

CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1946.

VOLUME VIII—IRISH LANGUAGE.

WITH SPECIAL TABLES FOR THE GAELTACHT AREAS

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CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1946.

VOLUME VIII—IRISH LANGUAGE.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

This volume contains statistics of the population relating to the Irish language. It gives details of Irish speakers and non-Irish speakers classified by sex, age, area, occupation, etc. The information was compiled from replies given to the following instructions on the Census schedule:—

IRISH LANGUAGE: Write "Irish only" for those persons who can speak only Irish. Write "Irish and English" for those who can speak Irish and English. For persons who can read but cannot speak Irish, write "Read but cannot speak Irish." Do not write anything opposite names of persons who can neither read nor speak Irish.

Language statistics invariably suffer from the defect that personal judgment must necessarily enter into replies to questions designed to elicit information on the number of persons able to speak the language and therefore 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 inquire. Other information (age, religion, occupation, etc.) on the Census schedule may be given exactly, but it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to devise a method simple enough for Census purposes to provide a rigid distinction between those who "know Irish" and those who do not. Irish language statistics have, however, a certain value for purposes of comparison between different areas in the country, between this and previous Censuses, etc.

As stated in the explanatory notes to the corresponding volume of the 1936 Census report, it has been shown from a comparison of the numbers returned as being able to speak Irish only in 1926 and 1936 that the numbers could have risen only through misinterpretation of the instructions. Since there was no improvement in this respect in 1946 it was decided, as in 1936, to show only two categories of persons—"Irish speakers" and "non-Irish speakers." Persons who were described as being able to speak Irish only or Irish and English were regarded as Irish speakers, while persons described as being able to read but unable to speak Irish and those in respect of whom no information was given, were regarded as non-Irish speakers.

The present volume follows the pattern adopted in the corresponding volume of the 1936 Census report, in which particulars of knowledge of the Irish language were published in respect of populations *aged 3 years and over*. It is considered that the omission of children under 3 years of age effects an improvement in the statistics. Comparative figures for 1926 and 1936 in respect of the population aged 3 years and over and figures for each Census up to 1926 for the total population at all ages are shown. It will be observed from the 1926 figures in Table 1 that the exclusion of persons under 3 years of age tends to raise slightly the figure representing Irish speakers as a percentage of the total.

AN DAONAIREAMH, 1946.

IMLEABHAR VIII—AN GHAEILGE.

NÓTAÍ MÍNITHE.

Tá staidreamh san imleabhar seo faoin daonra maidir leis an nGaeilge. Tugann sé mion-eolas ar Ghaeilgeoirí agus ar dhaoine nach Gaeilgeoirí arna n-aicmiú do réir gnéasa, aoise, líomatáiste, slí bheatha, etc. Cuireadh an t-eolas le chéile ó na freagraí a tugadh ar na teoracháin seo a leanas i sceideal an Daonáirimh:—

AN GHAEILGE: Scríobh “Gaeilge amháin” do dhaoine nach féidir leo ach Gaeilge a labhairt. Scríobh “Gaeilge agus Béarla” do dhaoine ar féidir leo Gaeilge agus Béarla a labhairt. Scríobh “Léamh na Gaeilge gan labhairt na Gaeilge” do dhaoine ar féidir leo Gaeilge a léamh ach nach féidir leo í a labhairt. Ná scríobh dada os coinne ainmneacha daoine nach féidir leo Gaeilge a léamh ná a labhairt.

Bíonn de locht beagnach i gcónaí ar staidreamh teangan go dtéann breithiúnas pearsanta i bhfeidhm ar fhreagraí ar cheisteanna a bhaineas le heolas d’fháil ar an líon daoine a bhfuil labhairt na teangan acu agus dá bhrí sin dhealródh sé gur lú is féidir an líon “Gaeilgeoirí” a mheas go cruinn ná aon ní eile arb é cuspóir an Daonáirimh fiosrú ina thaobh. Féadfar eolas eile (aois, creideamh, slí bheatha, etc.) i sceideal an Daonáirimh a thabhairt go cruinn, ach tá sé an-deacair, mura bhfuil sé dodhéanta, slí a cheapadh a bheadh simplí go leor chun críocha Daonáirimh chun idirdhealú glan a dhéanamh idir iad sin a bhfuil “eolas ar Ghaeilge,” acu agus iad sin nach bhfuil. Tá tábhacht áirithe leis an staidreamh ar Ghaeilge, áfach, chun compráid a dhéanamh idir líomatáistí éagsúla sa tír, idir an Daonáireamh seo agus na cinn roimhe, etc.

