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An Paorach, múinteoir taistil, in Aonach Urmhumhan (1906-1910)

Le Cáit Ní Laoghóg

Ag deireadh an chéid seo caite thosaigh Conradh na Gaeilge ag fostú múinteoirí taistil don chéad uair.¹ Sa bhliain 1901 ceapadh timirí chun obair na hathbeochana a eagrú ar bhonn náisiúnta.² Bhí Séamus Ó hEocha (An Fear Mór) ina thimire i dtuaisceart Chúige Mumhan nuair a ceapadh An Paorach ina mhúinteoir taistil in Aonach Urmhumhan i 1906. Dealraíonn sé gur casadh ar a chéile iad ag Oireachtas na bliana sin nuair a tháinig An Paorach anall ó Shasana.

Rugadh An Paorach, nó Francis Hugh Power, i bPlymouth, Sasana sa bhliain 1879. B'as Gleann Garbh i gCo. Chorcaí dá athair. Bhí gaol gairid idir é agus T. D. Sullivan agus A. M. Sullivan. Fuair sé scolaíocht i scoil phoiblí agus chaith sé tamall i gColáiste na nÍosánach i Valladolid sa Spáinn. Bhí Spáinnis, Fraincis agus teangacha eile aige. Nuair d'éirigh sé as an gColáiste i Valladolid fuair sé post i mBord Scoileanna Londan agus is i Londain a d'fhoghlaim sé Gaeilge.³

Sara dtáinig An Paorach go hAonach Urmhumhan scríobh An Fear Mór chuige agus dúirt: “Déanfaidh mé mo dhícheall chun ceithre phunt a fháil duit mar thosú mar tá fhios agam gur fiú dhá oiread tú. – Anois i dtaobh na hoibre a bheidh le dhéanamh agat caitfidh tú craobh do mhúineadh sa bhaile dhá oíche sa tseachtain agus rince a mhúineadh an tríú hoíche. Tá súil agam go mbeidh trí craobhacha eile agat tamaillín amach ó Aonach, abair trí nó ceathair de mhílte agus buíon múinteoirí agus buíon banrialta Dé Sathairn agus b'fhéidir scoil nó dhó. “*Ní bheidh aon obair chrua le déanamh agat in aon chor agus beidh cuid mhaith den lá agat féin*”.⁴ Is léir nár ghlac An Fear mór le múineadh ranganna móra (thart faoi chéad dalta uaireanta) agus taisteal ar rothar ar dhrochbhóithre le linn soinnine agus doinnine mar “obair chrua”.

Sarar thosaigh An Paorach ag saothrú in Aonach bhí an talamh réitithe dó ag Ó hEocha. Dealraíonn sé go raibh craobh den Chonradh in Aonach Urmhumhan féin chomh fada siar le 1901.⁵ Ach sa bhliain 1906 tháinig fás faoin eagraíocht sa cheantar. I mí Deireadh Fómhair foilsíodh *Dún Na nGaeilge* don chéad uair. Séard a bhí ann ná páipéar [agusín] dhá-theangach a thugtaí amach saor in aisce leis an *Midland Tribune*, Biorra; praghas an *Tribune* ag an am sin ná 1d. Is léir go raibh an-díol ar an bpáipéar sin i dTiobraid Árann Thuaidh ag an am. Bhíodh go leor tuairiscí ann ar imeachtaí logánta idir chásanna cúirte, chruinnithe den rialtas áitiúil, fhógraí báis agus mar sin de. San agusín nua bhíodh mionchur-síos ar chluichí Chumann Lúthchleas Gael agus go háirithe ar imeachtaí Chonradh na Gaeilge. Bhíodh altanna gearra in nGaeilge, seanfhocail, focail d'amhráin agus altanna stairiúla ann freisin.⁶

Sa chéad eagrán den *Dún* a tháinig amach 13 Deireadh Fómhair 1906 deineadh tagairt do shuirbhé a rinne An Fear Mór ar scoileanna an cheantair féachaint cé mhéid Gaeilge a bhí á mhúineadh iontu. Bhí Gaeilge agus stair sa scoil in Eochail Arra (múinteoir D. Ó Nialláin), Gaeilge agus stair i mBéal Átha Gabhann (Scoil na gCailíní, múinteoir Cáit Ní Chruadhlaoidh), Gaeilge i Scoil na gCailíní i bPort Rua (múinteoir T. Ó Frálaigh). Bhí fonn ar Mr. Smith Gaeilge a bheith in Ard Cróine dá mbeadh múinteoir ar fáil. I mBuiríos Uí Chéin dúradh go raibh na mná rialta “doing a little at the language”. Ní raibh Gaeilge á mhúineadh i dTuaim Uí Mheadhra



mar níor aontaigh an máistir Mr. Ahern leis.

