

70 SD Vol 1, col 1476, 27 Jul 1923

71 ibid , col 1518 Hogan regarded the under £10 valuation being used as a criterion as 'unfortunate' He knew of valuations of over ten pounds which were really congested

72 ibid , col 2115, 3 Aug 1923

73 ibid , col 1870 The Earl of Kerry sought assurances from Hogan He was anxious that the exceptions which had been made for lands which could not be acquired under the bill, for example, 'home farms', could not be overruled Hogan assured him that this could only happen when there was no other untenanted land available

74 'Migrated' was a term used for the practice employed by the Land Commission of relocating farmers from the congested districts in order to make their holdings available for division amongst those who remained This was done to upgrade these holdings and make them 'economic' The migrant received a farm of a similar size

to the one he had left and was given financial assistance to build a new house and suitable farm buildings

75 **SD** Vol 1, cols 1777-8, 31 Jul 1923

76 *ibid* , col 1527

77 *ibid* , col 1502 Throughout the debate in the Seanad there were references made to what some senators saw as the radical nature of the bill with its wide powers to take land compulsorily

78 The Irish Convention of 1917-1918 was devised by Lloyd George in the ‘alleged hope that the Irish would agree a constitution for their country’ Lee, Ireland, p 39 It failed in this objective but it did do some useful work on land legislation which led to the framing of the 1920 Land Bill

79 **SD** Vol 1, col 2116, 31 Jul 1923

80 Sir John Keane headed a group of senators who saw compulsory acquisition of land for relief of congestion as the thin end of the wedge which would lead to farms being broken up and given to landless men See the Seanad debates on the Land Bill, Vol 1, *passim*

81 **DD** Vol 4, cols 231-3, 5 Jul 1923, **DD** Vol 3, cols 2011-2, 15 Jun 1923

- 82 Hogan's practical instincts were affronted by the civil war, the cost of which he insisted would have paid for the completion of the purchase of every acre of tenanted and untenanted land **DD** Vol 2, col 607, 5 Jan 1923
- 83 Hogan to the President, 18 Mar 1923, NA, DT, S3192
- 84 **Commons Debates**, Vol 159, cols 444-7 and 643, 27 Nov 1922
- 85 **CD** Vol 169, cols 1057-59, 21 Feb 1923 The Treasury finally agreed to the £30,000,000 NA, DF, F001\0010\24
- 86 **CD** Vol 162, cols 1057, 1737, 1757 and 1760, 27 Feb 1923
- 87 **CD**, Vol 162, cols 569, 570, 28 Mar 1923
- 88 **CD** Vol 160, col 1737, 27 Feb 1923
- 89 *ibid* , Part 1, Section (B) **CD** Vol 159, col 643, 27 Nov 1922 **The Financial Agreements Between the British Government and the Irish Free State Government** part 1, Section (B), 12 Feb 1923 NA, DT, S 1995
- 90 This is borne out by the type of questions which were being asked in the House of Commons MPs were principally concerned with how the financial arrangements

between Britain and Ireland would affect their taxpaying constituents NA, DT, G2/2, C1/105, n d

- 91 Paul Canning, **British Policy towards Ireland 1921-1941** (Oxford, 1985) p 77
- 92 *ibid* , pp 78, 81
- 93 Ronan Fanning, **The Irish Department of Finance** pp 137-8 Cosgrave to Blythe 20 Jan 1926, Blythe to Cosgrave, n d c 29-30 Jan 1926, NA, DT, S 1995
- 94 O'Higgins stressed throughout the passage of the bill the necessity for the state to make its presence felt particularly in areas where there was considerable 'irregular' activity, the west and south west **DD** Vol 3, col 1162, 28 May 1923
- 95 Report by District Justice Louis J Walsh, 31 Jan 1923 Report by District Justice O'Suilleabhain, n d , Feb 1923 NA, DJ, H5\1307\23
- 96 Hogan himself calls it 'an amending bill' **SD** Vol 1, col 1518, 27 Jul 1923
- 97 **DD** Vol 3, col 2067, 19 Jun 1923
- 98 Sir John Keane asked the minister to stop referring to the 1920 bill during the introduction of the 1923 Land Bill **SD** Vol 1, col 1902, 1 Aug 1923

