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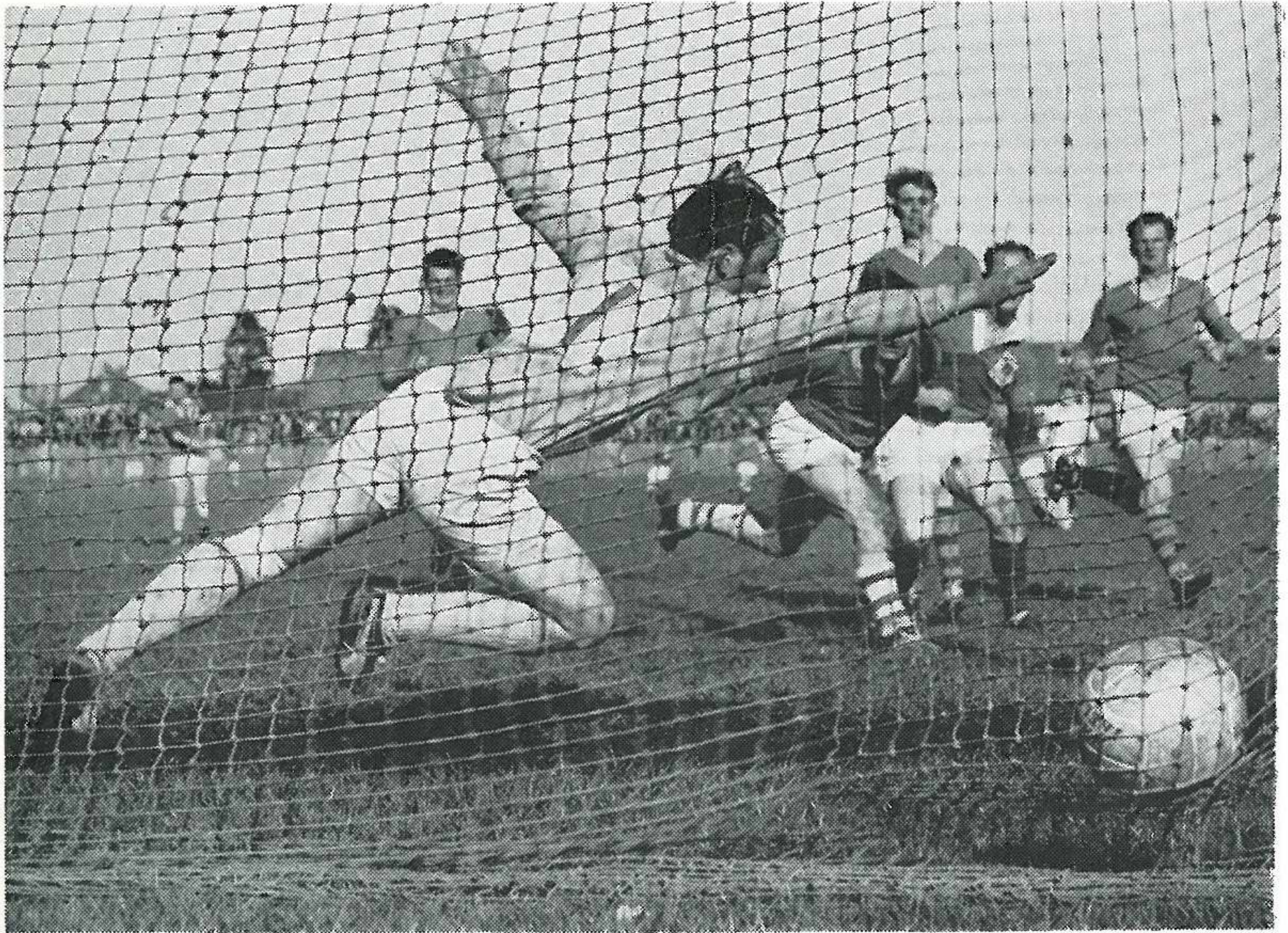
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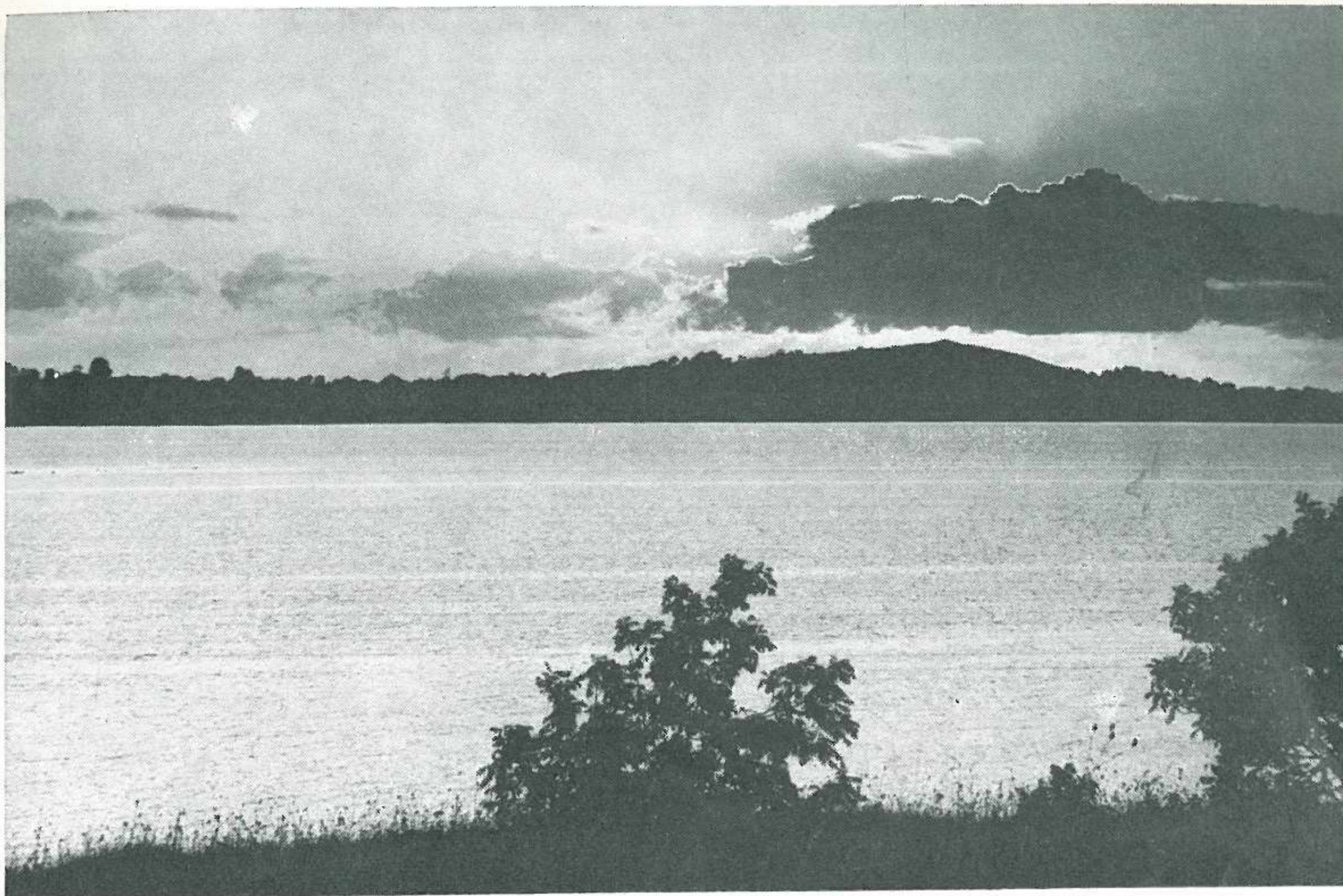
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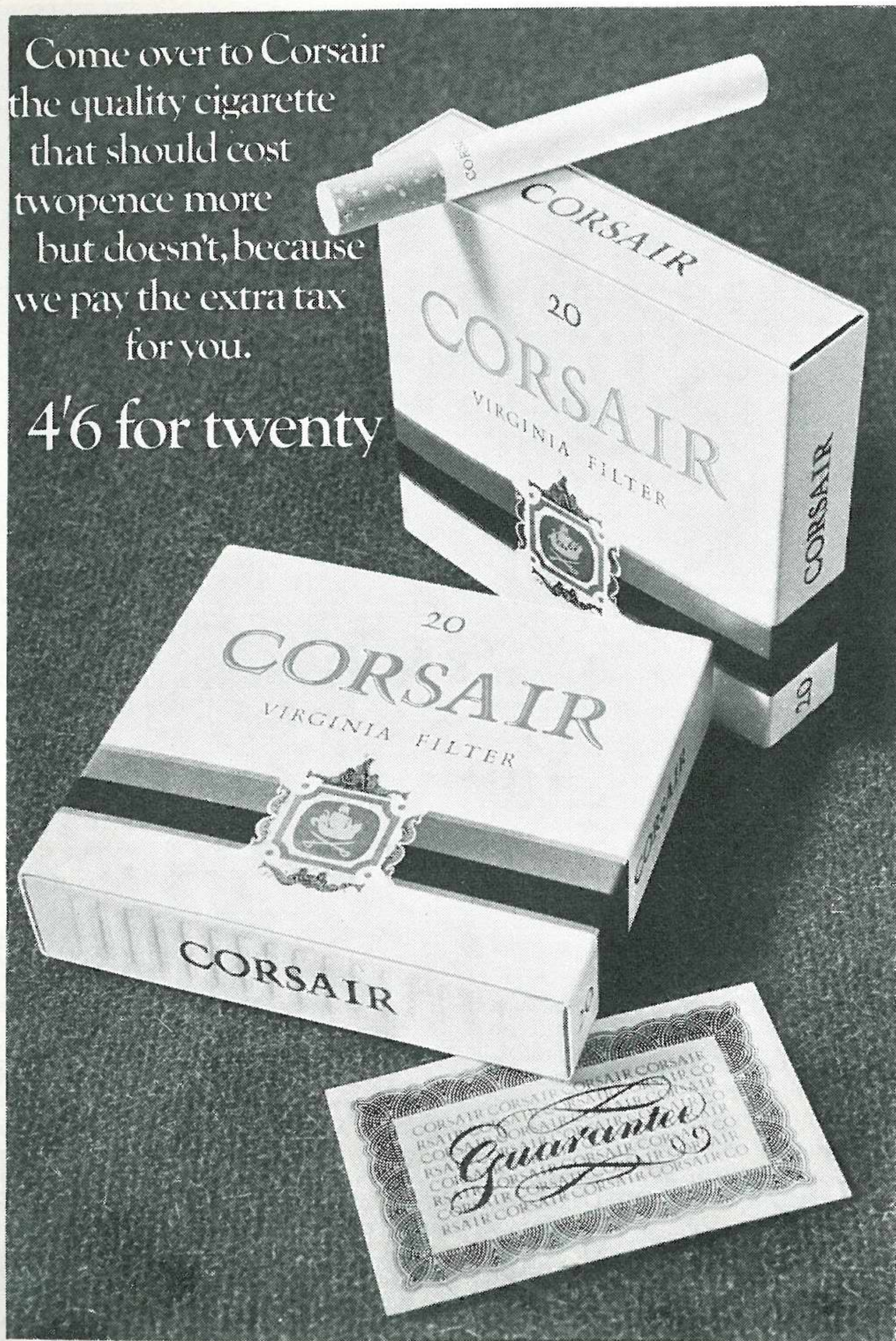
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Gaelic Sport

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COVER PHOTO

Our front cover this month pays tribute to the winners of the Texaco awards in hurling and Gaelic football, Dan Quigley (Wexford) and Sean O'Neill (Down) respectively. We, of Gaelic Sport, would like to add our congratulations to both men, worthy recipients of these very popular awards.

UPHILL AGAIN

LAST month's County Conventions heard a lot about the importance of the club in the Association's structure. They heard how and why many clubs are declining, allegedly because of excessive emphasis on inter-county competitions. And they heard talk of remedies, of plans to strengthen or, as the case may be, to re-vitalise the clubs and to encourage them to engage in the social life of their communities.

But talk is worth nothing without action. Unfortunately, there has been precious little of that since the movement to socialise was mooted three or four years ago.

It doesn't help in any way to say now that the current efforts to reshape the Association should have been undertaken twenty years ago. It only underscores the lamentable fact that so much ground has been lost through lack of foresight and imagination, through the mistaken idea that a match every week (or, more likely, every month) was enough to keep the club throbbing with life and to maintain the flow of membership from town and parish.

Why has there not been more action, more progress, since the problem was recognised? A major obstacle is lack of money for development, another is the pro-

liferation of small clubs, many of which must amalgamate before anything worthwhile can be achieved.

And, of course, there is still an alarming lack of ideas, initiative and energy.

Many clubs now think that they fulfil their social obligations by holding an annual dinner. Others will go as far as building a small pavilion, in which they will install a dart board. All this will be a crippling waste of time and money.

A small number of clubs have shown the way. Clubs like Clann Eireann in Lurgan, Glen Rovers in Cork, Kilmacud, Na Fianna and St. Vincent's in Dublin; Maynooth in Kildare.

These are the showpieces, and not every club will have the resources — not to mention the quality of leadership—to follow their example. Yet, they can be used as headlines. The Central Council should organise a scheme of conducted tours of those progressive centres. The grassroots officials around the country should see them and learn how they were organised and constructed.

First-hand information and personal observation is better than all the printed plans in the world.

Search for peace

A NEW tours agreement will soon be drawn up between the Central Council and the New York Board. Whatever form it takes—and it is unlikely that the exiles will meekly drop out of the National Leagues—let us hope that, at least, an era of peace and mutual goodwill will ensue.

In the past, the New York G.A.A. men have made major grievances out of flea-bite irritations; they have seen insults where none existed, or where none was intended. For our part, let us treat the exiles fairly and generously. They are not strangers; they are our own people. Let us treat them as brothers. New York must reciprocate. Thus will the bickering stop and peace and friendship follow.

The non-tour

IT is suggested in a letter published in this issue that Down acted "the dog in the manger" in regard to the invitation which Kerry received to visit Australia next month. In other words, that, having had to turn down an invitation themselves because of financial obstacles, they didn't want Kerry to go either.

This is a most unfair allegation. It goes without saying that Down would not have allowed their principles, their actions and their customary sense of fair-play to be overruled by envy or any other mean motive.

Their County Board officials have said in public several times that, while they would like to send the team to Australia, their main concern was that these tours should be conducted officially by the Central Council and placed on a proper financial footing.

Indeed, Kerry must admit that Down had propounded this policy long before the Kingdom received their invitation from Harry Beitzel, through John Kerry O'Donnell.

However, one can see how difficult it is for Kerry men to look at it that way. The Kerry team and officials were deeply disappointed when the Central Council turned down their application to travel and reason seldom functions in minds where strong emotions are aroused.

They noted that it was the Down delegate who proposed the rejection of the Kerry application at the Council meeting on January 17 and that, in doing so, he referred to the Kerry invitation as a "horse deal", thus appearing to impute some sort of dishonest practice to the Kerry officials.

It was understandable, then, that they overlooked the comments of the President, Seamus Ó Riain, who told the delegates that they should not sanction an unofficial county tour because they had already accepted recommendations to set up full international competition with Australia.

It seems to me now—with the wisdom of hindsight, of course!—that Down made a tactical error in pressing so strongly for the rejection of Kerry's application. While no one doubted their motives, which had been stated at the December Council meeting, it did seem as though they were envious of Kerry's good fortune and said, in effect (as our reader alleges) — "if we can't have it you won't have it".

In fact, it was surprising that they did not take care to present a diplomatic front on the occasion, since it should have been obvious that their motives could easily be misunderstood — and as they have been by many aggrieved Kerry men.

Some days before the meeting, Paddy O'Donoghue, Chairman of the Down County Board, was quoted in a daily newspaper as saying that his county had no feud with Kerry, and did not wish to have one. He foresaw the dangers of misunderstanding.

Has a feud been born now? I hope not. Because while a feud in the council rooms is merely a war of words, it becomes a very different kettle of fish when translated to the playing field. I think Kerry and Down are big enough, and wise enough, not to allow grievances, real or imaginary to fester when they meet again in a football match.

A few final words about those invitations to Down and Kerry. Down, as All-Ireland champions, were, of course, the team most entitled to travel. But they were faced with insurmountable financial obstacles. They couldn't raise the money themselves and the Central Council, naturally, was not prepared to foot the bill. This was bad luck, but they should have accepted it as they would accept a defeat on the field of play.

Kerry, on the other hand, had a benefactor—one of their own—in America in the person of John O'Donnell. This was fabulous good luck. And I believe that they should have been allowed to enjoy it.

A Kerry trip to Australia in March would not have upset any plans for full internationals between the countries. Moreover, as those internationals are not likely to get under way for eighteen months, at the very least a county tour would have maintained essential contact with Australia in the meantime.

It is regrettable that the chance was lost.

WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES?

THE enemies of the Association were people I used to hear about a lot when I was younger. The phrase amused me then, for I regarded the G.A.A. as the country and, consequently, the enemies, if they existed, simply didn't matter.

Since then, a change has come over my rather naive thinking and over that of many more also for we don't hear so much to-day about the enemies of the Association. Is it because they don't exist or because there are so many G.A.A. speakers more concerned with the dissentient people within the Association?

My feeling is that in '69 we have less enemies than we had forty years ago, but we also have less friends. Time will tell, but it seems to me we are losing the affection of a lot of people whose good will would be of paramount importance to the continued success of the G.A.A.

We fight too much among ourselves, perhaps, and in making the suggestion I am quite aware of my own contribution to controversy. Verbal battle isn't wrong by any means and as we all know can do a great deal of good. Restrictions imposed by strong-minded men stimulate other strong-minded men to react rather violently,

By _____

EAMONN YOUNG

whether the reaction is unjust or not.

These verbal jousts, however, probably make the Association less attractive to the outsider and I remember a mature rugby friend admitting that the real reason he favoured the ban was to keep out the fiercer G.A.A. man who, as he put it, would chew men like him up and spit them out at any meeting. The fact that this isn't true does not prove that the feeling doesn't exist.