I Ros Cré bhí na cailíní sa chlochar ag léamh *Cathair Chonraoi* agus bhí Mr. White ag múineadh Gaeilge dos na buachaillí sa scoil náisiúnta. I gCarraig (Aonach) bhí Mr. Power tosaithe ar Ghaeilge le cabhair na gceachtanna do mhúinteoirí a reachtáilí gach Satharn i Halla an Bhaile, Aonach. Ní raibh aon Ghaeilge i mBaile Liam mar ní raibh an teanga ag na múinteoirí. Is léir go raibh caighdeán cuíosach ard i Scoil an Chlochair, Aonach Urmhumhan, mar nuair a tháinig an tEaspag Ó Fógartaigh ar cuairt ann léigh cailín óg, Brigid Gaynor, aitheasc fáilte roimhe i nGaeilge. Mhol an t-easpag seachtain saoire don mhúinteoir, Bríd de Bhial!

Bunaíodh craobh de Chonaradh na Gaeilge i dTuaim Uí Mheadhra an 14 Meán Fómhair 1906. Bhí an sagart paróiste, Rev. E. Flynn, agust sagart cúnta, an tAth Mac Conmara, i láthair. Gaeilgeoir díograsach ab ea an tAth Mac Conmara agus thug sé an-tacíoicht don chraobh. Sa mhí chéanna bunaíodh craobh i mBéal Átha Gabhann [Silvermines]. Bhí an tAthair Ó Dubhlaioich [Dooley] i gceannas ar an gcruinniú agus mhínigh Séamus Ó hEocha aidhmeanna an Chonartha. I mí na Samhna bunaíodh craobh in Eochall Arra. Bhí an tAth. Ó hAllmhuráin, S.P., i gceannas ar an gcruinniú ansin agus labhair D. Ó Nialláin, O.S., agus M. Ó Meachair. Sa mhí sin freisin foilsíodh tuairisc ar chruinniú de Chomhairle an Bhaile mar ar glacadh le rún a mhol P., Cadell go gcuirfí 1d sa £1 ar na rátaí chun tacú le gluaiseacht na Gaeilge.

Ar an 10ú Samhain fógraíodh go raibh An Paorach tagtha agus go raibht sé ag múineadh sna craobhacha thuasluaite (agus ins na scoileanna i dteannta an Timire). Bhí ranganna i bPort Rua agus i dTeampall Doire chomh maith. Ar an meán bhíodh thart faoi chéad i láthair ag na ranganna i gcrabhacha na Chonartha.⁷ Bhí An Paorach ar lóistín ag uimhir 9 Cnoc na tSamhraidh, Aonach Urmhumhan. Seoladh litreacha agus cártaí poist chuige agus an seoladh i nGaeilge orthu – rud a bhí coiscthe ag Oifig an Phoist ag an am. Scriostaí an leagan Gaeilge den seoladh agus scríobhtaí an leagan Béarla i bpeannluaí gorm!⁸

Ag tús mí Eanáir 1907 fuarthas litir ón mBord Rialtas Áitiúil ag glacadh leis an An Paorach mar mhúinteoir Gaeilge san scoil i dTeach na mBocht ar £10 sa bhliain ar choinníoll nach gcuirfí isteach ar uaireanta na n-ábhar eile. I mí Eanáir freisin tosaíodh ar cholún i dTiobraid Árann Thuaidh. Is i mBéarla a bhíodh an chuid is mó ar fad des na tuairiscí sin. Bhí an-suim ag Neilus Downing, tuairiscoir an *Midland Tribune*, i gcursaí na Gaeilge, ach is ar éigin a dhféadfadh sé bheith i láthair ag gach rang ar fud na dúthaí.

Mar sin seans maith gurbh é An Paorach féin a scríobh na haltanna sin (nó ar a laghad cuid acu). Mar chruthú air sin tháinig cárta chuige ó Fhionán Mac Coluim 20/4/1907 a dúirt: “Is maith liom a fheiscint go bhfuilir ag scríobhadh gach seachtmhain san bpáipéar *Dún Na nGaedheal*”.⁹ I mí Eanáir 1907 bhí tuairiscí ó na ranganna éagsúla, Eochail Arra, Port Ruadh agus Béal Átha Gabhann – an t-aon áit taobh amuigh den bhaile ina mbíodh dhá rang i rith na seachtaine. I dTuaim Uí Mheadhra “An Paorach played the pipes including Brian Boru’s March and Fr. MacNamara read extracts from Joyce’s *Social History*”.

