



The Plantations in Ireland

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

The Plantations in Ireland

Ireland in the sixteenth century was unsafe, forested and divided into three – The new English controlled the Pale and most cities, The Old English or Anglo-Irish settled outside Dublin, The Gaelic Chieftains controlled much of Ireland. Henry VIII had two aims with regard to Ireland – he wanted to introduce the reformation into Ireland and he hoped to reduce the power of the Gaelic chieftains. He introduced the policy of ‘surrender and regrant’ which meant that Gaelic chieftains could surrender their land and it would be regranted to them in return for their loyalty. In 1541, Henry called Parliament in Dublin and was declared king of Ireland. The Laois-Offaly plantation took place in 1556 under Queen Mary. Two thirds of this land was English and the other third was Irish. Average size farm was 360 acres and rent was one penny an acre. Settlers were not allowed to inter-marry with the Irish. Laois became Queens county and Offaly became Kings county. However, this plantation was a failure because there were too few English settlers and they had to employ Irish servants and labourers so the planters broke their own rules.

The Munster plantation occurred in 1586 under Queen Elizabeth I. 577,000 acres were planted and 12,000 acres was the largest farm allocation. Rent was between 1 and 3 p per acre. They were allowed to employ Irish labourers and rent to Irish natives. Some new towns were established under this plantation e.g. Mallow. However, there were also a lot of failures – the land was poor, there were few settlers and most landlords were absentees and had little interest.

The Ulster plantation was more successful in 1609 under the control of King James I as 23 new towns were built, 5 million hectares were planted. Undertakers were given farms of 2,000, 1,500 and 1,000 acres. Rent was £5.33 per 1,000 acres. Planters were not allowed to rent to the Irish and they had to build bawns for protection. Servitors were ex-soldiers that were allowed Irish tenants. Over 40,000 planters settled, infrastructure was improved, protestant ownership increased, new farming methods were introduced and new industries were developed. However, this plantation also caused religious, political and cultural differences in Ulster which ultimately led to the Troubles. The Cromwellian plantation took place in 1650 under Oliver Cromwell. All good land was settled and Irish natives were given the choice of ‘To Hell or to Connaught’. Surrendered soldiers, priests, widows, orphans, prisoners and beggars all had to leave the country. After this plantation, 90% Protestant land

ownership was achieved. Other consequences of this plantation were that many soldiers married Irish Catholics and many Irish outlaws attacked their settlers. The plantations in general had religious, political, cultural, farming and industry consequences e.g. The penal laws were introduced which were laws against Catholics.

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