

439

1

White

D. J.

**CLOSED
UNTIL**

1996

INSPECTION

PERMITTED

UNDER

S 5(4)

Chief Secretary's Office, Ireland.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION.

2

SUBJECT.

MINUTE.

CHIEF CROWN SOLICITOR
27 FEB 1920
DUBLIN CASTLE

Waterford.

Speech by Mr. V. J. White on his installation as Mayor of Waterford.

This Chief Crown Solicitor Attorney General advise

Attorney General

27-2-20

think it better to take no action

27/2/20

I and Lieutenant

II Chief Secretary

submitted

C.S. of an hour

to say that I received

the h.c. I wonder what would be said if such a speech was made by the Mayor of Waterford, or of Wicklow (in S.C.). It would surely have to be in this is certainly done.

1/3/20

1/6/20

The sole reason had for taking no action is the impossibility of proof against Mr. White. No police were present making this no one with it available to give evidence against him. he A

L.L.
In view of the above, I would be happy to proceed. Jh
10/3/20

RI CONSTABULARY OF
Received
6 FEB 1920
Hunt

28058
SECRET.

119 5
28,545
Crime - Special

3

Crime

Speech by Dr. Vincent J. White on
Installation as Mayor of Waterford on $\frac{23}{20}$
DR.R. 27
Waterford 25/20

Assist. Under Secretary,

Submitted to see.

no evidence is likely
to be obtainable against
Doctor White and in
view of the D's
remarks at A perhaps
a caution might be
considered sufficient in
the case of the editor of
the Waterford Standard.

I beg to submit the annexed Cutting
in favour of instructions

The meeting of the Corporation at
which this speech was delivered was
a purely Sinn Fein gathering - It
was rigorously boycotted by Nationalists,
both members of the Corporation and
the public. The Town Hall was
packed with Sinn Feiners - Police
were not present, as there were no
reasons for believing that Dr White,
or anyone else, would break the law.
He has not hitherto done so, notwithstanding
his utterances so far being
ornate rather than violent. In
the circumstances, it does not
appear to be possible to get any
witness to prove Dr White's actual
words - although I have no doubt
but that he is correctly reported -
Dr White is a neurotic,
The County Inspector. Vain

19/20/20

26:2:20

A

and excitable man, neither mentally
 nor physically robust. It will
 be observed that he qualified his
 exhortation to join the Irish Volunteers
 by subsequently advising against
 violence or shooting. - From what
 I know of Dr White, I believe
 that he is not in favour of outrage
 or crime, from which the Sinn Fein
 movement in Waterford has
 hitherto been singularly free. Neither
 do I anticipate that his harangue
 will in any way affect recruiting
 for the Irish Volunteers in Waterford
 - Dr White is a thorough type
 of the unbalanced enthusiast -
 and would I imagine, be a
 fanatical hunger striker

The "Waterford Standard"
 is a Conservative paper, published
 bi-weekly in Waterford. In publishing
 the annexed report I am quite sure
 that the Editor had no intention of
 furthering the objects of an unlawful
 association. On the contrary, I
 imagine

the object in view was the
discrediting of Dr White or his faction,
without realising that a breach of
the law was being at the same
time committed.

C. O. Seiner
Captain
25.7.

Waterford 25:2:20.

Submitted for instructions as to action
to be taken against Dr. White.

The officials named in Press report at "A"
will of course strongly object to give evidence
of Dr. White's statement at "B". I have
not interviewed them yet pending instructions.

Both Dr. White and the Proprietor of the
"Waterford Standard" (a Mr. Whalley) are clearly
guilty of offences under D. N. Regs.

The Insp. General

R. I. Munnell et.

Secret

Brime Special.

cutting from the "Waterford
Standard" of 25th Feby 1920.

CO OF WATERFORD.

Lady Lane 25. 2. 20.

I beg to submit cuttings
from the "Waterford Standard"
dated 25th inst containing a
report of a speech delivered
by Dr Vincent J. White, Mayor
of Waterford, on the occasion
of his installation as Mayor,
at a Council meeting in the
Town Hall, Waterford, on
23rd inst

W. Farrell Sgt 54045

The Dist. Insp.

INSTALLATION OF MAYOR.

SCENES IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

REMARKABLE SPEECH BY DR. WHITE.

