

The Limerick Municipal Elections, January 1899



reparations for the elections to the Limerick Municipal Council under the extended franchise began as early as

April 1898. The Limerick Trades Council planned a large demonstration in May to push for a fair wages clause and stricter supervision in the letting of contracts than provided for in the local government bill. The attempt by Sir Charles Dilke to have a fair wages clause inserted was ruled out of order and it was left to the local bodies themselves to decide on such matters. Therefore, the Trades Council argued, it was up to the newly enfranchised labourers to vote for those candidates who would enact such measures on their behalf¹.

The original date of the inaugural meeting failed to allow for the religious duties of the overwhelmingly Catholic workforce. Having at first fixed the date of the demonstration for Mayday - a Sunday -

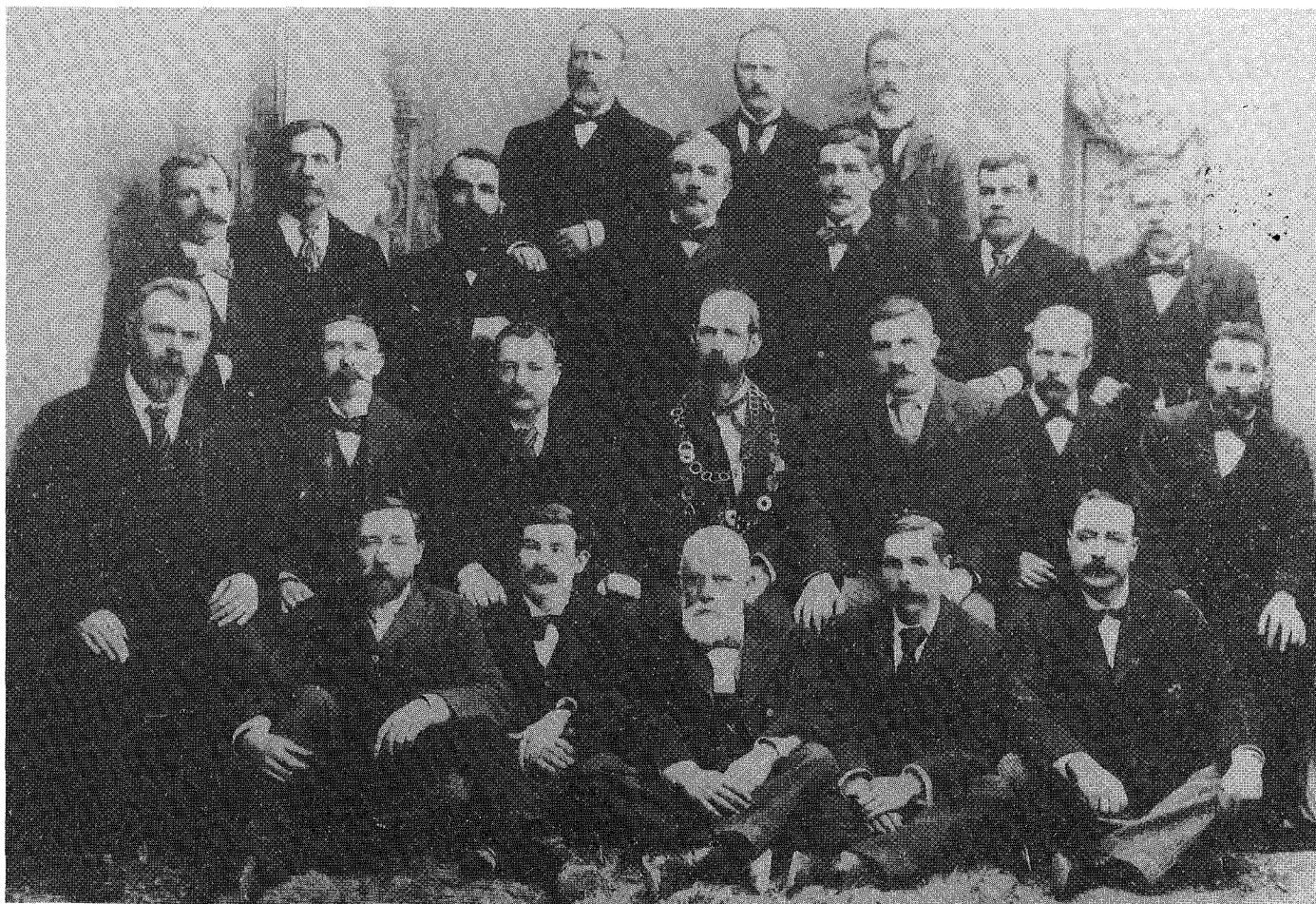
by Enda McKay

many speakers at the Trades Council pointed out that this date was also fixed for a retreat of the Confraternity of the Holy Family and that, as nearly all of the members of the Council were also members of the Confraternity, 'they could not be expected to attend the demonstration, as they would have to be at the chapel.'² John Daly addressed the meeting, which was finally held on 22 May, and in his speech set the tone for all subsequent Labour meetings leading up to the elections in January 1899. Daly told the meeting that when the local government bill was passed into law, 'he hoped they would be able to give a farewell benefit to all the shoneens and bid them goodbye, and have honest working-men regulating the affairs of the city.'³ Resolu-

tions were passed in support of fair wages for corporation employees and condemning 'sweating.' This latter resolution anticipated a strike later in the summer of 1898 by the tailors of Limerick City.

The high hopes held out by Daly to the workers of Limerick were based on the dramatic increase in the municipal franchise provided for by the local government bill. In effect this meant that the old city electorate of 709 was increased to 5,521⁴. Women, of course, formed some of this increase, but workers previously unenfranchised were the main beneficiaries. (See Table for a breakdown of these increases by ward).

The registration of the new voters was vital to the Labour interest. John Daly issued a placard in August calling upon the people, particularly those associated with the 1798 centenary commemoration, to register their votes⁵. A meeting in the Mechanics' Institute in September was



The Labour Party on Limerick Corporation 1899.

