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Tipperary TDs

By Pat Lonergan

From the establishment of the first Dáil in January 1919 to the end of 2001, fifty-seven men and women have served as members of Dáil Éireann for constituencies which included all or part of County Tipperary. Their story begins with the general election of 1918, in which a total of 105 members were elected to represent Irish constituencies in the Westminster Parliament. The Sinn Féin MPs, who comprised 73 of these, refused to take their seats at Westminster; these included four TDs representing Tipperary – one for each of the constituencies of Tipperary East, Mid, North and South. Those who were not in jail met as the first Dáil at the Mansion House on 21 January 1919, and elected a Republican government.

In May 1921, the British government held separate elections for the twenty-six counties of Southern Ireland and the six counties of Northern Ireland, as provided for in the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. There were 128 seats in the Southern Irish Parliament. Sinn Féin candidates were returned unopposed for 124 of these; the other four were allocated to Trinity College, Dublin, and were filled by four unopposed ex-Unionists. The Sinn Féin members met as the Second Dáil, holding their first meeting on 16 August; the TCD members did not attend. This Dáil approved the Treaty in January 1922, and the British Government commenced the process of handing over power to a Provisional Government, drawn from the pro-Treaty majority. In this Dáil, the combined constituencies of Tipperary Mid, North and South were represented by four members, and five members represented the constituency of Waterford / Tipperary East.

The Provisional Government and the British Government had agreed that an election would be held in the 26 Counties to approve the Treaty and the proposed constitution of the Irish Free State. This election was held in June 1922, and the third Dáil first met on 9 September, with 128 seats, and representation for Tipperary similar to that of the second Dáil. The Irish Free State was formally established in December 1922, with W. T. Cosgrave as President of the Executive Council.

After the Civil War ended in 1923, Cosgrave wished to secure a clearer mandate than that given in 1922, and so the first general election of the Irish Free State was held in August 1923. At this election, the whole of Co. Tipperary became a single constituency, returning seven members. This arrangement lasted up to and including the general election of 1944. In 1947, the county was divided into the constituencies of Tipperary North and Tipperary South. In the 1948 general election, and every subsequent general election, Tipperary North has returned three TDs. Tipperary South was a 4-seater until 1974, when it briefly became a 3-seater. This affected only the general election of 1977, as in 1980 the constituency reverted to being a 4-seater, remaining so until 1997, when it again became a 3-seater.

These changes, enacted by various Boundary Commissioners over the years, were consequent on population shifts within the county, and invoked a number of alterations to the geographical boundaries of the constituencies. When the county was first split in 1947, the two constituencies were co-terminous with the North and South Ridings of the county. The constituency boundaries have since been changed several times; Tipperary North now includes

a substantial area of the South Riding, and Tipperary South includes a small area of Co. Waterford, south of Clonmel.

Of Tipperary's fifty-seven TDs, only three were women; one of these, Mary Ryan, was the widow of a former TD, whose seat she first gained at the by-election following his death. Apart from Mrs. Ryan, only two other TDs have been relatives of former members; Don and Noel Davern were the sons of Michael Davern. Eight Tipperary TDs died in office, two of them within a period of six months in 2000. Only three of these deaths resulted in by-elections; in the other cases, the seats were left vacant until the next general election.

One TD resigned his seat; Frank Drohan, elected for Waterford/Tipperary East in 1921, resigned in January 1922, just prior to the vote on the Treaty. He was opposed to the Treaty, but had been instructed by his constituents to vote in its favour, which he felt unable to do. Pierce McCan TD never attended a Dáil session. He had been elected in the general election of 1918, and was deemed a member of the first Dáil which met in January 1919, but was unable to attend as he was imprisoned in England. He died in prison in March 1919.

Tipperary's longest-serving TD was Dan Breen, whose two periods in office reached a total of 36 years and 11 months. The longest period of continuous service as a TD for Tipperary is the 35 years and 8 months served by Seán Treacy from October 1961 to June 1997. As of the end of 2001, the shortest-serving TD is also the Dáil's newest member, Tom Hayes, elected in July 2001. Amongst former TDs, the shortest period in office is eight months, served by Carrie Acheson from June 1981 to February 1982.

The names and dates of office of all TDs for Tipperary are set out below. In this table, the following abbreviations have been used.:

Constituencies:	Tipp.:	Tipperary Mid/North/South 1921-1923; Tipperary 1923-1948.
	Tipp. E.:	Tipperary East 1919-1921.
	Tipp. M.:	Tipperary Mid 1919-1921.
	Tipp. N.:	Tipperary North 1919-1921.
	Tipp. S.:	Tipperary South 1919-1921.
	TN:	Tipperary North, 1948 to date.
	TS:	Tipperary South, 1948 to date.
	WTE:	Waterford/Tipperary East, 1921-1923.

