How did the Irish in Perth make sense of events in Ireland from the turn of the twentieth century until the passing of the Home Rule Bill in 1914, and how did they respond? There are limited sources available to answer these questions, the main vehicle for informing the Catholic Irish of Perth on events in Ireland being the *Western Australian Catholic Record*. This newspaper had been started in 1874 by J.T. Reilly, Fr Matthew Gibney and Fr John O'Reilly, and by the turn of the century was well established as the weekly mouthpiece of the Catholic Irish in Perth. One of the founders, J.T. Reilly, was a leading Catholic layman and journalist in Western Australia and Victoria. He later claimed his reason for starting the paper was

"The continued and prevailing prejudice manifested towards the Catholic body, and the particularly annoying and partial manner in which the newspapers of the Colony were conducted, eventuated in the establishment and publication of the *Western Australian Catholic Record*."

Naturally, being a Catholic owned and edited paper, the *Record* took a strong pro-Catholic, pro-Nationalist stance. The colony's most influential newspaper, the *West Australian*, reported Irish news from English sources with almost no comment. However, when J. Winthrop Hackett became the editor the paper began to develop an anti-Catholic bias.

Another source of Irish response to events in Ireland was the Celtic Club, which was formed in 1902 to cater for people of Irish birth or descent who were in sympathy with the Irish National movement. By looking at how the *Record* reported events in Ireland and how certain members of the Celtic Club responded to events it becomes obvious that the Catholic Irish in Perth responded in much the same way as the Nationalists in Ireland but with an Australian perspective.

*Events in Ireland*

At the beginning of the twentieth century Ireland was relatively tranquil. James Joyce described Dublin at this time as being 'the centre of paralysis', a place in which the maudlin mumbled helplessly about "poor old Parnell". Charles Stewart Parnell, the great leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party had been dead nearly ten years and the party, which had split into rival factions before his death, was moribund. The
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great Irish cause—Home Rule—had been defeated in the House of Lords in 1893 and with the Conservatives in government since 1895 it was not likely to resurface in the immediate future. Many people in Ireland ceased to place their faith in politics and turned in another direction. They had witnessed the Irish Parliamentary Party destroy itself by too much reliance on English parties; it was now time to turn to self-reliance and to return to a vision of Ireland as a nation with its own unique identity and culture.

This movement towards an Irish Ireland did not arise suddenly after Parnell's death. It had been slowly forming from the 1880s in the euphoria engendered by the possibility of Home Rule. One of the first manifestations was the Gaelic Athletic Association which was formed in 1884 by Michael Cusack—later immortalised in Joyce's Ulysses as 'the Citizen'—and rapidly attracted thousands of members. The GAA aimed to stem the playing of 'English games' and revive traditional Irish games such as hurling. About the same time the Young Ireland Society was formed to encourage interest in the study of Irish history and literature and prepare for events such as the return from exile of the Fenian book lover John O'Leary in 1884. O'Leary became the idol of a group of literary intellectuals including William Butler Yeats and the Gaelic scholar Douglas Hyde who in turn formed movements which encouraged Irish studies. Yeats accurately analysed what was then happening in Ireland when he wrote, 'A true literary consciousness—national to the centre—seems gradually to be forming... We are preparing likely enough for a new literary movement like that of '48 that will show itself in the first lull in politics.'

Hyde, with the support of Eoin MacNell, founded Conradh na Gaeilge, the Gaelic League, in July 1893. The League quickly became a mass movement, drawing its members from Protestants as well as Catholics. Padraic Pearse was an early member and later became the editor of the League's newspaper, An Claidheamh Soluis. Pearse claimed in 1914 that the League 'will be recognised in history as the most revolutionary influence that has ever come into Ireland':

The centenary commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion was a defining moment for Irish Nationalists. Many events were staged, culminating in August with a huge demonstration by 100,000 people in Dublin to lay the foundation stone for the Wolfe Tone monument. William O'Brien, who had been the editor of Parnell's paper, United Ireland, started a new organisation which he called the United Irish League in commemoration of the 1798 Centenary celebrations. The League, which aimed to bring pressure on the government to ease the plight of people dispossessed of land, grew to huge proportions and for a while the current of opinion in the country was directed towards the League and away from the Parliamentary Party.

All of these organisations helped to resurrect, and even, at times, invent a feeling of Irish nationality. Their significance was not so much the influence they had on contemporaries but more that they proved to be a training ground for future leaders. Many of the people who were to figure prominently in the early twentieth century history of Ireland came to the fore in this period. Possibly the most influential of these was a remarkable man called Arthur Griffith. Griffith edited a weekly newspaper, the United Irishman, in which he constantly called on Irish people to regain their self-respect, to foster their language and literature and to cease looking towards England with gratitude for every slight improvement in their position. On 30 September 1900, Griffith formed an organisation known as Cumann na nGaedheal, which initially made little impact but later became known as Sinn Fein. Griffith formulated a policy in which he advocated that the members of the Irish Party should withdraw from West-
Ian Chambers

minister and set up a parliament in Dublin. This was modelled on the example of the Hungarians who had, without bloodshed, resisted the threats of the Austrian Emperor and withdrawn from the Imperial Parliament in Vienna and demanded a separate parliament. In the end this was the policy successfully adopted by Sinn Fein in 1919. The Irish Parliamentary Party, which had been split since the downfall of Parnell, was finally reunited in 1900, under the leadership of the Parnellite John Redmond, and set about trying to bury the old animosities.

This was the position in Ireland at the turn of the century and was to remain so for the next few years while all these developments were consolidated into another push for Home Rule which finally ended in 1914 in the passing and then immediate suspension of a Home Rule Act.

