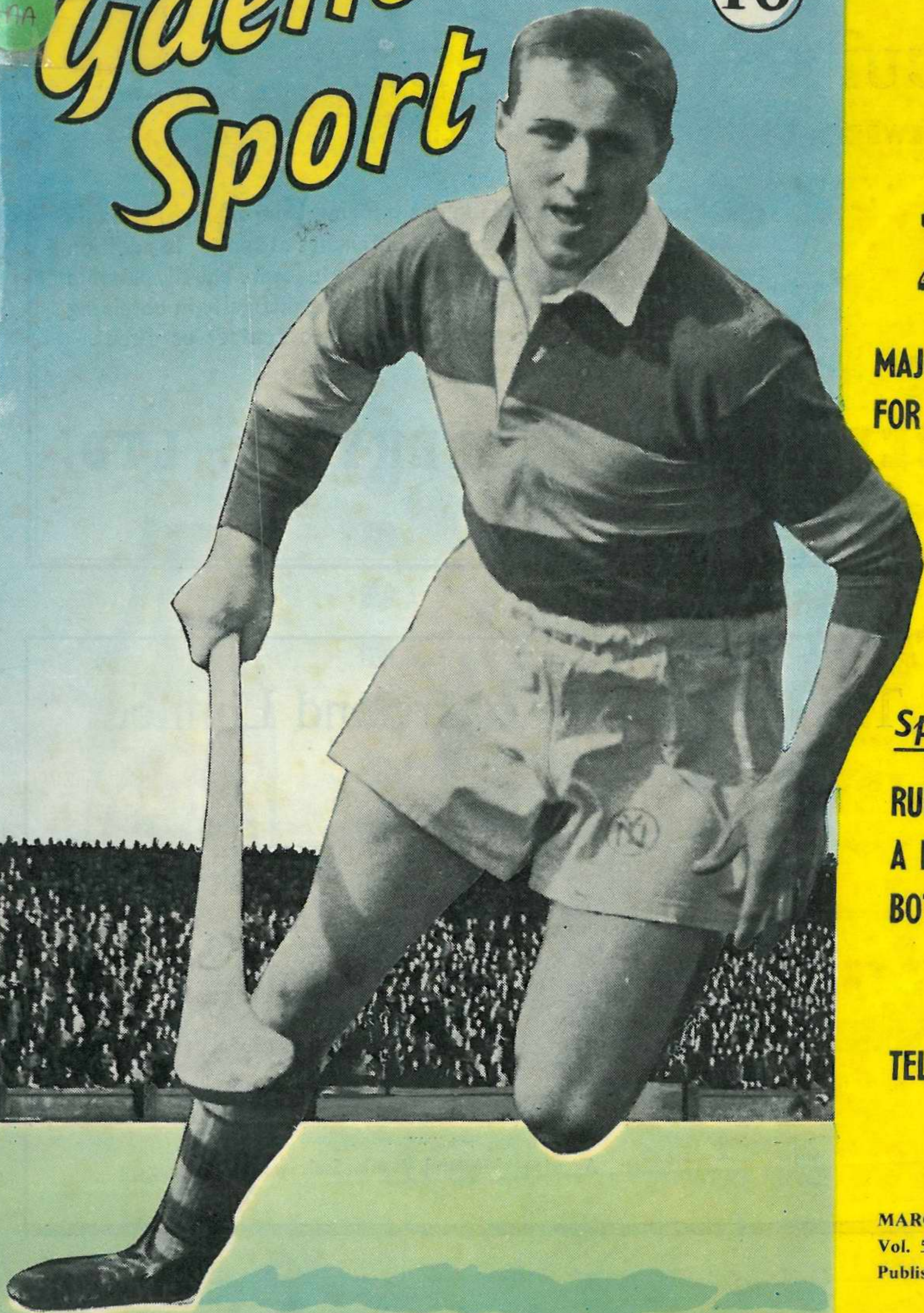


12

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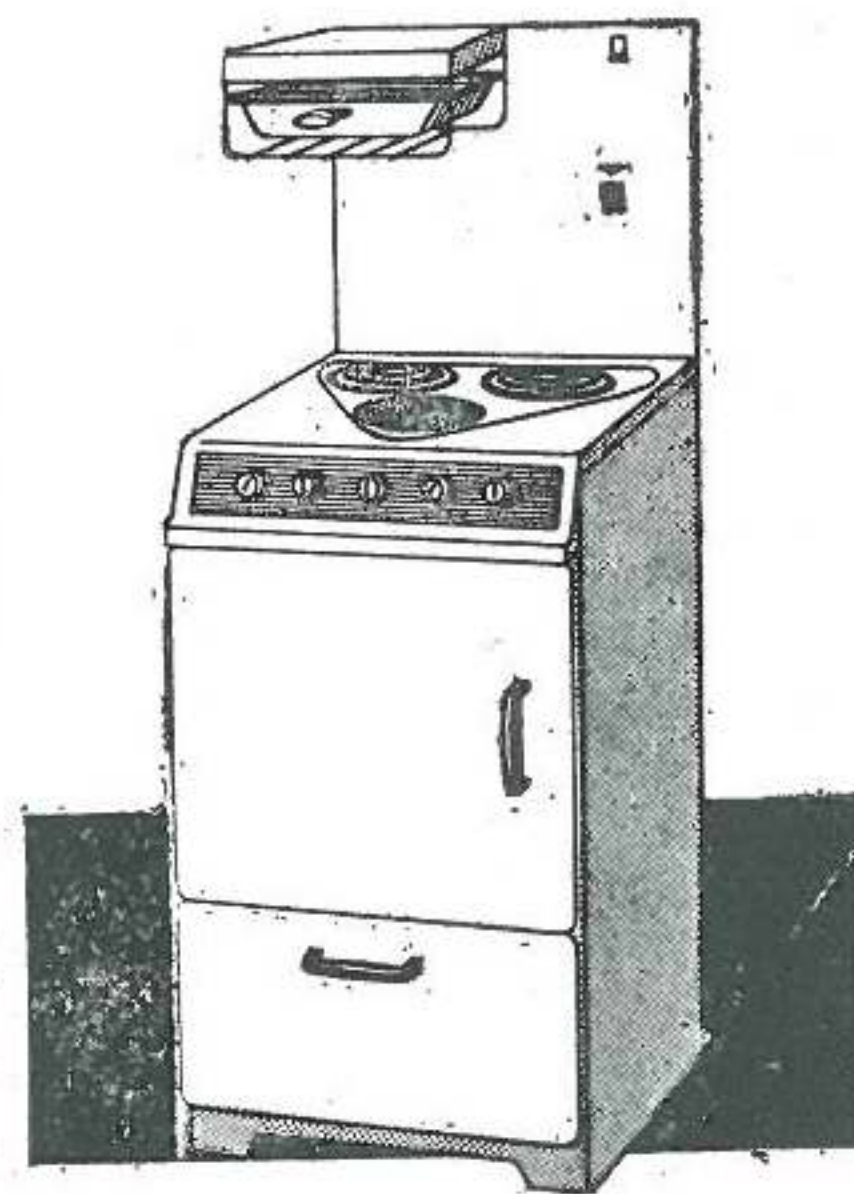
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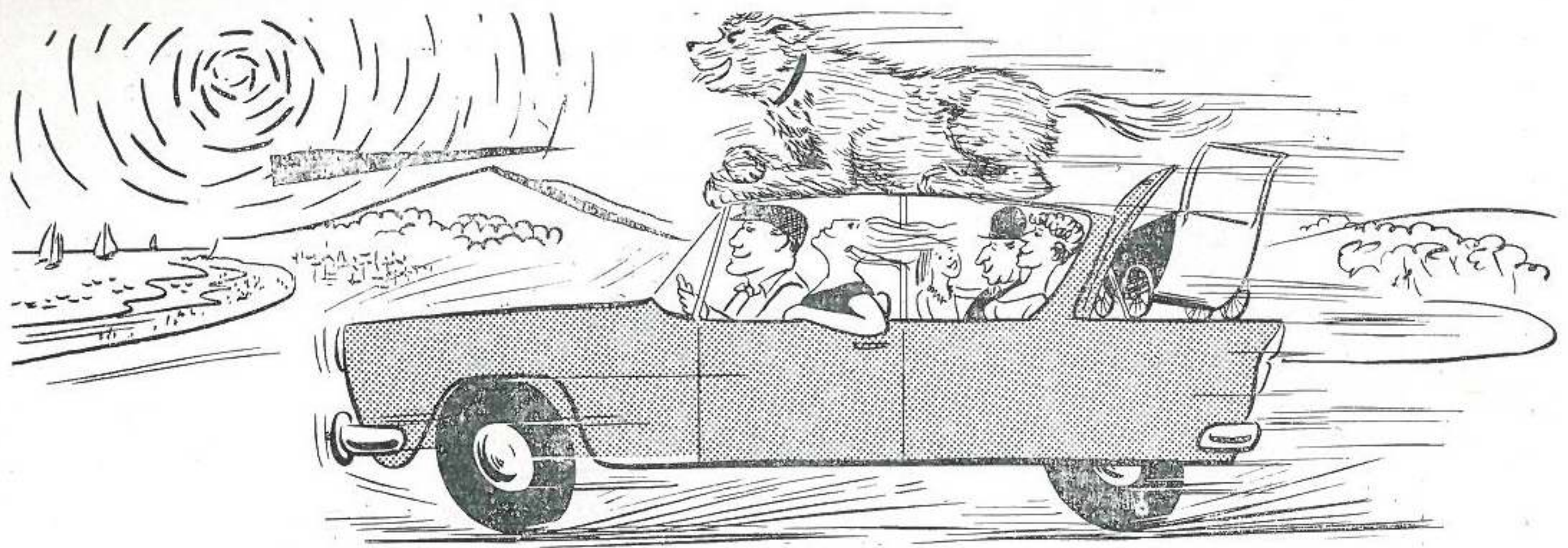
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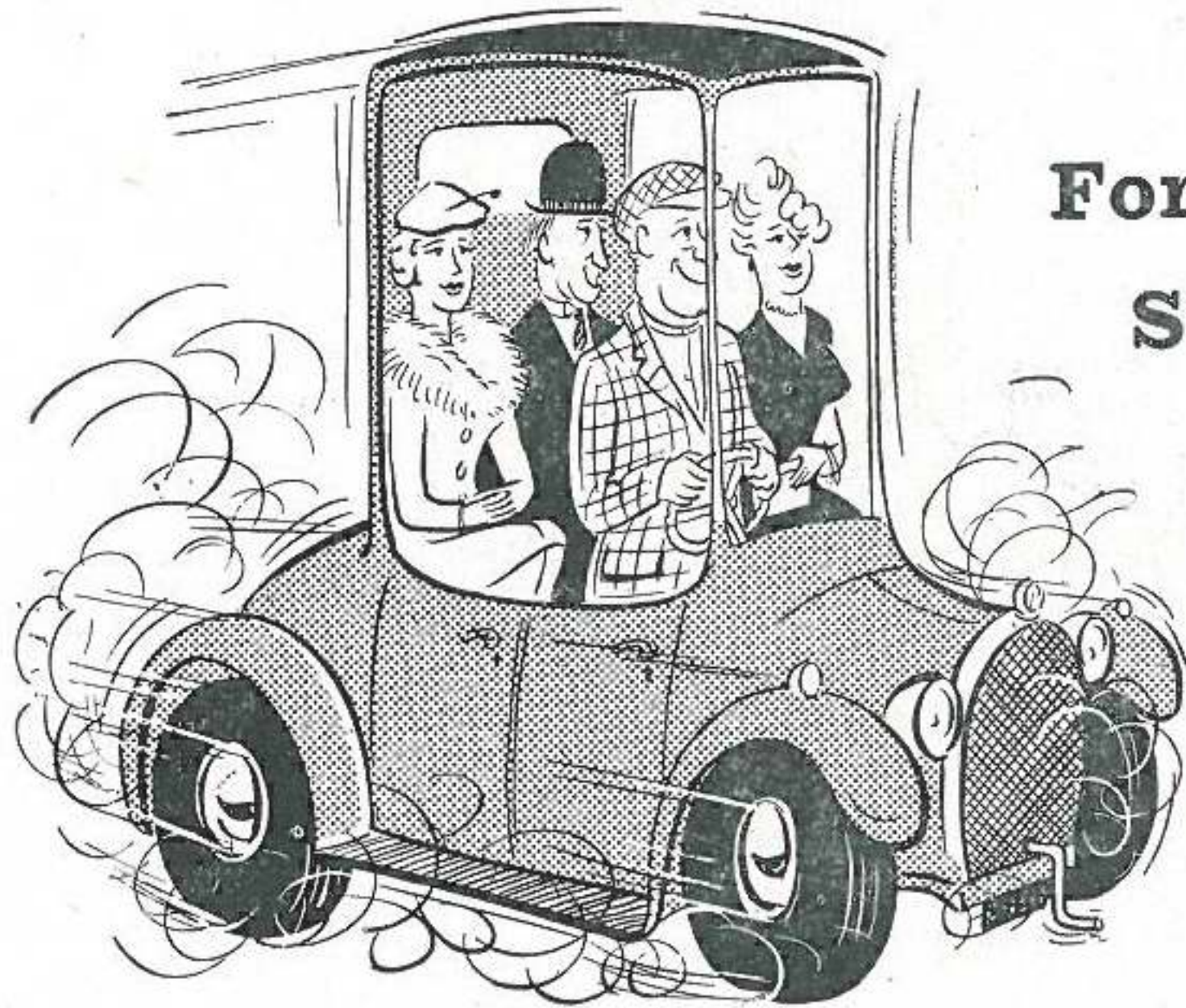
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Gaelic Sport

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COVER PICTURE

A powerful action shot of that great Tipperary hurler, Liam Devaney (see page 42).

PRÍOMHALT

An Fheile Náisiúnta

LÁ mór na nGael ar fud an domhain é an 17ú lá Mhárta. O cáid deasgabhála é sa Róimh, san Astráil, sa Chongo agus in aon áit eile ar fud na cruinne 'na bhfuil scata Éireannach. Mór-shiúl de 100,000 de chine Gael síos Ascal a Cúig i Nua Eabhrach agus dúch uaithe á úsáid ag Uachtarán na Stáit Aontaithe an dá bhealach 'na dtaispeanann na Poncánaigh an meas atá acu ar an dtírín bheag seo againn-ne.

I nÉirinn deintear comóradh ar bhás an Aspail Naofa ar bhealach níos ciúine leis an bhéim ar an spioradáltacht. Ach, toisc gurbí an fhéile náisiúnta í, cuireann an Cumann Luithchleas Gael taispeántas ar leith ar siúl i bPáirc an Chrócaigh.

Ó 1928 i leith tá togha na nimreoir, san iomáint agus sa pheil, le feiceal againn Lá 'Le Phádraig ag iomaíocht le haghaidh Coirn na mBóthar Iarann. De gnáth feictear sár-chluiche peile idir aon dá Chúige an lá sin ach is oth linn a rá nach amhlaidh sa chomórtas Iomána.

Ar an gcéad dul síos ní bhíonn ceachtar den dá Chúige, Uladh nó Connacht, sa choimhlint cor ar bith. Bliain in dhiaidh bliana

(lasmuigh de 1947 nuair do rug Iománaithe Chonnacht an Corn leo) siad fóirne Chúige Mumhan agus Chúige Laighean a bhíonn ag iomaíocht sa craobh-chluiche agus é beagnach cinnte roimh ré gur ag Cúige Mumhan a bhéadh an bua. Is rí-lag an caighdeán iomána atá san dá Chúige eile agus is magadh den chead-scoth é iad a chur sa choimhlint in aghaidh Chúige Laighean fiú amháin. Táimid ag súil go ndéanfaidh údaraisl an C.L.C.G. dian-iarracht leis an cheist seo a leigheas agus go bfeicfead Cúige Uladh ag baint na Craoibhe Iomána Eadar-Chúige sar i bhfad.

Comhartha maith é, i mbliana, go bhfuil an chéad teilescóileadh spóirt, riamh, ag an aonad "lasmuigh" de chuid Telefís Éireann á dhéanamh ar chluichí Gaelacha. Is maith an mhaise dóibh é go háirithe nuair is ar an bhFéile Náisiúnta atá sé a dhéanamh. Traoslaímíd dóibh agus guímíd gach rath ar an obair.

Bhéimís ag súil, áfach, go mbéadh an tráchttaireacht as Gaeilge ar chluiche amháin díobh ar a laghad. Ar an mbealach sin do bhéadh an Fhéile Náisiúnta i 1962 fíor-Ghaelach agus fíor-Náisiúnta.



SEAN DONEGAN

THE BAN

a defence

By Sean Donegan

THE article concerning the "Ban" by Eamonn Mongey in the last issue of *Gaelic Sport* was most informative in regard to the history of the case but I must take issue with him on many points. I state categorically, however, that Eamonn and all others who write on this subject have done a good service by bringing the matter into the open.

The word "ban" is an unfortunate one and seems to be used only in connection with Rule 27. Other bodies have their rules and many organisations have "excluding" rules but the appellation "ban" is reserved for the G.A.A. I know of seminaries where most games are tolerated, and played, but Gaelic football is prohibited. And the reason? Because there is a danger of broken fingers.

When Eamonn Mongey doubts "If there has been or ever will be in any sporting organisation a more controversial rule than the G.A.A. ban on so-called foreign games" he has walked right into trouble in his first sentence. There is no amateur organisation comparable to the G.A.A. anywhere in the world. If we take the nearest comparable sporting bodies, viz., athletic and/or cycling groups,

Eamonn must be aware of the painful situation existing in this country.

He is surely aware also that amateur athletes find themselves prohibited from competing at certain venues, or in particular places, or at specified periods of the year. Will I give instances? In another article, perhaps, but space does not allow me to dwell on the point here.

In any event, the G.A.A. is more than a sporting body and Eamonn Mongey needs no instruction from me on this point.

In tracing the history of the "ban" it is interesting to note that the I.A.A.A. also had a "ban" against the G.A.A. The ascendancy-controlled body could see the consequences to them not alone in the sporting arenas but in the political field also, should this dwarf develop into the giant they envisaged. In the event they were right in their view.

It is unfair, I think, to apply hindsight to the attitudes of the founders and county committees of the early days. We must face up to the fact that all, or nearly all, of the early members of the G.A.A. had participated in one sport or another under the I.A.A.A. At that

particular period (1870-1880) the nadir in the Irish resistance movement had been reached; the brainwashing was almost complete; the 1867 fiasco had petered out and Ireland was leaderless.

Suddenly, with the foundation of the G.A.A., a new spirit was abroad but with centuries of repression behind it, the practised eye of British diplomacy could see, years in advance, the looming threat in this National Movement; every artifice and ruse would have to be used to weaken and discredit it; if not a "ban" then infiltration was an old stand-by.

We must remember that many friendships and personal associations were about to be broken up when the members of the new organisation were faced with the problem of excluding certain games. It is interesting to note, however, that one year before the first All-Ireland final was played the "ban" was in effect. What a deplorable situation it would have been had well-known rugby players or cricket players participated in the first All-Ireland contest since the ancient Tailteann Games.

In referring to the fact that three of the founder members had played "foreign" games, Eamonn Mongey

BOTH SIDES OF THE CASE

In this article, SEAN DONEGAN, former Offaly, Leinster and All-Army footballer, replies to the arguments for the abolition of the Ban put forward by Eamonn Mongey in the last issue of GAELIC SPORT. In the following pages TOM WOULFE, the man who piloted Civil Service's "Inquiry" motion through the Dublin Convention, and regular GAELIC SPORT contributor, TERENCE ROYNANE, express their views on Rule 27 (see readers' letters, page 60).

does not state if this happened after the foundation of the G.A.A. I take it that it happened before, and it is rather hard for a person to "fall foul" of a rule which is not yet in existence.