Front row (left to right): M. Prendergast, J. O'Brien, J. Slattery, J. Vaughan, Jer. O'Brien.

Second row: J. Connery, Ald. M. Joyce, Ald. J. Gilligan, Ald. J. Daly (Mayor), Ald. T.J. Prendergast, M. Murphy, J. Moloney.

Third row: R.P. O'Connor, J. O'Brien, W. Whelan, J.H. Moran, J. Barry, J. Hassett, T. Gough.

Back row: J. Kett, W. Fitzgerald, J. Dalton.

Limerick Museum.

arranged to set up an executive committee to organise the labour vote. Daly told the meeting that he would not serve on the committee as he believed it should only contain 'workingmen and their rank and file.' On Daly's suggestion it was agreed to have 11 members on the committee. Members, elected by ballot, included representatives of the Trades Council, tailors, masons, corporation employees, painters, bakers, coopers, carpenters, plumbers, porkbutchers and cabinet-makers⁶.

Later in September, a 'manifesto' was issued 'to the workingmen of Limerick' calling for the organisation of the Labour vote and offering help in choosing candidates for the new city council. There would be no public appeal for funds 'as this is solely a workingman's movement' which would 'trust entirely to the workers themselves and those who are well-known friends of labour', to finance the movement⁷. In an editorial the *Limerick Leader* urged support for the new movement and underlined the importance of an independent workers movement. Although Daly's name was not among the signatories to the manifesto, the RIC had no doubts that he was the prime mover⁸.

A series of Labour meetings in the various city wards was held in October and early November. All of them were characterised by rousing speeches from John Daly. James Kett of the Coopers' Union presided over many. Kett warned a meeting of voters in the Custom House ward that certain politicians 'were trying to use the workers' vote for their own ends.' But the workers were there for one reason only, 'namely the betterment of their condition as workingmen'⁹.

This independent policy meant that the workers needed to identify their enemies. According to Kett, it was the three classes who made up the old city council and who took money from the workers: 'the publican, the pawnbroker and the landlord'¹⁰. At the top of the workers' grievances, as articulated by their spokesman, was poor housing. Other issues included poor sanitation in general and inept control by the old city council of the city's finances.

Compared to the more populist and pro-Labour *Leader*, the *Limerick Chronicle*, which catered for a more conservative readership, provided a more restrained, if no less committed, coverage of the campaign. In part, this was due to a quieter and belated campaign by what were termed 'the large ratepayers'. The issue of high rates had been prominent even before the introduction of the local government bill which gave the franchise to non-ratepayers. Nearly every year from 1885, when the city rate was 5/4 in the £, had seen a rise. The rate for the year ending April 1898 was 6/5 in the £. The Limerick Ratepayers Association passed a resolution against what it regarded as excessive expenditure and urged better administration of street cleaning¹¹. Under the old regime, the ratepayers had their own representatives on the city council and it was decided that these represen-



Michael Cusack, Mayor of Limerick 1896-1898, with his wife in Brussels, c.1900.
He was defeated in Glentworth Ward.

Limerick Museum.

tatives - Alderman Anglim, Stephen Dowling, J. Clune, P. O'Malley and J. O'Donnell - should seek re-election¹².

The novelty of so many new electors - particularly the urban workers - inevitably heightened political excitement. With leaders such as John Daly, the position of the Limerick workers on the major political issue of the time - Home Rule - was never in doubt. Indeed, support for Home Rule was not a class issue and huge Nationalist victories were forecast throughout the country in the coming elections. The policy of 'toleration', as preached by John Redmond and Tim Healy was, not surprisingly, supported by the *Chronicle*, which argued that 'it would not be impolitic ... to let bygones be bygones and start the new order in unity'¹³. From a different perspective, the steady progress in organising the Labour vote prompted the *Leader* to confidently predict a working Labour majority on the new council¹⁴.

By mid-November, the Labour candidates for each ward had been picked. These candidates represented a variety of occupations. There were tailors, painters, labourers, plasterers, fishermen, bakers, coopers, carpenters and printers going forward. Each of the 8 wards were to return 5 representatives, the councillor with the highest number of votes being deemed alderman. (Previously an alderman was elected by his fellow

councillors). In six wards Labour nominated 4 candidates each, in one ward - the Market ward - only three, subsequently increased to four, and a full slate of five candidates in the Glentworth ward¹⁵.

At a meeting held to announce their candidates, the Labour spokesmen, including John Daly, stressed their independence of the various political factions - Dillonites, Redmondites and Healyites. Rather, they continued to heighten social and economic issues, in particular housing conditions¹⁶. The reputation of the existing city council, on the other hand, was not enhanced when a meeting to pick three of its members to work with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Harbour Board and the Traders' Association to deal with a contentious issue - that of the amalgamation of the Limerick and Waterford Railway Co. - was postponed because there was not a quorum¹⁷.

Although the Ratepayers' Association had decided to support their five sitting representatives, the merchants of the city felt that a greater business input was needed. A meeting in a city hotel in early December brought together a large section of commercial society, many of whom were Justices of the Peace, for example A.W. Shaw, vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, S.B. Quinn, High Sheriff of Limerick, Thomas Cleeve and

