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C.14.

O'CONNOR, Arthur,

D. C. Conference. 10-5-22.

'HUSH TIMES' 11-5-22.

Mr. Art O'Connor said that he agreed with the first sentence in the report, that the general state of agriculture was most unsatisfactory. He objected, however, to the propaganda that it was they (the opposition) who were responsible for that condition. It was chiefly due to the fact that they did not live in a water-tight compartment, and that they were subject to general world conditions. He referred to the "profiteering" which, he alleged, was going on among the farming community, and which was, he declared, becoming a scandal.

The cost of living was higher in Ireland than it was in England or Scotland. It would be the fault of that assembly, he believed, if they did not get the outside organisations concerned to come together and devise some means by which agriculture should be allowed to carry on.

EXTRACT FROM "THE FENIAN" No. 52, dated 11th SEPTEMBER 1922.

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The Freeman prints a letter addressed by Art O'Connor from Mountjoy to the Archbishop of Dublin pointing out that the Mountjoy Chaplains had refused absolution to prisoners unless they renounced their political faith. In a footnote the Editor states he is informed that the Archbishop had already arranged for additional confessors, not connected with the prison, to attend and hear the prisoners' confessions. This we take to mean that absolution will no longer be denied prisoners for being republican soldiers. So far, so good. But we would like to know why if priest who refused absolution before were wrong (as this action of His Grace's shows them to have been) steps were not taken earlier to correct them; and whether any disciplinary measures will be taken against the Clergy whom, it is now admitted, abused their sacred office? It is naturally very satisfactory to us to have the confirmation of His Grace of the correctness of the arguments on this matter from time to time advanced in this paper.

Sheet No 2.

Speeches on Ratification  
by  
O'CONNOR. A.

'INDEPENDENT'  
4-1-22.  
(CONTINUED FROM  
SHEET NO 1.)

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S TRAP.

Mr. Lloyd George had set a trap, and they walked in. He caught them all within the crib.

"and," said the speaker, amid some laughter, "here is the misfortune and the pity. Not only did he get you within the crib, but some of us, too, and the pity of it is when I say us, I mean those who are genuine Republicans. (A voice—"Where are they?" Another voice—"Here.") Instead of uniting their strength to lift off the crib and get free again, they started trying to persuade themselves that, instead of being within the crib, they were having the grandest freedom that could possibly be enjoyed—that, because they were going to be very very well fed under it."

He hoped none of the Deputies would be swayed or misled by some of these extravagant resolutions that had been passed during the last fortnight or three weeks. Every one of them was sent there with a mandate.

If the people did not mean that mandate, the people should never have given them that mandate.

THREE-QUARTERS STATE.

He believed the people meant them to work out for them an independent sovereign State. Under this Treaty they had not got an independent Sovereign State. They had three-quarters of a State. They had got a State with its principal ports controlled, with a jumping off ground next door to them from which an army could be dumped in at any moment, and, in a word,

they had not got the essential thing for which they struggled in the last 750 years. It had been contended that it was ne-

cessary during the last minute of the last hour of the 4th-5th December to accept this thing. He said it was not necessary. The struggle that had lasted so long, the discussion that had lasted a couple of months, could have lasted a couple of hours or days longer. That assembly would be dishonouring itself and would be unfair to itself if, at the bidding of Mr. Lloyd George or any of his minions it was to surrender the sovereign independence of the Irish people (cheers).



'IRISH TIMES' 5-1-22.

Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Minister for Agriculture, referring to a statement made on the previous day, hoped that no misconstruction would be put on it by the farmers or the farmers' union. It was an ill bird that would foul its own nest. He was a farmer's son, and he hoped that the farmer members of the Dail would not think that he was attempting to throw dirty water upon the farmers of the country. The members of the farmers' union had helped him very much in his work as Minister of Agriculture, and he took that opportunity of apologising to the farmers for any of the things which might be misconstrued into what he said.

'FREEMAN'S' 18-3-22.

Mr. Art O'Connor, T.D., said the reasons why he was against the Treaty were that he would not swallow allegiance to any King of England; that he would not come into the British Empire with his head up or down.

Sheet No. 1.

# Speeches on Ratification by O'CONNOR. A.

'INDEPENDENT'  
4-1-22.

## "IN THE SWAMP"

### MR. A. O'CONNOR OPPOSES APPROVAL

Mr. Art O'Connor, Minister of Agriculture, said he should not attempt any fireworks, because if he were to pose as a bellicose individual he would be very much of a damp squib. All his activity and work had been more or less of a civil nature, and he knew nothing about the military side of the movement except what he was able to judge from results achieved.

The Treaty had suffered from its advocates both within and without that Assembly.