Perth Reports

Early in 1900 the Record reported a visit Joseph Chamberlain had recently made to Dublin to receive the honorary degree of LL.D from Trinity College. Chamberlain had been the bête noir of the Nationalists since 1886 because of his opposition to Home Rule. He had been a member of the Liberal government when it brought in the First Home Rule Bill, and had, together with a number of his supporters, voted against the Bill. This split the Liberal party and Chamberlain and his followers crossed the floor and supported the Conservatives. Parnell called him the man who killed Home Rule. By 1899 Chamberlain was Colonial Secretary in the Conservative government which had embroiled Britain in a war with the Boers of Southern Africa and thus given the Nationalists, who opposed the war, another reason to resent his visit to Dublin. Jingoism swept Britain but many Irish people, in common with many in Continental Europe, sympathised with the Boers. One historian claims that 'The Boer War created among Irish Nationalists a sense of exhilaration at what was the first major setback for a very long time to the apparently impregnable advance of British imperialism'.

Another reason was that Irish Nationalists viewed the Boer struggle as similar to their own. In August 1899 Maud Gonne and Anna Johnston had formed an Irish Transvaal Committee with the aim of preventing Irish recruitment for the war.

There were dramatic scenes in Dublin when Chamberlain arrived. A large force of police occupied Beresford Place to quell disturbances but a carriage carrying Maud Gonne, James Connolly, Arthur Griffith and two others swept into the square followed by a large, cheering crowd. The police rushed in, dragged the driver from the seat and attempted to lead the horses away. Connolly managed to take the reins and drove the horses through the police line, followed by the enthusiastic crowd. The carriage continued on to lead a demonstration around Dublin, the United Irishman reporting:

Viewed from the brake as it crossed the bridge the scene was magnificent. Half the length of O'Connell Street was black with people, marching slowly after the 'suppressed' members of the Transvaal Committee in the brake. Passing Trinity College the storm of hissing and hooting was terrific.

The Record of 27 January 1900 reported Chamberlain's visit to Dublin in a rather short item which, although not sympathetic towards him, seemed to play down the demonstrations:

Mr. Chamberlain's recent visit to Dublin was paid expressly that he might receive from Trinity College the honorary degree of LL.D., the arrangements having been made some months previously. In the speech delivered on the occasion, the Right Hon. gentleman seemed rather apologetic. He apologised for the inopportuneness of the time, entering
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into an explanation also of the misfortunes of the war, for which he predicted a change for the better. He concluded by uttering the hope that now that they had seen him, they would not think him quite as black as he was painted. Red, however, we may remark for our own part, would probably in future be the more appropriate colour for the painters of the Minister to use. The due depth of the dye remains to be proved.

Accompaniments of the Secretary's visit were some lively displays by the students of the College, an attack by the police on the National Club in Abbey Street. Nothing, however, took place of particular note.

Three years later Chamberlain was invited to Australia by Prime Minister Alfred Deakin but declined because of his concentration on a campaign for Imperial tariffs, a campaign which would eventually split the Conservative party. The Record gleefully reported in an editorial on 9 January 1904 that Chamberlain was not coming to Australia and remarked that 'we are, therefore, spared the doubtful glory of taking part in the celebration on Australian soil of an apotheosis in whose object it seems by no means easy to repose confidence'.

The Irish of Perth were kept well informed by the local press of developments during the Boer War from an Imperial perspective but the Record never missed an opportunity to report it from an anti-British, pro-Boer perspective. The newspaper considered that 'this war is altogether unfortunate and deplorable. There is little glory to be gained by it'. In an editorial on 27 January 1900 it used the occasion of a speech on the Boer war in the House of Commons by Geoffrey Drage, the Liberal member for Derby, to highlight the Irish cause:

The Uitlanders are overtaxed, but have no share in the Government. The people of Ireland are heavily overtaxed, but their share in the Government of their country—their own native country and not merely that into which they have come as unsettled immigrants—is delusive. 'No Roman Catholic can ever be admitted to be President.' But—not to speak of the Sovereign—the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland cannot be a Catholic, nor can the Lord Chancellor of England. Again 'The Judges are all subservient to the President and can be dismissed by him at pleasure.' But surely the memory of the famous 'Removables' still remains among the Irish people. If Irish judges are secure in their seats care has been taken beforehand to make safe appointments. A case in point will be recollected as that of the renowned 'Peter the Packer,' which may be taken as typical.

However, the Record attempted to balance its articles against the war with tributes to the Irish and Australians who were fighting the Boers. It was difficult to be entirely against a war in which Australia was enthusiastically engaged.

The campaign in Ireland to prevent recruitment for the Boer war was growing in strength and in a bid to counteract it Queen Victoria visited Ireland in April 1900. Despite attempts by Maud Gonne and others to disrupt the visit, it was very popular with many Irish people. Arthur Griffith's United Irishman reluctantly admitted that the Queen was 'frantically cheered'. The response in Perth was also favourable, the leaders of the Irish community took the optimistic view that the Queen's visit would lead to a settlement of the Home Rule demand. A public meeting held in the Perth Town Hall on 6 April passed two resolutions. One expressed appreciation of the visit and hoping that 'this gracious act would be soon followed by substantial benefits to her Irish subjects' and another claiming that because of the 'distinguished service rendered by the sons of Ireland to the British Empire...the time is opportune...to properly recognise the claims of the Irish nation to self-government'. This was a popular hope at the time; the Record had published an item on 10 February from the Cork Examiner in which that paper had suggested that 'the present government, in view of England's difficulties, [with the war] should endeavour to conciliate Irishmen by bringing forward and passing a Home Rule Bill'.
During her visit to Ireland the Queen had decreed that the previously forbidden shamrock could be worn by Irish service personnel on St. Patrick’s Day. The Record acknowledged that the Queen had “conferred signal favours on Ireland” but sarcastically commented that “it might appear ungracious” if they were to echo the words of Lord Macaulay’s disaffected Roman—“Add not unto your cruel hate your still more cruel love”.