We fight with the press occasionally and I certainly will not say this is wrong without examining each individual case. It is doubtful, however, if taking on the press as a body is a wise move. We very often castigate the press for its alleged failure



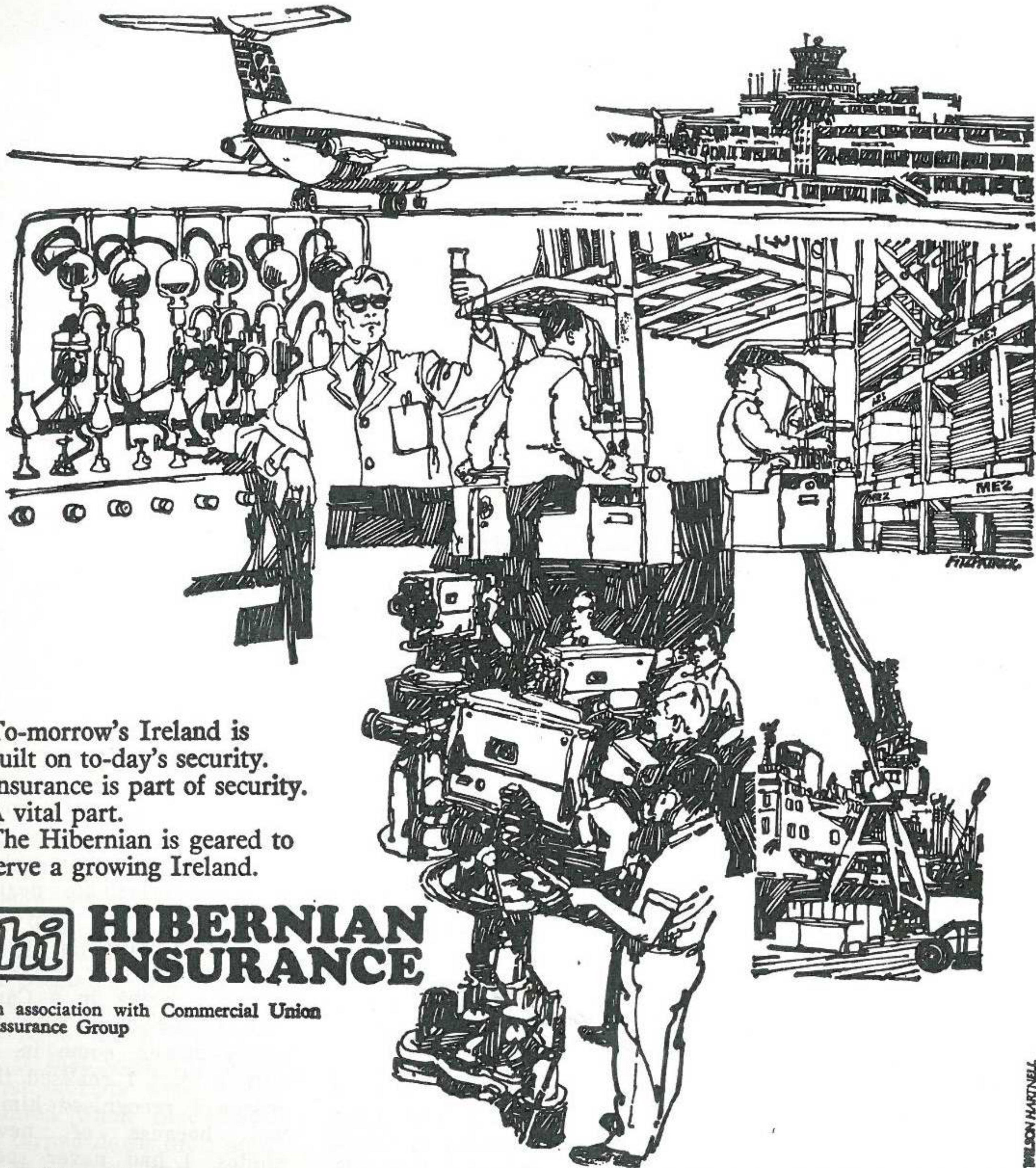
to give what we regard as adequate coverage to G.A.A. activities. In doing so, we forget that the average sports-writer is one who sees all games (and reports on them) and is, as a result, not a believer in our foreign games rule. In fact, the hard words which are still said about foreign games and the attitude which is supposed to support them are bound to antagonise many of these sports-writers who eventually become (if they are not so already) hostile to the G.A.A. though they won't ever say it.

It is, indeed, the foreign games rule which bedevils much of our thinking. It has created a division in our population, a division of which people are far more tolerant to-day than they were thirty years ago. We all know that it was necessary at one time, and I'm not even sure if removal thirty years ago would have been too soon. Nowadays, however, it is most unfortunate and one can only hope that its inevitable death will not be long more delayed.

What a division it has caused. It's only a year since I was having a drink in a Cork pub, and I saw Tom Kiernan, the rugby player, come in. It was with a start I realised that the reason I recognised him at all was because of newspaper photos. I had never seen him play. I found out soon that he

● TO PAGE 48

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I GO ALONG WITH YOUNG

Says **DOMINICK DAVIN**

LIKE Eamonn Young I am very anxious to see 13-a-side football and hurling given a fair and prolonged trial at all levels. "Youngey", always something of an optimist by nature, painted a very, very rosey picture in last month's issue of the magnificent football we will see in the 13-a-side game. Incidentally, he does not seem to advert to the hurling aspect at all, but that is by the way.

Now I thoroughly agree with Eamonn that we could see brilliant football under the new dispensation and even that we **should** see plenty of fast and open play, but it is because I would like to be sure of this, that I feel the system should be tried extensively in all grades and at all levels before any decision about it is taken.

Now it is obvious that if you are going to have 26 men instead of 30 on the field you are going to have far more open play, since not alone have you four few players in action but each of the remainder will have more space to play in, and a correspondingly greater amount of ground for each man to cover. The result will be that the emphasis in 13-a-side will probably be not so much on sheer speed as on the best possible combination of mobility combined with stamina. And, believe me, stamina will be a mighty important factor when 12 men have to cover the same amount of ground as 14 deal with at the moment. Eamonn Young feels the goalkeeper will

take a far greater part in the play as a result.

That may well be, but for this you must have a goalkeeper who is almost as good an out-field footballer as he is a goal-minder. But not every team has a Johnny Geraghty or a Billie Morgan to guard the gap. So what are the teams who want to guard their goalkeeper as much as possible going to do?

They are obviously going to try and cut down the open space in front of the goal as much as possible. And there are a variety of ways in which they can do so. Despite the popular belief to the contrary, there is nothing in the 13-a-side rules which forces any team to play without a full-forward or a full-back. And any team which rely too much on its goalman is obviously going to make its own defensive arrangements to meet its own requirements.

The most obvious move is either to play your complete half-back line, as at present, and play your two full-backs, one at each corner of the square, or else pull back the centre half back to full-back and play your two half-backs on the 40 yard line, each one-third of the way in from the touch-line.

Either way a "cute" team might thus be able to cut down the open spaces to the absolute minimum—and then there is, as a last resort, the old defensive "W" formation with the centre-back playing as a "stopper" in the exact middle of a completely defensive "box" in which two full backs and the two half-backs formed the corners of a square

which had only one fundamental purpose, to prevent the other side from scoring. It was a system that, at one stage, almost succeeded in killing the spectator appeal of soccer in England.

It would be a pity to see such a defensive system introduced as the answer to open attacking play, but, let's face another fact, no team is going out there in a championship game to play to the opposition's plan. They are going to play to whatever plan they think will win the game for them.

And it is to make sure that such defensive thinking would not come to dominate (especially in football, the pace of the ball would tell against defensive tactics in hurling) that I would like to see the 13-a-side game fully and very thoroughly tested, even at some championship level, before it is adopted as a universal rule either temporarily or permanently.

There is one other point that worries me about the introduction of 13-a-side and it has nothing to do with the actual playing of the game on the field.

And the factor that really worries me is that 13-a-side would cut down the number of young men playing the games, and heaven knows we have enough young people falling out already. The object of any Association which has games as one of its chief reasons for existence must be to have as many as possible playing its games.

On the credit side, however, with thirteen-a-side it would be easier to put a team on the field, which could prove a boon, especially in thinly populated areas.

THE RAILWAY CUP

●

**By
Owen McCann**

ALMOST twenty years have now elapsed since the Blue of Munster was triumphant in a Railway Cup football final. The date was March 20, 1949. On the St. Patrick's Day we had the last drawn final in football: Munster 2-7, Leinster 2-7.

The replay saw the South, with such as P. A. Murphy (Cork), Jackie Lyne and Batt Garvey (Kerry) and Mick Cahill and Packie Brennan (Tipperary) in the line-out, triumph 4-9 to 1-4 to record the province's only run of two titles in succession, and also consolidate Munster's ranking in second place in the Roll of Honour with six crowns.

Munster won the initial Railway Cup final in 1927, when an all-Kerry team beat Connacht, the only instance in football of one county supplying all players

in a title winning combination. At the end of that 1949 competition Leinster had ten titles, and Connacht and Ulster brought up the reere with four and three crowns respectively.

Munster, in fact, were the football specialists of the 1940's. They won only one title in the 1930's (1931), and four from 1941 to 1949 inclusive, the richest harvest reaped by any province in that particular decade.

When one remembers the many great Munster footballers who have graced the scene since 1949, it is hard to credit that the province has contested no fewer than ten finals unsuccessfully since that last title win! They lost to Leinster in 1952, 1953, 1959 and 1961; to Connacht in 1951, 1957 and 1958; to Ulster in 1956, 1960 and 1966.

Leinster won three finals on the trot, 1928-29-30, a doubly historic run in that it gave the province the first double, and also the first hat-trick of titles in football. That 1949 defeat was Leinster's second final failure to Munster (the other was in 1946) after winning their 10th crown at Connacht's expense in 1945. Leinster made it title No. 11 in 1952 to start their greatest era.

In 1955 the East completed the first four championships-in-succession run in the history of football, and in 1959 took a fifth crown in that decade. That equalled the record of five titles in the one decade established by the East in the 1930's.

Connacht's glory decades were the 1930's and the 1950's. The West took the Railway Cup for the first time in 1934, and equalled Leinster's hat-trick of championships in 1936-37-38. The province won three more titles in the 'Fifties: 1951-57-58, and brought the total to eight final victories in all in 1967.

The 'Sixties, irrespective of the

outcome of this concluding series of games of the present decade, belongs unquestionably to Ulster. Not only had the North their greatest number of wins ever, but the footballers of Ulster also set some impressive new peaks to boot.

Ulster had a mere five titles at the start of the current decade. Hard to realise now that it was not until 1942 that the Railway Cup went North for the first time. The North retained the trophy in 1943, and in 1947, Kevin Armstrong (Antrim) had the distinction of being the first man to bring the Railway Cup in triumph over the Border, after he had led the province to a final success over Leinster. The fourth win was in 1950, and No. 5 in 1956.

The decade now moving into history dawned with a sunshine Spring for Ulster with wins over Leinster and Munster, and 1963 really set the pattern for some brilliant achievements.

Ulster beat Leinster in the final that year, and made it a first hat-trick of titles in 1965 at the expense of Connacht. Then, in 1966 with a final win over Munster the North equalled the Leinster record of four championships on the trot, and also of five final wins in all in the one decade.

In 1967 in a semi-final at Belfast's Casement Park, Ulster beat Leinster to pencil in a unique distinction in the record-book—the first run of nine consecutive wins by any province. During that record-making achievement, Ulster beat Leinster four times, Munster three times, and Connacht twice.

Connacht deprived Ulster in the 1967 final of a majestic new double record, but the North bounced back again last year with wins over Connacht and Leinster to make it a record sixth title in the one decade.

That success also put Ulster firmly in second place in the chart with 11 titles to Leinster's 17, Connacht's eight, and Munster's six.

Since Munster's 1949 success, the North has been the most successful province of all. Eight times since then, the Railway Cup has been won by the North, as against Leinster's seven championships, and Connacht's four.

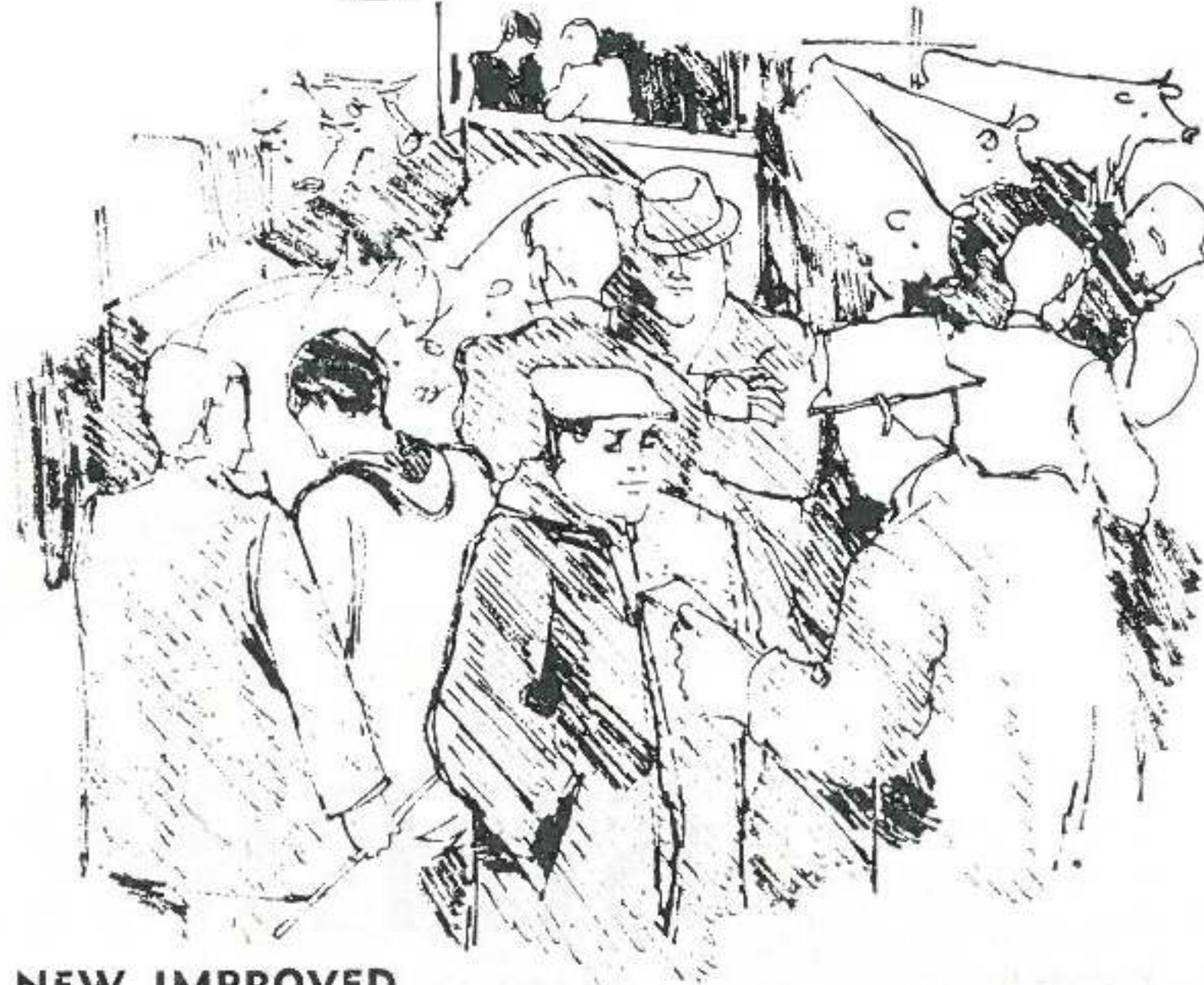
Ulster has lost only one semi-final in this decade—to Leinster at Casement Park in 1961. The 1962 final with Leinster, and the 1967 final against Connacht rank as the North's only defeats in a total of 17 games from February, 1960 to St. Patrick's Day, 1968 inclusive.

This month's semi-final marks the 14th between Ulster and Connacht since 1933, won by the West. Ulster made the score 7-6 in their favour at Cavan last March. These provinces have also clashed in three finals, with Connacht winning two. The overall record in the story of their meetings in the Railway Cup is eight wins each. Connacht's last semi-final win over Ulster, incidentally, was at Sligo in 1957, when they had two clear goals to spare—2-8 to 0-8.

Last year Leinster and Munster were also in opposition for the 13th time in a semi-final. The East won that meeting at An Uaimh to go one up (7-6). Leinster has a comfortable 9-3 lead over Munster in finals, for an over-all record of 16 wins, as against the South's nine, with one match drawn. The first Leinster-Munster semi-final was at Cork in 1933, where Leinster won 2-4 to 1-2. Cork was also the venue for Munster's last semi-final win over Leinster—in 1957 on the score 2-5 to 0-9.

Finally, neither Ulster or Connacht has won the Railway Cup in the concluding year of a decade. Will 1969 see either lay this bogey?

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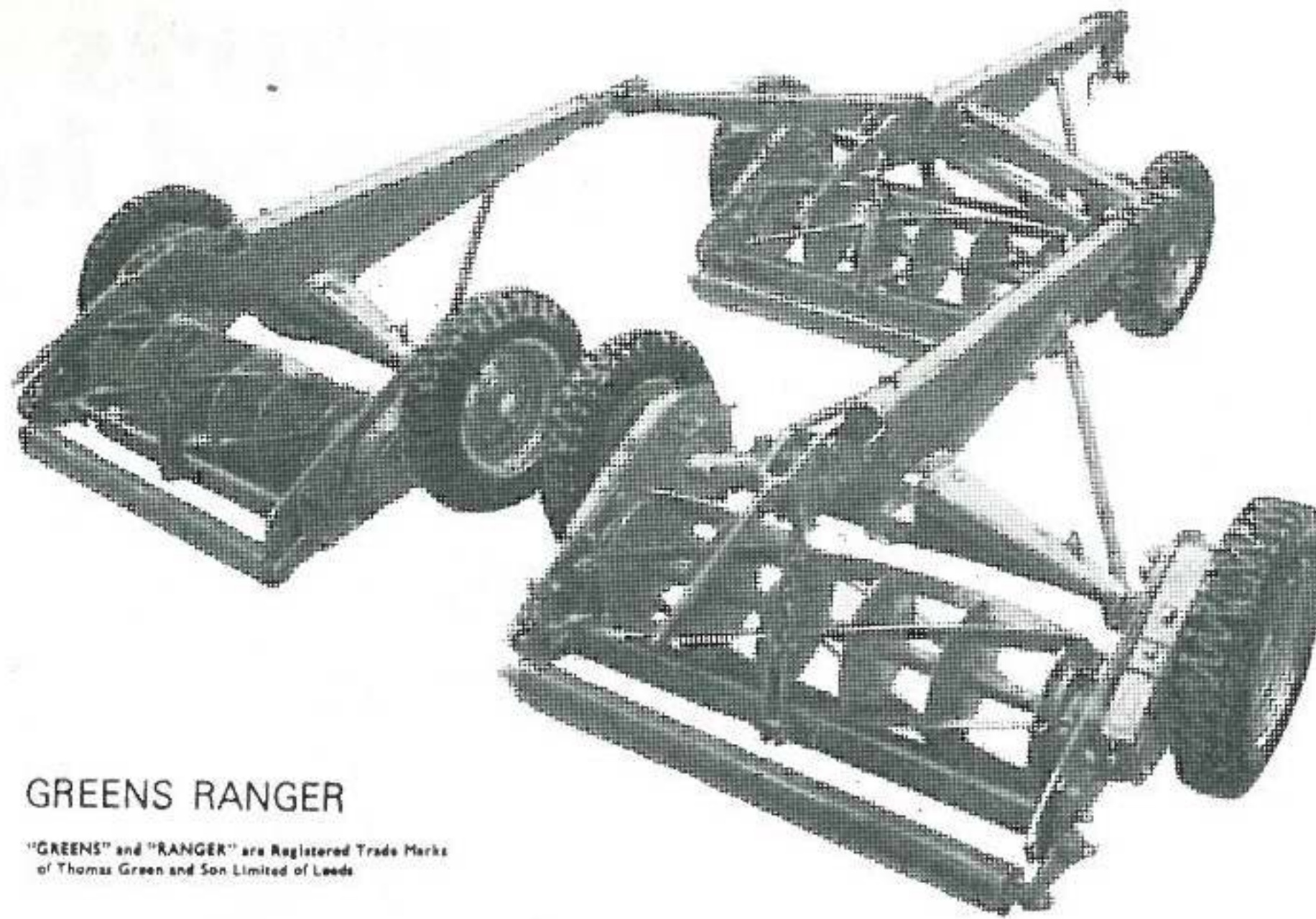
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'THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE'

FOR, I suppose, the past decade and a half, the amount of fuss and bother that has, from time to time, arisen about matches or series of matches, between the Gaels of Ireland and the Gaels of New York would fill a pretty big book, and it looks as though we may have a little while to wait yet until we reach the last chapter.

