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CASE STUDY 4: THE END OF BRITISH RULE IN IRELAND

The campaign for independence for Ireland was long and complicated. A strong democratic campaign for independence competed with a strong violent campaign. There was also a large minority of Irish people who wanted to remain part of the British empire. The result was that Ireland was divided in 1922. Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, but the Irish Free State became a self-ruling Dominion. As you study the sources, look for reasons why British rule ended in Ireland (but not Northern Ireland). The sources may provide evidence that one or more of these factors were important:

1. The British left Ireland as soon as the people there wanted them to.
2. The British left because of the actions of important individuals.
3. The British were forced out by peaceful political protests.
4. The British were forced out by armed resistance.
5. The British wanted to leave because the area was causing them problems.

As you study each source, decide whether it supports any of these factors. When you have looked at all of the sources and the Background, try to decide on the relative importance of these factors.

[Background](#) | [Worksheet](#)

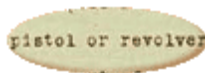
Use the [Worksheet](#) to record your ideas.

The [Background](#) will give you an introduction to the end of British rule in Ireland.

Sources



[1. Cartoon on Home Rule for Ireland, 1906](#)



[2. Police report on the situation in Ulster, 1913](#)



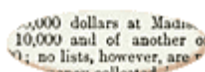
[3. Film of Irish troops in WW1](#)



[4. Film of Dublin after the Easter Rising, 1916](#)



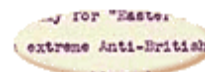
[5. Letter on treatment of Irish prisoners, 1916](#)



[6. Letter on opinions in the USA, 1916](#)



[7. Leaflet published by Sinn Fein, 1917](#)



[8. Letter on opinions in Ireland, 1919](#)



[9. Film on the war in Ireland, 1920](#)



[10. Act that created the Irish Free State, 1922](#)

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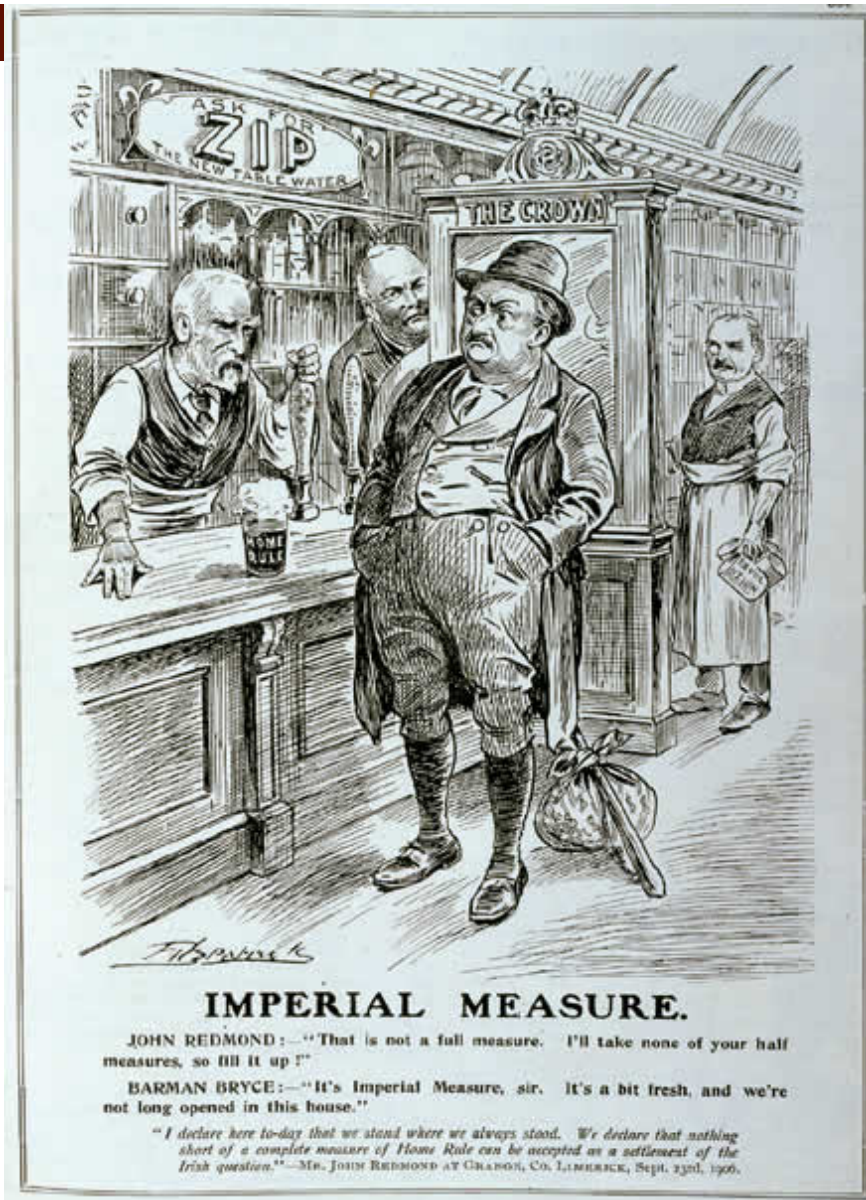
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SOURCE ONE

