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The Fenians and Tipperary Politics, 1868-1880

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– 1 –

Historians of fenianism in the 1860s and 1870s have tended to focus upon the organisation's participation in political and military affairs; they have devoted considerably less attention to Fenian involvement in electoral politics. The present study examines the role of I.R.B. members in County Tipperary between 1869 and 1880. It suggests that the involvement of Fenians in constitutional politics was more extensive in that county, if not in the rest of Ireland, than scholars have hitherto recognised.

Militant nationalists did not play a major role in the 1868 general election. Church disestablishment, tenant right and Catholic university education were not priorities for the Fenian movement. Militant nationalists were mainly concerned with amnesty, or the release of the Fenian prisoners who had been incarcerated in English jails since 1865. These priorities were of little interest for most candidates and only 20 Liberals throughout the county espoused the amnesty principle, which was totally anathema to the Whig section.¹

While Tipperary was one of the counties where one would have expected the amnesty issue to be important, because of the extent of the Fenian movement in the area in the 1860s and because some of the imprisoned leaders were from that county, this did not occur. This was because the local clergy ensured that disestablishment remained the major issue. Even the land question had a higher priority because of the events at Ballycohey in the weeks prior to the election.²

The nationalist, Peter Gill, proprietor of the *Tipperary Advocate*, who entered the contest for a while, based his campaign on the land question.³ However, Gill withdrew, realising the agrarian issue would never gain the same prominence as church disestablishment. There was evidence of Fenian participation during the election, but this was on an individual scale and there was no co-ordinated approach. George Henry Moore received the active support of Mark Ryan and Myles Jordan in Mayo, while Richard Pigott of the *Irishman* was aided by local Fenians in his unsuccessful attempts in Limerick City.⁴

While Fenian involvement was insignificant at the 1868 general election, the position was reversed at the November by-election, caused by the death of Charles Moore. Isaac Butt would have been the ideal candidate to consolidate the unity between militant and constitutional nationalists. Many groups urged him to contest the election, including Archbishop Leahy, and his nomination at the great county meeting in Thurles was seconded by the Fenian, T.P. O'Connor of Laffana. Butt appealed to a broad section of Tipperary society. His espousal of amnesty and the tenant right questions ensured him the support of two of these major groups.

However, Butt refused to allow his name to go forward, offering no explanation.⁵ One can only speculate on this decision, but he probably did not want to alienate the one important group he was trying to entice into the new political coalition that was then being formed – the Irish Conservatives.⁶ Butt's decision caused greater problems, for it allowed the Fenians the opportunity to participate in the constitutional process. They would not have become involved if Butt had accepted the nomination. Without Butt the constitutional nationalists were divided,



with different groups espousing the claims of a number of candidates like John Martin and Peter Gill.

Tipperary was the ideal constituency for the Fenians to launch their campaign into constitutional politics. In the post-1852 period most of the county's elections had been contested, the electors having a choice in five of the seven contests. By contrast, constituencies such as Kildare and Carlow had only one contest in the six elections up to 1868. Tipperary had been to the forefront of Fenian activity during the 1860s, with areas such as Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Mullinahone well known as strong Fenian bases. Their influence was greatest in the southern half of the county, with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and Charles Kickham drawing most of their support from Tipperary and Clonmel during the by-elections of 1869 and 1870.⁷

Many of the Fenian leaders from Tipperary such as Kickham and John O'Leary encountered severe prison conditions between 1866 and 1871, and their plight was chronicled by many of the national newspapers.⁸ These were important factors in gathering support for Rossa's candidature in Tipperary. While candidates like Kickham would secure the 1,000-odd votes that were available to the advanced nationalists, a personality such as Rossa, whose name was well-known to nearly every voter because of the publicity his severe prison experiences received, would secure those extra vital votes. Tipperary, therefore, was perhaps the only county where the Fenian movement could mount a successful electoral campaign.

The nationalist effort was greatly augmented by the activities of the recently-formed Amnesty Association, which had united the differing strands of Irish nationalism.⁹ An estimated 600,000 people attended the 54 demonstrations which it organised between August and November 1869, and nine of these were in Tipperary. These created an air of excitement on the eve of the 1869 by-election.¹⁰ The meetings were to conclude with a demonstration in Cabra on 7 November. The movement was on the verge of breakup as it appeared to be unsure about its next line of action. The progression into constitutional politics was a natural advancement, for it would retain the militant and constitutional wings of the movement.

Amnesty was important in developing a national consciousness amongst the Irish people. The feeling persisted that the demonstrations, especially those in Tipperary, were arranged to further the aims of fenianism and the authorities argued that the people were becoming more defiant.¹¹ The meetings indicated to the Fenians that benefits could be secured through their involvement with constitutional organisations. It also brought together constitutional nationalists and helped eliminate the distrust that existed between them since the early 1860s.

The decision to nominate Rossa for the 1869 by-election is often attributed to J.F.X. O'Brien, a Fenian who had served a period of imprisonment, but was released because of ill-health.¹² The main driving force were the local advanced nationalists, Peter Gill and Daniel O'Connell, a Fenian from Toomevara.¹³ The first indication of Rossa's selection occurred the week before the election, when placards were placed throughout the county calling on the people to select him. The notices stated that Rossa and the other imprisoned Fenians were responsible for the church act and the proposal land legislation. Nevertheless, the primary reason was to elect Rossa because of the amnesty issued.

The decision to nominate Rossa appears to have been taken on the day of the nomination meeting itself. He was proposed by Patrick Mackey of Templemore and seconded by Michael Carroll of Borrisoleigh.¹⁴ This event caught the amnesty supporters by surprise for they were then laying down the rules under which Denis Caulfield Heron, the Liberal candidate, should be supported: namely a clear indication of support for amnesty. No preparations had been made to canvass the constituency, nor was a decision made as to how they would meet Rossa's



election expenses. This attitude was not surprising as the Fenians were not totally committed to the electoral process, using the occasion to highlight the case of the imprisoned Fenians. Their initial intention had been to nominate Rossa and then withdraw having made their point.

Once the ball was set rolling, however, they were sucked into a contest. At this stage they required the expertise of the constitutional nationalists, as the Fenians themselves had no experience of the electoral system or the electioneering process. Thus the Fenians were as dependent on the constitutional nationalists as they were on their own leadership to give them a household name candidate. To some constitutional nationalists, even those sympathetic to the Liberal party, it allowed them the opportunity to express their nationalism and to rehabilitate themselves after a decade in the political wilderness. Not all of those elected on the Liberal ticket in 1868 could be called firm adherents of Gladstone's policy, while others were only conditionally so.¹⁵

While a by-election in Tipperary had many advantages, it also created its own problems. The closing months of 1869 saw a Gladstone euphoria grip the country. The Church of Ireland had been disestablished, the measure becoming law on 22 July, and the people waited in anticipation for his land bill which was hoped would be the panacea to all Irish agrarian problems. Gladstone still retained the support of the Irish bishops and clergy, so that any nationalist candidate would have to contend with that body's power. On a practical level was the question of finance, which could cost an individual candidate up to £10,000.

