

CHAPTER IX.

IRISH LANGUAGE.

The number of persons who stated that they could speak Irish was 543,511 in 1926, or 18·3% of the total population. The following table shows the trend in the totals of Irish speakers and non-Irish speakers since 1881 :—

SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN (NUMBERS IN THOUSANDS).

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1926
Irish speakers	925	664	620	554	544
Non-Irish speakers	2,945	2,805	2,602	2,586	2,428
Total population	3,870	3,469	3,222	3,140	2,972
Irish speakers as % of total	23·9	19·2	19·2	17·6	18·3

Personal judgment must necessarily enter so largely into the replies to this question that the number of Irish speakers would appear to be far less susceptible of exact measurement than any of the other matters into which it is the purpose of the Census to enquire. To every other query, place of residence, age, birthplace, religion, occupation, etc., on the Census schedule it was possible to give an exact reply. It was obviously impossible to devise a method simple enough for Census purposes which would permit of a rigid distinction being made between those who "know Irish" and those who do not. The final decision in the matter had to be left with the person enumerated. At the same time the statistics have a considerable value for purposes of comparison as between one part of the country and another, as between the last and previous Censuses, as between one age group or occupation and another, and the subsequent analysis will show that there is a marked consistency in the replying.

While the number of Irish speakers has declined by 10,000 since 1911, the decline in the number of non-Irish speakers has been proportionately greater, with the result that the proportion of Irish speakers has increased from 17·6% in 1911 to 18·3% in 1926 of the total population. This is the first occasion on which an increase has been recorded since 1881, and probably since 1851, for the increase in the proportion between 1871 and 1881 from 19·8% to 23·9% has been stated to be largely fictitious (Census of Ireland, 1881, General Report) and due to the change in the form of inquiry. The proportions of Irish speakers in 1851, 1861 and 1871 were respectively 29·1%, 24·5% and 19·8%.

Over the whole period of 45 years from 1881 to 1926 the number of Irish speakers declined by 41%, while the number of non-Irish speakers declined by 18%.

The percentage of Irish speakers is low in the county boroughs. In fact, the percentage in 1926 was only 7·5% in Dublin Co. Borough, and this is lower than in any Leinster county. The percentages in Cork Co. Borough, Limerick Co. Borough, and Waterford Co. Borough are respectively 10·1, 8·9 and 8·8, and these are lower than the corresponding figures in any Munster county. These figures, however, show an increase over the percentages recorded in 1911, which were as follows :—Dublin Co. Borough, 3·9; Cork Co. Borough, 8·7; Limerick Co. Borough, 6·8 and Waterford Co. Borough, 7·7.

As one travels east Irish speakers become fewer. The counties with the highest percentages of Irish speakers are Galway (47·4%), Mayo (36·8%), Donegal (34·4%), Kerry (33·0%), Clare (30·3), Waterford* (30·1%), and Cork* (21·1%), all of which border the south or west coast. There is a marked break between Waterford, with 30·1% and the next lowest on the list, Cork, with 21·1%.

* Excluding the Co. Borough

With regard to the changes which have taken place since 1911, the most striking increases occurred where there was most room for improvement—in Dublin Co. Borough from 11,870 to 23,712 ; Dublin Co. from 5,873 to 15,906 ; Wicklow from 1,054 to 5,008 ; Kildare from 1,677 to 5,793. The greatest declines occurred in Galway from 98,523 to 80,238, Cork from 77,205 to 60,616, Mayo from 88,601 to 63,514, Kerry from 60,719 to 49,262.

The delimitation of areas by the Gaeltacht Commission for the Irish Speaking Districts (Fíor-Ghaeltacht) and the Partly Irish Speaking Districts (Breac-Ghaeltacht) which together constitute the Gaeltacht, has been adopted in this Report. The unit of delimitation was the District Electoral Division. Broadly speaking, the Irish-speaking Districts are defined to be those in which 80% or over of the population can speak Irish, and Partly Irish-speaking Districts are those in which 25-79% of the people can speak Irish.

The Gaeltacht Areas are predominantly rural. The Breac-Ghaeltacht contains one large town, Galway, with a population of over 14,000, Killarney and Dungarvan, with over 5,000, and seven towns with populations ranging between 1,500 and 5,000 inhabitants ; the Fíor-Ghaeltacht contains only one town, Dingle, with more than 1,500 inhabitants.

The following table shows how the numbers of Irish Speakers in the Gaeltacht areas have changed since 1911 :—

	1911	1926	Changes 1911 to 1926	
			Actual	Percentage
Gaeltacht Areas :—				
Fíor-Ghaeltacht	149,677	130,074	— 19,603	— 13·1
Breac-Ghaeltacht	163,831	116,737	— 47,094	— 28·7
Rest of Saorstát Eireann	240,209	296,700	+ 56,491	+ 23·5
Total	553,717	543,511	— 10,206	— 1·8

While the number of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht has declined by 66,697, or by 21%, the number in the rest of the Saorstát has increased by 56,491, or by 24%. The qualitative changes are not measured by these statistics, for, as will presently be seen, the increase in the Irish speakers in the rest of Saorstát Eireann is practically confined to children at the school ages, many of whom must inevitably lose the language when they leave school. The gain of one Irish speaker in this group does not from this point of view compensate for the loss of one Irish speaker in the Gaeltacht.

