

IRELAND AND THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

The Position in Case of Empire's Wars

The Imperial Conference will put certain aspects of the Free State Constitution to the test. The Minister for External Affairs is diplomatically preparing our minds. He has the delicate task of modifying electioneering statements of himself and his colleagues, reconciling discrepancies, and explaining facts away.*

"Co-equality" is one of the words which exercises all his tact. It has been, in the mouths of Ministers, a word of power. The first Article of the Free State Constitution declares magniloquently: "The Irish Free State . . . is a co-equal member of the Community of Nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations." "The Treaty," we were told in 1922, "makes Ireland a Sovereign State co-equal with the other States inside the British Commonwealth." "Ireland," Mr. Hogan explained in December, 1921, "was equal under the law of the Treaty with England, and if England was a Sovereign State, then so was Ireland." Co-equality, we were assured, was the essence of Dominion Status. But how is Dominion Status defined? "It would be difficult and dangerous," said Mr. Lloyd George while the Treaty was under discussion, "to give a definition." We were told that it meant the Republic in all but name.

The Implementation of Co-Equality.

Now the Imperial Conference is at hand and "co-equality" is to be defined; the Free State Government want "the position of co-equality to become operative"; they are going to "advance a policy for the implementation of co-equality." All this is confusing to simple minds. If co-equality does not mean equality, what does it mean? And if the Free State has it already, why is it yet to seek? But we have it, Mr. Fitzgerald appears to mean; it is not implemented; it is not operative; it is not defined; but we have it. That should be sufficient to satisfy our national pride. And now it is to be implemented.

Ireland is to be co-equal with England as a Sovereign State. In which of two ways possible will that be done? Will the Free State Government, for instance, amend the British Constitution, or will the clauses dictated by England be withdrawn from the Constitution of the Free State? Will the final appeal from English Courts of Law be made in

future to an Irish Privy Council, or will appeal from the Free State to England be withdrawn? Will an Irish Governor-General reside in London or will Mr. Timothy Healy disappear? Will the Executive Authority of Great Britain be vested in Mr. Cosgrave? Will he summon and dissolve the House of Commons? Will the members of the British Parliament take an Oath of Allegiance to him?

But perhaps "co-equality" does not mean "equality" at all. Perhaps it will prove to have some quite different connotation, such as "dependence," "subordination," or "inferiority"; or, perhaps, it will not be defined, or it may be proved, simply, that the assertion that the Irish Free State is a "co-equal member," is, to use the language of diplomacy, a "statement incapable of substantiation." It will be interesting to see.

"Technically at War."

"Co-equality" in the existing condition of Ireland, is a pretence which no one can take seriously, except, perhaps, the Minister for External Affairs. But there is another aspect of the Treaty and a very grave one, which the Imperial Conference should bring to light: it is the question of Neutrality in time of war. Of all the deceptions practised upon the people of Ireland by the sponsors of the Treaty none has been more shameful than the concealment of the situation in which it would place Ireland if England were at war, and that deception is being practised still. The "neutrality" fiction, one of the most potent of the arguments by which a majority was gained for the Treaty, is being reiterated by Mr. Fitzgerald now.

There is a clause in the Treaty Constitution which every man and woman recording a vote in Ireland ought to know by heart—one which is never alluded to by Free State Ministers—Article 7 (b). Loudly and incessantly these Ministers expounded Article 49, assuring the people that by virtue of it they are safe from participation in England's wars. Mr. Fitzgerald referred to it when he said:—*

"As to the position in case Great Britain was at war, it was absolutely recognised that the Saorstát could only be bound by a decision of its own Government."

Again, in view of impending discussions all Mr. Fitzgerald's diplomatic tact was required. He qualified his statement with a few carefully chosen words: "So far as actual war was concerned," he explained, "the position

was clear, but from the point of view of being technically at war, that might be a difficult matter."

"A difficult matter"—"Technically at war." In these graceful and airy phrases the Minister for External Affairs alluded to an agreement which looms like a brooding volcano over the future of Ireland, threatening the very existence of the people. It is the language of a politician who does not scruple to conspire with the enemies of his country to deceive the credulous people who elected him.