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

Cartoon from an Irish newspaper in 1906 commenting on plans to give Ireland Home Rule
(By permission of [The British Library](#), Lepracaun, October 1906)



How to use this source

1 Study this source carefully. Ask yourself whether the source supports or contradicts the view that:

- The British left as soon as the people wanted them to
- The British left because of the actions of important individuals
- The British were forced out by peaceful political protests
- The British were forced out by armed resistance
- The British wanted to leave because the area was causing them problems
- The British left because they felt the country was ready to rule itself democratically

2 If you were an **admirer** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

3 If you were a **critic** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

4 Does this source suggest that Redmond was an effective leader of the movement for Home Rule?

5 What does the source suggest about the actions of the British?

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SOURCE TWO

Transcript | Useful notes

Extracts from police reports on the situation in Ulster in 1913
(PRO ref: CO 904/27/3)

How to use this source

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4 Does this source suggest that Redmond was an effective leader of the movement for Home Rule?

5 What does the source suggest about the actions of the British?

There is a strong impression amounting to a certainty here that the Military will not act against the Unionists here that they will have the full support of the English Unionists and that many Officers of the Army and Navy will resign their Commissions to assist them in resisting Home Rule by force.

To sum up the situation you have in Belfast some 300,000 Protestants and 100,000 Catholics - the latter mainly depending on the former for a livelihood - of the Protestant population all are bitterly opposed to Home Rule which they regard as Rome Rule. All the men of means and influence, with few exceptions, are prepared to sacrifice money and their business believing that it would not be possible for them to live under an Irish Government. There are some 20,000 drilled men in the City. No doubt there are at least 3,000 rifles and ammunition, (see footnote), while almost every man and boy has a pistol or revolver of some kind. The game may be bluff on the part of the leaders but it is impossible to doubt the fanaticism and determination of the rank and file. Should the Home Rule Bill pass, even if they desire to do so, the leaders will not be able to restrain their followers or protect the Catholic population in the pursuit of their business.

My own opinion is that almost the entire Protestant population of Belfast are determined in their opposition to Home Rule. Many of them are prepared to resist it by force and most of them are willing to make great sacrifices rather than submit. I do not believe they would be mad enough to take the field against His Majesty's troops but short of this almost anything might happen. I am convinced that there will be serious loss of life and wholesale destruction of property in Belfast on the passing of the Home Rule Bill

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SOURCE THREE

[Useful notes](#)

Extracts from a British film showing Irish troops in the First World War, 1915-17
(By permission of the [Imperial War Museum, London](#): 'With the North and South Irish At The Front')

Modem

ISDN

Broadband

How to use this source

file size: 1.2MB

file size: 3.1MB

file size: 7.8MB



Running time: 4mins 14secs

[help?](#) [get plugin](#)

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SOURCE FIVE

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

Letter from Irish parliamentary Party Leader John Redmond commenting on the treatment of Irish prisoners in 1916 (PRO ref: CAB 37/160/31)

CONFIDENTIAL

I CIRCULATE to my colleagues a letter which I have received from Mr. Redmond.