Is léir go raibh dul chun cinn na ranganna ag brath cuid mhaith ar na sagairt – An tAth MacNamara i dTuaim Uí Mheadhra, An tAth Ó Dubhlaioich i mBéal Átha Gabhann, An tAth Ó Domhnalláin (gur chainteoir ó dhúchas é) i bPort Rua agus an Dean White (a fuair bás díreach roimh Nollaig 1906) agus An tAth Ó hÓgáin in Aonach Urmhumhan. Ar an dtaobh eile dúradh faoin Athair Floinn, S.P., Tuaim Uí Mheadhra, “After devotions the P.P. arrived at the class to the mingled astonishment of all present” (23-3-1907). Dealraíonn sé nár chuaríteoir rialta a bhí ann.

Is deacair a dhéanamh amach conas a reachtáilí na ranganna. Bhíodh amhránaíocht agus damhsa mar chuid lárnach des na ceachtanna. Ag tús an chéid bhí conspóid faoi mhodhanna

muinte ach ón am a osclaíodh Coláiste na Mumhan i mBéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh 1904 is é an Modh Díreach (nó Modh Berlitz) is mó a bhíodh in úsáid. *Simple Lessons in Irish* leis an Athair Eoghan Ó Gramhna a bhí in úsáid mar théacs go forleathan. Anseo thíos tá sampla den Chomhrá Beag a mhúintí na ranganna.

Cáit; - Dia dhuit a Mháire.

Máire; - Dia's Muire dhuit féin a Cháit, a bhuidheannach. Cionas tá tu inniu?

Cáit; - Go maith - slán a bheidh tú - Cionus tá tu féin a ghile?

Máire; - Maith go leor mhuisse - Bhfuil aon scéal nua agat?

Cáit; - Mhuisse níl pioc. Bhfuil aon scéal agat féin?

Máire; - An deamhan faic! Táim ag dul síos an sráid anois. Slán leat go fóill.

Cáit; - Beannacht Dé leat, a chara.¹⁰

Is dócha go raibh ar na daltaí íoc as na ranganna (nó cuid acu), mar nuair a bhí *Echoes from Ormond* ag iarraidh na buachaillí a spreagadh chun freastal ar na ranganna in Aonach dúradh "the subscription would not be felt by anyone with the spirit of pluck of the true Gael" (2-3-1907).

Scríobh An Paorach tuairisc ar a chuid oibre in Aonach Urmhumhan chuig Conradh na Gaeilge i Mí na Márta 1907. Seo thíos an litir -

9 Cnoc an tSamhraidh,
Aonach Urmumhan,
4-3-1907.

A Dhaoine Uaisle,

Prior to the grant of the National school as a place wherein to hold the classes, matters were not in a very flourishing condition. Owing principally to the uncertainty of tenure of the room in the Town Hall attendance, which at the inception of the Múinteoir Taisd'Í [*sic*] Scheme was very good, began to fall off considerably. This has now been remedied to a large extent, and for the past three weeks there has been an average of forty students each night. Although many staid away from the class it must be said that those who staid on were really earnest and deserve well of Irish Ireland. The instruction given rigidly on direct method lines has been followed with eagerness, and the advanced class is now engaged in the study of Ceachta Beuga Ghaeidhlighe which will soon enable them to read the National Language. The other class is receiving instruction from Mac-Leighinn and is progressing. Though dancing has ceased during Lent the gatherings on Thursday evenings have been well attended. The lectures on native social history, were, it appeared, welcome and many of the audience contributed freely to the night's enjoyment by rendering songs and recitations.

Mise bhur gcara umhal,
Prionnsias Aodh de Paor
Múinteoir Taistil.¹¹

Glacadh leis an tuairisc agus dúradh go raibh sé "sásúil.

