

IRISH NEWS

GENERAL.

The London *Daily News* of November 23, contains the remarkable story of an "Irish Outrage." An explanation of the mysterious shooting by a sentry at Marrowbone-lane depot of the Air Department, Dublin, last week (says the *Daily News*), is now forthcoming. At midnight the sentry saw objects on the wall of the depot, and, taking them to be raiders, fired. Other soldiers coming on the scene joined in the fusillade. The police, when they investigated the occurrence on the following morning, found three dead goats in a corner of the depot yard. The owner is claiming £10 compensation from the authorities.

Mr. Arthur Griffith, Acting-President of the Irish Self-Determination Movement, referring at a Sinn Fein demonstration in Liverpool on November 20, to the shooting of Constable Dowling in Dublin a few weeks earlier, declared that he was murdered by three thieves. The Castle Government had stopped investigation which would have led to the arrest of the assassins, because they knew that if the men were arrested the world would see that what had been trumpeted forth as a Sinn Fein murder was in fact a murder by ordinary criminals.

"If Canada or Australia experienced the tyranny now being exercised over Ireland, they would cut the painter at once." This was Mr. G. B. Shaw's summing up of the Irish situation in an address in London on November 28. Industrial Ireland was almost the same as industrial England, but what was peculiar was the political conditions. They had more police in Ireland than in any other country relatively to the population, and they required 60,000 soldiers to protect the police. They could not govern Ireland in that way. Ireland wanted and liked a strong Government, and yet there was practically no law in the country. The reason was that they could not possibly govern without the consent of the people.

The new Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alderman Tom Kelly, M.P. for Stephen's Green, has been associated with Mr. Arthur Griffith as a Sinn Fein apostle from the start of the movement. For many years he has been a popular and respected member of the Dublin Corporation, and has always felt a great pride in his native city, with whose history and traditions he is intimately acquainted. At the meeting of the municipal council on April 19, 1916, he read the extraordinary document alleged to have been prepared by the military authorities for the arrest of prominent Irishmen, the occupation of certain buildings in the city, and the isolation of others. He did not take part in the rising, but was deported on the suppression of the insurrection. On the arrest of Messrs. de Valera and Griffith in May last, Professor MacNeill and himself represented the two prisoners on the Mansion House Conference. Alderman Kelly was responsible for the starting of the "Aonach" and the Sinn Fein Bank. He has for many years taken an active interest in the housing problem in Dublin. He was arrested on some political charge or other a few weeks ago, and is now in gaol, without trial. In connection with the imprisonment of the Lord Mayor-elect of Dublin a cable message to the daily press dated London, February 18, says that in the event of Alderman Kelly not being allowed to quit England for the mayoral installation at Dublin on Monday, probably the corporation, headed by the outgoing Mayor, will come to London to instal him.

STRANGLING IRISH TRADE.

A delightful state of affairs is revealed in a few paragraphs from the report of the last meeting of the Foreign Trade Committee of the Irish Development Association (comments the *Irish Weekly*, Belfast, of recent date):—

"There is a demand for Irish hides abroad, both in Europe and America, but the Irish hide exporter is compelled to sell at an average flat rate of, roughly, 1s per lb through the Hide Control Board, the British tanner paying, say, 1s 4½d per lb for the same hide, the difference between these two prices amounting to more than £7000 per week for all Ireland, going to the credit of the Ministry of Food."

Thus, in respect of this branch of the transaction alone, our country is cheated to the extent of at least £364,000 per annum—no inconsiderable addition to the burthen of taxation, apart from its effect on an Irish industry. Capitalised at the present high bank rate of 6 per cent., £364,000 a year represents a sum of £6,066,666. In Belfast we can appreciate the significance of this amount more readily when we consider that if the Corporation had it at their disposal they could build 6700 new houses at the cost of £920 each. But the Committee of the I.D.A. show that much more is done in the way of

"fleecing" Ireland over the hides she sells: "Given a free market for hides, the Irish exporter could sell at about 1s 8d per lb, which would mean an increase in the marketable value of fat stock of about £2 10s per head"; and—"Altogether the loss to Ireland through this control of one of the main subsidiary products of the cattle trade is computed in a carefully documented estimate to be no less than £3,000,000 per year—a loss equally affecting North and South. Which means an addition of £3,000,000 a year in connection with one industry to the burthen of "indirect taxation" which Ireland is compelled to bear. Irish profits from the sale of horses and sheep, wool and mutton, beef and butter, eggs and poultry, potatoes, oats, and barley are "taxed" by similar methods—and more ruthlessly in some cases. Our estimate of the annual cost of the "British connection" under present conditions as £50,000,000 is, we fear, some millions below the real amount.

We can sell four-fifths of our products nowhere except in England and at English-fixed prices only. We must import five-sixths of what we require from England, at English prices, or through England on English ships, paying English companies, English port dues, English clerks and laborers before we get a sight of commodities from America or France—and paying Customs duties to the credit of the English Treasury. These charming arrangements for making and keeping Ireland prosperous have been made quietly and unostentatiously. Of old, Irish commerce was killed by "Navigation Acts." Modern methods are at once simpler and more efficacious. While Irishmen had ships in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was possible to carry on a secret trade with Continental countries, and even with the "American Colonies"; our "contrabandists" were taking away and bringing in "forbidden" goods at many harbors from Dundrum Bay in Co. Down to Bantry Bay in Co. Cork. Now the plan is to keep Ireland without ships—as she is kept without the slightest authority over the development or direction of her own industries and trade. When the Rev. W. Bluc, Mr. "Billy" Coote and Co. get to America they will prove that the Pope is responsible for all these causes of poverty and stagnation.

EVERYTHING BUT LIBERTY.

In the course of an article in the *Sunday Times* on the attitude of English Trades Unionists towards the Irish question, Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., writes:—

"There still remains one cold, hard fact—we have tried everything except Liberty, Force, Police Rule, Coercion Acts, and Military Rule have all been attempted with a view to solving the Irish problem. The only thing not essayed is Liberty. To-day, more than in any other period, we ought to apply the one test not yet put forward—it is the one hope which remains. The Labor Party are neither divided nor lukewarm in their advocacy of what is called Dominion Home Rule. The hope of securing peace out of the permanent partition of Ireland is an impossible one. Ireland ought to be a united nation. We have found no difficulty in the Labor movement in reconciling North and South under the banner of trades unionism. My own union has a membership of nearly 18,000 for the whole of Ireland. I have met both sections of the community, and have not found that bitter partisan and bigoted feeling that we hear so much about in this country. It is for this reason that we believe Ireland should be treated as Canada and Australia and South Africa are treated to-day. Not, let it be observed, as a Republic, for we recognise the Imperial danger and the absurdity of any such proposal. Suppose we had followed the advice of those who, immediately following the South African War, decided to rule the country by the sword. It would have been a very different chapter in history to that recorded to-day. Surely, then, the lesson from all this is clear and unmistakable."

No varnish can hide the grain of the wood; the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself.

Prompted by gratitude towards God for the grace of the faith, by sympathy with the unfortunates of the poor heathen still living in darkness and the shadows of death, ought we not to use every endeavor that at last the blessings of faith may be vouchsafed to those poor nations who know not God?

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