- 99 SD Vol 1, cols 1486-1517, 27 Jul 1923 Memorandum from Hogan to Cosgrave,  
17 Apr 1923, NA, DT, S 3192
- 100 Memorandum from Hogan to Cosgrave, 17 Apr 1923, NA, DT, S 3192
- 101 Hooker, **Readjustments** p 51
- 102 Memorandum from Hogan to Cosgrave, 17 Apr 1923, NA, DT, S 3192
- 103 *ibid*
- 104 According to R V Comerford, **The Fenians in Context** (Dublin, 1985), pp 25 and  
28 See also J J Lee **The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848 - 1918** (Dublin  
1973), p 96

In August 1850 the tenants' movement was united in the Irish Tenant League

The apparently limited political impact of the tenant-right movement of the 1850s should not be allowed to obscure the importance of the agrarian question in contemporary Irish minds. The campaign to repeal the act of union had derived much of its strength from largely unspoken assumptions about changes that would follow in land laws.

- 105 B L Solow, **The Land Question and the Irish Economy** (1978), p 12 says 'The notion became firmly established that defects in the system of land tenure lay at the root of all Ireland's economic difficulties, and the cure of these difficulties lay in the reform of the land law'
- 106 O'Connor, **Syndicalism** p 34
- 107 Hogan to the President, 7 Apr 1923 NA, DT, S 3192 Hogan appears to have overestimated the number of 'landless men', when he suggested that they numbered 1,500,000 J W Boyle says that the entire male population over fifteen years was 1,500,000 in the 1901 census, a figure which covered the thirty-two counties Therefore it is unlikely that the figure which Hogan gave was correct in 1923 when the population had fallen even lower J W Boyle, 'A Marginal Figure The Irish Rural Labourer', in Samuel Clark and James S Donnelly, Jr, (eds) **Irish Peasants** (Manchester, 1983), p 312 However, there were undoubtedly a large number of landless men who would have been excluded from land ownership because of the shortage of land The census for 1911 gives a figure of 132,338 for Agricultural labourers and cottagers This figure does not include other groups which could be classified under the general heading of agricultural workers For example, shepherds or other skilled farm workers would have been 'landless'
- 108 O'Connor, **Syndicalism** p 38

- 109 The Land Act 1984 was an exception One of its main provisions was brought in to encourage leasing of farm land without the danger of the leasee establishing rights over the property This was not a success as there was no tradition of long term leasing farm land in independent Ireland as there was in Britain Interview with Mr Tom Duggan, then of the Department of Agriculture, 18 Sept, 1989
- 110 Hooker, **Readjustments** pp 165, 150, 151, 152, 153
- 111 See above, p 246
- 112 **DD** Vol 24, col 2266, 6 Jul 1928

HOGAN'S LAST YEARS 1932-1936

‘Sick at heart and thoroughly disillusioned’ is how one writer described Hogan’s reaction to the defeat of the Cumann na nGaedheal government at the 1932 election <sup>1</sup> Hogan had been at the centre of Irish politics for a decade as Minister for Agriculture His close friendship with O’Higgins made him privy to and concerned with broader political issues and after O’Higgins’ assassination, he took on the role of parliamentary scourge of republicanism which O’Higgins had fulfilled so energetically now the republicans had won

Perhaps that is why Hogan’s participation in political life declined Even as a front bench spokesman, his energy or talents were not sufficiently stretched He must also have felt a sense of helplessness as he saw the policies to which he had adhered in the face of strong opposition in the late 1920s being dismantled State intervention on an increasing scale undermined many of the objectives for which he had worked, while de Valera’s disputes with the British appeared to threaten the foundations of Irish agriculture

During a debate on the Sugar Manufacture Bill, which proposed setting up three new sugar factories, Hogan was unequivocal in his denunciation of the proposal on the grounds that it was ‘unsound and uneconomic’ Carlow, which in his opinion, had been managed and run most efficiently, ‘cost £400,000 a year of good State money to make sugar and provide a 10 per cent dividend’ He maintained growing mangolds and feeding them to cattle would give a better return Therefore, he asked, ‘why have you sugar beet at all?’<sup>2</sup>

He could not understand how the government could hope to increase the number of people working on the land unless there was a fundamental change in the way that agriculture was organised Fianna Fail in his opinion ‘wanted to have it both ways’, that is to maintain ‘the

high standard of living associated with livestock' at the same time as they were 'dropping the economy that brought it about' The tone of his contribution had about it, despite its well thought out arguments, an air of desperation His closing remarks reinforce this impression