And the peculiar part of it all is that, while I do not feel all that ancient, yet, at the time when I was dragged around to matches first, (and I did not need much dragging, except when my small legs fell down on the job of following closely behind the footsteps of my father) no one ever thought of such an international series, and only the real old-timers remembered the visit of a team of New York and Chicago hurlers to Ireland away back in 1911.

It was the first Tailteann Games in 1924 that began to make us conscious of the Gaels beyond the Atlantic. A team of hurlers came over, and though they were well beaten by the pick of Ireland, put up such a good show that their display roused quite a deal of enthusiasm both here and back in the United States.

As a result the Tipperary hurlers, 1925 All-Ireland champions, set out, in the early summer of 1926, on the most strenuous trip ever undertaken by a G.A.A. team until Meath headed off to Australia in the spring of 1968. Johnny Leahy's Boherlahan selection set off from Cobh to New York by ocean liner, which took them four or five days, and then they travelled,

playing matches here and there along the way, from New York to San Francisco and back again.

The Tipperary men covered thousands upon thousands of miles, won every game they played with superlative ease, and were away from mid-May till late July. No wonder Tom Kenny from Portroe wrote a booklet about it all, unaware that his son Seán, now so internationally famed, would make a dramatic appearance on the New York hurling fields when a Tipperary team turned up there again 24 years later.

Up till 1927, whatever tours had taken place had been confined to hurlers, even the legendary 'invasion' of America in 1888 had been composed of athletes and hurlers, and no American footballers had appeared for the Tailteann Games of 1924. Now football stepped onto the international stage for the first time when, in 1927, Kerry crossed the Atlantic as All-Ireland champions.

Maybe we had been 'conditioned' by the sweeping successes of Tipperary; maybe we had been fooled by the absence of New York footballers from that 1924 Aonach Tailteann.

In any case, I well remember reading with absolute astonishment in small items in the daily papers, usually a day or two late, that the Kerry men, Ireland's pride, had been beaten not once but twice by the Exiles. That incidentally was the first time I had ever heard of the Polo Grounds. Those victories lent great interest to the first visit of an American football side here for the Tailteann Games of 1928.

but though the Exiles put up a good fight they failed to match the pick of Ireland. What is more, Kerry went back a year or two later, and 'cleared their name' by defeating all comers in the States.

The Americans entertained Tipperary hurlers again in 1931, and again Tipp. swept in unbeaten triumph from the Statue of Liberty to the Golden Gate and back again, though they did not cover as much territory or play as many matches as did their pioneering side of 1926.

But from 1932, which saw the last revival of Aonach Tailteann, until the outbreak of World War II in 1939, trips and tours became very common indeed. The hurlers of Limerick and Kilkenny, the footballers of Kerry, Mayo, Galway, Cavan and Laois all headed off to America at one time or another, while, if the only official New York teams appeared for the 1932 Tailteann Games, at least one club side came over later in the decade.

After the War the great re-awakening came when the 1947 football final between Kerry and Cavan was staged at the Polo Grounds. Oddly enough, nine years before, when the New York Board had asked for the replay of the drawn 1938 final between Kerry and Galway, nobody over here took the request seriously.

Then, in 1950, New York was, for the first time, admitted to the National Leagues, and since then we have had St. Brendan Cups, International Leagues, World Cups—and New York back in the National League again.

A visitor from another planet,

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and we may well have a few of these knocking round any day now, may well wonder what is the cause of the recurring disputes.

Well while these are two major factors, the question of finance and the question of control—and these may be to an extent inter-linked—there is, I think another and a very human factor involved to which we do not pay sufficient

attention on this side of the Atlantic—but I will come to that in a moment.

As for the finance and control aspect, the vital facts, as I see them are those. The games in New York are, all things else being equal, invariably financial successes; the games here at home never seem to be able to cover the expenses of the visiting teams.

Therefore the New Yorkers,

because the maintenance of the International Fund depends on their side of the Atlantic, probably feel they are fully entitled to an equal voice in decisions about future tour relationships between Ireland and America, and, to get down to basic facts, are never too happy to accept Central Council control over what they feel are their own affairs.

On the other hand, as we have always seen it here, the Central Council is the supreme body of the Gaelic Athletic Association at home or overseas. Personally I would like to see New York represented not alone on Central Council but also, possibly, on the G.A.A. Executive. But I would also like to see New York formally affiliate or at least formally Associate. At present their relationship with the G.A.A. is not really covered in the rule book at all.

As for psychological trouble this, I think is caused by the fact that whereas visiting Irish teams are feted in New York, we nowadays make no fuss at all over here about visiting New York sides, nor does the sporting public turn up in any numbers to see them play.

Why this should be so it is very hard to pin-point, unless the reason is that when we here at home talk of 'exiles' nowadays we are more usually referring to Britain rather than to America. But, whatever the reason, New York players and officials alike are hurt by our seeming indifference to their best efforts and their dedication to the game. It may seem a small point, but it is an important one.

What is the solution? Well, first we must regularise New York's position. Are they to be a county or a province of the G.A.A., or are they to be a co-equal country, with as much authority as Central Council? Until that is decided we will get nowhere.

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Conflict: Club or County?

By JIM BENNETT

FROM the current series of conventions one of the clearest indications has been of concern about the conflicting claims of club and county, of major and minor competition. On the one hand Louth have pressed the germ of an idea for the confinement of inter-county games to some defined portion of the year. An effort to give the clubs in their county (and every other) room to breathe, flex their muscles and develop some strength.

It is certainly true that there is a strong feeling among the clubs that inter-county competition makes grim inroads on their team spirit and their plans. Too many players too often absent from the club training sessions and, sometimes, the club's matches; too much energy and vitality spent in the service of the county to give their best in the service of the club.

It is a problem, of course. But it is one which must be lived with in view of the structure of club competition and inter-county competition, both of which have been found indispensable in the life of the Association. Total solution of the problem would demand the dropping of one or the other. Impossible to keep the inter-county without the club, of course; and, to do away with the inter-county and keep the inter-club competitions would involve a large-scale reshuffle of the present set-up. Certainly it is neither impossible nor, even, unsatisfactory, because it could easily form a basis from which greater strength might be developed.

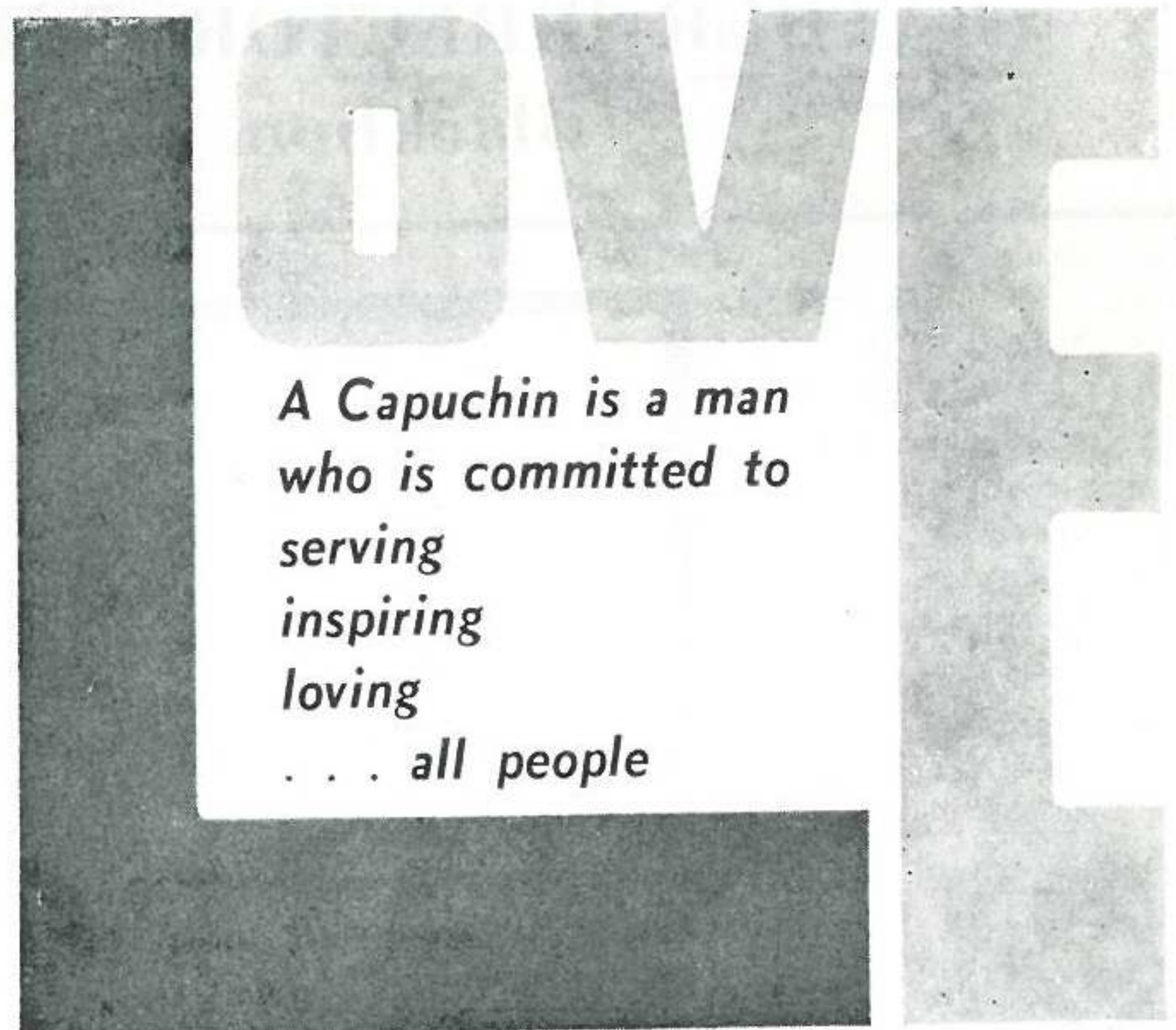
But, it would mean a com-

pletely new concept of what the club must be. Any sort of competition on a provincial or national basis for clubs would mean drastic reduction in their number. The weak shoots would have to be lopped off, and only strong, Central units with a playing strength, financial potency, and breadth of appeal of greatly increased size could function. There probably would not be more than six or seven such

major units in each of the moderately-sized counties.

It would, perhaps, destroy some of the sense of local loyalty and identification with the club which has always been its ideal. And, of course, it would mean breaking with the deep-set traditions of county championship and All-Ireland championships. Is all this price too high? It seems to be so, though, if one considers the

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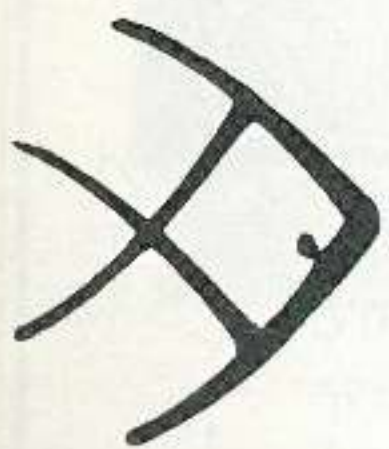
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A nasty question



(And an answer)

B. L.E. or N.A.C.A.I. ? That's a nasty question for the G.A.A. as an organisation just now. It has been for some time and there's many a G.A.A. man who regrets the day the Association ever debated the controversy.

I heard out a debate on the subject at the Cork Convention last year which rivalled the Ban disputes at their most ferocious and the heat of the argument was equalled only by the sincerity of the contenders. Let's hope the argument will soon be settled and that Ireland can take its place in the international athletic arena without division among her sons.

The G.A.A. has always been a father-figure for the N.A.C.A. and in the very early days the athletics aspect was probably much stronger *vis-a-vis* the games than it is to-day. In those days Irish athletes were prominent in the world arena and in the weights especially the national prestige was tremendous long before that doughty doctor from Kanturk, named O'Callaghan, stood squarely on the victor's podium in successive Olympics.

As the field games gained in popularity they tended to attract more of our organising ability

and it was only natural that by comparison the athletic status would decline in the Association itself. Externally, there was a very potent force which hit Irish athletic prestige: the increased attention given to athletics in so many new countries. Standards in both track and field events improved until even by the early 'thirties only Bob Tisdall and Pat O'Callaghan were in the gold medal class.

Then came the disastrous suspension of the N.A.C.A. and since then we have been to a large extent put away in sadness to the limbo of international athletics. That blow, in itself, was enough to depress our athletic standards further and when we remember the tremendous leap made both by emergent and more sophisticated nations since then, it's no great wonder that the athletes who did get to Mexico, bereft of the hair-trigger competition enjoyed by the athletes of other countries (not to mention the

money spent on them) didn't get within a donkey's screech of the gold medal.

Right, you say, we know all that. Just what are you getting at?

Well it's this. The G.A.A. as a body plays almost no part in present day athletics. In fact, the G.A.A. if it made its mind known probably wants to keep out of athletics because of the possibility of serious difference among its members over athletic politics. Yet, the G.A.A. is very conscious (or should be) of the importance of sports to-day when there are more built-up areas and where the tendency is to gather together and not return to the isolated homesteads which have been a feature of Celtic life in Ireland since time immemorial.

The G.A.A. can help athletics without entering the political arena. It can do so by encouraging athletics in its fields and by that I don't mean by handing over its fields to anyone.

In the old days the boys spent many a happy hour at the cross-roads putting the big stone for length and running races of all sorts and distances. Con Flynn, God rest him, told me the

● TO PAGE 18

Dohenys down in West Cork used train by running four miles to the Club House and the last in had to buy a gallon of porter. Not much use saying it was only a penny a pint when half a mile from home your guts were gone, your tongue hanging out and you had no money anyway.

Leaping for breadth and height was very popular and it all helped both body and mind. The delightful picture hasn't quite faded, for a friend of mine in Athlone started with a playful challenge at the cross-roads to run a four-mile road-race ending back at the start point.

Who outside of a recognised athletic club has caught a discus in his hand? Or how many more have thrown the javelin, or tried a pole-vault. The equipment costs a little money and the average person won't spend that money on himself.

This is where the G.A.A. club can do wonderful work. Why not let the athletics split heal as it will in time, and encourage our G.A.A. clubs, most of whom have very good fields, to erect a small hut where will be housed a javelin, high-jump posts, a sixteen pound shot, a half-hundredweight, and half a dozen hurdles. Two boards and a pit away in the corner of the field will be enough for the long and triple jumpers.

If this is done, the boys who have enough of the hurling and football will have a spot of fun at the athletics and from it will, no doubt, come good performers. Let them compete where they like.

For all we know it may be the little extra in athletic enjoyment that will lure our young men (and perhaps a few young women) away from their favourite present-day occupation of feverish gyrations in tempo to an appalling overdose of cacophony.

NEW QUIZ-TIME

By PERMUTER

SHOOTING FOR POINTS

YOU should be able to tap these over, though if you are a little rusty for want of practice some of those from awkward angles may "throw" you. Watch the close frees, they are to be taken in the time limit indicated. As with all close frees, you only get one chance.

1—Who are the current Intermediate Hurling All-Ireland title holders?

Time limit : 5 seconds.

2—Which county captured the first All-Ireland football championship.

Time limit : 7 seconds.

3—For what county does Noel Power hurl?

4—Who are the current Ulster club champions in football?

5—Bill Carlos won All-Irelands with Roscommon; can you say what position he occupied?

Time limit : 5 seconds.

6—In the famous Polo Grounds final of 1947 who was the Cavan goalkeeper?

7—Can you say which county was captained to an All-Ireland victory by M. Buckley?

8—What club does Seamus Leydon (Galway) play for?

9—Name the Dublin hurling champions 1968?

Time limit : 5 seconds.

10—Can you give the final score in the Wexford-Cork All-Ireland camogie final?

GO FOR A GOAL

And watch those time limits—you have to be quick to avail of a goal-scoring chance.

11—In the football champion-

ship of 1945 what did Jack Lynch, Derry Beckett and Pat (Hitler) Healy have in common?

12—Can you remember the score when Down suffered their only important defeat of 1968 at the hands of Longford in the Grounds Tournament?

Time limit : 10 seconds.

13—What club does Margaret O'Leary, the star of Wexford camogie, assist?

14—Which player was top-scorer in Leinster during all inter-county games of 1968?

Time limit : 10 seconds.

15—Who is Chairman of the Policy Committee?

Time limit : 7 seconds.

16—Can you name the director who made the Gael-Linn films "Peil" and "Christy Ring."

17—Famous Tipperary footballing brothers, Tom and Mick Cahill, each assisted another county as well as their native Tipperary. Can you say what these counties were?

18—Who was the Roscommon handballer who won an All-Ireland title last year after a lapse of sixteen years?

19—In the same year the number of players on a team was reduced from 21 to 17 and the number of points in a goal reduced to five from an unlimited number. When was that?

20—For what county did Brian Seeley figure in an All-Ireland final?

Time limit : 5 seconds.

Answers : Page 22



What might have been!

By DAN McAREAVY

WHEN this appears in print I will no longer hold the portfolio of Armagh county chairman; I will have returned, whence I came, to the backbenches with plenty of time to cast a cold clinical eye over the past five years since I was handed the "hot seat" at the 1964 convention.

Nor is it in any spirit of hypocrisy or humbug that I describe this examination of conscience as the most salutary that I have ever undertaken.

Gone now is that exciting dream nurtured then, of the absolutely perfect Armagh — invincible on the field, each club a well-oiled cog in the most streamlined administrative set-up in the land, the grounds problem solved, a fierce but healthy rivalry in every clash, the sound of the ash becoming louder and louder, in short—the great proud G.A.A. heart of the county would (I had hoped) beat more proudly than ever before.