A branch of the United Irish League was formed in Sydney in March 1900 to devote itself to the ‘great national revival in Australia’ and this was followed by a branch in Melbourne in June.14 Perth formed a branch shortly afterwards and by 1 October was able to hold a meeting in the Mechanics Institute to raise support for the Irish National Party in the coming British elections.15 By 1902 it was decided that the Irish community in Perth needed ‘a permanent meeting place for the interchange of Irish ideas and the privileges of social enjoyment’.16 In late 1902, at a meeting of the United Irish League held at the Young Men’s Society Rooms, it was resolved to disband the League and to form an ‘Irish National Club’.17 At a subsequent meeting held in the ante-room of the Hibernian Hall on 1 December and presided over by Dr O’Connor M.L.A., it was proposed by P.J. O’Connor, and seconded by J.P. Doheny that a Celtic Club be formed in Perth.18

Dr O’Connor, who was planning to travel overseas for an extended visit, offered the use of his house in Hay Street and it became the first club premises.19 After preliminary meetings chaired by Dr O’Connor, the first meeting of the Celtic Club on 5 December 1902 decided to modify and then adopt the Melbourne Celtic Club rules and set the subscription at £1.1s.20 The following officers were subsequently elected: President, J.P. Maxwell, L.L.B., vice-presidents, M. O’Dea, P.J. O’Connor; treasurer J.P. Doheny; committee, Messrs. J. Horgan, L. Dwyer, P.C. McGough, D. Hehir, J.P., M.G. Lavan, L.L.B., D. O’Mahoney, F.J. Ryan, P. Wholley, M. Collopy, J. Keating; M. A. Scanlon acted as secretary.21 These men were all from the business and professional classes of the city and their names were to feature prominently for many years as the leaders of the Perth Irish Catholic community. The Club at its inception had 62 members.22 Celtic Club was actually a misnomer23 because rule 3 of its constitution stated that ‘each candidate for membership shall be of Irish birth or of Irish descent, and shall be in sympathy with the Irish National movement’.24 This, of course, barred half the Celts of Perth. Nevertheless, the Club did indeed become a centre for the Irish community and many of the future important visitors from Ireland were entertained there.

The centenary of the patriot Robert Emmet’s death in 1903 gave the Irish community a chance to honour his memory. Emmet, a Protestant poet and orator, led a short-lived insurrection in what was to be the final flicker of the United Irish rebellion. The plan went tragically wrong when they were forced to rise prematurely on 23 July 1803 after an explosion in their gunpowder factory. The rising was quickly crushed and Emmet was captured and publicly hanged and beheaded, but he will always be remembered for his speech from the dock: ‘When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written’.

The centenary was celebrated on 20 September with a massive procession in Perth starting from the Hibernian Hall in Murray Street and terminating in a huge meeting attended by 5,000 people at the Association Cricket Grounds. The clergy attended in force and included the Very Reverend Father Keogh, the Very Reverend Father Gibney and Reverend Fathers Breton, Smyth, Donagher, Morris and Brennan. The president of the Celebration Committee, J.P. Maxwell, a Perth lawyer and President of the Celtic Club, explained to the crowd that the reason that had brought them together
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‘was to celebrate the centenary of the death of the pure souled patriot Robert Emmet’. After numerous speeches by various dignitaries the gathering ended with a proposal to set up an Emmet memorial in the form of a bursary to provide for the study of Irish history at the Christian Brothers’ College. By 1904 Irish people all over the world were awaiting the next election in Britain and the possibility of the Liberal party coming to office. It was widely believed that the Liberals would then bring in Home Rule. In this climate and also in view of the intended visit of delegates from the Irish Parliamentary Party during next year, it was decided to revive the United Irish League and a meeting was held of interested people in the billiard room of the Celtic Club on 13 April 1904. The League was duly formed but the meeting caused controversy within the Irish community: not only was there disappointment at the small turn out but some members of the Celtic Club objected vehemently to the meeting being held in the club. The Record 23 April 1904 reported:

The proceedings were no sooner opened than a spirit of opposition and dis-union made itself painfully manifest... the great national object for which the meeting was convened was completely overshadowed and placed in the background by a paltry discussion upon ‘the sacred precincts of the Celtic Club’, a phrase which implied that the committee had no right to authorise the holding of a meeting within, and the admission of strangers to, the premises of that institution.

The reasons for this strong objection to the meeting were not clear to contemporaries. The Record asked rhetorically, ‘is it an exhibition of snobbishness, of petty jealousy, innate cussedness or personal animosity on the part of some of its members, or does it arise from an undue influence exercised by sticklers for hard and fast rules?’ The previous November the founder of the United Irish League in Ireland, William O’Brien, had resigned from his seat in parliament, and from the Irish party, over attacks on his policy of conciliation. This had repercussions both in Ireland and abroad. On 5 May 1904 Michael Davitt reported to Redmond that ‘the organisation [UIL] in the U.S. is virtually dead. There is no doubt of William O’Brien's popularity in Western Australia, this had been demonstrated in early 1902 by the reception he received when he stopped briefly in Fremantle during a voyage for his health. However, the controversy over the re-establishment of the United Irish League in Perth had nothing to do with O’Brien's resignation it was simply, as the Record had suggested, ‘an undue influence exercised by sticklers for hard and fast rules’. Once the adjourned meeting was moved away from the premises of the Celtic Club to the Hibernian Hall ‘the proceeding were characterised by the utmost unanimity and enthusiasm. The United Irish League was duly re-established and was soon engaged in its first important project.