It will be seen that rather less than one-half (45%) of the Irish speakers were in the Gaeltacht in 1926 as compared with 57% in 1911.

The following table shows the numbers of Irish speakers in these three types of areas related to the population thereof :—

IRISH SPEAKERS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION.

	1911	1926
Gaeltacht Areas :—		
Fíor-Ghaeltacht	79·0	77·3
Breac-Ghaeltacht	48·1	37·9
Rest of Saorstát Eireann	9·2	11·9
Total	17·6	18·3

Relatively to the population, there has been a marked loss of Irish in the Breac-Ghaeltacht, where now only 38% of the population speak Irish, compared with 48% in 1911. In the Fíor-Ghaeltacht the actual loss was probably due more to a loss of population than to a loss of the language amongst the people who remained.

The following table shows the numbers of Irish speakers in the Fíor- and Breac-Ghaeltacht areas in each county :—

GAELTACHT—IRISH SPEAKERS.

Gaeltacht in County	Irish speakers, 1926			Percentage Decline 1911-1926		
	Fíor- Ghaeltacht	Breac- Ghaeltacht	Total	Fíor- Ghaeltacht	Breac- Ghaeltacht	Total
Clare	2,463	16,715	19,178	16·9	26·7	25·6
Cork	5,780	16,526	22,306	11·3	32·2	27·8
Donegal	38,570	6,906	45,476	10·7	31·9	14·7
Galway	41,106	25,916	67,022	15·1	23·5	18·6
Kerry	19,024	17,433	36,457	12·9	24·9	19·1
Mayo	18,907	24,979	43,886	11·3	33·1	25·2
Waterford	4,224	8,262	12,486	22·1	31·5	28·6
Total	130,074	116,737	246,811	13·1	28·7	21·3

In each of the seven Gaeltacht counties the losses have been more severe in the Breac-Ghaeltacht areas. The proportionate losses since 1911 are greater in Clare, Cork, Mayo, and Waterford principally because these counties have higher proportions of their Gaeltachts in Breac-Ghaeltacht areas than have the other three counties.

Ages of the Irish-speaking Population.

The following table shows the distribution of Irish speakers in certain age groups in 1926 :—

Age Groups				Irish Speakers	Percentage of Population at each age	Percentage of total
0 — 4	...	...	...	8,170	2·8	1·5
5 — 9	...	...	...	56,273	19·8	10·3
10—14	...	...	...	115,579	39·1	21·2
15—19	...	...	...	79,004	27·6	14·6
20—44	...	...	...	131,409	13·4	24·2
45—64	...	...	...	85,149	15·1	15·7
65 and over	...	...	...	67,927	25·0	12·5
Total	...	...	...	543,511	18·3	100·0

The most striking feature of this table is the high proportion of children who can speak Irish at the school ages. One-fifth of these aged 5-9 and two-fifths of the 10-14 group can speak the language. That the proportion is lower at 15-19 than at 10-14 is no doubt partly due to the fact that children were, in 1926, learning more Irish than children of the same age five years earlier ; it must also be due in some measure to loss of the language after leaving school. Almost exactly one-third of the Irish speakers are aged less than fifteen years.

The next table shows in greater detail as to age the percentage of persons who can speak Irish in each province (see Diagram 18).

Province	0-2	3-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-	Total all Ages
Leinster ...	0.5	2.0	14.3	31.0	18.2	8.9	6.4	4.1	2.8	2.2	1.7	8.8
Munster ...	1.1	3.5	20.0	42.0	30.6	16.7	14.0	13.0	16.2	21.4	33.0	20.4
Connacht ...	3.3	8.5	26.3	47.5	39.3	28.3	25.8	25.9	30.5	36.8	46.3	31.7
Ulster (3 Cos.)	4.7	11.3	26.5	41.6	29.4	20.9	18.9	18.3	18.5	21.0	25.0	22.9
Saorstát Éireann ...	1.6	4.6	19.8	39.1	27.6	15.8	13.2	11.9	13.7	17.2	25.0	18.3

It will be seen that the proportion increases for Munster and Connacht with increasing age from the age group 35-44. In the three Ulster Counties the proportion remains about the same for ages 25 to 54 and then increases. In Leinster, where very few of the older generation can speak the language, the proportion of Irish speakers decreases regularly with age. In all provinces the proportion of Irish speakers is greatest at the age group 10-14, and it is only at this age group that the proportion for Leinster bears comparison with those for the other provinces.

The next table shows the number of Irish speakers at the ages 10-14 years as a percentage of the total population at these ages in each county.