Both the Rossa and Kickham campaigns created major problems. At the 1870 Longford election the successful candidate, Greville-Nugent, spent over £4,000 while his nationalist opponent, John Martin, expended £932.¹⁶ Such costs involved paying election agents, election fees, hefty printing costs and buying refreshments for electors and non-electors. Thus it was virtually impossible to secure suitable candidates with the financial resources to contest elections on the nationalist ticket. Nevertheless the 1869 and 1870 Tipperary contests were the first occasions in Ireland where the nationalists mounted a successful campaign with limited resources. Both by-elections were fought on shoe-string budgets. They were unable to pay the sheriff's fees or the transport costs for the voters to come to the polling stations.¹⁷

While no detailed accounts were provided, it was beyond the financial capabilities of the nationalists, for it was well below the £1,227 which Heron expended on the first contest.¹⁸ Kickham himself was prepared to pay some of the costs, but in 1873 T.P. O'Connor of Laffana, Cashel, embarked on a lecture tour of the United States in an attempt to pay off the debt, much of it still outstanding to George Roe of Lorcan Park. The financial problems were exacerbated when the nationalists lodged a petition against Heron's election in 1870 on the grounds of unfair clerical intimidation. Over £900 was spent on this unsuccessful venture.

The Fenians depended upon ordinary people to pay the election costs for both Kickham and Rossa, with Irish people in the United States and Britain, as well as in Ireland, contributing to the fund. For the first time the Irish abroad took an interest and played an active part in electioneering.¹⁹ Unfortunately, these subscriptions were small and never met all of the electoral costs. It was difficult to secure money during this period, for 1869-70 saw great demands upon the generosity of nationalists with constant appeals being made from the amnesty movement, the Patrick Lavelle Sustainment Fund, the Longford election fund and other nationalist causes. It was impossible for Irish people to subscribe to all, and these appeals tended to be only successful when the issue was directly before the people. Once the newspapers directed their attention to other causes, the supply of money dried up.

Electoral violence was prevalent in this period and the 1869 by-election was no exception. Only 2,161 of the 9,498 electors voted, primarily due to intimidation and violence. Only five



polling stations existed in the county: Thurles, Nenagh, Clonmel, Cashel and Tipperary – and the people feared they would be attacked. Past experiences, as in 1837, 1841, 1857 and 1866, indicated the prevalence of electoral violence. Heron's supporters probably also felt that the active Fenian participation would result in violence as had occurred at tenant right demonstrations in Limerick and Dundalk. This concern was greater than their desire to vote their approval for Gladstone's Irish policy. Their fears were not unfounded, for farmers were taken out of their beds in Templemore and Borrishleigh and forced to swear that they would vote for O'Donovan Rossa.

Voters from Golden were intimidated by the mob in Tipperary town and their two priests, Frs Ryan and O'Connell, were roughly treated. The home of Fr Howley, parish priest of Tipperary, was attacked and wrecked. Nine electors were threatened in the town and when they voted for Heron £105 worth of damage was done to their property.²⁰ However, the worst scenes occurred at the nomination meeting in Clonmel on 22 November when both sets of supporters clashed, with continuous jeering and hooting of the opposition speakers. Such activities were common occurrences in most constituencies during the 1868 election.

The 1869 election was the first election in which the clergy and the landlords were not the main protagonists. The clergy now faced a new threat – from the laity – and these confrontations became more pronounced throughout the 1870s and 1880s, as seen from the contests in Longford in 1870 and Mayo in 1874. Now the constabulary and military were protecting those electors who were supporting the clerical nominees: escorting them to the polls while a mob threatened and intimidated them.

O'Donovan Rossa won the seat by 103 votes (1,131 votes to 1,028). A number of factors aided his victory, the most important being Heron's surprise when Rossa was selected. Initially, Heron may have felt that the nomination was merely an attempt to highlight the amnesty issue and that there was no serious threat to him losing the contest. However, he quickly realised the seriousness of the situation, as is evident in his offer of £500 to the prisoners relief fund if Rossa withdrew from the contest.²¹

Tipperary was an ideal constituency for the electoral involvement of the militant nationalists. Peter E. Gill had contested the two 1865 by-elections and put his name forward for the 1866 by-election and the 1868 general election. He secured 909 votes, or 30 per cent of the poll, at the 1865 by-election. Thus the Fenians could depend on a core of about 1,000 votes, but needed a big name candidate to secure the additional votes. James O'Shea has indicated that most Tipperary farmers opposed fenianism, but emotive issues such as the Manchester executions and the harsh treatment of the political prisoners jolted them into supporting them.²²

The evidence suggests that the clergy were wrong-footed in their approach towards Rossa, there being little co-ordination between the three dioceses in the county. Clerical control of the electoral process was easy in those constituencies where there was only one diocese, as evident in Longford at the 1870 by-election. As the bishops of Cashel, Killaloe, and Waterford were in Rome attending the first Vatican council, there was little co-operation between the clergy of the different dioceses. They were caught completely unawares by Rossa's nomination and had little opportunity to organise the voters as the polling took place on 27 November.²³

The clergy felt that Heron would be returned unopposed as he had the support of the tenant right movement in Tipperary, the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Nation*. The complacency within the Liberal ranks was thus understandable. The clergy adopted a similar approach to that of the 1868 contest: choosing their candidate and then conducting Heron on a tour of the principal towns in the county. Unlike the 1868 contest, Heron constantly referred to the need for the release of the Fenian prisoners, an attitude clearly influenced by the amnesty demonstrations.



The election placed the electors in a dilemma. Most still retained a certainly loyalty to Gladstone because of his policies towards Ireland, but sympathy existed for the Fenian prisoners as exemplified during the amnesty demonstrations. The electors were being asked to choose between their loyalty towards their fellow-Irishmen or to a British politician who had shown his readiness to redress Irish grievances. The result indicated that the Gladstonian coalition in Ireland of Whigs, tenant right advocates and nationalists was beginning to disintegrate. Between 1869 and 1873 this process was completed and at the 1874 general election the Liberals won only 10 seats.

Rossa's victory had greater national significance than was at first realised. While the contest itself was a low-key affair outside Tipperary, the result sent a signal to the rest of the country and a blatant display of nationalist fervour, evident during the amnesty demonstrations, now re-emerged. This enthusiasm expressed itself in two ways: with bonfires and processions throughout the country, even in those areas where fenianism had been negligible or non-existent during the 1860s, such as Lahinch, Scarriff and Swinford.²⁴ Rossa's victory allowed people to express their Irishness in a manner which they had been unable to do since the O'Connell movement of the 1840s.

Secondly, what had begun as a simple expression regarding Fenian prisoners now assumed a more embracing dimension. The success resulted in the advanced nationalists looking at other constituencies where they could spread their message – mainly Queen's County and Longford. Thus the Rossa election was seen as "one of the most remarkable elections on record..." It must rank with the Terence Bellew MacManus funeral in November 1861 as having re-awakened interest in the Fenian movement.²⁵ While the MacManus funeral was an attempt to publicise the organisation and gain recruits, the Rossa election endeavoured to re-invigorate a moribund movement and gave the I.R.B. a badly needed lift at a time when it had little to enthuse about.

An important feature was the direct involvement of the Fenians, indicating the changing structure of its leadership. The old guard idealism of Stephens, O'Mahony and others was coming under threat from a younger and more pragmatic group. In 1869 the Supreme Council had been re-organised, leading to the emergence of a new generation of leaders, which included J.F.X. O'Brien from Cork and John O'Connor Power from Lancashire, who were prepared to utilise all avenues to support their cause.²⁶ The by-election success made them adopt a more pragmatic approach to constitutional politics, as can be noted on two fronts: they adopted a policy of "benevolent neutrality" towards the new Home Government Association, allowing individual members to take a more active approach to parliamentary activities. This policy was pursued up to 1876 and helped in the development of the Home Rule movement.²⁷

Also in January 1870 the Supreme Council advocated that a persistent approach be taken to gain control of all local bodies, such as corporations, town commissioners, etc. The election indicated that militant nationalists were prepared to use the constitutional process to highlight the plight of Irish radicals in British jails. It was the first time they had put forward prisoners to highlight their cause, and this approach was adopted by other militant nationalist groups in the 20th century, such as Sinn Féin between 1917 and 1919 and the hunger strikers during the early 1980s.

