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From rogue revolutionary to rogue civil servant: The resurrection of Bulmer Hobson.¹

Marnie Hay

Prior to the 1916 Easter Rising, Bulmer Hobson (1883–1969) was one of the leading propagandists and organisers within the advanced nationalist movement in Ireland.² As a Sinn Féin propagandist, he was second only to Arthur Griffith. He also co-founded the nationalist youth group Na Fianna Éireann with Constance Markievicz in 1909,³ served on the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in 1912–14, helped to establish the Irish Volunteers in 1913, and co-ordinated the landing of guns and ammunition at Howth in 1914. His open opposition to an insurrection with no hope of military success provoked his comrades in the IRB to kidnap him on Good Friday 1916 and hold him captive until the rebellion was underway. This, combined with his subsequent evasion of arrest, ensured that his disappearance from the nationalist scene lasted longer than that historic Easter weekend. To the general public it was as if he had been executed along with the rebel leaders, but without the posthumous benefit of their spin-doctors.⁴

Some of Hobson's former colleagues, misunderstanding his motives for not participating in the Rising, not only denounced him as a coward and a traitor, but subjected him to ostracism.⁵ Despite this, Hobson managed to stage a quiet resurrection after the establishment of an independent Irish state as a civil servant and economic propagandist. In 1924 he secured permanent employment as Deputy Director of Stamping in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. Frustrated, however, that successive Irish governments did not institute 'a bold national policy of reconstruction' to tackle poverty, unemployment and emigration,⁶ he resuscitated his propagandist career by turning his pen to these issues in the 1930s.

Hobson, the product of a liberal Belfast Quaker family, believed that a strong economy in the Irish Free State would lead to the eventual reunification of Ireland.⁷

His concern for Irish unity dated back to his teenage admiration for the [p.209] combination of non-sectarianism and separatism espoused by Theobald Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, and his own early efforts in Belfast to bring Ulster Protestants into the nationalist movement through such propagandist organisations as the Protestant National Society, the Ulster Literary Theatre and the Dungannon Clubs.⁸ As a civil servant, he had to publish some of his writings on economic issues anonymously or under a pseudonym. Despite these precautions, however, his criticism of the government's economic policies landed him in trouble at work, provoking the censure of Minister for Finance and fellow Belfast native Seán MacEntee. This chapter will not only uncover Hobson's little-known activities as an economic propagandist and their impact on his civil service career, but also help to bring his life after 1916 out of the shadows.

In the period 1900–16 during his years as an advanced nationalist activist, Hobson's devotion to nationalist activities had impacted negatively on his ability to secure steady employment, particularly in the north. As a single man with no dependents this had not been overly problematic. His situation was to change when, while on the run in June 1916, he married Claire Gregan (1887–1958), a member of Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan who had been his secretary at the Irish Volunteer office.⁹ Consequently, when Hobson emerged from hiding after the June 1917 amnesty for individuals connected to the rebellion who had escaped arrest or were still serving time in prison, he had to find steady employment that would enable him to support a family in Dublin.

Prior to the 1916 Rising, Hobson had been a printer and journalist by trade.¹⁰ He built on this experience from circa 1918 to 1923 when he worked in book publishing as co-director of the Candle Press and Martin Lester Ltd in Dublin. By 1920 the Hobsons had set up home in the Mill House on Whitechurch Road in Rathfarnham.¹¹ Their children Declan Bulmer and Camilla Claire were born in 1921 and 1928 respectively.

In addition to their involvement in the advanced nationalist movement, Hobson and his wife, whom an *Irish Times* columnist described as 'strikingly handsome',¹² shared an interest in literature and theatre and helped to support the establishment of the Gate Theatre in the late 1920s.¹³ The Hobsons were known for hosting gatherings at which 'the most diffident artists' were encouraged 'to express themselves.'¹⁴ They also shared a concern for social issues. For instance, Claire Hobson gave evidence on

behalf of Saor an Leabhbh (the Irish Save the Children Fund) to the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Acts (1880–85) and Juvenile Prostitution (otherwise known as the Carrigan committee) (1930–31).¹⁵

Perhaps finding that book publishing did not provide a reliable enough income to support his young family, Hobson sought employment in the civil service of the new Irish Free State established in December 1922. He was initially hired in August 1923 as Temporary Technical Clerk in the Stationery Office at a salary of £250 per annum. He moved up to a permanent, pensionable position in [p. 210] October 1924 after he successfully interviewed for the post of Deputy Director of Stamping in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. The creation of this new position may have been a result of the Minister and Secretaries Act of 1924, which led to the increased formalisation of staffing of the civil service and of the titles of individual civil servants. The job initially came with a salary scale of £350–£500 per annum plus bonus.¹⁶

Ironically, Hobson was based in Dublin Castle, the former bastion of British authority in Ireland. He managed the printing section of the Stamping Department in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, which was responsible for all of the government's 'secure' printing needs, such as postage stamps, pension books, licenses and various government forms.¹⁷ By the late 1940s he had about sixty people working under his supervision.¹⁸

The Revenue fell under the remit of the Department of Finance, but was an independent entity. As Hobson had no previous experience in the Irish civil service, it is not overly surprising that he joined an office associated with Finance. Like External Affairs, it was a newly created department, there having been no need for such functions in Ireland under the Union with Great Britain.¹⁹ The newness of Finance may have provided more scope for bringing in new blood. According to a former employee of the Stamping Department, some people who were recruited at its inception had been 'politically involved'.²⁰ Perhaps Hobson's old friends from his Dungannon Club days, P. S. O'Hegarty, Secretary of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs from 1922 to 1944, and Ernest Blythe, who served as Minister for Finance from September 1923 until March 1932, helped him to secure employment.