County	% Irish speakers 10-14	County	% Irish speakers 10-14	County	% Irish speakers 10-14
Galway ...	56.4	Waterford Co. ...	41.1	Louth ...	35.3
Claro ...	53.8	Monaghan ...	40.5	Kildare ...	34.2
Kerry ...	50.7	Laoighis ...	40.0	Wicklow ...	33.8
Roscommon ...	47.8	Cavan ...	39.9	Wexford ...	29.9
Mayo ...	43.6	Tipperary S.R. ...	39.2	Dublin Co.* ...	26.8
Sligo ...	43.5	Offaly ...	39.0	Cork Co. Boro.' ...	25.5
Donegal ...	42.9	Leitrim ...	38.1	Waterford Co. Borough ...	23.3
Tipperary N.R. ...	42.8	Meath ...	38.0	Limerick Co. Borough ...	23.3
Limerick Co. ...	42.4	Kilkenny ...	36.9	Dublin Co. Boro.' ...	23.1
Longford ...	42.0	Westmeath ...	36.7		
Cork Co. ...	42.0	Carlow ...	35.4		

* Including 4 Urban Districts adjoining Dublin Co. Borough, but excluding Dublin Co. Borough.

The counties are arranged in descending order of magnitude of the percentages. The four County Boroughs and Dublin County are weakest in Irish at the ages 10-14, and the counties on the western seaboard, with the marked exception of Leitrim, are strongest.

As the following table shows, there is a far greater range of variation between the counties when the percentages of Irish speakers at ages 45 or over are compared:—

	%		%		%
Galway ...	62.4	Limerick Co. ...	6.3	Monaghan ...	2.6
Mayo ...	53.7	Waterford Co. Borough ...	6.1	Westmeath ...	2.1
Waterford Co. ...	47.5	Louth ...	3.8	Meath ...	2.0
Kerry ...	40.7	Limerick Co. Borough ...	3.7	Kildare ...	2.0
Donegal ...	40.2	Leitrim ...	3.6	Wicklow ...	2.0
Claro ...	37.5	Cavan ...	3.1	Tipperary N.R. ...	1.8
Cork Co. ...	25.8	Dublin Co.* ...	2.8	Carlow ...	1.7
Sligo ...	14.8	Dublin Co. Boro.' ...	2.7	Offaly ...	1.6
Roscommon ...	7.4	Kilkenny ...	2.7	Longford ...	1.6
Cork Co. Borough ...	7.3			Laoighis ...	1.3
Tipperary S.R. ...	6.9			Wexford ...	1.2

* Including 4 Urban Districts adjoining Dublin Co. Borough but excluding Dublin Co. Borough.

The percentages range from 62·4% in Galway down to 1·2% in Wexford. In six of the counties more than one-third of the persons aged 45 or over can speak the language. In Co. Cork the proportion is about one-quarter and in Sligo one-seventh. In none of the other counties is the percentage of Irish speakers aged 45 or over greater than 8%.

With regard to retrospective comparisons of the numbers of Irish speakers by ages, it is unfortunate that drastic changes were made from Census to Census in the age classification adopted which affect the direct comparability of the figures. From the data supplied, however, and from the known regular precession with age of the percentage of Irish speakers at each Census (see Diagram 18) it has been possible to adjust the numbers in each age group so as to establish comparability with, it is believed, only a small margin of error :—

PERCENTAGE OF IRISH SPEAKERS CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUPS AT EACH CENSUS, 1881-1926.

Age Groups				1881	1891	1901	1911	1926
				%	%	%	%	%
0 — 9	...	...	...	6·4	4·2	5·0	5·5	11·3
10—19	...	...	...	17·9	13·0	14·2	20·0	33·4
20—39	...	...	...	24·3	18·2	18·0	14·4	13·6
40—59	...	...	...	38·0	30·8	28·9	21·0	13·8
60 and over	...	...	...	51·5	44·9	41·4	34·3	23·1
Total	...	...	...	23·9	19·2	19·2	17·6	18·3

The great increase in the percentage of Irish speakers at the age group 0-9 and at 10-19 during the last intercensal period will be noted. At the latter ages the percentage increased from 20% to 33%. It is also remarkable that the percentage of Irish speakers at the two youngest age groups have persistently increased since 1891, the relative increase in the percentage from 14% in 1901 to 20% in 1911 at the ages 10-19 being very marked. At the three later ages the decline in the proportion of Irish speakers from Census to Census is quite regular, except at the age group 20-39 between the years 1891 and 1901. The increase in the proportion of Irish speakers at the ages 10-19 and the slowing-up of the decline between 1891 and 1901 was due, no doubt, to the wave of enthusiasm for the learning of the language which followed the foundation of the Gaelic League (1893).

