The photograph at the left shows a collector at work: Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin, an old farmer from County Kerry, records a story for Tadhg Ó Murchad (right), one of the Commission's collectors, who will transcribe it for the Commission's Archive. At the right, another storyteller records a folksale.

THE IRISH FOLKLORE COMMISSION:
A SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Irish Folklore Commission obtains much of its material by means of detailed questionnaires, generally printed both in English and in Irish (Gaelic), which are sent out to collectors (see the account of the Commission in the preceding issue of The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring, 1961). The sample questionnaire reproduced below reflects the Commission's concern for recording all aspects of folk tradition, the cultural milieu as well as discrete items like tales or songs.

Questionnaire
February, 1952

TINKERS

Note. — This questionnaire is not intended as a means of collecting information about individuals who travel the roads alone (tramps, beggarmen). It refers only to tinkers who move about in family or other groups and ply a trade or calling, such a tin-smithwork or horse-dealing.

Generic Names. By what general title(s) are these nomads referred to locally: tinkers, travellers, 'gipsies', tramps, beggars, séilebhgin, siúbhlóiri, etc.?

Local Tinker Groups. Give the family-names of any tinker groups which visit your district. Are any of them known locally by special by-names or nickname? Have individual tinkers any unusual Christian names?

Areas Within Which Tinker Groups Operate. As a general rule, tinkers travel about only within certain areas. Can you find out which areas are included by the local tinkers in their "rounds"? Any stories of rivalry between groups in this regard?

Customs and Superstitions. Please write down an account of any customs or superstitions of tinkers regarding the following: birth, marriage, death, buying, selling or exchange, good luck or ill-luck, festivals, belief in the supernatural, or any other matter.

Religions and Social Practice. To which religious belief do the local tinkers belong? Are they married in church? If so, where? Do tinker marriages take place at particular times? Any accounts or stories of tinker marriages or weddings? Do the local people, or local individuals, take part in these weddings? Are tinker children baptised by local priests? Any special lore about this? Do tinker children attend local schools for any period? Does a priest or other clergyman attend tinkers who are dying locally? Any special lore about the wakes, funerals, or burials of tinkers? Where are tinkers who die locally buried? Any other lore regarding these matters?

Visits and Local Encampments. Please give a general statement about the routine visits of tinkers to your district — their frequency, the periods at which they arrive and leave, the length of their stay.

(Continued on fourth page)
THE IRISH FOLKLORE COMMISSION:
A SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE (cont.)

Where do they camp? Have these camp-sites changed from time to time for any reason? How do tinkers dispose of their waggons or cars, gear, and animals during their stay at the camp? Where do the animals graze — along the roads or in fields? Any friction with the local people or with the authorities regarding this? What do tinkers (men, women, and children) do during the camping period? Do they travel about locally or mix with the local people? Where do tinkers sleep while in camp? Where do they cook, and eat? Is there anything peculiar about their carts or waggons (style, colours, size)? Have these changed over a period of years? Where do tinkers spend the winter?

Crafts and Means of Livelihood. What trades or calling do the local tinkers follow? Do they make or repair tins and other vessels? Do they produce or sell locally any other articles? How do the prices of these articles compare with those bought in shops? Do they buy, sell, or barter animals casually or at fairs? Are tinkers regarded as being poor or fairly well-to-do? Have they changed in this respect over the years? Are they regarded as being generous or the reverse?

Behaviour. Any accounts of the general behaviour of the tinkers would be welcome — their attitude to one another, to the local people, to the law, to the clergy, to women and children, to animals. Any information about their moral character — honesty, truth, charity, and so on? Do the Catholics among them attend Mass or other religious services when they are camped locally; do they frequent the Sacraments? Have they changed in this respect over the years? Are there accounts of individual tinkers having settled down on the land locally, or having married outside their own social group?

Physical and Other Characteristics. Do tinkers differ in any special way from the local community as regards the following: physical appearance, hair colour or skin pigmentation, facial structure, height, gait, hardiness, health, dexterity, manner of speech, ability to sing, dance, mimic, or tell stories? Any peculiarity in their dress?

Tinker Personalities. Any stories of individual tinkers, men or women, who were better known than the rest for some reason?

Tinker Society. Can you get any information about the structure of tinker society? Have the local groups a king or other lesser head to whom obedience is given, as distinct from parental authority? Are there classes within the tinker world? Do tinkers absorb individuals from outside their own class?

Languages. Have the local tinkers a language or languages of their own which they use for private conversation among themselves? By what name or names are these languages known? When are they used, as a rule? Can you obtain any words, or phrases of these languages? If so, please give the Irish or English translation also. Do you know of local tinkers who can speak Irish or any other well-known language, that is, as their native tongue?

Origins and History. Have the tinkers themselves, or any local persons, any traditions about how the tinkers originated? Apart from these, is anything known about who the tinkers really are in origin, or how it has happened that they took up the nomadic life? Is anything known as to how long they have been visiting your district?

Sayings, Proverbs, or Songs about Tinkers. Can you get any of these locally, e.g. "a tinkers' damn (curse)" — what was that?; "the bray of a tinker's ass", "eyes like two burned holes in a tinker's blanket"; "bean tíilliúrá agus bean tincéara, sin beirt ná réidh-tigheann le chéile," etc.?