The installation of the new Mayor of Waterford, Dr Vincent J. White, for one whole year, took place in the Large Room of the Town Hall on Monday at noon. Every available space was packed with spectators, including the portion of the room allotted to the Corporation. Many people were unable to gain admittance, and so great was the crush that the stairs leading up to the Large Room were also crowded. The enthusiasm of the audience at times was almost delirious, and Sinn Fein tags were very much in evidence. One woman distinguished herself by waving the American flag draped in Sinn Fein colours. All the Nationalist members were absent, and the installation ceremony was performed by Alderman Maurice Quinlan who was elected to the chair for the purpose. It is customary for the outgoing Mayor to perform the installation ceremony, but Mr. David MacDonald, who was defeated at the last election, was not present. The Mayor wore a Sinn Fein robe of green Irish poplin faced with gold and white brocade, and clasped with a Tara brooch, having discarded the traditional robe of crimson and ermine. A remarkable feature of the proceedings was the large number of women present and the interest they manifested in the ceremony. As the members took their seats they were received with vociferous cheers. The following were present:—Aldermen T. D. Connolly, Dr. V. J. White, Mayor-Elect; Maurice Quinlan, P. Quinlan, Richard Keane, P. Brazil, Councillors Mrs. White, T. F. H. Jacob, J. J. Gallagher, J. K. Walsh, Wm. Jones, P. Cahill, Wm. Cullinane, J. D. Walsh, T. Dunne, R. Whittle, James Power, P. W. Kenny, J. S. O'Neill, T. O'Neill, M. Hunt, M. Hennessy. Messrs. T. F. J. Higgins, Town Clerk; Patk. Kent, Borough Treasurer; P. A. Murphy, Law Adviser, and J. J. Fleming, Borough Surveyor, were present.

The Clerk having read the notice convening the meeting, Councillor T. O'Neill proposed that Councillor Maurice Quinlan take the chair, which was seconded by Councillor P. W. Kenny and passed.

Mr. P. Cahill asked leave to move the suspension of the standing orders, which was granted. He proposed that a vote of condolence be passed to Alderman T. Cullen on the death of his sister, and the motion was seconded by Mr. T. Dunne, and passed in silence, the members standing.

The Mayor-Elect, who was loudly applauded, then repeated after the Town Clerk his declaration of office, which he signed.

Sergeant-at-Arms Moloney then brought forward the Mayor's robe and, amidst tremendous cheering, it was donned by the newly-installed Mayor who repeatedly bowed his acknowledgments.

When the tumult had died down, Mr. M. Quinlan said—It gives me great pleasure to instal you in the office of Mayor of this city, and more so especially is it a privilege to me to do so for the part you have taken in the fight for an Irish republic (cheers).

The newly-installed Mayor then took the Mayoral chair, and the entire audience, the Sinn Fein members, and officials present, rose en masse, and cheered for a considerable length of time.

When order had been restored a dramatic incident followed. Pointing to the Corporation mace which lay on the table, the Mayor said to the Sergeant-at-Arms, "Take that mace off the table—that bauble of foreign rule and English domination in this country, and consign it to the muniment room."

Amid great excitement and cheering, the Sergeant-at-Arms advanced to the table and removed the mace.

The Mayor said:—Ah chara,—Once again it gives me great pleasure indeed to have the opportunity of returning thanks to my fellow-citizens for the great honour they have conferred upon me by electing me Mayor of my native city (cheers). I deeply appreciate the great honour you have conferred on me, and let me hasten to tell you, that I will do my utmost to appreciate that honour, and endeavour, as a plain, humble citizen, to carry out to the full the dignity of this illustrious and historic chair as Mayor of Waterford. On the 13th of last month I was very delighted indeed and somewhat embarrassed on account of the great eulogies that were poured out on me not only by my colleagues of this Council—my own special colleagues—but by other members of this historic Corporation. In fact when I got up a few minutes afterwards to say a few words I felt very diffident indeed, and I may say that