Ghlac An Paorach páirt an-ghníomhach in imeachtaí uile an Chonartha, go háirithe ins na coirmeacha ceoil. Deineadh cur síos ar thráthnóna amháin i mí Eanáir 1907. I bPort Rua "there was a good attendance even though there was a change of class time. An Paorach who was to perform later at Youghal Arra turned out in Full Irish Costume, pipes and all". Faoin teideal



“Gallant Tipperary”, rinne an *Midland Tribune* cur síos ar imeachtaí an tráthnóna:- “An Paorach, accompanied by Neilus Ua Dunaighaigh (Dún na nGaedheal) Fr. Donnellan (native speaker) and Mr. Frawley, N.T., were present and took an active interest (in the class). An Paorach gave several delightful selections on the old Irish war pipes. They proceeded to Youghal Arra and in Newtown School (lent by Fr. O’Halloran, P.P.). An Irish Concert was held at the behest of Youghal Arra Hurling Club. The Promoters were Mr. Jerry McDonnell, D.C., Mr. D. Gill and Mr. J. McGrath, N.T. The crowds couldn’t be accommodated in the hall. An Paorach who was the man of the evening gave selections on the war pipes and sang *Lord Waterford* and *Clontarf by the Sea*.¹²

Tugadh mionchur-síos ar na míreanna eile a bhí ar an gclár. Lean damhsa nuair a cuireadh deireadh leis an gcoirm cheoil. Mar aguisín leis an gcúntas dúradh: “The local Gaelic Class is taught by Mr. T. McGrath and numbers about 200”. Níl sé soiléir cén rang atá i gceist mar tá sé intuigthe go mbíodh An Paorach ag múineadh i bPort Rua agus in Eochail Ara. B’fhéidir go raibh An tUasal MacCraigh i mbun rang do thosnaitheoirí.

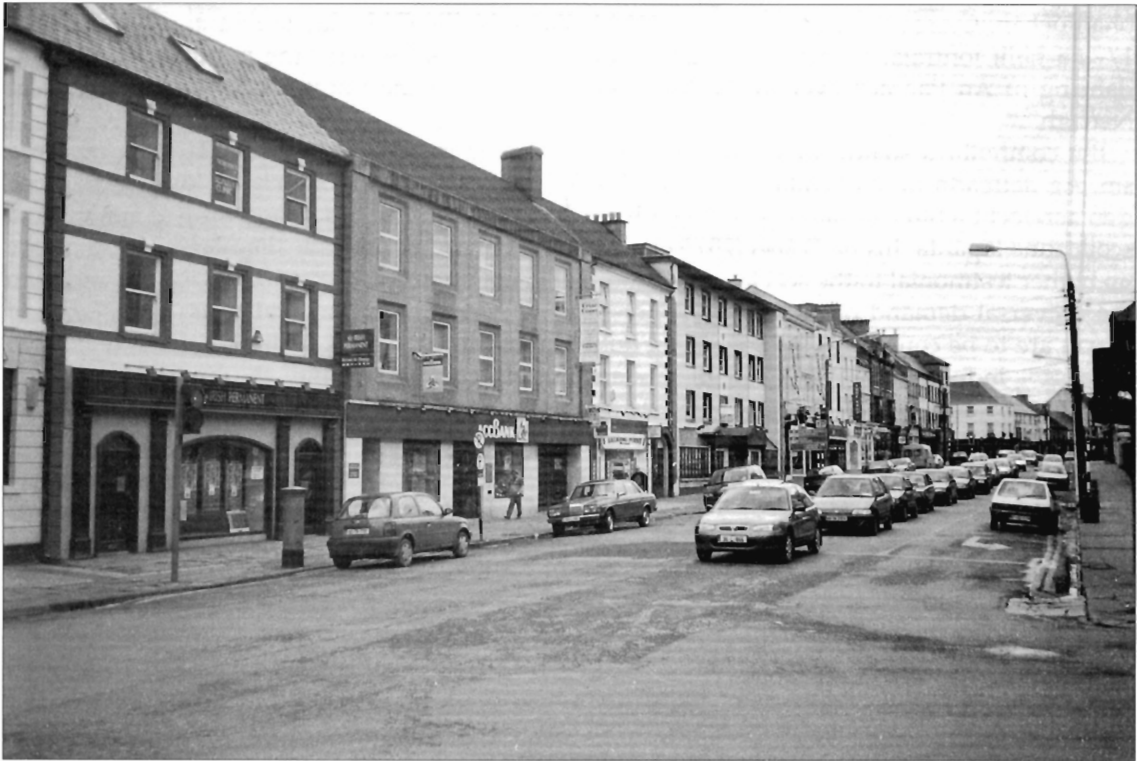
Thart faoin am sin bhí an-suim ag lucht Chonradh na Gaeilge sa bhfilleadh beag. Bhí alt ag Neilus Downing i *nDún Na nGaedheal* i mí na Feabhra 1907 faoin teideal “What of a National Dress?” Cuireadh an cheist “Did you see the Highlander who was with Nenagh people the other night in Oxmantown Hall (Birr)?” Insíodh gurbh é An Paorach a bhí ann agus nár chulaith Albanach ach culaith Éireannach é an filleadh beag! D’iarr sé ar na daoine an “Culaith Náisiúnta” a chaitheamh, é a chur ar a gcuid páistí agus iad a chur ag foghlaim na píbe móire!

