

SINN FEIN HEADQUARTERS, 23 SUFFOLK STREET.

# DAILY SHEET.

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## NEARING CHRISTMAS.

The air is already full of preparations for Xmas festivities, Xmas shopping, Xmas reunions. Are 5,000 men to be kept from their homes because they believe still in the faith which Tone, Emmet and Pearse died for?

Doctors, honourable members of the legal profession, business men, farmers, working men, mayors, councillors—all, men prominent in the fight for Ireland's freedom for years past, incarcerated by the Free State Ministers of King George V., dubbed murderers, looters, and charged with the grossest crimes against the common weal.

Day by day thousands of anxious wives and mothers keep watching and hoping for the release of the prisoners. Every night they hope for the morrow and every morrow finds their hope unfulfilled. This strain is beginning to tell on the women and children all over Ireland and, particularly, in Dublin city. It is impossible to look on at all this without being moved to great pity. There are several women in the city with four or five children under 10 years of age, who have been deprived of their breadwinners for the past 18 months. Last Christmas it was lonely without them, but they could "pull away with God's help, for the present." This Christmas the faces are very much paler, the floors and walls barer, and the cross is very much harder to bear. Their resignation is extraordinary, but the effort to bear it is telling on their bodies. Can nothing be done by the citizens to relieve such distress? The women ask with pardonable irritation at times, "Why don't they do what the Cardinal suggested, and open the gaols for Christmas?" Mr. Cosgrave pledges his word that the money subscribed to the Loan will be spent with the greatest care and best possible advantage to the country, and talks of the "strictest economy." Are the subscribers satisfied to have some of their £10,000,000 expended on the upkeep of hundreds of officials to look after thousands of political prisoners? In North Dublin Union there are twenty-six wardresses to look after five women. Mr. O'Higgins says: "We enter upon a new chapter of our history." Let him prove it by opening the gaol gates. With the best will in the world we cannot see any difference between this chapter and his last one, if there are still thousands of prisoners and corresponding hardships outside.

Mr. Hogan (Minister of Agriculture) tells us that the success of the Loan has placed the independence of the Free State beyond challenge, and that it is a triumph for patriotism and common sense, and Mr. Cosgrave, in a public speech some time ago, said they were "not at all" afraid of a renewal of the war. What, then, are the Free State Ministers afraid of? Why are the prison doors locked and barred? This wonderfully subscribed £10,000,000, has it not brought any sense of security or good feeling or success in its wake. There is amongst the thinking Free Staters themselves the disturbing thought of these prisoners. There might be some chance of settling down if the gaols and camps were cleared. There is none while things hang on as they are at present. There are thousands of prisoners in gaol. There are thousands on thousands outside who think of them and with them. They all live in Ireland. Do the Free State Ministers realise that? Let them think a little harder, and see if they have not it in their power to bring a tolerable peace for Christmas.

### INSULT TO POLITICAL PRISONERS.

As an additional comment on Mr. Kevin O'Higgins's statement to the Mountmellick Rural District Council, we have received the following:—

A letter received by a prisoner in one of the camps was addressed to him as "Prisoner of War." The Free State Censor crossed out the word, "War," and wrote instead, "destruction." The prisoner in question wrote a complaint demanding an explanation from the Governor, but up to the time of going to press we have not heard what excuse the Governor had to make for the impertinence of his subordinate. Is there no decency left on the Free State side to come out and denounce this real crime against the common weal, the crime of not only keeping these men in prison, but of endeavouring to slander them as well. Is that, we ask the people of Ireland, the way to make or keep the peace?

### ROBERT DE COURCY.

Yet once again in history a Mayor of Limerick of Limerick offers up his all—his life—for Irish freedom. Councillor R. De Courcy, Mayor of Limerick, lies in a dying condition in Kilmmainham Gaol, after forty days hunger-strike. He is, indeed, a worthy and a loyal successor of his two friends, Seoirse Clancy and Michael O'Callaghan, the two Republican Mayors of Limerick, who were brutally murdered by English Auxiliaries on March 6, 1921.

Mr. De Courcy's family, on his mother's side, was one of the oldest in Limerick City, traceable back to the time of the Sieges. Many of his forebears were closely associated with the corporate and industrial life of the City of the Broken Treaty.

By profession he is an architect and engineer. In 1902, after a distinguished scholastic career, he graduated as B.E. in the Royal University, gaining honours in Architecture. Unlike many other young engineers, his interests were focussed on the homeland, on Irish railways and roads, and particularly on the industrial possibilities of our country. The Irish Industrial Association found in him an ardent advocate. From 1909 onwards, he spent Sunday after Sunday, with a small group of Limerick enthusiasts, addressing after-Mass meetings in the country districts, encouraging people to support their own industries.

In January, 1914, we find Robert joining the Volunteers, on the occasion of Roger Casement and P. H. Pearse's visit to Limerick. Since then, at each political cross roads, he has followed "the thorny way"—Ireland's way. It is well known how invaluable his specialist knowledge proved to the I.R.A. since hostilities with the English re-opened in 1919. With rare self-sacrifice he turned his back on his lucrative profession, and wholeheartedly devoted himself to the cause of the Irish Republic.