But I suppose there is no way out of it This is going ahead, and this complete waste of money that the country cannot afford is going to occur no matter what I say<sub>3</sub>

There was a sad irony for Hogan, which he can hardly have missed, in the knowledge that he had been one of the prime movers in the establishment of the sugar beet industry in Ireland While it had not achieved all its objectives - there had been serious differences between the growers and the management at Carlow - the factory proved that beet could be grown and sugar refined albeit with a subsidy It had generated full time employment in the town as well as increased tillage The excitement which the opening of the first factory had caused in other country towns had not been dampened by the difficulties experienced at Carlow No town in 1933 would have refused a sugar factory

Hogan's prediction that the three new factories would not be a success was eventually proved correct Today only Carlow remains The others closed because they were not economically viable However they did provide employment for more than 30 years in towns where jobs were scarce, which was probably their main political objective in 1933

Hogan, according to one deputy in the course of the same debate, had 'been living in a spirit of defeatism' for some time. It would have been difficult to ignore the bitterness and resentment which he did nothing to hide. However, he did not abandon his clear and well reasoned approach to the issues on which he spoke. He was as effective as ever in dissecting weak arguments and pointing out contradictions. During the debate on the removal of the Oath of Allegiance he quoted de Valera's opening sentence which said that the Bill was 'To remove the Article of the Constitution which makes the signing of the Oath of Allegiance Obligatory to members entering the Dail', and he continued: 'The following note was added: "This Article is not required by the Treaty"'.<sup>4</sup>

He contrasted this statement with Fianna Fail's assertion during the election

that the Oath was optional on the wording of the Treaty itself and that it was only, if you like, the malice or the weakness, or the political bias of the last government that had it in the Constitution, and the country was told that, in fact, we had already got the consent of England for the removal of the Oath, because the Oath was a matter of choice.

He asked why had not the country been told at the last election about the 'great advances we had in our constitutional position, which on the showing of the President and the Attorney General, [made] us an independent nation today'.<sup>5</sup>

The bitterness and recriminations of his public utterances while they add a degree of spice to what he said tended to distract attention from the important points he was making, and

helped turn the debates in which he participates into verbal brawls. Hogan when in government attacked the opposition for bringing up the past because he regarded arguments about past behaviour irrelevant to the majority of the issues discussed in the Dail. He, when in opposition, found the temptation to hark back to the past exploits of members of Fianna Fail during the Civil War irresistible. He referred to the opposition party who 'committed murder and robbery and numerous other nameless crimes in order to effect their policy'.<sup>6</sup>

There was no point at which Hogan and Fianna Fail met and agreed. In an obituary it was said that

between Fianna Fail and such a man there could be no bridge of understanding. They put the soul of Ireland first, and he held the immediate need was to put our people on their feet financially. Fianna Fail and Hogan hardly spoke the same language.<sup>7</sup>

Reading any of the major debates in which Hogan took part confirms this view. It was not just that he opposed Fianna Fail, he hated both the party and its leader. The gulf between them had existed while Hogan was in government but it became enormous once he was released from the constraints of office. His language was less than temperate and he never lost an opportunity to direct his venom at his opponent. His lack of restraint when criticising the government seems to have come from his deeply held conviction that the Cumann na nGaedheal style of government was the best for the country. It was not based on sentiment but grounded on the simple belief that 'we [the Irish] are as good as the

English, and that if the English make a success of democracy, we could do it' <sup>8</sup> He thought that Cumann na nGaedheal had achieved a degree of success

All during our tenure of office we tried to keep something democratic and free, something first-class, if you like, in the way of government before the people, and all the time we were attacked, the people were corrupted and propaganda of the most unscrupulous kind was used against us,

His attitude may appear arrogant and patronising to the electorate But it was not He had, unlike the republicans, accepted the inevitability of dealing and trading with Britain and the Commonwealth for the foreseeable future He did not love the British but he respected their power and status Unlike many politicians at that time, he had not over indulged himself on the rhetoric of nationalism In his opinion Ireland was a small country Therefore it should act sensibly because a 'small country can never afford to make a fool of itself' Countries that are 'small and weak [have] to be particularly careful and [have] to have even more austere standards than the standards of big powers' Nor could he see any point in antagonising the British <sup>10</sup>