Dealraíonn sé go raibh suim ar leith ag An Paorach ann. Chaitheadh sé é de ghnáth, go háirithe ag coirmeacha ceoil nó ócáidí poiblí de shaghas ar bith. Bhí litir aige faoin gceannteideal “The National Costume” sa *Chlaidheamh Soluis*, 14/9/1907. I gcúntas sa pháipéar *Sinn Féin*, 26/10/1907 dúradh “A meeting of Cumann Filleadh Beag na hÉireann was held at An Prointeach, Johnston’s Court on Friday 18th. Principal object to popularise the wearing of the kilt as a national costume . . . a telegram was received from An Paorach wishing to have his name inscribed on the list of members”.¹³

Bhí cáil ar an bPaorach i measc Gaeilgeoirí mar shaineolaí ar an bhfilleadh beag mar is léir ón gcárta seo a seoldadh chuige 2/3/1908 ó Chormac Ó Cadhlaigh: “An neosfa dhom, m’ás é do thoil é, cá bhfaghainn filleadh beag agus cad an luach a bheidh air?”¹⁴ Bhí An Paorach an-ghafa leis an bpíob mhór freisin. Bhí sé ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí Chumann na bPíobairí i Londain. Bhí an-cháil air i measc Gaeil Londain mar pháipéar agus chum Giolla Bríde Ó Catháin “An Paorach Aerach Álainn Ó” ina onóir.¹⁵

Luaigh Micheál Breathnach é ina leabhar *Seilg i Measc na nAlp*. Ag cuimhneamh dó ar a chairde samhlaíodh dó iad ag aeraíocht agus “An Paorach faoin gculaith gaisce ag síorshéideadh na bpíob i dtosach an tslua”.¹⁶ D’fhoilsigh An Paorach alt san *Dún* ar stair na bpíob mór. Dúirt gurbh úirlis Éireannach í agus nach as Albain a tháinig sí ar dtús. Bhíodh sé de nós ag saighdiúirí Éireannacha máirseáil chun catha le ceol na bpíob. An uair dheireannach a tharla sé sin ná ag cath Fontenoy. I Musaem Chluny i bParis bhí Píob Mhór a bhain le píobaire Reismint an Tiarna Cláir le feiceáil. San alt sin freisin thug sé comhairle phraiticiúil ar fhoghlaim na bpíob. Dúradh gur ag na hAlbanaigh a bhí na modhanna na bpíob titithe i léig in Éirinn. Bheadh sé féin sásta cahbrú le héinne gur suim leis an pháipéaracht a fhoghlaim.¹⁷

I mí Feabhra 1907 chinn an Banna Feadóige agus Droma (Aonach Urmhumhan) ar rang Gaeilge faoi leith dóibh féin a thosú. Bhí An Paorach ina bhun. Bhí rang do chailíní á reachtáil ag Iníon De Bhial agus dúradh: “An Paorach entertains the membership occasionally by playing a selection of Irish airs on the violin”. I mí Márta foilsíodh alt aisteach (gan aon ainm leis) sa *Dún* “A Target for Green Pretending Leaguers:- An Paorach has made himself a power



Aonach Urmhumhan Grianghraf: cóip ceart le Frank Burgess.

in the land. Then of course shy hogwash at him. Most people do not know the fact that An Paorach threw up a £200 a year position (with retiring pension attached) on the London Co. Council to throw himself into the movement. He has done so. Yelping anti Irish curs – the expression is figurative – must needs however slander him. But like the braying of assets [*sic*] it is merely noise and cannot hurt. Fág a Bealach!”

Ní fios go baileach cad ba chúis leis an ráiteas sin. Dealraíonn sé go raibh easaontas éigin i measc lucht na Gaeilge ag an am, mar i mí Aibreáin bhí alt eile sa *Dún* ar an dul céanna:- “An Paorach, or the most watched, talked of and criticized person in Nenagh, as some call him, has come back from his holiday refreshed by the invigorating ozone with which he filled his capacious lungs during his sojourn by the sea. He has need to be invigorated. Work abundant and stiff awaits him. The Feis is drawing near. Preparations must be made for it in the various branches under this charge. Sunday saw him about his business again”.