Eamonn also makes play with the fact that only in 1905 did the "ban" as we now know it come into being. Surely, he is not naive enough to expect any association or organisation to have perfect, watertight rules on its formation!

Twenty years is a short period in the struggle of a nation and the "ban" in one form or another was a "must" in the minds of the majority from 1886 onwards. It was truly a sign of democratic procedure that, notwithstanding the opposition of certain prominent foundation members, the majority of delegates, in Congress assembled, saw the need or such drastic action.

I go along with Pat Davin's statement that Maurice "considered that a man should not be prevented from playing games that were not termed Gaelic."

Nobody tries to prevent a man from playing foreign games. Many a student has no other outlet for his sporting proclivities — Gaelic Games being excluded from the

curricula in certain colleges; many boys are brought up in homes where there is a tradition of rugby, soccer or hockey and many a young man attaches himself to the pavilions where amenities exist for the spare moments. Such a young man may be only vaguely aware that large crowds gather in some North Dublin park during the month of September each year but should the National safety be in danger he could well be one of the leaders in the fight.

On the other hand, the youth brought up in the tradition of Gaelic games and who joins his local club is expected to abide by the rules of the G.A.A. One of these rules precludes his participation in what are to him "foreign" games. If he wishes to take part in those games he may leave the G.A.A. at any time.

In my opinion, the vast majority of Gaelic players have no interest whatever in the excluded games. Many are interested in the progress of Irish international teams in all sports and the degree of interest is conditioned by the fact that a green-jerseyed team of Irishmen is playing under the name of 'Ireland' against another country.

To some extent the fact that

they are at times pitted against "the ancient enemy" arouses a patriotic desire that they crush their opponents and the fact that they are playing the same impirical game is ignored; the thought that "England's battles were won on the playing fields of Eton" is furthest from their consciousness.

Whilst no sensible protagonist of the "ban" will suggest that non-Gaelic players are anti-Irish we must admit that, whether wittingly or not, they give solace, support and sustenance to that section of the public which associates itself (and is indignant if we think otherwise) with Empire and all its trappings.

I cannot do better than refer Eamonn Mongey to the "statesmen" of our North-East region who have, time and again, insisted that they are Irishmen with a difference. Whilst those "qualified" Irishmen keep the iron fist under the noses of our segregated brethren I am entitled to class them as anti-Irish. The Norwegians had a name for such-like and I don't think it is drawing the long bow to place any obstacle we can in their way to thwart them in their plans to impose their way of life upon us.

Which raises the question posed by Archbishop Croke's statement that "This will set an example of tolerance and moderation to all other athletic schools and let us hope they will have the manliness and good feeling to follow suit." Would there be a reciprocal volte face on the part of the controlling bodies of "foreign" games should the ban be removed?

Judging by their quietude throughout the course of the present controversy, and indeed throughout the years, they have nothing to offer us. In fact, they expect to have everything to gain and little or nothing to lose. In the classic manner they shall wait for the internal upheaval and then hope to gather the spoils.

Unfortunately, when one delves

(Continued overleaf).

into history, as Eamonn Mongey has done so thoroughly, we find the dissident Irishman as the cause of all, or most of, our misery throughout the ages.

Whilst wishing to stress the political implications I would also ask Eamonn to weigh the matter in the light of the physical strain on players who indulged in say, the games of rugby and Gaelic football. Would a Saturday and a Sunday game be helpful to the average player? If one game is bound to suffer, then which one? Apparently the Sunday one and not altogether from the lack of fitness on the part of the player—"to me, this is conclusive proof that rugby starts only at 6 o'clock on a Saturday night"; or is Eamonn worried about the "gates" at Lansdowne Road? It only goes to prove what a minor proportion of our population is interested in rugby.

In any of the "excluded" games, with the exception of soccer (which has its undoubted value for the smaller city men), there is an element of snobbery, old-school tie, pseudo-Oxford accent and "which side of the tracks were you born on?" I don't think the majority of

our players subscribe to any of those attitudes nor do I think the vast majority would be happy in the beloved pavilions—I might even hazard the guess that they would not be welcome there. Maybe someone in authority in those bodies would correct me on this point?

"The devil can quote Scripture . . ." It is all very fine for Eamonn to quote Down, and players from that county and from Derry, as in favour of abolition of the "ban", but let us have a look at both sides of the question. Might I suggest that the results of this year's county conventions in the "Sundered Six" be studied by antagonists of the "ban".

To my knowledge, Down ploughs a lonely furrow in suggesting a modification of Rule 27 and, whilst admitting that they have brought quite a number of our Orange brethren to Croke Park. I think we need some further evidence of tolerance from that quarter before acceding to the Down motion that the "ban" be modified.

Eamonn Mongey's Gallup poll to the contrary, I still think that the

voices of all club members and players are heard at Congress, through the delegates. There is no suggestion that the members of Congress are other than democratically elected and I am sure they still see the necessity for the "ban"; in fact it is more necessary now than in the pre-1916 days. Freedom has many facets and the curtailment of one's sporting activities is a small loss of freedom when mirrored in the greater freedom of Irishmen to come and go as they please. This is one of the ideals of the G.A.A. and who doubts that the members of this association are not merely players only; as I said earlier, the G.A.A. is more than a sporting body and its members have suffered pain and death in an effort to play their own games.

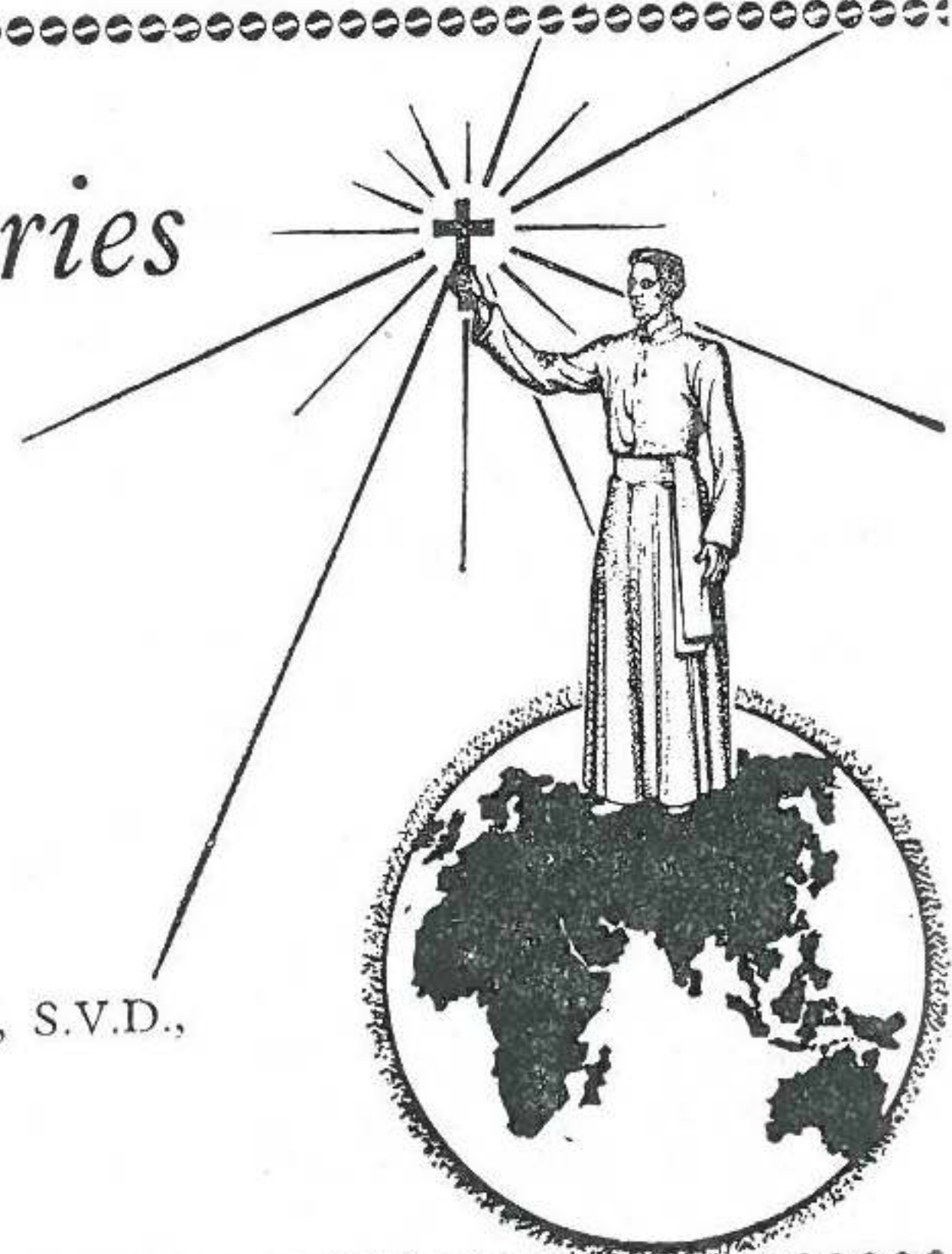
Liberalism is the modern cry. Even the advocates of "peaceful co-existence" profess a liberal outlook. Acceptance of such professions betokens a political immaturity not advisable in the best diplomatic circles. Let's hope the Liberals within the G.A.A. can see the wood in spite of the trees.

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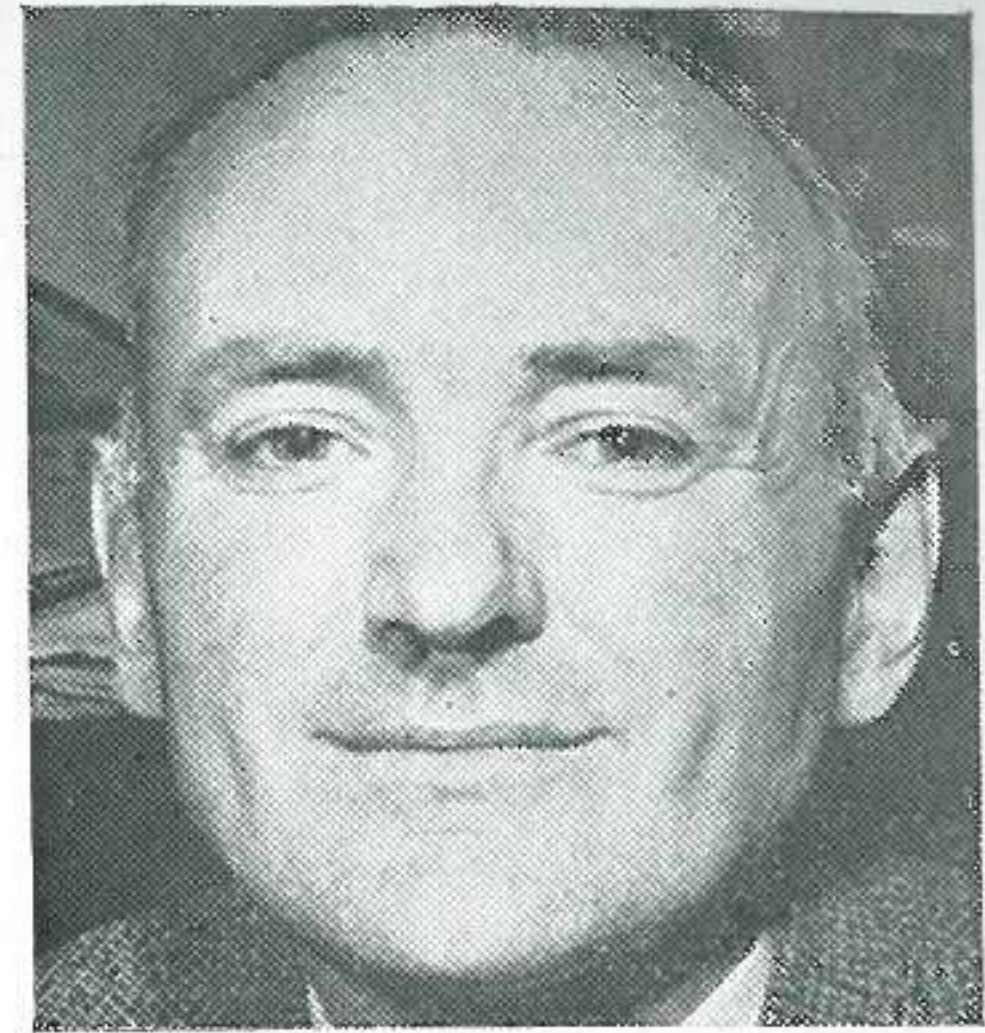
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FOUNDERS REJECTED BAN RULE



TOM WOULFE

By Tom Woulfe

IT is no exaggeration to say that the volume of discussion on the Ban over the past few months has exceeded the sum total of discussion previously devoted to this subject. This, in itself, is something for which I am grateful.

It may be useful at this stage to see if the discussions have assumed any discernable pattern or trend. The purpose of any serious discussion is to reach agreement or, failing agreement, to reduce the area of disagreement between the parties to the discussion.

Whilst the parties to the Ban discussion are very far from agreement at this stage, the field of disagreement has been substantially reduced, and at a fundamental point, too.

I refer to the attitude of the founders—Dr. Croke, Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin—towards the Ban. Up to a year ago or so, there was universal belief within the G.A.A. that the Ban represented the ideals of the founders. I think we may now

say that there is general and realistic acceptance of the view that the founders rejected the whole principle of the Ban.

With the founders gone the current defence of the Ban is that it is the repository of the national consciousness of the G.A.A. It is no tribute to this defence to say that it is difficult to deal with. The defence is, of its very nature, so nebulous and evasive that it is almost impossible to come to grips with it by process of logic.

This, in turn, gives the defenders full scope to exploit emotional appeal, and this is what they have been doing. It is a pity that the most vocal Ban defender at the moment has rather spoilt his case by an overdose of invective and personal abuse which can scarcely endear his cause to the average member of the Association.

These tactics paid off in the past on the rare occasions when the Ban was questioned; but they will not intimidate or divert those of us who are now determined to see

that the Ban is brought out into the open.

As a corollary to the contention that the Ban is the home of the national consciousness of the G.A.A., we are told that the removal of Rule 27 would reduce the Association to the level of an ordinary sports organisation. We are told, too, that the probable result of this “adulteration” would be chaos and schism, and the formation of a new association by the “Ban at any cost” brigade with “traditional aims”.

The use of the phrase “traditional aims” is indicative of the muddled thinking of the opposition at present. How they can identify pro-Ban with traditional aims is beyond comprehension when you reflect that they have already accepted that the founders rejected the Ban.

By any process of logic, then, aren't the anti-Ban exponents in the true line of succession to the founders?

As I said before, the present
(Continued Page 11).

FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE . . .



**. . . WELL DRESSED
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DUBTEX

(Continued from Page 9).

defence is that Rule 27 must stay because it is the Association's repository of national consciousness. Let us take a brief look at this rule—and one cannot do so without also taking a look at its next-door neighbour, Rule 28, which deals with the appointment of Vigilance Committees.

As I have said elsewhere, Rule 27 has since the day of its premature birth been the problem-child of the G.A.A. I say premature because it was first introduced in 1886 by the Central Council without the necessary sanction of Congress. It was discarded many times because of the trouble it gave. It was finally restored in 1905 when a ban on the playing of soccer, rugby, cricket and hockey, plus any other foreign game, was imposed unanimously without any recorded discussion.

There were 77 delegates at that Congress, and Dublin, who sponsored the Ban motion, had 13.

No other foreign games have since been added, although it is not necessary to say that they are numerous and much favoured by G.A.A. folk—players and administrators. Golf, the most "garrison" game of all foreign games, is surely a strange omission.

The Ban on attending and promoting the four forbidden games was imposed some time after 1905—and before 1924 at any rate. But I can find no evidence that it was endorsed by Congress; so that it would appear that it, too, originated as a ruling of Central Council.

Of course, it is only fair to say that Congress has since given covering sanction by refusing to

lift the imposition. In regard to Rule 27 there is general agreement that it is, perhaps, the most abused rule in the Official Guide although the foreign dance rule would dispute that distinction.

Undoubtedly Rule 27 has caused more cynicism, rancour, tittle-tattle, deceit and ridicule than any other rule. The whole principle of the Ban has been emphatically condemned by the founders, Croke, Cusack and Davin.

Pearse himself condemned it, too, when he said: "Do not condemn English games, but play Irish ones." The word "Ban" hadn't come into use by that time. It is well known that any boy in St. Enda's who wished to play rugby was freely facilitated to do so by Pearse.

Isn't it letting sentiment run riot, then, to suggest that Rule 27 is the home of the national spirit of the G.A.A.?

No; the national spirit resides elsewhere. The national purpose of the G.A.A. was expressed by the founders in the first instance—in Croke's first letter in particular—and it has been nurtured down the years by the spirit of successive generations of players and officials.

I am convinced that Rule 27 in practice is weakening the national outlook of the G.A.A. because any institution which is a hot-bed of cynicism—as Rule 27 is—could scarcely be expected to produce anything noble.

Rule 28, which creates the machinery for the implementation of Rule 27, was made by Central Council in August, 1924—four months after Congress had decided by a 54-32 vote to retain

the Ban. Although Rule 28 has been accepted by Congress, it has never been formally ratified by that body.

Rule 28 demands the appointment of Vigilance Committees, the members of which are known to the County Board Chairmen only.

The accused is never told who reported him. He is left to suspect, often in error, as I found to my embarrassment. The set-up here reeks with the taint of the informer and is a slur on the good name of our Association. It does not remove the stain of an informer for a Vigilance Committee member to plead that he did what he did in the interests of the G.A.A. An act which is improper and unmanly in itself cannot be justified on any ground, in my view.

After all, there is a decent and above-board method of operating Rule 28 by appointing Vigilance Committees openly, as we appoint referees and other officials. Their reports would then be read at the open Board meetings so that anybody accused of breaking Rule 27 could know his accuser and would be given an opportunity, if he so wished, of cross-examining him.

There is nothing in Rule 28 as it stands to prevent the adoption of the foregoing system. As a matter of fact, I had decided to implement this system in Dublin had the 1960 County Convention elected me chairman.

I am quite satisfied that the Ban will never be enforced under the present procedure simply because Irishmen naturally recoil from having anything to do with a system tainted with informer germs.



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PICK OF

THE

MOTIONS

By **TERENCE ROYNANE**

THE motions for the forthcoming G.A.A. Congress have been so much dominated by Rule 27 that a non-G.A.A. man might well be pardoned for thinking that this Rule was the most important one in the whole Official Guide.

The newspapers have devoted reams of publicity to it, and a great deal of time was taken up by it in the County Conventions, or rather at some of the County Conventions; but with the exception of one or two counties, the general opinion seems to have been very much in favour of keeping the Rule more or less as it is.

What does seem a pity, though, is that the Dublin motion to set up a Committee of Inquiry into the Ban does not seem to have been discussed on its merits at all.

The fact that personalities were very much to the fore in the newspaper controversies meant that a very sensible motion has been prejudged and I feel wrongly prejudged.

It is generally believed that the original purpose, at least of some of the sponsors of the motion, was to do away with the Ban altogether, and that, I think, is a fair estimate of the position; but I was at the Dublin Convention and that was *not* the idea of the motion as passed by Dublin.

My feeling that day was that the majority of the delegates were in favour of the Ban in some shape or form and that what they desired when they voted for the Civil Service Football Club's proposals

was a full and fair investigation not alone into the Rule itself but into the present administration of that Rule.

