Big Labour Meeting in Roscrea.

Address by Mr James Larkin,

MR P. T. DALY, MR D. STUART, &c

FINE HURLING GAME—OFFALY DEFEAT LEIX.

On Sunday last, a big Labour demonstration by supporters of Mr. James Larkin, was held in Roscrea. The programme for the occasion included a hurling tournament between selected teams from Leix and Offaly, a procession through the town, and a public meeting held in the evening in Rosemary Square and addressed by Messrs. Larkin, P. T. Daly, T.C. of Dublin, and others. The object of the tournament was to provide funds to build a new hall for the Roscrea workers.

A large contingent travelled from Dublin by special train. The Fintan Lalor pipers band and a Transport Union band accompanied the excursion. On arrival they were met at the station by the Roscrea workers, who also had a fife and drum band. A procession was formed, which marched through the town and then proceeded to the hurling field.

The hurling match attracted a very large crowd of spectators who witnessed a keen, open game, played under most favourable weather conditions. Mr. Widger Meagher, secretary of the Tipperary Co Board, G.A.A, refereed, and Mr. James Larkin threw in the ball at the start. Leix showed considerable dash in the opening stages, putting in the first score in a short time. After a while, however, Offaly team got into its stride, and for the greater part of the game held control. Although the final score showed a big margin in Offaly's favour, play all through was lively and interesting. The bands rendered pleasing selections on the field.

After the match the crowds adjourned to the town, where many attended the public meeting in Rosemary Square. Streamers on the different streets bid "Welcome to Jim Larkin." The meeting was orderly and enthusiastic. Afterwards the bands escorted the speakers to their train.

THE PUBLIC MEETING

Mr. M. Cunningham presided, and on the platform were Messrs. James Larkin, Councillors P. T. Daly (Typographical Association), John Byrne and O'Meara, of Dublin, Dermot Stewart, secretary of the Tailors' Union, Ed. Tucker, President of the Dublin Trades Council, H. Pollett, Southampton shipyard workers.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Mr. Cunningham said—Comrades of Roscrea, we can congratulate ourselves on the very enjoyable day we have provided for everybody to-day. We are thankful, above all, to Comrade Jim Larkin, for bringing such a magnificent gathering into our town. I must also congratulate you as good obedient children of the father of your Union—Jim Larkin. At the present time we are having trouble with people who have called themselves the foster fathers of the Transport Union. We have put up a fight which has lasted close on three months, with the employers of roadmen. The fight is not over yet and we have to excuse ourselves to the Dublin visitors for the dirty streets of the town. But the Dublin people know what trade unionism means, and we mean to put up a fight here even though the streets remain dirty and we have to fight on hungry stomachs for the time being. We are not going to accept that 29/- a week under any circumstances. They have offered us meat or grub by hanging it out through a window, and then leaving it to us to take it or leave it. I will not detain you now. You have heard me often enough, and I make way for Comrade Dermot Stewart, of the Irish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Union (cheers).

MR. DERMOT STEWART

Mr. Stewart said—Mr. Chairman and fellow workers of the town of Roscrea, when we heard in Dublin that the roadworkers in Roscrea had refused to accept the degrading conditions offered by the bureaucracy of the County Council, aided and abetted by the reactionary people of your own Union, we agreed that we would help you to stand up and fight against the attempt to reduce your wage below a living standard. It is possible, however, that this meeting will welcome a victory instead of being a show of resistence. The County Council have passed a resolution consenting to payment of 35/- a week for the roadworkers. If the roadworkers had accepted 29/- a week when it was offered, when every inducement to force them to accept was used by their reactionary comrades and by the Executive, they would never get the 35/- again and their standard of living would be lowered. They have shown what the determined men of Tipperary can do (cheers). They show that no tyrant will be allowed to trample upon them. The rank and file of the workers of Ireland were becoming resigned to their fate. They were losing heart and courage and spirit for the fight. But now Jim Larkin, the man who started the movement has come back and the old spirit is being infused into the working classes. That spirit is growing every day, and Larkin will soon come into his own again (cheers). The determination of the rank and file of every class of workers in this country is plain. They are not going to accept any deductions in wages, which would reduce the conditions of living, and deprive them of the right to live in the land to which we belong (cheers).

MR P. T. DALY, T.C.