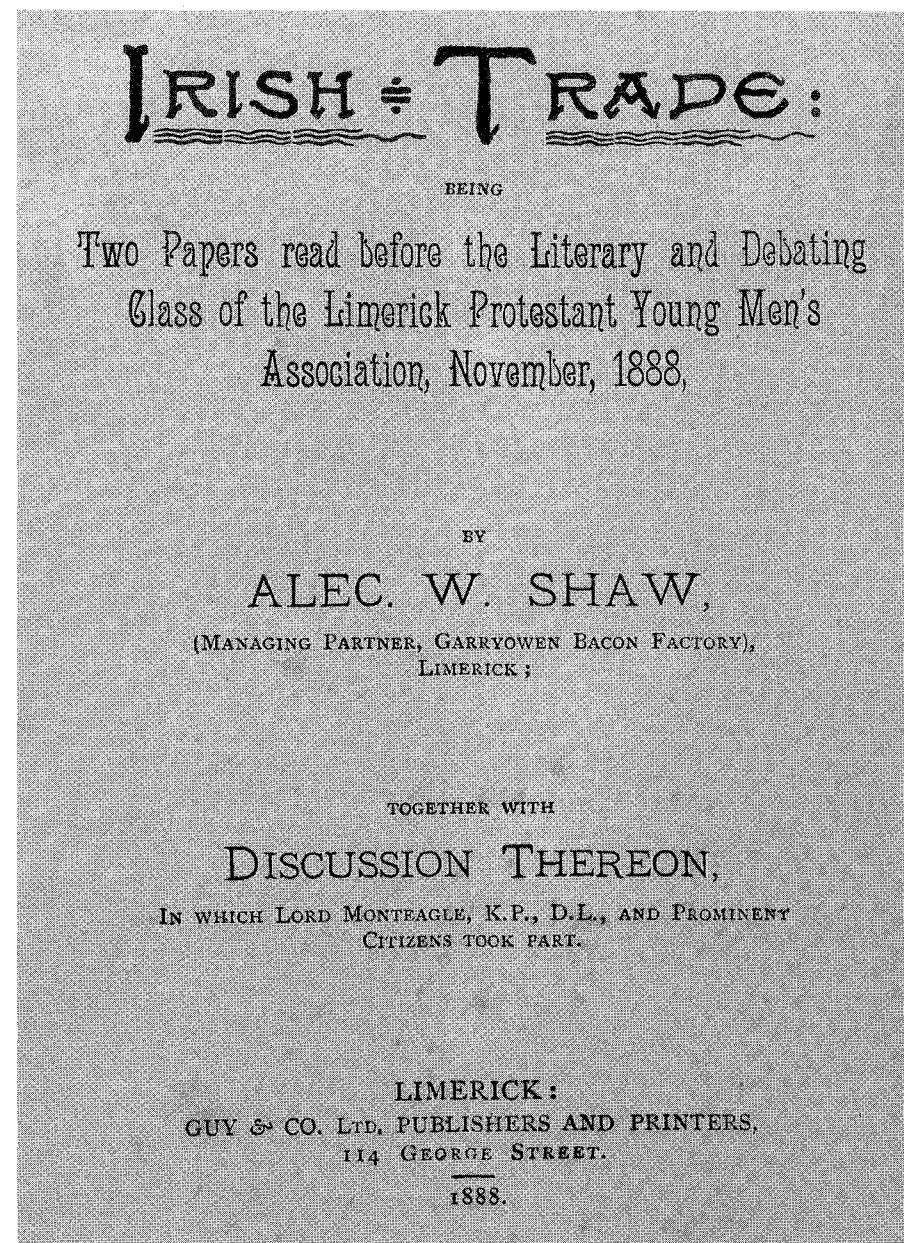
J.E. Goodbody¹⁸. Thomas Cleeve had already started advertising his candidature for municipal office. He was a magistrate for the city, his interests, both 'proprietorial and managerial' in many food companies gave employment to 'between 2,000 and 3,000 hands' thus making him 'a large benefactor to the working classes'¹⁹.

The meeting of the city merchants to pick candidates for the election was addressed by the Mayor, Michael Cusack, himself a candidate. This overlapping of interests between those already members of the council and the merchants was underlined by comments that they should not oppose 'good' men at present sitting, but rather to fill some of the vacancies caused by councillors retiring²⁰. It was decided to put forward 16 candidates to contest the elections with two in each ward²¹. There was no hint of irony in the *Chronicle's* welcome for this new-found interest in civic affairs on the part of so many merchants: the paper held that it was 'a serious blot on the city representation that the larger taxpayers and employers of labour have been for so many years past conspicuous by their absence in the council chambers'²².

The merchants said that they were running only two candidates per ward so that the remaining three vacancies could be filled by other interests²³. They were anxious that 'politics' should not be introduced, although one of their number - a sitting councillor - David Nelson, thought that 'everything should be done to oppose the nominees of John Daly'²⁴. Nelson was asked to withdraw this statement. Later he was to give a more forthright opinion of Daly. The merchants claimed that their 'sole desire (was) to work harmoniously with all sections of the community for the common good of the city'²⁵. Apart from T.H. Cleeve and E.B. Cleeve, other large employers of labour going forward were A.W. Shaw, G. Goodbody and J. Matterson.

The labour reaction was hostile. John O'Brien, a labourer going forward in the Abbey ward, referred to the employers' meeting as 'hypocritical'. He told a meeting that 'the large employers of the city were dragged together to hold secret conclave' (the *Leader* was not informed) 'to intimidate the working man'. He warned the workers to beware of this 'intervention of shoneens' and said that 'it was the first time in 700 years that the working class had got the privilege of citizenship'²⁶. In answer to Nelson, John Daly felt it necessary to tell another meeting that he personally had not nominated any candidate. Rather, if elected, he would go into the council chamber 'on equal terms' with the other Labour representatives²⁷. Daly was at this time very busy canvassing, according to the RIC, in order to get a Labour majority on the council. Out of the 40 seats, the RIC predicted that Daly 'and his supporters would win 15'²⁸.

It is interesting to note that in his monthly reports for November and December 1898 on the approaching



Book by Alec. W. Shaw, Managing Partner, Garryowen Bacon Factory, standing on the Merchant Ticket. He was defeated in Irishtown Ward.

Limerick Museum.

municipal elections, the Inspector-General of the RIC mentioned only Limerick by name. In November he reported that the contest had already begun: 'a list of candidates who are practically the nominees of John Daly, being opposed by a number of respectable persons who will receive the support of the clergy and businessmen of Limerick'²⁹. Indeed, clerical opposition to the Labour candidates sharpened as the election date approached. In his report for December, the Inspector-General noted that Limerick was 'perhaps the most interesting of the pending elections,' the reason being the clear-cut nature of Labour and the 'extreme Nationalists' being opposed by 'representatives of the merchants and large ratepayers backed up by clerical sympathy'³⁰.