The following table shows the changes which have taken place in the numbers of Irish speakers in certain age groups between 1911 and 1926 :—

	0—2	3—9	10—14	15—19	20—39	40—59	60—	Total
1911 ...	1,922	31,994	63,043	58,387*	133,579*	117,742	147,050	553,717
1926 ...	2,709	61,734	115,579	79,004	110,809*	86,497*	87,179*	543,511
% change	+40·9	+93·0	+83·3	+35·3	—17·0	—26·5	—40·7	—1·8

* Estimates.

While the total of Irish speakers has only decreased by 1·8% since 1911, there have been very striking changes in the age distribution of the Irish-speaking population. Irish speakers aged less than 20 have increased by 103,680, and Irish speakers aged 20 and over have decreased by 113,886 since 1911. There have been enormous increases in the number at the school ages and at the ages 10-14 the numbers have

nearly doubled. Even at the ages 15-19, when the great majority of the population have left school, a solid gain of 35% has been registered. At the later ages, on the other hand, substantial declines are recorded, and clearly the percentages increase considerably with age. The decline has been no less than 40% at ages 60 and over. The regularity of the changes from age 3 onwards will be particularly noted.

DIAGRAM 18.

NUMBER OF IRISH SPEAKERS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION AT EACH AGE GROUP IN SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN AND PROVINCES 1881 to 1926 AND IN THE FÍOR- AND BREAC-GHAELTÁCHT 1911 AND 1926.

(The fine lines drawn on the diagrams for Munster, Connaught and the Gaeltacht indicate the fluctuations in the number of Irish Speakers in given groups of persons—see text).

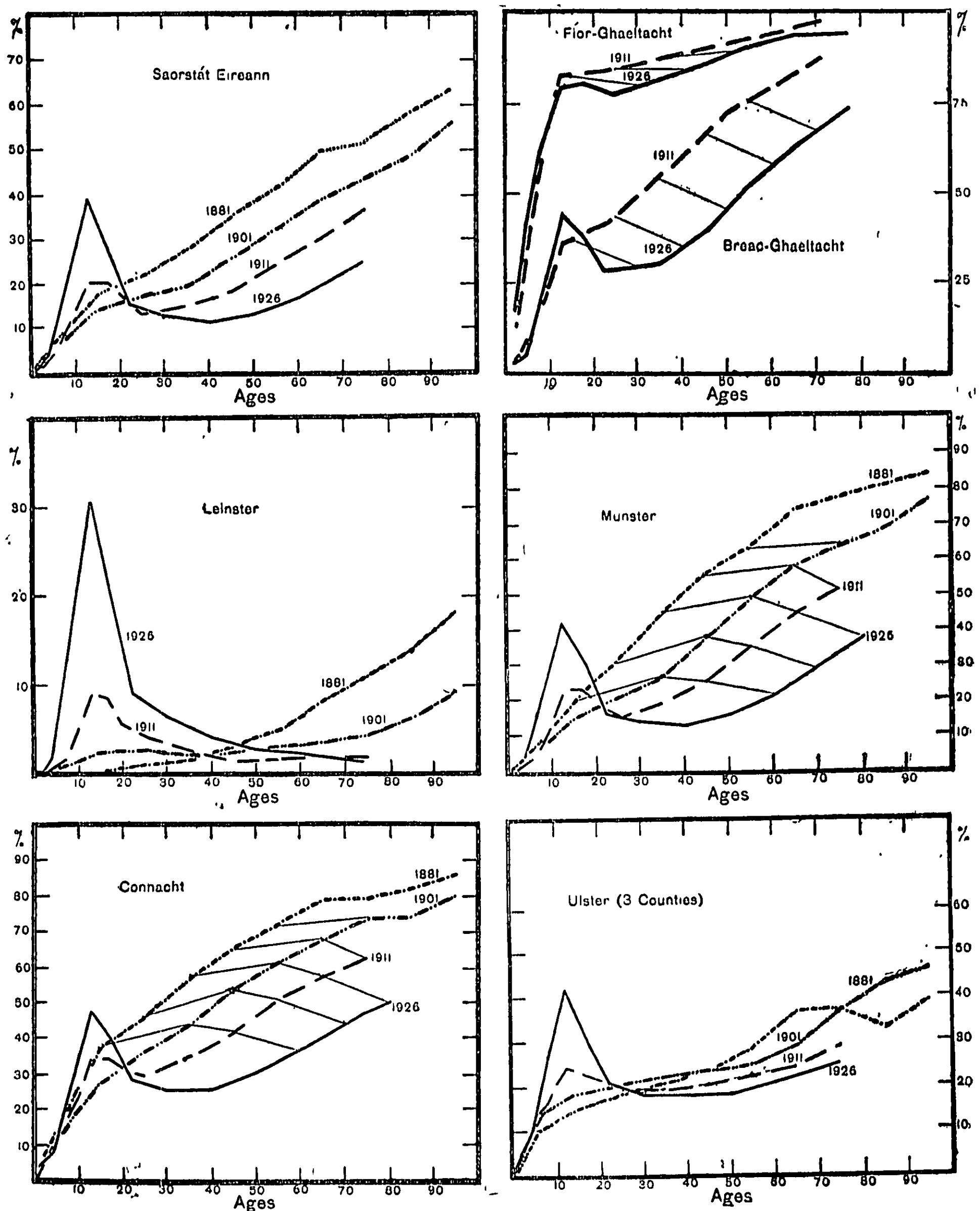


Diagram 18, which shows the trend in the proportion of Irish speakers at each age in the years 1881, 1901, 1911 and 1926 illustrates the very striking changes which have taken place in the age distribution of Irish speakers since 1881. The outstanding feature is, as already remarked, the very high proportion of Irish speakers at the