Irish Visitors

Word had been received that the member for East Clare, William Redmond, and his Australian-born wife were on board the S.S. Ophir, bound for Fremantle en route from Britain to the Eastern states. William was the brother of John Redmond, the Irish Party leader. The League, at a meeting on 25 November, decided to give the guests ‘a patriotic greeting’. Final plans were laid at a meeting of the League on 5 December. It was at first arranged to have a government launch convey the Redmonds from Fremantle to Perth but this was changed to a fast carriage when it was realised that the Ophir would only remain at Fremantle for a short time. The Redmonds were duly conveyed to a reception at the Celtic Club on 8 December and soon after continued
their journey to the Eastern states. The League immediately began planning for a return visit when the Redmonds again called at Fremantle. It was decided to hold a banquet under the auspices of the League and the Celtic Club when they returned on 27 March 1905. In preparation for the return visit, the Club obtained 'quotes for the purchase of an Irish flag (plain green with a harp in the centre).'

The Redmonds returned to Fremantle in the early hours of 27 March and were immediately engaged in a round of functions which lasted for the two weeks they remained in Western Australia. It seemed that the whole Irish community wanted to see and particularly hear Redmond. There was a 'smoke social' at Dan Mulcahy's National Hotel in Fremantle, a civic reception in Perth, another 'smoke social' at the Hibernian Hall, a monster public meeting at His Majesty's Theatre, a social organised by the Irish National Foresters, a trip to Mundaring Weir and a long sojourn in the Goldfields. Two of the remaining four Fenians who had been transported to Western Australia with John Boyle O'Reilly in 1868, Thomas Duggan and James Keilley, were introduced to Redmond at a function at the Celtic Club. Duggan was now 83 years and Keilley 77; they lived in a cottage in Waugh Street, North Perth, which had been provided by subscriptions from the Irish community. Duggan took ill soon after Redmond's visit and remained in hospital until his death in 1913 but lived long enough to receive another visit from Redmond when he returned in that year.

The Redmonds departed Fremantle on 15 April after a farewell at the Celtic Club the previous evening. The Record of 22 April 1905 reported:

The Chairman, [J.P. Maxwell] in a well-expressed and eulogistic speech, proposed the toast of Mr Redmond's health. The toast was supported by the Rev. Father Keogh, V.G., the Rev. Father Smythe and Messrs. P.J. O'Connor and Con O'Brien, vice-presidents, and Mr J.E. Hayes, treasurer of the Celtic Club. The toast was drunk amid loud cheers and with musical honours. During the course of the Chairman's speech, Mr Maxwell presented Mr Redmond with a handsome medallion indicating that he had been elected an honorary life member of the Celtic Club.

Redmond had accepted an invitation to attend a conference of the Adelaide Hibernian Society on 26 April and when he arrived in Adelaide on 20 April he told an interviewer that he 'was astonished by the advance which has been made by West Australia since the establishment of Responsible Government'. He spoke admiringly of the gold fields and was 'certain that West Australia will be one of the most prosperous States of the Commonwealth'. The reception afforded to relatively minor dignitaries such as Redmond demonstrates the great need felt by the Irish Nationalist community to maintain their links with the old country. It also 'demonstrated that Irish politicians alone could vitalise Irish Australians'. During the period of planning for the Redmond visit, the Celtic Club reinforced its original rule by insisting that the following statement be placed on the back of all nomination for membership forms: 'I hereby declare that I am of Irish "birth", "descent", and am in sympathy with the Irish National Movement, and I undertake to subscribe to the objects, and abide by the rules of the Club'.

The Redmond visit also revitalised an interest in Home Rule for Ireland. On 16 August 1905 W. Nelson MLA moved a motion in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly:

That this house, recognising that local self-government, wherever it has been conceded to English speaking people within the British Empire, has tended to promote happiness, progress, and contentment, is of [the] opinion that the same principle, if applied to Ireland, would produce the same result.
The Irish born Minister for Works, P.J. Lynch, strongly supported the motion and it was passed by a majority of twelve votes. But it was all to no avail. The constant hope and dream for the majority of Irish people remained Home Rule, but the Liberal Party won a massive victory at the January 1906 election and Home Rule had not been an issue at the election. The Liberals had a majority of 84 seats over the other parties combined and with such a majority Home Rule seemed unlikely to figure prominently in the next Parliament.

Shortly after the election Joseph Devlin, the successful Nationalist candidate for the seat of West Belfast, arrived in Perth. Some idea of the arrangements made for his visit can be gathered from the Record's report:

Thursday 12 April 1906 [the day he arrived], civic reception at Fremantle, and similar reception in Perth in the afternoon; Monday 16 April, reception by the Celtic Club; Tuesday 17th, reception by Fremantle Irishmen and public address in the Town Hall; Wednesday 18th, smoke social by the United Irish League in the Hibernian Hall, Murray Street; Thursday 19th, public address in His Majesty's Theatre.

The Mayor and Councillors of Perth have arranged to tender Mr Devlin a reception on his arrival in Perth.

Other arrangements, such as a visit to the goldfields, will be made to suit his convenience.

T. M. Quinlan, the adopted son of J.T. Reilly, wrote a poem for the occasion. The first stanza ran:

From that distant Isle of Erin
Of ruined Shires, and tow'rs
A 'Céad Míle Fáilte' Devlin
To this free land of ours;
What tidings do you bring us
Of friends far o'er the sea,
Is that cruel darkness lifting
Will Ireland soon be free?