Political affiliations:	Cen.:	Centre Party.
	CG:	Cumann na nGaedheal.
	CP:	Clann na Poblachta.
	CR:	Coalition Republic (1922).
	CT:	Clann na Talmhan.
	Far.:	Farmers' Party.
	FF:	Fianna Fáil.
	FG:	Fine Gael.
	Ind.:	Independent.
	Lab.:	Labour Party.
	Rep.:	Republican.

The Centre Party, the Blueshirts and Cumann na nGaedheal merged in 1933 to form Fine Gael.

Two general elections were held in the years 1927 and 1982. These are indicated below as follows:

1927J: June 1927.
1927S: September 1927.
1982F: February 1982.
1982N: November 1982.

Acheson, Carrie: FF; TS, 1981-1921F. Defeated 1982F.
Ahearn, Theresa: FG, TS, 1989-2000. Died September 2000.
Bourke, Séamus: SF/CG/FG, Tipp. M./Tipp., 1919-1938. Elected as SF 1918 and 1921, Pro-Treaty 1922, CG 1923-1933, FG 1937. Defeated as FG 1938 and Ind. 1943.
Breen, Dan: Rep./FF, Tipp./TS, 1923-1927J, 1932-1965. Elected as Rep. 1923; joined FF in 1926, but resigned and stood as Ind. in June 1927, and was defeated; he then spent some years in America, and did not run in the election of September 1927.
Brugha, Cathal: CR, WTE, 1921-1923. TD for Waterford 1919-1921. Member of First Dáil.
Butler, John: Lab., WTE, 1922-1923. TD for Waterford, 1923-1927J.
Byrne, Daniel: Far., WTE, 1922-1923.
Byrne, Séan: FF, TS, 1982F-1987. Defeated 1981, 1987, 1922. Senator 1987-1997. Did not stand in 1989.
Crowe, Patrick: FG, TS, 1951-1957. Defeated 1948, 1957.
Curran, Richard: Cen./FG, Tipp., 1933-1937, 1938-1943. Defeated 1937, 1943.
Dalton, Louis: CG, Tipp., 1923-1927J.
Davern, Don: FF, TS, 1965-1968. Died November 1968. Son of Michael Davern, TD 1948-1965.
Davern, Michael: FF, TD, 1948-1965.
Davern, Noel: FF, TS, 1969-1981, 1987-2001. MEP 1979-1984; did not stand in elections of 1981 and 1982. Son of Michael Davern, TD 1948-1965, and brother of Don Davern, TD 1965-1968.
Dee, Eamon: SF, WTE, 1921-1922.
Drohan, Frank: SF, WTE, 1921-1922. Resigned 1922.
Dunne, Thomas: FG, TN, 1961-1977. Defeated 1957, 1977.
Fahey, Jackie: FF, TS, 1965-1977. Defeated 1961. TD for Waterford 1977-1992; defeated there 1992.
Fanning, John: FF, TN, 1951-1969.
Ferris, Michael: Lab., TS, 1989-2000. Defeated 1977, 1987; did not stand in 1981 and 1982 elections. Senator 1975-1989. Died March 2000.
Fogarty, Andrew: FF, Tipp., 1927J-1948. Defeated TN, 1948. Senator 1948-1951.
Griffin, Brendan: FG, TS, 1973-1989. Defeated 1969, 1989, 1992.
Hassett, John: CG, Tipp., 1927J-1933.
Hayes, Seán: FF, Tipp., 1927J-1937. Defeated 1937. Defeated in by-election, 1947.
Hayes, Tom: FG, TS, 2001. Elected in by-election, July 2001. Defeated in by-election, June 2000. Senator 1997-2001.
Healy, Séamus: Ind., 2000-2001. Elected in by-election June 2000. Defeated 1987, 1989, 1992, 1997.
Heffernan, Michael: Far., Tipp., 1923-1932. Defeated 1932, 1933 for CG.
Hogan, Patrick: FG, TS, 1961-1972. Died October 1972.
Kinane, Patrick: CP, Tipp./TN, 1947-1951. First elected in by-election in Tipp. October 1947. Defeated 1951, 1954.