The ratepayers and merchants did not attack the Labour candidates directly: to do so would have been impolitic. Rather, they concentrated on the experience of businessmen in financial affairs. A circular issued by the Ratepayers Association said

that only those men who exhibit intelligence and acuteness in their private affairs could be relied on to properly consider the major issues confronting the city council³¹. But insofar as the Ratepayers had any influence on the present or previous city councils, they could not be very satisfied given that a request to the local government board for a loan for street maintenance was refused because of the poor financial state of the city³². This did not stop the merchants from issuing addresses with very populist appeals. Subjects they considered worthy of attention included housing of the working classes and general sanitary reform, provision of technical education, economy in expenditure of city funds and a fair wage for city employees³³. This great similarity with the Labour programme showed the extent to which the new Labour grouping had set the agenda and how popular these issues were.

Despite the similarity in their programmes, the *Chronicle* argued that 'it

will be necessary to entrust the work to capable and experienced hands, for though Labour may know what it wants, it is not always ready to go about it in the safest and most expeditious manner³². In its last editorial before the election, the *Chronicle* was 'certain that the great bulk of the workingmen will generously recognise what the large employers have done for Limerick, for every deserving institution and every philanthropic work'³³.

The desire for unity within the Home Rule movement gave an opportunity to some candidates to blur any perceived differences with those advocating the Labour cause. The Limerick Board of Guardians had recently issued a call to all sections of the faction-ridden Home Rule Party to arrange a conference to hammer out any differences. This call was met with a positive response throughout Nationalist Ireland. The *Leader* maintained that as unity was a great national issue 'it had little to do with local politics'. It continued: 'If any of those candidates have failed in their duty to the workers in the past, we trust they will be sent about their business - unity or no unity'³⁴. The *Leader* stressed the importance of a Labour majority: 'If the Limerick workers want to have their views represented in the council, they must return a majority of their own class'³⁵. Then, basic decisions such as changing the time of council meetings from day to evening could be made. In an address in the form of an editorial to the workers of Limerick, the *Leader* urged them 'not to be humbugged by platitudes about representation of all classes' and urged them to 'vote for the Labour candidates'³⁶. To inspire the newly-enfranchised, the paper published some rousing poems and ballads on polling day. For example:

*The Shoneens now begin to proclaim
A new-found benevolent aim,
Each hopes to affix,
By the vote of the 'Micks',
The letters 'T.C.' to his name.*

** * * * *

*The masses have now got a rise
And their power we must recognise
So we'll take off our coats
To capture the votes
Of the rabble we used to despise.*

Another example was an extract from *The Ballot Box my Throne: The Poor Voter on Election Day* by John Greenleaf Whittier:

*While there's a grief to seek redress
Or balance to adjust
Where weighs our living manhood less
Than Mammon's vilest dust;
While there's a right to need my vote
A wrong to sweep away,
Up! clouted knee and ragged coat
A man's a man today!*

An attack on John Daly (who was going forward in two wards) by Councillor David Nelson, a seed merchant seeking re-



**Mayor John J. Cleary shooting the arrow into the Shannon in 1872.
He lost his seat in the Abbey Ward.**

Limerick Museum.

election in the Custom House ward (and who, as we have seen, had previously attacked Daly) proved a major talking point on the eve of the election. In effect, Nelson accused Daly of denying his religion while in prison. Firmly in the Republican tradition, Daly claimed to be an 'Irish Catholic' when questioned by the prison authorities³⁷. The *Leader* afforded Daly ample opportunity to refute Nelson's allegations³⁸. These allegations were again used by Daly at the final Labour election rally on 15 January. Though at least one priest tried - unsuccessfully - to prevent bands from attending³⁹, Daly used the occasion to profess his Catholicism as well as his Labourist sympathies. Praising the good judgement of the newly-enfranchised women voters, he said 'I am confident the women of Limerick will go tomorrow to the booths and put the sign of their beads, like good sound Catholics, after the names of the men put forward by the people'⁴⁰.

Polling day was marked by no demonstrations of any kind. Despite the novelty of the occasion for the majority

of voters, it was characterised by a 'workmanlike efficiency' at the polling stations with 'no ill-feeling of any kind'⁴¹. There was a large turnout early on, in part because of 'the constant procession of fair voters'. In the Dock ward, 700 voters had registered before 6.00, whereas in recent parliamentary elections the total largest poll had been only 500⁴².

There were 79 candidates contesting the 40 seats. 27 of the out-going councillors were putting themselves forward again, 34 formed the Labour group, while the remainder consisted of the merchants and 'large ratepayers'.

The results were quite startling. Of the 27 outgoing members only 11 were returned. Of the 18 merchants, 5 were elected. However, of the 34 Labour hopefuls, 24 were successful, thus ensuring a Labour majority on the new city council. Indeed, the Labour victory was even more sweeping: the RIC reported that Daly had succeeded in getting a number of old councillors sympathetic to Labour elected⁴³. Later Ambrose Hall, one

of the defeated candidates and a member of the old city council, maintained that Alderman McDonnell and P McDonnell and Councillors Donnelly and Carr were also representatives of Labour⁴⁶.

The extent of the Labour victory was all the more surprising given the opposition of the Redemptorist Fathers, who, according to the RIC, 'cautioned a congregation of some 3,000 men to see that Daly and his followers would be left severely alone' in the elections⁴⁷. It was not only through the ballot box that people gave their opinion of such advice: a further RIC report gives details of an anonymous letter in red ink being received by the rector of the Redemptorists warning of 'several consequences if they did not cease their attack on Daly'⁴⁸. Thomas Hayes, County Inspector for Limerick, was not optimistic over the results in the city. In his opinion the new act would have 'an indifferent chance of working ... owing to the class of men elected'⁴⁹. He predicted 'trouble'. Another gloomy outcome was that 'the influence of the priests has had but little weight which in itself is not a hopeful sign'⁵⁰.