However, Rossa's victory created a dilemma for the Fenians: what course would now be pursued? One argument stated that amnesty had been placed before the country and the people of Ireland (through the Tipperary electorate) had delivered their verdict. Some nationalists wanted Rossa to be re-nominated so that the amnesty question would remain before the people.²⁸ The opposing view argued that the Fenians had made their point and should withdraw from the constitutional process. Rossa was elected on a single issue – the



release of the Fenian prisoners – but the Fenians who advocated such a policy had no medium or long term strategy for utilising the constitutional process.²⁹ Even if the Fenians had decided to take their parliamentary seats, they had no policies on issues such as the university or the land question.

The evidence also shows the changing structure of Irish nationalism. Those who had been acceptable as parliamentary representatives in the past were now regarded as being too moderate, as the country became more extreme in its nationalism. Heron was a Catholic barrister with firm ideals on tenant right and amnesty and in the pre-1869 period would have been acceptable to Irish nationalists. However, the evolving nature of Irish nationalism, brought about by the advent of the amnesty movement, meant that Heron was no longer acceptable to this section of the Irish public.

The significance of Rossa's, and to a lesser extent Kickham's, victory was that other constituencies organised nationalist candidates who did not have clerical support. Byelections in Meath, Longford, Kerry and Westmeath in the 1870-'72 period were all conducted without the priests.³⁰ The Rossa victory convinced many nationalists that they should nominate candidates who suited their demands and not have to resort to clerical help.

It eventually resulted in nationalist candidates such as John O'Connor Power in Mayo and W.H. O'Sullivan in Limerick County being returned to parliament primarily because of their past nationalist credentials. It heralded in a period where the priests had to contend with a new and more dangerous political force than they had previously encountered – nationalism. The priests were in a dilemma: either they reach an accommodation with this threat or face political oblivion. Eventually they reached an agreement with this new force.

While attempts were and have been made to undermine Rossa's success, in particular that only 23 per cent of the electorate voted, his election as M.P. for Tipperary was a notable victory. This was not comprehended by the establishment in Britain and Ireland.³¹ In their opinion he was elected because he was a Fenian, while Heron was rejected because he was the government candidate. It was viewed as a black and white situation, not attributing any deeper significance to the result. It appeared to indicate an ungrateful attitude to Gladstone and his policy of governing Ireland according to Irish wishes.

The English press felt that it typified the negative attitude of the Irish, while Gladstone's opponents viewed it as a failure for the Prime Minister's policies so that a firm hand should be used against Ireland.³² They failed to comprehend the special circumstances behind Rossa's triumph. A better barometer of Irish sentiment towards Gladstone's Irish policy was evident at the Longford by-election in January 1870 when the nationalist candidate, John Martin, was decisively beaten by his Liberal opponent, Greville-Nugent. Also the Liberals won ten of the eleven by-elections held after the 1868 general election, six without a contest.

– 2 –

With Rossa's disqualification the search resumed for a candidate who would retain the broad spectrum of support which Rossa had attained. Both Peter Gill and John Martin were mentioned as possible candidates.³³ It was rumoured that Rossa would be re-nominated, in the hope of placing him alongside O'Connell as an Irish patriot who had been refused his seat by the British government, but who then won the subsequent byelection. Only on nomination day was Charles Kickham, as an advanced nationalist candidate, put forward by Thomas P. O'Connor of Laffana, Cashel, and Thomas Mackey of Templemore.³⁴ It was the first indication that the Fenians were not prepared to take an active part in the contest.



The authorities feared that violence would ensue, and extra military and constabulary were drafted into the county. However, this failed to contain intimidation and threats were used at the polling stations in Thurles, Nenagh and Clonmel where Heron's supporters and voters were assailed. In Carrick-on-Suir Heron's supporters had fire-balls thrown into their homes, while a group of voters, led by Dean Cantwell of Fethard, were attacked and dispersed at Knocklofty while on their way to Clonmel.³⁵ These assaults must be attributed to the closeness of the contest, with both sides aware that few votes separated the candidates. Tipperary town remained free from intimidation, this being the principal Fenian stronghold, as can be noted in that Kickham took 560 votes against 21 for Heron.

Heron was returned by 1,668 votes to 1,664. Kickham's vote was strongest in the southern part of the constituency in Tipperary, Thurles and Cashel, while Heron's core support was in Nenagh. All of the electors in Mullinahone voted for Kickham despite his being denounced by the parish priest, Fr Hickey, on the Sunday before the election.³⁶ Kickham's failure must be attributed to a number of factors. The campaign never achieved the same unanimity amongst nationalists as at the Rossa contest, with the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. opposing Kickham's candidature. From the outset Kickham was a reluctant candidate, there being a definite ambiguity regarding his direct involvement. A more positive approach from Kickham would probably have resulted in a nationalist victory.

Kickham himself was surprised at the support he received, saying that he found it difficult to believe, "how so many voters braved and resisted priests, landlords, bailiffs, money lenders, meal mongers, calico-sellers, and placehunters of all kinds...Those who voted against me were driven to do so."³⁷ Not only did Kickham's candidature divide the electorate, but as Comerford points out, it created a split within his family. Some of Kickham's cousins, like the Crean brothers, urged him to withdraw and support Heron, a point which Kickham found unacceptable.³⁸

On this occasion the clergy were aware of the Fenian threat and ensured that the voter turnout was greater than in November. Some nationalists were outraged by the way the clergy used the altar to force their views on the people.³⁹ The nationalists were also hampered because the Vatican had finally condemned the Fenians by name in January, just a month before the by-election. Nevertheless, the closeness of the vote was such that the declaration cost Kickham the election as some voters switched sides; more importantly it probably influenced others to vote for Heron who otherwise would have remained neutral.

The clergy also attempted to place the land question to the forefront. Given the recent introduction of Gladstone's land bill into parliament there was already a rising chorus of criticism, and inevitably amnesty was having to take a more subversive place in Irish life. At the nomination meeting in Clonmel, Fr Richard Cahill, P.P. Knocknavilla, who proposed Heron, devoted most of his speech to tenant right.⁴⁰

Kickham's chances were affected by the authorities' decision to delay a number of vital telegrams which the nationalists sent to their supporters. The nationalists realised the result would be close and notices were sent to the different areas urging that every person be got out to vote. It was afterwards suggested that these telegrams were deliberately delayed to ensure that these voters remained at home. The authorities also disallowed 11 votes, of voters who had stated they were voting for "Rickham". While the preference was clear, the authorities were within their rights in disallowing them.⁴¹

Despite these setbacks Kickham had scored a moral victory and there was certain justification for adopting this stand. Heron and the clergy could not claim on this occasion that they had been caught unawares as had occurred in November 1869. From the outset the priests



had been actively involved and were not complacent about their task. Despite this Kickham's support base increased dramatically. While a core of 1,000 votes existed for any advanced nationalist candidate, this level of support had been greatly exceeded. One theory suggests that many electors remained at home in 1869 because they feared the clergy's power. A local factor also existed; Kickham as a Tipperary man was bound to get more local support. What is important is that this result was achieved even though the Fenians were not enthusiastic about their participation in the election.