The answer was that Ireland was still a long way from being free. The most the Liberals were able to offer in 1907 was an Irish Council Bill. The Council was to be given control over some departments of the Irish administration including education and local government, but the Lord Lieutenant was left with wide veto powers and the overriding authority of the Imperial parliament was to remain. It was a completely inadequate substitute for Home Rule, described even by the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, as 'a little, modest, shy, humble effort to give administrative powers to the Irish people.' The news of the Council Bill was first reported in the Record of 13 April 1907:

I have it on best authority that the new bill will give the administration of £7,000,000 of Irish Taxation into the hands of the new authority, which will consist of a new single chamber Assembly in Dublin ... There is a question as to the election of priests to the Irish Council, which it is understood is under consideration.

The Chief Secretary of Ireland, Augustine Birrell, introduced the bill into the British parliament on 7 May 1907 and this was duly reported in the Record of 11 May, as were the reactions of John Redmond: 'Mr John Redmond, the Nationalist leader, received the Bill with a qualified approval ... He would withhold his final judgement of the bill, but would not repel any device for lessening his countrymen's sufferings'. The Record also reported that the Irish Unionists vehemently denounced the measure, predicting that it would lead to religious strife, and that the minority would be at the mercy of the permanent Catholic majority, and that 'Mr Balfour, leader of the Opposition, said he doubted if Mr Birrell regarded this 'preposterous scheme' seriously.
The reaction in Ireland was a deep disappointment with the 'preposterous scheme'. When the National Convention of the United Irish League met in Dublin on 22 May Redmond, anticipating rejection by the Convention, took the initiative and submitted a resolution rejecting the bill. The Irish in Perth were advised of this in the Record of 1 June, which was followed on 15 June with a long editorial entitled 'The Stillborn Bill'. This came to the conclusion, to which we are irresistibly driven, a conclusion which the whole history of Ireland for the past three hundred years indelibly stamps on the mind is that the root of the cause of Mr Birrell’s failure to bring in an acceptable bill is the same cause as that which has blocked the way of every measure of justice to Ireland, and which has been always the insuperable obstacle to any amelioration of her misgovernment by England—namely, the fact that the majority of Irishmen are Catholic.

In the same edition it was reported that at a recent meeting of the Nationalist members of the House of Commons it had been resolved to place on record their strong disapproval of the government’s failure to redeem its pledge and that the party had decided that ‘Home Rule could not be won by conciliation alone but only by a vigorous, well-sustained agitation in Ireland, a disciplined party in the House of Commons and a thorough organisation of the Irish vote in Britain’. In the next edition on 22 June, the Record took the Boulder Star to task for claiming that ‘this action, as being a refusal to accept a substantial measure of relief, will alienate the sympathy of many’. The Record indignantly asserted that ‘the Bill would not have afforded “substantial relief”. The reform it would effect would have been nil’.

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The Celtic Club decided at a committee meeting on 6 April 1908 to finally open membership of the Club to all Celts regardless of whether they were of Irish descent. This was a commercial decision to attract membership rather than a change of the ethos of the Club. The Club was still very concerned with Irish matters, and it became embroiled in a controversy over Irish immigration. There had been concerns in Ireland for some time about the number of people emigrating. The Record of 23 May 1908 published a long lecture by an Irish Jesuit priest, Fr Phelan, suggesting ways to 'save our dwindling population from emigration'. Fr Phelan told his audience that 'when we say this country is losing over forty thousands of its inhabitants every year, we state a fact to shudder at'. On 23 March 1908 the Celtic Club received a letter from J. Cavanagh, a club member and prominent Perth architect, apparently suggesting the formation of a movement to direct immigrants from Ireland to Western Australia. The committee replied saying they could not support his movement but suggested he hold a public meeting to 'let Irishmen discuss the matter.' On 25 May the committee received a petition from twenty members including a prominent member, Michael O'Dea, requesting a public meeting to discuss immigration, and the Club called a special meeting for 4 June. At this meeting a motion proposed by J. Cavanagh was passed:

That this meeting considers it is advisable to take immediate action in the matter and that the Committee of the Club be asked to arrange a deputation to the Government asking them to send a lecturer to Ireland.

The purpose of the lecturer was to explain the advantages of immigration to Western Australia. However, the President of the Club, J. Maxwell, voted against the motion. An amendment to the motion, proposed by M. O'Dea, suggesting that they write to the United Irish League asking if they 'could suggest a scheme by which we could induce a portion of those who have resolved to leave the old land to come to Australia', was defeated 'on the voices'. On 8 June it was decided to appoint a committee to 'wait upon the government and ascertain the favourable assistance and wants of the government with regard to an agent to be sent to Ireland'. Two of the committee members were J. Cavanagh and M. O'Dea. As a result of his opposition to the interest shown by the Celtic Club in Irish immigration, Maxwell tendered his resignation from the Club on 15 June. The Record came out on 20 June with a strong editorial denouncing Irish immigration and calling the resolution passed at the Celtic Club 'in the highest degree unpatriotic.' The members of the delegation, appointed by the Club to meet with the government, began to have second thoughts and the Club was advised on 22 June 'that the deputation regarding the immigration question had been fixed for that morning but as opinions were divided on the deputation it was decided not to approach the minister.'