Of course the results were not universally welcomed by the people of Limerick. The RIC reported that the 'respectable class' were 'much agitated' and it was only after the results had been announced that they realised the extent of the work done by 'Daly's organisation' which 'looked after the parliamentary revision court and for months before that had a large staff looking up those who might succeed in receiving the franchise'⁵¹.

The extent of the change (the *Freeman's Journal* claimed that the elections had 'revolutionised municipal politics' in Limerick⁵²) was not only one of outward Labour victory. Almost hand in hand with the Labour success went success for the IRB. According to the RIC, no less than 21 members - an absolute majority - of the new council were members of the IRB⁵³. These included 5 aldermen: Michael Joyce, a river pilot; David Gilligan, a publican; T. Prendergast, a baker; John Daly, another baker and Stephen O'Mara, a bacon merchant. Two IRB men, Stephen O'Mara and Michael Donnelly, had served on the old council. All 5 representatives of the Irishtown ward (4 were designated 'Labour' while the fifth, Michael Donnelly, was popularly identified with the Labour cause) were members of the IRB. The Market ward, which returned 3 publicans, a butter merchant and a tobacconist, all of whom, except for the butter merchant, had served on the previous council, was the only ward to have neither a Labour nor an IRB man returned.

The occupations of the 24 Labour councillors were: 4 bakers (including John Daly), 3 labourers, 1 clerk, 1 plasterer, 1 tailor, 1 painter, 2 solicitors, 1 bootmaker, 2 horsedealers, 1 shop-porter, 1 fisherman, 1 carpenter, 1 river pilot, 1 cooper, 1 printer, 1 fitter and 1 mechanic⁵⁴. One of the two solicitors elected on the Labour ticket, James Moran, was a member of the

Increase in local government electors in Limerick City wards brought about by the Local Government Act of 1898

	Old	New
Castle Ward	54	690
Abbey Ward	44	724
Irishtown Ward	64	868
Custom House Ward	71	560
Market Ward	130	550
Shannon Ward	102	565
Glentworth Ward	72	622
Dock Ward	<u>172</u>	<u>997</u>
Total	709	5,521

Source: *Limerick Chronicle*, 20 December 1898

Breakdown by ward of Limerick Municipal Elections, January 1899.

The information contained in these tables should be treated with some caution as it tends to show the bias of the RIC officer who made them out. For example, the column headed 'Capacity' (referring to 'General capacity for municipal affairs) has a strong link with an elected councillor being a member of the IRB (column headed 'Secret Society') or not. 'Re-Elec' refers to those who were members of the previous city council.

Abbey Ward

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
M. McDonnell	Publican	Re-elec	Fair	No	403
W. Fitzgerald	Plasterer	Labour	Nil	No	356
J. O'Brien	Labourer	Labour	Nil	IRB	342
M. Murphy	Tailor	Labour	Nil	IRB	332
P. Moloney	Painter	Labour	Nil	IRB	324
Defeated:					
J.J. Cleary J.P.	Gentleman	Re-elec			205
J. Kivlehan	Merchant	Re-elec			179
W. Holliday	Merchant	Merchant			86
J. Power	Merchant	Merchant			54

Castle Ward

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
D. Gilligan	Publican	Labour	Nil	IRB Extreme	345
J. Hassett	Horse Dealer	Labour	Nil	Nil	325
J. Connery	Fisherman	Labour	Nil	IRB	318
J. Vaughan	Carpenter	Labour	Nil	IRB	311
T. Donnellan	Farmer	Re-elec	Fair	IRB	290

Defeated:

A. Hall J.P.	Agent	Re-elec			231
R. Nash	Solicitor	Re-elec			156
W. O'Connell	Victualler	Re-elec			131
W. McDonnell	Merchant	Merchant			82

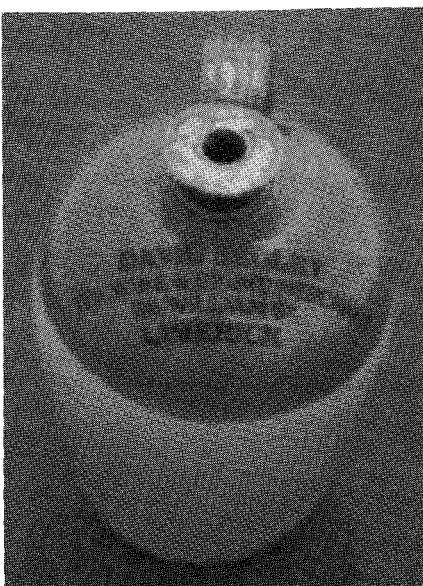
Custom House Ward:

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
M. Joyce	Pilot	Labour	Nil	IRB	276
J. Kett	Cooper	Labour	Fair	IRB	264
T. Cleave J.P.	Merchant	Merchant	Very Good	Nil	225
S. Quin J.P.	Merchant	Merchant	Very Good	Nil	224
L. Carr	Merchant	Re-elec	Very Good	Nil	197

Defeated:

J. Maloney	Baker	Labour			194
J. O'Neill	Clerk to John Daly	Labour			172
R. Gleeson	Carpenter	Re-elec			102
W. Frost	Publican	Re-elec			72
D. Nelson	Seed Merchant	Re-elec			68
J. McMahon	Merchant	Merchant			30



**Whiskey Jar of Cllr. David Begley,
Publican, re-elected in the Market Ward.
Limerick Museum.**

IRB. The four other members of the new city council regarded as sympathetic to the Labour cause included 3 publicans and 1 merchant (Laurence Carr). The occupations of the other members of the council were 3 publicans (making a total of 6), 1 butter merchant, 2 bacon merchants, 3 merchants without further description, 1 tobacconist, 1 builder and 1 farmer. If we include the 6 publicans, we find that there were at least 14 traders on the new council.