But idealism and reality are unhappy bedfellows. It's an expert's job to blend the two and in this I was found wanting.

Lest it be thought that there has been a "sell-out" in Armagh let me hasten to add that the Association remains in an impregnable position in the county. There has been no hint—nor will there be—of any devaluation of a single principle for which the G.A.A. always stood.

Certainly the position of the

Association in the county has been held but surely this is not sufficient in an era demanding a new-look approach to everything. Even in organisations where fundamentals have remained unscathed the trappings have undergone a radical overhaul. So far the G.A.A. has made but a token gesture in this direction.

I am convinced that much of the trouble—frustration is probably a more appropriate word—facing our administrators lies in adjusting the Association to present-day conditions and demands. Conservatism has shackled positive imaginative thinking. The sincerity held but "not-an-inch" mentality is a sickening approach particularly at Congress.

Pride alone in the tradition of the local club is no longer sufficient to maintain the interest of to-day's members.

Counter attractions have developed at an enormous pace and not least on the social scene. Here other organisations would appear to have jumped ahead of us in providing much more than the opportunity to play a game.

There is a surfeit of inter-county fare, travel no longer presents any difficulty and with the grass-roots thus threatened at club level radical new thinking is clearly called for.

The problem of involving clubs more actively in the social life of their area is a major consideration which must be tackled. Many have not suitable premises

and a match on possibly two Sundays in the month will simply not do as we approach the seventies.

Talk of international tours has a disturbing ring when so much remains undone at home.

In another context, I heard a 15-year-old schoolboy recently exclaim in a debate: "Nero fiddled while Rome burned; today Apollo 8 reaches the moon while Biafra and growing millions throughout the world continue to starve".

The speaker's language may have been extravagant when applied to this article but it seems to me that the money expended on the Yanks and the Aussies might well be used to give a welcome financial transplant to our "starving" clubs. There are many areas in the overall administration where pruning could take place. Or have we got our values totally out of focus?

If clubs are to become once again the focal point of their parish or district they must be given the conditions for so doing. The Central Council has a grave responsibility in this matter. It will shirk it at its peril.

This is no defeatist submission but rather a realistic assessment of the position as it appears to me. It will always be a privilege and pleasure to serve in such an outstanding organisation as the G.A.A. but disappointment can have an eroding effect on spirit.

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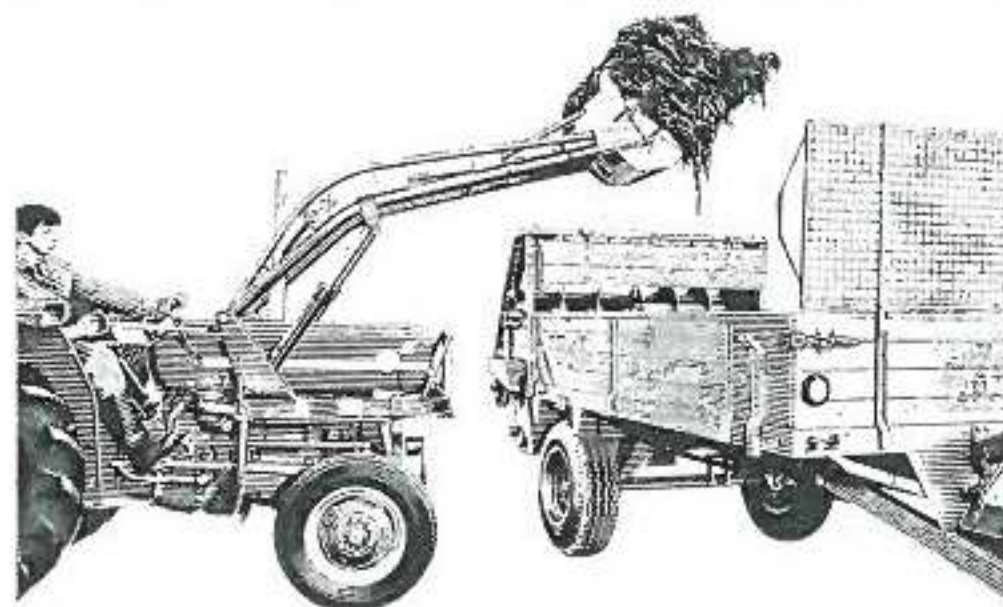
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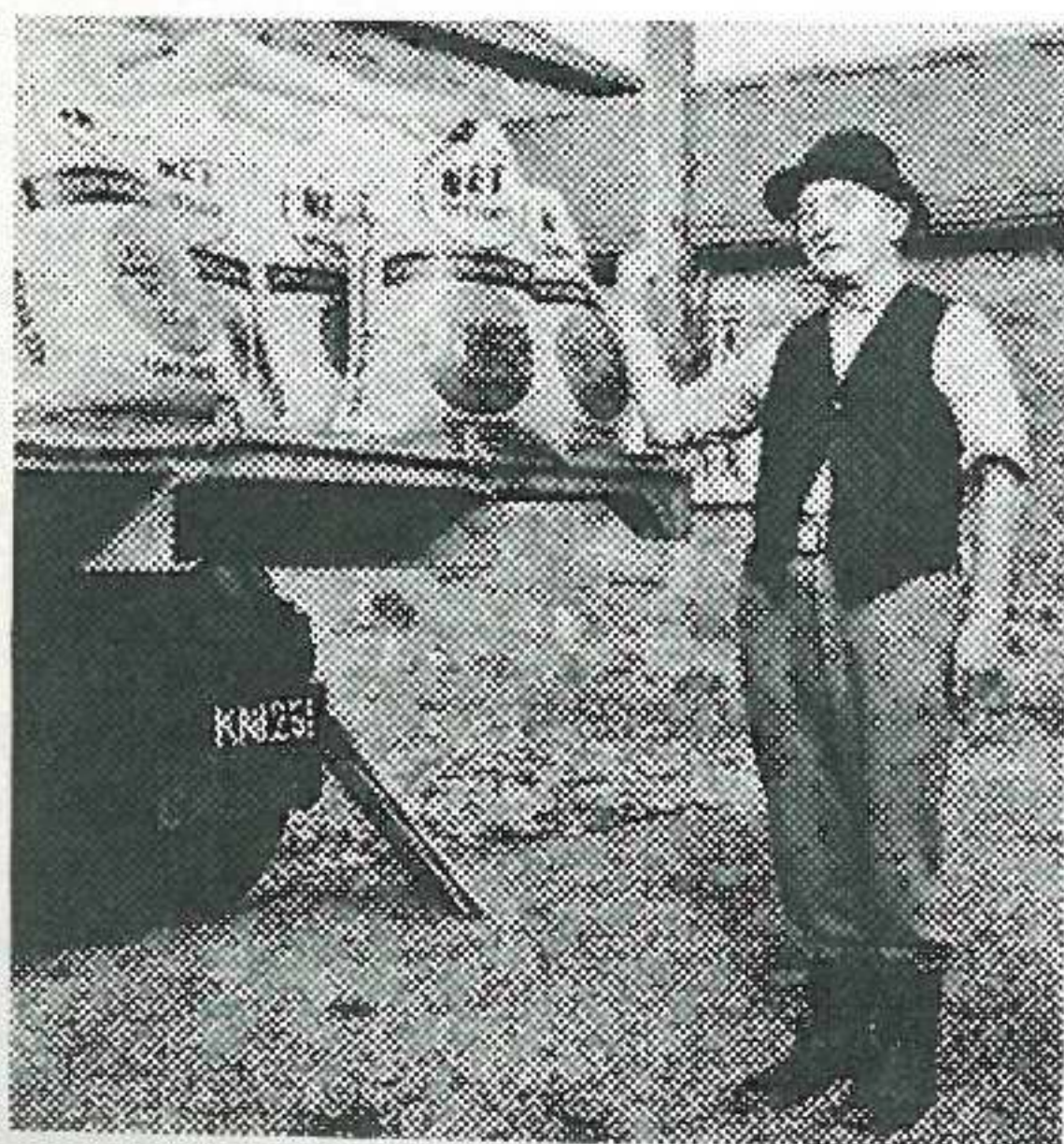


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Three bright Stars from Derry

ON a sunny March day, nearly four years ago, I was at Ballybay to see a team from St. Columb's, Derry, score a history-making win over a Jimmy Duggan-led St. Jarlath's, Tuam, outfit in the All-Ireland Colleges' senior football semi-final. This month, three of that very talented Derry side put their skills and class on parade for the first time in interprovincial senior football when they line-out in the Ulster jersey against Connacht.

They are Malachy McAfee, who was centre-half-back that day at Ballybay, Tom Quinn, a polished performer in the No. 7 shirt, and Seamus Lagan, the full-forward. All were also to the fore in the side that had a final win over Belcamp O.M.I., Dublin, to take the Hogan Cup to Derry for the only time so far.

Later in 1965 we saw Quinn, McAfee and Lagan display their skills efficiently with that great Derry squad that swept all before it in the All-Ireland minor championship. Last September they were back again to colour the Croke Park scene with their quality play in another All-Ireland championship final win—over Offaly in the under-21 grade.

There is, of course, a wealth of difference between under-age competitions, and the hard grind of interprovincial fare. But there is still every reason to believe

that, having speedily bridged this gap, McAfee, Quinn and Lagan will now go on to each make a really sizeable imprint in this grade also.

After all, they have all been Derry first team regulars over the past few years, and, having also watched this trio in a number of games in the premier ranks, I am in no doubt that they are steadily maintaining their climbs to greatness.

Indeed, after a busy year of travelling up and down the country in 1968, and during which I saw most of the top players in action, I would be prepared to argue long and hard with anyone that Tom Quinn, now Derry's automatic choice at full-back, is the best man in this position in the game at present!

The young Bellaghy man's football is already that of a mature player, rather than of a performer really only on the threshold of his senior career. I continue to be impressed by his cool, brainy, alert and active craftsmanship, by his sure and clean fielding, his verve, drive and positional sense.

Quinn, who was at midfield in the St. Columb's team that lost the 1966 All-Ireland semi-final to St. Jarlath's, has also captured my imagination with the variety in his play, his speed to the ball, and generally lengthy and well-directed clearances.

I now confidently look to Tom Quinn, who added an Ulster club championship medal to his collection shortly before Christmas, to further advance his climb to the top by celebrating his debut in the Ulster No. 3 jersey with the type of wholehearted and inspiring display of power-football that could well prove one of the major factors in setting the North firmly on the road to overcoming this hurdle in quest of their seventh title of the 1960's.

McAfee was also a consistent performer all during the past year with Derry in the senior and under-21 grades, as centre-half. He has many outstanding qualities, and he is skilfully employing them to telling effect. Well-equipped for the testing role of pivot, he has in game after game provided the same solid, "professional" type of play that never gives supporters of his team a moment's worry, and, as a result, is so frequently taken for granted.

McAfee has sure hands, is dependable in the air, keen in anticipation, sure in his covering, and gets length and direction into his kicks. He is also vigilant off the ball.

The Derry centre-half will be at right-wing in the coming clash with Connacht. However, while I am convinced that the No. 6 spot is his best position, I am equally certain that this talented performer with the star-plus quality will, with his energy, mobility and great skill, prove a dynamic and forceful unit in the Ulster bid for a second successive semi-final win over the West.

Lagan changed his full-forward role of his Colleges' days to that of midfield partner of Tommy Diamond, now also a first-team

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● FROM PAGE 21

regular, and an under-21 medalist in Derry's 1965 minor title winning outfit. It is in this midfield ranking that he has made his mark in inter-county competitions, won an under-21 medal, and now gains that first Ulster jersey.

I must admit that I was not as prepared for his inclusion in the provincial squad, as I was for the selections of Quinn and McAfee. This was due, not to the fact that

I was any less impressed by Lagan's potential, but rather because I did not anticipate that Colm McAlarney (Down) would be moved out of midfield.

I last saw Lagan in action in November at Croke Park at midfield for St. Joseph's Training College, Belfast, against All Hallows, Dublin, in the new Universities' League (Quinn, McAfee and McAlarney were also in the Belfast side that day, so if you have not been at any of these

games so far, now you have some idea of what you are missing).

But back to Lagan. I thought he marked that last headquarters outing with the best game I have watched him play. There was method and drive about his football, industry and endeavour, and he proved a very efficient midfield link between defence and attack. I look to him now to be a big success on his interprovincial debut.

These, then, are three bright jewels from Derry, a trio who are brilliantly taking in their stride all the major rungs up the ladder that leads to a place among the elite. They will continue to repay watching not only in the coming Railway Cup series, but in the years ahead.

●
Quiz Answers

● FROM PAGE 18

POINTS

- 1—London.
- 2—Limerick (Commercials) 1887.
- 3—Kerry.
- 4—Bellaghy (Derry).
- 5—Centre-half back.
- 6—V. Gannon.
- 7—Kildare (1927).
- 8—Dunmore McHales.
- 9—U.C.D.
- 10—Wexford 4-2; Cork 2-5.

GOALS

- 11—All three were completing the "double"—winning All-Ireland football medals having previously won hurling medals.
- 12—Longford 3-9; Down 1-12.
- 13—Eoghan Ruadh (Dublin).
- 14—Tony Brennan (Meath) with 6-57 (75 points).
- 15—Pádraig Ó Fainín (Waterford).
- 16—Louis Marcus.
- 17—Tom with Cavan and Mick with Cork.
- 18—Ray Doherty.
- 19—1892.
- 20—Armagh (1953).

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CATHAL CAWLEY

A PROFILE : By SEAN RICE



HE has never hit the headlines in the same way that his colleague, Michael Kearins, has done. Yet, he has always been there, always plugging away at centre-half back. He made his debut on the Sligo team the same year that John Donnellan made his on the Galway team. That was in the Connacht junior championship of 1958—a game which Galway won.

Cathal Cawley was only eighteen then. He had already played minor football for Sligo that year and later the same year was drafted into the Sligo senior team. Since then, he has been playing at centre-half back without many medals to show for it. But despite this he has never become despondent, for he feels that the big break-through is not too far off.

Why this feeling? Simply because 1968 was Sligo's best year in football for many a long day. The senior team reached the semi-finals of the National League for the first time in about forty years, and failed narrowly to Kildare after a hectic struggle that took two hours to decide.

And then there was the magnificent display by their minors in the All-Ireland final when they failed so narrowly to Cork, the biggest county in the country, after a great second-half rally.

These are the things that have made Sligo buzz, and brought hopes gushing to the surface. As

Cathal Cawley told me: "I have never witnessed anything like the enthusiasm in the county at the present time. And it is all due to the progress of the seniors and minors during the past year".

But for all that do they really hold high hopes of winning the Connacht championship this coming year? Cathal Cawley says they do. "We were the only team to beat Galway during their great reign. By doing so we qualified for the Wembley tournament and even since then we have fared better against them than Mayo have done".

"I think if we can manage to weld some of last year's minors into the present senior team our prospects for the future will be very bright. Already one of those minors, Richard Hayden, has been brought into the team and against Donegal he was one of the side's best players", he said.

Cathal Cawley's greatest treasure is the Railway Cup medal he won with Connacht two years ago. He had been selected

four times for Connacht—and it is the only reward his displays for his county have earned for him.

He did win a medal with his native Ballinacarrow as a youngster, won a Mayo junior championship medal with Crossmolina where he was stationed for some years as a Garda and with whom he has been invited to tour America this coming autumn. He also won a Roscommon junior championship medal with Keadue where he was also stationed for a short time, and he also won a medal with Ballina Stephenites.

Now he plays with Claremorris and has bright hopes of capturing another Mayo senior championship medal this year. But his dearest wish is to win a medal with his native county. He has not too many years left to do this, and consequently trains strenuously at every opportunity.

"The present Sligo enthusiasm has also bitten me," he said. "So I try to be fit for every game.

Sligo are pretty certain to qualify for the National League group semi-final again this year and if they emerge as they did last year they should have garnered sufficient experience to reach the final and to bring Cathal Cawley and, indeed, Michael Kearins, the medals they have so long been seeking.

The big talk is over

NOW DOWN TO WORK!

By SÉAMUS Ó CEALLAIGH

THE period of the big talk at divisional and county conventions is over for another year, but that must not mean a complete turning away from some of the important topics that were under discussion.

A keen student of the games remarked to me quite recently that Boards throughout the season devoted far too much time to routine affairs, whilst matters of policy were rarely, if ever, on the agenda and were discussed generally only by accident.

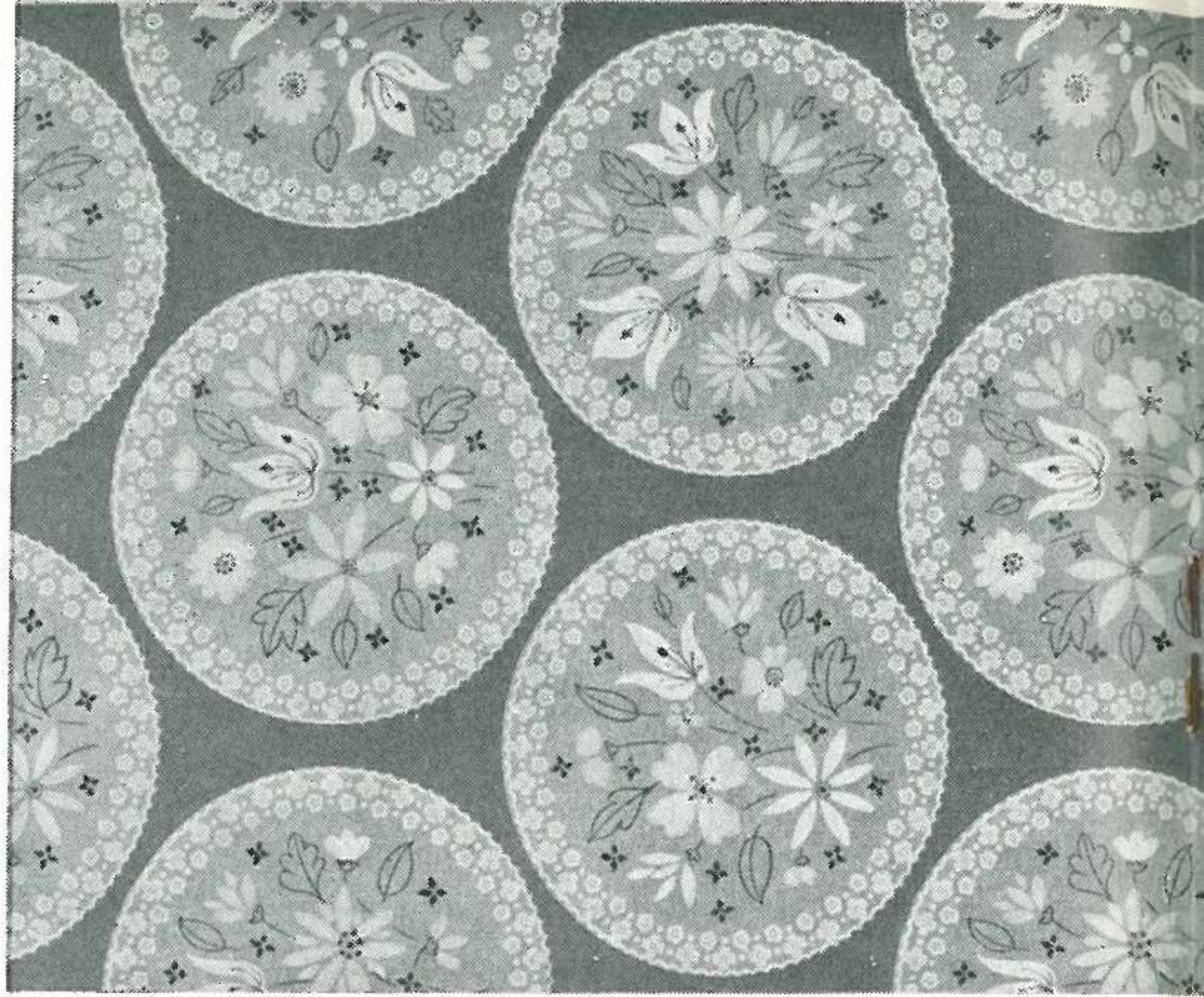
This situation cannot be allowed continue and pressing problems must have the constant attention of governing bodies.