H. H. A.

December 1, 1916.

(Private.)

My dear Mr. Asquith,

November 30, 1916.

The question of the prompt release of the Irish untried prisoners is, in our deliberate judgment, not only essential to the maintenance of the present satisfactory reaction in Irish feeling, but of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the general interests of the Empire and the successful conduct of the war.

The condition of Ireland, though still far from satisfactory, has vastly improved within the last two months, and that improvement has been due, amongst other causes, to the release of over a thousand of the interned prisoners and the confident expectation, which has been spread by us, that the Government contemplated a policy of conciliation, involving the removal of martial law and military rule, the release of the remainder of the interned prisoners, and some mitigation of the treatment of the convicted prisoners. Recent events and widely spread statements in the press have confirmed that impression, and if, in this matter of the interned prisoners, the popular expectations are disappointed the result will be a fresh outbreak of bitterness and exasperation, which may undo all the good effected during the last two months.

The effect of a refusal to release these men will be most damaging to the position and influence of the National Party in Ireland, and will be pointed to by all those in Ireland who are hostile to constitutional and parliamentary action as a fresh proof that the British Government attach no weight to the wishes of the Irish people expressed through their parliamentary representatives.

An amnesty movement is already on foot, and, in the event of a refusal to release the prisoners, it will inevitably rapidly assume immense proportions. We shall feel it necessary to support this movement with all our influence. It will also be supported actively by the Catholic Church in Ireland. Great meetings and processions will be organised, and the difficulties of the Government in Ireland will be immensely increased.

After months of furious and angry agitation the prisoners will, of course, be released, when infinite mischief has been done and the release can have no healing effect on the Irish situation, but would be hailed by Sinn Feiners and extremists as one more proof that violent agitation is the only argument to which the British Government will listen.

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SOURCE SIX

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

Letter sent to the Foreign Office in 1916, commenting on the effect of British policies in Ireland on opinions in the USA
(PRO ref: CAB 37/150/8)

Received at the Foreign Office from an Irish gentleman at New York.

I AM daily hoping for a tiny piece of statesmanship in regard to the handling of Irish affairs. The Irish vote here may not only be considered as lost to us, but every Irishman is now a centre of anti-English propaganda. When the rebellion first started I tried to rally the Irishmen round the U.I.L. standard by sending a telegram to Redmond, which put us on record as claiming the Botha clemency for the rebels, and I started an Irish relief fund. The A.P.A. and the "Sun" refused to publish our telegram or to announce our relief fund: two days later the executions started, and the Sinn Fein, Clan na Gael crowd, using the Friends of Irish Freedom organisation, swept every active and passive Irishman into their net.

Meetings are daily held everywhere. 30,000 are said to have been present at Philadelphia; 20,000 were present at a meeting I attended in Madison Square (and practically all were Irish, and bitterly incensed Irish); meetings of from 500-10,000 are recorded in every newspaper.

17,000 dollars was collected at Philadelphia; 30,000 dollars at Madison Square Garden; I have been told of one donation of 10,000 and of another of 8,000; the Committee assert the funds are nearing 250,000; no lists, however, are published, and I think the total is exaggerated. But most of the money collected is being spent on anti-English propaganda.

I hear from Canada that Irish recruiting is a farce now and the pathetic skeleton of the Irish Rangers is eliciting ridicule. The Irish and French now more than ever make common cause. Irish will now unsparingly support the French language agitation. Also Curtis's Round Table talks will fall on bad ground. The Canadians seem more willing to interfere in English affairs and to accept an arrangement which will give them the English market; but they are noting the inefficiency we have shown in war, and are the less inclined to permit English control to increase in Canadian affairs.