The Record rarely carried letters to the editor but in the issue of 4 July it published a long letter from M. J. Cavanagh, brother of J. Cavanagh, supporting 'divert[ing] a portion of the emigrants (who will leave Ireland whether we will or no) to Western Australia'. This was followed over a period of a month by numerous letters heatedly arguing the case for and against Irish emigration. Michael O'Dea contributed two long letters arguing against immigration, or at least against sending a lecturer, even though he was on the committee elected to visit the government. In the end the whole matter was allowed to fade. Maxwell withdrew his resignation on 24 August and resumed the presidency. Emigration continued to be discouraged in Ireland; the Record 6 November 1909 published an article from the Dublin Freeman's Journal in which the writer discoursed at length on the hazards facing any Irish person tempted.
to emigrate to Australia:

It is lonely to be one more in that population of four million, thin spread over a vast continent, and it is not cheerful to join the fight for food in the towns ... Australia has its labour problems, its workless workmen. The land can be worked only by men of capital, and these must have local knowledge at that. They must also be ready to work very hard, much harder than would be demanded by any other investment of their money ... The Australian Commonwealth Parliament is now discussing the military and naval defence proposals, which will put every male child of twelve under compulsory military training and keep him ... till he is twenty.

After that, who would want to emigrate to Australia?

By late 1909 attention was centering on the forthcoming election in Britain. Many of the Liberal government's important plans and obligations had been defeated in the House of Lords—an education bill in 1906, a plural voting bill in the same year, a series of land reform bills in 1907, and a new licensing bill in 1908. Needless to say, Irish Home Rule would have met a similar fate had the government dared to attempt to introduce it in this climate.

The Lords rejected the budget in the winter of 1909 and that was the last straw—the Liberals called an election for January 1910. The Liberals won 275 seats against the Conservatives 273, but 82 Irish members and 40 Labour members now held the balance. As neither the Irish nor the Labour members were likely to vote with the Conservatives the Liberals again formed a government determined to reduce the power of the Lords to reject their bills. If the power of the Lords could be curtailed there was a great chance of the Irish finally getting Home Rule. The Liberals brought in a Parliament Bill which aimed to reduce the power of the Lords, but of course the Lords threw it out.

Another election was called in December 1910 but it produced a result almost identical to that of the previous January. Nevertheless, after a protracted fight and a threat by the Liberals to create a mass of Liberal peers, the Liberals managed to get the Parliament Bill through the Lords in August 1911. The Parliament Bill provided that any bill which was passed by the Commons three times and rejected three times by the Lords would automatically become law. The historic power of the Lords was now gone—they now could only delay bills, not reject them—and the way was open for Home Rule.

The Irish in Perth who hoped for Home Rule were firmly behind Redmond and his parliamentary party. However, there was not total solidarity in Ireland. William O'Brien took exception to what he perceived to be the growing sectarian tone of the Irish party and in 1910 launched the All-for-Ireland League in a vain attempt to interest Protestants in Irish nation building. The Irish in Perth were told in no uncertain terms by the Record 19 November 1910 that the League was a 'noisy little clique' which was 'disrupting the peace of the country and sowing the seed of faction', thereby demonstrating that the once popular O'Brien had been finally usurped by Redmond. The Record of 11 February 1911 was pleased to publish a statement by John Redmond:

The result of the General Election of December, 1910 may be fairly claimed as a great and unprecedented triumph for the Progressive and Democratic forces of Great Britain and Ireland. It has sealed the doom of the Veto power of the House of Lords, and it has given a clear and unequivocal mandate to the Premier to settle the Irish Question finally... by the concession to the Irish people of 'Full Self-Government' in all purely Irish affairs.
The Third Home Rule Bill

In early 1911 the Liberals under Prime Minister Asquith set out to implement this canon of Liberal policy, which had existed since William Gladstone had been Prime Minister, and bring in a Home Rule Bill. However, the Cabinet committee which was appointed to formulate the Home Rule Bill took a leisurely approach to their task. They deliberated for almost a year before presenting the bill to the Irish leaders with the incredible disclaimer that it 'was not the result of serious consideration, but had been thrown hurriedly together, and was not to be regarded as expressing the settled view of the Cabinet'. Incidentally, the Irish leaders had never been consulted during these discussions. Meanwhile the Protestants of Ulster began to organize resistance to the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. Separated by history, religion, and economics from the Catholic South, they considered themselves more British than Irish and wanted to continue the Union with Britain.

Because of the time taken to formulate the bill there was little to report during 1911. However, some of the optimism of the time was apparent in the Record of 25 February when it reported:

First of all "Home Rule"—which in the past seemed distant as the horizon and shadowy as the rainbow—is a certainty at last. This is glorious news, news that sends a thrill of joy to every true hearted Irish exile no matter how fortune has dealt with him.

As the resistance by Ulster became more apparent the Record became defiant. The editorial on 27 January 1912 ridiculed Ulster resistance and claimed that 'many Protestants are sound Home Rulers'. It was also asserted that that 'there will be no civil war in Ulster'. They would not have been happy to know that Ulster resistance was indeed being taken seriously by members of the British government. It was discussed at an important cabinet meeting on 6 February 1912 and David Lloyd George, together with Winston Churchill, proposed that Ulster should be excluded from the proposed bill. The response in Perth to events in Ulster was similar to that of leading members of the Irish party; neither realised the depth of Ulster resistance. Both Redmond and his deputy John Dillon refused to believe that Ulster intransigence would ever force the partition of Ireland, and late in 1913 Redmond was still asserting that 'Irish Nationalists can never be assenting parties to the mutilation of the Irish nation.' Dillon was obsessed with the idea that Ulster was bluffing.

Protestant Ulster was led by Sir Edward Carson who represented Dublin University in the House of Commons. Carson was an ideal choice for leader because he was absolutely devoted to the maintenance of the Union. In later years he recalled: 'From the day I first entered Parliament devotion to the Union has been the guiding star of my political life.' When Andrew Bonar Law became leader of the Conservative Party on 13 November 1911, Carson gained a formidable ally. Bonar Law was born in Canada of Scottish Presbyterian stock, and felt deeply his compatriots' desire not to be ruled by Roman Catholics. Just before Asquith introduced the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912, a mass meeting was held at Balmoral, near Belfast, attended by 100,000 people including Bonar Law and seventy English, Welsh and Scottish members of Parliament. In his speech Bonar Law described the attempt to pass Home Rule as a 'tyranny naked and unashamed, and tyranny not less real because the usurpers had obtained their power by fraud instead of force.'