The drift from the games has to be arrested—at both national and local levels — and a start should be made with the Railway Cup ties. These have declined in popularity during the present decade at an alarming rate and the finals are no

ness to suggest that a competition which provides just three games for a majority of these counties is helping football, particularly in the weaker counties. Four groups of eight, with separate trophies, providing a minimum of seven games for each competing county could be a much improved arrangement, with a system of promotion and relegation properly applied that would keep every county on their toes throughout.

We cannot any longer ignore the big drain from Gaelic games, of promising players in their mid-teens. The primary schools, particularly in the big centres of population, are doing tremendous work for the G.A.A., but recent investigation in certain quarters has revealed the startling fact that two out of every three of these lads turn to other codes or desert the playing fields altogether before they are eighteen.

This is a very serious matter



longer the compelling St. Patrick's Day attraction of some years ago.

Any new international competition should be based on these games—it would immediately rebuild the competitions and would have the added attraction of giving many first class players the chance of a trans-Atlantic trip that they had little prospect of under the previous arrangement. With the home finals decided in March the way would be clear for an early May journey abroad that should incorporate both the International finals and the Cardinal Cushing series of matches.

The Whit Saturday games at Wembley would be put on a much sounder basis too were the All-Ireland champions to play a Rest of Ireland selection in both codes — giving the exiles the opportunity of seeing our best players in action each season. The trophies for these games should be attractive and distinctive — something to ensure matches of championship fervour, not the holiday atmosphere that can do so much damage to the prestige of Gaelic games.

The National Football League is not serving its purpose—that was made obvious in the course of discussions at the conventions—and unless some remedial action is taken a drive to rescue football will soon be as urgent as the present steps to extend the hurling appeal.

It is sheer lunacy putting all the football counties into the same group and absolute mad-

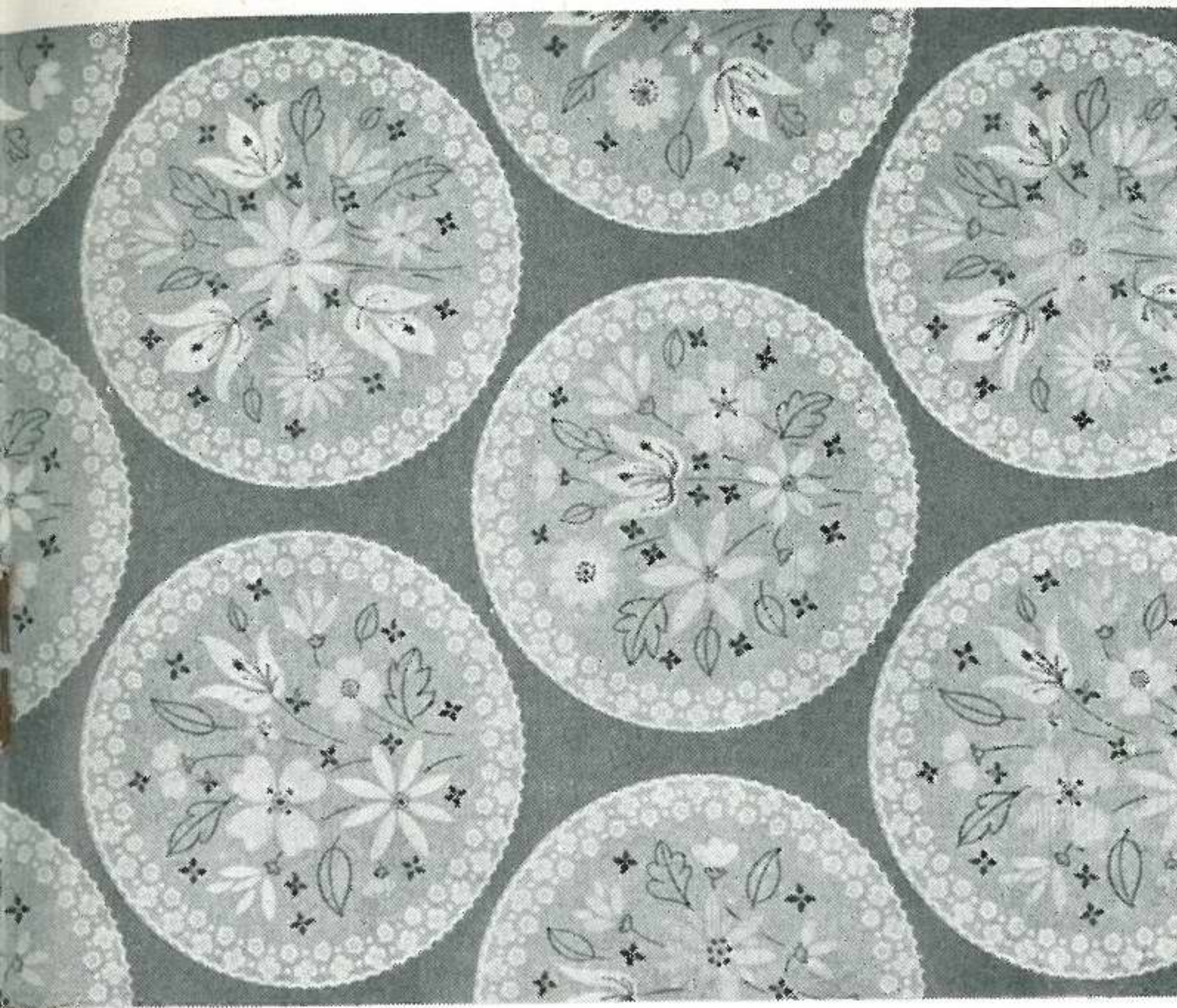
ness that demands immediate attention, for even players who have reached considerable prominence on Gaelic fields are implicated, and have been lost.

This is a situation that definitely cannot be permitted to develop any further, and enquiry into the reasons suggest that the lack of social life within the G.A.A. has an important bearing. Adolescent youth seek their enjoyment where the opportunities for dancing and other amusements are available and clubs must face up to these facts or suffer a continuing drain of their best blood elsewhere.

We are living in a very materialistic age—in days when the claim of Gaelic games from the national angle cuts little ice. The people that matter, the men that are leaders in industry, in commerce and in the professions are to be met in the rugby and golf club pavilions—and to a young lad seeking a good start in life, this is an important consideration.

The G.A.A. has its leading personages too—men of influence in all sectors of the national life—but our players are not getting the opportunities of meeting these people.

A few clubs have taken very commendable steps to right matters in this regard, but their example must be followed by very many others as a matter of extreme urgency, so that the G.A.A. must hold its proud position as the premier youth organisation in every parish in the land.



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THREE CHEERS FOR NEILLI MULCAHY!

WHEN I read Neilli Mulcahy's article on possible new camogie styles in the recent issue of 'Our Games Annual' I found it hard to restrain myself from giving her three rousing cheers. After all, the mere fact that such an internationally renowned dress designer and leader of haute-couture showed her great interest in camogie was in itself a crushing answer to those who for years have tried to convince themselves that camogie players were nothing more than a dowdy collection of 'Mary Hicks'. But then, Neilli Mulcahy was herself a very effective and talented

camogie player. I remember, during her school-days, seeing her win a Dublin Colleges medal at Croke Park with Loreto Convent, St. Stephen's Green, then a great stronghold of the game. She also played for U.C.D. during her time there and it may be noted in passing that her sister Elizabeth, now Mrs. Berney, not alone captained U.C.D. to Ashbourne Cup victory but won several All-Ireland medals in the Dublin tunic. So no wonder I read Neilli Mulcahy's article with great interest and studied her designs with greater interest still.

All the five sketches she gives are both attractive and fetching, but as I, unfortunately, will never again have the opportunity of wearing any of them myself, I thought it wiser to get the opinions of present-day players on the matter, and the younger players at that.

Now, from the fashion point of view, they were all in favour of all or any of the designs, but from the sheer practical view-point of playing in any of them, they had some interesting comments to make.

They all felt, for example, that while a blouse and skirt style would look the best from appearance purposes, they had found from experience one very big objection.

Camogie is a game that demands more freedom of movement than any game for women except tennis, and almost all the girls with whom I discussed the matter felt it would be impossible to keep the blouse part really tidy through a closely contested fifty minutes, especially if there is a great deal of overhead play.

Indeed they felt that the most practical designs that Neilli had for them were the 'Pinafore' and the 'Culotte dress.' Oddly enough, those to whom I spoke were all against knee length socks. They say that in other field games for girls on cold days the results were disastrous, with blue knees the most notable colour scheme of any side.

On the question of the 'Culotte' and the 'Pinafore', opinion was divided, but amongst star players

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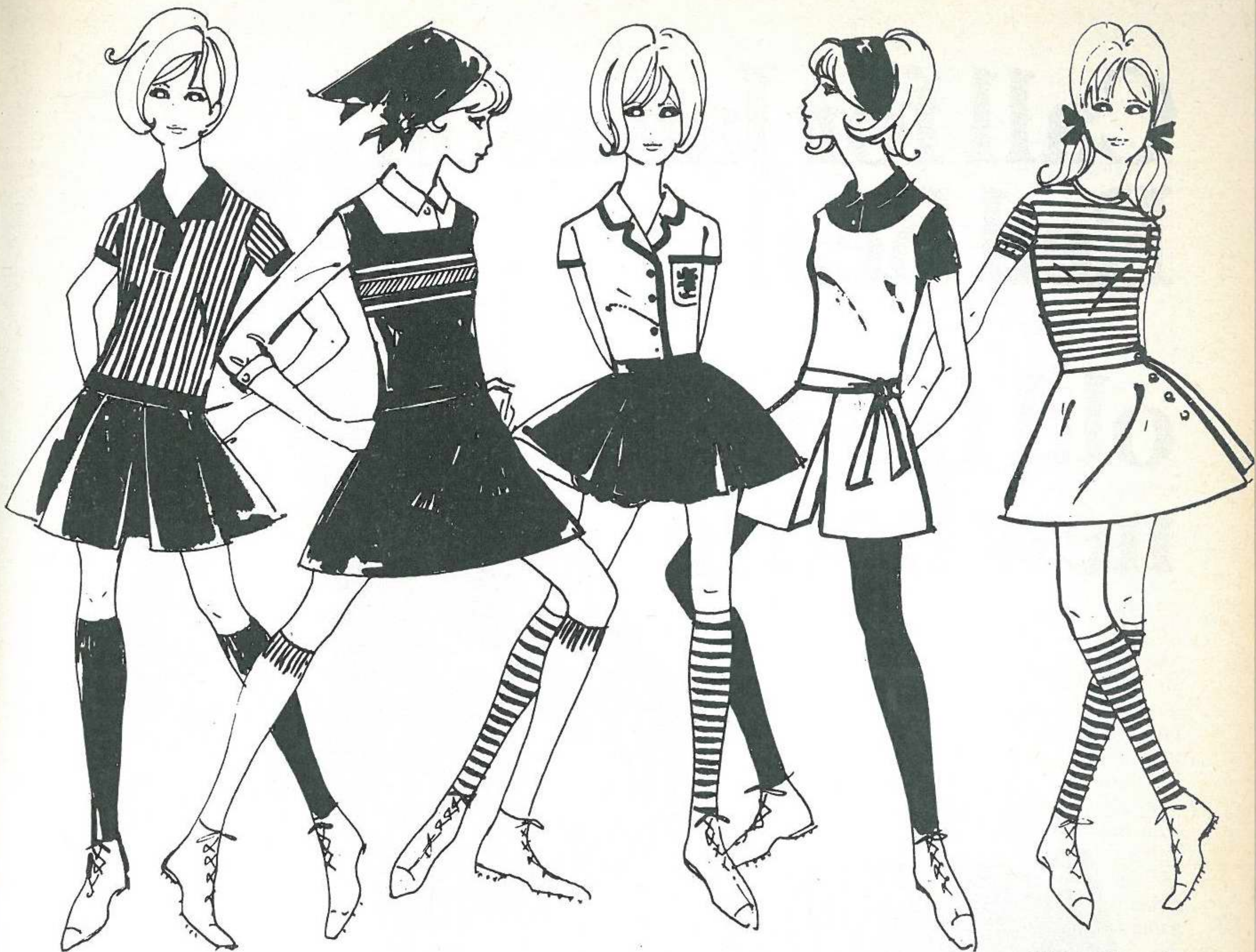
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Fashion designer Neilli Mulcahy's attractive camogie outfits (above) are reproduced by courtesy of "Our Games", the G.A.A.'s official annual.

I found a body of opinion in favour of the 'Pinafore', which, after all, may be said to be much the same as the present tunic.

On the other hand, the Culotte found favour with many of those associated with school sides, particularly as many schools already wear similar divided-skirt type uniforms for gymnastics, volleyball and other sports. Some players felt that, in recent years, since tunics were sensibly shortened, and especially since tights became so cheap and practical, that there is not a great deal wrong with the present outfit, as long as each player gets

her tunic made, or makes it herself, to her individual requirements.

Because, and here is a big snag, not all players are built like fashion models, and an outfit that might look just the thing on one player might prove absolutely disastrous as worn by her stouter sister.

And there is one further point in favour of the Pinafore tunic style. For my sins, year after year, I like to watch the ladies play tennis at Wimbledon. I notice that all the top world-stars stick to the one-piece tunic style. They must have their

reasons, and their reasons are bound to be good ones, for their livelihood depends on their success.

Meanwhile, a word of thanks to Neilli Mulcahy for her taking the time and trouble to make camogie players more fashion-conscious on the playing fields. Her article, as I feel it was intended to be, must lead to a great deal of discussion at the proper level, among the players, and I am sure we will see results, probably first of all in the Colleges' competitions, if the winds of change start to blow at Congress level.

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TEA WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANTS

WHEN you walked inside, the place seemed dark after the brightness outside. Through the gloom came the gleam of the red-tinted mahogany counter and the brassy curves of the big scales. There was a smell of bacon mixed up with bulls' eyes, and always as you crossed the threshold a small bell pinged somewhere to warn someone of your arrival. A benign lady in a blue checked overall, or a pleasant man in a fawn coat took your penny and counted out your dozen of sweets. Usually they threw in one extra for luck—unless you were temporarily in disgrace for having chased the shop cat into a chest of tea, or knocked down a pyramid of digging forks on display in the corner.

You know the sort of shop I'm talking about if you're over thirty. It contrasts vividly with the glass acres of the modern emporium and you might as well guard your memories because memories are all that are left to us of shops like this. What with

rationalisation, mergers, take-overs, easier communications and distribution, and television advertising, the pattern of shops is changing. However, there is a crumb of comfort if you're a sentimentalist. Sometimes the setting changes but the old spirit stays on. In many towns and villages you'll see a thriving general store. From the outer side of the street, if you look across to the wide polished windows, you can see into every corner of the shop. The fitches of bacon have vanished from the rafters. In fact the rafters have vanished too. But sometimes the packaged, boned joints of to-day's bacon are tumbled higgledy piggledy in the deep-freeze cabinet with the frozen peas; and the digging forks lean up against a pyramid of biscuit boxes. This is always a comforting sight.

And where the old shops have moved with the times, business is booming. In the area of Dublin where I live, the most popular local shop is run on old-fashioned lines. From our Mr. D. you buy everything from a packet of pins or a pound of rashers to a bottle of Jameson. By clever buying, and co-operation with his trade group, he keeps prices on general lines

In the following article **Linda Collins** nostalgically recalls the days of the old Tea, Wine and Spirit merchants, where one could buy anything from a pennyworth of bullseyes to a plough.

down to the same level as the supermarkets, so you can imagine how popular the place is. We get all the fun of bargain shopping here, plus a bit of bonhomie, pleasant conversation, and serious advice on what stocks to lay in for the next Christening party. Mr. D's sense of adventure is strong. Once he favoured us with casks of Algerian wine—you brought your bottle along and filled it in the shop from the tap on the cask. Cost: four and sixpence. Two glasses of this and you lay awake all night—but anyway it was an experience to drink it. With happier results, Mr. D. has experimented by stocking rarer liqueurs and little-known Cognacs.

He is also a connoisseur of tea. Single-handed, he has been responsible for raising the tea-drinking standards of our populous neighbourhood far above what they were. He it was who first persuaded us to try the "two shillings a quarter" stuff: the haute couture of tea. Now we're so discerning that we willingly pay more than this on occasion. But, of course, when a "special offer" comes along Mr. D. ensures that we take advantage of it.

"Tea, Wines, Spirits". The sign still seen outside many grocers' shops. We learned from Mr. Nigel Beamish who is

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● FROM PAGE 29

Managing Director of Edward Dillon & Co., the wine merchants, that we are apparently the only country in the world where this particular selling tradition has grown up. It's intriguing to speculate how it happened. Of course many grocers don't confine themselves to those three lines plus general stocks. Mr. Beamish quoted us several letter-heads of Irish firms which stated: ". . . and Son. Suppliers of Ploughs, Coal, Tea, Wine, Spirits. Funeral Undertakers".

At the Dillon premises in Mountjoy Square, Dublin, you won't see any ploughs for sale—but they do sell practically any alcoholic wine or spirit which you can call to mind. The setting is singularly gracious: a superb Georgian house with the beautiful proportion of the rooms and the marvellous eighteenth century plasterwork still intact. Besides the essential business equipment of today, the offices contain pieces of antique furniture—all of them functional and earning their keep—which add immensely to the general effect. Necessary privacy for staff has been obtained by the clever use of head-high muffled glass partitions which do their job unobtrusively and don't impinge in any way unpleasantly on the proportion of the rooms. The vast kitchens and storerooms of former times also work hard for a living: they house an "entertainment room" and all sorts of equipment essential to the running of the business. In fact, 25 Mountjoy Square is a functional setting for the efficient running of a business: and yet the house today looks more like what it was when first built than ever before.