Arís ag deireadh na míosa sin dúradh: “The Shoneens say that An Paorach is not what he lets on to be. His name they aver is plain Power. The subject of these remarks wishes it to be distinctly known that his name is Proinsias Aodh de Paor, or shortly An Paorach. He cannot help what John Bull calls him. What he calls himself is the main thing. Some Shoneens say they cannot pronounce such a name. Let them learn Irish and all will be well or let them desist from discussing this much criticized yet harmless being”.

Socraíodh ar Fheis ollmhór a chur ar siúl in Aonach an samhradh sin. Cuireadh tús le feachtas mór chun airgead a bhailiú. Foilsíodh liosta fada des na daoine a thug sintiús don

bhailiúchán. Cuireadh coirm cheoil ar siúl i halla an bhaile Oíche lae le Pádraig, 3/- 2/- agus 1/- na táillí iontrála. Is léir gur éirigh go maith leis an oíche mar “the popular singing and dancing of An Paorach ever to the fore concluded one of the finest concerts ever set out in Nenagh”.¹⁹

Bhí comhoibriú suaitheantasach idir lucht na Gaeilge in Aonach agus i mBarra sa tréimhse sin. Ag deireadh mí na Bealtaine tháinig litir ó Choiste Cheantair Bhiorra ag lorg An Paorach don aeraíocht a bhí beartaithe acu. Tugadh cead dó dul ann. Fad bhí sé ann thug sé cuairt ar na scoileanna logánta. Ins na *Echoes* (25/5/1907) an tseachtain sin dúradh: “Perhaps there could be no higher testimonial to the services and labours of An Paorach in the cause of Irish Ireland than the universal demand on this popular personality from all over the Midlands. The people of Biorra are to be congratulated on getting hold of this model type of Irishman. Already he is in harness – indeed he is never out of it – and working away through the branches with his accustomed earnestness. Apart altogether from his apparent sincerity and winning ways An Paorach is ever regarded as genuine, for amongst other things he cast aside the dimes and dollars of a “comfortable sit” to work for an ungrateful people”.

Fad is a bhí An Paorach i mBiorra bhí Seán Ó Gruagáin (garmhac le Diarmaid Ó Ríain, údar *The Peeler and the Goat*), Múinteoir Taistil cheantar Bhiorra, ag feidhmiú ina áit. Tháinig 150 ag a rang i dTuaim Uí Mheadhra agus chuir líofacht na ndaltaí alltacht air (*D na nG* 8/6/1907). Tháinig iarratas ó Bheannchar ag lorg An Paorach “attired in his Irish Costume” d’aeraíocht ar 16/6/1907. Diarr D. Ó Nialláin cead “to have An Paorach accompany an excursion of the Gaelic League to Mt. St. Joseph’s Abbey (Ros Cré). The fact of An Paorach accompanying them would tend to infuse enthusiasm into the people in the towns and villages along the routes”. Tugadh cead dó freastal ar an dá imeacht sin. D’éirigh thar barr leis an bhFeis in Aonach agus cuireadh deireadh leis na ranganna don samhradh.

I mí Meán Fómhair léimid ar an *Tribune*: ‘The teacher has returned from his sojourn in the Munster Training College, Ballygeary, with new methods, new songs and new dances’. Ag tagairt don rang i dTuaim Uí Mheadhra dúradh: “No one can complain that reading is not taught for An Paorach gave us a simple reading lesson and showed us how to say correctly the sounds. We must pay great heed to the sounds”. Ag cruinniú den Choiste Ceantair moladh go mbunófaí craobh nua i bPocán.

I mí Deireadh Fómhair tionóladh cruinniú poiblí den Chonradh i Halla an Bhaile in Aonach. Glacadh le tuairiscí ar imeachtaí na bliana. Toghadh cathaoirleach agus coiste nua. Labhair a rúnaí M. Ó Meachair agus dúirt: “as a member of his class he thought his duty to mark his appreciation of their teacher An Paorach. If the people of the town only knew the true value of the man they would come to appreciate him. Unfortunately they did not seem to realise the true worth of the man whom they had amongst them. Besides being a teacher of Irish he was accomplished in many other ways; as a singer, a musician, an elocutionist and a dancer; and the people had the advantage of all these qualifications for the same money.