after all the good things said about me I almost contracted shell-shock (laughter). Now, A chara, you have conferred on me the highest gift that lies within the giving of the citizens of Waterford. You have donned me to-day in the robes coloured green, white, and gold—emblematic and symbolical not of the hypothetical Irish Republic, but of a republic which exists in fact (loud cheers). You have in Dublin to-day the freely elected representatives of the Irish people living from pillar to post and tortured in prison by the great defender of small nationalities (cheers). But, A chara, I deeply honour the great gift you have conferred on me, and though I fully appreciate it, still though you have placed this magnificent chain around my neck, fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen, do not forget that in this year of 1920 there lies at the present moment in the fetid, dank, and noisome dungeons of England our own brothers, not with a chain of gold, and not with a bauble around their necks, but with the cruel steel manacles of England, cutting deep and searing into their flesh. Why do they lie there? What have they done? They have loved their country. They acted as they thought best, and what was undeniably best, for their country. And what is the reward the champion of small nationalities metes out to our brothers? I recognise that to-day is a joyous day and I do not wish to throw out anything that will tend to lessen the joyousness of this occasion, but it is well to think in this hour of what is happening to our fellow-countrymen. It is customary, I understand, when a man, or I should say a citizen, is elected a Mayor of Waterford, to state briefly—and believe me it will be brief—the policy I intend to follow, the first matter is the poor (hear, hear, and cheers). The question of the poor is a question, I am sure, dear to every individual member of this Council. It is has been my proud privilege to mingle with the poor not only of Waterford but of Dublin, and I yield to no person my knowledge of the poor of Waterford. Perhaps in my position as dispensary doctor I visited more houses than any other individual in a short space of time, and when I went among my people—because they are our people, they differ from us only because we have a few more shillings than they have in our pockets—when I went among them and saw the houses they have to live in, and saw their general conditions, the great squalor, and I may say the utter hopelessness of their outlook, borne by the poor in a heroic spirit, I began to ask myself what was the cause of this poverty. I asked myself is this poverty the fault of the people, and I came to the conclusion that it was not. In a few exceptional cases, which you will understand, it might be, but they were very few indeed, and I finally came to the conclusion that lack of employment and a wrong state of economics was the great fault of the undue poverty which exists in the great cities of Ireland. Bearing in mind that reconstruction is one of the principles of Sinn Fein, I feel convinced that if any plank was going to do anything for the poor of Ireland, that plank was Sinn Fein (cheers). But no such stimulus was needed. I had long and carefully thought out, and was satisfied, that the movements in Ireland were wrong, for the past few years at any rate. The first thing you want in Ireland is employment. John Bull, I appreciate, would prefer to have Ireland the cradle for the rearing of her soldiers and sailors to dominate and conquer other people. John Bull would have this Ireland to be his farmyard to raise fat beasts to fill his huge maw (laughter). Trade follows the flag, and I submit that any nation, to be prosperous must have trade, and must be allowed to develop. Since I am speaking of industries, I may mention that there is to be now established a dressed meat factory in Ireland, and I earnestly exhort all citizens rich and poor who have money to spare to invest in this dressed meat factory which, with God's help, I hope to see soon started in Waterford; and, from my point of view, let it not be forgotten that the factory means employment and employment means great circulation of money and let us hope money means happiness and prosperity to the workers (cheers). As I am on the question of industries I would like to mention this point. Some years ago in Westland Row, Dublin, a huge company was about to start a factory for the manufacture of Dunlop tyres. But aristocrats, or the alleged aristocrats, in that locality objected to the erection of that factory because of the foul odours which would arise from the manufacturing of the products. Consequently that tremendous undertaking—we know how tremendous it is, it is international; you will find its products in every part of the world—was lost to Ireland. I don't know if we have any aristocrats in Waterford to object to the