And that is the part that seems to have been entirely ignored in the discussions at the County Conventions as reported in the newspapers; for very few people seem to have considered the administration end of the motion at all. And I believe that it is in administration that Rule 27 has most need of revision.

To my mind, there is no point in having the Rule there if it is not enforced, enforced strictly and impartially, and I know, just as you know, dear reader, that such is far from being the case.

In the areas, and they are not so many, where "prohibited" games are popular, Rule 27 is not being strictly enforced. It is enforced when it suits, and that is none too often. Within recent times I know of at least one inter-county footballer and more than one very prominent club player who has been playing "prohibited" games and no action whatever has been taken. While, as far as going to watch prohibited games is concerned, this is surely a rule more honoured in the breach than in the observance in many cases.

If we are going to keep Rule 27, let us keep it in fact as well as in theory. Let us put it fully into force and let us not continue to give lip-service and no more.

After all is it not a fact that a man who is now a leading Irish rugby international was very well known on Dublin Gaelic fields until a couple of seasons ago and yet there was no official mention of it. And the man in question is not a Gaelic player turned rugby player. He is a man who had always been a rugby player but turned to the Gaelic code in the summer. And he has with him on the Irish team two other men well known in Gaelic ranks until comparatively recently, and I never

(Continued on page 15)

Three doctors sit down to a meal



"I think Guinness is a good drink after exercise or with a meal. I consider a glass of Guinness, cheese and an apple a better lunch than the usual meat, potatoes and two veg."

M.B., B.Ch.



"My lunch each day would not be complete without a bottle of Guinness. After what is usually a very full, sometimes exhausting morning, I find from long experience that the Guinness revives me and enables me to complete my day's work without fatigue."

M.B., B.Ch.



"I gladly give you my opinion of Guinness. It is the best drink of its kind in existence. I have prescribed it for the last forty years, and always with benefit. I drink but little myself, but prefer a glass of Stout with my meal."

M.B., B.Ch.

These letters recently received from doctors are published by special permission.

GUINNESS IS GOOD FOR YOU

GD 126D

(Continued from Page 13)

remember an objection to any one of the three of them.

In addition, I cannot remember any case in the last fifteen years of any man being suspended for playing cricket or hockey. There were instances some time before that of a prominent cricket player and a prominent hockey player being suspended but, and here's the funny thing about it, neither of them was suspended for playing either cricket or hockey — they were both suspended for playing either rugby or soccer.

As for a man being suspended for attending cricket or hockey matches, I never remember such a thing to happen. Doesn't this mean that there are no Vigilance Committees at cricket and hockey matches? And if not, why not? Are these not prohibited games just as rugby and soccer are?

If Vigilance Committees do not attend such games, which I am told are not well attended, are we not leaving ourselves open to the charge that we are really concerned only with games that are paying concerns?

Another matter that I would like to have seen raised is the matter of such foreign games as have become popular in this country since the Ban was first imposed.

Why should not the Ban be extended to basketball, which I believe to be the greatest present-day menace to Gaelic football; to badminton or to squash rackets? The Ban once applied to golf and tennis. As far as tennis is concerned I fear there is nothing we can do about it, as this is the only game in which both sexes can compete, and Dan Cupid is stronger than any association's rules and regulations.

But I sometimes wonder if golf should not be banned for playing members of the G.A.A., as it is, almost of necessity, a game of every man for himself and as such

Plays in goal for Leinster

OLLIE WALSH
... Kilkenny's brilliant goalkeeper, who plays for Leinster in the Railway Cup hurling final against Munster in Croke Park on St. Patrick's Day.



is very much opposed to team-spirit.

I am all in favour of a Ban of some sort to keep our own games distinct from others, but, if we are going to keep Rule 27 as it is, then, for the sake of the dignity of our Association, let us enforce it rigidly without fear or favour.

One motion that I am glad to see come up at Congress again is the motion from Wexford asking that the sending off of a player during a game need not necessarily mean automatic one-month suspension.

It is, I am sure, a motion with which most referees will heartily agree. As things stand, a player who defends himself from aggression and is sent to the line is left in almost exactly the same position as the man who attacks him.

The law as it stands is almost certain to favour the aggressor who gets away with the same sentence for striking a man as does the man who is struck first and, not un-naturally, hits back.

I think suspension for the remainder of the match would in many ways make the referee's job easier and I am all in favour of the Wexford proposal.

The administration of it should be easy enough for, as I see it, all a referee has to say is, "I sent so-and-so to the line for the remainder of the game, but in my opinion his breach of the rules did not warrant further penalty", and then the County Board, when the report comes before it, knows exactly where it stands.

For graver offences, all the referee has to do is to say, "I sent so-and-so to the line for 'whatever the offence was' and recommend that the Board deal with him under Rule X" — naming whatever rule covers the offence.

There does not seem to me to be any insuperable difficulty in this and I hope Congress will see the light in the whole matter and not raise entirely unwarranted issues as happened when a similar motion came up last year.

Leinster can do it

By Peter Byrne

BACK in 1948 a lithe, enthusiastic youngster walked into the Leinster dressing room, sought out the number 15 jersey and minutes later roared into action against Munster in the Railway Cup semi-final.

Much water has run under the bridge since that memorable tussle and 29 of the 30 footballers who set their sights on victory on that dreary February day are now but misty names to a fair proportion of the crowd that will throng Croke Park for this year's inter-provincial decider.

But one man is still very much to the fore. And when wily Kevin Heffernan, now a shade slower but still a master score-getter, takes the field against Ulster on St. Patrick's Day, be sure that that ice-cool football brain will still be ticking over as shrewdly as ever.

Heffernan's score-grabbing flair will be one of Leinster's trump cards against a Down-powered Ulster team which fairly oozes strength and craft right through the field.

Going strictly on semi-final form there shouldn't be much between the teams. Leinster were seldom at full stretch in writing finis to a weak Munster challenge while the Northerners, likewise, were always travelling on a tight rein in accounting for Connacht.

Much of Leinster's brilliance in beating Munster stemmed from the immaculate work of Dublin's John Timmons—a superb display of fast, punchy football which tore gaping holes in the Southerners' defence.

But can Timmons bring in a repeat performance against a full-



John Timmons

back of the calibre of Leo Murphy? Personally, I don't think so. And that could make score-getting a pretty hazardous occupation for forward colleagues Mick Whelan, Tommy Greene and Heffernan.

In defence, Ulster sport one of the toughest full-back lines in the game in Gabriel Kelly (Cavan), Murphy and Pat Rice (Down) and if Kelly, in particular, can put the brakes on Heffernan, the striking power of the Eastern province will be considerably weakened.

Likewise, I think the Down-powered forward line may find themselves in trouble at the other

end where Offaly's Pat McCormack and Greg Hughes, Mick Carolan (Kildare) and Paddy Holden (Dublin) present a solid front to all attackers.

McCormack is still the No. 1 right corner-back in the game and good as the wily Brian Morgan is, I can't see him cutting much ice against the powerfully-built Clara man on St. Patrick's Day.

But the real highlight of the day should be the clash of Dublin's rapidly-improving centre half-back and Down's Jim McCartan. Holden is certainly a wonderful half-back in the making but one wonders if he can succeed where the great Gerry O'Malley failed in the semi-final.

Should McCartan embark on another of his now-famous rampages, I can visualise plenty of trouble for the Leinster men—particularly if Paddy Doherty and Jimmy Whan are given any latitude.

Leinster's Des Foley and Mick Carley struck up a fine understanding at mid-field against Munster but even so, I can't see them exerting any real "pull" over Gene Larkin and Joe Lennon.

With Jim McCartan on hand to take over the role of third midfielder, Foley and Carley face a pretty tough afternoon.

Yet, I feel Leinster will win this game. Their Dublin contingent will, as usual, be fighting fit at this time of year, while there is no defence in the country better fitted to look after the Down-powered Ulster attack than the teak-tough Offaly men.

But if Jim McCartan hits another of his inspired patches, it could be closer than most people anticipate.

MUNSTER AGAIN!

By Frank O'Farrell

DELVE back through the record books and you'll discover that Munster have monopolised the Railway Cup hurling competition since its inception in 1927. Probe a little further and you'll find that of all the famous names that have played in the "Railway", one stands out like a beacon—the legendary Christy Ring.

Now Munster and Ring are back in business again and to most people that may sound like the end of Leinster's chances of regaining the trophy on St. Patrick's Day.

But is it? Ever since the advent of Wexford as a force in "big-time" hurling and Dublin's effort against Tipperary in last year's All-Ireland final, the balance of power has been slowly but surely swinging to the Eastern province.

And that revolutionary trend could well reach a climax in this year's contest in which Tipperary and Dublin players will again dominate the respective sides.

On my reckoning, this Munster team falls far short of some of the famous combinations which have sported the blue jersey in the past, and for all his many scoring exploits during the past year, the great Christy Ring isn't getting any younger, either.

Yet, the Cloyne wizard will still be the big attraction for the thousands who will throng Croke Park on March 17 and a lot hinges on the outcome of his battle with Leinster captain Noel Drumgoole.

Flanked by Dublin colleagues, Des Ferguson and Lar Foley,

Drumgoole emerged as one of the best full-backs in the game last year and a repeat performance here could well tame the great Christy.

But even if Ring is held, there is still plenty of scoring power in this Munster attack with half-forwards Jimmy Doyle and Donie Nealon linking up with Jimmy Smyth in a power-packed triangle.

To Laois all-rounder Ollie Fennell falls the unenviable task of curbing Jimmy Doyle but with Wexford stars Jim English and Billie Rackard playing alongside him, I won't be surprised if Fennell breaks even.

Dynamic Billie Dwyer (Kilkenny) had a field day against Ulster and with Dublin's Billie Jackson and Achill Boothman and 'Hopper' McGrath (Wexford) in support, the Kilkenny man will again command the closest of attention.

But I can't see him enjoying the same success against Mick Maher and with Jim Brohan (Cork) and Kieran Carey (Tipperary) filling the corner-back positions, scores will not be easily come by in this sector.

Expect a battle royal at mid-field when those two great personalities, Liam Devaney and Des Foley swing into action but I think Devaney's Tipperary colleague, Theo English should have the edge over Dublin's Mick Kennedy.

This "pull", coupled with the great defensive hurling of Brohan, Maher, Morrissey and Burns may just about suffice to tilt the scales in favour of Munster once again.



Donie Nealon

STAGGERING!

IT sounds fantastic—but it's true. When Christy Ring bounces on to the Croke Park turf on St. Patrick's Day it will be his 21st consecutive appearance in the final for Munster.

And except for three occasions—against Connacht in 1947 and Leinster in '54 and '56—the bold Christy has left the Croke Park enclosure each time with a Railway Cup medal tucked away in his pocket.

Couple that with the fact that he was a sub. on the victorious 1941 team and you'll see why Ring will always go down in the "book" as the man with the untouchable Railway Cup record. It's a staggering feat that defies comparison!



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Hurling finals need a boost

By MOONDHARRIG

WE were strolling down from Croke Park, three or four of us, after the Leinster hurling trial late in January when somebody raised the question, 'Are the Railway Cup games as good as they used to be?' Some said 'yes' and some said 'no' and in the finish they decided to accept my opinion, for it is one of my boasts, in an unguarded moment, that I have seen every Railway Cup final for thirty years.

But, when I went to give my opinion, I found that I had no real opinion to give, because when I tried to sort out the mixum-gatherum that serves most of us for a memory I found that, to be strictly honest, not all the matches of the old days that we look back upon as classics were quite as good as we now like to imagine they were.

There was one fact, however, that could not be gainsaid. The standard of the hurling competition has declined very steadily down the years.

Old Croke Park enthusiasts still stoutly maintain that the greatest hurling match they ever saw was the first Railway Cup final of all between Leinster and Munster back in 1927. That game I was not privileged to witness, but I vividly remember a whole series of hard-fought and vividly spectacular clashes between the same two provinces right through the 'thirties.

Hurling was hard and keen, there was never more than a few points between the sides, and rivalry was intense. In all those years the hurling final was usually as great an attraction as was the football final, and often more satisfying.

Then in the 'forties the decline set in. Leinster fell away and Munster reigned supreme, and very rarely since then have we seen the same keen rivalry prevail.

Corkmen, on the records, can justly claim that Munster's virtual monopoly began with the arrival

of Christy Ring in 1942, but there is obviously more to it than that. I think that, generally speaking, Munster in the past twenty years has had a far deeper pool of first-class hurling resources to draw on than has any other province, and the result has been that the South has not alone run up a wonderful string of successes in the Railway Cup, but has almost killed interest in the hurling competition in the process.

True, Galway did extremely well as lone Connacht standard-bearers for a period, while during the years of tremendous Kilkenny-Wexford rivalry in the middle 'fifties, we saw Leinster sides that hurled with all the dash and spirit that characterised the hurlers of the province in the early Railway Cup days.

But it is all too often presumed nowadays by the critics and spectators, and sometimes, one regretfully feels, by at least a few of the opposing players, that a Railway Cup hurling final can only have one ending—an easy Munster victory.

The last few finals have been more than disappointing; they have been disheartening for those of us who keep on hoping to see hurling get back to something approaching the same all-round standard as has been attained in football.

Let's hope that this year, when Munster and Leinster again meet in the final, the rise of Noel Drumgoole and his Dublinmen will give us a really memorable hurling final; for there has not been one that stands out in my memory since the early fifties, a game which Munster won by a narrow margin, but which was productive of plenty of keen, stylish hurling which was highlighted, as I remember it, by a superb display for Leinster by Bobby Rackard.

We have seen little inspiring leadership on the
(Continued on page 21)

Remember the team?

1927

RAILWAY CUP

To-day hurling fans may argue as to which was the best game of our time. Back in the 'twenties there was little or no argument about it. There was almost unanimous agreement that the first Railway Cup hurling final between Leinster and Munster might one day be equalled, but never surpassed! It was played on St. Patrick's Day, 1927. Rivalry between the provinces was very keen and the thirty men who took the field were all stars of the game in their own right.

The first half went nip and tuck at a killing pace until nearing half-time, when "Gah" Aherne of Cork flashed a great goal past peerless Tommy Daly to give Munster the lead. Fabled Lory Meagher, who was only a youngster then, made a long-range point for Leinster that put the sides level, and so it remained at half-time: Munster 1-1; Leinster 0-4.

Old-timers still rave about the brilliance of the hurling in the second half. Lory Meagher, Mattie Power, Dinny O'Neill shot a trio of Leinster points, but big Jim Hurley placed Martin Kennedy for the equaliser, a goal that sent the fans into an ecstasy of excitement.

Willie Gleeson and Lory Meagher again exchanged points. So did John Roberts and Eugene Coughlan. And then came a picture goal by Mattie Power to which Lory's brother, Henry Meagher, added a further point for Leinster. Coughlan and the Aherne brothers tore back for three fast Southern points, leaving only a point between the teams as time ticked out.

But it was Leinster who had the last word, Dinny O'Neill reverse-passed to Lory Meagher, who sent the ball high and straight between the posts for the point that clinched it.

In addition to the men already mentioned, "Fowler" McInerney, Garrett Howard, "Builder" Walsh, Mick Gill,



The Score:

LEINSTER	1-11
MUNSTER	2-6

Eddie Doyle and their Captain, Wattie Dunphy, played brilliantly for Leinster, and wonder men for Munster were Sean Oge Murphy, Jim Regan, John Joe Kinnane, Micky Cross, Mick D'Arcy and Phil Cahill.

It was said of the teams that day that every man on them was a hurling legend while still playing. Certainly the game they played in Croke Park in the first Railway Cup decider has become part of the lore of hurling.

LEINSTER

W. Dunphy (Captain), E. Doyle, L. Meagher, J. Roberts, H. Meagher (Kilkenny); Dr. T. Daly, E. Tobin, P. McInerney, G. Howard, M. Gill, D. O'Neill, E. Fahy, J. Walsh, M. Power (Dublin); J. Byrne (Laois).

MUNSTER

Sean Oge Murphy (Captain), E. Coughlan, E. O'Connell, M. Murphy, J. Regan, J. Hurley, P. Aherne, M. Aherne (Cork); M. Murphy, J. J. Kinnane, M. Cross, W. Gleeson (Limerick); M. D'Arcy, P. Cahill, M. Kennedy (Tipperary).

Remember the name!



(Continued from page 19)

Leinster side since Bobby Rackard and brother Nicky hung up their hurleys, and here's hoping that Noel Drumgoole will bring back to the Eastern province the spirit of days past.

It is all but essential that we see a good hurling final this year. Otherwise, the fixture will soon be written off, even by hurling fans, as either a non-too-entertaining curtain-raiser, or a pulseless postscript to the football game.

Indeed, we have been lucky in recent years that the football finals have more than made up for any shortcomings of the hurling fixture. But let it be remembered that we have seen some very poor football finals too, even within the past decade.

On the other hand, there was, and is, a keen rivalry between all four provinces in football that is sadly lacking in hurling. The football teams always seem to play as provincial sides, not as a collection of players without any link between them. Leinster, Connacht and Ulster especially have shown a wonderful team spirit which was also often shown by Munster football sides in the past, but which has been for some peculiar reason lacking in many Southern sides during the past decade.

The Railway Cup competitions are still one of the great attractions of the year, and rightly rank as second only to the All-Ireland senior championship; but to hold the balance, we need a hurling revival.

Time was when big crowds from hurling centres all over the country travelled to see the St. Patrick's Day hurling final and couldn't care less what happened in the football game, but for a long time past the football match has been, let's face facts, the main event of the day.

And that is not as it should be, for the football and hurling games should be equal in prestige.

To restore the hurling competition to its old place is the task that lies ahead of the men of Leinster and, to a lesser degree perhaps, the task of the men of Galway, who have so long and with very little assistance and very little reward ploughed a lonely if valiant furrow in this competition.