Deputy Director of Stamping was not, however, the position in a new Ireland that one would have predicted based on Hobson's earlier political career. Nonetheless, he held this position until his retirement in January 1948, even though his increasingly

poor eyesight eventually made it difficult for him to supervise the output of the printing presses. Opportunities for further advancement were limited because he had been hired at the highest level within the technical (or industrial) grades of the civil service. According to a former member of Hobson's department, perhaps due to snobbery the technical grades were deemed inferior to the non-technical grades, and a transfer between the two was not made possible until the Stamping Department was restructured in the late 1970s.²¹

As a civil servant, Hobson built on his past employment experience in printing and publishing, but occasionally could indulge his interest in economic matters. For instance, he had the opportunity to serve as secretary to an inter-departmental committee on the sugar beet industry, compiling the committee's May 1933 report.²² He also completed two government-funded editing projects, though he may have undertaken such work in an independent capacity. [p. 211]

Dublin Corporation commissioned him to edit *A Book of Dublin*, which first appeared in May 1929 and was then reprinted in June 1930.²³ Billed as an 'official handbook', this attractively illustrated volume presented the city of Dublin as historically and culturally significant and economically thriving. Presumably, potential tourists and investors were the target audience. The book, however, did not find favour with one reviewer in particular: Fr Timothy Corcoran, SJ, the editor of the *Catholic Bulletin*. He objected to the content of the volume, describing its two editions as 'manuals for the Ascendancy mind' that 'exuded in every page the drippings of deliquescent Protestantism.'²⁴

Under the direction of a committee appointed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Patrick McGilligan, Hobson also edited the *Saorstát Éireann Official Handbook*, which aimed 'to give an account of the Irish Free State as it is to-day,' as well as providing the historical background necessary for understanding modern Ireland.²⁵ The book was also a report on the achievements of the Cumann na nGaedheal government during the first decade of Irish independence. Unfortunately, the publication of the handbook was badly timed; it appeared in 1932, just as the electorate rejected William Cosgrave and Cumann na nGaedheal in favour of Éamon de Valera and Fianna Fáil.

Corcoran lambasted Hobson in gleeful purple prose. Edited by a Protestant and designed to provide an account of the first ten years of the Free State, the handbook was unlikely to find favour in the *Catholic Bulletin*, which reflected an extremist

Catholic and an anti-Treatyite ethos. Corcoran objected to the book's cover as well as its contents. He referred to the cover design as 'Bulmer's blurb', describing it as 'an attempt to make Celtic tracteries prance about as if they were cubist figures performing motley mummery to jazz music.' In his opinion, 'the Bulmer within' was even 'more objectionable' than the gaudy cover; he dismissed Hobson's introduction as a 'crude chunk of party propaganda' and gave mixed reviews to articles by individual contributors.²⁶

Hobson and Corcoran may not have shared a taste in cover art or agreed on what aspects of Ireland to promote in government-funded publications, but they had one thing in common. Independent (or partially independent) Ireland was not turning out quite the way either of them wanted it to. For Hobson, Irish independence had proved a disappointment. When the Irish Free State was founded in 1922, he had anticipated 'a period of economic reconstruction' that would undo the effects of the Union between Britain and Ireland. Instead he witnessed what were, in his opinion, 'protracted and barren conflicts over verbal differences of politics which only the contestants, and not many of them, could understand, and these conflicts developed a fanatical bitterness which found its outlet in civil war.' He saw 'the high hopes, born of a national victory' get sucked into a quagmire of 'violence and folly.'²⁷ His concern for what he believed should be the new state's foremost priority – building up the economy [p. 212] – led him to air his views on economic issues publically despite his position as a civil servant. In light of the poor economic conditions of the time, his employment in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, and his early writings on economic nationalism in newspapers like the *Republic* and the *Peasant*, Hobson's interest and energy in raising awareness about ways to combat poverty, unemployment and emigration is not surprising.

Hobson praised the 1929 Shannon hydro-electric scheme, which harnessed the waters of the River Shannon to generate electricity, and pushed for it to be followed up by further bold steps to encourage Irish industry.²⁸ He advocated a policy of reforestation in order to provide Ireland with a native source of wood for the manufacturing industry, to generate much-needed employment in rural areas, and to preserve the Gaeltacht. In 1931 he privately published a 23-page pamphlet entitled *A National Forestry Policy*.²⁹ In this pamphlet he proposed 'the establishment of 525,000 acres of plantations within fifteen years,' criticising the government's aim to plant 200,000 acres as too modest because it would not benefit the current generation

socially and industrially.³⁰ He recommended the creation of a forestry authority, the development of ‘a programme of land acquisition and planting on an adequate scale and for a definite and extended period,’ and a financial policy that ‘would enable the work to proceed as planned and without interruption.’³¹

A critic in the *Dublin Magazine* lauded Hobson’s ‘far-reaching suggestions’ as ‘worthy of earnest consideration,’ but criticised him for ignoring the existence of forestry expertise within the Department of Agriculture. Instead Hobson had suggested ‘the importation of trained technicians from abroad to advise on the utilisation of ... non-agricultural land.’ The critic pointed out that when a ‘distinguished German arboriculturist’ who was unfamiliar with Irish conditions had served as an advisor on a plantation in Knockboy, Connemara, the results were disastrous.³²

Hobson’s advocacy of reforestation in the Gaeltacht stemmed from both cultural and economic concerns. In 1936 Hobson declared that ‘the failure of successive Governments to attempt the economic reconstruction of the Gaeltacht [was] the most profoundly disappointing feature of the first fourteen years of Irish self-government.’ In his view the economic renewal of the poverty-stricken Gaeltacht, ‘which all our enthusiastic city Gaels have told us [was] essential for the survival of Irish language and culture,’ would do more to maintain the native language than ‘superimposing Father O’Growney on the educational system of Archbishop Whately.’³³ Hobson argued that employment created through reforestation of the Gaeltacht would enable ‘the people of the western counties ... to enjoy a good and an improving standard of life as the result of their own labours in the places where they live,’ instead of having to migrate to another country as casual labourers or draw the dole ‘to save them from destitution.’³⁴ [p. 213]

In the autumn of 1932 Hobson presented de Valera, the new President of the Executive Council, with a draft ‘plan to break the economic depression in Saorstát Éireann and to relieve the government of the cost of maintaining the unemployed.’³⁵ Hobson, like many others, probably hoped that the new Fianna Fáil government would jumpstart the Irish economy. In addition, he may have wished to demonstrate a willingness to work with his new taskmasters. Hobson’s plan involved the establishment of an Economic Recovery Commission, which would supervise and coordinate the work of two sub-commissions, one on Land Reclamation, Drainage and Forestry and the other on Housing and Town Planning. According to Hobson, de

Valera said ‘he entirely agreed with [the economic plan] and that it was just what he wanted to do – but he did nothing.’³⁶

