

Appeal to the People of Ireland.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

The striking success which has attended our efforts in opposing Lloyd George's Scheme for the Partition of Ireland was made manifest by the announcement of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on Monday, the 17th July, 1916, that the Bill embodying the proposals would not be introduced. The Agreement, however, as to the exclusion of the Six Counties entered into by Mr. Redmond and Sir Edward Carson still exists and has not been cancelled or repudiated. On the contrary the Leaders of the Irish Party have said they are still prepared to carry it out. The ostensible cause for the withdrawal of the Scheme was merely a difference of opinion as to the retention of the Irish Members in full strength at Westminster.

There are the strongest reasons for believing that further attempts will very soon be made to bring about a settlement. The high Imperial interests which the Partition Proposals were intended to serve still urgently demand attention, and it is most important for the British Empire that a settlement of the Irish Question should be effected without any delay whatever. The same considerations that influenced the Leaders of the Irish Party in agreeing to the recent Proposals will still weigh with them. Means must therefore be taken to prevent anything in the nature of a settlement that would fall short of Self-Government for all Ireland.

It may be well to briefly recapitulate the history of the recent negotiations. The Leaders of the Irish Party having entered into an Agreement committing themselves to this Scheme in opposition to Irish National sentiment and without consultation with the people, proceeded to secure the support of a majority of the Delegates at the Belfast Conference by misrepresentation of some of its essential provisions, and by deliberate concealment of some of its most objectionable features. They had the Agreement in their possession at the time of the Conference, but refused to produce it when challenged. The Heads of the Agreement as Officially published reveal its true nature, and establish beyond question the gross deception practised on the country. The Agreement, we believe, was not produced even at the Private Meeting of the Party called to obtain their assent to it, and the rank and file of the Party were kept in ignorance of its contents. The Leaders showed that they were determined to have the terms of the Agreement carried into effect by Act of Parliament against the Will of the People of Ireland, and they were only prevented by the growing volume of public opinion, and by the strength of the agitation that was got up in opposition to the Scheme.

The Leaders are now engaged in a pretence of criticising and attacking the Government—a rather belated policy if genuine—but in pursuing their new policy they are taking good care not to make any damaging attack on any vital matter. The object of this sham opposition and criticism is, as "The Daily Mail" (of August 1st, 1916) with brutal candour admits, "to regain a fuller control of all sections of Nationalist opinion in Ireland in order that the Nationalist Leader will be all the better placed to act as its spokesman when the time comes to attempt another Agreement." It proceeds: "He sacrificed something and risked a great deal more to bring about the recent abortive Settlement. The more his position is strengthened in Ireland the less likelihood will there be of the next negotiation leading to a second failure."

The Irish Leaders having betrayed their trust, the people of Ireland can have no further confidence in them. They have acted in direct opposition to the National sentiment. They have been either unable or unwilling to make any effective opposition to the Government in matters adversely affecting Ireland. They have brought contempt and humiliation on the National Movement. They have preferred Imperialism to Nationality, and British interests to Irish rights. They have sacrificed the cause of Ireland for the sake of British expediency. The recent history of the Party is a record of lost opportunities and mismanagement. Numerous supporters of the Constitutional movement have therefore lost faith in it and have resorted to revolutionary methods and force of arms.

The action of the Leaders has gone far to destroy the claim

of Ireland to be a distinct Nationality, and has tended to a recognition of two nationalities in Ireland—one consisting of the Covenanters of the North-East, and the other consisting of the rest of Ireland. This would be absolutely destructive of the traditional ideal of Ireland a Nation. It would divide the people into two hostile camps, thereby perpetuating in fact and in reality the old English policy "Divide and Weaken," "Divide and keep in subjection." It therefore behoves all Nationalists to be on the alert and thoroughly prepared for any emergency.

In order to revive and re-establish the National Movement on sound and vigorous lines, and to safeguard the National interests, it has been decided to extend the scope and objects of the Anti-Partition League so that the Organization will embrace a full National programme. It will be called in future

THE IRISH NATION LEAGUE.

The Organization will be thoroughly Democratic and free from the control of the Irish Parliamentary Party. It will express the views and opinions of the people upon all issues that may arise, and will take measures to have them carried out. It will uphold the principle that the Irish Party should maintain its Independence, and not attach itself to any English Party, but should have regard only to the rights and interests of Ireland. The following are the objects of THE IRISH NATION LEAGUE:—

1. To maintain the unity of Ireland; to secure complete National Self-Government and prevent any division or Partition of the Nation.
2. To preserve and cherish National ideals and the distinctive features of Irish life; its History, Traditions and Language; to cultivate patriotism and good Citizenship.
3. To obtain justice for Ireland in the matter of Imperial Taxation.
4. To develop the natural resources of the country; to revive its Industries and improve its Agriculture.
5. To promote friendship and cohesion between the Irish People and their exiled fellow-countrymen for the furtherance of the objects of this League.

Ireland a Nation, one and indivisible, is our first principle, and from the ideal of Self-Government for ALL IRELAND we will never recede. Firm in the belief that all parties and persons will benefit by its attainment we shall advocate that all reasonable safeguards be provided for that section of our fellow-countrymen who have hitherto opposed it.

As Self-Government is admitted to be inevitable we appeal to the people of all denominations and all shades of politics to join with us in bringing about a Settlement which will give the IRISH NATION power and freedom to work out its destiny in accordance with Irish ideas, and bring lasting peace and prosperity to our common country.

We invite representative Nationalists from every Constituency to become Members of the Organizing Committee; all who are in sympathy with the objects of the League are requested to communicate forthwith with the Honorary Secretaries. We urge the people of every district in Ireland to take action at once as time is pressing. A Branch should be established in every Parish or division of a Parish and should be provisionally governed by a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and five members of Committee.

Signed on behalf of the Organizing Committee,

- J. J. O'MEARA,
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C. O'DOHERTY,
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TEMPORARY OFFICES: JOHN STREET, OMAGH.
August 3rd, 1916.