The 1869 and 1870 by-elections indicated the necessity for a secret ballot, for a third force had emerged on to the political scene that was prepared to use intimidation and force. This was evident from the low turn-out of only 23 per cent at the 1859 contest. The 1870 contest also highlights the use of intimidation, for only 3,300 people voted out of a total electorate of 9,750. While Gladstone became aware of the electoral power of the clergy and landlords at the 1872 Galway and Kerry by-elections, he also realised the threat from the advanced nationalists. Nevertheless the success of the Fenian electoral campaign in 1869 and 1870 occurred when the open voting system was still in use. Mitchel's victory in 1875 was a major achievement; it had the benefit of the Secret Ballot Act, with the electors no longer encountering any intimidation from either landlords or clergy.

The Rossa and Kickham successes were the last of the by-election victories in which the Fenians were the main force on the nationalist side. The 1870 Land Act meant that amnesty was no longer the primary platform which highlighted Irish grievances, being replaced by the land question. The release of the Fenian prisoners no longer was to the fore at subsequent election contests. This did not diminish the electoral repercussions of the Fenian achievement: laying the basis for the success of the Home Rule movement between 1871 and 1873. Fourteen candidates were nominated by the Home Rule movement between 1870 and 1874; but none were Fenians or even closely associated with militant nationalism.

This is not to state that the Fenians had totally abandoned the constitutional process, as can be seen from the involvement of W.H. O'Sullivan in the 1871 Limerick byelection, and Mark Ryan and Matthew Harris in the 1872 Galway by-election.⁴² Their failure to play an overt role was partly attributed to the desire of the Home Rule movement to nominate candidates with moderate nationalist views, as they would appeal to the more conservative groups within the country, another indication of the changing pattern of nationalism.⁴³

– 3 –

By 1874 the political situation had changed dramatically with the advent of the Home Rule movement. The electors in Tipperary had to choose between five different nationalist candidates and for the first time were able to express their verdict on the state of nationalism in the country. Amnesty was not a major issue although it was mentioned by all candidates, including the Whigs, W. O'Callaghan and Captain White, who contested the election on the Home Rule ticket. The demise of amnesty was due to the declining fortunes of the Amnesty Association over the previous three years and the perception that all nationalist candidates favoured the release of the prisoners. Limerick was the only constituency where amnesty remained a major issue, due to the candidature of W.H. O'Sullivan, a former Fenian prisoner.⁴⁴

Tipperary was one of the few constituencies where there was conflict between the contrasting nationalist groups, the others being Mayo and Limerick.⁴⁵ The electorate had to decide between the moderate nationalism as represented by O'Callaghan and White, and the more extreme form of by the former Young Irelander, John Mitchel. Fenians such as Charles



Kickham were responsible for Mitchel's nomination, and this was done to embarrass the Home Rule movement and not as an endorsement of constitutional nationalism. Mitchel felt that Butt and the Home Rule movement were wasting their time and that "Home rule is ... useless even were it attained because it would be nothing more than a local board and ultimate power would still rest with Westminster".⁴⁷ He stated he would not take his seat in parliament if elected. This was what the Fenians wanted to hear and thus they had little difficulty in supporting his candidature.

Mitchel's campaign was aided by the establishment of the Mitchel Testimonial Committee in late 1873, which secured him maximum newspaper exposure. A committee was formed in Clonmel in December 1873 and its membership included Charles Kickham. The committee formed the nucleus of the Mitchel election committee in Tipperary for the 1874 general election and the 1875 by-election. Kickham was mentioned as a running mate for Mitchel, but he declined the offer, as he was not prepared to give any respectability to constitutional nationalism. The choice came down between Peter Gill and George Roe, a Protestant tenant farmer and a member of the Home Rule League, who had provided much of the finance for Kickham's by-election campaign in 1870.⁴⁸

The meeting which assembled in Thurles on 1 February had to decide between the old nationalist ideals as represented by Gill or the financial security which Roe promised. They nominated Roe, but Gill decided to contest the election, maintaining that the people had the right to make their decision. Gill appears to have felt that the nationalist tradition which he had represented since the 1860s was being disregarded. He also opposed Roe's selection because he had financed the Kickham by-election campaign and was now prepared to meet Mitchel's election costs.⁴⁹

Mitchel's nomination created problems for the constitutional nationalists in Tipperary. Would they support a revolutionary whose past deeds for his country were beyond question, who had endured imprisonment and exile, but who openly stated he would not take his seat in parliament? The alternative was to support the official Home Rule candidates, whose sincerity and credentials were suspect. Many Tipperary Home Rulers were placed in a dilemma, such as Mr. Meagher from Carrick-on-Suir.⁵⁰ The animosity was noted in the way the pro-Fenian newspaper, the *Irishman*, criticised Peter Gill, stating that his intervention had brought about Mitchel's defeat.⁵¹ These attacks were more acrimonious than those directed against the Whigs and the Conservatives, indicating the orthodox Fenian movement's attitude towards their constitutional allies, and in particular those who had held strong nationalist views.

Mitchel came a poor third to White and O'Callaghan, but his failure cannot be attributed solely to the divisions within the nationalist ranks, for equally important was clerical opposition. The priests felt Mitchel and his Fenian supporters still posed a major threat to their electoral authority and were well aware of their electoral potential. Consequently the clergy mounted a major campaign against the advanced nationalists. Their support for White and O'Callaghan appears to be partly motivated by a desire to diminish the challenge of Mitchel, Roe and Gill, and resulted in the advanced nationalists not securing any of the seats.

In Templemore the mob, headed by the local clergy, proceeded to O'Connell's Hotel in Main St. and hooted and shouted at the Mitchel-Roe committee. Archbishop Leahy maintained:

"If Mitchel had been returned, we could not hold up our heads and if it had not been for the exertions of the clergy, White and O'Callaghan would have been defeated because of lack of energy and organisation."⁵²

The result was not without its consolations for the advanced nationalists: a continuing growth in support within the county. Whereas their core support in the 1860s was 1,000 votes,



rising to 1,600 at the 1870 election, it now stood at 1,800. The threat from the Fenians and their allies remained and all of the clergy's resources were required to keep them in check, and especially as the 1872 Secret Ballot Act benefited them. The election also highlighted an important point to the Fenians: they fared better at by-elections than at general elections. The electoral successes of their candidates occurred at the 1869, 1870 and 1875 by-elections, whereas the 1874 general election proved a major disappointment.

During a general election the affairs of Tipperary were swamped by what was happening nationally and candidates like Mitchel were unable to secure the type of exposure necessary to boost their campaigns.⁵³ The election had an important message for the Fenians and advanced nationalists that was not repeated again in Tipperary: that divisions within their ranks benefited their opponents. Both of the new M.P.s were Whigs who did not pledge themselves to the Home Rule principle.⁵⁴ By the time the next opportunity occurred to test the political system these splits had been overcome.

The period 1868-74 thus witnessed a major change in Irish politics, with the Home Rule League now becoming the most important political force in the country. The 1874 election saw the return of a number of Fenians under the Home Rule banner. These included John O'Connor Power in Mayo, W.H. O'Sullivan in Limerick and Joseph Biggar in Cavan.

– 4 –

Throughout the closing months of 1874 and into 1875 there were continuous rumours that Charles White would resign his seat as he was about to be declared a bankrupt. During these months John Mitchel indicated his interest in contesting the county should it become vacant. This state of affairs was advantageous to the Fenians and their allies, giving them the time to advance Mitchel's candidature and thus eliminating any nationalist opposition. Mitchel's intervention was again intended to show up the hollowness of the constitutional process and to indicate that military action would be more beneficial for securing Irish independence.⁵⁵

Again the Fenians became heavily involved, through John Daly of Limerick and Charles Doran, the secretary of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., campaigning for Mitchel.⁵⁶ The first moves to nominate Mitchel came from his brother-in-law and Home Rule M.P., John Martin, who addressed a letter to Charles Kickham and the other advanced nationalists in Tipperary.⁵⁷ Not only were the older generations of Irish nationalism involved, but it also saw the emergence of a younger generation, with John Dillon and William O'Brien showing great sympathy with the advanced nationalists.

