

and honorable of men, has taken his stand from the beginning. Further, we know that Dail Eireann was elected by an overwhelming majority of the Irish people on the same principle. Had we known de Valera better, had we pondered more deeply over the clauses of the agreement, we should not have been astonished when the news came that the President declared that he was unable to recommend its acceptance. To do so would have been, to say the least, inconsistent for him.

### Ireland and the Agreement

The position therefore is that Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, R. C. Barton, and George Gavan Duffy signed the agreement, and undertook to present it to the Dail Eireann for approval. The English signatories made a similar undertaking on their part. After a long session of the Dail Eireann Cabinet, de Valera announced that the terms of the agreement were in such conflict with the will of the people, as expressed at three general elections, that he could not see his way to recommend the Dail and the people to accept them. He also added that in this he had the support of Cathal Brugha, Minister of Defence, and of Austin Stack, Minister for Home Affairs; and it was supposed that the four remaining members of the Cabinet, Messrs. Griffith, Collins, Cosgrove, and Barton, were in favor of recommending its acceptance. Later, it was announced that Arthur Griffith had issued a manifesto declaring that he considered the agreement a sound basis on which to build Ireland's future, and that what he had signed he would stand by. We may take it that Collins, Barton, and Gavan Duffy (of whom the latter is not a member of the Cabinet) agreed with Griffith. De Valera appealed to the people to keep calm, and assured them that the Cabinet was going to carry on. He summoned a meeting of the entire Dail to discuss the matter on Wednesday, December 14. Until news of the decision of the Dail reaches us we must only possess our souls in patience and await the issue. Remember that the agreement is not a peace treaty, but rather an instrument concerning which substantial agreement has been reached as a preliminary for the parliamentary discussions that are to follow. Nobody supposes that the English Parliament will be unanimous on the matter; and it ought not to be astonishing that there are differences of opinion in the Dail Eireann Cabinet. Sir James Craig's Parliament has also to discuss it, and we certainly do not look for unanimity in that quarter. Moreover, he has already begun to ask for more concessions, and surely de Valera is as much entitled to do so as Sir James. From all we know of Griffith and de Valera we do not think their differences of opinion will cause a split in the ranks; and, no matter what happens, so long as the leaders and the people are united we can face the future with equanimity. Possibly the result of the Dail's discussion may be that the terms shall be submitted to the Irish people for approval or rejection; and, in such an event, it is probable that many would say, as did the released prisoners, that what is good enough for Collins is good enough for them. We feel confident that de Valera will do nothing to cause internal dissension. No man knows better that such a catastrophe would mean the undoing of all the splendid work he has done in the past. It would seem that he was bound by his principles to take the momentous step he has taken; and whatever happens in the future no man can say that he was inconsistent or that he did not keep to the letter his unwritten compact with the people of Ireland. He has walked straight forward, never swerving from the path of honor and duty, since the day in Easter Week when he went out with Padraig Pearse. Throughout his career as President he has won the admiration of all by his wonderful tact and judgment. Before self and all that makes life dear to him he has always put the cause of Ireland. And, therefore, even if we do not see clearly now, out here, far away from the scene of action, common sense and prudence must compel us to trust in him and to be assured that he will take no step that in the light of his great mind does not seem for the final and real good of Ireland. Trust, therefore, and also pray that God may bless and guide

the councils of the Irish leaders. De Valera has brought Ireland where she stands at present. Do not forget that but few of us—very few of us—could see how wise he was during the years that have passed since 1916; and be humble enough to refrain from matching our own poor wisdom against his just for a few weeks more. All will come out right in the end. The bitter attacks made on him now by papers that are no friends of Ireland is perhaps a good omen.

### Various Comments

There is no doubt that the premature news that the Irish Question was settled aroused throughout the world great delight and satisfaction. At once cables were despatched to Lloyd George and de Valera from all quarters of the globe, including one from Lauder, sent by Mr. Steve Boreham. According to the reports published in our press, France and Italy were pleased, while India almost regarded it as a victory for herself. The Pope, French statesmen, committees of Self-Determination Leagues, public men, Prime Ministers, all joined in the congratulations. And, once more, in the cause of Ireland the Italian members of parliament stood up and cheered enthusiastically when the news was announced. There is no possibility of doubting that the Irish Question had become the greatest international problem of the day, and tidings of a satisfactory settlement brought widespread relief and joy. The announcement that de Valera could not see his way to recommend Dail Eireann and the people of Ireland to accept came as a shock to many optimistic persons. It certainly damped the universal enthusiasm somewhat, and although we are confident that a settlement is in sight, it would be in vain to pretend that the situation is not tense at the present time. As might be expected the N.Z. Press indulged in the usual sort of silly abuse of de Valera who is far too big and too great a man for our penny-a-liners to understand him. These people always behave as if they suffered from shell-shock when they are confronted with a man who respects principles and consistency. One scribe talked vacuously about leaders with their heads in the air. A few days previously the scribe in question was guilty of saying that the settlement now offered was not substantially better than that rejected five months ago, thus giving most people the idea that there was at least one man in Dunedin who had no head to put in the air or elsewhere. Another editor was equally amusing and equally at sea; but long experience has taught the public that it is vain to expect any manifestation of common sense from these persons when they approach the Irish question. Our old enemy of "Gas and Gaiters" fame performed one of his characteristic "stunts" and informed us that de Valera had given in, which was rather premature, considering all things. However, we have so often exposed the total unreliability of our daily editorials and headlines, where Irish affairs are concerned, that it is almost superfluous to warn our readers to pay no attention to what they find in such sources. The following extract from *America* will give people a luminous idea of how British news is made, and of what it is worth:

Sinn Fein issued this statement on October 21:

"Since the beginning of the negotiations the British Government has continued to make sinister misrepresentations of Ireland's case. Those who drafted the King's reply to the Pope knew the phrase 'trouble in Ireland' was a dishonest description of the British war upon Irish liberties. It suggested that the troubles are among the Irish people and of their own seeking, which is false.

"The North-east Unionists, forming 20 per cent. of the whole people, favor the British connection because for the last hundred years British Governments have given the minority rights and privileges of a majority, coercing the mass of the Irish people and maintaining the ascendancy of the minority.

"Similarly those inserting the ambiguous reference to 'my people' in the King's telegram were aware the words prejudged the whole question of Ireland's declared independence. Peace and friendship are impossible if every expression of good will of other

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