“Besides, he gave them useful lessons in many other ways – object lessons if he might call them so, in physical culture and the health of the body, etc. His discourse was an education in itself and no man could meet him no matter how dull or unobservant without profiting and learning something from him. At the classes he took the occasion to refer from time to time to anything that might be going on in society. In this way he was to the Gaelic League a teacher, a philosopher and a friend”.²⁰

I mí na Samhna bhí trácht arís ar bhrainte a bhunú i bPocán. Bheadh taca le fáil on Ath. Ó Meardha S.P. agus ón Ath Smith. Ansin dúradh: “were it not for untoward and unhappy circumstances Puckane would have been in step long ago”. Pé scéal é, caitheadh gur sáraíodh

na deacrachtaí mar tosaíodh ar an rang ag deireadh mí na Samhna nuair a cláraíodh os cionn céad dalta. Bhí na sluaite ag an gcéad rang eile agus “some have purchased reading and copy books”. Socraíodh go mbeadh ranganna ag An Paorach sa scoil i Pocán freisin maidin Déardoin ag 9.30. “The Rev. Manager and teachers long desired it but circumstances prevented An Paorach from doing the work”. Ag cur síos ar Phort Rua luadh: “An exile in Australia had sent money to Mr. Nealon to be distributed as prizes to the best students”.

Ag tús na bliana 1908 bhí agóid mhór ar siúl faoi chúrsaí talún i dTiobraid Árann Thuaidh. Feachtas in aghaidh “ranchers” a bhí ann. Tionóladh cruinniú mór poiblí in Aonach le tacaíocht on United Irish League. Labhraíodh Gaeilge ón ardán ag an gcruinniú sin.

Tuairiscíodh go raibh an tinreamh ag feabhsú ag na ranganna in Aonach agus go raibh an tArd Rang ag léamh *Séadna* faoi threoir Miss Veale. Ag trácht at Bhéal Átha Gabhann dúradh: “An Paorach has promised to teach songs now and again as a relief from the dancing. This will be great for there are some fine singers among us and what we all need **everywhere** is good humorous Irish songs”. Leanadh leis an obair. Bhí Coirm Cheoil Oíche Lá le Pádraig in Aonach arís áit ar tógadh isteach £33. Agus fuarthas £17-4-9 ag an mbailiúchán.”

Bhí an-tóir ar thurasanna ag an tréimhse sin. Reachtaigh Conradh na Gaeilge go leor díobh. I mí Lúnasa 1908 bhí ceann ollmhór go hEochail i gCo. Chorcaí. An Chomhairle Cheantair a bhí ina bhun. Chuaigh 400 duine ar an dtraein as Aonach. Ina dteannta bhí An tAth. MacConmara, Tuaim Uí Mheadhra, An tAth. Ó Dubhlaoidh, Béal Átha Gabhann, agus An tAth. Ó Grífin, Má Nuadhat. Bhí an lá go breá. “Music was supplied by Nenagh Fife and Drum Band and by an Irish Piper in Gaelic Costume, Mr. Power, district teacher”.²²

Nuair a atosáíodh na ranganna in Aonach i mí Meán Fómhair dúradh go rabhadar á reachtáil ag Miss Veale, An Paorach agus Dómhnall Ó Ríoghbhardáin. Tionóladh cruinniú mór den Chonradh in Aonach i mí Deireadh Fómhair. Tugadh cúntas iomlán air sa *Dún*. Dúradh go raibh an coiste agus na baill i láthair agus roinnt mhaith den phobal chomh maith. Glacadh tuairiscí ar imeachtaí na bliana. Gabhadh buíochas leis na daone go léir a chabhraigh leis an gcaobh. “Miss Veale was thanked for her constant and voluntary services in teaching the Language”. “The appointed teachers An Paorach and Mr. O’Riordan did not spare themselves in giving zeal and energy with their capable teaching in Language and Dance”.²³

Chuir an *Dún* comórtas ar bun – litir a scríobh i nGaeilge a bhí i gceist. An Paorach a rinne an mholtóireacht. Na buaiteoirí ná Miss Bridget O’Brien, Newtown, Nenagh and Miss E. Doorley, Lacka, Shinrone. Seo leanas a thuairim a sheol sé go dtí an *Dún*:

9 Cnoc an tSamhraidh,
Aonach Urmumhan,
23-11-1908.

A Chara,

The adjudication of this completion has given me great pleasure. I append the result at which I arrived after careful consideration of each letter.

The knowledge of the National Language displayed by all was remarkable and speaks well for those who imparted that knowledge. It also augurs well for the future of our race.

The writing generally might have been better.

In the case of the two prizewinners the Irish was very idiomatic and very good respectively. Some of the competitors referred to the futility of learning Irish if they did not speak it to each other and they were quite right.

Children should delight in endeavouring to speak to one another in the language they know to be that in which Almighty God intended them to converse.



Lack of ease in expressing oneself may be met with in the early stages of such endeavour but with perseverance this will disappear. Never mind making mistakes; talk away. Mistakes are easily corrected. Talk Irish – that is the main thing.