England's Difficulty.

"England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity" has been a saying cherished in the hearts of Irish patriots, however defeated, however near to despair. "When England is at war again," young and old have thought, "our chance will come." But did not English Statesmen overhear that saying? Did they not realise its significance and provide against the threat? Did they not, with the connivance of Irishmen, insert in the Treaty Article 7 (b)?

What was the purport of that clause, the intention of the British Statesmen who inserted it? They have answered the question bluntly enough themselves.

In December, 1922, the Free State Constitution was laid before the British House of Commons and House of Lords for their approval and consent. The members examined it, clause by clause, relating and comparing the various articles to make sure that England's interests were thoroughly safeguarded; no smallest loophole through which a hope of Irish Independence might penetrate might be allowed to remain.

Lord Sydenham observed a discrepancy and pointed it out:

"Article 7 (b) of the Treaty provides that the Government of the Free State shall afford His Majesty's Imperial Forces—

'In time of war or of strained relations with a foreign power such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purpose of such defence as aforesaid.'

But now turn to Article 49 of the Constitution, and what we have is this:

"Save in the case of actual invasion, the Irish Free State (Saorstát Eireann) shall not be committed to active participation with any war without the assent of the Oireachtas."

It is very difficult to believe that these two Articles are in Agreement."

The Earl of Selborne realised that the two Articles would not conflict, for the reason that Article 49 was rendered ineffective when taken in conjunction with the rest. "Is it not the case," he asked, "that there can be no neutrality within the Empire, that the whole Empire, including Ireland, is either at war or at peace, and that, although the Irish Free State Government might refuse

* See interview with Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald in the "Irish Independent" of October 7th, 1926.

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to send a single regiment to the war, they are, nevertheless, in a state of war if the Empire is at war?"

The Free State was to be a part of the Empire; that in itself would make neutrality impossible; but they had "made assurance double sure." The reply of the Lord Chancellor solved all doubts:—

"There is no question here of neutrality by their giving facilities neutrality goes."

The Irish people are thus doubly trapped; by becoming British subjects they make England's foreign relations, England's quarrels and crimes, England's enemies and England's wars their own; by giving facilities to England in war time they make Ireland a battle-ground. The situation was summarised by Mr. Churchill in forcible and simple words:—

"When the King declares war all subjects of the British Empire and all the Dominions of the Crown are from that moment at war . . . and an enemy may attack them, may attack their ships, or may imprison their citizens."

Giving Facilities.

"England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." How ably, with the help of their Irish abettors, have English Statesmen provided against that historic threat. "England's difficulty"—"strained relations" with a foreign power need no sooner become apparent than England, legally, according to the Treaty and Constitution, may proceed to make Ireland a base of war. She has her garrisons already, equipped and vigilant, in the Six Counties and the four Ports. She has, moreover, a green uniformed army, twelve thousand strong, under a Minister of Defence, who has sworn faith and fealty to the English King. Should these Irish soldiers refuse aid to England they will not be "neutrals"; should they fight for her enemies they will not be "belligerents"; it is "rebels" and "traitors" that they will be—not only in English parlance, but by their own Constitution and law. And she has a Treason Act, passed by a Dublin Parliament, by which Irish "rebels" can be legally and constitutionally hanged.

There is no limit, expressed or implied in the Constitution as to the "facilities," which "the British Government may require." England's armies may occupy and fortify Ireland from North to South and demand the aid of the Free State Government in doing so. English ships may harbour in every port, English aircraft be stationed in every plain. England's enemies may bombard our coasts, blockade us, destroy our shipping, land where they are able, send poison gas over our fields, and bomb our towns and villages from the air. Irishmen who befriend England may be shot or captured by her enemies; Irishmen who resist England may be hanged as rebels and traitors to their Sovereign Lord the King. That is the situation which Article 7 (b) is capable of creating, and which Article 49 can do nothing whatever to prevent. That is the neutrality secured

to Ireland under the Treaty and Constitution of the Free State. But if the worst befell we have this consolation—we should only in Mr. Fitzgerald's delicate phrase, be "technically at war," the women and children would be "technically" in concentration camps, the Irishmen who died fighting for England, or against her, would be only "technically" dead.