I had a letter from a prominent Irishman in Australia describing a condition of things there which you may readily infer.

Indeed, I think there is not only an anti-English movement of much menace here, but also an anti-Imperial movement in the Colonies.

How to use this source

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Source 6

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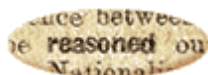
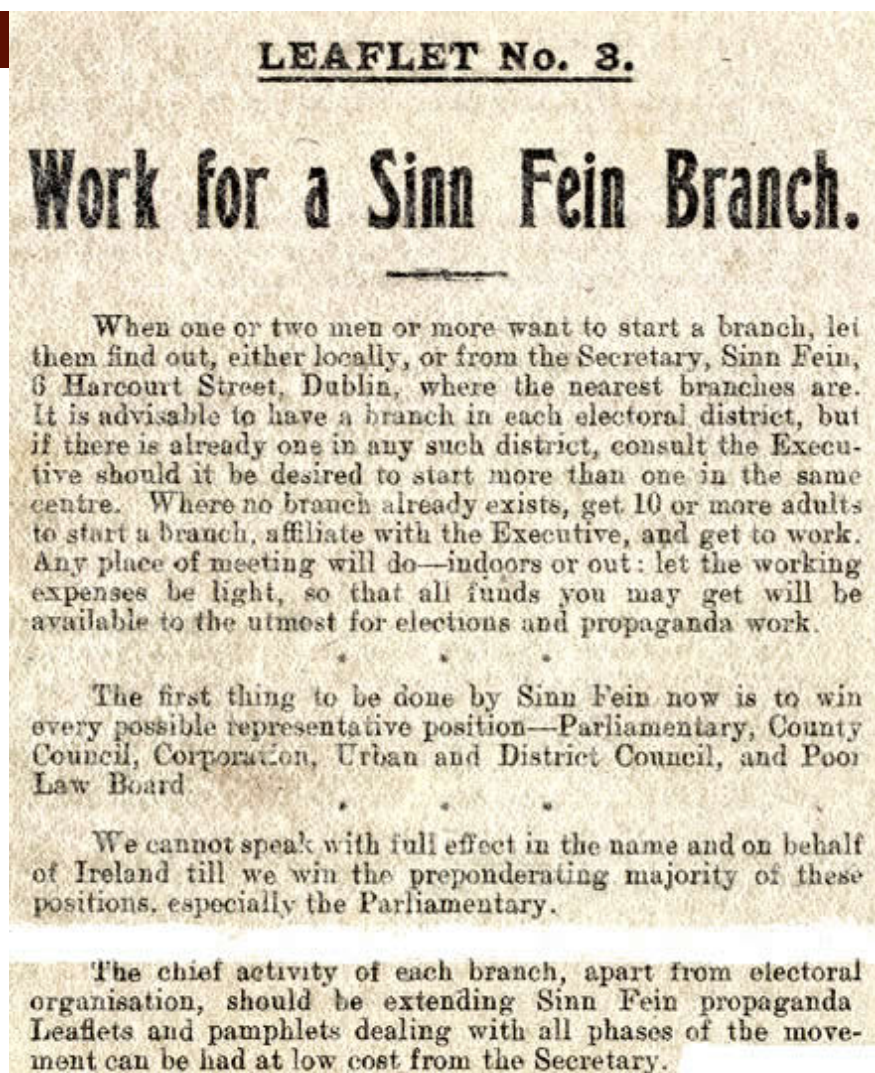
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SOURCE SEVEN

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)Leaflet published by the Irish Republican movement, Sinn Fein, in 1917
(PRO ref: CO 904/161)

7a

[7b](#)

How to use this source

1 Study this source carefully. Ask yourself whether the source supports or contradicts the view that:

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- The British were forced out by peaceful political protests
- The British were forced out by armed resistance
- The British wanted to leave because the area was causing them problems
- The British left because they felt the country was ready to rule itself democratically

2 If you were an **admirer** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

3 If you were a **critic** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

4 What does this source suggest about the organisation of Sinn Fein?

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Source 7a

Leaflet published by the Irish Republican movement, Sinn Fein, in 1917
(PRO ref: CO 904/161)

LEAFLET No. 3.