Dillons probably had quite a lot to do with importing that glass of port you took last night to ward off the Hong Kong 'flu, and

the glass of brandy you keep in the kitchen press for emergencies. Many famous names are associated with the firm from Hennessy's through Sandeman's, Dewar's, Bushmills, Lanson Champagne, and the historic Grand Marnier liqueur, and including drink to be taken in a tiny glass. The Hennessy family of course are descendants of a member of the Irish Army who went to France with Sarsfield as a member of the Wild Geese after the Treaty of Limerick, and they maintain intimate connections with Ireland to the present day.

Mr. Beamish was worth listening to as he "talked shop". For instance, you must be aware that Ireland rates fairly highly in the drinking stakes—but had you realised that nowadays the "hard men" are a shrinking band, and that there is a much more sophisticated and sensible approach to having a jar? People are drinking less, but with more discernment, and the change is welcome.

The credit for this seems to belong to the ladies. Since they invaded the pubs there are fewer "serious sessions" but a greater variety of interesting jorums on offer. At last, the pub is becoming a centre of social enjoyment, with the drink as an incidental.

Also, people are beginning to drink wine with their meals at home and again Mr. Beamish is our authority for saying this is definitely not just a question of keeping up with the Joneses. We have discovered that it's nice to have a glass of Burgundy with the bit of sirloin on Sundays, or a drop of Graves with the chicken—and to heck with the Joneses.

Nothing better repays the outlay of an extra half crown or five bob than a bottle of wine. You see, when you buy at the

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

cheapest end of the scale the proportion of money you're paying for the actual wine itself is small. A lot of it is taxes. But as you lay out the extra couple of shillings you get all the advantage of that in a better wine. So the slightly dearer bottle is really a better bargain. Most of us must budget for this sort of purchase and Mr. Beamish advises that in this case we should "shop around" within our price bracket till we find a wine which we really like. Then make a note not of the name of the wine but of the **shippers'** name, which will be mentioned on the label. If you continue to buy from that shipper's range you'll get first-class drinking at a budget price. Firms like Edward Dillon & Co. bring in shipments of wine in the cask and subsequently bottle them themselves, in Ireland.

Maybe you've seen a cartoon of

a man sniffing at a glass of wine and saying "It's a silly little wine without much breeding but I think you'll be amused by its presumption". This pokes fun at the snobbery which says you can't enjoy wine unless you've developed a mysterious 'palate'. Nonsense. The way to get a palate is to drink what you enjoy. And the rule about red with meat, white with fish—while a good rule on occasion—was made to be broken whenever you feel like it.

Sandeman's Five Star Port is still prime favourite with Irish people and this is what the majority still think of as "wine". Rich and sweet, it is warming without being too heady and there's a bottle on practically every sideboard in the country. We are also great sherry-drinkers. We like it to have a sweetish taste, but are reassured when it says "dry" on the label. On the whole, we are now a

nation drinking less but with more discrimination. My only crib with the trade is: why aren't there better varieties of fruit drinks for people who prefer non-alcoholic refreshments?

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slow grinding-down of many clubs under the strains of poverty and declining population or declining appeal, drastic action seems to be needed.

On the other hand, counties with serious ambitions for the future, complain they get too little match-play in the League—too little opportunity to improve their sides in the competitiveness of it. Should the junior inter-county championships go at last? Should the terrible clutter of tournaments be thinned mercilessly? Is there a place for such as the Railway Cup, the Grounds Tournament, etc., games which invariably give still more games to those who have most already?

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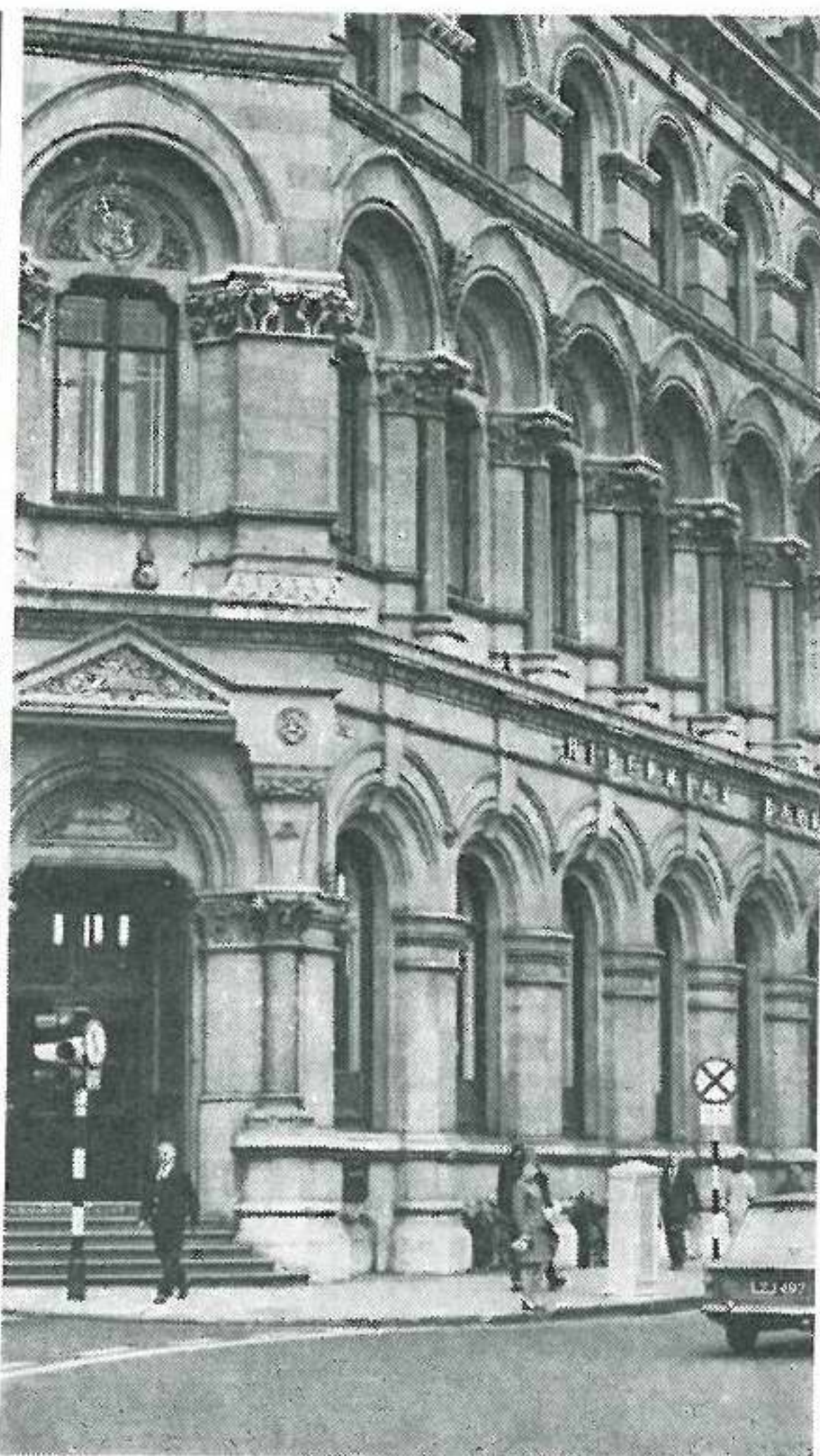
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● The victorious Provincial Bank Gaelic football team, winners of the Banks Gaelic football trophy for 1968.

THE GAMES IN THE BANKS

WHILE Rugby and Golf Competitions dominate the Bank's sporting programme, Gaelic is strongly fostered by the Irish Bank Officials Association and last year there was a great upsurge of interest in both Hurling and Football. In recent years no team has so convincingly dominated the Gaelic scene as the Provincial Bank sides of 1968. Both Hurling and Gaelic Football victories were sweetly savoured by the Provincial Bank and the satisfactory result was a reflection of the Provincial Bank players and mentors.

The Hurling Competition attracted only three Banks. The Munster and Leinster Bank Limited eliminated the National Bank in a pulsating, controversial and fiery semi-final, despite the individual efforts of National's goalkeeper Tom Monaghan (Cork) and Pat Murphy (Limerick). At O'Toole Park, amidst scenes of unrivalled excitement the Munster and Leinster failed to topple the Provincial Bank stalwarts from their 1967 pedestal. From the

start, the champions set out to contain the Munster and Leinster stars. This was done with great effect and the final score read 7-4 to 5-5. This game highlighted the merits of a 13-a-side contest by its continuity and fluent striking. The Provincial Bank were capably led by their captain and centre-back, Lorcan Wall (Clanna Gael), who prompted his defence to neatly funnel a smart supply of ball to the forwards, where Eddie Keher (Kilkenny), although closely marked, often troubled the Munster and Leinster defence with his characteristic goalward sorties. The skill of Eddie combined with the enthusiastic display of his colleagues tipped the scales in favour of the Provincial Bank and a richly deserved victory. John O'Connell (Cork) starred at midfield and Pat Hannifin also impressed in a gallant Munster and Leinster side. The participation of other Bank teams would add further excitement and colour to this competition.

With the Hurling trophy tucked under their belts Provincial Bank set out to complete the second part of the double by capturing the Football Cup. Following an easy win over the Hibernian Bank in the first round, they qualified to meet the Munster and Leinster Bank, who had already eliminated the Bank of Ireland, in the semi-final. In this semi-final classic there was a wonderful display of football skills, tactics and strategy by the Provincial Bank who imposed their iron will on the exchanges and toppled the Munster and Leinster Bank, reigning champions, on the score 2-8 to 1-5. The Ulster Bank took the National to task in the other semi-final. The National, who have bestrode the football scene in recent years had to bow to the combined strength of a triumphant Ulster side. With Inter-Provincial stars like Mick Burke (Cork), Jim Duggan (Galway), Pat Murphy, Tony

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Allied Irish Banks

The Munster & Leinster, the Provincial and the Royal Banks

● FROM PAGE 35

Fitzgerald (Limerick) and a host of other inter-county players the National's performance was disappointing.

The final was played at St. Vincent's grounds, Raheny, in an atmosphere of suspense and tension. Within seconds of the start the bid for supremacy was in full swing. The Provincial settled down to play realistic football and their industry was rewarded with an early lead. Just before half-time the Ulster gained control of the game, but the Provincial backs, marshalled by their captain and centre-back, Denis Murphy (Muskerry) weathered the storm and led at the interval 2-2 to 1-3. In the second half the Provincial team aided by the elements fired over some memorable scores, and by the third quarter they had edged into an unassailable nine point lead, but the Ulster side never faltered. In the closing minutes the Provincial defence had to withstand endless pressure from their worthy opponents, but the gallant Provincial boys held on to win their first Gaelic Football Trophy on the score 2-9 to 1-4. The Ulster had a formidable side which included Jimmy O'Donnell (Cavan), John Nallen (Cavan), Brendan Needham and Willie Corr (Louth). Provincial Bank also had inter-county stars in John Aherne and Liam Cagney (Limerick), Paud Finnegan (Kerry), Brian O'Reilly (Mayo) and Philip McLaughlin (Cork).

The standard of both the Hurling and Football competitions was high in 1968 and continues to improve each season and it is hoped that this favourable trend will be maintained and that the recent mergers in Irish Banking will not have an adverse effect on these entertaining competitions.



Eddie Keher of Kilkenny helped Provincial Bank to another hurling victory.

Jack Mahon, author of "Twelve Glorious Years" and "Three In A Row", always an advocate of the introduction of All-Ireland club championships, analyses the pros and cons in the following article.

By

Jack Mahon



TIME RIPE FOR CLUB TESTS

THE time it seems is at last ripe for the introduction of All-Ireland club championships at Congress next Easter. For some years past Munster have run official provincial club championships. Connacht has its official provincial football championship for even a longer period, but it has been run irregularly, some years not at all and like in Munster is always a year late. Ulster's unofficial title (it used to be organised by the St. John's G.A.A. club in Belfast and, like in Connacht, in football only) became official this year, was run off quickly, but became so involved in distasteful scenes and unsporting play in its first year that its introduction has left a bad taste. Leinster have yet to enter the race, but motions have now been passed in Leinster counties to have this set-up changed. So, as I said, it would seem that the time is now ripe to inaugurate these championships at All-Ireland level. But is it?

If these championships are to be started then we must streamline our whole G.A.A. schedule as never before. We all agree our inter-county schedule is much overloaded. It is a strain on the players from the top

teams and in some counties at least cuts in on club schedules, sometimes delaying them for months and causing less club activity. Some counties have better regulated club leagues and championships than others. County championships in all counties must be completed by a certain date if the All-Ireland club titles are established. Similarly with the provincial titles.

To make room for the club All-Ireland's some competitions must go. Elsewhere I've suggested that practically all inter-county tournament games and many other competitions such as the McKenna Cup (Ulster), Gael Linn Cup (Connacht), O'Byrne Cup and Walsh Cup (Leinster) aye, even the Railway Cup should be scrapped. I know that some of these competitions have yielded valuable money for Accident Fund benefits, but we must devise other means. Is there any need for a Grounds Tournament or an Oireachtas Hurling Tournament?

Elsewhere, too, I've suggested that we stage some competitions with some "bite" at Croke Park on our national holiday. The Railway Cup finals have worn thin. It seems we don't produce

Christy Rings or Sean Purcells or Olly Freaneys anymore. But maybe its not that, for we still have the Sean O'Neills and the Jimmy Doyles and yet the Railway Cup tournaments grow paler. I suggested the staging of the Universities Championship finals (the Sigerson and Fitzgibbon) for such a day. They certainly have not come to lack bite now but now I've a better idea. Why not the finals of our inter-club All-Ireland's on March 17 every year at Croke Park? It's a thought and we could have the provincial finals all over by Christmas.

Last summer while in Gormanston at the football course I discussed this question with Eamonn Young (if you've never heard him sing "The Scottish Soldier" then be sure you do, but make sure the lights are out, the time is night and the glass is full or should I say empty!). We had just been organising the first ever unofficial club All-Ireland in Dunmore and had successfully defeated the Munster champions St. Nick's (Cork) in a replay at Tuam, after two hilarious weekends in Cork and Dunmore respectively. I was telling Young about the wonderful time

the Dunmore lads had in Cork at St. Nick's expense and of the fine time the Cork lads had in Dunmore on the occasion of the replay (it was carnival time in Dunmore—I suppose they'd call it fiesta-time in Spain) and some Cork players spent the entire August weekend in Dunmore.

New friends were made — friends for life. But it was the clubs themselves who organised it from the beginning and the fact that it was unofficial ensured its success. Were it official, both teams would have organised their own end of things separately, as is done with official inter-county competitions. There would have been less socialising and few friends would have been made. Eamonn and myself more or less agreed on this but on reflection is this not a fact in our official make-up.

Surely in an official tournament the onus could still fall on the home club to do the socialising and in the event of the finals being played at Croke Park as suggested surely the finalists—all four—could dine together at a banquet after the games. (The semi-finals and indeed all games prior to the final could be played on a two-game home and away basis with the best aggregate score deciding the outcome.) But perhaps my suggestions are bogging themselves down because they are too many at once.

Anyone who had the good fortune to see either leg of the first unofficial football final between Dunmore Mac Hale's (Galway) and St. Joseph's (Bundoran-Ballyshannon) last year will want to see these championships become official. Both games at Bundoran and Tuam were epics, the second one in Tuam the best club game I've ever seen, surpassing even the famous St. Vincent's and Tuam Stars clashes in the last decade. They

were sporting, open, fast and clean. Not too much mauling. Great goals. Wonderful displays and not all of these from established countymen.

Dunmore received a céad míle fáilte in Bundoran from the St. Joseph's team and officials (if not the St. Joseph's supporters) and the Donegal team received a great welcome to Galway on their return.

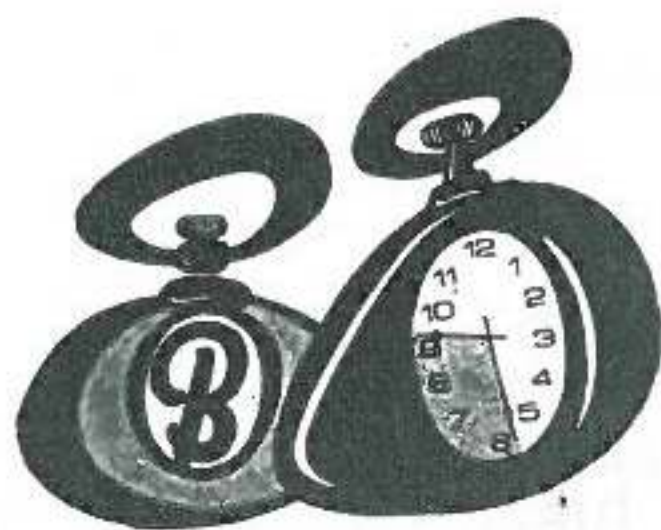
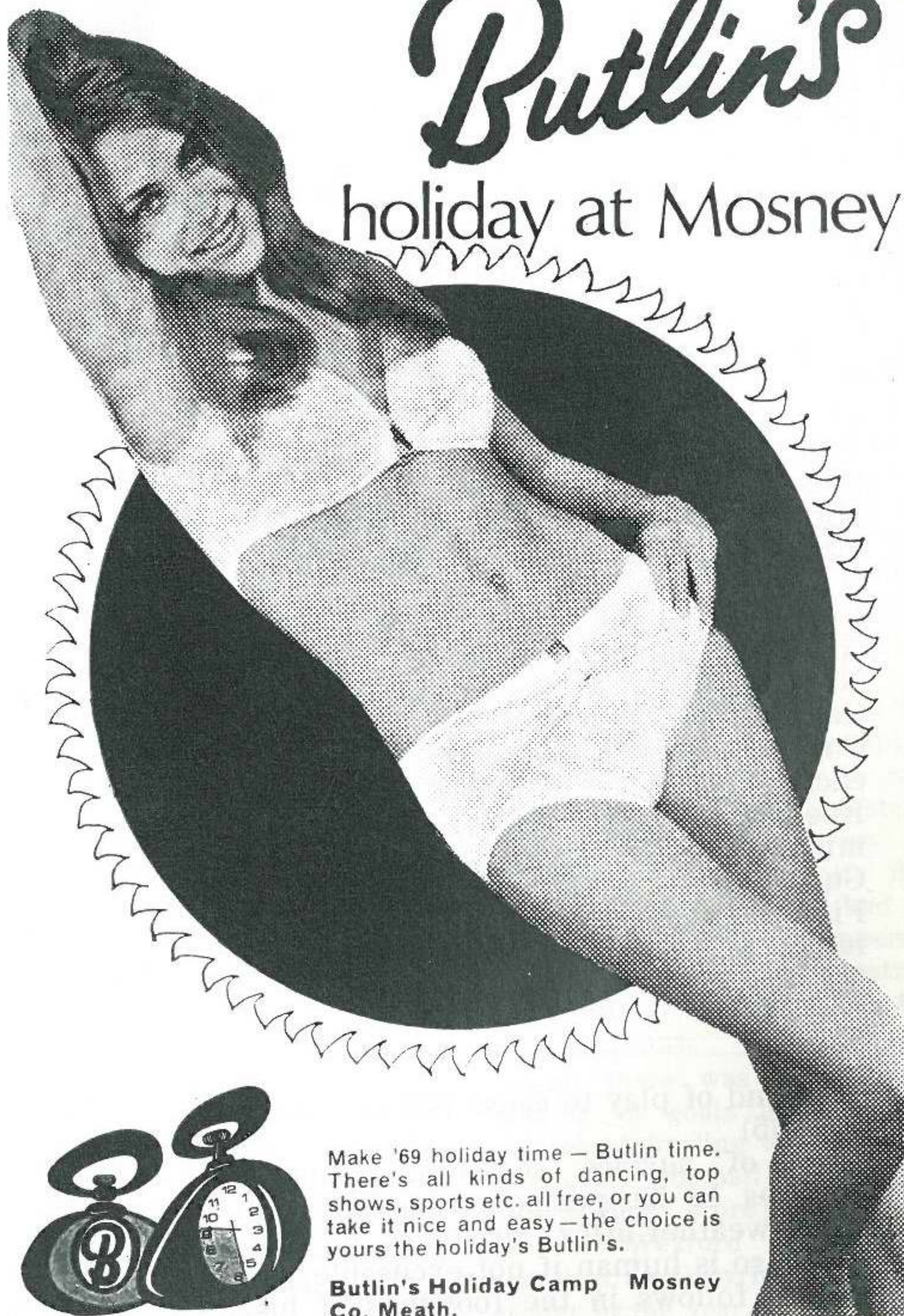
I saw these games, in fact feel privileged to have come on

as a substitute in the first one. We must inaugurate official club All-Irelands. There will be difficulties, numerous ones, but at least we might provide a county that never won an All-Ireland with an All-Ireland club title. Remember Donegal have never won an Ulster S.F.C. title. Yet a Donegal club team, and a superlative club team it was too, won the first unofficial club All-Ireland. Makes one think doesn't it.

