WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
IRELAND 1918-2000

Maedhbh McNamara & Paschal Mooney

'Women in Parliament', published November 2000, contains bibliography profiles of all women elected to the Dáil, Seanad, the Presidency, Irish women members of the European Parliament and women elected to represent Northern Ireland in its parliament and at Westminster.

The biographical profiles are backed up with statistical analysis, carried out by Una Nic Ghiolla Cuille, Dr Yvonne Galligan and Professor Kathleen Knight of the Policy Institute, Trinity College, which compares the representation of women in Irish politics with the situation in other democracies internationally.

'Women in Parliament' is essential reading for anyone interested in political history, the development of women's role in Irish national politics and women's rights in Ireland.

The election of Countess Markievicz as the first woman MP in the UK Parliament seemed like a promising beginning, but amazingly out of the 4,120 seats filled in the Dáil in the twentieth century, only 176 of these seats were won by women. But the women featured in the book have changed perceptions and have made the idea of women leaders more real to everyone. The research carried out in the book shows that they are strong, committed parliamentarians, giving their best both to their families and to their country.

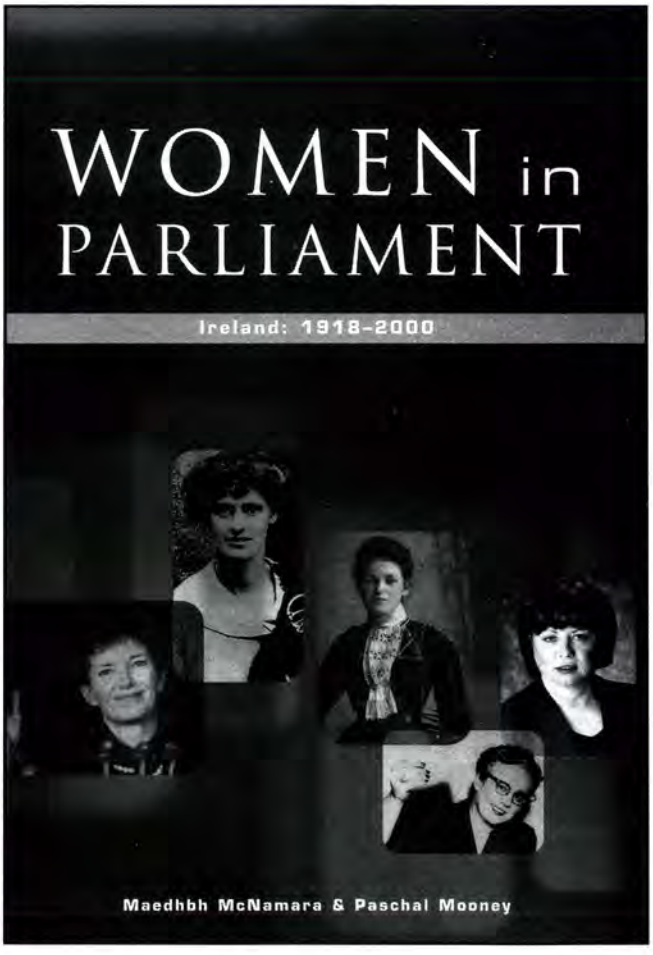
Of keen Leitrim interest is the fact that our county was served by a woman TD, the late Mrs. Mary Reynolds, who still holds the record for the most elections won by a woman, having won no less than nine elections between 1932 and 1957 and who saw her role primarily as a constituency worker.

In her foreword to the book, President Mary McAleese states:– 'We owe a great deal of gratitude, in particular, to the Irish women who broke new ground as public representatives in past generations. It took a lot of time and determination at a time when the range of opportunities open to most women was narrowly confined and attitudes were even narrower'.

The joint authors of 'Women in Parliament', Maedhbh McNamara and Paschal Mooney, can be proud of their work - the first study of its kind.

Maedhbh McNamara is a native of Listowel, Co. Kerry, graduated with an honours MA in Sociology from NUI, Galway, became a research officer with Combat Poverty and since 1982 has been Social Affairs specialist in the Oireachtas Library and Research Section.

Drumshanbo man, Paschal Mooney has been a member of the Seanad since 1987 and is currently Fianna Fáil Spokeperson on Arts, Heritage, the Gaeltacht and the Islands. Paschal has worked as freelance journalist and broadcaster, presenting a variety of programmes on RTE Radio 1. He has researched, scripted and presented several documentaries and is a regular sports reporter with RTE.

Paschal dedicates his work on the book to his late father Joseph Mary Mooney, to his mother Eva and to his wife Sheila and their children.

'Women in Parliament' is published by Wolfhound Press.