dressed meat industry, but if they are going to stand in the way of the factory in the city, the sooner they clear out the better (cheers). Now there is an old saying that fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but I don't think my worst enemy would call me a fool. I know I am not an angel; I sometimes wish I was. I wish to speak to you now about labour. I appreciate Irish labour, and I appreciate what Irish labour has done for the Irish Republic. You will recollect that at the last general election Irish labour in good sense and in good part, stood down, lest perhaps they might obscure the question, the great question of Irish independence, and I have no doubt that should the necessity arise again, I for one will rely on the good sense of Irish labour and Irish labour will do the proper thing. I recognise to the full that labour in Ireland occupies a very important section of the community, but, at the same time, it is only a section. And I recognise that Irish labour stands on a different footing as compared with, say, labour in America, France, or Belgium. In those countries they have their national independence. We have not our national independence, and until the question of Irish independence, the question of an Irish Republic is finally settled, I hold it will always be the pre-eminent question in the Kingdom of Ireland (cheers). Now, am I in favour of strikes? I am, but with this reservation, namely, that strikes should not be resorted to until every other avenue to a settlement has been explored and carefully explored. I am absolutely in favour of a living wage. His Holiness Pope Pius declared that a living wage was one that would keep a workingman in frugal comfort and his dependents, and I am absolutely at one with that. Labour here in Waterford knows that I never hesitate to speak openly and straight from the shoulder. I don't think any reasonable labour man can take objection to what I say. Labour here in Waterford need never be afraid that White will do the wrong thing (cheers). The next question is housing. When I had the honour to be dispensary doctor I used to send to Dublin every six months a report on the general housing conditions amongst the poor, and I used to send back on the query sheet what at first must have appeared very strange replies. One reply to a query I sent was that half the city of Waterford should be burned down (laughter). I am not a Bolshevik. Don't think that. It has been my proud privilege to go into a great number of houses in Waterford, and I say this, that not even with the exception of Dublin is the housing accommodation worse than it is in Waterford. And I respectfully submit to my colleagues of this Council that one of the most pressing and important matters we have to consider is the question of the housing of the poor. I hold that after a man has looked to his soul he should look to his house, and if our people have not got decent houses to live in, we can't have decent people. When I look round and see the houses the people live in, I wonder how the poor can keep so respectable in spite of their appalling conditions. I further say that this question of the houses for the poor of Waterford should have been gone into years and years ago, and that other things being equal, if it was at all possible, more houses should have been built for the poor of Waterford. At the present time, owing to the four years of war waged for small nationalities, there was no building done in Waterford or the surrounding counties, and at the present moment we all know that the various substances which go to build houses, have gone to enormous prices. I will touch again the question of houses for the poor of Waterford, and you may rest assured that we will do all we can to build new houses if the means permit. There is just one other matter I wish to mention and that is the question of finance. Now the finances of the Waterford Corporation at the present moment does not exist (laughter). There is not a shot in the locker. You have not got a pound in the exchequer. The bank refuses to honour our cheques, and, roughly, I can tell you this that, speaking very roughly, and subject to correction, the total debts and liabilities of the Waterford Corporation amounts to the enormous sum of about a quarter of a million pounds (cries of "Oh," and a voice: "What about the excursions to London?") Now that is the heritage to which my comrades and colleagues come into the Waterford Corporation. We are absolutely burst financially. But if there is one bit of consolation in it, it is that if the Waterford Corporation is burst financially, the British Government is burst financially too (cheers). As you all know, the one-pound ten-shilling and five-pound notes are only promises to pay. It is not the real stuff. It is not gold or silver or copper even. The Government of England for the time being is

in this happy position: the wizard comes along and sees a couple of trees, and he says to the keeper of parks, "Cut down that tree," and then it is ground into pulp, turned into paper, and John Bradbury signs his name to it, and it is called a pound-note. That is the condition in which the British Empire stands at the present moment. It is financially burst. Now we are in the happy position exactly that England is in. I know what Councillor Tom O'Neill, keeper of woods and forests, would say if I went to him and asked him to saw down one of his trees in the Park, turn it into pulp, and then into paper, signed by Vincent J. White. Would you accept that paper as money? I guarantee that you would not. Very well, the Corporation of Waterford is financially burst, and so also is the Government of England. The only thing I can say to you is that—and now I am speaking seriously—that we will at all times exert the maximum economy and at the same time endeavour to have an efficient staff in every department of the Corporation in Waterford. I feel very proud indeed to have as my colleagues in the Corporation some of the most alert business brains that our city can produce and I say this with confidence, that I am convinced, although I hate figures myself, there are some great men in this Corporation whom, I have no doubt, if the Corporation can be pulled out of its financial difficulties, that these men will do it (cheers). Now there is another matter about which I wish to speak, and that is education. It is a matter I am very much interested in, and it is my desire and intention to visit as many of the schools in Waterford as I possibly can. I may say, from my knowledge of mingling amongst the people of Waterford, and I say it openly, that there are a great many parents that don't send their children to school that should send them. Now want of education means ignorance, and ignorance is a great drawback to any of us, rich or poor, and I feel absolutely safe when I say that my colleagues in this Corporation will exert all their powers and see what we can do to speed up and increase the average attendance of children going to schools here in Waterford. I was under the impression that we had not enough accommodation for scholars, but I was speaking to a superior of one of the teaching institutions here the other day, and she said that she could take in a lot more children than came to her. This is a question for the regenerating and the improving of Ireland a nation and Ireland a republic, and personally I will leave no stone unturned to see matters speeded up in that direction. Now a few words more and I am finished. The national outlook. All goes well with the Irish Republic, but it is a matter of grave concern to see how it fares in merry England, or rather murderous England. Things are very black indeed, and in perusing the daily newspapers I find that for the month of February up to the 23rd there was an average of one murder per day in the island sometimes called the sister island. On a former occasion I referred to an old saying that one should first remove the beam from one's own eye before looking for the mote in your neighbour's. I further said that it was not a beam that was in the eye of the sister island but a balk, and a very big balk at that. And as time goes on, I am passing many sleepless nights wondering what in the name of God can be done for that island at all. I don't think she deserves to have Home Rule, and I would submit to Lord French of Ypres who never got further than that, and also to Mr. Macpherson, the man with the Celtic imagination and the horned-rimmed spectacles, that they should take themselves, bag and baggage, out of this country and, for the love of God, try and bring about some sort of law and order in the sister isle. Now ever since I was a medical student in Dublin, I used to read the papers. It was the custom to see in them a lot about the terrible Irish question. It was asked: What do they want? What did they want? Let them tell us, and we will give them everything to get free of the very terrible Irish question. Now, Ireland in the general election of 1918, and later in the municipal elections last month, told the sister island that the people of Ireland demanded and insisted on an Irish Republic (cheers). And the people of Ireland were determined, in spite of every obstacle put in their way, to say in effect to John Bull, that the terrible Irish question can be settled by John Bull clearing out of this country bag and baggage, over to the sister isle. Now, A chara, let me tell you that things look bright and promising for Ireland. Things are looking brighter than they have looked for many and many a year. And I do not exaggerate when I say that if the Irish people stick together, and say "Down with faction," that the question of an Irish Republic is only a question of time and that of a very short time. (cheers). The number of young men in Ire-

