

Irish Free State's Last Words to Irregulars

PRESIDENT COSGRAVE REFUSES FURTHER
PARLEY.

The Republicans (says the *Manchester Guardian* for February 23) continue to set fire to Government buildings and to the houses of any to whom they bear a grudge. Members of the old Southern Unionist class are the especial victims. On Wednesday simultaneous attempts were made about midday to burn Government offices in Dublin. Only a few papers were destroyed, and several of the raiders were captured.

Lord French's house in Roscommon was looted on Monday, and a Senator's house in Co. Waterford was burned down. In the same county two large residences were burned to the ground on Sunday.

The houses of two Republican women in Dublin were wrecked early on Monday morning. These attacks are presumed to be unofficial reprisals for the destruction of the house of a member of the Dail the previous evening.

A train was set on fire and destroyed near Dublin on Monday night.

Engagements between Free State forces and Irregulars are reported from several counties. In Co. Galway on Wednesday a flying column of 18 men was surrounded and captured.

The Association of ex-Members of the Irish Republican Army has appealed to the Free State Government and the Republicans to agree to a month's truce to enable the Association to put forward peace proposals. The Association claims to speak for 20,000 men who belonged to the I.R.A. at the time of the truce with the British forces, but have since stood aside from internecine strife. Following are the suggested conditions:—

"That on the Republican side all military activities and acts of aggression against public and private persons and property shall be suspended.

"That on the Free State side all military activities, arrests, trials, and executions shall be suspended."

The Free State Government's amnesty offer to the Irregulars expired on Sunday. Surrender of arms was not very general among the Irregulars.

Last Word to the Rebels.

President Cosgrave has announced that the Government will not consider peace suggestions. The immediate prospect is dark. The following is the statement made by Mr. Cosgrave:—

"The statement is being diligently circulated by the Irregular leaders that the Government has made, or caused to be made, overtures for peace. So we have learned from correspondence recently captured. The statement is a deliberate falsehood. No such overture has been made by the Government or by any agent of the Government. The Government's terms of peace are clear and unequivocal, and they have been long since published to the Irregulars and to the world. No other terms have been proposed by or on behalf of the Government. No other terms will be entertained.

"While the Government has commissioned no agents to tamper with this clear and straight position, many persons have presented themselves to the Government professing to bear offers of peace terms from various and widely scattered groups of Irregulars in Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Kerry, Wexford, Dublin, Sligo. Every man of these knows the falsehood of the story now told by their leaders.

"It is then a solemn duty to repeat clearly and specifically, so that all may read and know:—

"The Government is determined to put down this revolt against democracy, regardless of the cost. Let no man be deceived. If anyone continues in this unnatural war upon his own people after the expiration of the stated period of amnesty, he must be prepared to pay the price in full, for there will be no going back upon this. Further, let it be clearly understood that there will be no meetings for negotiations on the part of the Government with de Valera, Liam Lynch, or any of their collaborators in destruction, male or female.

"The guns and ammunition which the Irregulars have

been trying to borrow or buy from Russia may add to the destruction, but will not bring de Valera or any of his tail appreciably near to either alternative of their programme, either victory over or extermination of the Irish nation."

Mr. de Valera has again abandoned the strict Republican position, and announces that he will accept Document No. 2, the alternative to the Irish Treaty which he put forward during the negotiations 14 months ago.

NEW UNARMED POLICE.

Fourteen hundred men of the new Civic Guard paraded through the streets of the capital on Tuesday. Under the command of the Chief Commissioner, General O'Duffy, they set out from Marlborough Barracks, their headquarters, to the music of brass and pipes. On the steps of the Government buildings in Merrion Street stood President Cosgrave, accompanied by other Ministers of the Free State, to take their salute as they marched past. The President expressed the general view when he said afterwards: "The Guards are a splendid force, and Ireland ought to be proud of them," for the blue-uniformed men looked fit, smart, and steady.

A space in the neighborhood of the Government buildings was swept clear by troops with fixed bayonets, but along the rest of the route considerable crowds collected to witness the parade.

The Guards returned to their depot to be addressed by Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Home Affairs. He impressed it on them that they were upholding the people's law impartially and impersonally, and they had reacted well to discipline because they were impersonal and impartial. They were not the servants of a particular Administration, but were, just as Ministers were, the servants of the people.

When Mr. O'Higgins touched later upon the "bad corner" which the Civic Guard had successfully turned, he was alluding to a crisis which, in the early days of the force, threatened to ruin it altogether. Agents of the Republicans enlisted themselves in the newly-formed force for the express purpose of seducing the loyal men from their allegiance, and vigorous action had to be taken to root them out. The discipline of the force is now excellent, by the accounts.

The men who marched through Dublin are still under training at their depot. The other two-thirds of the force, which number nearly 4000 altogether, are spread in small detachments all over the country, and they have been extremely well received in most of the districts which they are policing. The Irregulars have attacked many of their barracks, well knowing that the occupants had no means of defence, but have never yet succeeded in driving them out of a district once they have taken up their posts in it. If their barracks are bombed or burned, they shift into other quarters, that is all. If only one house is left standing in the district, said Mr. O'Higgins, then they will occupy that.

The same Minister told some of us the other day that when the Civic Guard barracks at Dundrum was destroyed the occupants merely migrated into the house of Mr. Patrick Little in the same town. By those who know Mr. Little and his propagandist activities on behalf of his fellow-Republicans the joke is considered rather a good one.

Republicans' New Order.

A quaint document has been issued by the Republicans. It is evidently designed to lend verisimilitude to the theory that Mr. de Valera, who has appended his signature to the pronouncement, is at the head of a *de facto* Government; one would, nevertheless, be surprised to learn that even Mr. de Valera takes it quite seriously. It is set out in Irish with an English translation, headed "British boycott order No. 6," and its purpose is to resuscitate and enlarge the five earlier boycott orders which were promulgated by Sinn Fein during the early months of 1921 before the truce with England was signed.

"Whereas," says the new order, "this unjust and grievous war of aggression is still pursued with increased bitterness by Great Britain through her creatures and agents in Ireland, now therefore it is hereby ordered that from the date hereof the aforesaid orders shall be rigidly enforced, and that the list of boycotted goods shall be enlarged by adding thereto."