Once again by selecting Mitchel the Fenians were re-affirming their contempt for Home Rule and creating difficulties for the advanced nationalists within the League, in particular O'Connor Power and Biggar, who were also members of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. There are indications that widespread violence would have occurred if a contest had taken place. Those houses in Tipperary town which were not illuminated during rallies had their windows broken and the constabulary were attacked when they arrived to put out a fire.⁵⁸ The only way the Home Rule League could avoid internal divisions was by remaining neutral, although some sections wanted to oppose Mitchel. As it was the Home Rule movement was caught completely unawares by these events and its failure to agree on a candidate allowed the Fenians to dictate matters.⁵⁹ Their position was boosted by the attitude of the two outgoing M.P.s. Despite their vague expressions of support for Home Rule in 1874, they quickly reneged and reverted to supporting the Liberal party.

Consequently, Tipperary was looking for a more committed nationalist candidate. Charles



Kickham called on the people to support Mitchel and not be swayed by rumours that the government would not allow Mitchel to enter parliament because he was an unpardoned felon.⁶⁰ Kickham also initiated a fund to defray the election costs, acting as its treasurer. It was not surprising therefore, that 3,000 people, headed by two bands and green flags, escorted Mitchel when he arrived in Tipperary town on 17 February.⁶¹ Throughout the campaign Mitchel's entourage was mainly composed of Fenian sympathisers, and P.J. Smyth, a former Young Ireland colleague of Mitchel, was the only moderate Home Ruler present.

Mitchel was returned unopposed for Tipperary on 16 February, but the House of Commons declared his election invalid because he was an undischarged felon. This decision united all nationalist, even those who had previously been lukewarm in their support.⁶² While many Fenians initially questioned the decision to renominate Mitchel, they soon realised that this issue was uniting the country in a manner that had not been seen since the 1872 Galway by-election.⁶³ A meeting convened in Horgan's Hibernian Hotel in Thurles on 22 February ratified Mitchel's nomination. The conference called on the Tipperary voters to re-elect Mitchel to show their abhorrence of the British government's actions.

The election developed into a national affair, the country viewing it as a typical English affront, the refusal of the English to listen to Irish views. As with the Rossa election, demonstrations took place throughout the country. This had the effect of ensuring that no nationalist would oppose Mitchel. The attitude was summed up by a pledge taken by the women of Tipperary who "...have bound themselves never to walk with, talk with, look for, wash for, court, marry or countenance, but let live and die as they like any man who will not vote for or back up John Mitchel for Tipperary!"⁶⁴

Just before the nomination closed the Conservatives chose Stephen Moore of Barne, Clonmel. The Mitchel camp were not disillusioned by this development for they were buoyed up by the government's actions. Before Moore's candidature was announced nationalist demonstrations had been held in Tipperary, Clonmel and Templemore, with further meetings arranged for Ballingarry, Borrisoleigh and other towns. Moore's entry enlivened the contest as the nationalists now had a direct supporter of the Disraeli administration to vent their anger on. As the *Nation* stated: "...the re-election of Mr. Mitchel is necessary to vindicate the right of freedom of election, not Tipperary alone, or even for Ireland, but for every constituency in the three kingdoms".⁶⁵

The Tipperary electors were well aware of the risks they were taking when they voted for Mitchel. Prior to polling day Moore placed 10,000 posters throughout the county stating that Mitchel would not be allowed take his seat because he was a convicted felon and had already been disqualified when elected the previous month. Leaflets to the same effect were also handed out at each polling stations.⁶⁶ The electors were not deterred, however, indicating the radical feeling within Tipperary society, and Mitchel won the seat by 3,114 votes to 746.

As soon as the result was declared the Mitchel Committee telegraphed Disraeli to say, "The verdict of Tipperary is Mitchel, 3,114; Moore 746, majority for Mitchel, 2,368, God save Ireland".⁶⁷ The result was greeted with acclaim by nationalists in Tipperary and Ireland. In Mullinahone, where nearly all of the 198 voters voted for Mitchel, every window was illuminated with candles and great bonfires blazed.⁶⁸ The victory was aided by the neutral stand adopted by the Catholic church. The clergy were preoccupied with the burial of Archbishop Leahy and the election of his successor. They gave no lead nor did they try to nominate an alternative candidate. The curates in Lorrha, Frs Kingston and Egan, and Fr John Crowe in Cappawhite conducted Mitchel's campaigns in their areas.⁶⁹ It is unlikely that the clergy would have defeated Mitchel if they had selected their own candidate. He was one of the few people at this time with the ability to unite all sections of Irish nationalism.



Moore successfully petitioned against Mitchel's selection on the grounds that he was a convicted felon who had not served out his sentence and not been pardoned by the British government. After Mitchel's death in April 1875 an unsuccessful attempt was made to overturn the decision on the grounds that a by-election should take place.⁷⁰ Moore was the last Conservative to hold a seat in Tipperary and was given the seat because of the mess that constitutional nationalists found themselves in and the decision not to run a candidate against Mitchel.

It is ironic that the British government's efforts to prevent John Mitchel from taking his seat were indirectly responsible for Charles Stewart Parnell's election for Meath in April 1875. Their actions in refusing to accept the sympathetic expressions of solidarity for the old guard of Irish nationalism led to the emergence of a newer and more vigorous brand of nationalism which was more formidable in its attempts at loosening the links between Britain and Ireland. By the time the next by-election occurred in Tipperary in 1877 the Home Rule movement had been greatly transformed, largely due to the activities of a small group of obstructionists who greatly paralysed the old parliamentary procedures.

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By 1876 the more orthodox Fenians and their supporters were critical of the Home Rule movement and had concluded that their participation in it had been a major mistake.⁷¹ The Supreme Council meeting in 1876 marked a major low for the organisation when four of its members, O'Connor Power, Biggar, John Barry and Patrick Egan, were expelled or had to leave because of their participation and support for the Home Rule movement. Even some of their replacements, like Matthew Harris and J.F.X. O'Brien, were prepared to involve themselves with constitutional nationalism. Thus, while the leadership was opposed to any involvement with the Home Rule party it was never able to break the connection completely; 1876 was the first indication that the Fenians would never again contest an election on single issues such as independence. From now on issues such as the land question would be incorporated into their election campaigns.

When the 1877 by-election, caused by the death of W. O'Callaghan, occurred, the Fenians had broken all ties with the Home Rule movement and Charles Kickham and John O'Leary were as opposed to the constitutional nationalists as they were to the British. Fenian antipathy towards the Home Rule movement became clear in the Autumn of 1876 when many of its members espoused the position of P.J. Smyth, then in dispute with the party on the issue of Repeal and Home Rule. Dr. Cahalan was responsible for bringing Smyth to Tipperary town, where he addressed a major demonstration and denounced the Home Rule leadership. Cahalan and the other neo-Fenians were using Smyth even though his nationalist ideology was even more conservative than that of home rule.

This attitude was again evident during the election when Edward Dwyer Gray was nominated by the Home Rule party and was opposed by the Fenian, John Sarsfield Casey. Casey had come to public attention in 1876 when he had written about the tenants' plight on the Buckley estate in the Galtee Mountains. He also appealed to the advanced nationalists because in 1865 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for Fenian activities. In 1876 he again came to fame when he suggested that the amnesty meetings be re-convened throughout the country in order to focus attention on the remaining prisoners.⁷² Thus Casey was one of the first Fenian political candidates who had broadened the political agenda of the advanced nationalists.