He had been listening to debates for several days, and he had been unable to discover whether the Treaty was a treaty of consent or was signed under duress. It would make a big difference if they knew which was which—whether the Assembly was being asked to go into the British Empire with head up, or was being forced into the British Empire. The Treaty had suffered from its advocates outside, because the people who, during the recess had been howling at their representatives and telling them where their duty lay, were, for the most part, people who never did a solid hour's work for the country and were anxious to drop down on the right side—

Mr. M. Collins—They were in ambushes.

### FROM PURPLE TO RED.

Mr. O'Connor said there were some good, but there were some of the very worst, and the people on the opposite side knew that, too. It seemed to him that they were very much like a spectrum during the past few weeks. They knew what a spectrum was like. When it was split up into various fragments they saw different sorts of colours. He thought Lloyd George had seen a

spectrum here. They had veered from extreme purple to extreme red, and those who wore the purple mantle had now arrived at the Royal Courts and were anxious to settle down there. Some professed Republicans on the other side said:—

"We will rest a little while at the Royal Court and furbish up our arms so as to be in a better position to advance."

And those who were extreme revolutionists thought if they lingered at all there was a danger that they might be contaminated by royalty and would not be able to advance at all. If he could feel in his heart and mind that the Republicans were only digging themselves in, that they were only going to use this business as a stepping-stone or post from which to advance further, he might be able to step along with them.

### A STEP BACKWARD.

Continuing, Mr. O'Connor said he was afraid it was a step backward instead of a step forward, and he held and agreed with Connolly when he said it was not the extent of the step that mattered, it was the direction of the step, and if the step was backward—(Here there was applause and the end of the sentence was lost).

Mr. O'Connor—Yes, you can applaud that because you think it suits your policy, or it is your policy. Yes, put as much of the soft solder in as you possibly can, but the result will prove that it is a step backward and not forward (hear, hear).

It is a step off the solid rock; you are in the swamp, and you will be swamped. I would have to give you a long, strong pull to get you out, and I would like to get you out because I am sorry to see you going into it.

### SOUTHERN UNIONISTS

It seemed to him that the Free State was going to be a very sweet thing and a very good thing for a class of people in the country who had never been conspicuous by their love for the country. The head of the deputation when in London wrote a certain letter promising certain things to Southern Unionists.

He would like to know exactly what these promises were—(Mr. Griffith—"Fair Play")—because Mr. Lloyd George stated that the Free State would be able to hammer out its own Constitution, subject to the guarantees given to the Southern Unionists.

"I wonder," asked Mr. O'Connor, "what do these guarantees mean? I wonder is it merely fair play, because I can assure the head of the delegation that if it means any more than fair play, if it means putting these people in place and power and giving them a controlling influence in Irish affairs, except what their heads and their single individuality entitled them to, the Irish people will not stand for it" (hear, hear).

These people, he said, were there as their enemies: they had stood in the way of the people every time they tried to make an advance, and it would be a poor thing now for the Free State, if it was ever established, that these people should be put upon the necks of the Irish people. They would not be put on the necks of the Irish people. Why make promises, he asked, and throw out a little bit of grain to attract these fellows in?

### SAME AS ANYBODY ELSE.

Why not be honest with them, and tell them they would get the same treatment as anybody else? Now these people were passing resolutions to tell the representatives of the people what their duty was.

They knew where their duty lay before they had heard of these people, and they would know it and do it when they would not be heard of (hear, hear).

Anybody who would accept a Free State would be a Southern Unionist, for, as far as he could make out it would be only an exchange from one union to another. The Union of 1800 was a Union of force, the present was a Union of consent, and that just took the boot off one foot and put it on another (hear, hear).

He was amused there last week listening to the threats of war. He wondered did the men who were trying to bluff them with the prospect of war believe it themselves. He had there a clipping from a newspaper of Nov. 28, in which Lord Birkenhead made a statement.

### LORD BIRKENHEAD QUOTED.

If he changed his mind he must have changed it very quickly. Lord Birkenhead said that if the only method of attaining peace in Ireland was by force of arms it would be a task from which neither this nor any other British Government would shrink, but the question he would like to ask was, when it was attained, with a great expenditure of treasure and blood,

how much nearer would they be to having a contented Ireland.

Mr. M. Collins—I asked Lord Birkenhead that in London.

Mr. O'Connor—He was quite confident that they were quite right in making this attempt to compose the Irish question.

Why did he not show the cloven foot on the public platform. Mr. O'Connor asked, and not be trying to deceive the world by pretending he was giving a genuine peace to the Irish people when he was giving them peace thrust down their necks with a bayonet (applause)? Why could he not be honest with them?—

Mr. M. Collins—Would you?

### WOULD LIKE GENUINE PEACE.

"We would be honest," said Mr. O'Connor. He had no desire to be at variance with England or the English people; he



Mr. Art O'Connor

had found them rather nice, decent people, but the English people in the political institutions were rather a different proposition. He would like to have a genuine and a proper peace between the Irish and the English people, so that they could be free to go along and work out their own life in their own tinpot way, and have no fighting nor arguing with them.