Fé mar adúradh sna nótaí mínithe leis an Imleabhar comhréire de thuarascáil Daonáirimh 1936, taispeánadh trí chompráid a dhéanamh idir an méid daoine adúradh nach raibh in ann ach Gaeilge amháin a labhairt i 1926 agus 1936, ná féadfadh méadú a theacht ar na figiúirí ach amháin trí mhí-thuiscint a bhaint as na teoracháin. Toisc nach raibh aon fheabhas ar an scéal seo i 1946 socraíodh, fé mar rinneadh i 1936, gan ach dhá aicme daoine a thaispeáint—“Gaeilgeoirí” agus “daoine gan Gaeilge.” Daoine adúradh a bhí ábalta Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge agus Béarla a labhairt, do háiríodh iad mar Ghaeilgeoirí, agus daoine adúradh a bhí ábalta Gaeilge a léamh gan bheith ábalta í a labhairt, agus daoine nár tugadh aon eolas ina leith, do háiríodh iad mar dhaoine gan Gaeilge.

San imleabhar seo leantar an nós a leanadh san imleabhar comhréire de thuarascáil Daonáirimh 1936, inar foilsíodh sonraí faoi eolas ar Ghaeilge maidir le daonra 3 bliana d’aois agus os a chionn. Meastar gur fearrde an staidreamh leanáil faoi bhun 3 bliana d’aois d’fhágaint as. Taispeántar figiúirí compráideacha do 1926 agus 1936 i leith daonra 3 bliana d’aois agus os a chionn agus figiúirí do gach Daonáireamh suas go dtí 1926 faoin daonra iomlán de gach aois. Chífeadh ó fhigiúirí 1926 i dTáible I go dtagann, de bharr daoine faoi bhun 3 bliana d’aois d’fhágaint gan áireamh, go mbíonn ardú beag ar an bhfigiúir i leith Gaeilgeoirí mar chéatadán den iomlán.

For reasons of economy in printing and paper costs it was deemed necessary to omit from the 1946 and 1936 volumes certain detailed information on the same lines as that which had been included in the corresponding volume for 1926. The tables giving particulars of language in respect of each District Electoral Division have been omitted from the printed report and certain other tables were slightly condensed. The information thus excluded from the printed report is available in manuscript form at the Census Office and may be inspected by those interested. In addition certain of the tables relating to occupation compiled in 1936 have not been prepared for the 1946 Census.

Detailed statistics are given in this volume of the numbers of Irish speakers and non-Irish speakers, ages and occupations of persons residing in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht and Breac-Ghaeltacht respectively. These areas are as defined in the Report of the Gaeltacht Commission, 1925.

Chun costais clódóireachta agus páipéir a laghdú measadh gur ghá mion-eolas áirithe den tsaghas a bhí san imleabhar comhréire do 1926, d'fhágaint as imleabhair 1946 agus 1936. Fágadh as an dtuarascáil chlóite na táiblí a thugann sonraí teangan i leith gach Toghroinne Ceantair agus rinneadh giorrú beag ar tháiblí áirithe eile. Tá an t-eolas a fágadh as an tuarascáil chlóite ar fáil i láimhscríbhinn in Oifig an Daonáirimh agus féadfaidh duine ar bith a bhfuil suim aige ann é bhreithniú. Ina theannta sin níor hullmhaíodh do Dhaonáireamh 1946 cuid áirithe de na Táiblí a bhaineas le slí bheatha agus a cuireadh le chéile i 1936.

Tugtar mion-staidreamh san imleabhar seo faoi líon na nGaeilgeorí agus líon na ndaoine gan Gaeilge, aoiseanna agus slí bheatha na ndaoine a chónaíonn sa bhFíor-Ghaeltacht agus sa Bhreac-Ghaeltacht faoi seach. Tá na líomatáistí seo mar a mínítear iad i dTuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta, 1925.