In September 1933 Hobson again wrote to de Valera about these economic proposals, asserting without any trace of modesty that ‘after another years’ close study I am still more completely satisfied that they are the best, if not the only real solution of the problem of unemployment here.’ Hobson offered to meet with de Valera to answer any objections to his proposals that may have deterred the president from adopting them. Hobson had obviously circulated his memorandum to others because he explained in the letter that he had been asked to publish it, but he wanted to get de Valera’s permission first. In conclusion, Hobson wrote: ‘I hope you will believe that I only return to the subject from a desire to help in the solution of the most urgent problem which confronts the country.’³⁷ De Valera appears to have given Hobson permission to publish the memorandum anonymously. Hobson published a revised version, entitled *National Economic Recovery: An Outline Plan*, privately in 1934. It was reprinted by the Talbot Press the following year.³⁸

This outline plan was not Hobson’s first anonymous publication on economic issues. In 1933 he had published a pamphlet entitled *The New Querist*, which drew on the tradition of Church of Ireland bishop George Berkeley’s eighteenth-century pamphlet *The Querist* by posing a series of nearly two hundred economic queries for ‘the consideration of the public.’³⁹ *The New Querist* reflects Hobson’s belief that a change in monetary policy and government investment in projects like reforestation and housing could combat poverty, unemployment and emigration.

Berkeley was an advocate of self-sufficiency as one way of tackling Ireland’s economic problems. In looking to Berkeley, Hobson was tapping into a tradition that was also being mined by Fianna Fáil. In an article tracing the direct and indirect influence of Berkeley’s ideas on Fianna Fáil economic policy, William Murphy points out that Hobson drew on some of Berkeley’s ideas, but for the most part used the bishop’s ‘structure and reputation’ to convey some of Hobson’s own ideas.⁴⁰ In particular, *The New Querist* reflects his interest in the social credit movement.

The founder of this movement was Major C. H. Douglas, a British engineer who published his theories of society in numerous articles, pamphlets and [p. 215] books. He came to public attention shortly after the First World War when some of his articles were published in a popular British avant-garde periodical called *New Age*. Douglas had ‘a unique interpretation of the role of banks in issuing credit and creating

money,' believing 'that banks [could] create money for their own use or for loan simply by forming an account and crediting it with whatever amount they desire.' Douglas himself wrote that 'deposits are created, to a major extent, by purely book-keeping transactions on the part of the banking institutions.' As he saw it, if banks could create money by increasing the money supply, then governments could tap into this money supply for the public good.⁴¹

Hobson was intrigued with Douglas's ideas regarding the creation of money. In *The New Querist* he asked 'whether anything is scarce in this country except money?'⁴² He suggested that the state should create money and spend it on wages to employ people to build much-needed houses, schools and roads, and to work on land drainage and reforestation projects. This in turn would provide people with an income that they could spend on goods, thus creating a demand for various commodities produced in Ireland. In his view, following such a plan would enable the Irish government to increase consumption and production in the home market, the only market over which it had any control.⁴³

Hobson's interpretation of social credit was only one strand of his economic thinking; a second strand was similar to Keynesianism. He himself noted that critics dismissed his economic writings as 'merely an adaptation' of the ideas contained in John Maynard Keynes' 1936 book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*.⁴⁴ As a result of this influential book, government control of expenditure began to be seen as the way to provide full employment. What his critics failed to note was that Hobson's *New Querist* and *National Economic Recovery* actually pre-dated Keynes' book. In 1937 Hobson commented that 'the new trend in English economic thinking which has recently appeared is tremendously important. I am very pleased that I had published my proposals before Keynes' recantation.'⁴⁵ By 'recantation' Hobson meant Keynes' rejection of the then-dominant economic belief in non-interference with the free market.

Hobson's ideas were ahead of their time in a country where Department of Finance officials would not start to 'absorb and come to terms with Keynesian economics in an Irish context' until the later years of the Emergency, as the Second World War was known in neutral Ireland.⁴⁶ Thus, Hobson's economic pamphlets made little if any impact. In 1934 he admitted: 'I cannot say that my efforts have made any impression on our politicians, who seem to see all the facts except the relevant

ones and have time to do everything except think.’⁴⁷ Despite being faced with such indifference, he kept writing and publishing his views.

In 1935 he established a small monthly paper called *Prosperity* to raise awareness about economic issues. The paper was published by the League against Poverty, which aimed to unite ‘people of all parties, or of none, who wished to see [p. 216] the standards of economic life raised in Saorstát Éireann.’⁴⁸ Free copies were sent to prominent clerics.⁴⁹ Hobson served as editor of the paper, while Fred Johnson, the son of Tom Johnson, the former leader of the Labour party in the Dáil, worked as manager. Lord Monteagle, Frank Hugh O’Donnell and Dr Patrick McCartan provided funding for the publication.⁵⁰ The paper, which had an initial circulation of 300, published schemes for the economic reconstruction of Ireland and tapped into the Catholic social action movement by providing interpretations of the papal encyclicals on social issues, such as *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931. Hobson wrote most of the articles under a variety of pseudonyms.⁵¹

Minister for Finance Seán MacEntee was so ‘perturbed by the criticisms that were being levelled against his party’s financial policy by the League against Poverty’ that ‘he requested that the Department of Justice identify the group behind it.’ Garda Special Branch, which maintained dossiers on a number of organisations in the 1930s, delivered its report on the group on 23 April 1936.⁵² Hobson is not mentioned in this report, suggesting that the investigation by the Gardaí found no evidence to link him with the League of Poverty, which they had deemed to be an organisation in name only.⁵³ Hobson, however, had gained considerable experience dodging police detectives back in his days as a Sinn Féin propagandist and member of the IRB.

