



Political developments in Ireland 1

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

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Ireland in 1900 was in crisis as there were two main groups living in the country that both sought independence – the Home Rulers wanted the restoration of an Irish parliament but were willing to retain the union. The vast majority of the Irish population supported the cause of Home Rule as led by John Redmond. However, there was a small number of people who wanted an independent Ireland and were willing to stage a rebellion to achieve this. These were mainly from the north east of the country, as Protestants in Ulster feared a Catholic-run Ireland. They believed ‘Home Rule is Rome Rule’ as they felt that an Irish parliament would discriminate against Protestants. In 1885, Ulster opponents of Home Rule formed the Unionist party and gained support from the Orange Order and the Conservative Party in Britain. The ruling liberal party in Westminster supported the Home Rule Party but the Conservatives controlled the House of Lords and they refused to grant Home Rule. In 1905, Arthur Griffith set up Sinn Fein with the hope of establishing a dual government of Britain and Ireland, with separate parliaments holding equal power. There was also a movement that sought to promote the native language (Hyde and MacNeill) and sports (Cusack) in an effort to re-establish the Irish identity lost since the Famine. In 1911, the parliament Act removed the power of veto of the House of Lords. This meant that Home Rule was introduced in 1912; it would become law in 1914. In 1912, many Unionists signed the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant, which declared that they would do anything to prevent Home Rule. In 1913, the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Irish Volunteer Force formed. In 1914, all of Europe was at war; as a result Home Rule was delayed until the end of the war. Irish volunteers split with 90,000 joining the British army and 10,000 remaining at home.

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