The candidatures of Rossa, Kickham and Mitchel were exceptional in that they concentrated on political issues, whereas Casey was advocating support for social issues, such as the land and education questions.⁷³ This was in keeping with the general national trend in which local Fenians began to incorporate the land question into their programme. Casey also differed from the other Fenian candidates in that he was prepared to take his seat at Westminster if elected. While many of the Fenians leaders were opposed to such actions Casey was still able to secure the help of John Daly and Denis Dowling Mulcahy and the moral support of John O'Leary.⁷⁴

Similarities existed between Casey's candidature and that of Rossa. Casey was awaiting trial for his writings on the Galtee property. A vote for Casey was thus regarded as a vote of solidarity for a person faced with the threat of imprisonment. It also posed the question: what criteria was necessary in choosing a nationalist candidate? The election addresses of Gray and Casey were similar: both supported fixity of tenure, education, amnesty and Home Rule.

However, Gray used the past endeavours of his father, Sir John Gray, who had been a nationalist M.P. for Kilkenny City between 1865 and 1875, while the Fenians opposed him because they disapproved of him being given the seat simply because of his father's deeds.⁷⁵ Gray's position was not helped by the *Freeman's Journal's* approach, which implied that the people of Tipperary had disgraced and humiliated themselves in the past when they elected people like Rossa and Mitchel; it now stated that the county had the opportunity to atone for its sins.⁷⁶ In contrast Casey had suffered for Ireland through imprisonment and exile and thus was a better nationalist.

The 1877 election saw the active participation of the clergy against the Fenian-led opposition. They had learned from their mistakes at the 1875 contest when they had failed to nominate a candidate against Mitchel, which resulted in the Conservatives securing the seat. The clergy had no alternative but to give Gray their total commitment, for the possibility now existed that the second seat would be held by a Fenian, and that would leave them in a situation where their political influence in the county would be negligible as in other counties such as Mayo. On this occasion they were better organised, and even though Casey was a strong candidate the clergy held the upper hand from the outset. They were not prepared to sit on the sideline and allow the Fenians control the contest. The three bishops openly supported Gray and ensured that no other moderate nationalist candidate would split the vote.⁷⁷ While Croke was opposed to Fenianism and did condemn it, he was not prepared to attack individual Fenians, indicating that the majority of Irish people held similar nationalist views. As far as he was concerned Fenianism had brought the country some good, having forced the government to give "a tolerable land bill, and disestablishment of the Protestant Church".⁷⁸

Casey fared best in those parishes where the local clergy had not taken a more resolute approach to the Fenians. They included Clogheen, Cahir, Tipperary, Emly and Newport, all centres where the parish priest played a very ineffective role in minimising the Fenian challenge. Not only did the clergy spearhead Gray's campaign, but they also led the attempts to pay all of his election costs.⁷⁹ What transpires is a clear approach by Croke to regain the initiative from the Fenians. This is surprising in the light of the declining clerical influence in electoral affairs in many other counties in the 1874-1880 period.⁸⁰

Gray easily won the election by 3,853 votes to Casey's 1,344. Casey received little support in the north of the county due to lack of organisation and strong clerical power. Tipperary town was the only area of confrontation, this being the main Fenian stronghold where there was much fighting between the two groups. Casey's defeat must also be attributed to the calibre of candidate he was facing. Gray was a nationalist and signified his support for Parnell's obstruction policy. Thus the Fenians were not able to secure all of the nationalist, or indeed the advanced nationalist, vote as they had done in the past.



Their cause was not helped by Isaac Butt, who before the poll commenced called on the people to support Gray and stated that Casey was being used by an unscrupulous group who did not have the best interests of the Home Rule movement at heart.⁸¹ The contest is also important in that it indicated that the Fenians on their own were no longer a major electoral force. Their cause had not even been helped by the funeral of the Fenian leader, John O'Mahony, which occurred only a few weeks before the contest but did not provide any major impetus to the campaign.⁸²

There was no contest at the 1880 election. John Dillon and P.J. Smyth were returned unopposed. The election indicated the declining electoral power of the Fenians in Tipperary and Parnell's emerging authority. While Tipperary was outside the Land League's western base, in April 1880 it was one of the few counties outside of Connacht where the Parnellite wing of the party recorded a victory with Dillon's election. It indicated that the clergy had consolidated their electoral power since the 1877 by-election, as can be noted in their determination to have Smyth elected.

This was in direct opposition to Parnell's wishes. Parnell was forced to adopt a cautious approach and he had to persuade Peter Gill to withdraw his nomination at the county convention in Clonmel on 22 March. The election highlights the emerging centralisation of the Irish political party system, with Parnell replacing the Fenians as one of the important powers in the county. The Fenians' declining power can be seen in Smyth's speech at a rally in Clonmel in which he attacked the people who had opposed the bishops and clergy in the past.⁸³ This was also directed at Parnell and the advanced nationalists (who were then opposing the clergy's nominees) and at the past activities of the Fenians in Tipperary.

To summarise: there were seven elections in Tipperary between 1868 and 1880 – three general elections and four by-elections. A radical nationalist element existed throughout this time, resulting in four Fenian-supported candidates heading the poll. No other county attracted such Fenian support. Their success must be attributed to the use of high-profile candidates at each election. These were single-issue candidates, and the individual circumstances of each contest benefited their prospects. They were aided by the uncoordinated approach of the constitutional nationalists.

No lead was provided by the Catholic clergy, whether on their own or in partnership with other groups, and the priests were the most important political power brokers in most areas of the county. Eventually there was no longer room for single issue candidates, a point which the Fenians in Tipperary and elsewhere slowly realised. The events in Tipperary between 1868 and 1880 are important in our understanding of the electoral significance of the Fenians not alone in the county, but throughout the whole of Ireland.

FOOTNOTES

1. R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-1882* (Dublin and New Jersey, 1985), p. 165.
2. The extent of the clergy's role in Tipperary can be seen in their resolution calling on all priests and voters in the county to be united when it was rumoured that the conservatives were going to run a candidate in the constituency, See David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (Westport, Conn., 1974), p. 43; For the events in Ballycohey see Gerard Moran, "William Scully and Ballycohey: A Fresh Look" in *Tipperary Historical Journal*, 1992, pp. 63-74.
3. For an outline of Gill's election address see *Nation*, 5 Sept. 1868, p. 377.
4. See Gerard Moran, "The Changing Course of Mayo Politics, 1868-1874" in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran, eds, *A Various Country: Essays in Mayo history, 1500-1900* (Westport, 1987), p. 143; M. Ryan, *Fenian Memories* (Dublin 1945), p. 41; Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, pp. 188-9.