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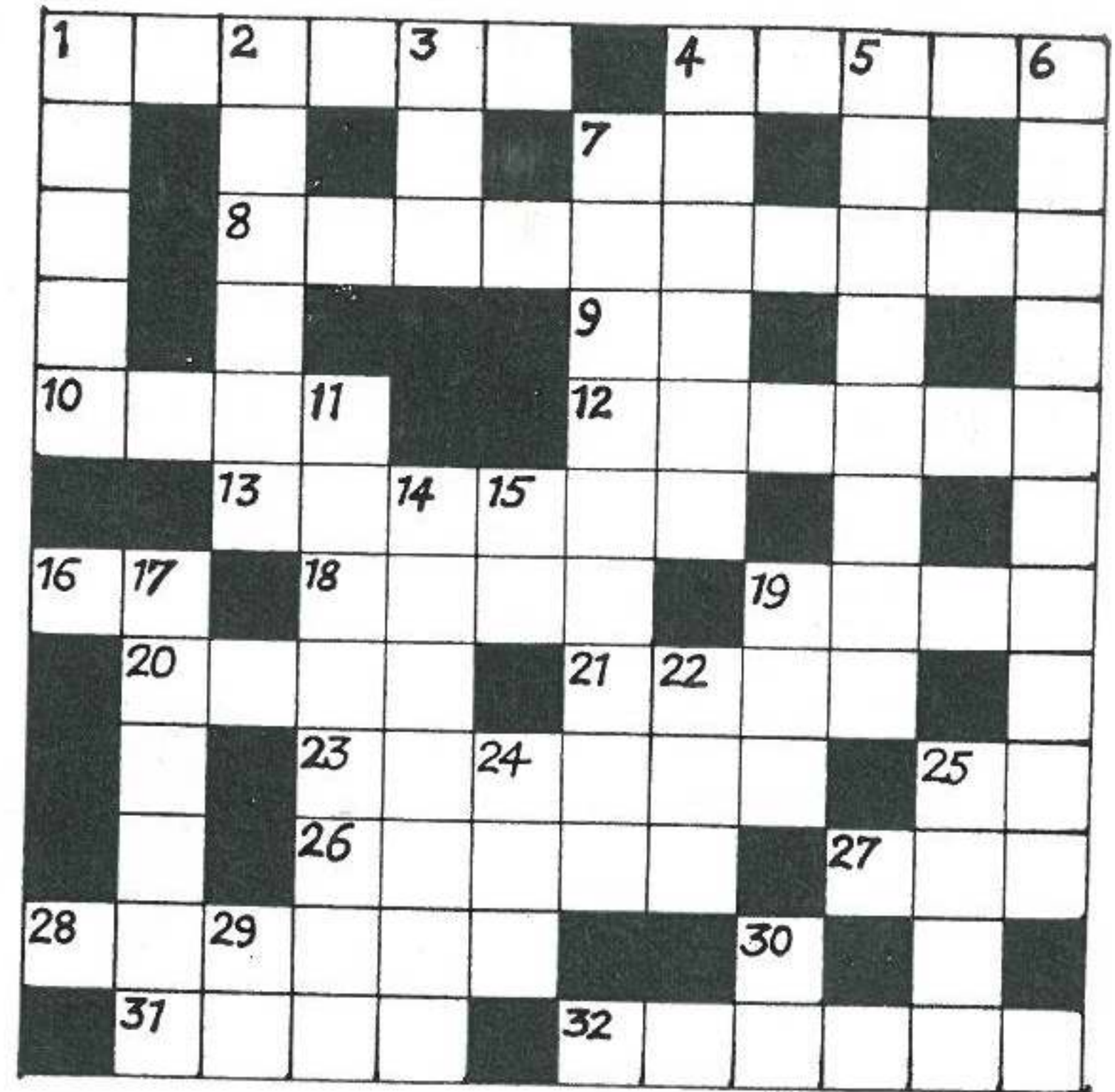
Butlin's Holiday Camp Mosney Co. Meath.

ACROSS :—

1. The kind of action which enables hurling goalkeepers to save those split-second shots which they can hardly see. (6)
4. Speedy, easy-moving forwards are sometimes compared to these animals. (5)
7. Half-way towards being an "over". (2)
8. Gaelic Cultural objects of the Association give rise to this tournament played in September and October. (9)
9. No more than half-a "kick". (2)
10. A player's weak point could be called his Achilles' ——. (4)
12. Heavy pressure or serious injury could be described by this adjective. (6)
13. A point from one's own 70 yards line will have often travelled this number of yards. (6)
16. Concede a bloodless victory. (1,1)
18. (and 32 across) Sligo-born player on the Sligo team which won its way to the All-Ireland junior hurling (Home) final. (4, 6)
19. One of these is as good as a mile. (4)
20. Man to man combat in struggle for possession. (4)
21. Middle Eastern country which would make a suitable epitaph for an athlete. (4 or 1, 3)
23. River which graces the county of the All-Ireland champions. (6)
26. Names could make the flowing hair on the necks of horses. (5)
27. Cottrell who often partnered the Taois-each at midfield for Cork. (3)
28. Keep what you have won—as the Cork minor footballers did to the All-Ireland Cup. (6)
31. Finger ornament again appears on Cork teams. (4)
32. See 18 Across.

DOWN :—

1. The kind of play to cause referees concern. (5)
2. Type of surface sometimes causes matches to be postponed during the harsh weather after Christmas. (6)
3. To do so is human if not excusable. (3)
4. Martin follows in the footsteps of his



- father, Mick, on Waterford hurling teams. (6)
5. Is rotten makes the beginning of the decline when the decay first took hold. (3, 3, 2)
6. The usual punishment for misbehaviour in Gaelic games. (10)
7. Spreading at this point is the sign of unfit player. (5, 4)
11. One of the team of officials who control a game. (8)
14. Irish Christian name which often means player has birthday around the Christmas season. (7)
15. The rear part of the knee. (2)
17. Billie was prominent Kilkenny full-forward. (6)
19. Month in which most of the championships begin. (3)
22. One of the substitute players—in brief. (3)
24. Miss Carroll outstanding at Camogie for Tipperary and Munster. (3)
25. One of the young Down stars, though his name suggests he might be an old King. (4)
29. Initials of prominent Mayo midfielder of the early fifties. (1, 1).
30. To (sic). (2)

SOLUTION : PAGE 48

THE TWO-TIMERS

By
Seamus
O Braonáin

THE man who can master many arts always touches a soft spot in our hearts. We admire his many gifts, his exploitation of his wide talents, and we envy him a little because of the ease with which he takes everything in his stride. Football and hurling, like so many other things, seem to provide fewer all-rounders these days as the specialist comes into his own in this age of the specialist.

You can admire the specialist wholeheartedly for his expertise, his sole concentration on one kind of skill to master it. But, you cannot love him with the same warmth as the fellow who takes everything in his stride as though nature had intended him to be perfect at everything.

As I said, not many of these gifted individuals can be found, nowadays, but every now and again one catches the attention.

Last year, for instance, if the All-Ireland final had continued its first-half trend and Tipperary had gone on to win, who can say that Michael Keating would not have been the Star of the Year. Earlier he had been well in the lead after his daring exploits and the grandeur of his play in the League final, and the Munster final, in particular.

Yet, earlier, Keating had been a Munster interprovincial at football, the powerhouse of Tipperary's attack and a man well able to hold his own in and out-shine any company. The polish of his football and the fact that he plays with style rather than honest toil, shows him to be a "natural" at the game, not just a "made" player.

Des Foley must rank as the finest player of both games over the last decade. One remembers his remarkable performances while still at school, and he followed this up by putting the seal on his quality with two Railway Cup winning medals on the same day not long after his schooldays. Foley, of course, won a football All-Ireland with Dublin, but despite his wonderfully consistent and thoughtful play at football, many of his most thrilling performances were given at hurling.

To go no further back than Dublin's championship clash with Wexford, in a team decimated by withdrawals and outnumbered by the eager Wexfordmen, Foley gave a performance which could only have been conceived by a truly unique hurler.

Running everybody close, if not outdoing them, was Denis Coughlan, who showed form in losing Cork teams that few others could display in victory. At Killarney, against Kerry, Coughlan gave no inch to the triumphant Kerry men; he was one of the few Corkmen who could say they had a successful day.

Then, in the Munster hurling final, Denis played with such authority and smoothness, in the first half particularly, that Tipperary's selectors' blood pressure must have climbed to uncomfortable heights. A succession of Tipp. men failed to curb Coughlan even in a hopeless second-half.

It was during this unhappy summer for Cork that I first really understood the excitement of a little clutch of Blackpool boys at a St. Nick's game some years ago. They reacted with predictable joy at St. Nick's every success, but their special attentions were preserved for the slim centre-fielder then an unknown as far as I was concerned.

"Look, look, Dinnis Cawalan have it . . . watch him, watch him . . . oh, lovely Dinnis, boy".

This young man was their hero, all right. And it was his style and the clever things he did with possession which fascinated them. Now, that Coughlan is playing inter-county it is not always so easy to be constructive, but I will remember him as one of the most elegant clubmen in both football and hurling.

And, who can overlook John O'Donoghoe of Tipperary, who has had his greatest year in the goal for the hurlers, his complete confidence in his ability to save any kind of shot lending a stone-wall soundness to his very appearance between the posts. But, at football, too, he has had an outstanding year with Tipperary showing great dash and constructive ability at wing or corner forward positions.

And, there was Jack Berry, banging in goals in Wexford's All-Ireland hurling win, and also ending the football season with the highest score of 1968 — 3-9 for Wexford against Kilkenny in an O'Byrne Cup match earlier in the year.

AG TOSNÚ ARÍS

LIAM Ó TUAMA A SCRÍ

“**A**NOIS teacht an Earraigh, beidh an lá ag dul ag síneadh.” Sin líne filíochta do scrí Antoine Ó Rafertí níos mó ná céad blian ó shoin. Líne filíochta atá ann, atá de glan mheabhair ag na mílte is ag na mílte, fiu amháin ag daoine atá ar bheagán Gaedhilge. Cuimhíonn siad ar an gcéad líne, nuair a bheadh an chuid eile den dán dearmhata glan aca. Pé ar domhan é tá an t-Earrach chughainn arís. Séasúr is ea é, a thathníonn linn go léir. Tá dríocht éigin ag dul leis. Ar an gcéad dul síos, cuireann sé i-n-iúl duit go bfuil an Geimhreadh thart, nó geall is a bheith thart. Cloisimid na h-éin ag canadh ar maidin. Tuigeann siad siúd go bfuil atharú ar an aimsir. Chífeá na h-uain ag léimrigh ins na bántaibh; go mór mór má bhíonn an ghrian ag taithineamh i-n-aon chor. Cuireann teas na gréine teasbach orra. Agus rud éigin fós bíonn na maidine ag eirí níos gile agus bíonn na tráthnóintí ag eirí níos fuide. Ní h-aon iona é annsan, go bfeicimid níos mó daoine óga ag imirt peile is ag iomáint gach tráthnóna. Bíonn siad ag ullamhú dos na comórtaisí éagsúla a bheid ag tosnú aon lá anois — comórtaisí i ngach grád, beag is mór.

Beidh an Sreath Náisiúnta fé

lán t-seól i rith na míosa so—peil is iomáint. Comórtas ana mhaith é seo. Do bhí géar gádh leis. Go dtí gur cuireadh ar bun é, do bhíodh an chuid is mó des na fóirne daoimhaoin ar feadh tréimhsí fada gach aon bhlian. Chó luath is a bheadh na comórtaisí Cúigigheacha thart, ní bhéadh a thuille cluicí aca go dtí go dtosnóchaidís arís sa bhlian nua. Uaireanta bheadh cluiche cáirdiúil idir chonndaethe áirithe ach taobh amuigh de sin, ní bheadh faic ar siúbhal. Rud eile, tá airgead i gceist. Tá’s agam nách é sin an phríomh-chuspóir ach tá géar-gádh le h-airgead i lathair na h-uaire chun na cluichí a choimeád ar siubhal i-n-aon chor. Seadh, a scéal féin, scéal gach aoine, agus sgéal Mháire an t-airgead, mar adeireann an sean-fhochal. Do ceapadh scéim nua cúpla blian ó shoin, scéim a dhéanann an teacht isteach ós na cluichí sa Sreath Náisiúnta a roinnt go cothrom. Tá conndaethe áirithe ann agus teastuigheann cabhair uatha. Tá míle constac g cur isteach orra, idir imirce, agus an líon-daoine ag tuitim is constacaí eile dem t-saghas san. Is annamh riamh a bhuidhann siad cluiche. Buadhtar orra sar a théann siad amach ar an bpáirc i-n-aon chor, agus ní orra féin atá an locht ná ar a lucht stiúirthe ach chó beag. Ar an

dtaobh eile tá conndaethe eile ann, agus tá siad deimhin de ó thosach go raghaidh siad cuid mhaith den bhóthar.

TÁ TRADISIÚN ACA

Maidir le h-iománíocht d’fhéafa a bheith cinnte abfad roim-ré go raghadh conndaethe mar Thiobrad Árann, Loch gCarman agus Cill Choinnigh tamall fada, agus go mbainfeadh ceann éigin aca ar a laighead, an leath-chraobh, agus tá gach seans ann ní h-amháin go mbeidh ceann aca sa chraobh-chluiche ach go mbuadfid amach é. I lathair na h-uaire tá an lámh uachtar san iomáint ag cúig nó ag sé conndaethe. Sin uile agus is mór an chailliúnt é agus is mór an truagh é, mar is é an iománíocht ár bpríomh-chaitheamh aimsire, an cluiche abhí ar aigine ag Micheál Ó Cíosóig nuair a bhunaigh sé Cumann Lúth Chleas Gaodhal an chéad lá riamh. Tá peil abfad Éireann níos láidire sa tír, ná mar atá an iomaníocht. D’fhéadfadh aon nídh a thitim amach maidir le peil. Conndae ana-bheag is ea Conndae Longphort cuir i gcás, ach mar sín féin bhaineadar amach an chraobh-chluiche sa Sreath Náisiúnta, blian nó dó ó shoin. B’féidir go dtárlóchaidh rud éigin mar sin arís i mbliana. Is maith an scéalaidhe an aimsear adeeitear.

CLÁR LAIGEAN, 1969

MINOR AND JUNIOR HURLING

- (1) Cill Dara v. Cill Mhantáin—Aughrim, 27/4/69
- (2) Lubháí v. An Mhí—Trim, 27/4/69.
- (3) Ceatharlach v. (1).
- (4) Iar Mhí v. (2).
- (5) (3) v. (4).

MINOR AND SENIOR HURLING

- (1) Laois v. Iar Mhí. (Senior only)—11/5/69.
- (2) Ua bFáilí v. (1)—25/5/69.
N.B.—Áth Cliath and Laois to change places in M.H. Draw.
- Leath-craobhacha—(Minor and Senior)
- (3) Cill Chainnigh v. Áth Cliath—22/6/69.
- (4) Loch Garman v. (2). (Senior) and v. (2)—Minor—15/6/69.
- (5) (3) v. (4). Finals on 13/7/69, Páirc an Chrócaigh.

INTERMEDIATE HURLING

- (1) Cill Dara v. An Mhí—Trim
- (2) Cill Mhantáin v. Áth Cliath—
- (3) Ceatharlach v. Laois—
- (4) Loch Garman v. (3)—
- (5) Cill Chainnigh v. Ua bFáilí—Birr
All First Rounds on 20/4/69.
- (6) (2) v. (4).
- (7) (1) v. (5).
- (8) (6) v. (7). An Craobh.

UNDER 21 (Hurling Championships)

- (1) Laois v. Loch Garman— Ros Mhic Treoin—
- (2) Cill Chainnigh v. Ua bFáilí— Cill Chainnigh—
- (3) Iar Mhí v. Áth Cliath—M. Cearr.
Round 1 on 27/4/69.
Draw for Semi-final Bye.

UNDER 21 HURLING

(Ard Comhairle Special Competition)

- (1) Ceatharlach v. Cill Mhantáin.
- (2) An Mhí v. Lubháí.
- (3) Cill Dara v. (1) no (2).
- (4) An Craobh.