END
~~END~~

III

land at the present time seems to give the liberator of small nationalities a lot of trouble (hear, hear). The hero of Ypres has said that the trouble in Ireland at the present moment was largely due to the number of young men who had nothing to do here. Well, I say this: God bless the young men of Ireland, and thank God we have the young men of Ireland here to-day (cheers). And I further say this, that it is up to every young man in Waterford, and not alone in Waterford, but in Ireland, to join up and join the Irish Volunteers (cheers). Now previous to the so-called Act of Union in 1800, we are perfectly well aware what the condition of affairs were in Ireland, and the reply the English Government gave to the Irish people and the reply which our Volunteers gave was to wheel their cannon into College Green and say: "To hell with England; we demand a certain thing, and we are going to get it." Well, the English climbed down, and I venture to say that the epoch we are living in at present is analogous to the period prior to the passing of the so-called Act of Union. So therefore I say, when I see so many young men sitting before me, I say to them, if you are not members of the Irish Volunteers, then, in God's name, join up. Learn the word of discipline; learn the word of command; learn to obey, and you will be doing good solid work for Ireland. I am a man of peace myself—gentle Vincent White. I don't want any of our men to go out and shoot anybody. We want you to keep cool. Learn to obey the word of command, and I say this, if the young men had not learned up to this how to obey the word of command, how to respect their leaders, England before now would have let loose her quarter of a million men in Ireland and would have reduced our country to a bloody stillness (cheers). I want the young men and the old men to join the Irish Volunteers, and in doing that you will be doing good work, solid work, for your country. Now to-day is the 23rd of February. To-morrow is the 24th, and to-morrow is fraught with great significance not only to ourselves locally, but to the people of Ireland and the Irish people abroad. I refer to the local municipal bye-elections, and it is not necessary for me to point out to you or explain to you what the policy of Sinn Fein is. It stands for a united independent republic, and I submit to any business man here to-day, who may not be of a republican turn of mind, that those principles are sound, logical principles, and if they think it out for themselves, they cannot but see why Ireland should not be a republic, and why Ireland should not move forward and take her place, as God intended she should, a premier place amongst the foremost nations of the earth. These four gentlemen to-morrow are going forward in the name of an Irish Republic, and I say to you A chara, that it is your bounden and sacred duty to leave no stone unturned to see that these men are returned as our comrades to this Council. Now, I would ask you all finally to go to any man or woman whom you have, or likely to have, any influence, and speak to them about the election and the great significance it means not only to Waterford, but to Ireland and the Irish people scattered abroad. I ask you to stand shoulder to shoulder, marching side by side, to a united Ireland carrying the banner of the Irish Republic (cheers). To-morrow, then, A chara, don't forget the names of the men who go forward in the name of the Irish Republic—Dawson, Quinlan Wyley and O'Brien (cheers).

The proceedings then terminated.