In August 1936 the League against Poverty became the League for Social Justice, which was ‘composed of people of all parties, or none, who wish to see the social and economic teaching of the papal encyclicals, given practical effect in Saorstát Éireann.’⁵⁴ Its 26-member council included Lord Monteagle, Fred Johnson, three clergymen, Fianna Fáil TD Seán Brady (a former member of the Dublin Fianna), and City Librarian of Dublin Roisín Walsh, among others.⁵⁵ Hobson’s name does not appear on the list of council members. The League for Social Justice organised meetings to discuss Catholic social principles and published a series of pamphlets entitled *Towards a New Ireland*.⁵⁶

In September 1936 *Prosperity* changed its name to *Social Justice*. The paper, however, folded in June 1937 after only twenty monthly issues.⁵⁷ As Hobson later

noted, 'less than 100 people were sufficiently interested in the ideas it stood for to purchase it at the modest price of 2d. a copy.'⁵⁸

Hobson's editorship of *Prosperity* brought him in touch with Mrs B. Berthon Waters, a writer on economic affairs, and the Rev. Edward Cahill, SJ, one of the founders of the Catholic Action movement in Ireland and Professor of Church History and Lecturer in Sociology at the Jesuit College in Milltown Park. Cahill and Waters were members of An Ríoghacht, a Catholic social action group established in 1926. It may seem odd that Hobson, a former Quaker, should team up with two Catholic social activists, but there were similarities in their views.⁵⁹ For instance, Catholic social thinking promoted the solidarity of community as an alternative to class struggle. Middle-class Hobson never had much time for [p. 217] class struggle. His Dungannon Clubs, which were part of the early Sinn Féin movement, had put what they saw as the interests of the nation before the divisive interests of class or religion.⁶⁰ In 1937 Hobson even admitted that 'personally I don't care if there are a lot of rich people so long as there are none left in involuntary poverty.'⁶¹

An Ríoghacht hoped to influence the social and economic policy of the Irish government by making a submission to the Commission on Banking, Currency and Credit, which met between 1934 and 1938. This commission, which was appointed by MacEntee, was directed to 'examine and report on the system in Saorstát Éireann of currency, banking, credit, public borrowing and lending' and 'to consider and report what changes, if any, are necessary or desirable to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and the interests of agriculture and industry.'⁶² Hobson dismissed the commission as 'heavily loaded with partisans of the existing order.' Hobson, Waters and Cahill were keen to raise public awareness about the Banking Commission, so that matters 'of such vital importance to the whole community' would not be 'settled behind closed doors.'⁶³ Between July 1936 and October 1938 the trio tried to change the direction of the Banking Commission.⁶⁴

In December 1936 Hobson, Cahill and Waters prepared a 16-page memorandum on behalf of the League for Social Justice, which they submitted to the commission on 14 January 1937. Unfortunately, it was delivered too late to be considered by the commission. Hobson then sent the memorandum to two economists in England in order to gain feedback. Although John G. Smith, Professor of Finance and Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Birmingham, and James E. Meade, a Fellow and Lecturer in Economics at Hertford College, Oxford, and future

Nobel Laureate in Economics (1977), criticised certain parts of the document, they were generally positive. Cahill forwarded the economists' opinions to de Valera.⁶⁵ In addition, Cahill, Hobson and Waters sent de Valera a 'first and tentative draft of the form which a minority report might possibly take' in September 1937.⁶⁶ In writing their draft, the trio had had access to parts of the draft majority report,⁶⁷ which recommended maintaining the economic status quo, thus following the policy of the previous Cumann na nGaedheal government.

De Valera had suggested to his friend Eoin O'Keefe, who was a member of An Ríoghacht, that members of the commission who favoured a more progressive economic policy should submit a minority report. O'Keefe initially approached Alfred O'Rahilly, a member of the commission and Professor of Mathematical Physics at University College Cork, about preparing a minority report, but he was too busy. The job then fell to Hobson, Cahill and Waters.⁶⁸ Finín O'Driscoll has argued that de Valera, in instigating the production of a report, 'was attempting to ensure that the more radical element within Fianna Fáil could find solace in [p. 218] one of the minority reports and that those elements could not accuse him of losing the ideology of self-sufficiency that had brought Fianna Fáil to power.'⁶⁹

The document written by Hobson, Cahill and Waters was presented as the Third Minority Report⁷⁰ in March 1938 by Peadar O'Loughlen, a Fianna Fáil politician from Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, who had been appointed to the commission ostensibly to represent the interests of the rural community. O'Loughlen, though he had diligently attended meetings, had remained silent throughout the proceedings. It later emerged that he had been appointed not only as de Valera's watchdog,⁷¹ but also 'to hold a watching brief for a group' within An Ríoghacht.⁷² The Third Minority Report enraged MacEntee and the Secretary of the Department of Finance J. J. McElligott, neither of whom realised that a civil servant was partially responsible for the document. (Ironically, de Valera was more aware of Hobson's 'extracurricular activities' than the top men in Finance.) MacEntee and McElligott did not believe that O'Loughlen was the author and recognised that excerpts of the report were similar to passages in the anonymously published pamphlet *National Economic Recovery* and in two documents produced by the League for Social Justice, its submission to the Banking Commission and a pamphlet entitled *The Achill Island Tragedy*.⁷³

The Third Minority Report also generated criticism from Fr Edward Coyne, SJ, an economist and future chairman of the Commission on Vocational Organisation. He

was dismissive of Hobson's involvement, calling him a 'Quaker or Protestant' whose 'technique was well known': he 'gets a number of prominent or semi-prominent people to join forces and he then uses them as a means to propagate his fads.' Coyne viewed the scheme outlined in the report as 'quite untrue, most unwise, injurious to the encyclicals and would bring them into disrepute with educated Catholics, or would lead the uneducated to believe that the Third Minority Report really was a concrete remedy backed by the Pope.'⁷⁴

The Third Minority Report disputed 'the validity of the link with sterling,' the perceived need for a central bank, and the ability of 'the private sector to remedy unemployment or to provide any meaningful economic growth.' It recommended 'comprehensive government intervention in the provision of capital, capital development, and the provision of full employment,' possibly through a state forestation policy.⁷⁵ The report reflects views put forward in Hobson's previous economic publications. Although de Valera praised the Third Minority Report, the production of which he had indirectly encouraged, the document made no impact on the existing policy.⁷⁶

The contents of the Third Minority Report, and thus Hobson's ideas, later influenced the economic thought of Clann na Poblachta leader Seán MacBride.⁷⁷ In response to the British government's devaluation of sterling in September 1949, the cabinet of the Inter-Party government, of which MacBride was a member, would decide to establish a committee on devaluation the following month. [p. 219] Hobson, by then in retirement, was appointed to the committee, but it does not appear to have functioned.⁷⁸ More recently, Des Gunning has suggested that the 'tone and attitude' of Hobson's economic writings 'anticipated current environmental "green" politics.'⁷⁹ For instance, Hobson's 'criticisms of the banks' dominance of the Irish economy were occasionally quoted by the Irish Green Party in the 1990s.⁸⁰