Deceiving The People.

Had Irish leaders who preferred the Treaty with all surrender and all its perilous entanglements to the risk of immediate war, put the alternative fairly to the people, their conduct could not be indicted, although their judgment might have been blamed. But what is to be thought of leaders who, from first to last, used all their ability to conceal from the people the true nature of the Treaty which they were urging them to accept, who withheld the Constitution until the morning of the election and silenced their opponents by war, imprisonment and executions, while they passed it into law; who dominated the elections of 1923 by a species of military terror, and now, when elections are again impending, lie to the people again?

The people of Ireland have never, knowingly and willingly, voted for Partition, or for giving "facilities" to England, or for an Oath of Allegiance to the English King. The Treaty for which they voted was an imaginary thing, pictured for them in the mendacious speeches of Free State Ministers and the Free State press. It was a Treaty which was to bring about a united Ireland, a fully-constituted Nation in which there would not remain one English regiment or a scintilla of English rule—a Sovereign State, recognised as such by the world, free from all implication in England's wars, with a Government owing allegiance to the Irish people and to the Irish people alone—a Republic in all but name. It was for such a State that the people voted, deliberately duped and imposed upon by men who are Ministers to-day.

The Lessons of Experience.

It is by cruel experience only that the people are learning the truth. They have learnt certain lessons already—that the Treaty means the loss of Six Counties, and English garrisons on Irish soil; a status so mean that the free nations scarcely remember that Ireland exists; an Oath of Allegiance which excludes from the legislature all but sworn supporters of the British Crown; a Constitution which makes the Republican movement treason in accordance with English law.

They have more lessons yet to learn and one is the import of Article 7 (b). Will they learn that lesson from the Imperial Conference and extricate themselves from Imperial allegiance as best they may, or will they wait to be taught by experience, as before? Will they continue to listen to the diplomatic expositions of Free State Ministers and entertain the gentle illusion of neutrality until, some day, they are rudely awakened to find Ireland "technically at war"?

DOROTHY MACARDLE.

The Meanest Crime

Continued from column 3, page 5.

in water. This "wondrous wavy curly hair" producer can be profitably sold in bottles at 1/6 each.

There is another plan for producing wonderful hair effects with strong black tea and bay rum mixed up and sold at 1/6 per bottle.

Valetta Beauty Clay and Valetta Vanishing Cream are also "plans" for money-making.

A Literary Plan.

The hard-up out-of-work man or woman can also try a literary plan which he, or she, is told can be made to show a good profit. Start a library by selling 200 members 200 2/- novels which clients are told can be bought at 9d. each, so that each member shows a profit of 1/3 to start with.

Then there is the "silent salesman" plan which clients are told is the idea of a "Chicago Editor." The "silent salesman" is just an envelope. "Nothing more or less than the complete selling talk printed on it. In the envelope place the merchandise to be sold."

The unemployed man or woman having manufactured hair washes and hair wavers and put them into bottles, labelled them, can put them into "silent salesman" covers, leave them at houses and call back in the evening for either the money or the unsold "goods." That is what is called "easy as pie." The same can be done in disposing of packets of post cards. The "Mail Order" plan can also be worked side by side with the "silent salesman" plan. There is a fortune in a mixture of salicylic acid, some extract of cannabis and some collodion as a cure for coras, at 1/3, and the same can be made at the expense of unfortunate sufferers from rheumatism and gout, for which clients give in return a small portion of a mixture mainly of methylated spirit and camphor.

Fortunes From Fat.

If the clients purchase some white Castile soap and melt about 12 lbs. of it in some soft water and then stir in some sulphate of magnesia and some pink colouring matter, they are in possession of "Obesity Soap," which we are told will reduce fat. It must be well advertised in ladies' magazines and "put up" in a fancy wrapper.