Perhaps the most notable defeat was that of long-serving member and sitting Mayor of Limerick, Michael Cusack, who was overcome by the Labour onslaught in his Glentworth ward. Other long-serving members who were defeated were Ambrose Hall and Jeremiah Anglim. John Daly's antagonist, David Nelson, also lost his seat. On the old council there were 8 justices of the peace, while under the new system only 4 j.p.s were returned.

The first duty of the new council was to elect a new mayor. Given the Labour victory it was expected that Daly would be nominated⁵⁵. Any prospect of a possible contest disappeared when Thomas H. Cleeve did not allow his name to go forward⁵⁶. A meeting of the Labour councillors decided to nominate Daly for the mayoralty⁵⁷. At the first meeting of the new council on 23 January John Daly was elected mayor unopposed to 'prolonged applause and waving of hats'⁵⁸. Daly's speech of acceptance was, in part, a Nationalist, indeed a Fenian apologia. He did, however, echo previous speakers in stressing toleration for members of the council who held different views. An optimistic pointer to the future was in the choosing of candidates for the office of high sheriff for Limerick. The names of 3 candidates, all merchants, were agreed. These were T.H. Cleeve, A.W. Shaw J.P. and W.L. Stokes J.P.⁵⁹ The Labour councillors had previously agreed that the shrievalty should not be a party issue but rather a matter for the whole council⁶⁰.

Dock Ward:

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
E. Cleeve	Merchant	Merchant	Very Good	Not	475
E. O'Connor	Printer	Labour	Fair	IRB	423
J. Hayes	Builder	Merchant	Fair	Not	411
W. Whelan	Fitter	Labour	Nil	IRB	363
E. Dalton	Mechanic	Labour	Nil	IRB	345

Defeated:

J. Daly	Ex-Convict, Baker	Labour			320
E. Long	Tan Yard Manager	Merchant			299
T. Creagh	Carpenter	Labour			284
P. McGuire	Hay Merchant	Re-elec			262

Glentworth Ward:

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
T. Prendergast	Baker	Labour	Nil	IRB	293
J. Barry	Horse dealer	Labour	Fair	Not	292
J. Coffee	Solicitor, Coroner	Labour	Good	Not	277
J. O'Brien	Labourer	Labour	Nil	Not	277
J. Slattery	Shop Porter	Labour	Fair	Not	250

Defeated:

J. Guinane JP	Land Agent	Merchant			167
J. Gaffney	Solicitor	Re-elec			155
F. Kennedy JP	Agent to Guinness	Merchant			135
M. Cusack (Mayor)	Painter	Re-elec			126
J. Matterson JP	Bacon Merchant	Merchant			122
J. Hayes	Builder	Re-elec			112
J. O'Malley	Engineer	Re-elec			67
W. Counihan	Solicitor	Re-elec			35

Irishtown Ward:

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
J. Daly	Ex-Convict, Baker	Labour	Erratic	IRB	598
M. Donnelly	Publican	Re-elec	Good	IRB	503
M. Prendergast	Baker	Labour	Nil	IRB	390
J. O'Brien	Labourer	Labour	Nil	IRB	381
T. Gough	Bill Poster, Sec to Pork Butchers Society	Labour	Nil	IRB	364

Defeated:

J. Hickey	Publican	Re-elec			325
A. Shaw JP	Bacon Merchant	Merchant			260
E. O'Callaghan	Merchant (Tan Yard)	Merchant			162
S. Lee	Lee's Foundry	Merchant			93

Market Ward:

Elected:

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
P. McDonnell	Publican	Re-elec	Good	Not	282
W. Stokes JP	Butter Merchant	Merchant	Very Good	Not	193
D. Begley	Publican	Re-elec	Good	Not	185
P' O'Malley	Publican	Re-elec	Good	Not	156
J. Clune JP	Tobacconist	Re-elec	Good	Not	152

Defeated:

J. Anglim	Merchant	Re-elec			124
P. Cleary	Commercial Traveller	Labour			121
J. Madden	Saddler	Labour			121
J. McCormack	Printer	Labour			112
J. Sheehan	Printer	Labour			83

Shannon Ward:**Elected:**

Name	Occupation	Ticket	Capacity	Secret Society	Vote
S. O'Mara	Bacon Merchant	Re-elec	Good	IRB	253
J. Moran	Solicitor	Labour	Fair	IRB	222
P. Herbert	Bootmaker	Re-elec	Good	Not	197
J. Godsell	Baker	Labour	Fair	IRB	196
M. Spain	Bacon Merchant	Re-elec	Very Good	Not	187

Defeated:

J. Goodbody JP	Merchant	Merchant	166
T. Savage	Cabinet Maker	Labour	163
G. McCarthy	Solicitor's Clerk	Labour	154
J. Roche	Merchant	Merchant	153

The Labour councillors also decided that when any plan of action was supported by two-thirds of their members, then such a plan or strategy would have the support of all Labour members.

The highly controversial decision taken by the previous council to abandon the night watch was revoked. The very significant decision to change the meeting time of the council to the evening was also taken at this inaugural meeting of the new city council. Finally, like all urban councils in Nationalist Ireland, a resolution in favour of Home Rule was passed⁶¹.