After his involvement with the production of the Third Minority Report, Hobson continued to work with Waters, writing pamphlets for the *Towards a New Ireland* series, which she edited.⁸¹ This pamphlet series, which was published by the Irish People Co-operative Society Ltd, supported 'a broadly-based policy of social and economic re-construction in Ireland appealing to all sections and interests in the life of the nation.'⁸² In contrast to his own papers *Prosperity* and *Social Justice*, this pamphlet series claimed to have 'a wide circulation'.⁸³

In addressing the need for economic renewal in the west of Ireland, Hobson's tone became increasingly sarcastic. In 1937 he noted:

Perhaps when the last inhabitant of the Gaeltacht has departed for an English slum or a Scottish 'bothy' the Government will appoint a commission to report on the wealth which would be produced from the Irish Highlands. The report will be very interesting, but by then the absence of any available labour in the western desert will prevent its recommendations being carried out.⁸⁴

In a review of Professor R. G. Stapledon's *The Hill Lands of Britain* Hobson praised the author's suggestions for developing and improving the productivity of highland areas, commenting that his work 'would be very highly prized in a rational society, and there is much that we in Ireland could profitably learn from him, if we had one here.'⁸⁵

Hobson's remarks eventually landed him in hot water at work. As a civil servant he was prohibited from making political remarks in the public arena. However, at an An Ríoghacht meeting on 9 March 1938, Hobson commented on the issue of slum housing, proposing that:

The government acting as a central bank should issue the money to local authorities for housing, and the money would be repaid out of the sale of the houses or rents from them. The number of houses built should depend on the natural limit imposed by materials and labour available, and not by the artificial limit of how local authorities could float loans.⁸⁶

Press coverage of the meeting, which quoted Hobson's suggestions, provoked MacEntee to demand an explanation and apology from the rogue civil servant. [p. 220]

The disagreement between the civil servant and the government minister over what the former could or could not say in public begs a brief comparison of their respective political careers. Like Hobson, MacEntee was born and raised in Belfast and participated in the culturally nationalist Gaelic League and Ulster Literary Theatre. His father also supported Home Rule for Ireland. However, MacEntee, the younger of the two and a Catholic, did not join the advanced nationalist/republican organisations, such as Cumann na nGaedheal, the IRB, the Fianna and the Dungannon

Clubs, in which Hobson had played a leading role in Belfast in the first decade of the twentieth century. In January 1914, while employed as assistant chief engineer at the Dundalk electricity works, MacEntee joined the Dundalk corps of the Irish Volunteers,⁸⁷ an organisation that Hobson was instrumental in setting up. The Easter Rising was a turning point for both men. Hobson's decision not to participate in the rebellion and his evasion of arrest effectively killed his rising political career.⁸⁸ In contrast, MacEntee's participation in the insurrection, for which he was not only imprisoned but also received a death sentence, from which he was later reprieved, helped to launch a political career first with Sinn Féin and then with Fianna Fáil that lasted until his retirement in 1969, the year of Hobson's death.⁸⁹ Thus Hobson's political career had ended just as MacEntee's was about to take off.

In responding to MacEntee's demand for an explanation and apology, Hobson defended his conduct. He explained that:

In saying what I did I was endeavouring to make a contribution to the problem of slum clearance, on the necessity for which I thought there was complete unanimity of opinion among all classes and parties ... I thought the subject lay in a field of social effort which was completely outside politics, which civil servants could legitimately enter. I did not think I was contravening any regulation and did not intend to do so.

MacEntee, however, was not satisfied with this defence. In his view,

it should have been perfectly clear to an officer of Mr Hobson's rank and responsibilities that his comments on what he conceives to be the government's duty in the matter of slum clearance and housing were distinctly of a political nature and that their public expression was a serious impropriety of [sic] Mr Hobson's part.

At MacEntee's insistence Hobson gave 'an unqualified undertaking' that he would not publicly comment on politics in future.⁹⁰

Shortly afterwards in April 1938, Michael Deegan of the Land Commission complained that the League for Social Justice, which he had been told was founded by Hobson, had made comments regarding the forestry service. He lodged a protest and

requested that the Revenue take steps to ensure ‘that the [p. 221] rules which should guide civil servants in their public relations are observed.’ In light of Hobson’s recent ‘undertaking’ and an inability to attribute the offending comments on the forestry service to Hobson directly, no action was taken on this second occasion.⁹¹

In any case by the late 1930s it had become increasingly difficult for Hobson to produce any writing for publication. In September 1937 he revealed that ‘every time I agree to review a book fate intervenes and either I cannot see to read it or cannot get time to write about it.’⁹² His failing eyesight eventually forced him to abandon writing economic propaganda and book reviews altogether.⁹³

MacEntee does not appear to have held a grudge against Hobson as the minister approved a raise in the salary scale for the Deputy Director of Stamping in December 1938 to £500–£600.⁹⁴ Correspondence regarding the proposed revision of the salary scale provides insight into Hobson’s performance as a civil servant:

When he came to the Stamping Branch he was 41 years of age so that his first acquaintance with revenue principles and methods was made at an age when his mental outlook had already been formed. It is, therefore, only to be expected that he should be slow in adjusting himself to the ideas underlying revenue administration, and it is doubtful whether in fact this adjustment has ever fully taken place.⁹⁵

Hobson’s propensity for making public comments about economic matters may have been an example of his failure to adjust himself completely to the constraints of a civil service career.

In 1944, in light of new work undertaken since 1939 and Hobson having ‘carried out his duties in a highly efficient manner,’ his salary was again raised, after a certain amount of debate, to £640 with the possibility of further increments. His supervisors, recognising that he was due to retire in four years time with only 23 years of pensionable service, recommended that he be placed on a new higher pay scale personal to him in order to ensure a better pension on his retirement in January 1948.⁹⁶ Such generosity may have been designed to provide recognition of his contributions to the struggle for Irish independence in the period 1900 to 1916, as well as his work for the Revenue since 1924.