Boot polish is another good plan "for money-making," but all the "plans" sent out at 2/- a batch seem to be based on the amount of gullibility prevalent among the public, and no count of conscience on the part of the clients who can produce these "goods" at less than a few pence per bottle or packet and sell it at usurious prices. That, of course, may be "business," just as it is "business" to sell these sixteen pages of deception at 2/-. Our whole objection to the thing is that the "clients" are led into it by false pretences and that the advertizer should state in the Dublin catch-penny daily and evening newspapers in a perfectly honest, straightforward and genuine language what their proposal is and not further draw them on by tempting circulars.

IRELAND AT THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

Old Principles Changed for a New Allegiance

There are diseased conditions of the human organism in which the poison can best be conquered by injecting into the system solutions of the same poison in increasing strength, until at last resistance is stimulated and the destructive bacillus overcome.

So, too, in the body politic, corrupting poisons sometimes thrive unchecked, almost unnoticed, so stealthy is their advance, until at last no remedy is to be hoped for save that some sudden and violent increase of the evil will provoke a reaction which will bring it quickly to an end.

It would be with bitter shame only, were it not that there is the hope also of some such cure for Ireland's desperate malady, that a Republican could watch the proceedings of Free State Ministers at the Imperial Conference.

Two Ways.

The history of the Irish Free State has come to a crisis there. For the Irishmen who chose to administer the Treaty there were two ways open, and now, in London, the moment has come when they are forced finally to reveal by which road they have elected to go.

The unwritten understandings that govern the status of Canada, the "meticulous ambiguity" of the Treaty and Treaty-Constitution, and the secret promises given by the English to the Irish signatories, created a situation in which it remained possible for these Ministers to insist upon a certain measure of respect for Ireland's separate Nationality and for all that is symbolised in the names of the leaders of the Rising of 1916. But they have not chosen to take that way; they have preferred—with servile and officious haste—to precipitate themselves along the path of Empire and to proclaim their change of heart with an enthusiasm which elevates their utterances into an almost poetic strain.

The man who promises a false allegiance, who endeavours to maintain a position

founded upon evasions, and makes a pretence of loyalty to two contrary things, is doomed, sooner or later, to find himself in a dilemma in which one of these pretences must be foregone.

In such a difficult position did Mr. Cosgrave find himself on October 19th, when he was called upon to attend the unveiling of a Memorial at Westminster Abbey to the men of the British Empire who fell in the Great War. He did not go. He sent Mr. Kevin O'Higgins to represent him. In a letter to the British Premier he explained his reason: Mr. O'Higgins had not, like Mr. Cosgrave, been a comrade of the leaders of Easter Week.

Had Mr. Cosgrave, then, at last bethought himself of Ireland's honour? Had he resolved fearlessly to uphold her dignity and vindicate her heroes in the citadel of the Empire that had sent them to their death? Was he remembering with chivalrous compassion the mother of Pearse, the widow of Tom Clarke, and all who mourn still for the men who died for Ireland in 1916? Did he hope, by showing so much reverence, to make some atonement for the tragic history of four ignominious years? Unhappily, that was not his thought. His reference to the men whom England executed was in a different mood: "So far as those who were killed amongst my companions are concerned," he wrote, "time and subsequent happy developments have almost completely cicatrised the wound."

Those whose sentiments he feared to offend by his presence at Westminster Abbey were the relatives of the British soldiers who fell in that fight. They, Mr. Cosgrave confesses, still mourn their dead.

"Happy Developments."

"The subsequent happy developments" to which Mr. Cosgrave referred involved the imprisonment of the widow and sisters of the O'Rahilly, the daughter of James Connolly, the widow and the sisters and brothers of Joseph Plunkett, and the widow and the son of John MacBride. It is by such means that those would have been "cicatrised," and that Mr. Cosgrave has proved his new allegiance to be more fervent and enduring than the old.

His letter to Mr. Baldwin has been acclaimed in England as a model of style, of admirable sentiments simply and beautifully expressed.

In the chair at the table of the Imperial Conference which Mr. Lloyd George offered to Eamonn De Valera in June, 1921, and which De Valera refused then, and refused in December again, Mr. Cosgrave sits. Moreover, he has sworn true faith and fealty to the British Government, and, finally, has publicly proclaimed that no indignation remains in him against those who executed his comrades of Easter Week. Better than their lifelong devoted servants the English love a repentant rebel: Mr. Cosgrave has won their hearts.