- Loughman, Francis: FF, Tipp./TS, 1938-1943, 1944-1948, 1957-1961. Defeated 1943, 1948, 1951, 1961; did not stand in 1954.
- Lowry, Michael: FG/Ind., TN, 1987-2001. Resigned from FG in 1997 and was elected as Ind.
- McCan, Pierce: SF, Tipp. E, 1919. Member of First Dáil. Died March 1919.
- McCarthy, Seán: FF, TS, 1981-1989. Defeated 1989, 1992. Senator 1989-1993.
- McCurtain, Seán: CG, Tipp., 1923-1927J. Defeated 1932, 1933. Did not stand in elections of 1927.
- MacDonagh, Joseph: SF, Tipp. N.Tipp., 1919-1922. Member of First Dáil. Died November 1922.
- Moloney, Patrick: CR, Tipp. S.Tipp., 1918-1923. Member of First Dáil.
- Molony, David: FG, TN, 1981-1987.
- Morrissey, Daniel: Lab./Ind., Lab./CG/FG, Tipp./TN, 1922-1957. Elected for Labour Party in 1922, 1923 and 1927; following his expulsion from the Labour Party in 1931, he was elected as Independent Labour in 1932. In 1933 he joined Cumann na nGaedheal and was elected as CG/FG in all elections from 1933 to 1954.
- Mulcahy, Richard: FG, Tipp./TS, 1944, 1961. TD for Dublin Clontarf division 1919-1922, Dublin North 1923-1937 and Dublin North-East 1938-1943; defeated in Dublin, 1937, 1943. Member of First Dáil; leader of Fine Gael 1944-1959.
- O'Brien, William: Lab., Tipp., 1927J-1927S, 1937-1938. Defeated 1927S, 1933, 1938; did not stand in 1932. TD for Dublin South, 1922-1923; defeated there 1923.
- O'Byrne, Patrick: SF, Tipp., 1921-1922.
- O'Donnell, William: CT, Tipp., 1943-1947. Died February 1947.
- O'Kennedy, Michael: FF, TN, 1969-1981, 1982F-1992, 1997-2001. Defeated 1965, 1992; did not stand 1981. Senator 1965-1969, 1993-1997; EEC Commissioner 1981-1982.
- Phelan, Nicholas: Lab., WTE, 1922-1923.
- Robinson, Séamus: SF, WTE, 1921-1922.
- Ryan, Jeremiah: FG, Tipp., 1937-1944. Defeated 1927S, 1933 for CG. Did not stand in 1944 election; defeated in by-election in Tipp. in October 1947 and in general election in TN in 1951.
- Ryan, John: Lab., TN 1973-1987, 1992-1997. Defeated 1969, 1989. Senator 1989-1992.
- Ryan, Mary: FF, Tipp./TN, 1944-1961. Defeated 1961. Widow of Martin Ryan, TD 1933-1943.
- Ryan, Patrick: Rep., Tipp., 1923-1927J. Defeated for CG 1927J.
- Sheehy, Timothy: FF, Tip., 1927S-1933. Defeated 1927J, 1933, 1937.
- Smith, Michael: FF, TN, 1969-1973, 1977-1982F, 1987-2001. Defeated 1973, 1982F, 1982N; Senator 1982-1987.
- Stapleton, Richard: Lab., Tipp., 1943-1944. Defeated 1944 (Tipp.) and 1948 (TS).
- Tierney, Patrick: Lab., TN, 1957-1969. Defeated 1951, 1954.
- Timoney, John: CP, TS, 1948-1951. Defeated 1951.
- Treacy, Seán: Lab./Ind., 1961-1997. Defeated 1957. Resigned from Labour Party in 1985 and thereafter stood as Independent. Ceann Comhairle 1973-1977, 1987-1977; MEP 1981-1984.
- White, Vincent: CG, WTE 1921-1923. TD for Waterford 1927J-1932; defeated for Waterford 1923, 1932, 1933. Defeated in Westminster by-election for Waterford, 1918.

Note re sources: The principal source for the information in this article is *Dáil Directories*. Of particular use were *The Magill book of Irish politics (1981)*, by Vincent Browne and Michael Farrell, which gives details of all Dáil elections from 1922 to 1981, and *Elections '97*, by Seán Donnelly, which lists all who served as TDs from 1918 to 1997. During the course of research, a number of queries concerning individuals arose. These were solved by reference to contemporary local newspapers, which were made available, with her customary courtesy and efficiency, by Mary Guinan Darmody of the Local Studies Department, Tipperary County Library.

Editor's Note: In the General election of 17 May 2002 three seats for the 29th Dail were filled in both Tipperary North and Tipperary South. In an election where 33 outgoing TDs failed to be elected, the Tipperary constituencies remained remarkably stable. The only change over the 28th Dail was the retirement of Michael O'Kennedy who did not seek re-election in 2002 - his party colleague Marie Hochtör taking the third seat. The TDs returned were:

Tipperary North: Michael Smith; Michael Lowry; Marie Hochtör.

Tipperary South: Noel Davern; Tom Hayes; Seamus Healy.