5. See *Nation*, 9 Oct. 1869, p. 125; *Tipperary Advocate*, 9 Oct. 1869, p. 2. N.L.I., Ms 8692 (1) *Isaac Butt Papers*, R.B. O'Brien, dated 9 Feb. 1870; Ms 8692 (4), *Butt Papers*, C. Weguel to Butt, dated 11 Mar. 1870. According to Cardinal Cullen's secretary, Conroy, Butt wanted to become M.P. for the county and was annoyed that the Tipperary clergy had decided to support Heron. However, there is little evidence to support this view: Dublin Diocesan Archives, (D.D.A.) *Paul Cullen Papers* (Bishops, 1869), Conroy to Cullen dated 3 Dec. 1869).
6. See Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, pp. 178-9.
7. See Comerford, 'Patriotism as Pastime: The Appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s' in Alan O'Day, ed, *Reactions to Irish Nationalism* (Dublin, 1987), p. 26; James O'Shea, *Priests, Politics and Society in Post-Famine Ireland: A Study of County Tipperary, 1850-1891* (Dublin and New Jersey, 1983), p. 164.
8. For information and accounts on what the fenian prisoners endured, see Marcus Bourke, *John O'Leary: A Study in Irish Separatism* (Tralee, 1967), pp. 107-27; for the conditions endured by Kickham see R.V. Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 91-9.
9. See O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-6.
10. *National Archives*, (Fenian Papers), police report on proposed amnesty meeting in Tipperary town (4685 R), dated 7 & 8 Oct., 4 Nov. 1869; Maurice Johnson, "The Fenian Amnesty Movement, 1868-1879" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1981), p.100. The nine meetings in Tipperary were in Thurles, Kilfinane, Clonmel, Templemore, Cashel, Nenagh, Newport, Tipperary town and Emly.
11. See Thornley, *Butt and Home Rule*, p. 88.
12. Pigott, *Recollections of an Irish national journalist*, p. 321.
13. R.V. Comerford, "Tipperary Representation at Westminster, 1800-1918" in William Nolan, ed, *Tipperary: History and Society* (Dublin, 1985), p. 332. What was unusual was that Gill had been denounced by the fenians in the 1860s because he was competing with them for the same type of support.
14. *Nation*, 13 Nov. (1869), p. 205; *Tipperary Advocate*, 13 Nov. (1869), p. 2.
15. See Michael Hurst, "Ireland and the Ballot Act of 1872" in Alan O'Day, ed, *Reactions to Irish Nationalism* (Dublin, 1987), p. 37.
16. Gerard Moran, "The Advance on the North: The Difficulties of the Home Rule Movement in South-East Ulster" in Raymond Gillespie and Harold O'Sullivan, eds, *The Borderlands: Essays in the History of the Ulster-Leinster Border* (Belfast 1989), pp. 134-6; Moran, "Politics and Electioneering in County Longford, 1868-1880" in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran, eds, *Longford: Essays in County History* (Dublin 1991) pp. 183-4. When Parnell contested his first election contest as a home rule candidate in the 1874 County Dublin by-election he had to pay out personally £2,000; see Donal McCartney, "Parnell and Parnellism" in Donal McCartney, ed, *Parnell: the Politics of Power* (Dublin, 1991), pp. 11-12. At the 1878 Co Down by-election Viscount Castlereagh spent over £14,000, while the defeated Liberal candidate, Dease, spent £6,000 at the 1872 Kerry by-election; B.M. Walker, "The Land Question and Elections in Ulster, 1868-1886" in Samuel Clark & James S. Donnelly, eds, *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1790-1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 235-242; Thornley, *Butt and Home Rule*, p. 128; Hurst, *Ireland and the Ballot Act of 1872*, p. 52.
17. See letter of Charles Kickham on the 1869 by-election in *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jan. 1874, p. 6.
18. *Irishman*, 5 Feb. 1870, p. 515; this was made up of printing £324; hotels, £148; tallyrooms etc., £361; conveyance of voters and canvassers £283; clerks, messengers and office expenditure, £100.
19. The small sums can be noted in the £3/10/- contributed by the Fenians in Steubenville, Ohio, towards Rossa's electoral expenses and sent to Isaac Butt, see N.L.I., Ms 8692 (1), *Isaac Butt Papers*, Henry McGinness to Butt, dated 9 Feb. 1870.
20. *Nation*, 27 Nov. 1869, p. 228; 7 May 1870, p. 605.
21. Pigott, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
22. O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 151, 158-65.
23. *Ibid*, pp. 160-1.
24. See *Nation*, 4 Dec. 1869, pp. 246-7; National Archives, *Fenian Papers*, Lahinch meeting, [5081 R] dated 28 Nov. 1869; Swinford meeting, [5029 R], dated 28 Nov. 1869; *Irishman*, 4 Dec. 1869, pp. 367-8.



25. A.M. Sullivan, *New Ireland*, ii (London, 1877), pp. 280-1; for an account of the MacManus funeral see Louis R. Bisceglia, "The Fenian Funeral of Terence Bellew MacManus" in *Eire-Ireland*, xiv (Autumn, 1979), pp. 45-64.
26. See Emmet Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-1870* (Chapel Hill, 1987), pp. 660-1.
27. Marcus Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
28. *Irishman*, 29 Jan. 1870, p. 497; John O'Mahony voiced this approach; see also *Tipperary Advocate*, 29 Jan. 1870, p. 1; *London Times*, 30 Nov. 1869; N.L.I., *Thomas Larcom Papers*, Ms 7712.
29. See *London Times*, 6 Dec. 1869; N.L.I., Ms 7712, *Larcom Papers*.
30. For the bandwagon effect which Rossa's election produced on the country see Hoppen, *Politics, Elections and Society*, pp. 466-7.
31. *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1869; *London Times*, 26 Nov. 1869; *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 Nov. 1869; N.L.I., Ms 7712, *Larcom Papers*.
32. Hurst, *Ireland and the Secret Ballot Act*, p. 39.
33. There was no doubt but that Gill would have been unable to hold together the broad band of nationalists who had worked on the Rossa campaign. Martin's selection had certain merits because he had only been defeated in the Longford by-election, so that he had a very high profile and might persuade the more moderate nationalists to support the cause. However, it was unlikely that the clergy would have taken to Martin because their counterparts in Longford had been so resolutely opposed to him.
34. *Irishman*, 26 Feb. 1870, p. 561; *Nation*, 26 Feb. 1870, p. 441.
35. *Tipperary Advocate*, 5 Mar. 1870, p. 3; *Irishman*, 5 Mar. 1870, pp. 574-5; *Nation*, 5 Mar. 1870, p. 454.
36. *Irishman*, 5 Mar. 1870, p. 576.
37. See letter of Kickham to John O'Mahony on the Tipperary election, *Tipperary Advocate*, 9 Apr. 1870, p. 2.
38. Comerford, *Charles Kickham*, pp 113-4.
39. See Peter Gill's letter on this issue, *Tipperary Advocate*, 5 Mar. 1870, p. 2.
40. *Tipperary Advocate*, 26 Feb. 1870, p. 3.
41. See *Nation*, 12 Mar. 1870, p. 470; *Irishman*, 12 Mar. 1870, p. 590; *Tipperary Advocate*, 12 Mar. 1870, p. 3.
42. Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, pp. 122-3; Ryan, *Fenian Memories*, pp. 414.
43. This angered the advanced section of the party, as when it refused to nominate John O'Connor Power to a vacancy in Louth in 1874 caused by the election of Philip Callan to seats in Dundalk and Louth; see Gerard Moran, "Philip Callan: The rise and fall of an Irish nationalist M.P., 1868-1885" in *Journal of the Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, xxii, no. 4 (1992), p. 402; N.L.I., Ms 8694 (4), *Isaac Butt Papers*, John Barry to Butt, dated 21 Feb. 1874.
44. See Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 472-4.
45. This was largely due to contrasting attitudes as to who were the best people to represent Irish interests in Westminster. For the events in Mayo see Moran, *Changing Course of Mayo Politics*, pp. 146-53; Thornley, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-4.
46. See interview with Mitchel in the *Chicago Times*, quoted in *Irishman*, 24 Jan. 1874, p. 470.
47. See Kickham's letter in support of Mitchel, *Irishman*, 7 Feb. 1874, p. 49.
48. *Irishman*, 17 Jan. 1874, p.454.
49. Emmet Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule Movement, 1870-1874* (Chapel Hill, 1991), pp. 248-9. *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Feb. 1874, p. 2. It was only afterwards that the Tipperary clergy decided to support O'Callaghan and Whyte. The Killaloe clergy meeting in Nenagh on 6 Feb. took the lead and were followed by the priests in Cashel and Waterford at their meeting in Thurles on 7 Feb.; *Dublin Daily Express*, 6 Feb. 1874, p. 2; 9 Feb. 1874, p. 3; *Irish Times*, 6 Feb. 1874, p. 3.
50. See *Tipperary Advocate*, 5 Feb. 1874, p. 3.
51. *Irishman*, 7 Feb. 1874, p. 507.
52. See Larkin, *Catholic Church and Home Rule*, p. 249; Dublin Diocesan Archives, *Cullen Papers* (Bishops, 1874), Leahy to Cullen, dated Feb. 1874; *Irishman* 21 Feb. 1874, p. 540. In Thurles a major