Memories of Birkenhead.

Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, having, from the moment when he voted for the Treaty, taken a position frank in its repudiation of all the Republican principles he had once avowed, found himself in no such awkward dilemma. His opportunity was not forced upon him; he made it for himself on the occasion of the dinner at the Irish Club in London on October 25th. His statement there, as reported by the "Irish Independent," makes the reader dizzy as a rider on a whirlingig when the motion is suddenly reversed. It was of Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Winston Churchill chiefly that he spoke. These names conjure up vivid images to Irish minds: "Galloper Smith" standing shoulder to shoulder with Carson in 1912, threatening war to the knife should Ireland be given Home Rule; Lord Birkenhead in Downing Street on the night of December 6th, 1921, supporting Lloyd George's threat to the reluctant Irish Delegates of "immediate and terrible war." There are speeches of his, made during the tragic months of 1922, that will not go from our memories yet awhile: that of March 8th, congratulating himself that now the task of suppressing Irish Republicans would be carried out "with an economy of English lives"; that of March 16th about "putting down the turbulent population of the South of Ireland" by the shedding of "Irish blood"; his statement of March 22nd that thirteen battalions

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of British troops and some 15,000 rifles for the police have been supplied to "Ulster" and that "if the whole thing breaks down . . . it can be corrected in two days either by military, naval or economic weapons." That of the 27th, when he spoke of the signs which "encouraged" him—above all, the fact that all the forces in Ireland which "contend for a Republic" are "ranging themselves in implacable hostility to Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins." His remark of May 11th that he had "reason to suppose" that a "concerted and organised attempt" on the part of the Provisional Government would be made to deal with the Irish Republicans. And certain passages from his exultant speech of July 6th when the Provisional Government had taken the action which he so ardently desired:—

"Three or four weeks ago we were deploring in this House, and we were genuinely misunderstanding, the relationship that had been entered into between Mr. Collins and Mr. Griffith, of the Provisional Government, and Mr. De Valera, and the so-called Pact, which was entered into between these personages, occasioned no small anxiety to the Government. Events have developed since then and the position to-day is shortly this . . .

They have destroyed in the course of their necessary operations some of the most beautiful and some of the most historic districts of Dublin . . . I, for one, rejoice, as I have said before in this House, that this task, painful, costly, bloody as it must ultimately prove, is being undertaken by those to whom it properly falls, by those to whom it as directly falls as it would fall in the case of any Dominion which was menaced within by domestic dissension . . .

Consider . . . only a short year ago these men and those whom they are attacking were banded together under a single uniform—the uniform of the Irish Republican Army—in order to destroy all that they thought was left of British Sovereignty and authority in Ireland . . .

I am even bold enough—cautious as I have been throughout all these discussions—to say that at the moment the situation is more hopeful than it has been at any moment since this Treaty was come to."

Winston Churchill's Part.

Such memories as these we keep of the

part played in Irish history by him, and no less sinister was Winston Churchill's part. It was he who, in the House of Commons on June 26th, 1922, threatened the Provisional Government with instant retribution unless they brought the occupation of the Four Courts "to an end, and a speedy end."

His plans had been deeply laid; on the same day he said:—

"His Majesty's Government have supplied the Government of Northern Ireland with upwards of 50,000 stands of arms and all the equipment necessary for a defence force organised upon that scale. All this process was completed three or four weeks ago, and it constitutes the second half of the policy which we have been pursuing since the Treaty was signed."

It was he who, contrary to all justice, while Erskine Childers was being tried for his life, denounced him as "a mischievous and murderous renegade," thus giving Mr. O'Higgins the cue for his terrible speech of November 17th, in which he explained the preparatory execution of four Irishmen and authority for the judicial murder of Erskine Childers while his case was pending Appeal.

"Men Who Willed Peace."

Was it such occasions as these that Mr. O'Higgins had in his mind when he responded to Lord Birkenhead at the Irish Club?