It seemed to him some of the Irish people were more loyal than the English people (applause); otherwise, where did the "common citizenship" come in. Since when did Munster become the equivalent of Yorkshire and Suffolk? And the "fealty to King George in virtue of the common citizenship"—where did the common citizenship come in between Cork and Yorkshire?

### "PEOPLE OF THAT ILK"

Mr. Milroy—Where do your constituents come in?

Mr. O'Connor—My constituents gave me a mandate in 1918. They renewed that mandate last May, and

that mandate was that to the best of my ability I should support the Republican Government in this country. I have not changed. I told them a couple of months ago when I spoke to them publicly that I would not change; that they could change if they choose.

He would vote against the Treaty, because the acceptance of it meant the death-knell of the Dail and of the Republic. But there was another complication being introduced into Irish representative affairs which he could assure the gentlemen of the Treasury Bench opposite was not a good augury. If at any moment people in a certain locality found themselves out of sympathy with some of their Treasury actions—suppose they got a snowball resolution going, and suppose they got a venal Press to support it, would they bow to that resolution? Would they do what their honour and judgment dictated to them they should not do? He held that the heart and mind of the people had not changed—that

the heart and mind of the people was not changed by resolutions of farmers' unions and people of that ilk who never did an honest day's or an honest hour's work—

### HOW FARMERS SUFFERED.

A Member—They did; they supported us in the fight.

Mr. M. Collins—The farmers' houses were burnt down all over the place.

Mr. O'Connor—Some of them, but I have been rather surprised at some of the names I have seen presiding at meetings in my part of the country—

Mr. Collins—If you saw some of the houses I saw—farmers' houses—burnt down all over the place.

Mr. O'Connor said the men he referred to were not farmers. He wished to the Lord they were. They were masquerading as farmers, just as this Treaty was masquerading as a Treaty of Peace between Ireland and England, that it was giving them practically an independent State. It was a masked ball—a masquerade.

(CONTINUED  
ON SHEET No. 2.)

## AGRICULTURAL REPORT TILLAGE AND SETTLEMENT

Referring his report to a private session, Mr. A. O'Connor, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, said that the question of tillage and the provision of food was giving them a great deal of uneasiness. The season's crops were rather short. Tillage, which got a certain amount of stimulus during the war, was now going back into grass, and unless the assembly looked into the question he feared that in a few years' time the country would be nothing but a wilderness upon which cattle will be browsing. It would also be their duty to look into the question of the number of men employed when they met in private session.

Mr. D. Ceanní said agriculture needed a great deal of legislation. The agriculturists of Ireland had made immense sacrifices in the struggle, and they were prepared to do a good deal more. He urged that when they got the opportunity of legislating they should place agriculture on a proper footing. He appealed to the people to produce food voluntarily.

The report states that Commandant Barton's administration extended over 10 months, and was terminated by his arrest. He devoted most of his energy to devising a Land Settlement Scheme and setting up of a loan fund in connection with same. The scheme now extended over the whole country, and had, during its brief existence, made remarkable headway, becoming firmly rooted in the life of the nation. It had proved its worth and need, and would be a lasting monument to the ability, courage and imagination of Comdt. Barton.

The same decree made Nov. 1 National Arbor Day, and authorised the appointment of a National Inspector of Forestry, who reported on Arbor Day, 1919, that "the main result is that in practically every case the work was got in hand, and as nearly as we can reckon, some 250,000 to 300,000 trees were planted."

The report deals in detail with labour disputes bearing on agricultural affairs and their settlement; the development of food and stock produce, and the dressed meat and packing industry. The scheme in connection with the latter had to be postponed ~~owing to the destruction of~~

British forces of creameries and other industrial concerns.

The land hunger trouble in the south and west during the winter and spring of 1919-20 is dealt with at length. "But, with the establishment," adds the report, "of the Arbitration Courts by the Dail and their successful functioning under this Department, this sinister menace to the peace of Connacht and of Ireland was removed."

In Sept., 1920, a Land Settlement Commission was sanctioned by the Dail, and since its inception has been busily engaged in carrying out the work for which it was created.

The Commission and its Courts were now solidly established, and were working continuously and smoothly at the task of solving the insistent and troublesome land question.

On the tillage question, an outline is given of the proposed Corn Production Decree, 1921, filed by Mr. David Ceanní in October last, before his arrest, and on that account was not discussed. This proposed Decree sought to make it compulsory for all persons holding arable land to put as much under cultivation as will ensure a sufficient supply of food for the people of this country, to be classed as follows:—

(a) All persons holding less than 50 Statute acres shall put 10 p.c. under cultivation.