NOTES

1. *Limerick Leader* 15 April 1898
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.* 23 May 1898
4. *Limerick Chronicle* 20 December 1898
5. 17143/S 1898, Précis of information received in CBS for August 1898, CBS, CSO, SPO
6. *Leader* 16 September 1898. From the beginning of the campaign the Labour cause was given total support by the Leader to the extent that as far as the local elections were concerned, the *Leader* was the Labour journal. It was owned by J. Buckley, T.B. Naughton, the editor, and J. Dalton, the manager, had attended the demonstration welcoming John Daly home from America. (*Leader* 15 May 1898)
7. *Leader* 29 September 1898
8. 17676/S 1898, Précis of information received in CBS for October 1898, CBS, CSO, SPO
9. *Leader* 14 October 1898
10. *ibid.* The workers, however, were not completely alone: at least two ward meetings were held in premises owned by the Christian Brothers. John Daly was soon to start a bakery business and was to have his bread van built by the boys in the industrial school run by the Brothers. (*Leader* 30 December 1898)
11. *ibid.* 12 November 1898
12. *Chronicle* 12 November 1898
13. *ibid.* 10 November 1898
14. *Leader* 18 November 1898
15. *ibid.* 21 November 1898
16. *ibid.*
17. *Chronicle* 24 November 1898
18. *Leader* 2 December 1898
19. *Chronicle* 24 November 1898
20. *ibid.* 8 December 1898
21. *ibid.* 8 December, 13 December 1898
22. *ibid.* 10 December 1898
23. *ibid.* 13 December 1898
24. *Leader* 9 December 1898
25. Letter in *Leader* 14 December 1898
26. *ibid.* 9 December 1898
27. *ibid.* 16 December 1898
28. 18191/S Précis of information recorded in CBS for December 1898, CBS, CSO, SPO
29. C.O. 904, Inspector General's Report for November, Reel 35
30. *ibid.* I.G.'s Report for December 1898
31. *Chronicle* 10 December 1898
32. *ibid.* 24 November 1898
33. *ibid.* 10 January 1899
34. *ibid.*
35. *ibid.* 14 January 1899
36. *Leader* 16 December 1898
37. *ibid.* 4 January 1899 (Leader's emphasis)
38. *ibid.* 13 January 1899
39. The designation 'Roman Catholic' did not sit easily on the shoulders of many Irish Republicans. The fact that the Catholic prison chaplain refused Daly a copy of Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* - unlike the Anglican chaplain - cast further doubt over his orthodoxy. (*Leader* 30 December 1898).
40. *Leader* 30 December 1898
41. 18261/S 1899, CBS, SPO
42. *Leader* 16 January 1899
43. *ibid.* Evening edition
44. *ibid.*
45. 18261/S 1899 CBS, SPO
46. *Chronicle* 21 January 1899
47. 18261/S 1899 CBS, SPO
48. 18315/S 1899 CBS, SPO
49. 18261/S 1899 CBS, SPO
50. *ibid.*
51. 18315/S 1899 CBS, SPO
52. *Freeman's Journal* 18 January 1899
53. 18261/S 1899 CBS, SPO
54. *ibid.*
55. *ibid.*, *Freeman's Journal* 18 January 1899
56. *Weekly Freeman* 28 January 1899
57. *Chronicle* 21 January 1899
58. *ibid.* 24 January 1899. When the town clerk invested the new mayor with the chain of office, a supporter shouted 'It was not a handcuff!' (*Chronicle* 24 January 1899)
59. *ibid.* 24 January 1899
60. *ibid.* 21 January 1899
61. *ibid.* 24 January 1899

APPENDIX**A PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT****First Meeting of the New Corporation
An Epoch in Limerick's Municipal History****The Mayoralty - John Daly
Unanimously Elected**

Great interest was manifested by the citizens in to-day's proceedings at the Town Hall. The first meeting of the new corporation was held at noon. An immense crowd gathered both inside and outside the barrier, clergymen and citizens of all ranks being represented. The council chamber was prettily decorated, and when the Mayor's Sergeants entered, bearing the maces and other municipal insignia, a scene of enthusiasm was witnessed unexampled in the history of Limerick Corporation, which extends over seven centuries.

The Town Clerk formally announced the result of the election, and mentioned that under the new regime ten members formed a quorum, as against fourteen on the old Corporation. Pending the election of a Mayor, it would be necessary for them to elect a chairman in pursuance with the Privy Council Order. [The ex-Mayor, Michael Cusack, who, although not now a member of the Council, would have been entitled to preside at the election of his successor, did not put in an appearance].

Mr W Whelan - I have great pleasure in nominating the Town Clerk (applause).

The Town Clerk - You must elect a member of the Council.

Mr John O'Brien - Under these circumstances, I beg to propose that Alderman John Daly take the chair.

Mr Michael Prendergast seconded the proposition.

Alderman John Daly then took the chair amidst great applause.

The Mayoralty

Alderman Daly said that he was prepared to receive propositions for the Mayoralty for this year, 1899.

Mr James Kett said - Mr Chairman, Aldermen and Town Councillors, and electors of this ancient city of Limerick, as one of the Labour Party (applause), I am happy to stand here to-day, as the companion of I might say my youth, a man who has struggled through middle life, and one who now in the end has achieved a victory which, I am sure, not alone will the citizens of Limerick be proud of, but wherever Irishmen are all over the world, they will gladly receive the tidings that our noble, patriotic and spirited Irishman, who through many years of prison life suffered in cold and dreary dungeons, with no one to give him a cheering word to help him in that terrible ordeal in which brutal Englishmen might be at liberty to insult his noble soul. Mr Chairman and gentlemen, I do not intend to continue long, or to lay before you the manly qualities which are encased in that noble soul and body of John Daly (applause). I neither intend to be intolerant or offensive to any man (hear, hear); but at the same time I do not intend

to surrender one iota of the rights of labour. In all things which will come before our meetings those who may be opposed to us will be treated with toleration, because if we are intolerant what we have promised to do for the electors of the city will never be achieved. I hope that when we pass out through this struggle we will have young men of the working classes to take our places with better opportunities to bring to an issue the objects which we have in view. He had great pleasure in proposing Alderman Daly for the Mayoralty for the year 1899 (applause).