The real answer, of course, to the problem of

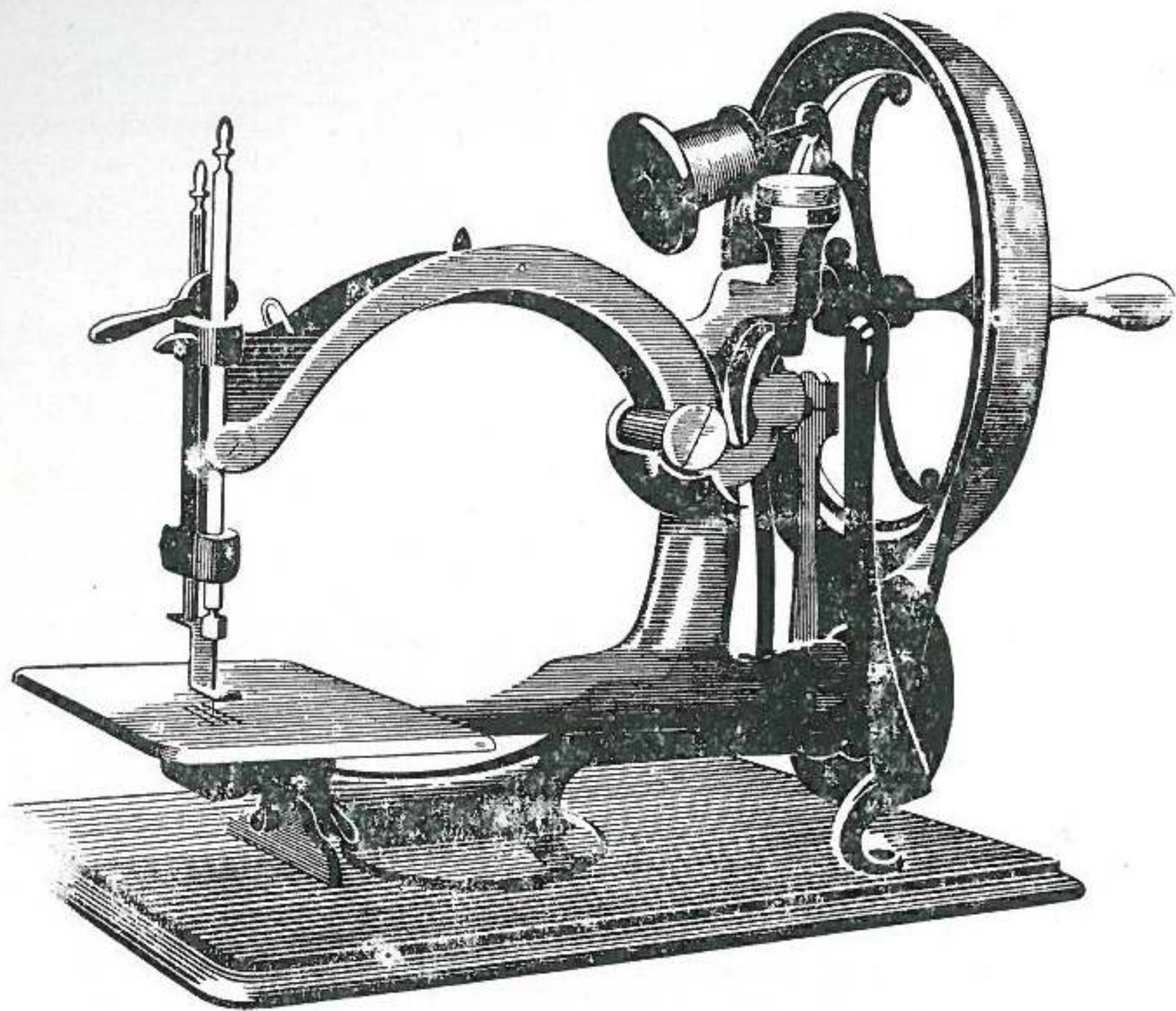


NOEL DRUMGOOLE . . . the Dublin full back and Leinster's skipper in Railway Cup hurling final against Munster.

making the Railway Cup series as consistently interesting as its football counterpart, is the spread of hurling throughout the north of Leinster, the rest of Connacht outside of Galway, and in the eight counties of Ulster. That is why this year's hurling encounter is, to the far-sighted, the most interesting for some time past.

This year, the Leinster side is backboned by native-born Dubliners. If they do well, new hope will be born in every area where strenuous efforts are being made to build up a hurling tradition. And I feel, rightly or wrongly, that this year the hurling final may recapture some of its old-time greatness.

Of the football series I have no fears; competition is so keen there that every game is always well worth seeing, semi-finals and finals.



Things were different after this

Like many other inventions, that of the sewing machine was the result of more than one person's effort. The idea might be said to have been "in the air" from the middle of the 18th century at least. The important eye-pointed needle and double thread or lock-stitch is an American contribution and dates from about 1832. Many of the early machines are still quite satisfactory to use and some of them are very silent in their working. The use of the sewing machine spread throughout factories and homes with enormous rapidity, removing so much drudgery that few of us now-a-days would care to revert to hand sewing.

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By

EAMONN YOUNG

CONGRESS AT WORK

THE Annual General Meeting of the G.A.A. will be held in Dublin on Easter Sunday, or on Easter Saturday in addition. Each county may send one delegate for each of its ten clubs, thus entitling a county like Cork to send 28. A county with less than five clubs (as in England) may send one representative.

The functions of Congress are to consider reports of the provincial and general secretaries; to study the financial accounts; to elect a president and two trustees; to make or amend rules. The foreign games rule may be debated only every three years and the playing rules once in five.

The secretary's report which is published about a fortnight before Congress is a very important document as it covers all aspects of G.A.A. life for the year with comments by the man who must be regarded as the expert. Paddy O'Keeffe is a blunt, plain-speaking writer, and whether one agrees or not, at least there is no doubt of the intention.

The president serves for three years and his annual speeches state the policies of the association.

Is the functioning of Congress satisfactory as it stands, and, if not, can it be improved? I believe that, like all democratic gatherings, it is unwieldy, inefficient and productive of hot and useless air. In fact, very often so little is done that it becomes obvious that Central Council, not Congress (which is the supreme body), is the real ruler of the association. But the parallel exists in all similar councils so there's no need to become alarmed.

Sometimes we complain that the right men are not sent. Undoubtedly some of the boys I've met

are no pillars of parliamentary wisdom (any more than I), but they usually have definite opinions and representing their own clubs they ensure that any verdict taken in Dublin is influenced by the club in the country.

County delegations usually vote en bloc, especially on an important matter. This year, for instance, many counties have made decisions at home regarding the foreign games rule discussion. So it may be that a man who has no love for the ban will, in fact, vote for it. While this seems absurd it must be remembered that as his county's delegate he must convey the feeling of the body which he represents.

Those who do most of the talking at Congress are the members of the Central Council where each, representing his county, is normally an enthusiastic and articulate member.

The good speaker who knows his facts will therefore sway many a delegate. Alf Murray is a case in point. But there have been men who spoke as well as Alf without commanding anything like the same respect.

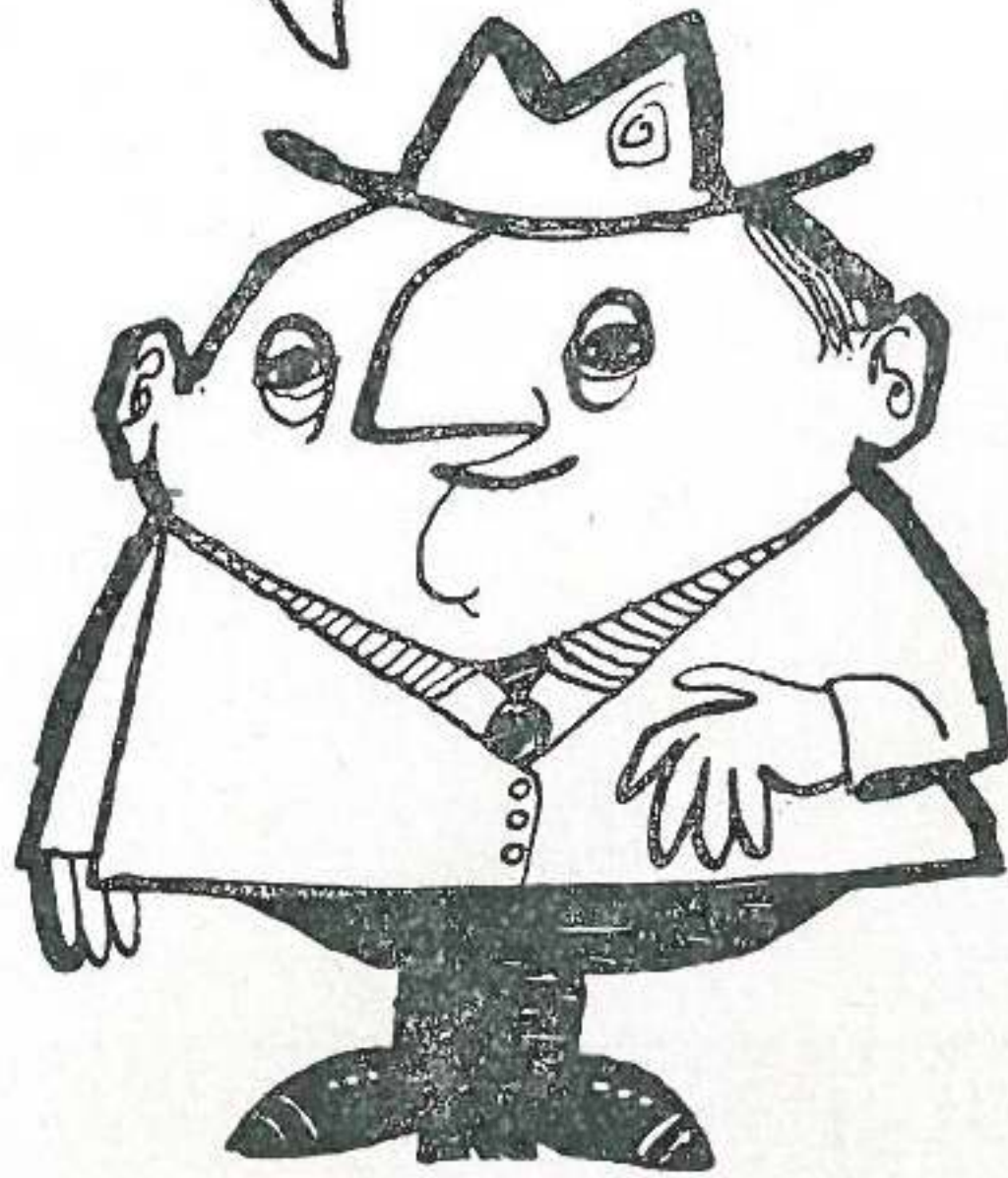
I cannot forget the whispered words of the late Sean Og Murphy (a teetotaller) about one of those: "When he stands up, any wise man will go out, have a half-one and come back in time to vote against."

It is right that Congress should show its support of the Irish language, but the practice of translating into English the words already said in Irish is regrettable at a gathering where there's far too little time for the work.

This is, indeed, Congress's biggest headache.

(Continued on page 25)

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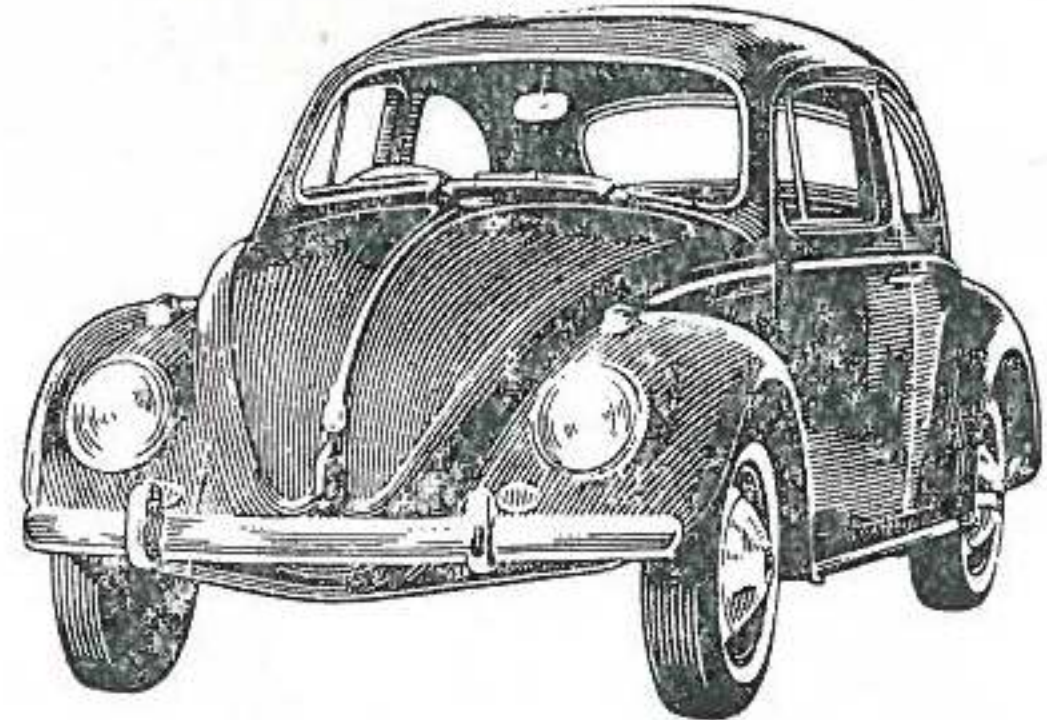
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(Continued from page 23)

Remember two years ago when the suggestion that the goalie wear a distinctive jersey was beaten because it smelled of soccer? A few days later when people had time to think it was realised that a distinctive jersey was absolutely necessary. Congress, hurried and worried, must dash through a long agenda making decisions in haste which, alas, are sometimes repented at leisure.

There is, as stated, a Saturday evening session if needed, but considering that this is needed each year and not always held, the inference drawn is that there exists a desire for a short Congress. Judging by the facility so many of us have to talk all day about nothing, that desire may be considered reasonable.

The most important discussion at this year's Congress will be the foreign games rule, about which Sean Donegan, Tom Woulfe and Terence Roynane have written in this issue. The ban does not restrict my activities, but I have no love for it. However, if I were sure that its removal would harm the association I would vote for its retention. That's why Tom Woulfe's solution is ideal. He does not suggest that it be abolished but merely that a committee study the problem and report to Central Council. No further action could then be taken until '65, by which time we might all have our minds made up.

The Dublin motion suggests a secret ballot on the ban discussion and the verbal heat that has been generated over this is quite amusing. That great old fighter with the unlikely name of Fear Ciuin regards a secret ballot as an insult to one's personal integrity, though the procedure is rightly regarded all over the world as the essence of democratic practice.

In the case of the ban, those who favour it do not need a secret ballot, for having been regarded as a fundamental it will always command open support. In addition, there are many whose convictions are so strong that they welcome the chance of expressing them.

When change is needed, however, one often has to wade against the flood of opinion, and while those who look for the change are men of stern conviction, not all of those who agree with them

*Padraig
Ó Caoimh . . .
General Sec.
of the G.A.A.,
presents his
33rd annual
report to
Congress in the
Gresham Hotel
on Easter
Sunday.*



have the fibre for open support. If only one man were to cast an untrue vote because of expediency, the argument for the secret ballot would be carried—and in truth there would be a moral responsibility to have it.

Indeed, I am convinced that the reason why many of the pro-ban members dislike the secret ballot is because Rule 27 is more likely to get a jolt under those conditions.

So that is Congress. The big hall in the Gresham is full. At the top table are Hugh Byrne, the President, and Paddy O'Keeffe. Near them are the press-men, and ranged around the room in county groups are the delegates. There are hot words, flowery phrases, staccato interruptions and plenty of humour. The President is an angel to some and a dictator in the eyes of others. The day starts about noon and the evening shadows are falling along O'Connell Street before the day ends.

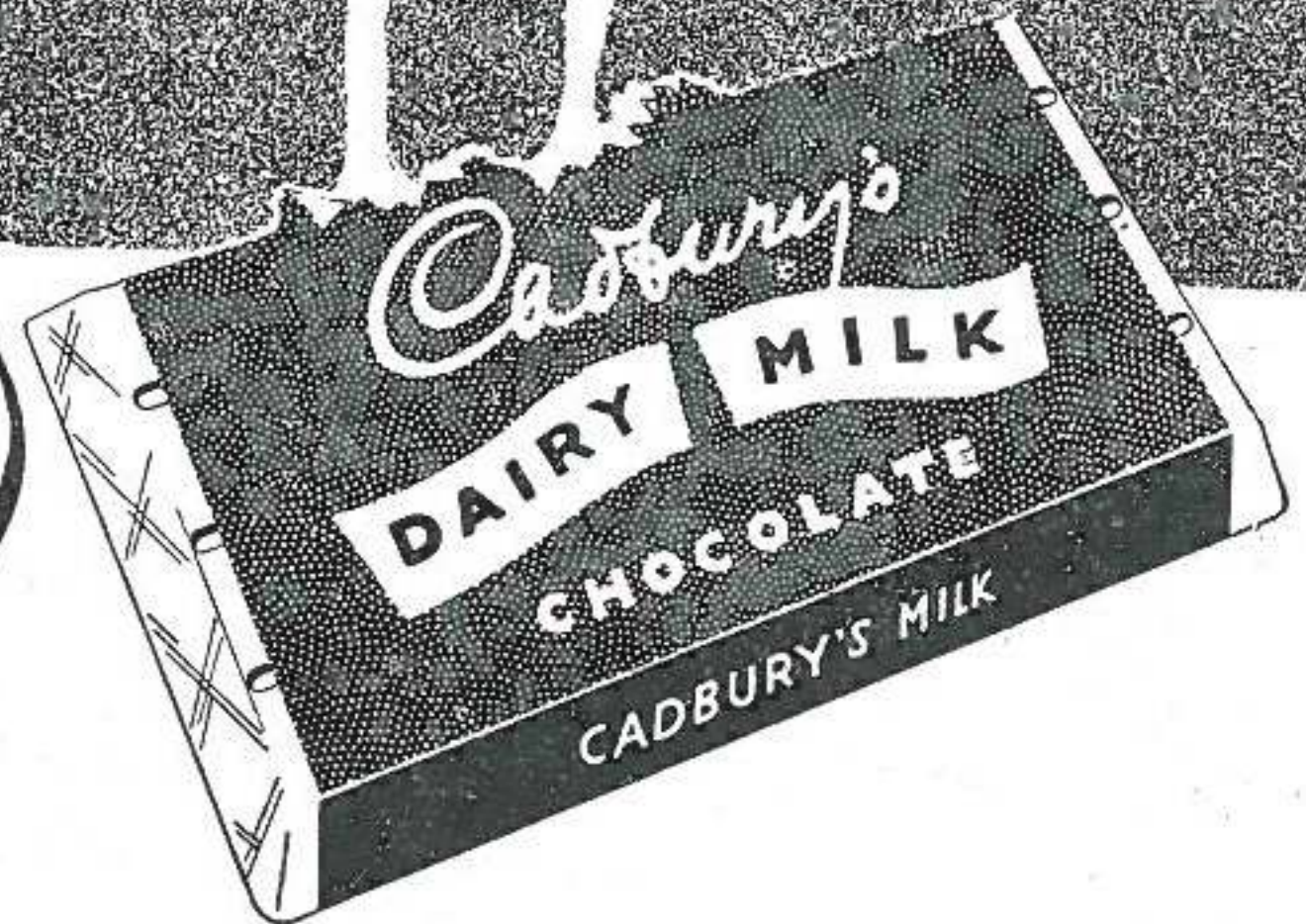
And when it's all over, there's many a true man will shake the hand of one whom he will not see for another year and talk perhaps in quiet, kindly tones of the men who are gone; the talkers, the players, the yarn-spinners, the "Souls that have toiled and wrought and thought with us. . . ."

Congress, more power to your elbow; but why, sometime, not come to the country? What a welcome you'd get!

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BRING IT BACK

Says EAMONN MONGEY

ONE of the most recent rules in the G.A.A. and yet one of the most consistently attacked—that's the dubious record of the one which prohibits full-time collective training. In recent years counties like Roscommon, Kerry, Meath and Cavan have sent motions to Congress to have it abolished, and this year my own county, Mayo, joined the attack in an effort to rescind it.

Now, there's one very significant feature about the records of the five counties mentioned above, which deserves notice. They are the counties which practised collective training most widely, most intelligently and, indeed, most successfully.

For a reason which I shall explain later, I take it that collective training, as we knew it, started in 1925. In the 30 years between that and 1955 when it was abolished, one or two of those counties appeared in 28 out of the 30 All-Ireland finals played, and between them they won 24 of those finals. But since then, they have won only one between them.

True, they may not have had the talent they had in previous years, but is it only a coincidence that the departure of these teams from the "honours" list occurred at almost exactly the same time as the abolition of collective training? Is it not even more significant that Dublin's rise to power (which was based on a combination style of play) coincided almost exactly with the abolition of collective training in other counties?

For, make no mistake about it, Dublin is the

one county in Ireland which doesn't need to worry about whether there is or is not full-time collective training. Almost all their players are living within a sixpenny bus ride of one another. They can be gathered together by 'phone at a half hour's notice. But for the other counties there is a far, far different story.