Hobson spent most of his retirement living alone in Roundstone, Connemara where he had a house built overlooking the sea, his marriage, forged so romantically

while on the run, having ended in separation around 1940-1.⁹⁷ Hobson lived in Roundstone until about 1963-4 when ill health forced him to move in with his daughter Camilla Mitchell and her family in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.⁹⁸ In January 1969 he quipped to his son Declan that ‘I have laughed at life and am ready to laugh at death.’⁹⁹ He died in August of that year, the same month in which rioting broke out on the streets of Derry and his native Belfast. [p. 222]

In 1968, a year before his death, Hobson complained that Irish political separatists had turned out to be economic unionists, content to settle for British policies that did not meet Irish needs.¹⁰⁰ His economic views were connected to his belief that a strong economy would lead to the eventual reunification of Ireland. He thought that the best way to bring unity was ‘to make an Ireland so prosperous that Ulster cannot afford to stay out of it.’¹⁰¹

Both in the advanced nationalist propaganda of his youth and in the economic propaganda of his middle age, Hobson sought to combine idealism with pragmatism. In both cases his ideas only appealed to a minority audience. In his 1968 book *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow* he re-published some of his economic writings from the 1930s alongside his memoirs of his nationalist career, which were based on his Bureau of Military History witness statements.¹⁰² This juxtaposition implies that he considered both periods of his life equally important. Perhaps he hoped that one day his economic ideas would gain mass appeal in the same way that a policy of passive resistance combined with guerrilla warfare, which he had advocated for many years prior to 1916,¹⁰³ garnered mass support after the great tragedy of his life, the Easter Rising.

Bulmer Hobson was a man who went his own way, acting in response to his own understanding of the truth. He was a rogue revolutionary who defied IRB orders when they ran counter to what he believed were the best interests of the Irish Volunteers and the nationalist movement in general. He favoured a policy of guerrilla warfare over insurrection because, in his view, it had more chance of military success. His commitment to the struggle for Irish independence could not be reconciled with the pacifist principles of his ancestral faith, so he resigned from the Religious Society of Friends. After independence, he continued to support the cultural life of Ireland through his involvement in such activities as book publishing and the foundation of the Gate Theatre. He also became a rogue civil servant who publicly criticised the economic policies of successive Irish governments. Advocating ideas stemming from his own versions of social credit and Keynesianism, Hobson suggested alternative

economic policies for Ireland in a series of little-known publications. Always at the heart of his activism – and criticism – was an intense love of Ireland and a life-long commitment to improving his country culturally and economically. [p. 223]

¹ This chapter expands on and revises some of the material contained in chapter 9 of my monograph, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth-Century Ireland*, which was published by Manchester University Press in 2009. I would like to acknowledge the receipt of funding from the former Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which made some of the research for this chapter possible.

² For a detailed discussion of Hobson's nationalist career, see Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Manchester, 2009); Marnie Hay, 'Bulmer Hobson: the rise and fall of an Irish nationalist, 1900–16' (PhD thesis, University College, Dublin, 2004). I would like to thank Professor Michael Laffan for his adept and genial supervision of this thesis.

³ See Marnie Hay, 'The foundation and development of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909–16', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvi, no. 141 (May 2008), pp 53–71.

⁴ See Marnie Hay, 'Kidnapped: Bulmer Hobson, the IRB and the 1916 Easter Rising', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, xxxv, no. 1 (Spring 2009), pp 53–60; Marnie Hay, 'The mysterious "disappearance" of Bulmer Hobson', *Studies*, xcvi, no. 390 (Summer 2009), pp 185–195.

⁵ Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*, pp 201–3.

⁶ Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Tralee, 1968), p. 112.

⁷ His father Benjamin Hobson Jr was a commercial traveller from outside Lurgan, Co. Armagh, who identified himself politically as a Gladstonian Home Ruler. Hobson's mother Mary Ann Bulmer was a suffragist and amateur archaeologist from Darlington, Co. Durham in England. For more detail on the Hobson family, see Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*, pp 6–11.

⁸ For a discussion of Hobson's influences and involvement in nationalist organisations in Belfast, see chapters 1–3 of Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*.

⁹ Claire Hobson (née Gregan), Bureau of Military History witness statement, BMH WS 685; Parish marriage register, Rathfarnham, National Library of Ireland (NLI), microfilm no. P8972; Mary Ann Bulmer Hobson, 'Bulmer family chronicle from

before 1050 to 1936', NLI, MS 5220; Obituary of Mrs Claire Hobson, *Irish Independent*, 24 Feb. 1958.

¹⁰ In the 1901 census Hobson is recorded as an 18-year-old apprentice printer while the 1911 census lists him as a 28-year-old journalist, www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1901/Antrim/Clifton_Ward_Belfast/Hopefield_Avenue/1004537/;

www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Down/Holywood_Urban/Ballycultra/232384/

(accessed 11 Jan. 2011).

¹¹ *Thom's Directory* first listed Hobson at the Mill House in 1920.

¹² Quidnunc, 'An Irishman's Diary', *Irish Times*, 26 Feb. 1958.

¹³ Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*, pp 219–20.

¹⁴ Quidnunc, 'An Irishman's Diary', *Irish Times*, 26 Feb. 1958.

¹⁵ Christopher Shepard, 'A liberalisation of Irish social policy? Women's organisations and the campaign for women police in Ireland, 1915–57', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvi, no. 144 (Nov. 2009), p. 579; Roger Mitchell to Marnie Hay, 21 Jan. 2011 (email in possession of author).

¹⁶ P. Ó Ceallaigh to S. Ó Muimhneacháin, 7 June 1944, in Remuneration of higher posts in Stamping Branch, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/E2/1/39; Ronan Fanning, *The Irish Department of Finance 1922–58* (Dublin, 1978), p. 39.

¹⁷ In February 1923 the Irish government announced its plans to set up the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. By April 1923 the office was established. Seán Réamonn, *History of the Revenue Commissioners* (Dublin, 1981), pp 56–8; Paddy Ryan (ed.), *Revenue Over the Years* (Dublin, 1998), pp 8–11; conversions with Paddy Ryan, (now former) Assistant Principal, Communications Branch, Office of the Revenue Commissions (25 and 29 Aug. 2006).

¹⁸ Telephone conversation with Cormac O'Callaghan (20 Sept. 2006). Mr O'Callaghan joined the Stamping Department as an Assistant Stamper in 1947 and later rose to the position of Director of Stamping.

¹⁹ Basil Chubb, *The Government and Politics of Ireland* (3rd edn, London, 1992), p. 230.