Shortly after the Home Rule Bill was introduced into the British parliament on 11 April 1912 a large, enthusiastic meeting was held in the Hibernian Hall in Perth to
express support. The meeting was presided over by Lord Mayor Molloy and was attended by leading priests and politicians, including the Archbishop, Dr Clune, the State Attorney-General, T. Walker, and Senator Needham. The Lord Mayor told the meeting:

We are met here this evening for the purpose of giving expression to our joy and heartfelt gratitude on the occasion of this memorable event, which has happened in the history of Ireland; we are here to show our sympathy with this great measure introduced by the Parliament of England[sic] for the emancipation of Ireland, and to send along to the Irish people and the Irish party... words of congratulation and encouragement.

Bishop Clune emphasised the point that 'the new Asquith measure would not only satisfy the legitimate craving of the Celtic heart for constitutional freedom, but also ensure the solidarity of the Empire'. The Attorney-General referred to the bill 'as the natural outcome of the modern movement for the uplifting of humanity, and he now felt that 'Ireland would re-occupy her long-lost place among the family of self-governing nations'... This tone of enthusiasm and hope continued throughout most of 1912 until events in Ulster started to take on a more sinister tone.

On 28 September 1912 the Ulster Unionists staged a theatrical signing of a Solemn League and Covenant which was eventually signed by 500,000 people who pledged themselves to use all means necessary to defeat Home Rule. Unionist obstruction in the House of Commons forced Asquith to introduce the closure accompanied by the guillotine, which meant that discussion would cease at a set hour each day. The Unionists, aided by the Conservative opposition, were beginning to offer serious resistance.

Commenting on these events the Record again attempted to downgrade the importance of Ulster resistance by telling the Catholic Irish of Perth that the "Solemn League and Covenant" will have no more effect upon the discussion of the measure than the snows of yester-year. Under the heading of 'A Solemn Humbug' it asserted that the 'Ulster' game is up'. Ignoring the 500,000 supporters of Carson who had signed the covenant, they quoted an unnamed Presbyterian minister who had written to The Times declaring that he deeply deplored 'the sectarian bitterness and strife being engendered by Sir Edward Carson'. At the end of 1912 the Record announced that 'the first round in the Home Rule Session has been fought and it has ended disastrously for the Unionists, and that the 'cause of Home Rule is marching on'. This was an overstatement of the position but it had an element of truth.

When Parliament was prorogued on 15 August 1913 the Home Rule Bill had passed through the Commons twice and had been rejected twice by the Lords. Under the terms of the Parliament Act it would become law when passed once more in the Commons. The Unionists were being confronted with what looked like a fait accompli and in desperation started to put pressure on the King. To them, the King, if he exercised his power of dismissal or dissolution was the only man who could prevent Home Rule.

The Record of 4 January 1913 took time out from reporting Home Rule to run a story about the commemoration on 24 November 1912 of 'Martyrs Day'. This event had been held for many years in Ireland in tribute to the men and women, particularly the Manchester Martyrs, who had given their lives for their country. The Manchester Martyrs were three Irishmen who were executed in 1867, after the rescue of two leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood from a prison van in Manchester resulted in the death of a police constable. The Record reported that every centre in Ireland had a procession, and every National Society turned out in its strength with their badges and bands to do honour to the nation's gallant dead, but
more especially to "the noble-hearted three" whose tragic story must for ever remain of poignant interest to our race.

The newspaper quickly returned to denouncing the Unionists. In the next edition, under a headline proclaiming 'Ulster Tory Threat to join with Germany', it featured an exchange which had taken place in the House of Commons on the previous New Year's Day. During the report stage of the Home Rule Bill, Carson had submitted an amendment to exclude the whole of Ulster from the scope of the Bill. In the course of the heated debate which ensued, the leader of the opposition, Bonar Law, remarked that he believed the Unionists in Ireland would rather be ruled by a foreign country than by the Nationalists. Winston Churchill fatuously claimed that this was the latest Tory threat—Ulster will secede from Great Britain and join with Germany. When the Record reported this it took the opportunity to claim that it recalled that an Ulster leader, James Craig, had 'hinted not obscurely at an "alliance" between the [Orange] lodges and the Kaiser'. It also reminded its readers that 'very recently the dead walls of Belfast itself were covered with a defiant "No Surrender" placard proclaiming the significant declaration—"If England does not help us Germany will'". The readers of the Record were to be subjected to this type of sectarian reporting during the whole of the tortuous passage of the Home Rule Bill from 1911 to 1914.

The Irish supporters of Home Rule continued to be optimistic. When it was reported in January 1913 that the Bill had passed through the Commons for the third and last time, 'there was heartfelt jubilation among the Irishmen and friends of the Irish Cause. The green flag was immediately hoisted over the Celtic Club in Hay Street' and a cable of greeting was sent to John Redmond. The true position was entirely different. The government had no intention of proclaiming the Home Rule Bill in the climate of total Ulster opposition. Asquith was meeting Ulster intransigence by putting pressure on Redmond to accept a proposal that an undefined area, termed 'statutory Ulster', be given control of a limited amount of the legislative process. Redmond considered the proposals 'offensive to Nationalism, but the PM formed the view he [Redmond] would accept them later on, with protest'.