Take my own county, for instance. When we were in winning mood in the late '40's and early '50's our team was scattered all over the country. Paddy Frendergast was in Donegal; Billy Kenny and Peter Solan were in Galway; Jimmy Curran was in Meath; Liam Hastings was in Kildare; Padraig Carney spent a period in Cavan; of the rest, over half were in Dublin and the balance in Mayo.

Now, when full-time collective training was banned, it was on the basis that players could be easily gathered together for an evening of training and that there was no necessity to bring them together in the one place for a week or two. But even in this jet and rocket age, how could it be possible to gather that bunch of Mayo players together every evening for a fortnight and have them at home every night? Of course, it couldn't be done, and counties like Kerry, Roscommon and Cavan are faced with similar problems.

The fact is that when the non-residents' rule was introduced in 1925, permitting players to

(Continued on Page 39)



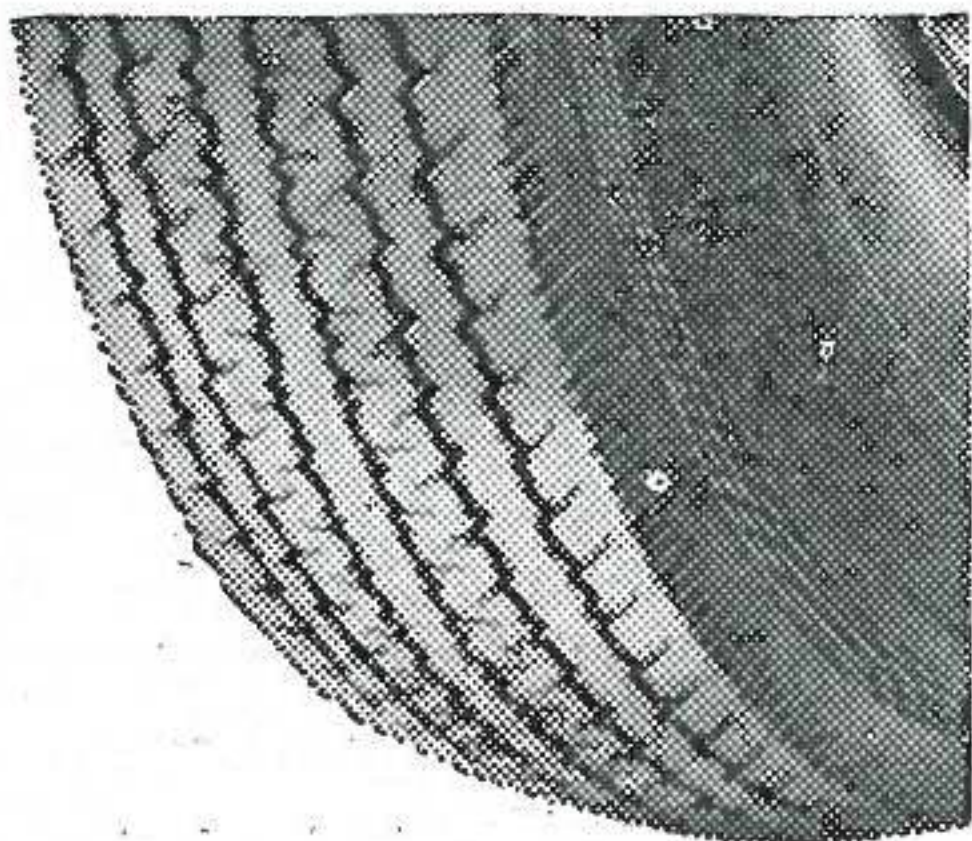
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AN IOMÁINT I LÉIG

CLUICHE Chúchulainn, fír-chluiche na nGael, an chluiche is ársa sa tír seo agus ceann de na cluichí is ársa ar domhan—iomáint. Le tapúlacht, aicillíocht, clisteacht, cruinneas is dánaíocht níl aon chluiche eile ar thalamh an domhain incurtha leis. Spreagann sé na sluaite, ardaíonn sé teocht na fola chun an pointe bheirithe; cluiche é a oireann do na Gaeil; ach tá sé ag dul i léig. Agus 'siad na Gaeil féin is ciontach le sin.

Le seacht gcéad bliain fé Shála an namhad coinníodh an cluiche álainn seo ar siúl in ainneoin slaide is chéasadh. E féin agus an creideamh—coinníodh iad. Tá saoirse bainte amach againn, i gcuid mhaith den tír seo, le dachad bliain anuas ach tá an iomáint ag dul i léig—“a clann féin do dhíol a máthair”.

Céard is ciontach leis an meath seo agus céard is féidir a dhéanamh len é leigheas?

Is fíor nach bhfuil an tsuim chéanna ag ógánaigh an lae inniu i gcluichí d'aon tsórt, leis na háiseanna nua caithimh aimsire atá anois ann—sé sin le rá nach bhfuil suim aca i gcleachtadh na gcluichí. Córas taistil, foirgnithe damhsa, teilifís, radio a chuireann isteach ar an bhfear óg anois; is leasc leis uair a' chloig a chaitheamh sa pháirc ag cleachtadh aon cluiche.

Má tá fonn air luithchleas ar bith a chleactadh, ar mhaithe lena shláinte nó ar fháth éigin eile, bh'fearr leis ceann a chleachtadh leis an chuid is lú costais. Chun camán a cheannach ní mór coróin nó níos mó a leagadh síos agus is beag stócach is a mbíonn an méid sin. Má bhíonn, fiú, níl aon chruthúnas aige nach scoiltfear ó bhás go greimleach é sa chéad ruathair in aghaidh Séimidh Rua—ansan cá bhfaigheadh sé coróin eile? Costas camáin. Is costasach an treallamh é, camán, ní ann féin ach sa mhéid go bhfuil sé chomh so-bhriste.

An bhfuil aon rud á dhéanamh le camáin a chur ar fáil sna scoileanna agus sna coláistí? Tá ach is fíor-bheagán é. Cuireann Coistí Contae roinnt airgid ar fáil do Bhórdanna Scol, nó do

Bhórdanna na nOg, cun camáin a cheannach ach níl ann ach scríobadh an bhárrithir. 'Sna Contaethe go bhfuil an iomáint láidir go leor iontu (m.sh. Cill Chainnigh) tig leis na buachaillí seanchamáin briste d'aimsiú ar pháirceanna imeartha agus iad a dheisiú; sna contaethe nach bhfuil an iomáint go fóirleathan iontu ní bhíonn mórán cluichí agus, dá thoradh, ganntanas camán le deisiú!

Chomh maith le gach rud eile tá ganntanas crann fuinseog sa tír ar fad ach sna contaethe is laige maidir le iomáint, ach go háirithe. Tá na hionaid déanta camán i ndeisceart na tíre agus i nGaillimh agus dá bhithín tá costas iompair ard go leor chuig áiteanna mar Sligeach agus Cabhán. Ar ndó tá na hionaid déanta sna ceantracha is mó éilimh.

Tuigeann údaraisí C.L.G. na deacrachtaí seo uilig. Ceapadh Coiste leis an cheist d'iniúchadh agus moltaí a thabhairt. Deineadh alán cainte, fiú baoth-chaint, ach níl ann sa deireadh ach deora crogail. Fiú, bhí fhios ag cách go raibh an tSraith Náisiúnta san Iomáint na Stáic mhaghaidh tar éis cúpla cluiche. Bunaíodh Coiste eile chun an scéal sin a leigheas. Tá an leigheas i bhféidhm i mbliana agus deirim go bhfuil sé níos measa ná an aicid!

An bhfuil aon mholtaí agam-sa? Tá. Deirim go bhfuil an iomarca airgid á chaitheamh ar pháirceanna. Cad is fiú páirceanna gan iománaíthe? Deirim go mbéidh ar na húdaraisí tabhairt féin cheist seo go bunúsach. Caithfear scéimeanna curtha crann fuinseog a bhunú, go háirithe sa chuid ó Thuaidh den tír. Caithfear airgead a chur ar fáil chun camáin a cheannach d'fhóirne na Scol. Caithfear teagascóirí lánaimsireacha a cheapadh le dul timpeall ar na scoileanna, ar na coláistí agus ar na clubanna chun na hógánaigh a theagasc—daoine cáiliúla go bhfuil féith taoiseach iontu. Caithfear an aSraith Náisiúnta d'athriaradh. Tógfaidh sé na blianta len é seo a dhéanamh ach céard is fiú triocho bliain ann i scéal ársa an chluiche iomána?



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ONLY 90 seconds of the 1954 Oireachtas final remained. Wexford were leading Clare, 2-8 to 1-7. The game was virtually over and it looked as if Wexford had retained the treasured Oireachtas title.

But wait—Clare have gained possession at midfield. The unmistakable figure of Jimmy Smith is there. He has the ball. He is tackled but manages to shake off the attention of two Wexfordmen. Then he is away.

Seventy yards between Smith and that Wexford goal . . . fifty yards . . . now forty. Bobby Rackard is there, that towering and graceful bulwark of defence. Rackard tries but Smith is through . . . only thirty yards . . . twenty. He shoots . . . Art Foley saves. Smith is there again . . . it's a goal!

The puck-out and Clare attack again. They are awarded a free. The ball is placed thirty-five yards out and well to the right of the posts. Smith bends, lifts and strikes—the teams are level and the greatest Oireachtas final ever played is over.

That game, although by no means his greatest, was the pinnacle of Jimmy Smith's hurling career. Clare triumphed in the replay, and so the powerful Ruan man won the only worthwhile senior inter-county medal of his long career.

It's now almost eighteen years since Jimmy Smith first made hurling headlines. It all began in St. Flannan's College, Ennis, where Smith, at the extraordinarily early

age of fourteen, was chosen on the college senior team. In 1944, '45, '46 and '47 he helped St. Flannan's win the Harty Cup together with the All-Ireland Colleges' title in 1946 and '47.

During those years, Smith had no equal in colleges' hurling. His huge, powerful figure made him a man among boys.

A brilliant all-round athlete, Jimmy also won numerous Munster colleges' athletic titles and also proved himself a useful footballer during those years.

By 1949 Smith was a regular on the Clare team. Tipperary were then supreme in the hurling world, and what Munster hurling follower will ever forget those great Tipperary-Clare duels of the early '50's.

These were Smith's greatest games. If I were to name one in particular I would choose the 1950 Munster semi-final at Limerick when the Ruan man crashed his way time and time again through that heretofore impenetrable Tipperary defence to score a personal

tally of 3-4 in a rather low-scoring game.

In 1953, Smith set up a new Munster championship scoring record when he notched six goals and four points against Limerick in the first round. This figure was then an all-time national championship high, but it was topped by Nick Rackard in the 1954 All-Ireland semi-final against Antrim.

However, Smith's record still stands in Munster and is likely to remain so for many a day.

The long-cherished dream of Jimmy Smith looked like being realised in 1955. In the first round, Clare beat All-Ireland champions Cork. In the second round they beat National League champions Tipperary. Only a young and inexperienced Limerick side stood between Clare and Wexford in the All-Ireland final . . . and had not Clare beaten Wexford a few months previously in the Oireachtas final?

What happened to Clare in that 1955 Munster final has never been fully explained. They were well

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PEN-PICTURE OF A HURLING GIANT

By

SEAN FEELEY

and truly beaten by Limerick. It was undoubtedly the greatest setback ever suffered by Clare.

Since then, Jimmy Smith has hurled on as brilliantly as ever—but in his heart he must have many times realised that his chances of ever winning an All-Ireland medal were gone.

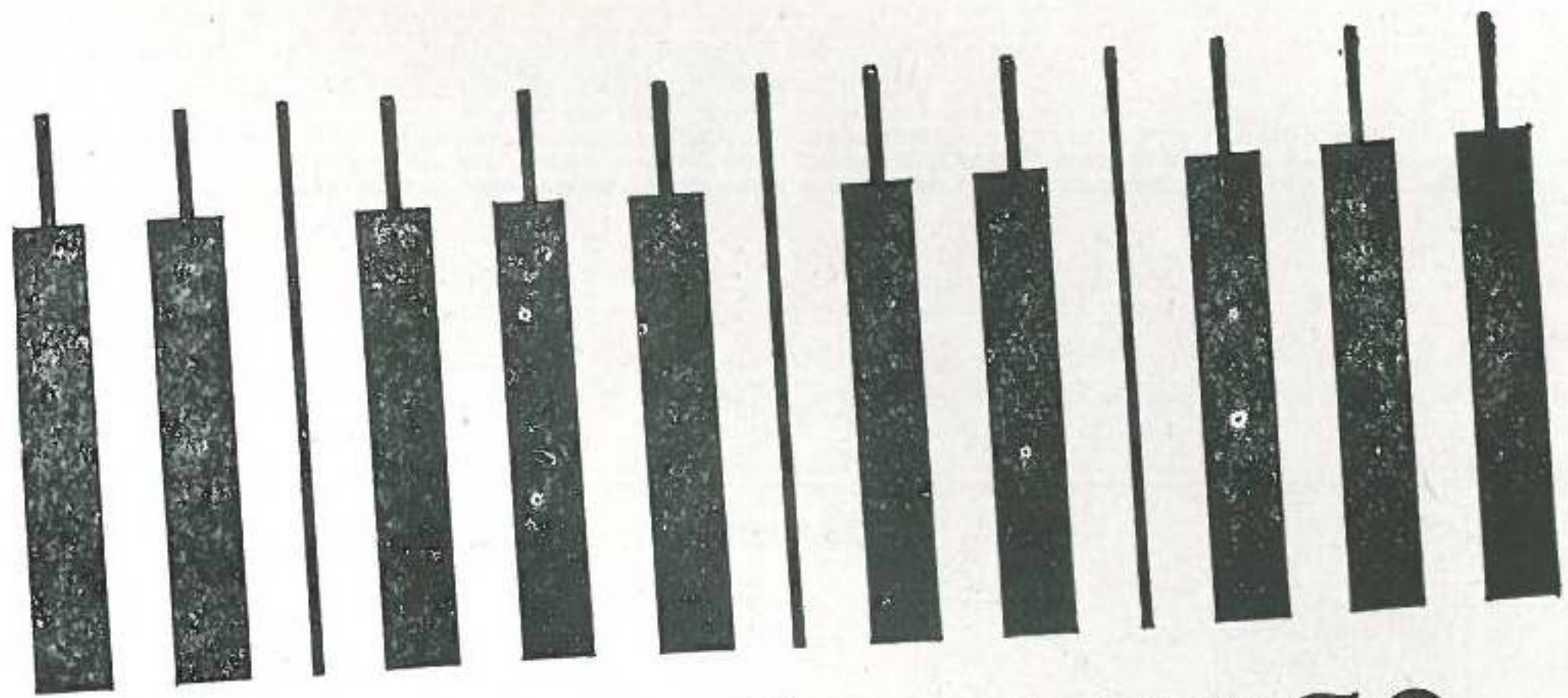
Honoured by the Munster selectors every year since and including 1954, Jimmy has collected a handful of Railway Cup medals; yet they are but tokens in the absence of the supreme honour.

The great hurling career of Jimmy Smith is now drawing to a close. His selection for Munster this year was somewhat of a surprise, for he had informed the Clare selectors that he would no longer be available for inter-county competition. Croke Park will see this great hurler for probably the last time on St. Patrick's Day.

In an era of great forwards, Jimmy Smith will be remembered as the greatest bar one—Christy Ring. On his day, this Clareman was almost unbeatable. Alone he could, and often did, carry Clare from the depths of mediocrity to glorious victory.

His surely was a greatness truly worthy of an All-Ireland medal.

Still, when it comes to a place of honour in the memory of Gael-dom, true ability and not All-Ireland medals is the criterion. That is why Jimmy Smith, pride of Clare, has his place assured.