school ages. In each of the years the proportion of Irish speakers increased markedly with age at the later ages, but at each year of age after 20 the decline from Census to Census has been quite regular. For example, at age 60 the proportion of Irish speakers was 46% in 1881, 38% in 1891, 36% in 1901, 27% in 1911 and 17% in 1926. As the people who were aged 60 in 1881 were born in 1821, the history of the loss of the language by persons born during the period from 1821 to 1866 is written in these percentages. From the regularity of the decline of these percentages it could be deduced that, were it not for the efforts which were made to save the language very few persons attaining the age of 60 in 1951 would be able to speak it.

The statistics in Volume VIII may also be used to give a rough indication of the fluctuations in the number of Irish speakers in given groups of persons at each Census since 1881. The groups considered in the following table are those of 1,000 persons who were aged 15, 25 and 35 respectively in the year 1881 and who still resided in Saorstát Éireann in 1926 :—

FLUCTUATIONS IN NUMBER OF IRISH SPEAKERS IN EVERY 1,000 PERSONS WHO RESIDED IN SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN DURING THE 45 YEARS 1881-1926.

Province	Age in 1881	Number of Irish speakers per thousand in				
		1881	1891	1901	1911	1926
Leinster ...	15	4	7	20	18	22
	25	11	10	24	20	18
	35	17	14	30	19	15
Munster ...	15	204	211	269	250	214
	25	315	322	390	358	295
	35	444	435	498	448	376
Connacht ...	15	379	377	438	413	368
	25	469	484	546	512	434
	35	581	569	623	578	500
Ulster (3 Cos.) ...	15	155	173	221	205	210
	25	184	187	235	224	237
	35	206	202	249	243	266

This table is to be interpreted as follows :—There were 315 Irish speakers aged 20-29 amongst 1,000 persons of these ages in the province of Munster in 1881. Take this at the average age 25. In 1891 there were 322 Irish speakers per 1,000 at the average age 35, so that assuming the total of emigration and deaths affected Irish speaking and non-Irish speaking areas in Munster in approximately equal proportions, the number of people in this group of 1,000 people who learned the language between 1881 and 1891 exceeded those who lost it by 7—in other words, there was no significant change in this group. For Munster and Connacht and for the Fíor- and Breac-Ghaeltacht the trends in the number of Irish speakers in given groups are indicated by fine lines in Diagram 18.

The table above also shows that in Munster and Connacht the changes which occurred between 1881 and 1891 were unimportant. In all the provinces the increases were considerable between 1891 and 1901. At each of the two Censuses since there have been substantial declines in Munster and Connacht and at the oldest age group in Leinster. On the other hand, the language has been well maintained in the three Ulster counties. Over the whole period 1881 to 1926 there have actually been increases in the proportion of Irish speakers amongst those ages 15 in 1881 in Leinster and

the latter factor may be roughly estimated for the Saorstát and the four provinces as follows :—

Province	Irish speakers aged 12 in 1911 (1)	Estimated numbers of these who still lived in Saorstát Eireann in 1926 (2)	Irish speakers aged 27 in 1926 (3)	Percentage who have lost the language (4)
Leinster	1,927	1,607	1,293	% 19.5
Munster	4,698	3,029	2,111	30.3
Connacht	4,425	2,350	1,869	20.5
Ulster (3 Cos.)	1,558	860	757	12.0
Saorstát Eireann ...	12,608	7,846	6,030	23.1

The numbers in column (2) were found by applying the ratio of the number of persons aged 27 in 1926 to the number aged 12 in 1911 to the number of Irish speakers aged 12 in 1911 in each urban and rural district. The number of Irish speakers aged 27 in 1926 will, of course, include some who started to learn to speak the language after their 12th year. The total of such persons is presumed to be relatively small.

It will be seen that under the conditions existing during the last intercensal period nearly one-quarter (23%) of those who could speak the language at age 12 have lost it 15 years later. As in the case of Irish speakers at the later ages the percentage loss was greatest in Munster, with 30%, and least in the three Ulster counties, with 12%. The corresponding percentages in the seven most important counties from the language point of view are shown in the second column of the following table :—

IRISH SPEAKERS AGED 12 IN 1911.

