

Tully, Jasper Joseph

by Marie-Louise Legg

Tully, Jasper Joseph (1858–1938), journalist and politician, was son of George Tully, newspaper proprietor, and Honoria Tully of Roscommon, and was educated at Summerhill College, Athlone. His grandfather Charles had founded the *Roscommon Journal* in 1828, and his father, George, founded the *Roscommon Herald* in 1859. George Tully died young, and the paper was continued by his widow. Having spent some years in America, Jasper returned to Ireland to run the *Roscommon Herald* with his mother. The *Herald* had been founded as a liberal paper, but by the 1880s it had become militantly nationalist. He was asked by C. S. Parnell (qv) to work as a Land League organiser, and was imprisoned with Parnell in Kilmainham gaol. After the split in the Irish parliamentary party (1890) he became an anti-Parnellite.

In 1886 Tully was prosecuted with his mother Honoria for publishing an intimidatory article in the *Herald*, but the jury disagreed on the facts, and in 1887 he was again tried on a charge of intimidation. In 1890 he was charged with publishing an article inciting people to intimidate farmers, and was sentenced to six months with hard labour. Until 1900, when he was arrested for a speech in Sligo, he (like many others) had his defence costs met by the Land League.

Jasper Tully was a member of Roscommon county council, was elected anti-Parnellite nationalist MP for Leitrim South in 1892, and became a whip in the Irish parliamentary party. He remained in parliament until 1906, when he was not a candidate for reelection. He stood for Roscommon North in 1917 and (as an independent) for the Roscommon seat in Dáil Éireann in 1923, but both attempts were unsuccessful. He was an active obstructionist, which he described as ‘talking rapidly and without hesitation. . . on some subject which you knew nothing about’. He was secretary of the Connacht council of the GAA.

Jasper Tully died on 16 September 1938, and was buried in Assylinn cemetery, Boyle, Co. Roscommon. On his death it was said that he possessed a vast file of confidential papers, which may have dated from when he was one of the whips of the Irish parliamentary party. His obituaries reveal him as a difficult man. While his speeches could be witty, they could also be ‘mordant and unpleasant to a degree’. But the *Roscommon Herald* reminded readers of his ‘kindness to little children’.

He married (1891) Marie Monson of Boyle (d. 1933); they had no children.

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Jasper Tully to John Redmond, 26 Dec. 1901 (NLI, Redmond papers, MS 15229); SPO, Irish Crimes Records register of newspapers (n.d.); *Roscommon Herald*, 24, 26 Sept. 1938; *Ir. Times*, 24 Sept. 1938; *WWW*; Walker

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