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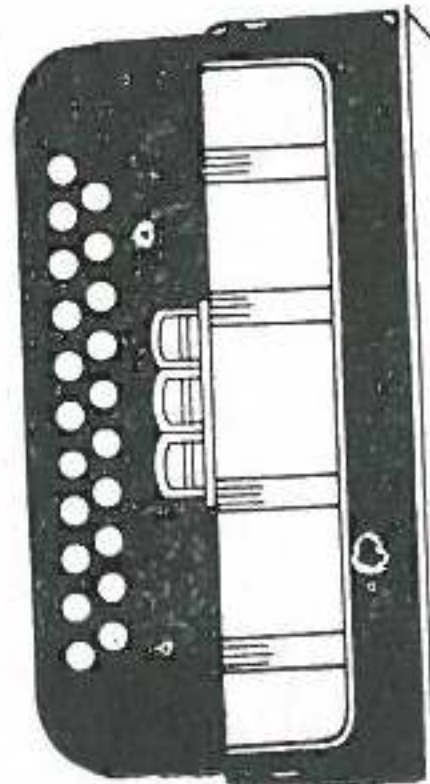
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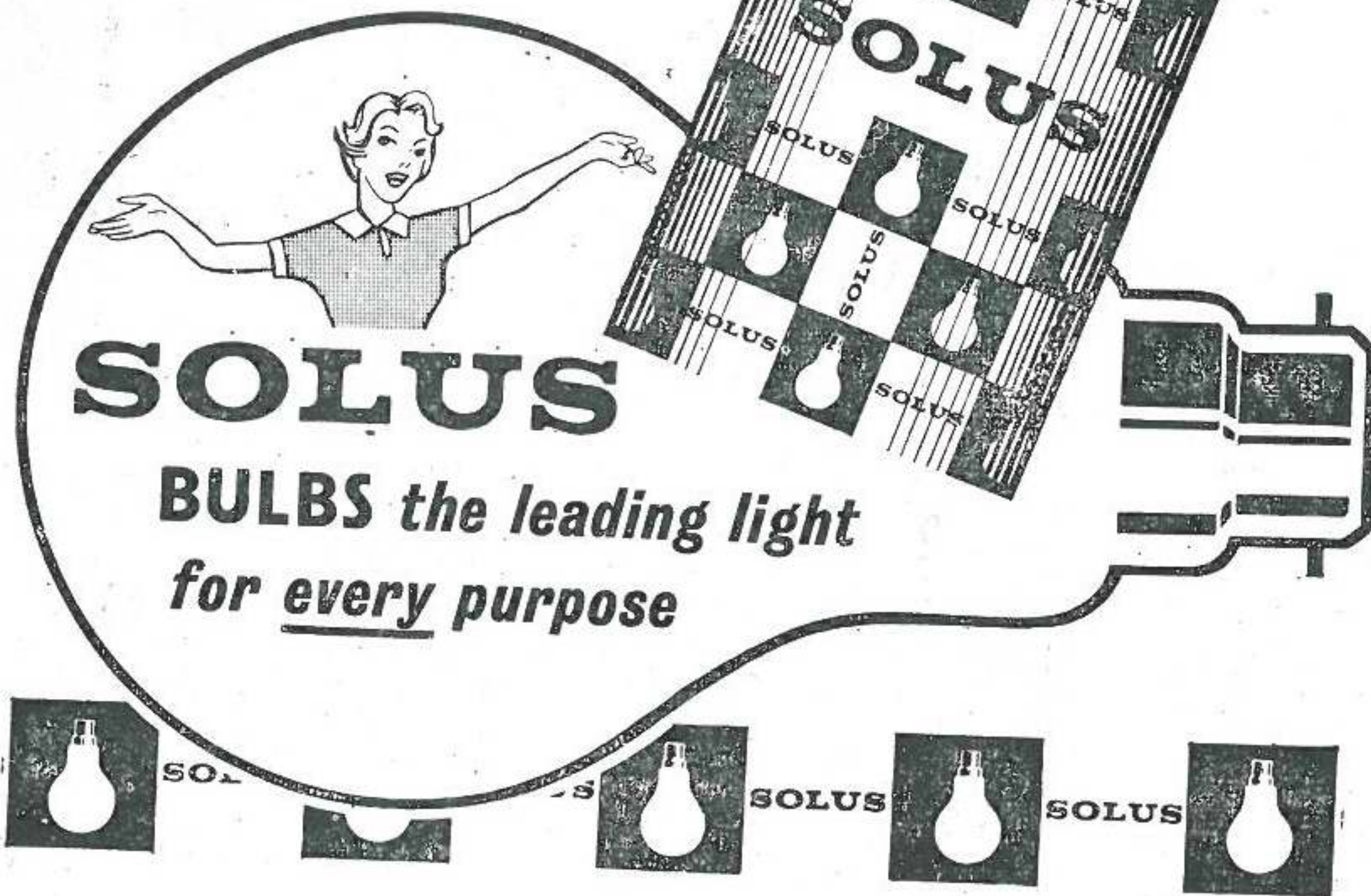
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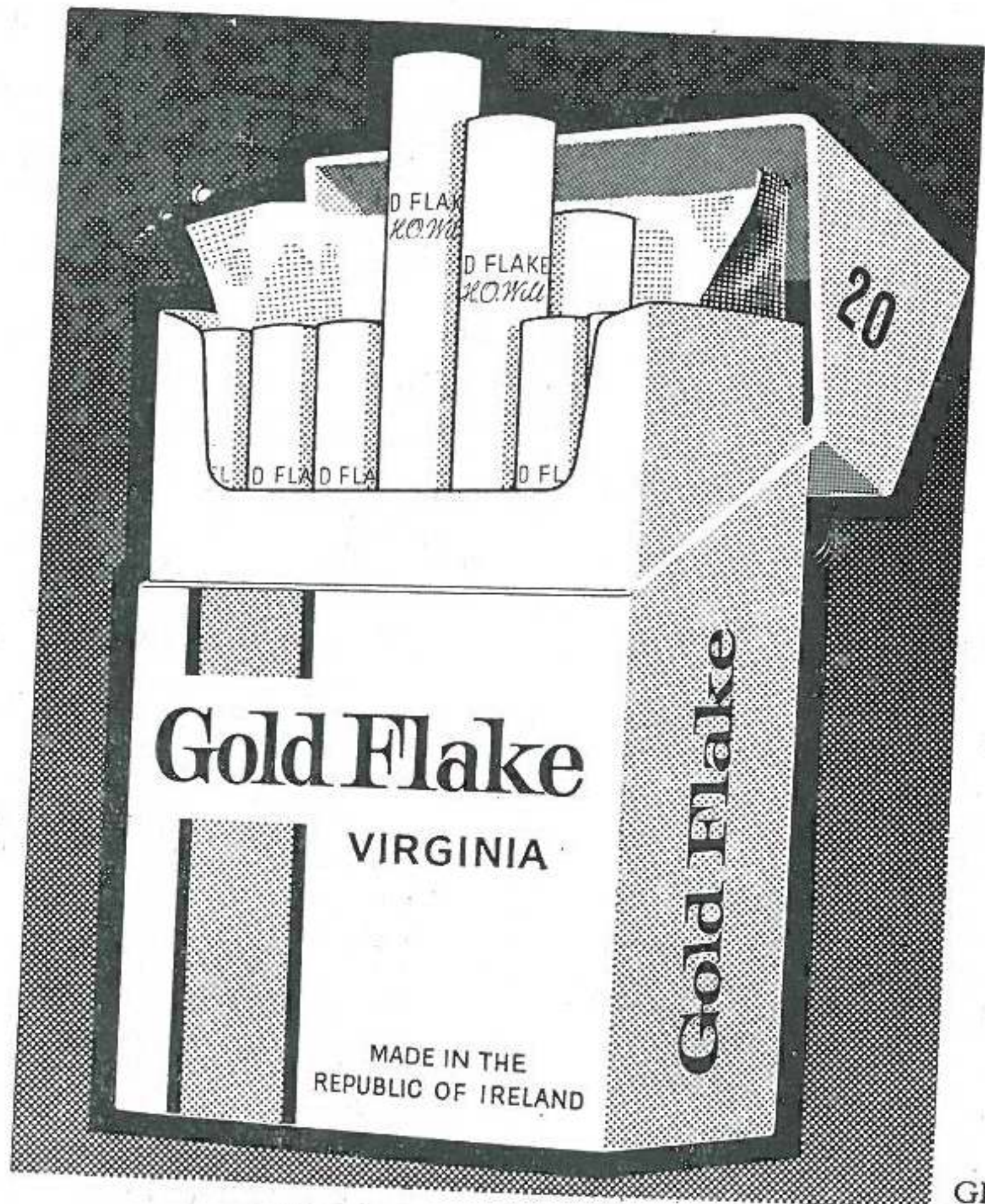
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THAT OTHER BAN

By AGNES
HOURIGAN

THE men, and more luck to them, have had great fun these last few months discussing Rule 27 and 'foreign games'; but no one that I know of has made any mention of the other Ban, the Ban on camogie. The girls' game could hardly get more of a cold shoulder from some of our G.A.A. folk if it had been invented by Oliver Cromwell.

I think I read through as much of the County Convention reports as I could in the daily papers when the Gaels were in session at the end of January, but I don't think I read of any single county that offered to give camogie a helping hand.

So, I suppose there's nothing left for us to do except go back to washing the jerseys and the togs and the socks and darning them too, so that the lords of creation will continue to look at their best when they field out for the club or the parish or for the county. (Of course when they get to the All-Ireland finals our washing is no longer good enough for them. The city laundries take over then).

And still, if the women didn't come to look at them play I wonder would the men always put the same heart into their games as they do now.

It would serve them right if we gave up going to their matches altogether and contented ourselves by sitting at home and looking at the television.

But there is another place where camogie seems to be banned—in Telefis Eireann, where they seem to think camogie is some kind of a bad word, because I have never seen or heard the name of it from Kippure since first the station opened on New Year's Eve.

Now, I don't see why we shouldn't get at least a mention from our own Television Station, and I expect a great deal more. Why can't the television cameras go up to the Phoenix Park on an odd Saturday or Sunday and film even twenty seconds of a camogie match to show to the viewers, or is it that Telefis Eireann has never heard of camogie?

After all, that should not be so, for the Camogie Association was one of the first to offer the new service its full co-operation. And if Telefis Eireann won't do even a quarter-minute of our matches, why can't it do a little instructional series on how to play camogie?

After all, U.T.V. gives the results of Ulster Colleges camogie games, and that is the least we might expect from our own station.

I would suggest to the Annual Congress to get down in earnest to this matter of camogie being entirely ignored on our own television, and set about having it rectified right away.

After all, we know by bitter experience that if we don't speak up for ourselves, no one else will. So, here's to the first day we'll see camogie on Telefis Eireann.



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The fickle fans

By CHRIS MURRAY

WATCHING the Galway-Roscommon League game in Tuam last November, the fickleness of football supporters struck me more forcibly than ever before. After last year's Connacht final, most Galway supporters were incapable of accepting defeat after a five-year winning sequence in the province, and promptly blamed their team for losing, without for one moment thinking that, perhaps, the better team had won.

No; there had to be scapegoats, and no one was blamed more than the youthful **Pat Donnellan** from Dunmore, who had the misfortune to lash a few headless wides when a pass to a more accurate colleague might have produced better results.

His youthful inexperience was not allowed for. Not even his past record as a glorious College footballer was remembered. The typical supporter

just remembered Pat's last game, the agonising misses, and in some subsequent club games Pat was reminded of his "sins" by some on-the-ditch observers.

Far from being ruined by this treatment, young Donnellan was spurred on to wipe out the "stain". No man could have trained harder. Wipe out the "stain" he did in the return League game referred to, when the big chance came again. The inaccurate boot from constant practice became unerring, and the typical supporter (Deo Gratias) quickly forgot. The scapegoat of yesterday became the hero of to-day. It was so funny to hear the same mouths shout "Good man, Pat"; "He's in great form", etc., etc., as shouted "Could never shoot", "Never will be a footballer", and so on at the Connacht final. Oh, the fickleness of our typical supporter. It is a fact that a footballer's reputation lives on the strength of his last game with many supporters. One good reason for not having a good game: At least an improvement in your next outing



Pat Donnellan

will be appreciated—that is if you have a next outing!

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(Continued from Page 27)

declare for their native counties, it became immediately necessary that full-time training be introduced—and indeed it was immediately introduced by Mayo in the 1925 championship campaign. For counties with a large number of declared players, the ease with which they could be gathered together prior to 1921 was gone, and collective training had to be resorted to.

But is collective training necessary at all? Undoubtedly, in my opinion—for two reasons. First, it introduces a wonderful spirit into the team; and spirit is one of the essential requirements for the victory of any team. Secondly, it improves a team out of all recognition.

Everyone knows, of course, how Kerry used to improve under the guidance of Dr. Eamon O'Sullivan, and I myself have had experience of how Roscommon used to improve also. It was well known in Connacht that if you met Roscommon in the first round of the championship before they started training you had a good chance of beating them. Later, it became nearly impossible.

In five years (1943-1947) we caught them once before they started training, and beat them. That was in 1945; but everyone knows what a magnificent team they were in the preceding years (1943-'44) and in the succeeding year (1946) in All-Ireland finals in Croke Park, when they were fully trained.

But not only does collective training improve individual teams, it also improves the game. The contributions which Kerry, Cavan, Mayo, Roscommon and Meath have made to the advance of football is indeed sizeable, and it was largely collective training which did it. As Dr. Eamon O'Sullivan says in his book, "The Art and Science of Gaelic Football," the natural evolution and future development of the game lies in combined play, and the only way to achieve this is through collective training.

The achievements of Down are a wonderful example of this. They have been in the fortunate position over the last few years of having practically all their players in close proximity to one another, the result being that they have been able to meet two evenings a week throughout the year.



Jack Dempsey . . . the Cork goalkeeper, reaches high but fails to stop this Wexford point in the League game at the Athletic Grounds on February 11. Cork won, 9-7 to 3-6.

The benefit of this collective training is reflected in their play. Without collective training the perfection which is theirs would have been impossible to achieve.

Why, then, was collective training ever banned? Because it was alleged that the practice of paying players who were out of pocket as a result of full-time training was an infringement of the amateur principles of the Association.

Candidly, I feel it was due to something else. I feel that when some abuses arose certain counties hadn't the moral courage to deal with them properly and efficiently. To save themselves from having to take honest but embarrassing steps, they abolished full-time collective training altogether.

It was, in my opinion, a very retrograde piece of legislation and one which, I hope, for the future progress of our games, will be repealed before too much damage is done.

LISTEN TO DR. JIM

MUCH emphasis has been and is being laid on the phenomenal growth of the G.A.A. in recent years: more clubs, record attendances, more playing fields; yet many sincere administrators of Association affairs up and down the country have expressed themselves as perturbed that the interests of the clubs, which are the backbone of the Association, are being sacrificed to make an inter-county holiday.

The dangers inherent in the formation of a gladiatorial elite of county hurlers and footballers can only be averted by diverting to the welfare of the clubs and their competitions some of the resources and energy which go to the making of All-Ireland records.

No less an authority than Dr. Jim Brosnan, chairman of the Kerry County Board, stated at the annual County Convention that "to speak of continued progress in the G.A.A. seems hypocrisy and idle lip-service, while players still tog out by the side of a fence, seventy-eight years after the founding of our Association".

It is a measure of the popular appeal of the games themselves that so many young men join the G.A.A. clubs, when the most that the vast majority of the clubs can offer is a game of football or hurling, and nothing else. Accommodation and shelter for dressing and undressing, where it exists, is primitive in the extreme, and in most cases the player has no option but to don his clothes without even washing his hands. He then leaves the field and his active association with the club ceases until the next

match. There are no club premises or rooms to which he can repair on occasions for a game of cards or any other form of amusement, or to look at the notice board to see if his name is up for the next match. In fact, in the wider and generally accepted sense of the word, there is no such thing as a G.A.A. club.

At this stage it might be no harm to look at how clubs of other associations order their affairs. Down in Tipperary, the birthplace of the G.A.A., there is the Clanwilliam Rugby Football Club, a tiny outpost, surrounded on all sides by adherents of the national games. It is only a junior club, yet it owns a first-class playing pitch, a handsome pavilion complete with dressingrooms, hot and cold showers, more than adequate toilet facilities, and a dance hall which adds considerably to the club's revenue. After a match, tea and other refreshments are provided for the visiting team and any supporters who may care to avail of them.

Tullamore R.F.C., in the great football county of Offaly, is another junior club with one of the finest layouts of any club in the country. There are many others not quite so lavish, but it is worthy of mention that even in the smallest of them, both teams fraternise after the game over a cup of tea, which is always laid on.

The disparity at senior club level is even more marked. Most rugby clubs in Cork, Limerick, Dublin and Belfast have a playing field with pavilion and bar, and in most cases a dance hall, the profits

from which enable them to maintain a high standard of club life, not only for the active playing members, but, equally important, for those whose playing days are over. It is safe to say that there is not a single G.A.A. club in the country with a fraction of the comforts and amenities offered by these clubs.

It will be objected that there are very many more Gaelic clubs than rugby clubs, and that they are widely scattered in every corner of the country. It is not suggested that it is possible for every G.A.A. club to have its own ground and club house with decent amenities, but it is possible for a number of clubs in any area to co-operate in the building of one good central club house with one or more playing fields attached.

A communal playing field and club rooms for all games are normal in every university, and if another example is required, a study of the National Playing Fields Association of Britain will provide it.

If at all feasible a dance hall should be incorporated in the building to provide money for additional comforts. It is idle to pretend that the young men and women of the G.A.A. do not patronise foreign dances. They do, and the money they spend on them might as well find its way into the club's coffers. In the urban areas particularly, no difficulty should arise in acquiring a bar licence; this would be a boon to the older members, who under the present dispensation can only resort to the local pub to "chew the rag" over the match and its fortunes, to the

Club check-up

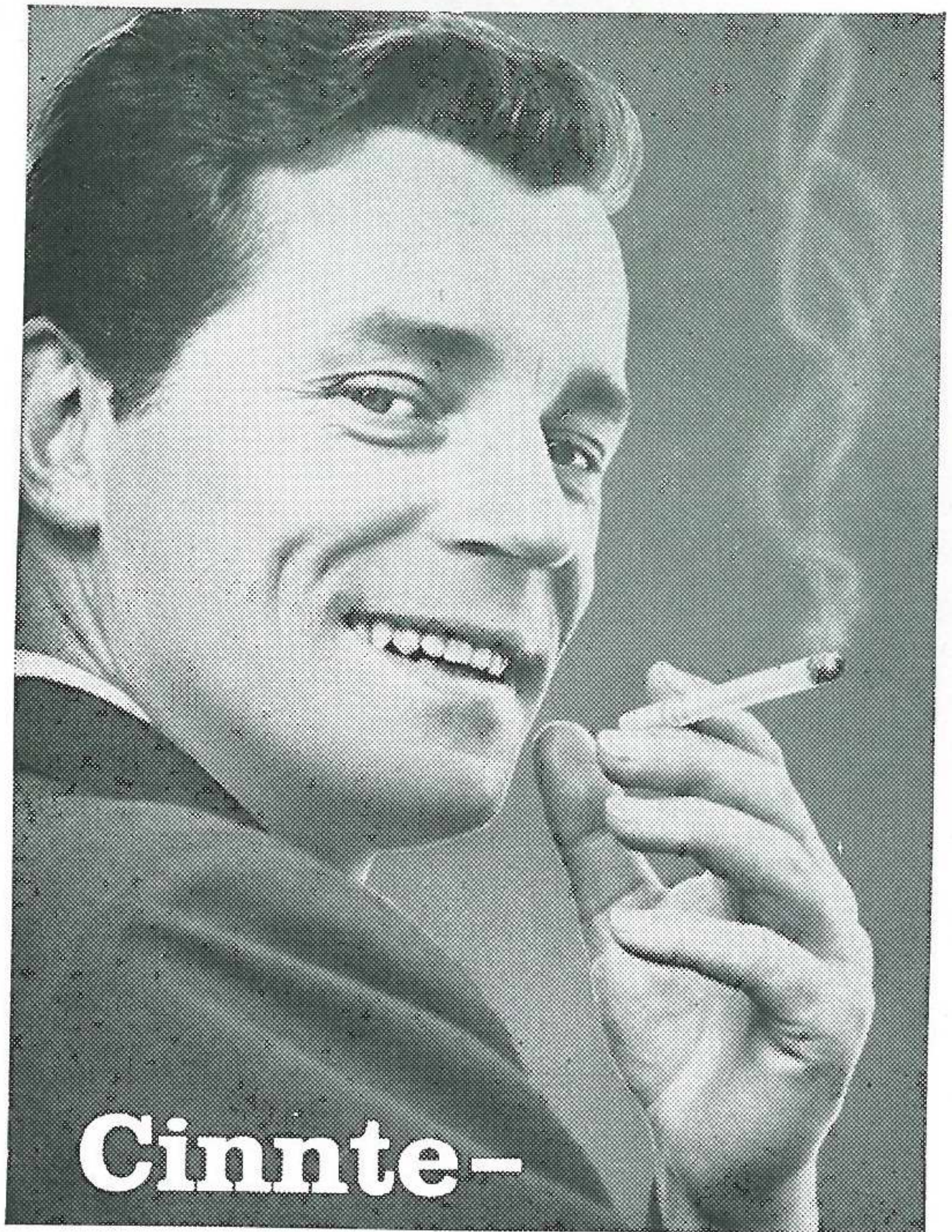
By

FRANK READE

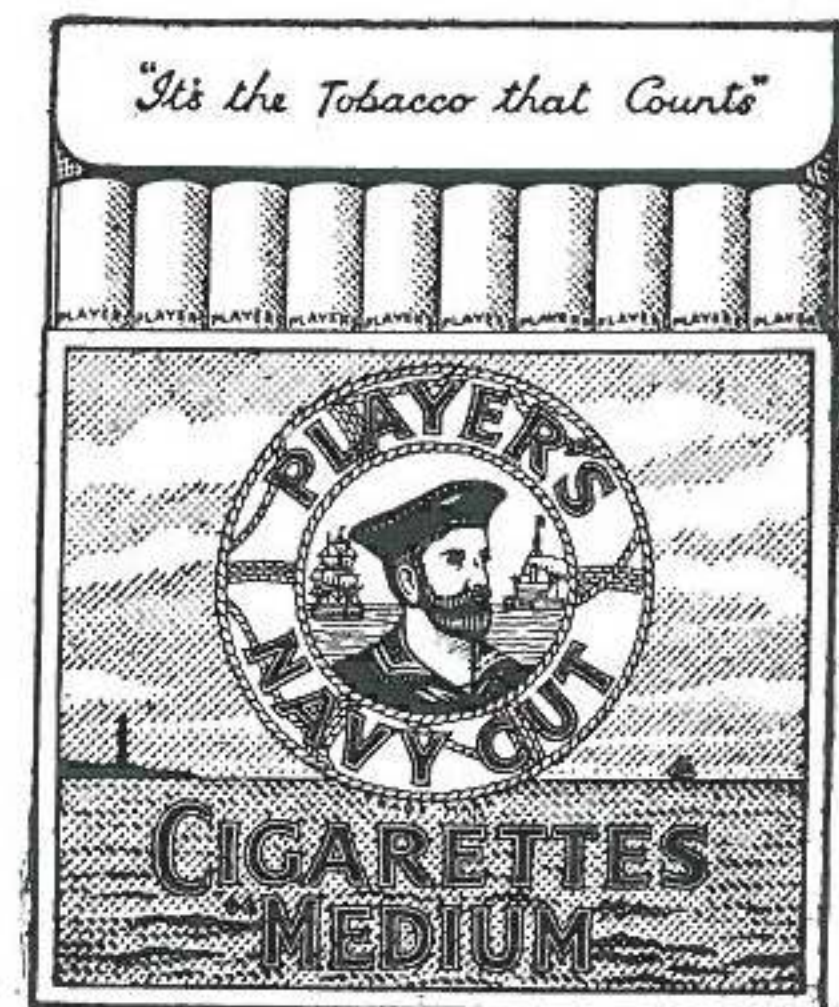
benefit of "mine host" instead of the club.