(b) All persons holding 50 Statute acres, or less than 100, shall put 15 p.c. under cultivation.

(c) All persons holding 100 Statute acres or over shall put 20 p.c. under cultivation.

The Bill made provision also for the infliction of certain penalties. Those not complying with the terms of the decree and who held under 200 acres of land to be fined £25 for every 50 acres they possessed, whilst persons holding more than 200 acres were to be fined £100, "and in addition £100 for every 100 acres over and above 200 acres."

## MILK SUPPLY.

Regarding the milk supply the report adds that the Inquiry Commission report disclosed a very unsatisfactory condition of the milk industry, due largely to inferior types of dairy cattle, and recommended in general terms the acquisition or leasing of certain suitable farms for the improvement of dairy herds. This report was considered by the Ministry, and referred back with evidence and terms of reference to enable a more detailed report and recommendation to be made. This report has been received by the Ministry, and circumstances arising out of the war have alone prevented its recommendations from being brought before the Dail.

An appended table showed:—Cases dealt with from May 1, 1920, to June 30, 1921, in 23 counties, 299; acres, 63,150; ruled under decree, 58 cases, 2,857 acres; cases in which lands alienated, 112, acres, 26,969; cases in which price fixed, 56, and acres, 16,046; lands left undisturbed, 75 cases, 10,697 acres; decisions pending, 54, acreage involved, 21,718.

(Comdt. R.C. Barton)  
Successor.

O'CONNOR. Arthur. Elm Hall, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.  
and Carlow.

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Age,

Occupation,

ELECTED SINN FEIN M.P. FOR SOUTH KILDARE, MAY 1921.

Prior to May 1921 Election, was on "Local Government Board", "Arbitration", "Civil Service", "Industries", "Labour", and "Agricultural Loan Bank" Committees, Dail Eireann.

Member of Labour Committee, and Local Government Board Committee.

Minister of Agriculture, Dail Eireann. (3-12-20).

Ceased to be Minister of Agriculture on De Valera's defeat at Dail Assembly on a Division on the Treaty Vote 7-1-22. (P.J.HOGAN appointed under new Ministry).

Went out of Office on Arthur GRIFFITH being elected President of An Dail on 10-1-22. (Successor, P.J. HOGAN).

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Quartermaster, Maynooth Battalion, Kildare Brigade.

Brigade Quartermaster, North Kildare Brigade.

Sinn Fein Adjutant-General. (6-11-20).

Close friend of P.H. PEARSE, executed 1916.

Made Anti-Conscription speeches in 1917.

At Naas on 17-3-18 he said "England of 1918 is not the proud England of 3 or 4 years ago. Thank God her life blood is fast ebbing away; we will soon see her drop into the Atlantic and we will dance on her grave". (G/3043/1 41/b/2).

Arrested 20-8-18 in Spidda, Co. Galway, where he had been in hiding since 18-5-18 and deported to Gloucester. Released 11-7-19.

Was Assistant County Surveyor. (G/3043/1 41/b/2).

In May 1920 made seditious speeches at Athy (5th Div. Record).

House searched in September 1920. Nothing found.

Signatory to document on 7-10-20 to M.of D. for Home Affairs re arrest of Joseph JORDAN for mis-appropriation of rates collected at Roscommon. (see notes D.37 taken from Eustace Street.(13) on 16-10-20).

Quarrelled with Maurice COLLINS and COSGROVE re murders of Police, to which former opposed.

Dail Eireann Member for South Kildare. June 1919. (Ref. Carter 12. 5th Div. Summary 22-8-20).

/Presided

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Presided over Sinn Fein Arbitration Court in Carlow. (Inf. 8.).

Signatory, as Minister of Agriculture, Irish Republic, to letter found at Croke Park 21-11-20 from Dail Eireann, Agricultural Department, authorising George Nicholls to sit and arbitrate in all disputes concerning land in Co. Carlow. (Ref File 25104).

Monthly Salary £33-6-8. (Ref. Req. 76).

Ext. from "Irish Bulletin" Vol.5. No.20. dated 29-6-21. "Imprisoned 1918-19. Wanted".

Dangerous. On the run. (Mulcahy's documents)(5th Div. W.I.S. 4-12-20).

Name appeared in captured documents. (File No.1991).

Attended Sinn Fein Sports at Kildare with Madame Markievicz 13-11-21.

Voted against ratification of the Treaty on 7th January 1922.

*Re-nominated as Republican candidate for Kildare & Wicklow, to contest in elections June 1922.*

*Defeated at Poll for 3rd Dail.*

Led surrender from Granville Hotel to P.G. Troops. (Ex F. Journal 6. 7.22.

*Amongst prisoners who arrived at Droichead nua.  
(Newbridge) Mil. Bks. (9.9.30.1.23).*

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