County	Percentage decline in 15 years, all causes	Percentage decline due to disuse
Clare	58.4	31.9
Cork*	53.5	28.7
Kerry	58.5	19.9
Waterford*	43.3	15.8
Galway	53.9	14.2
Mayo	58.7	17.1
Donegal	51.9	9.1

* Excluding County Borough.

As might be expected, the language was best maintained amongst given groups of persons in those parts of the country in which it is most spoken :—

Rural Districts in which percentage of Irish speakers in 1911 was—	Number of rural districts	Percentage decline in number of Irish speakers 1911-1926 amongst those whose age in 1911 was—	
		12 years	35 years
80 or over per cent ...	2	% 4.2	% + 0.1*
70—79	3	1.1	0.4
60—69	8	9.8	4.5
50—59	5	20.0	16.5
40—49	12	26.0	19.9
30—39	11	29.4	23.2
20—29	10	37.4	26.2
10—19	19	34.0	22.8
Under 10	90	26.7	+ 8.8*
All rural districts ...	160	21.9	11.7

* Increase.

The first figure in the third column means that of 1,000 persons who lived in the two rural districts concerned in 1911 and 1926 and who were aged 12 in 1911 (and

27 in 1926) the number of Irish speakers in this given group decreased by 4.2%. The table shows that amongst the two groups of persons there has been little loss of Irish in rural districts in which 70% or more of the population spoke the language in 1911. Thereafter the percentage losses increase steeply in both groups, and they amounted to no less than 37% and 26% respectively in the ten 20-29% Irish-speaking rural districts. The increase in the small number of Irish speakers aged 35 in 1911 in the large number of rural districts in which the percentage of those who speak the language is less than 10% will be noted. The sequence in the third column of the table, which is given above, affords some measure of the extent that the problem of assisting the people to retain the language, once they have learnt it, will become less acute the more the country becomes Irish-speaking.

Age of Irish Speakers in the Gaeltacht.

The severe losses which the language has sustained in the Gaeltacht, and more particularly in the Breac-Ghaeltacht since 1911 have already been indicated. The following table shows the number of Irish speakers in these areas distributed by ages :—

Areas	Ages						Total
	0—2	3—9	10—14	15—29	30—39	40—	
Fíor-Ghaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	1,472	16,561	17,471	38,323	18,608	57,242	149,677
1926 ...	1,634	13,963	15,516	32,014	13,467	53,480	130,074
% change ...	+11.0	—15.7	—11.2	—16.5	—27.6	—6.6	—13.1
Breac-Ghaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	248	6,138	13,336	34,423	22,290	87,396	163,831
1926 ...	273	7,325	14,900	24,261	10,368	59,610	116,737
% change ...	+10.1	+19.3	+11.7	—29.5	—53.5	—31.8	—28.7
Total Gaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	1,720	22,699	30,807	72,746	40,898	144,638	313,508
1926 ...	1,907	21,288	30,416	56,275	23,835	113,090	246,811
% change ...	+10.9	—6.2	—1.3	—22.6	—41.7	—21.8	—21.3

The losses have been most severe at the age group 30-39 where in the Breac-Ghaeltacht the number of Irish speakers was in 1926 less than half the number in 1911. The losses at all ages over 15 in the Breac-Ghaeltacht have been considerable. The smallness of the number of Irish speakers in these areas at the young ages will be particularly noted. In 1926 the number of Irish speakers aged 3-9 was 7,325 or only 1,046 per year of age compared with 2,980 per year of age at the ages 10-14, when children were learning Irish at school. Even when due allowances have been made for the possibility of substantial under-statement in the number of Irish speakers at ages 3-9 in the Breac-Ghaeltacht, there can be little doubt that the majority of parents who can speak both Irish and English are speaking English to their children.

The following table shows the numbers of Irish speakers as percentages of the total persons in each age group in 1911 and 1926 :—

Areas	Ages						Total
	0—2	3—9	10—14	15—29	30—39	40—	
Fíor-Ghaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	13.0	55.0	82.7	84.2	87.3	95.1	79.0
1926 ...	18.3	56.5	79.4	79.8	82.2	91.4	77.3
Breac-Ghaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	1.3	12.2	36.8	41.0	54.9	79.4	48.1
1926 ...	1.6	17.2	45.3	32.7	30.8	55.3	37.9
Total Gaeltacht ...							
1911 ...	5.6	28.2	53.7	56.2	66.0	85.0	59.1
1926 ...	7.4	31.6	58.0	49.2	47.7	68.0	51.8

It will be seen that in the Breac-Ghaeltacht only 17% of the children aged 3-9 are returned as able to speak Irish. Even in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht the percentage is only 57%. These percentages will be contrasted with the percentage of Irish speakers amongst their parents. For example, the proportion at ages 30-39 are 31% in the Breac-Ghaeltacht and 82% in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht.

Occupations of Irish Speakers.