At the moment of writing, Dundalk Gaels G.F.C. are trying to purchase a playing pitch. For the past few years all their games have been played in St. Brigid's Park, Dowdallshill, about two miles from the town of Dundalk. Most clubs in Dundalk have to avail of this ground, and the Gaels members feel that a pitch more adjacent to the town is virtually necessary to the Association. Unless Dundalk Gaels are different from most other G.A.A. clubs throughout the country, the result must be the same—an area of grass, surrounded by corrugated iron, with perhaps an old bus or rail carriage for dressing rooms. Proximity to the town may make the latter item unnecessary and "togging out" may take place in a convenient hotel.

In conclusion, another suggestion is offered. All over the country, notably in Kerry, the game of basketball has gained great favour among followers of the Gaelic codes. It is an ideal form of recreation for the long winter evenings when football and hurling are impossible. Let the G.A.A. and the I.A.B.B.A., which is also a 32-county organisation, get together and pool their resources to provide indoor basketball courts wherever needed. All G.A.A. clubs could register with the B.B. Association, thus prolonging throughout the week that association of G.A.A. club members which at the moment seems to begin and end each Sunday.



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PLAYER'S

1/8 ar 10 3/4 ar 20

TOP HONOURS FOR DEVANEY

WHAT Tipperary man will ever forget it? . . . Ten minutes of lurid drama and grim, steely defence that will stand always as a glorious landmark in the hurling history of the blue and gold.

It was the first Sunday of September, 1961, and Dublin and Tipp were battling it out in a fierce contest for the highest honour in the game.

When the Munster champions led by 0-10 to 0-6 at half time, it looked as if Dublin might collapse long before the end. But it was the Metropolitans who really turned on the steam after the interval—and Tipp reeled and tottered under the onslaught.

The Munster men recovered for a while, hit back and scores were level with just ten minutes to go. Then Dublin mounted a new assault. With Des Foley ram-

pant at midfield, they virtually camped in "enemy" ground.

Tipp were desperate. Hopes of that 18th title were slowly but surely crumbling away. But they had just one trump card left—and they played it in a final gamble.

They pulled an off-form Tony Wall out of the game and switched Liam Devaney from centre-forward—where he had been having a brilliant match—to centre half back.

The gamble worked. For the remaining minutes Devaney hurtled defiance in the faces of of the Dublin men. His stupendous defence lifted the siege, and Tipp moved back for the winning scores.

Yes, that 1961 All-Ireland triumph really belongs to Liam Devaney, for, at that stage, no other Tipp man was capable of stemming the rising, crashing tide of Dublin's attack.

Those ten minutes epitomised all the superb skill, the astonishing versatility, of the Borris-Ileigh man's hurling. It was the shining pinnacle of a Senior inter-county career that began in 1955 and that is still in the first flush of greatness.

And it brought Liam another All-Ireland medal to add to the one he already held for 1958 . . . to add, in fact to the growing collection of trophies that, beside the Celtic Crosses, include four National Leagues and three Munster championships.

It brought further honours, too. For, chiefly on the strength of that display, Devaney was nominated for the Caltex Trophy by the sports editors of the national papers and was also chosen "Hurler of 1961" by the Association of Gaelic Sports Journalists.



IF I'D ONLY KNOWN . . .

He would have given anything to see that match; but the thought of queues and crowded carriages and rush and bother put him off.

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SCRAPBOOK

By **EAMONN YOUNG**

NOW that Easter Sunday is only five weeks away one is wondering what's going to happen at Easter Congress. Needless to say, everything has faded into the background to give the stage to our foreign games rule discussion. The Dublin motion is the important one: it is suggested that a committee should investigate the operation of the Ban and report to Central Council.

Down, Cavan, Clare and Carlow will support Tom Woulfe and company and there will be many counties against, even though, in some cases, the majority in favour of the Ban was not strong. Tipperary is a case in point.

My feeling is that the Dublin motion will be beaten, and it's a pity, for we have under its terms an ideal chance of investigating the whole contentious affair, without taking any positive action until 1965. Still, the majority will rule and rightly so.

THE man whose speech against the Ban at the Tipperary convention had such a lot of support was John O'Grady, who won an All-Ireland between the sticks for Tipp. John, a schoolteacher, played for some years for Blackrock in Cork and represented the club at the County Board.

A clear-thinking delegate, he has a good grasp of the hurling essentials, and some time ago I heard

Tony Wall speaking in praise of John's knowledge of the game which Tipperary men would like to call their own.

PAUL RUSSELL and Paddy Moclair, two of the all-time greats in football, are forming an association of All-Ireland senior medal-holders. What its objects are I'm not very sure, but I have more respect for the integrity of these two great players than to suggest that they intend to harm the G.A.A. Yet, reading a columnist in a Sunday paper some time ago, one would think that this was a definite possibility.

Why are we so wary about organisations within the G.A.A. itself? Obviously because we cannot tolerate any band over which Central Council has not got control. For years I have been suggesting a proper referees' association with representation at county board level. The meeting of referees on an organisational basis as distinct from a lecture period would give better results. Yet, the idea has not caught on.

Are we afraid that the formation of an association could lead to a strike of referees?

In my view, there's nothing wrong and a lot of good in such internal units; and far from discouraging them, Central Council might be wise to inspire the confidence which would cause mem-

bers with ideas outside of the county boards to come in under the administrative wing of the G.A.A.

WATCHING a game the other day I had a brilliant idea: ANOTHER ONE! Why not put the numbers on the front as well as on the back of the player's jersey? The game I watched had a lot of men unknown to me, but the programme soon identified them. Sometimes, however, when a goal was scored, one remained doubtful as to who got it; for the man who might have been the scorer always ran out to his place, thus facing the onlooker. One could not identify him until he turned his back again. The double number would be very useful on TV.

THE Irish Rugby Union refused to allow an international game to be televised as it might affect the gate both at the game and at venues which would have an interest in the international fixture. One can anticipate the same objections from our association. Let's hope, however, that tolerant, sensible men will smooth the way to televised games, as soon as possible. One does not sympathise so much with the able-bodied follower who can either play or attend

(Continued on Page 45).



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*ACTION . . .
in the Cork-Wexford
National Hurling
League game at the
Athletic Grounds
on February 11.*



another game, as with the sick and the aged.

.

This year we had a motion from a club in Donegal suggesting that golf be banned. Any more of that nonsense and we'll be the laughing-stock of the country.

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THE other day an ex-county hurler was bemoaning the fact that there was no game he could play. He wasn't keen on golf or tennis and handball courts are scarce.

There's shooting, fishing, beagling, bowl-playing, and a few more pastimes which can make a player happy, but it's a real pity we don't have rounders on the village green on a Sunday morning or on a long summer evening.

.

This is what the plain man said:

Automatic suspension: "You don't use the handle of a shovel to slap a child or a hammer to kill a flea."

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It is doubtful if the substitution rule has been tightened up properly even yet. The other night I heard a good argument in favour of allowing the sub. on the field only when the play had stopped.

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WHY do so many referees throw the ball into the air for a hop-ball? The rule states the ball should be hopped on the ground. I admit personal prejudice here. Hard to blame one who spent many of youth's golden hours practising the run on to the ball and catching it, the ref. and the opposition on the rebound.

.

WHEN are we going to teach our young players something

about the science of fitness of which diet and health-care are such important facets? The other day a young man felt cold—colder than usual. On the weighing scale we found he had lost five pounds over the week-end—during which he had played a match and run a cross-country race.

Fatigue and the loss of the five-pound "pullover" was bound to have a lowering effect.

.

THE 200 pound Garda (an inter-county footballer) wanted the frail little man to go home but, spirits were in and temper up.

The Garda at length shoved your man through the door of the barracks. The last words I heard were: "I wish to God I could play football; I'd kick the heart out of you." It wasn't the Garda who spoke.

Club needs H.Q.

UP to very recently one of Dublin's greatest problems on the G.A.A. front was the lack of grounds.

For a long time Parnell Park stood almost alone because Dublin Corporation's huge building schemes literally ate up the existing grounds, which were few enough to begin with.

However, in recent years things have taken a more hopeful turn and the Corporation has provided

many grounds in Dublin's fast-growing suburbs, and the city now has a second county ground, which is equipped with a first-class pavilion complete with showers.

On top of all that the clubs themselves are showing a new awareness of the value of having their own headquarters, and already Erin's Isle, Inchicore Hibernians and St. Maurs have opened new parks.

And now the city's premier club, St. Vincent's, are working hard on

their new ground at Raheny, and they hope to have it ready for a May opening.

One of the things I could never understand was why Vincent's did not seek a headquarters of their own long ago. In their halcyon days they were capable of drawing crowds of 30,000 to their championship games, and had they launched their scheme to acquire and develop their own ground then they would surely have had one of the best in the country.

It is surprising that those in control of the club's affairs neglected to seek a ground of their own.

It can hardly be advanced that the lack of funds was the trouble because the club was in a thriving state.

And, anyway, Civil Service, whose resources can hardly have been any greater than Vincent's, developed their ground in Islandbridge and built a pavilion equipped with showers many years ago. This enterprise gained them a special award from the Leinster Council.

Of course, the acquiring and developing of a ground by any club, whether they be situated in town or country, is not easily achieved.

Above all, I think, the club must be possessed of a very sound committee and membership, and as well as that, it must have a few really dynamic men at the top, who will pursue their ideal to the limits of their endeavours.

Undoubtedly, the grounds posi-

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tion throughout the country has improved and hardly a week passes without a new one being added to the list.

The provincial councils and the county boards play their parts to the limits of their resources, but I cannot help feeling that clubs south of the Border should be given some help by the Government or by local authorities.

In the Six Counties substantial grants are available to all clubs under an Act which is designed to provide healthy recreation for youth, and I think that this is an excellent idea.

In any case, the possession of a first-class ground in a town or city is often a great boon to the place in question. Take places like Thurles, Limerick, Portlaoise, Cavan: look at the benefits these towns derive from their big G.A.A. parks.

If help were forthcoming from the authorities, we would surely see more and more grounds being opened and our organisation would surely go from strength to strength in each county.

The sparse attendance at most Dublin senior league and even championship fixtures has often been commented on in the past, and I am convinced that the reason for this is that the clubs had no proper headquarters.

There is nothing which stimulates players more than a loyal band of supporters, especially when they are from the same locality or parish.

And from the supporters' point of view they like to go to the familiar ground, where, rather like the "local," they can meet friends and watch their favourites play.

It also means that the club gains members who pay a yearly subscription which puts funds in the committee's hands from the start.

Clubs would also avoid rent and other charges which are made on them when they do not own their own ground.

This system has much to recom-

mend it and has been used by other codes for years.

Another matter of almost equal importance is the provision of a club premises, in cases where there is no pavilion or where it is too small.

A number of clubs throughout the country have already realised the importance of this aspect of administration.

The most recent one I have heard of is the fine project embarked upon by the Round Towers Club in Clondalkin, Co. Dublin.

They have under construction a premises which, when finished, will cater for all indoor games—even basketball in a limited way—and will have a stage for concerts, etc. The cost will be £4,600. It's a lot of money, but Clondalkin Gaels are equal to the task and have already collected £2,000.

And they can be sure that this is one investment that will pay off handsomely in the future and will be reflected in the progress of the club.



KEVIN HEFFERNAN
Dublin's long-serving corner-forward makes yet another appearance in the Leinster football jersey when he lines out against Ulster at Croke Park on St. Patrick's Day. This is Kevin's 14th consecutive season of service with the province. He first played on the Leinster team in 1949.

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T.E. and the G.A.A.

FEARs . . . reservations . . . hopes. They were all there before the coming of Telefis Eireann last January and quite a share of them filled the hearts of the followers and officials of Gaelic games.

It's early days yet. And until the G.A.A. championship season gets into full swing in mid-summer the impact of the electronic marvel of television on Gaelic games cannot be measured fully.

Sporting programmes on TE fall into three categories: (a) the nightly bulletin; (b) the weekly review, and (c) outside telecasts whether these be live or recorded on video-tape.

Having watched all three over the early weeks of Telefis Eireann's short existence, one thing is clear to me at least. Hurling and Gaelic football have been treated as just two of the many sports to be dealt with.

Whether this is right or wrong is something on which opinions differ, and I'm sure that the Radio Eireann authorities, depending as they are on direct income from licence holders and advertisers, are mindful of the fact that all tastes must be catered for.

Not for one moment do I suggest that things should be otherwise. But if the crowd-pulling power of every game in this little island is studied it will be seen that the taste for Gaelic games is far greater than for any other sport.

Among the licence-holders—and they, too, are the consumers and purchasers of the goods advertised by TE—the majority favour hurling and Gaelic football. Only Gaelic games can attract

60,000 crowds; many sports cannot draw in even half that figure.

Neither do I believe that Radio Eireann should pander to this majority. But it should, I submit, give them an adequately detailed and informed service.

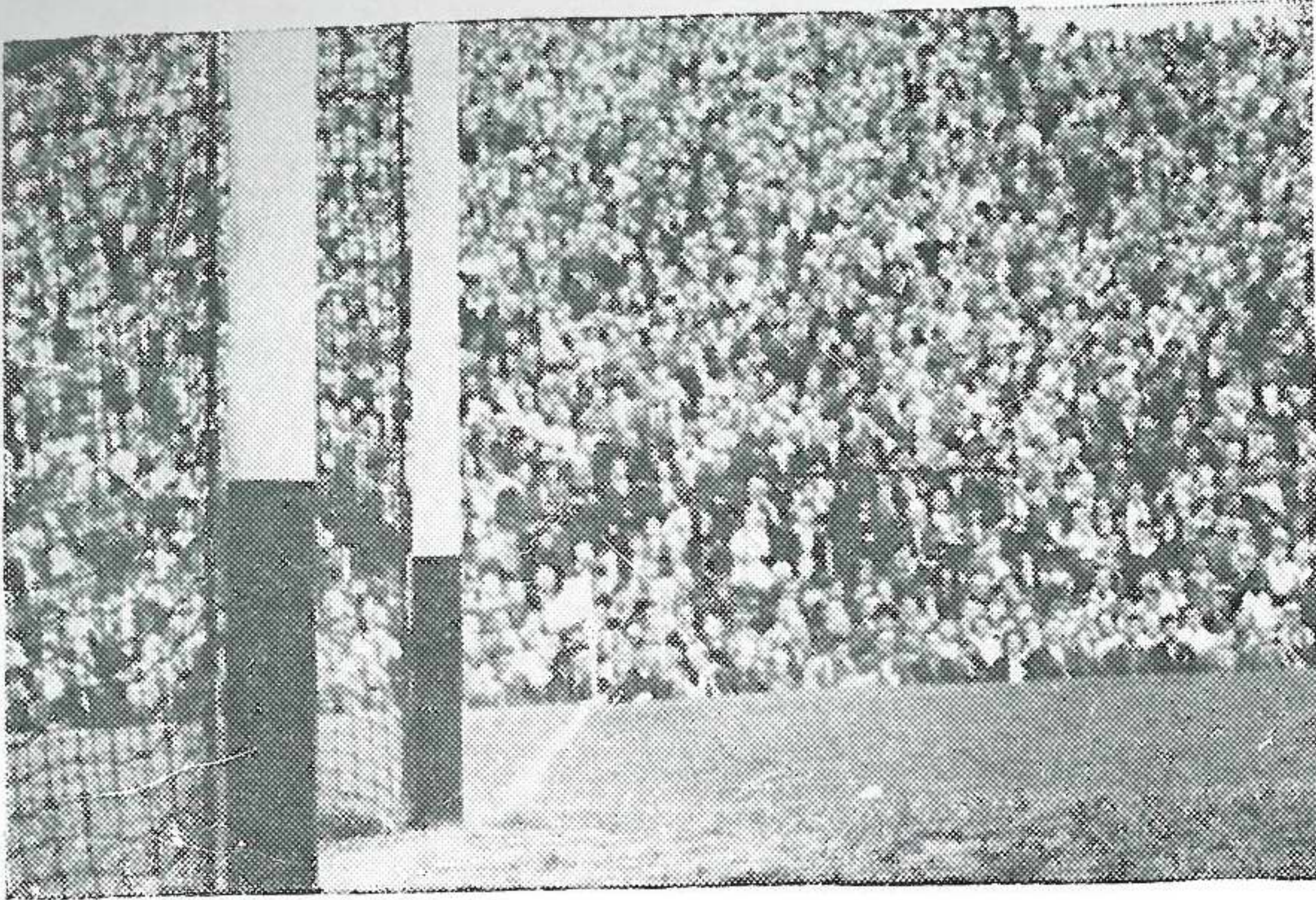
The Sunday night Sports Final at 9.15 gives reports of the day's games. But this programme suffers because, firstly, it's too short and secondly (at least at the time of writing) it lacks films of the day's games. This omission is due, I should think, to the fact that TE is not yet technically equipped to film games at country venues and have them ready for showing that night.

Sunday is a big day in Irish sport; come late spring and high summer and it will be even bigger. Then 15 minutes will be all too inadequate for proper coverage of all the big events in every sport. If the time is not increased only the scantiest summary of what happened in any game can be given.

The St. Patrick's Day Railway Cup finals will provide the test of TE's ability in live telecasts. The example before them is last year's film of the All-Ireland football final, very well done by the BBC-TV Belfast region.

As I said, it's early days . . . and we hope that TE, who have so far given such an excellent all-round service, will extend their coverage on Gaelic games in so far as their limited finances and technical facilities allow.

But they must strive to cover the country at large. No one will tell you quicker than the countryman (and his £4 is as good as the next) that what happens in Dublin isn't the be all and end all. In the G.A.A. they do things in the country too.



FACES IN THE CROWD

Fans, fiancées and V.I.P.s

DID you ever study faces in the crowd on the day of an All-Ireland final . . . tried to figure out what association each individual face-owner has with the game . . . what brought him or her to Croke Park?

You probably haven't; but it's a hobby of mine, which I have been sort of developing over the years. Oh yes, I do watch the game as well, but there is always plenty of time for studying faces, too.

You see, I am usually in a better position than most for viewing the crowd on the day of a final, for I belong to that privileged group of pressmen who are supplied with armbands and can move up and down on the sideline.

As I see it, most of those who are in Croke Park on the day of an All-Ireland senior final can be placed in five different categories.

First, there are the team followers. They constitute the bulk of the attendance. They are there because their county is there. Like the rolling snowball, this group has grown with the cham-

panionship. What was a thousand or two diehards at the first round match is now ten or even twenty times enlarged.

Needless to say, this vast throng attend with the sole purpose of witnessing 'a historic occasion' . . . in other words, they are there to see their county win. They are unashamedly biased and likely to dislike the referee at the slightest given or imagined cause. Their voices are loudest in acclaiming the scores.

Group two are also team supporters, but of a milder sort. They are part metropolitans, having left the old county years previously. Their love of county is as strong as ever, but city life has mellowed them somewhat. Their voices, too, acclaim the scores, but less vociferously than those of their country brothers.

