

IRISH NEWS

WHAT IS SINN FEIN?

Since the Declaration of Independence of the Irish Republic the press has had much to say of Sinn Fein. Imperialists cloud a great issue by harping on the excesses of individuals, and characterise the Sinn Fein movement as radicalism of every shade and color. Americans ill acquainted with Irish history think of Sinn Fein as the name of a political party, and criticise it favorably or unfavorably, according to their political views. Sinn Fein is bigger than any movement and deeper than any political tenet. It is the expression of a nation's soul, just as the declaration of Independence of the thirteen original colonies was the expression of the American soul. The *Dublin Republic* editorially shows the true meaning of Sinn Fein:—

"An enemy possesses our shores, compelling our acceptance of his forms of government even to the sending of our chosen representatives to his Parliament, where they become corrupted and where the separate identity and thought of Ireland is lost. It is therefore our first duty to cure this ill by refusing to accept the enemy's forms of government. Instead of turning our thoughts outward to the ends of the earth, be it Westminster or be it Washington, we must turn our thoughts in upon ourselves. We must assure ourselves to be that which we desire to be; and by concentrated thought upon ourselves not in any spirit of selfishness, but in exercise of spiritual discipline, we will make ourselves strong and self-reliant."

From this self-reliant spirit there arises the determination to "carry on" in the face of an army of occupation, to devise forms of government, to restore national culture, to stimulate trade and open up natural resources that are the bone and sinew of trade. These and other things like unto these will we do, firm in the faith that our salvation lies not in the ends of the earth, but in our own right hand, in our own wise brain, and our own clean intention and honest procedure. It will require infinite self-sacrifice, but with God helping us we can do no other." Surely there is no temporising or policy in such an aspiration. Politics in the common meaning of the term *politiké* has no reference whatever to an ideal so hotly expressed and so heroically followed. Separate political policies are welded into one united national aim seeking for the noblest ideal of citizenship. This in truth is Sinn Fein. Neither a political party nor a sporadic movement, but a great national ideal entering into every phase of a nation's life, appealing to the highest and the noblest in the individual citizen and expressing the Irish nation's soul.

HOW SINN FEIN VIEWS THE NEW IRISH PROPOSALS.

The less unscrupulous of the English papers are admitting that Ireland has broken British power in America, and some of those papers are now trying to turn the English Government from its Irish policy of "knives out." "Few Englishmen," says the *London New Statesman* in its current issue, "realise the effect that continuance of the war against Ireland is having on the minds of the most ardent friends of England in that country. They see around them . . . a regime which would not be tolerated for a moment by white people in any other portion of the British Empire. . . . The rule of Lord French and Mr. Macpherson" is, it says, "a master outrage which was almost bound to produce a crop of outrages on the other side." As long as English coercion in Ireland could be kept hidden from the world the English press actively or passively condoned that coercion. But the old times are gone. President de Valera and the Sinn Fein members generally have seen to it that every act of English aggression in Ireland is blazoned to the world, and eventually even Englishmen have been compelled to admit their savage domination of the Irish nation.

Yet it is this same England whose regime "would not be tolerated for a moment by white people in any other part of the British Empire" which is now for the thousandth time arranging an Irish settlement. Having bound and gagged the democracy of Ireland, England set up a Cabinet Committee which is already reported to have found a solution. The solution consists in a Parliament for all Ireland, of which any county can vote itself. The counties which choose so to vote are to have a governing authority elected by themselves, and both that authority and the remnant of the "Parliament" are to be subject to a body to be nominated by Lord French and Mr. Macpherson, the very couple whose rule is admitted in the press of England itself to be a "master outrage." This gorgeous "solution" has been come to after a month of secret conniving. During that month the goodwill of England was shown to us in a multitude of acts of aggression, comprising 99 arrests, 62 suppressions, 181 raids on private houses, more

than a score of armed assaults on civilians, and sentences totalling for that one month above 11 years and two months. In these circumstances it is not necessary even to state that were the "solution" just discovered the widest of all measures of self-government it would be rejected with a national anger unsurpassed even in our history. As it is, the "settlement" which the Cabinet connivers are reputed to have produced is not worth even a moment's anger by one Irishman. The thing is not even a good joke, though it might become such if England's political engineers have the hardihood to endeavor to impose it upon a nation which has made up its mind about what it wants, and is making up its strength to make sure of getting it.

STRANGLING IRISH SHIPPING.

An effort is being made to strangle direct shipping between Ireland and America. The allegation is made in a letter addressed by Messrs. Sean T. O'Connell and G. Gavan Duffy, to Mr. Frank L. Polk, chief of the American Commission to negotiate peace; Ambassador H. C. Wallace and Ambassador J. W. Davis. Accompanying the letters are documents directing how American sailors touching Irish ports are to be treated by the Irish authorities.

"England heretofore," they say, "has controlled commercial relations between the two countries by sealing up Irish ports. This compelled America to trade with Ireland only through English ports. England thus was able to collect approximately 15 cents on every dollar's worth of trade between Ireland and America. Lately Irish and American commercial interests have established direct trading routes to eliminate this British exploitation. England has already shown her active hostility to this Irish-American commercial arrangement in many ways. The case of the American-owned s.s. *Lake Gretna* is an example. This vessel arrived with full cargo for Dublin and Belfast, but could take no return cargo because the Dublin agents and the American Consul were prevented from getting cables through to the United States." The statement here reiterates the facts already published with regard to the charges in respect of a consignment of scale. "The British Government openly showed her efforts to strangle direct commercial relations between Ireland and Europe when she issued a notice that permits would be granted for the export from Ireland on license of a limited number of horses and cattle for the devastated areas of Belgium and France, but the exports must be sent via British ports, and not direct from Ireland."

The covering letter sent, with the text of the secret order against American sailors, to Messrs. Polk, Wallace, and Davis, read as follows:—"His Excellency Hugh C. Wallace, Ambassador of the U.S. of America, Paris. Your Excellency.—We have the honor to transmit to you herewith . . . copy of secret instructions issued officially. . . . As your Excellency may be aware, a vigorous effort is now being made . . . to revive direct commercial relations between Ireland and the U.S. of America. Already these efforts have met with considerable success, and U.S. steamers laden with American cargoes are now calling at the Irish ports of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork. English commercial interests have for so long controlled and exploited the trade between America and Ireland, out of which they have derived enormous profits, that it is not surprising that these interests view with grave concern the passing from them of this control, and the development by American commercial interests of closer and direct relations with Ireland. This attempt to interfere with . . . efforts to revive and develop the closer commercial relations of Ireland with the U.S. of America, to the profit and advantage of both countries, is deeply resented in Ireland. It is significant that these instructions refer only to ships flying the American flag, and we feel fully assured that it is for the purpose of retaining in England, for English interests and to the exclusion of the U.S. of America, the profits derived from Irish trade, that these instructions are issued." The letter was signed by Messrs. Sean T. O'Connell and G. Gavan Duffy.

The Rev. Father Howlett, O.M.I., one of the best-known and revered of men in Griqualand East, South Africa, died there on August 29. Father Howlett went to Griqualand 36 years ago, and, as the local newspaper acknowledges, during all that long period he was the spiritual father and fast friend of his flock, and was respected by all professing other religious beliefs, among whom he had many friends. To him no man was outside the pale: all were present or potential Christians. Following in the footsteps of the Master, Father Howlett "went about doing good," and his death leaves a big blank in the religious life of a community that, being on a frontier dividing Christianity from heathenism in South Africa, has great need of the consolations of the Holy Catholic Faith.