The following table shows the numbers and percentages of Irish speakers in certain groups of occupations :—

Occupational Group					Total in Saorstát	Irish Speakers	Irish Speakers as percentage of total
							%
Agriculture	...	...	...	...	672,129	143,961	21·4
Fishing	...	...	...	...	5,753	1,801	31·3
Other Producers	...	...	...	...	189,216	15,844	8·4
Transport	...	...	...	...	64,952	4,313	6·6
Commerce	...	...	...	...	85,008	10,111	11·9
Public Administration and Defence	...	...	...	...	37,333	6,856	18·4
Professions	...	...	...	...	55,441	24,097	43·5
Personal Service	...	...	...	...	127,842	12,205	9·5
Others	...	...	...	...	69,988	6,510	9·3
Total gainfully occupied					1,307,662	225,698	17·3

It will be observed that the greatest percentage of Irish speakers is recorded in the professional group, with 43·5%.

Specific occupations of males in Saorstát Éireann in which the percentage of Irish speakers exceeds 20 are as follows :—teachers (not music teachers), 76·1 ; christian brothers and other monks, 66·3 ; theological students, 65·4 ; students over 18 (not elsewhere included), 50·7 ; at school, 41·8 ; professional students (not elsewhere specified) and articled clerks, 41·5 ; clergymen, 33·8 ; fishermen, 31·3 ; civil service officials and clerks, 27·6 ; civic guard, 27·5 ; journalists and authors, 26·9 ; local authority officials and clerks, 24·4 ; farmers, 24·3 ; weavers, 23·8 ; religious lay brothers, 23·7 ; medical doctors, 22·0

Specific occupations of females in Saorstát Éireann in which the percentage of Irish speakers exceeds 20 are as follows :—teachers (not music teachers), 75·4 ; professional students (not elsewhere specified) and articled clerks, 60·6 ; students over 18 (not elsewhere included), 55·8 ; at school, 47·8 ; knitters, 43·4 ; nuns and postulants, 38·2 ; medical doctors, 32·7 ; civil service officials and clerks, 31·6 ; hand lace workers, 30·1 ; embroiderers, 29·4 ; telegraph operators, 27·1 ; farmers (including relatives), 26·2 ; farm managers, 21·8, and local authority officials and clerks, 20·7.

Occupations in the Gaeltacht.

The following table shows in broad groups the occupational distribution of persons residing in the Gaeltacht :—

Occupational Group					Numbers		Percentages		Total Saorstát Rural Districts
					Fíor- Ghaeltacht	Breac- Ghaeltacht	Fíor- Ghaeltacht	Breac- Ghaeltacht	
Agriculture	...	...	...	...	63,080	94,734	84·0	70·2	72·6
Fishing	...	...	...	...	1,232	1,161	1·6	0·9	0·5
Other Producers	...	...	...	...	3,744	11,728	5·0	8·7	8·6
Transport	...	...	...	...	766	3,322	1·0	2·5	2·1
Commerce	...	...	...	...	1,251	5,522	1·7	4·1	3·1
Public Administration and Defence	...	...	...	...	649	2,111	0·9	1·6	1·6
Professions	...	...	...	...	1,543	4,533	2·0	3·3	2·9
Personal service	...	...	...	...	2,528	9,432	3·4	7·0	6·9
Others	...	...	...	...	334	2,342	0·4	1·7	1·7
Total gainfully occupied					75,127	134,885	100·0	100·0	100·0

The economic organisation of the Fíor-Ghaeltacht is extremely simple. 84% of the people are engaged in agriculture and only 10% are "non-producers," compared with 20% in the Breac-Ghaeltacht, 18% in the total of rural districts, and 34% in the whole Saorstát. The distribution in the Breac-Ghaeltacht is rather similar to that in the total of rural districts.

In the whole Gaeltacht there were 158,000 persons engaged in agriculture, or more than a quarter of the total in agriculture in the Saorstát (672,000), and 2,400 in fishing, or nearly 40% of the Saorstát total.

The following table shows, for persons residing in the Gaeltacht, the numbers of Irish speakers in each occupational group expressed as a percentage of the total number in the group.

Occupational Group						Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht
						%	%
Agriculture	...	...	...	...	...	88.4	46.4
Fishing	...	...	...	...	...	86.8	49.0
Other Producers	...	...	...	...	...	74.6	30.4
Transport	...	...	...	...	...	62.5	23.2
Commerce	...	...	...	...	...	69.3	32.9
Public Administration, and Defence	...	...	...	...	...	54.7	41.4
Professions	...	...	...	...	...	85.3	60.1
Personal Service	...	...	...	...	...	69.6	29.0
Others	...	...	...	...	...	60.8	27.3
Total gainfully occupied						86.0	42.7

In the Fíor-Ghaeltacht the proportion of Irish speakers is highest for agricultural occupations and lowest for public administration and defence. The relatively high percentages for professions will be noted. The following are the percentages of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht in certain specific occupations :—