It must therefore have been particularly annoying for Hogan, who prided himself on his high standards in Government when he came under fire from the Fianna Fail government over the **Financial Agreement between the British government and the Irish Free State Government** which was being used as an excuse for the retention of the land annuity monies by the government Fianna Fail taunted Cumann na nGaedhael by referring to it as a secret agreement <sup>11</sup>

Hogan's Dail appearances between 1932 and his death in 1936 became less and less frequent. It is possible that his disillusionment with Irish politics was not the only reason why he stayed away. In 1931 he had married Mona Devitt, a widow with a young son. She bore him four daughters in quick succession. Whereas before his marriage he had no ties and devoted himself to his politics and to a lesser extent to his legal profession and his farm, he now had a family to provide for. After the 1932 election he concentrated on building up his legal business in East Galway with great success. With the farm at Kiltrickle, his legal business and a wife and young family he did not have much time for politics, though had Cumann na nGaedhail been reelected it is very likely that he would have returned to office.<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 See Chapter 1, note 66
- 2 DD, Vol 49, cols 409, 410, 412, 21 Jul 1933
- 3 ibid , 413, 414
- 4 DD, Vol 41, col 1021, 29 Apr 1932
- 5 ibid
- 6 DD, Vol 51, col 2037, 19 Apr 1934
- 7 See Chapter 1, note 59
- 8 DD, Vol 51, col 2039, 19 Apr 1934
- 9 ibid , col 2038
- 10 Vol 43, col 1033, 20 Apr 1932 Vol 43, col 1264, 1267, 22 Jul 1932
- 11 Cosgrave to Blythe, 20 Jan 1926 Blythe to Cosgrave, n d , c 29-30 Jan 1926  
NA, DT, S 1995

- 12 Interview with Mrs Patrick McGilligan, 14 Jun 1989 There is very little evidence of his ability as a platform speaker to be found in the national or local press, with the exception that is of the **Irish Statesman** However, the anecdotal evidence is strong especially the recollections of Anne McGilligan, John Joe Broderick and Liam Cosgrave However his spirited performances in the Dail confirm that he was a gifted speaker

## CONCLUSION

When Patrick Hogan became Minister for Agriculture in 1922 he was a young man with little practical experience of politics or national administration. In 1932 when he left office he had become a skilful parliamentarian, an excellent administrator and one of the leading members of Cumann na nGaedheal. He had achieved this status despite the national and international difficulties which had beset the decade.

Hogan's wit and ability as a debater and legislator in the Dail did much to enhance his position within the party and with the electorate. He could always be relied upon to put across his policies in both the Dail and the Seanad in a forceful and efficient way. His handling of the 1923 Land Act is a good example. Throughout he showed great understanding of the difficulties facing the various parties who were directly concerned. However, his sympathy did not weaken his resolve to have the bill passed with all its important sections intact. The 'Hogan Act' is a monument to his parliamentary skill even though, as he often stated, it was almost identical to the 1920 bill.

It was fortunate that Hogan had such a good working relationship with the senior members of his department as much of his administrative and legislative work depended upon their co-operation and ideas. His most important task when he became minister was to work with them to revive the flagging export trade. They had all the intelligence upon

which he could base his policy decisions. He was very conscious of the growing threat to Ireland's exports from increased competition from countries which were organising their marketing efforts on a national level. He quickly abandoned his hopes of voluntary regulation and with the support of the department began to introduce a series of bills to make producers adhere at least to a minimum set of standards. Passing the legislation was relatively easy but implementing it was not a simple undertaking. However, by the end of the decade the number of complaints about the quality of 'exported goods had declined dramatically.

Critics have accused Hogan's agricultural policy of being over cautious, of not being radical enough. These criticisms very often fail to take into account the conservative nature of the farming community and the need to introduce changes slowly as indeed the department did. They also fail to appreciate that after six traumatic years the farming community would not have welcomed another upheaval. However, it must be said that it is very likely that even if the preceding six years had been peaceful Hogan would not have tampered with the status quo. His prescription for success was based on the idea that hard work and carefully invested capital would revitalise the farming industry. It is not easy to say if his invocations to work hard and invest wisely were heeded. The slump of the late 1920s damaged the short lived recovery which had begun in 1928 and the economic war which started in 1932 put pay to any hope of an orderly growth in agriculture.