Mise do chara,
Prionnsias Aodh Paor.²⁴

Sa bhliain 1909 an cheist ba mhó a bhí á plé i measc na nGaeilgeoirí ná an Ghaeilge san Ollscoil. Tionóladh ollchruinniú poiblí in Aonach ag tacú leis an nGaeilge mar ábhar éigeantach sa Mháithreánach. I mí na Feabhra dúradh go raibh an Ghaeilge á múineadh ins na scoileanna ar fad ag a múinteoirí féin nó ag múinteoirí seachtracha. Bhí An Paorach ag múineadh in ocht scoileanna agus bhí an oiread sin scoileanna eile á lorg gur fhostaigh An Chomhairle Cheantair múinteoir eile, Domhnall Ó Ríoghbhardáin. Bhí ocht scoil faoina chúram freisin agus dhá chraobh. Teampall Doire agus Teampall Mór. Suimiúil go leor socraíodh go mbeadh An Paorach ag múineadh i Scoil na mBráithre in Aonach freisin.

Ag cruinniú de Nenagh Board of Guardians 14 Lúnasa 1908 bhí diospóireacht faoi mhúineadh na Gaeilge i dTeach na mBocht agus léigh an cléireach litir ón bPaorach. “With reference to the teaching of Irish in the Union I should like to respectfully point out to the Guardians that on no occasion was I *called upon to report progress*. I have had experience of other public services and was never expected to report to superiors without being instructed to do so. Should the Board of Guardians desire frequent reports I shall have much pleasure in presenting same on receiving intimation of such a wish. I might also mention the fact that the Local Government Board inspector has examined my work on several occasions and beg to assure the Guardians that there has been no lack of diligence on my part – in conclusion I beg to state that I welcome inspection at all times.

Tar éis roinnt diospóireachta eile socraíodh ar an ráiteas seo a eisiúnt. “The Guardians are perfectly satisfied that the teacher of Irish performs his duty in a satisfactory manner but as an encouragement to the children and as an aid to him in the discharge of his duties they think it advisable that the children should be examined occasionally by an inspector or someone connected with the Gaelic League”.²⁵

Lean An Paorach lena chuid imeachtaí éagsúla. I mí Deireadh Fómhair ag Coirm Cheoil in Aonach, “The curtain was raised with a selection on the Irish Warpipes by An Paorach in his usual dignified style and spirit in that particular role”. Arís in Eochail Ara ag coirm cheoil roimh Nollaig i measc an liosta fada míreanna tá “An Paorach rendered a song in Irish in his own inimitable style”.

Deineadh cúpla tagairt don bPaorach i *nDúin na nGaedheal* i rith samhraidh 1910. Ag cur síos ar Fheis Thuaim Uí Mheadhra scríobhadh faoin teideal “A Visitor’s Impressions”; “Journeying to the scene of the Feis we caught up with the ever present Paorach arrayed in all the fine old trappings of Ancient Ireland, with a military appearance just as proud and imposing as that of one of Shane the Proud’s Gallowglasses marching through the glens of the North”.²⁶ An uair dheireanach ar fad a deineadh tagairt dó ná ag cruinniú poiblí i Halla an Bhaile, Aonach, ag ceiliúradh Gaeilge éiginteach d’Ollscoil Náisiúnta n hÉireann. “Mr. Power and Mr. Riordan, two Irish teachers turned out with their pipes, two bands brass and reed and fife and drum paraded the town before the meeting”.²⁷

Dealraíonn sé gur fhág An Paorach Aonach i mí Lúnasa agus chuaigh go dtí Coláiste De La Salle, Port Láirge, chun cáilíocht mar mhúinteoir náisiúnta a bhaint amach.²⁸ Is ait ná raibh tagairt ar bith dó sin sa *Dúin*. Fiú ag cruinniú cinn bliana an Chonartha in Aonach i mí na Nollag gabhadh buíochas leis na múinteoirí Miss Veale, Messrs Riordan and Foley, ach níor

luadh An Paorach ar chor ar bith. Nuair a cáilíodh é fuair sé post in Oileán Acla, áit ar chaith sé tréimhse chorrathach go maith.²⁹ I ndeireadh a shaoil bhí sé ag múineadh i gColáiste Iognáid i nGaillimh. Anois is arís bhíodh éileamh air mar fhear teanga sna cúirteanna nuair ba le máirnéalaigh ón Mór-Roinn nó a leithéidí a bhain na cásanna. D'éag sé 20 Bealtaine 1955.³⁰

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