confrontation occurred between the supporters of Whyte and Mitchel, when Whyte attempted to address the crowd. See *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Feb. 1874, p. 3.

53. On this point see Moran, *Politics and Electioneering in Longford*, pp. 178-9.
54. O'Shea, *Priests, Politics and Society*, p. 198.
55. F.S.L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London, 1968) p. 16. Mitchel's attitude towards the Home Rule movement can be seen in a letter to P.J. Smyth. He said: "... I am savage against this helpless, driftless campaign called home rule..." Thornley, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-2
56. W. O'Brien & Desmond Ryan, eds, *John Devoy's Post Bag, i* (rep. Dublin, 1979), pp. 114-5.
57. See *Irishman*, 6 Feb. 1875, p. 502; *Nation*, 6 Feb. 1875, p. 4; *Tipperary Advocate*, 6 Feb. 1875, p. 4.
58. Denis G. Marnane: "A Nineteenth Century Tipperary Diary" in *Tipperary Historical Journal*, 1990, pp. 40-1. £120 was awarded to a large number of people in Tipperary town because the mob had destroyed their property during the election; *Nation*, 8 May 1875, p. 2.
59. Comerford, *Tipperary Representation at Westminster, 1801-1918*, p. 334. According to the police authorities the home rulers were adverse to Mitchel, but as they realised there was little chance of organising a successful challenge they felt that the best thing to do was to ignore him. It was also rumoured that the home rulers were considering putting Parnell forward for the seat. See N.A., C.S.O., R.P., 1875/3476, Report of the Police Commissioners to Thomas Burke, dated 25 Feb. 1875. The attitude of the ordinary members can be noted from John MacCarthy, who in a letter to Isaac Butt said that many people had joined the party because of its principles, and the best course it could pursue was to disassociate itself entirely from Mitchel's candidature, see N.L.I., Ms 8697 (7), *Isaac Butt Papers*, John MacCarthy to Butt, dated 12 Feb. 1875. Some Home Rule supporters like Bishop McCarthy of Cloyne wanted the leaders to disassociate themselves from the Mitchel campaign, while others like O'Connor Power actively canvassed for Mitchel. The only way the Home Rule movement could avoid a split was to ignore the existence of the contest; see Thornley, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-2.
60. *Nation*, 13 Feb. 1875, p. 6; *Irishman*, 13 Feb. 1875, p. 517.
61. Marnane, *Nineteenth Century Tipperary Diary*, p. 40.
62. See *Nation*, 20 Feb. 1875, p. 5, 6 Mar. 1875, p. 4, *Irishman*, 6 Mar. 1875.
63. For Kickham's objections to Mitchel's renomination, see *Irishman*, 27 Feb. 1875, p. 547; *Nation*, 27 Feb. 1875, p. 5.
64. *Tipperary Advocate*, 13 Mar. 1875, p. 3.
65. *Nation*, 6 Mar. 1875, p. 8.
66. Minutes of the Evidence before the Rt Hon Mr Justice Keogh, on the Trial of the Tipperary County Election Petition, at the Court House, Clonmel, h.c., 1875 lx pp. 12-3, qs 19-34, p. 14, qs 86-91.
67. *Nation*, 20 Mar. 1875, p. 4.
68. *Irishman*, 20 Feb., p. 532; 20 Mar. 1875, p. 593.
69. *Tipperary Advocate*, 13 Mar, p. 2; 20 Mar. 1875, p. 4.
70. *Copy of the Short Hand Writer's Notes of the Judgement delivered by the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland, on the 29th day of April, upon the Motion to set aside the Petition against the Return of John Mitchel for County of Tipperary on the Grounds of the Death of the Sitting Member*, h.c., 1875, cx pp. 2-8.
71. See letter of Richard Pigott to John Devoy, dated 21 Jan. 1876, in William O'Brien & Desmond Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag, i* (rep Dublin 1979), pp. 127-8.
72. See Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 494.
73. See Casey's speech in Tipperary town, *Tipperary Advocate*, 5 May 1877, p. 2.
74. Dowling Mulcahy spent over two weeks travelling around Tipperary denouncing the Gray family and urging support for Casey. See letter of Mulcahy to John Devoy, O'Brien & Ryan, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 252-3.
75. See *Tipperary Advocate*, 12 May 1877, p. 2.
76. Reprinted in *Irishman*, 28 Apr. 1877, p. 694.
77. D.D.A., *Cullen Papers*, (Bishops, 1877, file 2 correspondence of T.W. Croke of Cashel to Cullen) letter dated 28 April; in a further letter to Cullen dated 30 April 1877 Croke asked the archbishop of



Dublin to use all his influence to ensure that Alderman McSweeney from Dublin, wanted to run on repeal principles, did not contest the election. They also succeeded in getting Frank Hugh O'Donnell to withdraw, *Nation*, 28 Apr. 1877, p. 13; 5 May 1877, p. 5.

78. D.D.A., *Cullen Papers*, (Bishops, 1876), Croke to Cullen dated 25 Jan. 1876.
79. D.D.A., *Cullen Papers*, Croke to Cullen dated 16 May 1877. The bishops and clergy were angry at the unnecessary cost that Gray had been put to, but the fault was directed as those who urged Casey to contest the seat and not the candidate himself; see letter of John MacCarthy, Bishop of Cloyne, *Nation*, 14 July, 1877, p. 3.
80. For the declining influence of the clergy in other counties see G. Moran, *Changing Course of Mayo Politics*, pp. 149-53; Moran, *Politics and Electioneering in Longford* pp. 186-90; Moran, "James Daly and the Rise and Fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland" in *Irish Historical Studies* (forthcoming, Nov. 1994).
81. *Nation*, 26 May, 1877, p. 2.
82. Processions were held in some Tipperary towns, such as Carrick-on-Suir, to honour O'Mahony at this time: see N.A., C.S.O., R.P., 1875/3577, police report dated 5 Mar. 1877.
83. *Nation*, 10 Apr. 1880, p. 13. By March 1882 Smyth was having difficulties with his constituents because of a speech in the House of Commons in which he blamed the Land League for the level of violence in Ireland and for the introduction of the coercion act. Fr. James Cantwell, Administrator of Thurles said: '... the funds (of the Land League) were never used for a more vile purpose than in aiding to return to Parliament such a political renegade as Mr. Smyth'. *Nation*, 18 Mar. 1882, pp. 2, 3. This attitude was also expressed by the Tipperary Town Commissioners and the clergy of Cashel and Emly, who called on him to do the honourable thing and resign. *Nation*, 8 Apr. 1882, p. 4; 22 Apr. 1882, p. 6.

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