Hogan had to face three serious obstacles in the way of a prosperous agricultural industry. The first was the poor quality and handling of a large proportion of agricultural exports.

The second was the growing threat from competitors with consequential demands from British customers for lower prices and better quality. The third was the depression which succeeded the Wall Street crash. He tried to deal with the first two through education and regulation with some success, the third was beyond his control.

Land reform was also beyond his control. By the time Ireland had gained its independence the pattern had been set and nothing could have been done to alter it. Hogan was aware that thousands of uneconomic holdings did not make economic sense but also knew that it was too late to change the basis on which land was acquired by tenants. Hogan, a practical man, therefore, introduced an excellent piece of legislation and saw it efficiently through the Dail.

One of his most admirable qualities was his independence. When he voted against the censorship bill in 1928 he was not only defying his government colleagues but he was also disagreeing openly with some of his closest friends. Even though the late Kevin O'Higgins had been concerned with the bill from its inception he had no compunction in voting against it. Neither did he spare friend or foe in his denunciation of the bill and the hypocrisy of those who supported it. That a Minister is voting against his own government is an extraordinary event. However, it does not appear to have damaged his career in any way and there were no calls for his resignation. It is possible, therefore, to

conclude that his stand was accepted by members of the executive council as being characteristic of the man and therefore not a resigning issue

His independence may have been one of the reasons why he was chosen as Minister for Agriculture, a post which in 1922 did not have cabinet status. As an extern minister he would have been expected to act in an independent way as he would have been elected by the Dail and not appointed by the President. However, because of the absence on any real opposition in the Dail he never had a chance to exercise his independence, because he was in effect elected by his own party and not by a cross section of opinion.

There were several areas where he failed to make any serious impression on the prevailing ethos. In the early 1920s his attention was drawn to the need to develop alternative markets for agricultural produce, especially cattle. He did little in practical terms to encourage the opening up of new markets in Europe. It is possible that he ignored the prospective trade because he was aware from information he received from his officials that farmers would not divert livestock from their traditional markets without a special subsidy. The dead meat trade was similarly constrained because of lack of regular supplies from the farmers. Finally he did not push for primary and secondary schools to include agricultural science in their curriculums. This is one area where his conservatism did have a serious negative effect.

Criticism of Cumann na nGaedheal and Patrick Hogan's policies begs the question would any other group of ministers have done better. The answer lies not just with the people who made up the government but in the condition of the country when they came to

power in 1922. It was weary after the Anglo-Irish war. The decade which followed began with a bitter civil war and ended with the great depression. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Fianna Fail won the election in 1932. However, Hogan's single minded approach to agriculture's place in the economic life of Ireland may have been a hinderance to its long term development. Regarding the farming community as the ultimate arbiters in agricultural matters in one sense was a contradiction of his oft proclaimed opinion that agriculture was the most important industry in the country. If this was true then surely it should have been playing a far greater role in the development of the economic life of the whole economy. By trying to insulate it from the rigours which were being endured by other sections of the community he was limiting the role which it played in the economic success of Ireland. In a sense defending agriculture against encroachment from other interests at government level may have stopped it from becoming involved in other areas of the economy which would have benefited from being integrated with its strongest sector.

/

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## CONTENTS

### I ORIGINAL MATERIAL

#### (i) MS Sources

#### (ii) Government records

#### (iii) Parliamentary papers

#### (iv) Printed material newspapers

#### (v) Interviews

John Joe Broderick, 12 Oct 1989

Liam Cosgrave, 14 Jun 1993

Monica Duffy, 12 Oct 1989

Tom Duggan, 18 Sept 1989

Bridget Hogan O'Higgins, 18 Mar 1993

Mrs Ann McGilligan, 14 Jun 1989

Padraic O'Halpin's interview with Patrick McGilligan, 24 Nov 1976

Una O'Higgins O'Malley, 20 Aug 1989

### II SECONDARY MATERIAL

#### (i) **Printed sources: books**

#### 1 *Original material*

##### (i) **Private papers**

Joseph Brennan's papers, National Library, Dublin

Private letters and other documents belonging to Hogan, the property of his daughter, Monica Duffy, Kilbeggan, Co Westmeath

