

BRAINSE AN GHAIRM OIDEACHAIS,
(Technical Instruction Branch)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMPETITION

DUISBURG, GERMANY, 1961.

The tenth International Trade Competition held in Duisburg, Germany was the largest organised since the Competitions were initiated ten years ago. The following countries were represented: Germany, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg and Ireland. Eight observers from Japan also attended to discover if it would be possible for Japan to be represented at future competitions.

There was a considerable increase in the number of competitors and hence the competition was more intense. It was also evident that the standards are rising each year as each country improves its methods of selection and of prior training, before sending their students to these competitions. Spain, for example, due to their intensive training always secured the most prizes. In 1960, they obtained 18 first prizes. This year this number fell to 5. Irish employers released their students for three days per week from Easter to the end of June for special training. Were it not for this, the Irish apprentices would not have been so successful this year.

With a little luck on their side two other Irish apprentices could have won first prizes. The silversmith, who was in the lead in efficiency and time throughout the competition, misread a dimension on the drawing in the final stages and cut too much off his project. For the same reason the junior cabinetmaker, who was one of the two best craftsmen in his section failed to obtain a place. Working in the metric system of measurement may also have contributed to their failure.

In these competitions boys from each country make what afterwards they realise to be stupid mistakes. Irish boys are no exception to this general rule. For example our junior plumber, who obtained first place, when executing the first part of his test did not realise he was standing on the material for his second test and he crushed it. This meant that he had to beat out the lead piping thus losing a considerable amount of time. At this stage it looked as if he had thrown away his chances of success and he deserves great credit for obtaining first place. An Italian competitor in the Electrical House Wiring Competition made a simple mistake near the end of his test. When he discovered it he took a pliers and cut his work to pieces, ran out of the room and was later found lying on the public roadway. He was taken to hospital with a nervous breakdown. This illustrates the tension students experience in these competitions. In our own case one of the boys cut his hand on a sandpapering machine and had to retire from the competition.

Continental students work at a much faster pace than Irish or English apprentices. This gives them an advantage when the "time factor" is taken into account and sometimes the additional marks they receive put them ahead of their colleagues who are often better craftsmen. Except for this weakness, the Irish boys were up to standard with all of the other competitors.

On the social side the Irish boys stole all the honours from the other teams by their display of Irish dancing and by their singing of Irish songs. The team brought a set of hurling sticks with them. The playing of our national game attracted much attention from all the competing teams. The Irish apprentices were the most virile of all the groups and the most sociable. They made a fine impression on everyone associated with the competition.

These International Trade Competitions are growing in importance and prestige from year to year. The German Republic showed their appreciation in a big way of having been selected as host for the 1961 Competitions. The main streets of Duisburg and the other cities visited by the competitors were lavishly decorated with the flags of the eleven competing nations, with bunting and with flowers. As the pleasure boat from Mainz to Andernach approached the harbour of the latter town a salute of guns was fired. The mayor and local dignitaries were at the pier to welcome the delegates and trumpeters in ceremonial dress sounded a welcome at the harbour and town hall. Bands and orchestras played at the many functions and banquets organised by the host country. A complete film record was made from the official opening by the Minister for Commerce to the closing by the Federal President. This was televised the night before the candidates departed. The press carried daily reports on the progress of the competitions. A number of major industrial concerns organised visits to their factories, entertained the teams to dinner and presented souvenirs to delegates and apprentices. They also contributed financially to the cost of the competitions. The German organisers proved their efficiency and a spirit of good will prevailed everywhere.

Our thanks are due to sixteen Irish employers who released their apprentices for special training from Easter to the end of June and also for purchasing the uniforms for their apprentices. The majority of the Irish Trade Unions concerned were also very generous in providing money for the out-of-pocket expenses of their apprentices. Were it not for the enthusiasm and excellent co-operation of the individual Vocational Teachers in coaching the apprentices it would not have been possible to organise the Irish Team..

A special word of thanks is due to Seán Og Ó Tuama of Capel Street Technical School for having trained the boys in Irish dancing and in Irish and German songs. He sacrificed many of his free evenings to work, which contributed very much to the social success of the competitions as a whole.

The Group Leader, Mr. W. J. N. O'Brien of the College of Technology, Bolton Street, by his sympathetic and efficient organisation of the Irish Team contributed in large measure to the good impression left behind by our apprentices. His fluency in German and other languages made him the most sought after interpreter not only by the Irish apprentices but by those of other nations and he was also in demand on the different examining boards. His general efficiency impressed the German organisers. He worked long hours and was invaluable to the group.

R. GRIMES

20/7/61.

DUISBURG

RESULTS ACCORDING TO TRADES

Trade	Stage	Place	Candidate	V.E.C.
Plumbing	A	1st	Michael McDaid	Dún Laoire
	B	1st	William Jackson	Dublin
Elect. Inst. Work	A	3rd	Brian Coughlan	Dublin
	B	7th	Philip Byrne	Army School
Carpentry	A	1st	Patrick Coates	Dublin
	B	4th	Patrick Barrett	Galway
Joinery	A	6th	Dermot O'Rourke	Dublin
	B	7th	William O'Connor	Galway
Cabinetmaking	A	Retired	Brendan McGrath	Dublin
	B	6th	Frank Caulfield	Roscommon
Fitting	A	4th	John Quinn	Donegal
	B	8th	Seamus Thornton	Kildare
Turning	A	8th	John O'Donovan	Cork Co.
	B	6th	Tony O'Toole	Dublin Co.
Bricklaying	A	4th	Edward Plowman	Dublin
	B	4th	Fred Rogers	Dublin
Silversmiths	A	4th	Desmond Taaffe	Dublin
Technical Drawing	A	6th	Joseph Ledwidge	Dublin

INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMPETITIONDUISBURGLIST OF PRIZEWINNERS

COUNTRY	No. of Competitors	1st Prizes	2nd Prizes	3rd Prizes
Germany	32	16	6	3
England	31	2	7	3
Spain	30	5	5	4
Belgium	19	1	4	1
Italy	18	1	3	5
Ireland	18	3	0	1
Portugal	12	0	0	2
Switzerland	11	3	2	2
Luxemburg	8	0	1	1
Austria	8	1	1	2
France	5	0	0	1

PLACINGS OF THE IRISH TEAM

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	Retired
3	0	1	5	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	1

While the overall result is satisfactory, it must be noted that our successes to date have all been in building trade subjects. We must not be satisfied until first places are also obtained in engineering and electrical trades.