For politics as such he had no taste. He was a firm believer in the Sinn Féin policy, particularly in its cultural aspects; he organised history and debating classes in the Limerick area, but it is as an Organiser and Director of Elections that he showed off to most advantage. President de Valera admitted that the success of the famous 1918 East Clare Election was in a great measure due to his extraordinary genius; Waterford knew him during the General Election of 1918; and again in Limerick in 1921 and 1922 he acted as Director for the Republican candidates.

Robert De Courcy and his Limerick I.R.A. comrades were the first to unmask the shameful attempt by Richard Mulcahy to subvert the Army of the Republic in March, 1922. From June, 1922, to January, 1923, he remained on active service; in the middle of January of the present year he was arrested in Co. Tipperary. He spent some time in Limerick Jail before being transferred to Newbridge. Later he was sent to Mountjoy, and since the inception of the hunger-strike he has been changed to Kilmainham.

A tireless and earnest worker, his health has been very much undermined by the strenuous life of the last three years. Great fears are entertained for his safety.

His friendship with the late Michael O'Callaghan goes back to childhood. It was he who succeeded to the vacancy created in the Abbey and Castle Ward by the murder of Michael O'Callaghan. Whilst a prisoner on hunger-strike he was unanimously elected to the Mayoral Office which Michael held.

It is for the people of Limerick and Ireland to say if he is to be sent to his grave as Michael O'Callaghan was by England's hirelings.

BY A COMRADE.

The following letter has been addressed to Miss MacSwiney:—

Dear Miss MacSwiney,—As a poor Irish exile in England, I am writing you knowing all you have done for the cause, and still continue to do.

When possible I procure an Irish paper, and at present I watch with pity and (dread) the sufferings of the thousands of Irish boys who were on hunger-strike and are still languishing in jail.

It seems to me the majority of Ireland's people are "stagnant" to the treatment and anguish those boys of unflinching ideals are going through.

Has the Irish blood become so tainted in its new heritage, that all feeling for these brave souls have sunk into oblivion? Are they not, so to speak, their own flesh and blood and dying because the people of the Green Isle are afraid to speak. I see accounts of meetings, protests and resolutions, and the voice that could speak and has the greatest claim to speak is—painful to say—to all appearance dead. That is Labour. If any section of humanity can understand suffering it should be Labour. Can you publish this humble letter for one whose heart bleeds for Ireland, whose name makes no count in the history of my birthplace—Ireland. Can't the Voice of Labour, with their powerful influence, demand with "down tools" the right of every father and mother to have their sons and daughters come back home alive and not silent forever. Can no one get them to act at once, or has apathy such a grip on our countrymen that the spirit of dead heroes may haunt us for lacking what the people of Ireland never lacked before—courage to speak out against injustice.

I belong to no Organisation. I should be proud to alleviate the prisoners, but force of circumstances binds me down, and yet my love for Ireland is as deep as any to be found.

I appeal to you to publish this in the Irish papers and let it reach the souls of those that give us the comforts of life—Labour—and open the gates of suffering.

AN EXILE IN ENGLAND.

### TO ALL FREE STATE T.D.'S.

Do you know that the men in the jails and camps are in danger of serious mental trouble arising from the strain of the hunger-strike and the want of special treatment following it? Each day brings us disquieting news of this nature.

One of the men in Mountjoy who had been on strike for forty days became mentally affected and was removed to the Prison Hospital then in a semi-conscious state. This comatose condition was rapidly followed by delirium, which continued for some days. Now he is up and walking about the hospital but has become quite eccentric. This is only one of the many cases so afflicted. That of Eamon Enright cannot have escaped your attention. He is in a locked cell with a guard, and has been so held since his mind became impaired. That it did so, was due to the callous treatment meted out to the hunger-strikers after their ordeal—not alone had they to carry down their own bedding and tables, etc., to another landing to facilitate the official attendants, but they had to fix their own gas pipes. The strain was too great on some and the result is as stated. Other men unfit for detention in Mountjoy are:—Michael Barret, Tom McMahon, Sean O'Moore and Frank Dunne; they are suffering from partial loss of eyesight.

In Kilmainham there are eight now unable to attend themselves, two of them having been bed patients before the strike began. The nurses have been withdrawn. Ald. De Courcy, Austin Stack, Ernest O'Malley, Sean Buckley, Michael Kilroy, Sean Lehan, and — Casey are all bed patients.

A lad—John Carroll, 21 Mountpleasant Avenue—has been a prisoner in Hare Park. The last news his father has received from him is that he has been moved to the isolation hospital (Curragh) to be X-rayed. No information has been offered to his parents as to why he needs to be X-rayed. The boy is only 18 years of age, and before his imprisonment enjoyed good health. It is very alarming for his friends to receive this insufficient report of his condition. The attitude of the average medical man in charge of the various camps has not been such as to allay the anxiety of the prisoner's friends on hearing news like above. The war is over. Republicans have observed the "Cease Fire" order, but you have raised no protest against this abominable war on invalids.

Do you as an individual realise that you are responsible for the life and reason of each of your prisoners? In a short time you must answer for them to the Irish people and to God.