Group three—I pride myself on belonging to this category—are connoisseurs of the game. They are there because they are always there. They love the game and although they may have

preference for either team their main concern is for a close and exciting match.

My fourth category is rather a small one and mainly made up of the fair sex. They are there because new husbands, fiancés or boy - friends have brought them along. Had they known that it would be so crowded, so uncomfortable and so lengthy an affair, they certainly wouldn't be there, and they have already decided that they won't be there next year.

All of group five can be found in the V.I.P. section of the lower deck of the new Hogan Stand. Their cars can be found at the specially reserved main entrance on Jones's Road. They are there because they feel that they should be there and because they are accorded facilities to be there in comfort. They will be there again for next year's final, but not during the year.

This group is inclined to view the game with drawing-room refinement. No matter which side is winning, they appear quite happy and content . . . that is, of course, unless it is very cold or that the rain is being blown in their direction. Luckily, our climate usually provides pleasant weather in September, for group five is not at all well-disposed towards cold and rain.

Faces in the crowd . . . fine crowd . . . ninety thousand . . . one-fourth of the population of Ireland . . . a fair cross-section. Big crush on way out . . . avoid the 'bottle-neck' . . . collection boxes . . . I wonder do they ever go in to see the game. 'Twas a good game . . . that ref. . . . Terrible crush . . . must get a ticket next year . . . start looking real early. Shouldn't have worn my new shoes. . . . Up Kerry!

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How the giants have fallen!

By MAURICE MAGUIRE

OLDER readers will recall the days when a football All-Ireland without Kerry was unthinkable; to a lesser degree it was generally expected that Kildare should, as a matter of course, provide the opposition. For those not-so-old, All-Irelands of yesteryear conjure up visions of the royal blue of Cavan, the maroon of Galway, the green of Meath or the red and green of Mayo. But nowadays it is not even certain that any of the above teams, Kerry excepted, will reach their respective provincial finals.

This may be a heartening prospect for the less-favoured counties whose chances of appearing in the final stages of the All-Ireland competition seem to be enhanced. Is it due to a higher standard of football in the "weaker" counties nowadays or is it due to a lower standard in the formerly "great" counties?

This is a question not easily answered. If we take any one county with which to make a case we find conflicting evidence. In the case of newcomers Down, we could, without doubt, state that they rate with the all-time great teams. If we contrast the present Cavan team with the great Cavan teams of the 'thirties, 'forties and early 'fifties we can, equally adamantly, state that the standard of play in Cavan has plunged to an all-time low.

But all-in-all with some reservations it can be said that there is a general levelling off of standards. In Leinster, since the halcyon days of the Lilywhites, the championship has always been fairly open. Any one of eight teams could win the championship in any year. In the past twenty years each of the eight has won the pro-

vincial title; the exceptions are Kilkenny, Longford, Westmeath and Wicklow; and, Kilkenny apart, the standard in those counties is little behind that of the others.

In Ulster, however, the levelling up of standards has taken place in the last ten years. There is no gainsaying the fact that although Cavan has declined, all other counties have improved, and four new names have been inscribed on the championship roll of that province.

In Connacht, too, the cycles of Galway and Mayo supremacy have been broken up by Roscommon, and with Leitrim knocking on the door it only remains for Sligo to show a little finesse and cohesion to make the Connacht championship a wide-open affair every year.

This leaves us with Munster where Kerry still remain top dogs with an occasional challenge from the Rebel County. Here, where hurling is strong in all counties, the standard has never levelled up. It is to Kerry's credit that they have maintained such a high standard whilst lacking serious competition within their own bailiwick.

Here, to prove our contention that the standard has improved in all other provinces except Munster, we can quote the poor showing of that province in the Railway Cup series. Twenty years ago it was not unusual for fourteen Kerry men and an "outsider" to take on the pick of any other province and beat them. To-day, with a team more representative of the province but yet backboned by Kerry, the Munster team cuts a sorry sight in the interprovincials.

There is also the argument that Kerry, Galway

(Continued on page 55)

O'Malley out on his own

GERRY O'MALLEY was presented with the newly-formed Association of Gaelic Sports Journalists' "Footballer of the Year" award for his outstanding contributions to the game during 1961. It was the first major honour to come the Roscommon man's way, for O'Malley is one of the few front-line stars of the G.A.A. world who has never won an All-Ireland medal.

Few G.A.A. followers could have disagreed with the choice, because 33-year-old O'Malley, footballer and equally proficient hurler, is a sportsman with a capital S.

He played minor football for the Kiltoom St. Brigid's Club, but failed to make the county team in either minor or junior grades.

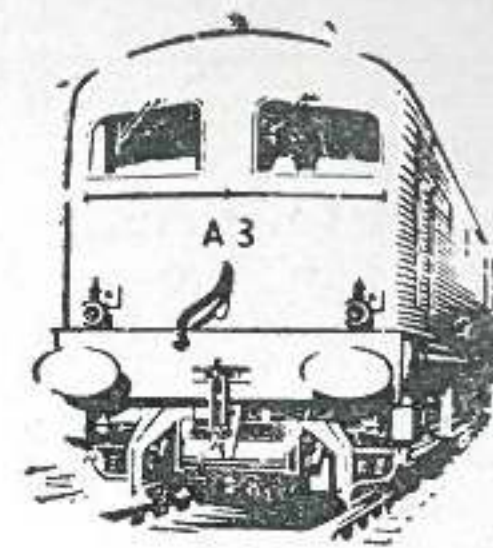
Then, in 1947, as Roscommon's All-Ireland stars of the early 'forties started to fade, O'Malley was given a "trial" on the county team—and, on his display, became one of the team regulars. His age: 18 years.

Since then he has missed only three county team games—on each occasion through injury. He has equalled Galwayman Sean Purcell's record 13 appearances for Connacht, and has turned out for the province in four Railway Cup hurling games.

And, perhaps more important, he has demonstrated to every player the art of being loyal to his club. For, although he has *never* worked in his own county, O'Malley has always played for his own St. Brigid's club, often travelling over a hundred miles to turn out in a relatively unimportant game.

His hobbies? Says Gerry: "That's an easy question to answer—football and hurling." The most outstanding footballer he has played against? "I think that must be Sean Purcell," he says.

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MIGHTY MICK

A PROFILE: By LIAM FOX



A LEGEND in his own lifetime. So often has this statement been applied to personalities of sport. In fact, too often . . . and it has now become one of the clichés of sport.

But not when it's applied to Mick Mackey of Limerick. Here, indeed, is a sporting figure still hale and hearty and in the prime of middle age, truly a legend in his own lifetime.

As proof of this, Mick Mackey, hurling artist supreme of bygone decades, was recently voted into the Hall of Fame of Irish sport.

Nor could there be a more worthy recipient of this high honour. Through the years of magnificent hurling service to his club, county and province, Mick demonstrated that he belongs to the all-time greats of this ancient game of hurling. Ahane, Limerick and Munster all benefitted by his talents and the game of hurling itself was enriched by his craft.

Here, too, was living proof of the widely held belief that hurling runs in families. For Mick Mackey, a hurling great, was the product of a great hurling family. Nobly

he carried on the fame of the renowned Mackey clan.

Way back in the early years of the Gaelic Athletic Association the Mackeys were serving the new organisation. Mick's grandfather, also named Mick, captained Limerick in 1887, and another Mackey, Anthony, was one of the earliest treasurers of the new Association.

A new generation brought John "Tyler" Mackey, who captained Limerick in 1910 when the county was narrowly beaten in the All-Ireland final by Wexford.

With such a background it occasioned little surprise in the 'thirties when Tyler's three sons, John, Mick and Paddy, burst into prominence. Hurling surely ran in their blood.

But the greatest of all, of course, was Mick. A burly man and solidly built, yet as many a baffled defender discovered to his grief, still a speedy player.

He was, too, a hurler of unconquerable spirit and fierce determination and he was fearless in his efforts to overcome the strategies of the opposing defences.

He came on the hurling scene

with Limerick in 1932 and the following year appeared in his first All-Ireland. But Kilkenny proved Limerick's masters that day. There was consolation, however, the following year when Limerick beat Dublin in the replayed final.

Mick Mackey won a second All-Ireland medal in 1936 when he captained the team that beat Kilkenny in the final, and four years later he led his county to All-Ireland championship triumph again.

Among his many honours Mick holds five National Hurling League medals and was chosen several times for Munster with whom he won eight Railway Cup medals. And proof of the versatility of this great sporting character is the fact that he helped Limerick win the Munster junior football title in 1939!

The years have produced many great hurlers and innumerable arguments about which of them was the greatest. One thing is certain: there will never be another Mick Mackey.

(Continued from Page 52).

and Mayo suffer most from the effects of emigration. To a lesser extent Cavan is similarly affected, but in the case of Kildare the argument is not so strong. In this case the problem lies in the poor standard of its minor teams.

However, casting aside those arguments, I maintain that the standards have levelled up and that the rise of counties like Derry, Down, Offaly and Roscommon will act as a spur to other counties formerly classified as weak, and we may yet see an All-Ireland final between Longford and Fermanagh!

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AS YOU WERE!

WILL Down join the elite of Gaelic football by winning three All-Ireland titles in a row? Their form to date in the National League, and that of their players on the Ulster Railway Cup fifteen, suggests that the Mourne men are well capable of performing this feat and of joining Kerry, Dublin and Wexford as the only counties to share this rare honour.

Kerry 1929-'32 and Wexford 1915-'18, were the only counties to win four successive football titles. Kerry came back to win three in a row in 1939, '40 and '41, while Dublin brought off the treble on no less than three occasions, the last time being 1921, '22 and '23.

Prior to Down, four counties won two successive titles. These were Kildare 1927 and '28, Roscommon 1943 and '44, Cavan 1947 and '48 and Mayo 1950 and '51. Each of these were really great teams; yet they failed to bring off the elusive treble and should Down fail in their attempt, they will still be in good company.

Kildare went very near to scoring the treble, for, after winning the 1927 and '28 titles, they came back and qualified for the 1929 final, only to lose, 1-8 to 1-5, to a great Kerry side.

Cavan, too, went near to the hat-trick. They too reached the vital third final but went down to Meath 1-10 to 1-6. On their all-important third year, Roscommon and Mayo failed to come out of Connacht.

Down's task of winning three in a row is even more difficult than was that of Kildare, Roscommon, Cavan and Mayo. Prior to starting on the long road back to Croke Park, Down will undergo a three weeks' American tour. This trip, which begins in mid-May, is a tour in every sense of the word for it only begins on arrival in Boston. Travelling from city to city, Down will have a much more strenuous sojourn than has usually been the case with American visits.

Will this affect Down's championship performance? Only Kerry in 1931 have survived such a visit. They went on to win that year's All-Ireland title. The Limerick hurlers did it in 1936.

Are Down capable of emulating the great Kerry men of the early thirties? I think so. These Downmen are an exceptionally dedicated and determined team. They are, in fact, a unit in every sense of the world. It is very difficult to put such a team off their game and I certainly expect them to be back in Croke Park in late summer.

What Connacht county will oppose Down in the All-Ireland semi-final? It will probably be either Galway or Roscommon and I favour the former. A win over Leitrim in the first round will put Galway into the Connacht final and on current form they should be capable of overcoming either Roscommon, Sligo or Mayo, to regain the provincial crown.

A Down-Galway semi-final would certainly be an exciting game, but if the Railway Cup semi-final is any indication, then it must be Down for the final.

Down Munster way it is certain to be a Kerry-Cork provincial final and so low is the present standard of Munster football that it seems to be of little consequence which of them qualify to meet the Leinster champions in the semi-final.

Kerry suffer from a very definite scarcity of new talent. They have failed to produce a good minor side in recent years and the brilliance of Mick O'Connell alone is unlikely to carry the present side to any major honours. Cork, on the other hand, have a supply of good former minors but their time has yet to come and it may take a year or two before they blend a formidable fifteen.

The resurgence of Dublin football opens up the
(Continued on Page 59).

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(Continued from Page 57).

outcome of the Leinster championship. The Metropolitans meet the winners of Louth and Wicklow in their first game and then the winners of Kildare, Wexford and Meath in the semi-final. It should be a Meath-Dublin semi-final, and remembering what happened last year, I must tip Dublin to qualify.

Offaly, the proud holders of the Leinster title, will probably get their sternest opposition from Westmeath before qualifying for the Leinster final. In recent years Offaly's dependable defence has always proved too good for the scheming Dublin attack and with the Midlanders' desire to win the major honour now greater than ever they must be fancied to retain their provincial title and dispose of the best that Cork or Kerry can produce in the semi-final.

Yes, it looks like being another Down-Offaly All-Ireland final and if I were asked to choose between these two at this stage, I would confidently plump for Down.

What then, of the chances of hurling champions Tipperary? Not since Wexford in the mid-fifties has any county brought off a hurling double and at this far off stage, Tipperary must be given a reasonable chance of succeeding.

Twice in the past (1898-1900 and 1949-'51) Tipperary have scored a hat-trick. Once previously (1895 and '96), they won two in a row. This year they meet the winners of Galway and Limerick in the Munster semi-final and here they appear almost certain winners. In the provincial final, they will meet the winners of Cork, Waterford and Clare.

There certainly is nothing certain about the outcome of this Munster championship — but then there never is! Cork or Waterford could well oust Tipperary and qualify for the All-Ireland final, but seeing that I have to choose, I will pick Tipperary as the better choice.

In Leinster, it will be another triangular contest with Dublin, Wexford and Kilkenny in the reckoning. Kilkenny are due back but remembering Dublin's wonderful performances last year, they must be tipped to retain their provincial title and

take their place in Croke Park on the first Sunday in September.

For the first time Dublin have an all-home produced hurling side. Unlike past occasions when trying to retain their Leinster title, they have lost no non-native players as a result of declarations and home county allegiances.

This, too, is a more determined and dependable Dublin fifteen than ever before. They are playing for the honour and glory of their native county and this is the spirit which wins matches and which should lead Dublin back for their second final in a row.

Last year, Dublin could, and perhaps should, have beaten Tipperary. This time they may well do it and they certainly deserve the honour. However, if it is a Dublin-Tipperary final, I still look to the Munstermen to win. Perhaps it's tradition which prompts me in this choice but there it is — Tipperary to retain their hurling crown and Down to score the hat-trick.

Footnote.—Not since Mayo and Tipperary in 1950 and '51 have two counties simultaneously retained All-Ireland titles.

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YOUR VIEW

Letters
page

THE BAN

Sir,—I wonder if this would interest any of your readers who follow the happenings of the foreign games Ban. William Webb Ellis of Tipperary, whilst at Rugby School in England in 1823, during a game similar to the present Association Football game, getting fed up with it picked up the ball and ran with it to the goal-line, thereby starting a new game which became rugby.

It seems obvious that he got that idea from the Tipperary version of Gaelic football.

The new game spread when three brothers from Wicklow, named Acton, were expelled from Rugby School. They went to school at Cheltenham, and introduced the game there.

John Truell.

Cheltenham.

◇ ◇

A Chara,—Why doesn't Eamonn Mongey, and everyone else like him, come out in the open and say honestly that they want the Ban abolished.

Instead, they beat about the bush—like Mr. Mongey in your *Gaelic Sport* at Christmas—and try to prove that the founders said this and the founders said that and hope that, by doing so, they will undermine the ordinary G.A.A. member's belief in this fundamental rule.

For that's what the Ban is—fundamental. I don't care what the founders did or said; I still believe in the principles of the men who first imposed the ban on foreign games. Those principles haven't changed—and that's why the Ban is still necessary, and why it must be retained.

J. Burke.

Belfast.

A Chara,—Eamonn Mongey's article on the Ban in the last issue of *Gaelic Sport* was an eye-opener. Up to the time of reading that article, I never thought very much about this Rule 27. But if I were asked to make a decision, for or against, I'm sure I would have decided in favour of retaining the Ban.

I've now made up my mind, however, that the rule is absolutely outdated, and that it was not really founded on the "ideals and traditions" that some people would have us believe.

I am now convinced, for I have discussed the matter with many people since reading Mr. Mongey's arguments, that only the older members of the G.A.A.—namely, the officials and Congress delegates—are in favour of the retention of the Ban.

It is about time, therefore, that the players, in fact all the young men in the Association, had their say. So why not a country-wide secret ballot among ALL members on the question? It would be interesting to see the outcome.

J.K.D.

Waterford.

◇ ◇

A Chara,—As a G.A.A. member who believes in the Ban on foreign games I must reply, briefly, to Eamonn Mongey's article in a recent issue of *Gaelic Sport*.

Mr. Mongey, and others, are making great play of the founders' alleged opposition to the imposition of a Ban of any kind. But, surely, their reasoning is unsound. It's as simple as this: no matter what the founders said or thought, the Ban was imposed by the organisation, and it has been

retained, by majority vote, down the years.

And if the majority want it to stay in the Rule Book, they will say so again at Easter Congress this year — by a democratic majority vote.

So why all the hot air about the founders? It's up to the G.A.A. men of today to decide the issue.
"Green Coat."

Castlebar.

◇ ◇

Sir,—My sincere thanks to *Gaelic Sport* for publishing that fine article by Eamonn Mongey in the last issue.

No matter how one feels about the Ban, it is a great thing to see it being brought out in the open for discussion. As you said in your editorial, for too long it has been regarded as a dirty word.

It is a pity, however, that those who want to keep the Ban are not so calm and level-headed in their contributions to the discussions as those who want it to be abolished. Too much personal abuse has clouded a subject that should be approached with clear-sightedness and reason.

A final point. Why have the pro-Ban men created such a desperate row about the suggestion of a secret ballot on the rule at Congress?

If, as they claim, the vast majority of G.A.A. members want it to stay, they have no more to fear from a secret ballot than from open voting. One cannot help surmising that there is real worry behind all their clamour and "red herrings".

"Land Leaguer."

Roscrea.

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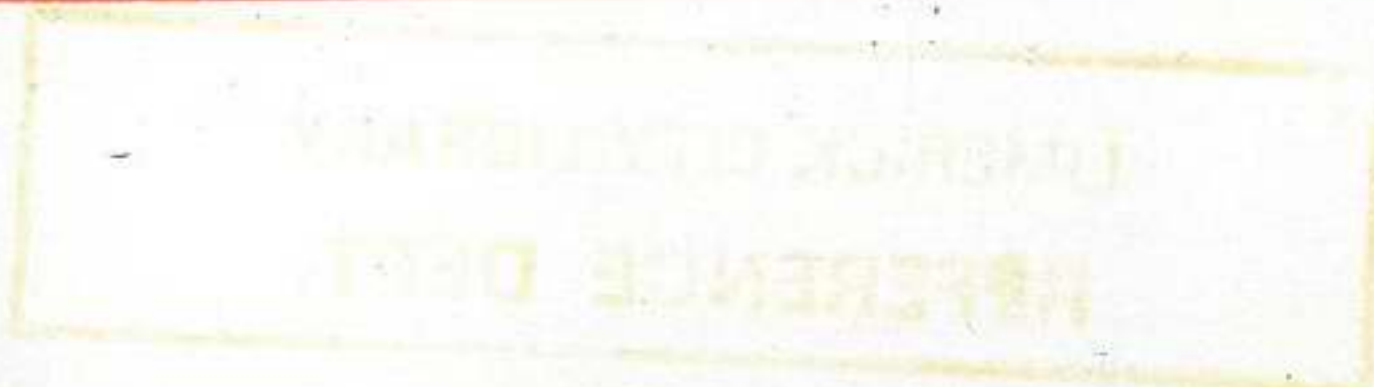
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