Meanwhile, at the end of 1913, the Irish of Perth were thrilled to receive another visit by Mr and Mrs W. Redmond. They had intended making a private visit and had not warned the Perth Irish community of their impending arrival. When they arrived at Fremantle they went to the National Hotel where Mr and Mrs M. Mulcahy 'soon put the telephone wires in motion' to signal their arrival. It was not long before they were welcomed at the Celtic Club and wished 'a very pleasant sojourn in Australia and [that] the trip would benefit their health'. Redmond responded by telling the members that

I can assure you that everything is going well with the Irish cause. (cheers) You cannot place any reliance on the tainted Tory cables about threatened rebellion. Mr Asquith and his colleagues, including Winston Churchill, are absolutely unanimous on the Home Rule issue... After the passing of the Home Rule Bill there may be some rioting and scenes of disorder, but there will be no civil war. The majority of the Ulster representatives are in favour of autonomy, and the mutilation of the Northern Province or its separation from the rest of Ireland is unthinkable as well as impossible economically.

Later, over lunch at the Palace Hotel, Monsignor Verling told Redmond that 'on behalf of the Archdiocese and clergy, it afforded him pleasure to join in a hearty welcome to one of Ireland's most distinguished sons, who came with a message of hope to the scattered children of the Gael'.

If Redmond was telling the 'children of the Gael' the truth as he saw it, and there is no evidence to the contrary, then the Irish party at the time had no idea of the real
In the course of events. In reality most members of the Liberal Party were engaged in finding ways to separate Ulster from the provisions of the Home Rule Bill. On 12 November, about the time Redmond left Britain for Australia, a number of prominent members of the Liberal party including Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, R. B. Haldane and Lord Crewe were at a dinner at which Lloyd George suggested Ulster exclusion. This culminated on 9 March 1914 with Asquith, when moving the second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, introducing an Amending Bill that provided for any county in Ireland to vote for exclusion for six years. Even though this was seen as a victory for the Unionists, Carson thought he could get more and he contemptuously dismissed the Amending Bill with the words, 'We do not want a sentence of death with a stay of execution for six years'.

The Record continued to treat Carson with disdain and published a full page of sarcastic comment on him in its 18 July 1914 edition. Others were not so sure that the passage of events were favourable to the Nationalists and tried to encourage a demonstration of support for Home Rule. A correspondent to the Record on 1 August 1914 wrote:

I have been watching the columns of the W.A. Record for several weeks past in the hope of hearing some suggestions about holding a Home Rule demonstration in Perth such as was held in Melbourne, Sydney, and Hobart. Surely there are just as true Irishmen in W.A. as in any other part of Australasia. In my opinion that grand old man, Mr John Redmond, deserves all the encouragement that Irishmen can give him. Hoping more able pens than mine will take up this matter, or open a subscription list for the cause, to which I am ready to give my donation.

It was all too late. Europe was moving rapidly towards war and this was casting a shadow over the whole Irish imbroglio. In a last desperate measure to resolve the Irish deadlock, the King called an all-party conference which held four meetings at Buckingham Palace between 21 and 24 July but ended in failure when neither the Nationalists nor the Unionists would compromise on the division of the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh. A Cabinet meeting was held on the afternoon of 24 July of which Churchill was to write later: 'turning this way and that in search of an exit from the deadlock the Cabinet toiled around the muddy byways of Fermanagh and Tyrone'. It was at this point that Sir Edward Grey advised the Cabinet of the ultimatum Serbia had received from Austria-Hungary and in Churchill's famous words, 'The parishes of Fermanagh and Tyrone faded back into the mists and squalls of Ireland, and a strange light began immediately, but by perceptible graduations, to fall and grow upon the map of Europe.' In the end it was decided on 18 September that the Government of Ireland Act [Home Rule Act] was to be given the Royal Assent with two provisos; the first was that it was to be suspended until a date to be determined not being later than the end of the war; secondly, it would not come into operation until special provision was made for Ulster in an Amending Bill.

The West Australian of 21 September, reported the event in a very small paragraph under the heading 'Home Rule; King's assent granted'. However, the Record made no mention of this momentous occasion until 10 October, and then only to report that 'the Nationalists in Victoria hailed the news that the Home Rule Bill had received the Royal Assent with the keenest pleasure'. The outbreak of war was to put Ireland out of the news until Easter 1916.

The Catholic Irish of Perth were kept well informed of events in Ireland by the Record but the news was always presented from a Nationalist perspective. From the
"I'm an Australian and speak as such"

turn of the century to 1914 Ireland underwent massive changes culminating in the long hoped for Home Rule. As in Ireland, the Irish of Perth changed their views as the battle for Home Rule progressed. When John Redmond became the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1900 the Record could only hope 'that he possesses qualities still to be developed', but by 1914 he was looked upon in both Perth and Ireland as the saviour of Ireland. The once popular William O'Brien was quickly dismissed as 'disrupting the peace of the country and sowing the seed of faction' when he tried to oppose Redmond in 1910.

Many of the Perth Irish had divided loyalties but most were first and foremost Australians. The Irish-born T. Quinlan was a leading figure in the Perth Irish community but he made the point during his welcoming speech to William O'Brien that he was 'an Australian, and he spoke as such.' This divided loyalty led to a reluctance by the Perth Catholic Irish to slavishly follow the Nationalist line. They were reluctant to be too critical of the Boer War because of Australia's intimate involvement in the war; in contrast to the Nationalists in Ireland they welcomed the visit of Queen Victoria. They were happy to promote lavish welcomes to dignatories from Ireland, to celebrate centenaries of past Irish heroes and to raise money for the cause of Home Rule but were not quick to organise Home Rule demonstrations. They wanted to take a deep interest in the 'old country' but they wanted to be eventually accepted as Australians.

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31 Record, 4 January 1902, p.8
32 Ibid.
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34 Record, 26 November 1904, p.6 and ibid., 10 December 1904, p.49.
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