Work for a Sinn Fein Branch.

When one or two men or more want to start a branch, let them find out, either locally, or from the Secretary, Sinn Fein, 6 Harcourt Street, Dublin, where the nearest branches are. It is advisable to have a branch in each electoral district, but if there is already one in any such district, consult the Executive should it be desired to start more than one in the same centre. Where no branch already exists, get 10 or more adults to start a branch, affiliate with the Executive, and get to work. Any place of meeting will do—indoors or out: let the working expenses be light, so that all funds you may get will be available to the utmost for elections and propaganda work.

The first thing to be done by Sinn Fein now is to win every possible representative position—Parliamentary, County Council, Corporation, Urban and District Council, and Poor Law Board.

We cannot speak with full effect in the name and on behalf of Ireland till we win the preponderating majority of these positions, especially the Parliamentary.

The chief activity of each branch, apart from electoral organisation, should be extending Sinn Fein propaganda. Leaflets and pamphlets dealing with all phases of the movement can be had at low cost from the Secretary.



Source 7b

Leaflet published by the Irish Republican movement, Sinn Fein, in 1917
(PRO ref: CO 904/161)

The one thing above all others that branches should propagate is the firm resolve of Ireland to achieve Independence, and to become once more a Sovereign Nation.

* * *

To this end, the difference between Sinn Fein and Parliamentarianism should be **reasoned** out with our fellow-countrymen, and an intense Nationalism be advocated rather than any condemnation of the failures of Parliamentarianism, which is to be chiefly condemned for being false doctrine, and therefore not to be countenanced by Sinn Fein, any more than Unionism.



