

Unconvincing Apology For Concentration Camp

IN his reply to the South Tipperary and Cavan Co. Councils' resolutions calling for the immediate release of Republican prisoners, Mr. de Valera states that "the real position is not fully appreciated." In fact, the position is more fully appreciated and understood than he might wish it to be. Hence the resolution from Local Government bodies.

In his statement, the leader of the Fianna Fail party wants the Republican prisoners to give an assurance "that they will adhere to democratic methods." Now that sounds odd coming from a man who has put over 200 men through his Concentration Camp in the past 18 months. The Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Fein—a constitutional organisation—and 60 key members throughout the country were the first victims of this totalitarian policy.

It is hardly in accordance with democratic process to arrest people arbitrarily and to imprison them indefinitely without charge or trial.

Far from giving a similar undertaking himself to that which he requires of others, Mr. de Valera stated in Leinster House last July that he may seek 'further powers'. In other words, the Offences Against the State Acts may be only a beginning.

Let it be repeated once more that the Republican Movement will not take aggressive military action in the 26-County State. That has been stated publicly for years as declared Republican policy and has been borne out many times in the past two years. The 26-County Government is well aware of this.

Mr. de Valera requires the Republican prisoners to

limit their freedom of action in their efforts to end British Rule and liberate the Six Counties from British Occupation Forces. Does he also ask the other party to the dispute to bind itself accordingly? Has he secured from the British Government "an assurance to adhere to democratic methods" in its dealings with this country? If so, the British Government would bow to the oft expressed will of the Irish people thus resolving the entire question. Mr. de Valera has obviously not secured such an assurance, yet he has the temerity to attempt to extract it from Irish Republicans by the threat of continued and indefinite imprisonment.

It will be seen that the role of the 26-County Government in all this is completely partisan, and viewed together with the co-operation it affords to British Crown Forces in maintaining the Border, is undeniably collaborationist.

The Curragh Concentration Camp is now 18 months in existence and 100 Republican prisoners are still held there. They will not give any undertaking regarding their opposition to British rule. Since the recent escape (2/12/58) of 14 men, conditions have deteriorated considerably, especially as regards the monthly visit allowed to relatives.

The question is posed for all Irish people: How long are these men to remain there?

In spite of Mr. de Valera's unconvincing apology for his Concentration Camp, South Tipperary Co. Council and Cavan Co. Council have given a valuable lead to the Irish Nation. It is a lead to be followed.