

IRISH NEWS

WESTERN UNREST.

The economic urge behind lawlessness in Connacht was demonstrated tragically the other week, when Mr. Walter Joyce, a well-known Galway landlord, was fatally wounded on his way to Mass (says a Home paper). Mr. Joyce, who owned a large estate, had been involved in frequent differences with his tenants, and some years ago was boycotted severely—owing to his unwillingness to agree to the division of his grazing lands. His murder, which, it appears, was inspired by agrarian passion solely, had no direct political significance, but it shows the demoralising influence which the Republican campaign is having on the "landless" men of Galway. This demoralisation Mr. de Valera and his political supporters should have foreseen, when they propounded the amazing theory that a minority which deemed itself oppressed was entitled to proceed, by any and by every means, to harass and assail those with whom it disagreed.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ HOPEFUL SIGNS.

Although the recent destruction of Sligo railway station was one of the worst incendiary outrages that have been perpetrated as yet in Northern Connacht, there are signs that the Government's authority is becoming more real in that rather unsettled section of the country. Thus six Irregulars in the Erris district have handed in their arms to the local military authorities, and two prominent Republicans in Belmullet have severed their connection with militant opposition to the Treaty—stating that they could no longer identify themselves with a movement so immoral and so disastrous in its effects upon the welfare, peace, and prosperity of Ireland. Both Erris and Belmullet are in the extreme North-West of Co. Mayo; and the partial collapse of the Irregular organisation there shows—I think—that the anarchic elements are steadily losing ground in the Northern Connacht counties.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ OUTRAGES IN DUBLIN.

Recently there has been much violence, though, fortunately, little loss of life in Dublin. Among the exploits of the Republicans in that city lately may be numbered many unsuccessful attacks upon the National forces, several daring efforts to kidnap prominent supporters of the present Ministry, and the destruction of the suburban residence of the President of Dail Eireann. Although it would be tedious to discuss these outrages seriatim, two of them—the raid upon the meeting of the General Council of the County Councils and the kidnapping of Senator Dr. Gogarty—cannot be passed over. The raid upon the General Council's meeting took place on Wednesday, January 10, and was carried out by six armed men, who only departed from the council chamber when they discovered that the citizens they were searching for were not among the assembled county councillors. The kidnapping of Dr. Gogarty occurred two days later, when that eminent medical practitioner was carried from his residence in Ely Place and transported to a lonely country district by a militarist gang. Dr. Gogarty, like the county councillors, suffered no actual injury through the outrage upon his personal freedom, though he—less fortunate than they—only regained his liberty by adopting a clever ruse which enabled him to escape from his dangerous captivity. The important point about these outrages, however, is that they show the entire demoralisation of the forces opposing the Free State. When one of Dublin's leading doctors is kidnapped because he is a Senator, and when the Republicans do not hesitate to use force in the council chamber of a public body—recognised, at least in theory, by themselves as legally and democratically elected—surely they must have lost all hope of retaining any measure of national prestige.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ THE WAY TO PEACE: CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION.

The more we think over the present deplorable situation (says the *Dublin Leader*) the more we are convinced

that the best solution is that those who stand for the republican idea should take their places in the Dail and champion their cause in a constitutional manner. Bombing and burning leads nowhere but to national destruction and demoralisation. The Saorstát was arranged at the end by negotiations, and the pity is that the Party that had control in Irish politics at the time did not do its business in a business-like manner and so bring the negotiations to a satisfactory end. But bombing and burning by a party within the State, a party however big or however small, cannot win peace and settled government.

If the bombers and burners subdued the country by fear they would have to govern the country by fear—there is no light or freedom or national development in that direction. If it be possible that the Saorstát Government can be prevented by terrorism from functioning, surely it is plain that the armed opposition that prevented it from functioning cannot set up itself a government on the will and sanction of the people.

We are not satisfied with the Government of the Saorstát; we could not imagine ourselves being satisfied with any government, for all governments, we fear, are very imperfect affairs tainted with weaknesses, nepotism, jobbery, and other ills that flesh is heir to. But it is one thing not to be satisfied with a government and another to attack it in arms. All governments need incessant and minute watching and criticism. Each government, even in the most educated and advanced state, tends we fear to be a beggar on horseback. Give any human being large political power and unless he is a real saint—and we don't look for saints among politicians—he will tend, if he is little, to become a boulder and however big he may be to become a tyrant. They all need watching and checking.

If the armed opposition of the Saorstát shot every Saorstát T.D., and burned all the houses belonging to them, how far would that bring us on the road to liberty, fraternity, equality, development, civility, and freedom? There is no way out in that direction. Our last State would be worse than is our State to-day, and that is bad and sad enough.

What prevents the believer in a Republic from going into An Dail and working from what is to what he thinks, ought to be? We ask the special attention of our readers to the ruses of Lord Ashbourne on this matter. Lord Ashbourne is an independent man and a man of distinguished ability and great moral courage. He is a convert now of long standing to the Catholic Church, a speaker and writer of Irish. In the course of a letter to the *Leader* he says:—

"There is no reason why a convinced republican should hesitate to take the Parliamentary Oath. French royalists for instance are returned to Parliament for the express purpose of trying to re-establish monarchy in France, and they have no hesitation about taking the oath of fidelity to the Republic. The present writer has, since he reached the age of reason, been a convinced republican, but he has never hesitated to take the oath of fidelity, magisterial or Parliamentary. In the case of Great Britain, the oath, as it stands, presupposes a revolution, which took place more than 200 years ago, and the words, according to law, imply that the law can be altered, and that members of Parliament can work to get it altered. Then a Parliamentary oath binds a member—(1) during the existence of a particular Parliament; (2) so long as he is a member; and (3) in his capacity as a member. But there is nothing to prevent him working to get the law altered or to create an atmosphere which may be useful later on. It is therefore evident that you are right in saying that nothing can be done in the absence of a constitutional opposition, and, on the other hand, it is hard to see a limit to what might be done if we had one."

We are inclined to smile when Tom, Dick, or Harry says that 20, 30, 60, and 95 per cent. of the people are for this or that. Our mind is a blank as to what proportion of the present inhabitants of Ireland would like an Irish Republic, so we leave it at that; personally we are sick of the very word—and it is only a word for it may mean almost anything, and it stands for many bad and evil things. But if people want a republic why not go into An Dail and strive for it? They cannot get it by bombing, ambushing, and burning.

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