

## The Irish Vice-Counties

Doubts having recently arisen as to the correct interpretation of the boundaries of the biological vice-counties of Ireland, the Praeger Committee of the Royal Irish Academy has considered the matter and recommends as follows:

The names, limits and extent of the biological vice-counties of Ireland should be those set out in the map which forms the frontispiece to *Irish Topographical Botany* by R. L. Praeger (published by the Royal Irish Academy in 1901 as Volume 23 (3rd Series, Vol. 7) of its *Proceedings*).

In making this recommendation the committee has been influenced by the following considerations:

(1) the map referred to, though on a small scale, is of admirable quality and clarity, and permits the assignment to its vice-county of any locality with a margin of uncertainty of less than half a mile;

(2) the text of *Irish Topographical Botany* forms by far the largest single unit of biological records on a vice-county basis, and Praeger's prestige and authority were such that recorders of other groups of organisms were content to accept his judgement in this matter;

(3) the decision is in general harmony with the policy followed in Great Britain of "freezing" county-boundaries in the form in which they existed when the recording system was first instituted and ignoring subsequent administrative changes. Considerable changes in the Irish county-boundaries were made in 1898, but only one of these (the transfer from Galway to Clare of a substantial area on the west side of Lough Derg) was recognized by Praeger in his map or his text.

I hope to submit shortly to the Royal Irish Academy for publication in its *Proceedings* a more detailed statement about those aspects of the vice-county-boundaries which require clarification.

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