Mr John Godsell seconded. He said it was a very pleasing duty which had been given him to second the nomination of Alderman Daly as Mayor of Limerick for 1899. He considered himself most highly honoured. There was scarcely anything to be added to what his friend, Councillor Kett, had said about Mr Daly; it would be almost useless to add anything to his name and character and the splendid abilities which he would bring to the Council Chamber. He had known Mr Daly for thirty years and he remembered that at a public meeting twenty years ago, he felt proud because John Daly called him his associate (hear, hear). He was now a far prouder man, because he was placed that day in a position in which he could associate himself with Mr Daly. He felt that Mr Daly would be unanimously elected, and he did not think that any gentleman on the other side of the table would have a candidate to put in opposition to Alderman Daly. Mr Daly was a man who had sacrificed his youthful life for the benefit of his fellow-citizens, and he was sure that he would live the balance of his life as he had the former. Mr Daly did not mean to do, and would not do anything for any one section of the people that he would not do for all. He (Mr Godsell) knew every one of the other twenty-three labour candidates, and believed that each of them would prove himself as good a man as any of his predecessors in the Council. None of them were millionaires, but he believed they had a fair share of brains, intellect and capacity, and that within twelve months their opponents would find that the labour candidates knew how to use their power and to extend tolerance to all (cheers).

Mr John O'Brien supported the proposition. He had come there for the purpose of representing labour interests; but they were determined to treat their opponents generously, honestly and honorably. He would refuse to identify himself with a party that would attempt to remove one system of despotism and create another, and as a workingman he came there publicly to declare that if the gentlemen on the other side only understood them and their few good qualities, he thought that at the end of twelve months they would meet again with the greatest friendship (cheers). He came there to support the mayoralty of John Daly. He believed that John Daly had been victimised. Foul calumnies had been heaped upon him, untrue statements had been circulated through the city in order

to destroy him, but when they attempted to destroy John Daly, little did they know that the men of Limerick were prepared to stand by him on every occasion and they were there that day to secure his election to the Mayoralty in spite of all opposition that might be attempted. He hoped that the workingmen of Limerick, who had now achieved a magnificent democratic victory, would at least be allowed an opportunity either to ruin themselves or prove their capacity. Therefore he would suggest that they would be kind and generous enough to give them an opportunity of displaying their faults or their virtues, and he would promise them that if they acted consistently and fairly the labour party on the other hand were determined to reciprocate the compliment. Then probably this time twelve months another man might be found belonging to the other ranks worthy of filling the civic chair and they might have no objection. He had great pleasure in supporting the Mayoralty of John Daly (cheers).

No other candidate having been proposed, Alderman Daly was elected Mayor amidst great enthusiasm.

The salary attached to the office is £250 a year, and Alderman Daly is to take up the position forthwith.

The Town Clerk then invested Alderman Daly with the chain of office amidst great cheers and voices, "They are not the handcuffs anyhow," "You're worthy of it," and "Its too little for you."

The Mayor (Alderman Daly) then rose and said - Gentlemen - In acknowledging the high honour that you have conferred on me to-day I will trespass on your patience to say that circumstances over which I had no control forced me to accept the nomination of my party for the Mayoralty. I wish still further to say to you now, looking back on 35 years, mine has been, indeed, a chequered and eventful career. At 13 years old I had to begin the battle of life at one of the least skilled of trades - a lathsplitter. I served a portion of my apprenticeship to engineering and fitting. I had little time to read, but little as I had I read some of the history of my country, and my youthful soul became filled with the idea that I had a right to be a free man in my own land, and I was ripe for that glorious organisation known as Fenianism (cheers). Into the ranks of the Fenians I stepped, and in the Fenian organisation I carried a rifle, ready and willing to give up my young life that this land of ours might have its just, right self-government (cheers). I will not now dwell upon what passed between that day and this, more than to say that during many years of struggling for existence in British dungeons, my own fancy depicted many pictures to me, but never, in the wildest of my dreams, did I hope or expect that the cruel iron chain of England's jails would ever pass away, and that I should wear the golden chain of the City of the Violated Treaty (cheers). Now let me come to the specific business, which is, perhaps, directly before us. Nominated by the Labour Party, and accepted by all other

forms of thought and political complexions in the Council, I desire it to be understood that while in this chair, I am simply Mayor of Limerick, and I will, so far as it is in my power, preserve that order and decorum which is absolutely necessary for all and every legislative body (hear, hear); that whoever may have a difference from myself or my party will have all that indulgence and that spirit of fair play that has been spoken of by Councillors Kett and O'Brien, and I am full of hope and confidence that I will have the support of each and every man of the Labour Party in protecting every member of this Council that may happen to differ with us. I am full of confidence that the members of the Council will give sufficient thought and consideration to the subjects that will come before them in a manner that will elicit admiration from those who may differ with them, and that the hours of our meetings will not be devoted to personalities, but to the interests of the city and to the carrying out of the work which we have been collectively and individually sent here to perform. I do not think it necessary for me to detain you longer, more than to say I am now prepared to hear the names of three persons, which you will be called upon to put forward for the

Shrievalty of the City.

Alderman P McDonnell proposed that the first name to be placed on the list be that of Mr T H Cleeve.

Alderman Thomas Prendergast seconded.

Mr P Herbert Proposed Alderman P McDonnell.

Alderman McDonnell declined the honour.

Mr John O'Brien proposed that the name of Mr A W Shaw be put second on the list. Mr Shaw's candidacy had not been rejected by the people of the Irish town in any spirit of insult or disrespect to him, and he would take the liberty of stating that if the merchants of Limerick desired representation on the Municipal Council the least they might have done was to consult the working people, whose votes would be able to place them in that position. But instead, they went their own road. They simply conferred in the George Hotel, and put themselves in such a position that the workers could not meet them. They came to defy the workers, but the latter fought the battle and won. They did not want to make any bad use of their power, and he considered it an honour to be in a position to propose the name of Mr A W Shaw,

Mr Michael Prendergast seconded.

Mr Kett proposed the name of Mr S B Quin.

Mr Quin - I have been Sheriff for two years and must decline.

A Voice - What about Amby (laughter).

Mr Kett proposed, and Alderman Gilligan seconded that the third name on the list be that of Mr W L Stokes.

The names of Messrs T H Cleeve, A W Shaw and Wm L Stokes were accordingly ordered to be sent forward.

Limerick Leader, 23 January 1899