"His people knew Lord Birkenhead," he said, "as being a very real and sincere friend of their country. Always when things were difficult Lord Birkenhead had showed himself a real friend, and he was glad to have the opportunity of stating that fact publicly."

"There followed in the months after the signing of the Treaty very difficult times for the signatories. It was well in those days that they had men of the type of Lord Birkenhead, Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir A. Chamberlain to deal with, men who willed peace."*

Ireland is poor, the people discouraged, defeated in their bravest hope, disillusioned in the boon they purchased at the price, almost, of the nation's soul. Promises and pretences are breaking down; the future is uncertain. Magnificent is the Metropolis of Empire with its demonstrations of wealth and unholy power.

Mr. O'Higgins has chosen his friends.

DOROTHY MACARDLE.

*See "Irish Independent" of Oct. 26th, 1926.

The Shannon Scheme

The great "Shannon Scheme" with all its possibilities and so much boosted now-a-days for the improvement of the farming industry—small or great—will, no doubt, be used now as a shibboleth by Ministers and T.D.s seeking the suffrages of the electors. Everybody knows that the small Irish farmer—of whom there are upwards of 200,000 in the Free State—is always unwilling to fall in with new ideals, whether they come from a Minister or a philanthropist. The reluctance of farmers to adopt new machinery and new methods leads us to the conclusion that agriculture will be one of the last industries to call in the aid of electrical appliances; and in view of the economy and realibility of the small oil engine, it is difficult to see how any saving can be effected by generating electric current and distributing it to motors in outlying positions. When, however, the mains from some large electric power company pass within reach of a farm, the conditions are much more favourable. An interesting account of the application of electricity to a group of farms in Saxony was given some time ago in a paper called "Electrical Engineering." In this case current was brought from an adjacent town by overhead wires carried upon wooden poles. Two receiving stations were arranged from which the electricity was distributed to the farm-buildings. Sixteen fixed electric motors were installed for chaff and root-cutting, oat-crushing, and for operating machinery used in the manufacture of "potato spirit." In addition to this power equipment, six portable motors were provided. The houses and buildings on the farms were all lit by electricity, nine arc lamps and about one thousand glow lamps being used for the purpose. This example can only be compared to a large estate or group of farms in this country, and it is more than doubtful that the "Shannon Scheme," through whose agency we have heard so much about the resuscitation of our dying farming industry, could, with our many scattered and uneconomic holdings, be a commercial success. For the operation of farming machinery, pure and simple, it is, with us, we think, outside the question. It would appear that wood-sawing and other operations requiring power must be included if the results are to compare favourably with those obtained by the use of oil or steam engines.

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Document No. 2

A Chara—In the very interesting article by "Sentinel" in your issue of July 31st, one statement occurs which would, I fear, increase the misunderstandings you are anxious to prevent, it is that "Document No. 2 even if accepted by the British Government, would not mean the setting up of an Irish Republic no more than the Treaty Articles of Agreement which were sanctioned."

Now, the Treaty makes Ireland a Monarchy; it makes the King of England King of Ireland, North and South.

You will not find in Document No. 2 one word or hint that does this; you will not find one word that makes Ireland a Monarchy with "a King of the House of Windsor" or any King.

Document No. 2 would, if accepted, have made the Irish people free to have the ruler and form of Government of their own choice. They had already established a Republic. Document No. 2 did not disestablish the Republic; it left the existing State unchanged, merely proposing for it a certain foreign policy. Document No. 2 would have given us an Irish Republic in external association with other States of which Great Britain would be one. When the Representatives of those States met to discuss matters of common concern, the King of Great Britain or his Minister would preside and when, by unanimous consent of all the associated States, "concerted action" was decided upon, that action would be taken in his name. He would, so to speak, be the President of the Group—but King of Ireland he would not be.

Document No. 2 is of no practical interest now, but I believe it will interest historians as a most statesmanlike effort to wrest unity out of chaos, peace out of war, and victory out of defeat. I trust, therefore, that you will forgive me for correcting a mistaken interpretation of its effect.

DOROTHY MacARDLE.