

# Irish Parliamentary (Oireachtas) engagement on LGBT issues, legislation, motions, debates, etc.

1922 – 1970

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## Carrigan Report / Commission

- Debates search from 01/01/1932 to 27/11/1936
- No mentions of homosexuality, gross indecency or sodomy in this period

10 results for the Carrigan Report / Commission in the context of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 1934 debates: <https://bit.ly/3SIQj0E>

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## The Censorship Acts | "unnatural vice" and "indecentry"

All debates under Censorship of Publications Acts

- Censorship of Publications Acts, 1929: [Censorship of Publications Act, 1929 – No. 21 of 1929 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)
- Censorship of Publications Act, 1946: [Censorship of Publications Act, 1946 – No. 1 of 1946 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)
- Censorship of Publications Acts, 1967: [Censorship of Publications Act, 1967 – No. 15 of 1967 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)
- Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Control of Indecent Publications, 1958  
[Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Control of Indecent Publications. – Dáil Éireann \(16th Dáil\) – Tuesday, 20 May 1958 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)  
*I am satisfied that the powers vested in officers of customs and excise under customs law and under Section 5 of the Censorship of Publications Act, 1946, to detain indecent publications on importation are adequate and are being effectively exercised.*
- Undesirable Literature: Import Control, 1960  
[Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Undesirable Literature: Import Control. – Dáil Éireann \(16th Dáil\) – Friday, 10 Jun 1960 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)  
*Undesirable literature need not necessarily be indecent, obscene or blasphemous, and it is only with blasphemous, obscene or indecent matter we deal.*
- Committee on Finance. - Resolution No. 11—General (Resumed), 1960  
[Committee on Finance. - Resolution No. 11—General \(Resumed\). – Dáil Éireann \(16th Dáil\) – Tuesday, 10 May 1960 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*Before this, they used to read books but now they are reduced to reading the résumés or précis in Time magazine dealing with pimps, philanderers, prostitutes, lesbians and such nostalgic subjects.*

- Committee on Finance. - Vote 23—Office of the Minister for Justice (Resumed), 1962 [Committee on Finance. - Vote 23—Office of the Minister for Justice \(Resumed\). – Dáil Éireann \(17th Dáil\) – Tuesday, 27 Nov 1962 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*I know there is a good deal of homosexual crime on the continent. Crowding encourages that sort of thing. I am glad that the Minister is to consider the association between crime and health and that something will be done about it. The Minister should consider homosexuality as a case for treatment rather than punishment. Edmund Burke, the great orator, once tried to make the case that the law should not be so savage on homosexuals.*

- Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Circulation of Objectionable Publication, 1965 [Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Circulation of Objectionable Publication. – Dáil Éireann \(17th Dáil\) – Wednesday, 17 Feb 1965 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*The importation of any indecent or obscene matter is prohibited under the customs laws.*

- Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Control of Pernicious Literature, 1965 [Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Control of Pernicious Literature. – Dáil Éireann \(18th Dáil\) – Wednesday, 19 May 1965 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*I have no reason to think that the law in relation to indecent literature needs to be strengthened.*

- Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Certificate of Naturalisation, 1970 [Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Certificate of Naturalisation. – Dáil Éireann \(19th Dáil\) – Thursday, 19 Mar 1970 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*For instance, a man has written a book about the late Dag Hammerskjöld suggesting he was a homosexual. That has not been taken as being factual. I put this book in the same category.*

- Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Sale of Indecent Books, 1970 [Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Sale of Indecent Books. – Dáil Éireann \(19th Dáil\) – Thursday, 4 Jun 1970 – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

*I want to emphasise, however, that the existing machinery of the law, if properly utilised, is quite adequate to cope with the sale of indecent publications and it is up to members of the public to make their views known in the way for which the law makes provision.*

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## **“Land of Spice” Book Ban**

### **DEBATE: SEANAD ÉIREANN**

#### **Censorship of Publications—Motion**

[Seanad debate 18 Nov 1942](#)

*“Where that book (Land of Spice) can be held to be in its general tendency indecent or in the words of the definition, “to incite to sexual immorality or unnatural vice or is likely in any similar manner to corrupt or deprave”, I cannot see.” - Sir John Keane*

*“I admit that I had not read the book right through at the time but I agreed to ban it. That may be a condemnation of myself, but I admit that I did not read through the hundreds of books that were banned and I do not intend to do so. I have great confidence in the board we have established. I did not read this book and I read it with the inclination to be rather sceptical as to whether the board was right in banning it.” – Mr. Boland*

#### **Censorship of Publications—Motion (Resumed)**

[Seanad debate 2 Dec 1942](#)

*“In the case of this book whose aesthetic motif was the unspeakable sin, I showed the House, in the inner cover of the novel, the Argosy Library's mark of ownership..... This is how that affects this country: a book that has had its life as a library book in England run to its close starts a new career in Ireland. The entrepreneurs in England gets together the books I have indicated and he sends a batch of them here and there to the little country towns of Ireland.... The shopkeeper is not allowed any choice. He must take or leave the batch that comes to him, some of them in a most unwholesome condition so far as regards the public health because they may have been read by people in sick beds, they may have been read in atmospheres that were rich in bacteria and bacilli, but over they come to this country—it does not matter about us, the outlanders....., we are making asses of ourselves when we treat a book on its arrival to begin its work of Hell in Ireland as to all intents and purposes a new book. What does it matter to us, who are operating an Act of an Irish Parliament to defend the Irish people from corrupting influences, how long it has been tolerated in Great Britain? I am sure many of you must have read in the various papers about the asinine performances of the censors who ban a book that is already three years on the British market.....*

*This book that I have read to you only came our way in 1941. It was on the market from 1935. We are not omniscient.” Professor Magennis*

#### **Censorship of Publications—Motion (Resumed)**

[Seanad Debate 9 Dec 1942](#)

#### **Censorship of Publications Bill, 1945—Committee (Resumed).**

[Seanad debate 29 Nov 1945](#)

## **Censorship of Publications Bill, 1967: Second Stage.**

[Seanad debate 7 June 1967](#)

## **Censorship of Publications Bill, 1967: Second Stage (Resumed)**

[Seanad debate 14 Jun 1967](#)

*"The second was Land of Spices. I say this—when this Bill is passed, if nobody else brings it to the notice of the Censorship Board that this ban should be maintained, I shall do it, as a public representative and a Member of the Seanad.*

*It is a scandalous production about a nun in a convent. It is the only one of the books that I have read in detail. Any young girl reading it will ask: "What is at the back of this? What are they talking about? What are they thinking of?*

*when it transpires that the parent of this unfortunate nun was a homosexual and that finished it. It is a scandalous thing."* - Seán Ó Donnabháin

## **DEBATE: DÁIL ÉIREANN**

[Censorship of Publications Bill, 1945—Report and Final Stage. 7 Nov 1945](#)

*"We see nothing indecent in this book and want this thing reviewed because we do not believe that any ordinary five men could find anything indecent in its general tendency" they should be able to do so. If Land of Spices had been condemned under this, I would have been glad to be in a position to put my name down asking for a review of that decision.....*

*I know, of course, that anybody who dares to say that there should be any modifications or relaxation of censorship in this country leaves himself open to the charge that he is a freethinker and an atheist, and if anyone wants to describe the Minister as such for his attitude, I, for once, find myself in agreement with him. If anybody wants to describe the pair of us as atheists and freethinkers, we will be together for this occasion at least on that, but for this occasion only."* -Mr. Dillon