²⁰ Telephone conversation with Cormac O'Callaghan (20 Sept. 2006).

²¹ *Ibid.*

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- ²² Bulmer Hobson, 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Sugar Beet Industry', May 1933, NLI, Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 13,172.
- ²³ See Bulmer Hobson (ed.), *A Book of Dublin* (2nd edn, Dublin, 1930).
- ²⁴ Molua (Fr Timothy Corcoran, SJ), 'The last pose of Bulmer', *Catholic Bulletin* (Apr. 1932), p. 273.
- ²⁵ Bulmer Hobson (ed.), *Saorstát Éireann Official Handbook* (Dublin, 1932), p. 15.
- ²⁶ Molua, 'The last pose of Bulmer', pp 274–9.
- ²⁷ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 111.
- ²⁸ Bulmer Hobson, *A National Forestry Policy* (Dublin, 1931), p. 4.
- ²⁹ See *ibid.*, pp 1–23. Tom Garvin has countered Hobson's reasons for reforestation. Garvin argues that 'the real [nationalist] desire for reforestation was rooted in aesthetics and restorationism rather than in economic calculation,' adding that the replacement of Irish trees, which had been chopped down and shipped to Britain in the eighteenth century, 'would be a very impressive physical symbol of the undoing of the conquest.' *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland, 1858–1928* (Dublin, 2005), p.135.
- ³⁰ Review of *A National Forestry Policy*, *Dublin Magazine* (Apr.–June 1933), p. 91.
- ³¹ Hobson, *A National Forestry Policy*, p. 15.
- ³² Review of *A National Forestry Policy*, p. 92.
- ³³ Bulmer Hobson, 'Forestry and the Gaeltacht', *Ireland To-day* (Aug. 1936), p. 33. Fr Eugene O'Growney was the author of the standard Irish language textbooks used in the early twentieth century, while Church of Ireland archbishop Richard Whately played a leading role in the establishment of the Irish national school system in the nineteenth century.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- ³⁵ Bulmer Hobson's draft economic recovery plan, NLI, Hobson papers, MS 13,172.
- ³⁶ Comment written on Hobson's draft economic recovery plan, NLI, Hobson papers, MS 13,172.
- ³⁷ Hobson to de Valera, 23 Sept. 1933, NLI, Hobson papers, MS 13,172.
- ³⁸ See Bulmer Hobson, *National Economic Recovery: An Outline Plan* (Dublin, 1935). This pamphlet is reprinted in Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, pp 128–70.

³⁹ *The New Querist* is reprinted in Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, pp 115–27.

⁴⁰ William Murphy, ‘Cogging Berkeley?: *The Querist* and the rhetoric of Fianna Fáil’s economic policy’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, xxxii (2005), pp 63, 76.

⁴¹ Edward Bell, *Social Classes and Social Credit in Alberta* (Montreal, 1993), pp 37, 42–4.

⁴² Hobson, *The New Querist*, reprinted in Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 116.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁴ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 128.

⁴⁵ Hobson to William Glynn, 4 June 1937, NAI, Dept. of the Taoiseach, S12293.

⁴⁶ Fanning, *The Irish Department of Finance*, p. 357.

⁴⁷ Hobson to Dr William Maloney, 31 July 1934, NLI, Joseph McGarrity papers, MS 17,604 (2).

⁴⁸ Bulmer Hobson, ‘The League against Poverty’, *Prosperity* (Nov. 1935), p. 1.

⁴⁹ Garda Special Branch report, NAI, Dept of Justice, JUS/8/436.

⁵⁰ Finín O’Driscoll, ‘Social Catholicism and the social question in independent Ireland: the challenge to the fiscal system’ in Mike Cronin and John M. Regan (eds), *Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922–49* (London, 2000), p. 134. Francis Spring Rice, 4th Baron Monteagle of Brandon, was an uncle of the Hon. Mary Spring Rice, who had joined Hobson in playing central roles in the 1914 Howth gunrunning. Industrialist Frank Hugh O’Donnell was the owner of a men’s clothing company, founder of the Federation of Irish Manufacturers and a future senator. Patrick McCartan was a medical doctor and politician from Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone who had been a nationalist associate of Hobson’s since their days in the Dungannon Clubs. www.thepeerage.com/p35899.htm#i358984 (accessed online 8 July 2014); Bridget Hourican, ‘Rice, Mary Ellen Spring’ and Marie Coleman, ‘McCartan, Patrick’ in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009) (accessed online 8 July 2014); ‘Nominated for the Senate – Frank Hugh O’Donnell’, *Irish Press*, 18 Mar. 1938; and www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp (accessed online 8 July 2014).

⁵¹ These pseudonyms included Rigel, Aldebaran, X, Altair and Corvus. Cathal O’Shannon, William Glynn, B. Berthon Waters, Olive Gibson and Dr Eamon

O'Hogan were among the other contributors. The bound copy of *Prosperity/Social Justice* in the Special Collections Department of the University College, Dublin Library was annotated by Hobson, who listed the authors of most of the articles in the paper.

⁵² O'Driscoll, 'Social Catholicism', p. 135.

⁵³ Garda Special Branch report, NAI, Dept. of Justice, JUS/8/436.

⁵⁴ Bulmer Hobson, 'The manifesto of the League for Social Justice', *Prosperity* (Aug. 1936), p. 74.

⁵⁵ *Social Justice* (Nov. 1936), p. 104. For Brady's Fianna connection, see Paucic J. Dempsey, 'Brady, Seán Ernest' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (accessed online 7 Feb. 2011).

⁵⁶ Maurice Curtis, 'Catholic action as an organised campaign in Ireland, 1921–1947' (PhD thesis, University College, Dublin, 2000), p. 291; Hobson to Edward Cahill, 6 June 1936, Irish Jesuit Archives (IJA), Cahill papers.

⁵⁷ In the June 1937 issue of *Social Justice* Hobson announced that the paper was going to 'suspend publication during the summer months' (p. 1). He never revived it.

⁵⁸ Note in Hobson's handwriting written on a bound copy of *Prosperity/Social Justice* in the Special Collections Department of the University College, Dublin Library.