Occupation						Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht
						%	%
Smiths	...	...	...	...	...	79.1	31.4
Postmen	...	...	...	...	...	79.7	34.6
Shopkeepers, male	...	...	...	...	...	78.7	36.1
Shopkeepers, female	...	...	...	...	...	74.5	41.6
Shop Assistants, male	...	...	...	...	...	64.6	28.1
Shop Assistants, female	...	...	...	...	...	55.8	29.5
Civil Service Officials, male	...	...	...	...	...	76.3	47.0
Local Authority Officials, male	...	...	...	...	...	75.8	48.1
Gárda Síochána	...	...	...	...	...	51.9	31.1
Clergymen	...	...	...	...	...	78.7	53.7
Professed Nuns	...	...	...	...	...	66.7	48.4
Medical Doctors, male	...	...	...	...	...	54.8	41.8
Sick Nurses, female	...	...	...	...	...	48.2	28.7
Teachers, male	...	...	...	...	...	96.2	87.3
Teachers, female	...	...	...	...	...	92.1	86.7
Publicans, male	...	...	...	...	...	77.5	45.3
Publicans, female	...	...	...	...	...	74.0	45.7
Bar Attendants, male	...	...	...	...	...	61.0	28.1
Bar Attendants, female	...	...	...	...	...	57.0	30.9

In interpreting these figures it will be borne in mind that in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht 77% of the population and in the Breac-Ghaeltacht 38% are Irish speakers.

The industrial status of persons gainfully occupied in the Gaeltacht is indicated in the following table :—

INDUSTRIAL STATUS OF GAINFULLY OCCUPIED PERSONS IN THE GAELTACHT.

Industrial Status	Numbers		Percentages		
	Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht	Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht	Total of Saorstát
Employers	1,995	7,239	2.7	5.4	6.0
Own Account	29,694	43,056	39.5	31.9	22.5
Relatives Assisting	32,267	43,803	43.0	32.5	20.6
Employees at Work	9,987	36,194	13.3	26.8	44.2
Out of Work	1,159	3,639	1.5	2.7	6.0
In Hospitals, Retired, etc.	25	954	0.0	0.7	0.7
Total gainfully occupied	75,127	134,885	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the Fíor-Ghaeltacht 82% of the working population are “on own account” or “assisting relatives,” compared with 64% in the Breac-Ghaeltacht and 43% in the whole Saorstát. The population returned as out of work was far less in the Gaeltacht than in the country generally. The proportional distribution in agriculture alone is indicated in the following table :—

INDUSTRIAL STATUS OF PERSONS FOLLOWING AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS IN THE GAELTACHT.

Industrial Status	Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht	Total Saorstát
Employers	2.2	5.0	7.7
Own Account	41.8	37.5	32.4
Relatives Assisting	50.9	45.8	39.3
Employees at Work	4.5	10.4	18.1
Out of Work	0.6	1.0	2.2
In Hospitals, Retired, etc.	0.0	0.3	0.3
Total in Agriculture	100.0	100.0	100.0

The following are the numbers of farmers in the Gaeltacht classified by size of farms :—

Area	Size of Farms in Acres					
	1—15	15—30	30—50	50—100	100 and over	Total*
Numbers						
Fíor-Ghaeltacht	14,298	6,042	3,519	2,337	1,258	27,716
Breac-Ghaeltacht	11,716	12,116	7,692	5,509	2,813	40,240
Percentages						
Fíor-Ghaeltacht	51.59	21.80	12.70	8.43	4.54	100.0
Breac-Ghaeltacht	29.12	30.11	19.12	13.69	6.99	100.0
Rest of Country	24.40	28.40	19.90	16.52	9.20	100.0

* Includes “Area undefined.”

More than half the farms in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht are less than 15 acres in area and only 13% are over 50 acres. The distribution in the Breac-Ghaeltacht is somewhat similar to that in the Saorstát generally.

Housing in the Gaeltacht.

Statistics are given in Volume VIII showing the housing conditions of persons in each occupation in the Gaeltacht. The following table summarises these statistics for persons 12 years and over :—

Housing	Numbers		Percentages		
	Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht	Fíor-Ghaeltacht	Breac-Ghaeltacht	Total Saorstát
Size of Dwelling :—					
1 or 2 rooms	43,138	41,340	34.0	17.6	18.4
3 or 4 rooms	65,283	127,319	51.5	54.1	46.4
5 or more rooms	15,591	51,860	12.3	22.0	26.9
Not classified	2,781	14,861	2.2	6.3	8.3
Persons per room :—					
4 or more	11,570	8,911	9.1	3.8	4.6
3 but less than 4	17,990	18,139	14.2	7.7	6.5
2 but less than 3	35,101	50,813	27.7	21.6	18.1
Less than 2	59,351	142,656	46.8	60.6	62.5
Not classified	2,781	14,861	2.2	6.3	8.3
Total	126,793	235,380	100.0	100.0	100.0

More than one-third of the people in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht live in one or two room dwellings, and nearly one-quarter live in families with three or more persons per room.