Sean McKeon papers, Franciscan Archives, Killiney, Co Dublin

Richard Mulcahy papers, UCD archives, Dublin

##### (ii) **Government papers**

Cabinet papers, National Archives, Dublin

Cabinet minutes, National Archives, Dublin

Department of Agriculture files, National Archives, Dublin

Department of Finance files, National Archives, Dublin

Department of Foreign Affairs files, National Archives, Dublin

Department of Justice files, National Archives, Dublin

(iii) **Parliamentary Papers**

Constitution of the Free State of Ireland,  
The Stationery Office,  
Dublin (1922)

Dail Debates (2nd)  
(Private Session)

Dail Debates

House of Commons Debates

Irish Bulletin, Vol 5, No 20, 29 Jun 1921

Irish Land Commission  
Reports

Saorstát Éireann  
Official Handbook 1932

Seanad Debates

(iv) **Newspapers and Journals**

The Belfast Telegraph  
The Clare Champion  
The Connacht Telegraph  
The Cork Evening Echo  
The Free State Farmer  
The Irish Farmer  
The Irish Homestead  
The Irish Independent  
The Irish Law Times and Solicitors Journal  
The Irish Press  
The Irish Statesman  
The Round Table  
The Irish Times  
The Sligo Champion  
The Sunday Independent  
The Times

Books

Adams, Michael, **Censorship: The Irish Experience** Sceptor Books, Dublin (1968)

Bew, Paul **Land and the National Question in Ireland** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1978)

Bew Paul, Ellen Hazelkorn, Henry Patterson, **The Dynamics of Irish Politics** Lawrence and Wishart, London (1989)

Bolger, Patrick **The Irish Cooperative Movement and Its Development** I P A , Dublin 1977

Bolger, Patrick 'The Dreadful Years', in Carla Keating (ed ), **Plunkett and Co-operatives, Past Present and Future** UCC Bank of Ireland Centre for Co-operative Studies, Cork (1983)

Boyle, J W 'A Marginal Figure The Irish Rural Labourer' in Samuel Clark and James S Donnelly, Jr (ed s), **Irish Peasants, Violence and Political Unrest 1780 - 1914** Manchester University Press, Manchester (1983)

Brown, Vincent and Michael Farrell **The Magill Book of Irish Politics** Magill Publications, Dublin (1981)

Canning, Paul **British Policy towards Ireland 1921-41** Oxford University Press (1985)

Comerford, R V **The Femans in Context - Irish Politics and Society 1848 -1882** Wolfhound Press, Dublin (1985)

Cullen, L M 'Irish Economic History Fact and Myth' in L M Cullen (ed ), **The Formation of the Irish Economy** The Mercier Press, Cork (1969)

Cullen, L M **An Economic History of Ireland Since 1660** B T Batford Ltd , London (1972)

Davis, Richard, P **Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fem** Anvil Books, Dublin 1974

de Vere White, Terence **Kevin O'Higgins** Methuen and Co Ltd , London (1948)

Dooney, Sean **Irish Agriculture: an Organisational Profile** I P A in Association with Siuicre Eireann, Dublin (1988)

Fanning, Ronan **The Irish Department of Finance 1922 - 58** I P A , Dublin (1978)

Farrell, Brian **Chairman or Chief** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1971)

Foster, R F **Modern Ireland 1600 - 1972** Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London (1988)

Foy, Michael **The Sugar Industry in Ireland** Comhlucht Siuicre Eireann Teo, Dublin, (1976)

Gallagher, Michael **Electoral Support for Political Parties** Sage Publications, London (1976)

Gallagher, Michael **The Irish Labour Party in Transition, 1957-82** Manchester, Manchester University Press (1982)

Gallagher, Michael **Political Parties in the Republic of Ireland** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1985)

Garvin, Tom **The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1981)

Girvin, Brian **Between Two Worlds Politics and Economy in Industrial Ireland** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1989)

Hector, Daniel **The Department's Story - A History of the Department of Agriculture** I P A , Dublin (1971)

Hooker, E R **Readjustments of Agricultural Tenure in Ireland** Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press (1938)

Hoppen, K T **Ireland Since 1800. Conflict and Conformity** Longman, Essex (1989)

Johnson, David **The Interwar Economy in Ireland** The Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, Dublin (1985)

Keating, Carla 'Plunkett, the Co-operative Movement and Irish Rural Development' in Carla Keating (ed ), **Plunkett and Co-operatives, Past, Present and Future** UCC Bank of Ireland Centre for Co-operative Studies, Cork (1983)

