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CHRISTMAS IS COMING.

IRISH MEN AND WOMEN, DO YOU WISH TO SEE YOUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN DETAINED IN JAIL DURING THIS SEASON OF GENTLE, HOLY AND PEACEFUL MEMORIES? MANY OF THEM HAVE SPENT NEARLY SIX YEARS IN JAIL BECAUSE THEY LOVED IRELAND WISELY AND WELL. MANY OF YOU THOUGHT THEM HEROES THEN. **THEY HAVE NOT CHANGED SINCE BUT SOME OF YOU HAVE.**

Mr. Kevin O'Higgins has a sincere backer in the *Belfast News-Letter*. This paper considers Mr. O'Higgins is quite justified in seeking new powers to further persecute those who remained faithful to the ideal he has foresworn. The *News-Letter*, in a sub-leader on Saturday, says:—The Republicans are endeavouring to retain a dual Government and army in the country in the same manner as they did before the Treaty was signed. The British, by not adopting more thorough methods of extermination, had their powers partially wrested from them by some of the quondam Republicans. These have now become the Constitutional Authority of the country, although the *Belfast* paper says "they gained their power by unconstitutional means."

Mr. O'Higgins is quoted for saying:—"Juries have refused a verdict of guilt where evidence of such has been proven that a series of outrages have been committed in various areas, the perpetrators of which are well known to the population. Yet fear prevents the people from giving evidence."

We must agree. Fear does. Fear of the armed military Free State Forces from whom the criminals are recruits. The *News-Letter* says this state of things is intolerable, and the Free State Government will have the support of all good Orangemen in putting an end to it. It will undoubtedly, as Castlereagh had it in his scheme of outrage and extermination. England's ways have been well learnt and much bettered.

NEWS FROM THE CAMPS.

One hundred and fifty men have been released from Newbridge; between 40 and 50 from Harepark, and 80 from Tintown 3, amongst those last is Dr. Jim Ryan, T.D. He makes the eighth Republican representative released within the last few days. He is yet another of "the Mugs led away by the picturesque trappings of the tri-colour."

What is the mentality of Mr. Kevin O'Higgins when he speaks in this evenenomed manner?

If seven Republican T.D.'s can be released within a week, it is quite obvious that men who have been elected as representatives of Republican opinion when they were prisoners as late as last August cannot be classed as the mere tools of the political and military leaders.

MOUNTJOY.—No news of releases from here to-day. The men are suffering greatly from the result of hunger-strike and absence of proper treatment. Eamon Enright, recently released from here, is not improved.

KILMAINHAM.—Ernest O'Malley's condition still continues serious. Tom Derrig slightly improved. Most of the men suffer from insomnia. Alderman De Courcy, lately moved to St. Bricin's, is still weak. We have received no assurance of any improvement in his condition.

In to-night's evening Press we note a reference to the Rev. Canon Walter Kiely, who is about to celebrate his Golden Jubilee next Thursday. This gentleman was a Chaplain in Portland Prison for many years; during his time there Mr. Robert Barton was undergoing sentence. The Governor penalised Mr. Barton and put him on lough diet in an underground cell, whereupon Canon Kiely brought the fact to the notice of Mr. Joseph Devlin in the English House of Commons, and through his exposition of the injustice being done Mr. Barton, the Governor of Portland Jail was given to understand, that even an Irish political prisoner could not be treated worse than a criminal without unpleasant things being said of it to the Governor. The man on whose behalf Canon Kiely intervened was then, as he is now, an Irish patriot. He is one of those to whom Mr. Kevin O'Higgins elegantly refers as the "mugs" of the movement.

We often wonder on what meat the Executive of the Free State Government feeds that it has grown so gross in mind and so base in deed. When men on public board descended to the language of the tap-house, we were accustomed to look at them with raised eyebrows and hope that a few years of civic life would help to civilise them. To-day we hear language that would have disgraced a country Board of Guardians, not from the humble supporters of an election candidate, but from people in the enjoyment of high-sounding titles holding highly-paid offices.

Cabinet Ministers in the Free State to-day speak glibly in the language of the fish market of people "who lack the guts to fight," of men who "may rot in jail," of women "whose interest in Nationalism lies in the absence of a husband," and of those whom they release as "mugs."

The Free State has descended, and to some depth.

RETRENCHMENT AND MORE SALARIES.

"It were well for the public to realise that unless they are active in defence of their rights, the control of local affairs will be taken from them." Such is the swan song of the ex-guardians of the Union. In their statement, they dealt with the drastic action taken by the L.G.B. in abolishing them. They point out that their work was done in close connection with the Commissioner, and that this well-paid Government official, who is now being appointed to replace the guardians is no less responsible than the guardians for any defects that may exist.

It is a curious comment on the retrenchment at present being effected by the Free State Government that it should seek to create further highly paid appointments.

Why should the Commissioners at present in question be more efficient than the voluntary board just wiped out of existence? In 1921 the Board appointed a Commissioner. As the guardians said, he must share the blame with them of inefficiency where it existed. Apparently he did not effect any improvement. Are the present Commissioners any more expert than he was? Are any of them as well informed of the needs of the sick and infirm, of the distribution of monies to those in need of relief, of the necessary supplies of food and materials to the institution itself as many of the guardians who attended regularly without any remuneration, or, as they put it themselves, without public gratitude for years?

We think the highly-paid inexpert official will be more likely to delegate many of their responsibilities to the minor officials who have been party to the general inefficiency.

The need for economy is, no doubt, urgent, but this cure is doubtful; to create new highly remunerative positions with one hand, and with the other to "insist on the reduction of the present high wages paid to road labourers," to cut the teachers' salaries and dock the old age pensions, to say nothing of detaining nearly 5,000 prisoners at £1 per head per week.

The Irish workers are mainly responsible for electing this autocracy. Are they satisfied with the result?

JOE BERGIN.—It is well known to everyone in and around the Curragh—to the Free State soldiers, to the civilians, to the Republican prisoners in the four internment camps there—that Joseph Bergin, Military Policeman attached to Tintown 3 Camp was murdered on last Thursday night by some of the "Unofficial" murder gang, instigated and aided by certain ex-British soldiers and ex-Black and Tans stationed in the district. Joseph Bergin was one of the Volunteers cajoled into the Free State army by the unscrupulous lies about the Treaty, chief of which was that it was a stepping stone to the Republic. Two or three weeks prior to his murder, Joe saw that whatever the original intention of the Treatyites was, it was plain that the Anti-Irish Imperial section of the Free State army was now on top and was determined, no matter what the cost, to complete the Anglicising process. He was overheard giving his opinion on this to a comrade by an ex-British Officer, now in the Free State army who called him the orthodox British Army filthy names and told him he had better look out for himself. On Thursday night, the 13th inst., he was cruelly murdered. His name will not be forgotten by the people of Ireland: "Go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a anam."