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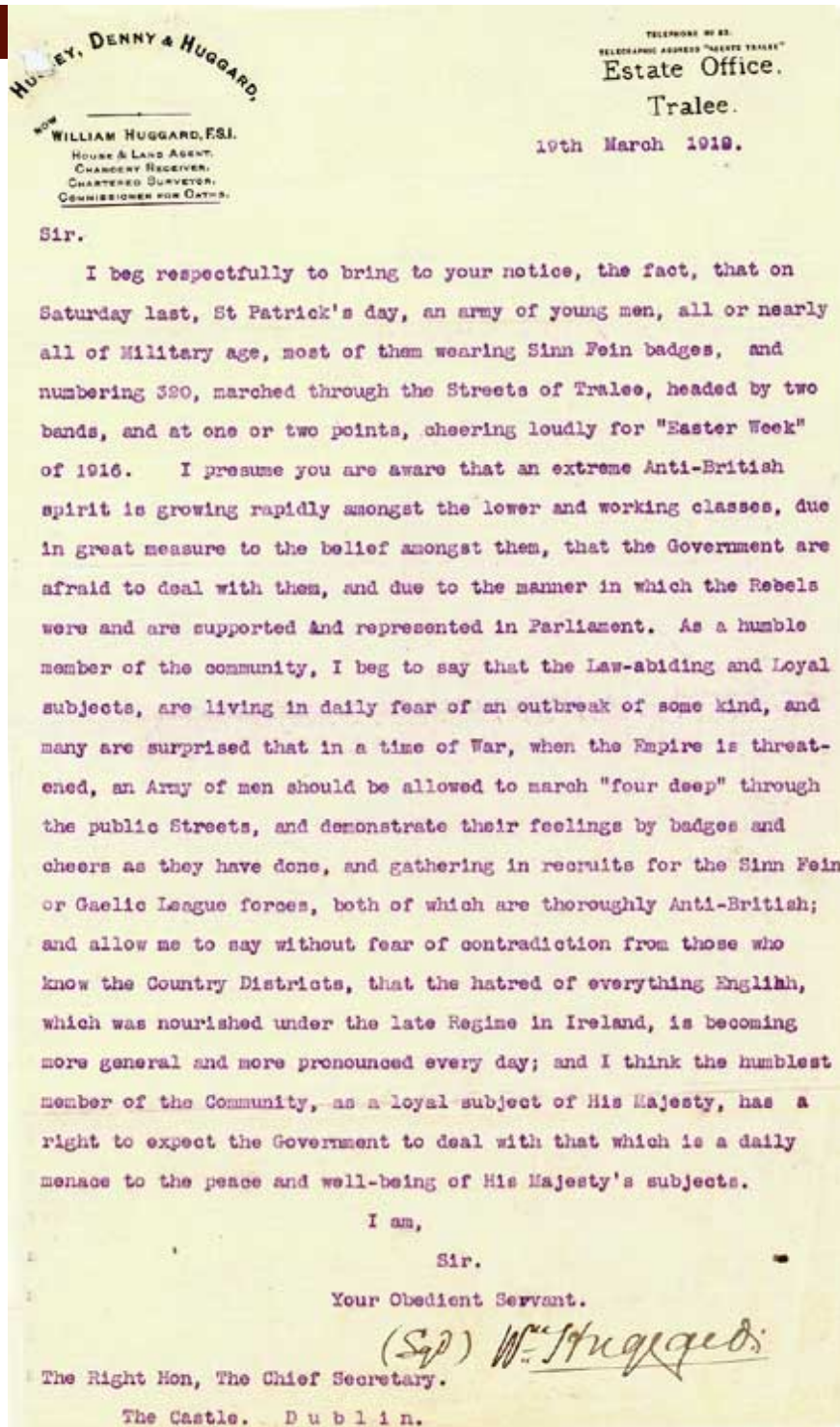
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SOURCE EIGHT

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

Letter from a land agent in Tralee to the British government in Dublin on opinions in Ireland towards the British, 1919
(PRO ref: PREM 1/231)



How to use this source

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4 What does this source suggest about the organisation of Sinn Féin?

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SOURCE NINE

[Useful notes](#)

Film from 1920 showing scenes from the war between British forces and Irish Republicans
([British Pathe](#): 220.29)

Modem

ISDN

Broadband

How to use this source

file size: 392KB

file size: 1.0MB

file size: 2.5MB



Running time: 1mins 22secs

[help?](#) [get plugin](#)

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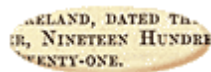
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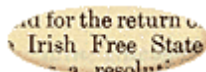
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SOURCE TEN

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)Extracts from the Act that made the Irish Free State a Dominion in 1922
(PRO ref: HO 45/19974)

10a

[10b](#)ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT FOR A TREATY BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, DATED THE SIXTH
DAY OF DECEMBER, NINETEEN HUNDRED
AND TWENTY-ONE.

1. Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace order and good government of Ireland and an Executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.

2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.

3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada, and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.

4. The oath to be taken by Members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form:—

I do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.

How to use this source

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Source 10a

Extracts from the Act that made the Irish Free State a Dominion in 1922
(PRO ref: HO 45/19974)

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3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada, and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.

4. The oath to be taken by Members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form:—

I do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.



Source 10b

Extracts from the Act that made the Irish Free State a Dominion in 1922
(PRO ref: HO 45/19974)

11. Until the expiration of one month from the passing of the Act of Parliament for the ratification of this instrument, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall not be exercisable as respects Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, remain of full force and effect, and no election shall be held for the return of members to serve in the Parliament of the Irish Free State for constituencies in Northern Ireland, unless a resolution is passed by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland in favour of the holding of such elections before the end of the said month.