SENIOR AND MINOR FOOTBALL

- (1) Lubháí v. Iar Mhí—4/5/69.
- (2) Ceatharlach v. Cill Mhantáin—
- (3) Loch Garman v. (2)—
Draw for Quarter Finals resulted thus :
(1) Ath Cliath v. Laois—4/5/69.
(2) An Mhí v. Cill Dara—18/5/69.
(3) Longphort v. Loch Garman nó Cill Mhantáin nó Ceatharlach—25/5/69 or 1/6/69.
(4) Ua bFáilí v. Lubháí nó Iar Mhí—8/6/69.
- Semi-finals :
(5) (1) v. (2).
(6) (3) v. (4). 15th, 22nd or 29th June, 1969.
- Final :
(7) (5) v. (6) on 20/7/69—Páirc an Chrócaigh.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

- (1) An Mhí v. Lubháí—An Uaimh
- (2) Áth Cliath v. (1)—
- (3) Iar Mhí v. Longphort—Mullingar
- (4) Ua bFáilí v. (3)—
- (5) Cill Mhantáin v. Ceatharlach—Carlow.
- (6) Loch Garman v. (5).
- (7) Cill Chainnigh v. Cill Dara—Kilkenny.
Round 1 on 30/3/69.
- (8) Laois v. (7). Round 2 on 13/4/69.

SEMI-FINALS

- (9) (2) v. (4).
- (10) (6) v. (8).
- (11) (9) v. (10). (FINAL)

UNDER 21 FOOTBALL

- (1) Cill Dara v. Lubháí—Kildare venue.
- (2) An Mhí v. Áth Cliath—Dublin venue.
- (3) Laois v. Longphort—Portlaoise.
- (4) Ua bFáilí v. Iar Mhí—Mullingar.
- (5) Ceatharlach v. Cill Mhantáin—Aughrim.
First Round games on 6/4/69.
- (6) Loch Garman v. (5)—
- (7) (1) v. (2).
- (8) (3) v. (4).
- (9) (6) v. (7 nó 8).
- (10) (9) v. ? (Final.)

CHRISTY O'BRIEN

of Laois

talking to
**Sean
Murphy**

LAOIS hurling has long since been in the doldrums — their only All-Ireland success was recorded away in 1915 while their most recent appearance at the last hurdle was in 1949 when Tipperary proved their masters. But one man thinks that the O'Moore county hurlers are not quite as bad as their gloomy record suggests. And that man should certainly speak with authority because for the past twenty years he has figured with distinction on the county team.

In fact, he has been tagged as one of the greatest hurlers who never won an All-Ireland medal. The player in question is none other than Christy O'Brien from Borris-in-Ossory. O'Brien was first picked for the county minors in 1949 and remained on the selection for the next two years. He was selected for the Laois junior hurling team in 1951 and later that year donned the Blue and White jersey with the senior fifteen in a National League against Wexford at Gorey, and he has commanded a regular place ever since.

But after 17 years dedicated service his only trophies are two National Hurling League (Div.

II) medals. But he has an unique record with Leinster in the Railway Cup competition. He played in every position except goalkeeper for his province and won four Railway Cup medals. His array of trophies also include four Senior, one Junior and one Intermediate Laois hurling championship medals won with his parish club in Borris-in-Ossory and he treasures these most of all. Christy travelled to New York in 1966 for the Cardinal Cushing Games and is loud in his praise for the reception accorded to him and his companions in America.

Christy O'Brien lives with wife and three children on a farm near Borris-in-Ossory where recently I interrupted the daily chores to have the following informal chat with the hard working and quiet spoken hurling genius:—

Murphy: During your long inter-county career who was the best player you encountered?

O'Brien: Without a doubt Tony Wall of Tipperary. He had great anticipation and his first time tactics were a treat to watch.

Murphy: What match stands out in your memory?

O'Brien: Well as you know I

had a lean period on the inter-county scene as regards trophies but I will always remember the year 1956. That year Borris-in-Ossory won their first Laois S.H. championship when they beat Cullohill. I was marking Father Lar Dunphy that day. Earlier in the year I won my first Railway Cup medal with Leinster.

Murphy: What is your opinion of present-day Laois hurling?

O'Brien: The standard of club hurling is extremely high but the same cannot be said of the county senior team.

Murphy: To what do you attribute the decline at inter-county level?

O'Brien: It is hard to say but I believe we had teams as good as any county but the players always had a defeatist attitude and completely lacked spirit.

Murphy: Have you any ideas to improve hurling?

O'Brien: At senior level anyhow I would like to see the selectors attending every county championship game, thereby seeing all prospective players in action. I would like to see young players getting a fair trial before being discarded. A new group for average standard counties

BECKERS TEA
the best drink

should be started in the National League as I feel Laois are out of depth at the moment and will never achieve anything while they are being inflicted heavy defeats.

Murphy: Do you think Laois can reach the top again in hurling?

O'Brien: Very definitely. As I have said the club standard compares favourably with any county. If only we could imbue the same diehard spirit to our county team. When we do the other counties beware!

Murphy: Will you line-out again with Laois this year?

O'Brien: No. I have reached the end of the road in my inter-county career but D.V. I will continue to assist my club on the local scene for many years to come.

Murphy: Had you any disappointments during your career?

O'Brien: Not many really. I enjoyed playing all the time despite our many setbacks. I think the real joy is in taking part, but of late the emphasis on winning is too great.

Murphy: Are there any rules you would like to see changed?

O'Brien: After 20 years playing I am still quite satisfied with the rules, but I would like to see players and officials studying the rules in greater detail.

Murphy: What are your views on the Ban?

O'Brien: Strange to relate I would like the rule 27 retained. I am not biased against soccer, rugby or hockey, but I think all four sports would suffer if the ban was lifted as prominent players would be in a quandry when a clash of fixtures would occur, as to which code they would line-out in. Anyhow Rule 27 helps to make the G.A.A. a distinctive Irish body.

Murphy: What do you think of the standard of refereeing?

O'Brien: Referees on the whole are doing a wonderful job, but too much unfair criticism is being levelled at them by supporters, players and club officials. I would like to see more uniformity in the interpretation of some of the rules.

Murphy: Have you any hopes or wishes for the future?

O'Brien: I would like to see the social side of the G.A.A. improved and proper dressing room facilities being made available for all games at both club and inter-county level, I would dearly wish to see Laois win an All-Ireland Senior title; if not the hurlers, well then the footballers. Finally I hope to remain an active committee member of Borris-in-Ossory club for many years, and so repay in some small way for the many years of enjoyment which I have derived from being a playing member of the G.A.A.

TOP TEN

OUR Top Ten ratings will take a new and, we believe, more scrupulously accurate form this year. Ten players will still be listed for each month, but points will not necessarily be awarded on a regular, diminishing scale from ten (for top place) to one (for bottom) as heretofore. In future, ten points—the top mark—will be awarded only for exceptional displays. As can be seen below, two or more players may be awarded the same number of points. In fact, the whole ten could be rated on the same mark. Current ratings are for games played in January.

HURLING

- (8) W. Chawke (Limerick)
- (7) J. O'Donoghue (Tipperary)
- (7) E. Cregan (Limerick)
- (6) L. Gaynor (Tipperary)
- (6) J. Flaherty (Offaly)
- (6) J. Allis (Limerick)
- (5) D. Bernie (Wexford)
- (5) N. Seymour ... (Tipperary)
- (4) P. Lynch (Wexford)
- (4) J. O'Donnell ... (Limerick)

FOOTBALL

- (8) M. Cole (Down)
- (8) P. Bradley (Westmeath)
- (8) P. Cullen (Dublin)
- (7) V. Kirwan (Waterford)
- (7) R. Carolan (Cavan)
- (7) J. Quinn (Meath)
- (7) C. McCarthy ... (Monaghan)
- (6) P. Buckley ... (Westmeath)
- (6) S. O'Neill (Down)
- (5) S. Donnelly (Longford)

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CALLING JIMMY GREY!

By ALLEYMAN

DESPITE the lack of adequate playing facilities, the Dublin Minor Handball Board continues to make excellent progress and now at the half-way stage of the season the time is opportune to take a look at the fortunes of some of the participants.

Perhaps, the most notable feature thus far in the League competitions has been the even distribution of the titles at stake.

Scoil Uí Chonaill, Terenure College, Coláiste Mhuire and Artane all landed trophies, which is an indication in itself of the comparatively even standard of handball at Juvenile level in Dublin.

The success of Artane was particularly popular, by reason of the fact that this will be their last appearance in their present form in a handball final.

Victory for Artane was a vindication of Rev. Bro. Barrett's assertion after the summer vacation when he told me that all athletes going out to represent the school this season would be determined to make Artane's

swan-song a glorious one. Undoubtedly, the handballers have very definitely shown the way.

Significantly, the victories of the other three, can be attributed to the dedication of their respective coaches. Rev. Bro. Stephen and Rev. Fr. Heaslip again did a wonderful job in coaching the winning Terenure College teams.

They have welded the present champion under 12 outfit, which, incidentally made its mark at under 10 level a couple of seasons ago into a team of specialised ball-players all of whom appear destined to make their mark at higher levels in the years ahead.

Proof of the strong position of handball in Terenure comes from the fact that teams also played in the under 10 and 16 finals. Indeed, Terenure College must be congratulated for the contribution it has made to handball in Dublin since the invitation of the Minor Board some four years ago.

It must be most gratifying for officials of the game in Dublin that Coláister Mhuire has established itself as a force. Their

latest victory in the second division of the under 12 grade is a sure indication that last year's under 10 championship win was no flash in the pan.

Rev. Brothers Wade and Murphy, who were joined this season by Brother B. C. Murphy, the reigning President of the Irish Handball Council must be given the credit for the present handball boom in the Parnell Square College. It is really superfluous to say, that, the last of the four week-end winners—Scoil Uí Chonaill are the King Pins of the under-age game in Dublin.

They were represented in no fewer than five finals—a fact that speaks for itself. Handball is deep-rooted in Scoil Uí Chonaill, going back to the days when it was catered for by Rev. Bro. O'Connor, then, by Rev. Bro. B. C. Murphy and, now, by Rev. Bro. Clavin.

The latter has unearthed some really worthwhile talent, much of which will definitely make the big-time. It is quite obvious, that



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this vibrant Minor Board in Dublin under the direction of Chairman Rev. Bro. B. C. Murphy and Secretary Philip Duignan is doing a wonderful job of work.

Further expansion is definitely hampered by the lack of playing facilities, this being a mill-stone that has plagued the game in Dublin for years. Handballers invariably look to the parent body—the County G.A.A. Board but thus far no assistance has been forthcoming.

Former Chairman Tom Loftus did give a sympathetic ear to the handball position in the county

and, in fact, made deliberate efforts to have a court erected by his Board. Unfortunately, for handball, it fell through, mainly through lack of support by his colleagues on the Board.

It is significant, however, from a handballer's view-point, that the new Chairman—Jimmy Grey comes from the only club in Dublin, Na Fianna—that caters for football, hurling and—handball.

Perhaps he will be instrumental in giving the handballers, especially the younger ones—the break they need. They deserve it.

Another winner from the lily-white county

THE new paper your wife has just picked out for the living room probably comes from the range made by Wallpapers Ltd. of Kildare. Before you start on the chore of hanging it, it may console you to know that a lot of other husbands are going to face exactly the same job this Spring, and that they'll be using paper which though it may differ in every way from the particular design your wife liked and bought, probably originated in that Kildare factory. Spanish husbands, French husbands—even a few Russian husbands—have been hanging Kildare Wallpapers lately and if Mr. Weir of Wallpapers Ltd. gets his wish, the husbands of the world will someday be joining you at the pastepot-and-ladder game. He has his eye on the export market and the globe is his oyster.

Meanwhile "back at the ranch", the choice available to us in Ireland from the Kildare range is quite fantastic and the value-for-money aspect is worth considering too. These Irish papers can compete on any level with any imports, roll for roll. Whatever your tastes (or more likely, whatever the Little Woman's taste) you'll find something to appeal to you when you flick through a sample book. If you want to follow the latest fashion, pick one of the new "psychedelic" designs — brightly coloured lively patterns which seem to have bubbled up from the designer's subconscious mind. These are really new, and Wallpapers Ltd. feel they will be most popular with the young marrieds.

READER'S FORUM

BOOST FOR FOOTBALL

A chara,—I was delighted to hear that the Central Council decided to arrange full international competition with Australia. And at the same time, I was angered by their refusal to let Kerry make a tour "Down Under" in March.

Now, I know that it is Down who should be going—as All-Ireland champions. But didn't they say that they couldn't raise the money, like Meath did last year? That should have been the end of their interest in the trip. Instead, they "shot down" Kerry at the Central Council meeting, as much as to say—"if we can't have it you won't have it."

Isn't that what they call a dog-in-the-manger attitude?

However, let us hope that something really worthwhile will come out of the decision to take part in full internationals with Australia. This competition must be developed at all costs; football badly needs the boost.

GERRY MOORE

Galway.

SEAN O'NEILL

A chara,—I was delighted to see that Down's Sean O'Neill came out of your popular Top Ten rankings as the star footballer of 1968. Of course, it was a foregone conclusion. Sean is the greatest; we will never see another full-forward like him.

NEAL McCANN (13 years)
Belfast.

13-A-SIDE

A chara, — I would like to thank Eamonn Young for his excellent article about 13-a-side football in your last issue. He certainly "sold" the idea to me. Please keep pressing the G.A.A. to give it a decent trial. And what about getting someone (maybe Eamonn Young also) to tell us how the system would work in hurling?

"THE IRON MAN"

Waterford.

WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES?

● FROM PAGE 7

didn't recognise me at all, though one couldn't blame him so much. That same division becomes apparent when G.A.A. men and followers of other games meet in business or socially. The fact that it is we who created the division is no help to the G.A.A. image.

The late Pádraig Ó Caoimh spoke many a time about the necessity of appointing a P.R.O. and one of the arguments against it was that every member is a P.R.O., and certainly so every official. The statement isn't quite correct, for the personal attributes of a good chairman or secretary are not necessarily those of a good P.R.O. I feel we have to tackle the job more precisely and appoint men, perhaps on a county basis, who will keep the finger on the pulse of social and commercial life both urban and rural with a view to keeping the community in general

favourably disposed to the G.A.A.

Needless to say, there are many material benefits to be gained from such good will and the awarding of suitable positions to reliable members of the Association means that in time the G.A.A. will play a bigger part in the life of the country apart completely from the world of sport.

We have at last become socially conscious in the Association and when the foreign dances rule has gone we will have club-houses that are real social centres. The effect will be a desirable mellowness among players and officials of both sexes, which will lead to greater internal harmony, and, as happiness, like discord, has a chain reaction more people outside the Association will then become our friends.

There has come already, and it will continue, a watering down of the thinking which

to-day gives us in its extreme form the curse of such things as Paisleyism. This does not mean that the flag of nationality will come down and, in fact, a greater understanding of the other fellow's opinion only makes a better man and, consequently, a better nation.

Nationality, which gives us roots, is always worth encouragement; extreme nationality is a tearing up of those roots and putting them in a glass case for us to admire. Unfortunately, the roots in the glass case don't live. I think the general body of the Association would hope that our officials would continue to be polite and courteous in the social sphere but would not undo the good by public invective at conventions.

We all like people to be fond of us and the flower of life grows and blossoms in the warmth of love. Associations which are only groups of people react in the same way to goodwill and I hope that the year ahead will bring an increase in public affection for the Association that has justly earned our loyalty.

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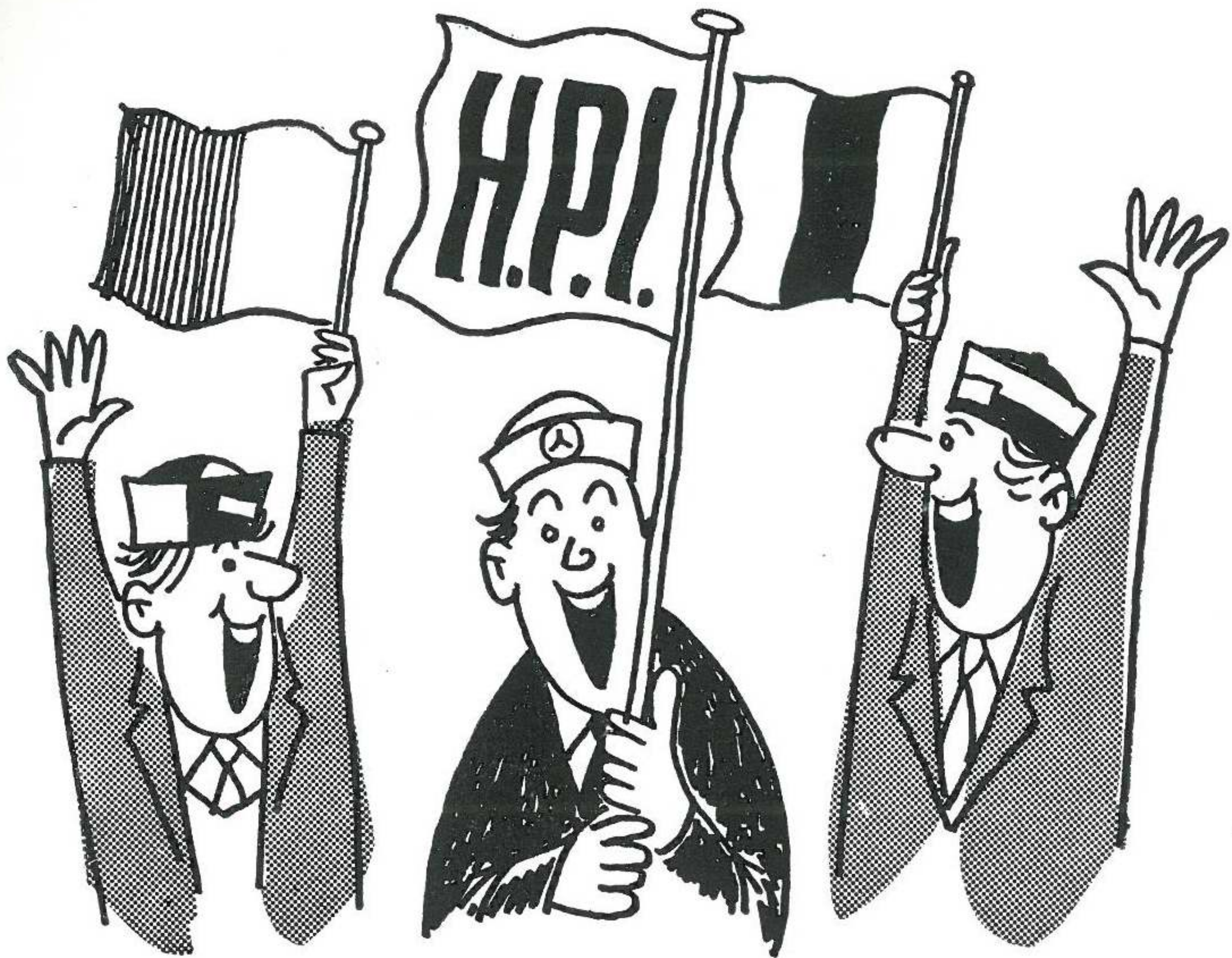
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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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