⁵⁹ Hobson reported that he resigned from the Society of Friends in 1914 because participation in an openly militant organisation like the Irish Volunteers was inconsistent with the pacifist principles of the Quaker faith (Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 1). The records of the Society of Friends, however, list his resignation date as 14 Oct. 1915, Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland (HLRSFI), Gen. File 69/2. Hobson may have resigned informally in 1914, but the Lisburn Monthly Meeting later requested written confirmation of his resignation.

⁶⁰ See Bulmer Hobson, *To the Whole People of Ireland: The Manifesto of the Dungannon Club* (Belfast, 1905), p. 7.

⁶¹ Hobson to William Glynn, 4 June 1937, NAI, Dept. of the Taoiseach, S12293.

⁶² *Commission of Inquiry into Banking, Currency and Credit – Reports and Minutes of Evidence* (Dublin, 1938). For a discussion of the commission, see Tom Feeney, *Seán MacEntee: A Political Life* (Dublin, 2009), pp 79–92.

⁶³ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 171.

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- ⁶⁴ O’Driscoll, ‘Social Catholicism’, p. 135.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 135–6.
- ⁶⁶ Cahill to de Valera, 8 Sept. 1937, NAI, Dept. of the Taoiseach, S12293.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ J. Anthony Gaughan, *Alfred O’Rahilly, II: Public Figure* (Dublin, 1989), pp 312–13; Enda Delaney, ‘Fr Denis Fahey, CSSp, and Maria Duce, 1945–1954’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1993), p. 31.
- ⁶⁹ O’Driscoll, ‘Social Catholicism’, p. 136.
- ⁷⁰ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 171; Enda Delaney, ‘Denis Fahey’, p. 29. ‘Draft for a report – Banking Commission 1938’ is reprinted in Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, pp 172–243.
- ⁷¹ O’Driscoll, ‘Social Catholicism’, p. 133.
- ⁷² Gaughan, *Alfred O’Rahilly*, p. 310.
- ⁷³ Annotated copy of the Third Minority Report, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/F009/0018/38.
- ⁷⁴ Edward Coyne to Provincial, 1 Sept. 1938, IJA, Coyne papers, quoted in Curtis, ‘Catholic action as an organised campaign in Ireland’, p. 309.
- ⁷⁵ Eithne MacDermott, *Clann na Poblachta* (Cork, 1998), p. 61.
- ⁷⁶ Delaney, ‘Denis Fahey’, p. 31.
- ⁷⁷ MacDermott, *Clann na Poblachta*, p. 61.
- ⁷⁸ Gaughan, *Alfred O’Rahilly*, pp 387–8. The committee consisted of ‘the Taoiseach and ministers for finance, industry and commerce, agriculture and external affairs, officials from their respective departments, the governor of the Central Bank, three professors of economics, Bulmer Hobson and a nominee of the Irish Banks’ Standing Committee’ (p. 388).
- ⁷⁹ Des Gunning, ‘Bulmer Hobson, “the most dangerous man in Ireland”’, *History Ireland* (Spring 2002), p. 5.
- ⁸⁰ Patrick Maume, ‘Hobson, (John) Bulmer’ in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (accessed online 12 Jan. 2011).
- ⁸¹ Hobson and Waters co-wrote the first pamphlet in the series, which was entitled ‘Forging new links of the Empire’. His other contributions to the series included ‘Invisible empire’, ‘Afforestation’, ‘National monetary policy’, and ‘Full home market’. See Waters to Hobson, 21 May 1948, NLI, Hobson papers, MS 13,161 (9).

⁸² Flyer for the ‘Towards a New Ireland’ pamphlet series, HLRSFI, William Glynn papers.

⁸³ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 171.

⁸⁴ Bulmer Hobson, review of R. G. Stapledon, *The Hill Lands of Britain, Ireland Today* (Oct. 1937), p. 84.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Irish Independent*, 10 Mar. 1938.

⁸⁷ Deirdre McMahan, ‘MacEntee, Seán (John) Francis’ in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (accessed online 12 Jan. 2011).

⁸⁸ Bulmer Hobson, statement to Joseph McGarrity, Apr. 1933, NLI, McGarrity papers, MS 17,453.

⁸⁹ MacMahon, ‘MacEntee, Seán (John) Francis’.

⁹⁰ Correspondence regarding statements made by Bulmer Hobson at a meeting of An Ríoghacht, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/E109/17/38.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Hobson to Mr Sheehy, 21 Sept. 1937, NLI, James L. O’Donovan Papers, MS 21,987/vi.

⁹³ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 114. Fanciful folklore within the Revenue alleged that Hobson’s ‘eyesight was impaired as a result of injuries received during the 1916 rising’ (Paddy Ryan, ‘The old stamping ground’, *An Rabhchán* (Feb. 1995), pp 10–11). Hobson himself stated that he had had ‘persistent’ ‘eye trouble’ since the age of seventeen (Seán Ó Lúing, ‘Talking to Bulmer Hobson’, *Irish Times*, 6 May 1961).

⁹⁴ Seán MacEntee to William O’Brien, 17 Dec. 1938, in Remuneration of higher posts in Stamping Branch, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/E2/1/39.

⁹⁵ Note for chairman, Nov. 1938, in Remuneration of higher posts in Stamping Branch, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/E2/1/39.

⁹⁶ Office of the Revenue Commissioners to Secretary, Dept. of Finance, 24 Jan. 1944, in Remuneration of higher posts in Stamping Branch, NAI, Dept. of Finance, FIN/E2/1/39.

⁹⁷ Roger Mitchell to Marnie Hay, 9 June 2012 (email in possession of author).

Commenting on the sudden death of Claire Hobson in Dublin in 1958, an *Irish Times* columnist recalled not only her ‘humour, tolerance, and an insatiable, but always

kindly curiosity', but also her 'sound judgement' in relation to literature and theatre (Quidnunc, 'An Irishman's Diary', *Irish Times*, 26 Feb. 1958).

⁹⁸ Mitchell to Hay, 9 June 2012; Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*, pp 229–30.

⁹⁹ Bulmer Hobson to Declan Hobson, 26 Jan. 1969. I would like to thank Hobson's grandson Roger Mitchell for providing me with a copy of this letter.

¹⁰⁰ Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 112.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰² Hobson provided the Bureau of Military History with sixteen separate witness statements relating to various nationalist organisations and associates.

¹⁰³ See Bulmer Hobson, *Defensive Warfare: A Handbook for Irish Nationalists* (Belfast, 1909).