

PRESS RELEASE

from

SINN FÉIN

December 29th, 1970.

Republican Prisoners in Belfast and England.

An appeal addressed to all Sinn Fein members to take an active part in the national collection for An Cumann Cabhrach, the Prisoners Dependants Fund, over the Christmas and New Year period was made by Ruairi O'Bradaigh, President of Sinn Fein when he spoke at the formation of a new Cumann for the Ballaghaderreen-Lisacul area in Lisacul Memorial Hall, Co., Roscommon last night.

Sentences of 15 years, ten years, eight and five years had been imposed on Irish Republicans in Belfast last week. In all cases the prisoners had refused to recognise British courts operating in Ireland.

It was not true to say that there were only six Irish Political prisoners in jail in England. Alex and Richard McLaverty of Belfast who are serving five year sentences in Winson Green Prison Birmingham are being ignored in certain quarters. Their family home at 36 Brookfield St., Ardoyne was burnt out in August 1969 and their alleged "crime" is that they took sporting weapons from a gunshop to defend their people in Belfast.

Two other groups of political prisoners and a number of individuals are on remand in various other jails in England making a total of close on 20 while many more are serving sentences in Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast.

First reports of collections from the Six Counties were very encouraging and he understood that the annual Cumann Cabhrach Sale of Work held recently in the Mansion House, Dublin was highly successful.

The wives and children of the prisoners and in some cases aged and dependant relatives must be provided for. The Republican Movement will not fail the men in jail. Active members and those associated with the Movement are confident of a generous response from the Irish people at home and in exile. The time to make this approach to them is now.

From the comfort of our homes this Christmas we should spare a

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thought - and some of our money too - for those imprisoned for Irelands sake.

Officers elected were: Chairman, Michael McDonagh, Lisacul; Vice-chairman, J. O'Hara, Ballaghadereen; Secretary, Liam Morrissey, Ballaghadereen; Treasurers, Larry Noone, Ballaghadereen and James Duffv, Kilmovee.

A vote of sympathy was passed with the McCormack family, Kiltobransks on the death of their sister.

Ends.