Kelly, P W **Agricultural Land - Tenure and Transfer** An Foras Taluntais, Dublin (1982)

Kenwood, A G and A L Lougheed **The Growth of the International Economy** Hyman, London (1983)

Lee, J J **The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848-1918** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1973)

Lee, J J 'State and Nation in Independent Ireland', in **Irishness in a Changing Society** edited by The Princess Grace Irish Library, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross (1988)

Lee, J J **Ireland 1912 - 1985 Politics and Society** Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1989)

Lyons, F S L **Ireland Since the Famine** Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London (1971)

McAleese, Dermot 'Anglo-Irish economic interdependence from excessive intimacy to a wider embrace' in **Ireland and Britain Since 1922** edited by P J Drudy, Irish Studies, 5, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1986)

Manning, Maurice **The Blueshirts** Gill & Macmillan, Dublin (1976, 2nd Ed, 1987)

McColgan, John **British Policy and the Irish Administration, 1920-22** George Allen and Unwin, London (1983)

McCormack, D, 'Policy making in a small open economy Some aspects of the Irish experience', **Central Bank Quarterly Bulletin** Winter (1979)

McDowell, R B **The Irish Convention 1917-1918** Routledge and Kegan Paul, London (1970)

Meenan, James **The Irish Economy Since 1922** Liverpool University Press, Liverpool (1970)

Meenan, James **George O'Brien: A Biographical Memoir** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1980)

Meenan, James 'The Historic Perspective', in James Meenan et al, **The Economic and Social State of the Nation E R S I** , Dublin (1982)

Moynihan, M **Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera** St Martin Press, New York (1980)

Norman, H F 'Ireland', in **Year Book of Agricultural Co-operation (1931)** edited by The Horace Plunkett Foundation London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd , London (1931)

O'Brien, George 'Patrick Hogan' in **Studies** Vol 25 - (1936), Educational Company of Ireland, Dublin (1936)

O'Buachalla, Seamas **Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland** Wolfhound Press, Dublin (1988)

O'Connor, Emmet **Syndicalism in Ireland 1917 - 1923** Cork University Press, Cork (1988)

O'Connor, Emmet **A Labour History of Waterford** Waterford Trades Council (1989)

O'Donovan, John **Economic History of Live Stock in Ireland** Cork University Press, Cork (1940)

O'Donovan, John, **Documents on Ireland No. 7** Department of External Affairs (1951)

O'Hagan, John, Kyran P McStay, **The Evolution of the Manufacturing Industry in Ireland** Helicon, Confederation of Irish Industry (1981)

O'Halpin, Eunan, 'The civil service and the political system', **Administration**, 38, 4 IPA, Dublin (1991)

O'Halpin, Eunan, **The Decline of the Union: British Government in Ireland 1890-1920**, Gill and Macmillan (Dublin, 1987)

O'Halpin, Eunan 'Policy Making' in John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (eds) **Politics in the Republic of Ireland**, 2nd ed , Folens, PSAI Press, Dublin and Limerick (1993)

O'Leary, Cornelius **Irish Elections 1918 - 1977 - Parties, Voters and PR** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin (1979)

O'Mahony, David **The Irish Economy** Cork University Press, Cork (1964)

O'Sullivan, **The Irish Free State and Its Senate** Faber and Faber, London, (1940)

Wyndham, Rt Hon George 'The Completion of Land Purchase', in S Rosenbaum (ed) **The Case for the Union** (1912) Reissued by Kennikat Press, New York and London (1970)

Rumpf, E and A C Hepburn, **Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth Century Ireland** Liverpool University Press, Liverpool (1971)

Solow, B L **The Land Question and the Irish Economy 1870 -1903** Harvard University Press, Massachusetts (1971)

Valiulis, M G **Almost a Rebellion - The Irish Mutiny of 1924** Tower Books, Cork (1985)

Valiulis, M G **Portrait of a Revolutionary, General Richard Mulcahy and the Founding of the Irish Free State** Irish Academic Press, Dublin (1992)

Walsh, J J **Recollections of a Rebel** Tralee (1944)

Ward, Alan, J 'Challenging the British Constitution The Irish Free State and the External Minister' in **Parliamentary History** Vol 9, Pt 1, (1990)

Whyte, J H **Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923 - 1979** Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 2nd ed, 1980)