Mr. Daly was warmly received. He said that the fight which was being carried on at present in Roscrea was not alone for the good of the town workers but for labour all over Ireland. The Government had decided to pay 29/- a week to the workers. The standard of living was to be fixed at a figure that would not buy cigarettes for the Governor-General for one day. It would not give tips to the servants he will meet in Spain while on his holidays (laughter). The workers were asked to remain solid in this fight against reduction of wages. The men of Tipperary who in the olden days wrote the history of Ireland in letters of gold in the records of the world will not be reneged by the men of Tipperary to-day. The county that gave to Ireland Doheny and Smith O'Brien, that gave to the national movement O'Leary and Kickham, will not betray the cause they are fighting for, or the class that is their own. He wished them God-speed in their work, and asked them to be self-reliant and self-supporting in their efforts. When they came victorious out of this fight they would have learned that in future they could best do their own work themselves, and that they could depend only on those who proved themselves reliable. He was pleased to be with the Tipperary men in the fight and proud to see that the old spirit is not dead. He would return to Dublin to tell their comrades that the old cry of "Up, Tipp. !" still rings through the country, and that the Tipperary men were carrying the banner of labour to victory (cheers).

MR. JAMES LARKIN

Mr. Larkin was greeted with loud cheers on coming forward. He said—Men, women and children of Tipperary, we of the Irish Transport Union want to thank you for the courteous and hospitable manner in which you have received us on entrance to your town. We thank you heartily and reciprocate your warm welcome with an invitation that when you come to Dublin, you should come to Liberty Hall, where you will find not only No. 1 branch but No. 3 and No. 5 whose committee you have here and No. 2 branch who are also represented here to-day, and you will receive a warm welcome from all at headquarters. (A voice—They have not all gone to Foran). No, they are not gone to Foran. I want to remind you that this Government that you and I exist under lives upon the bayonets of England, backed up and financed by the blood-money of the British Empire. And the men who are now taking the 30 pieces of silver are the men who are supporters of what is sometimes termed the "Injunction Executive" (laughter). Many years ago when I founded this Union, we entered upon a field of action that was never opened up before, and we adopted a line of policy that was new to the times and new to the people. When I started the Union I did not start with the mere object of raising the wages or the standard of living. I would not waste my time, or that were the only end and aim of the Union. We set out with one great object in view—to win the nation for the nation's people (cheers). If you read the old preamble of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, you will find it sets out in words, "From the centre to the sea, Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland and to them alone." I would be false to my name and race if I suggested that the people of Ireland should be satisfied with anything less. We set out to organise a nation that was beaten to the earth. In 1907 the Irish working classes were in abject misery, slaves who forgot that they had any rights either God given or man given. A small party of us gathered together in the city of Dublin and founded a movement that was to revolutionise the condition of the worker. When Ireland realises what she owes to Dublin, she will take upon herself some of the responsibility she has failed to assume so far. Dublin is the heart of Ireland, and from the furthest corner of Kerry to the North of Antrim, the best that the country can produce flows to Dublin to return from there stimulated and strengthened four fold to renew the fight. I am a Northerner, and I make no apology to any man on earth for the fact. I come from the black North.. They call it the black North, but we will make it run a bloody red before we have finished with it (cheers). Dublin is the centre and the fountain of strength still, despite all she has suffered. Many a time I have trod the Dublin pavements for weary hours at night, and many a time the thought came to me that if the very stones would rise up they could speak eloquently of the glorious dead that lie in the Dublin area. Not a house, not a street, not a place in that city but has been sanctified by the best blood of Ireland. But we have in Dublin, too, another breed the breed of Cromwell, and the breed of the Saxon, the breed that brings the germ of disintegration amongst the people. But the true Irishmen stand together there, and parochialism and the politics of the parish pump are forgotten. It must also be forgotten in the various country districts. If the men of Tipperary are prepared to work with us, we are prepared to stand in with them, and to march shoulder to shoulder to the end of the journey.

I know that the men of Roscrea and Nenagh are worthy of the best traditions of the country. When I heard they had been on strike for 10 weeks, for a miserable 6s a week I knew it was the same determination that the same men showed in fighting for their country in the past few years. Most of you fought when Cosgrave was resting in the sanatarium at Glentree, and most of you will be fighting yet when Cosgrave is forgotten. And you won't get £3,000 a year for it either (laughter). But you will get the satisfaction of bringing into being a nation and a Republic, one and indivisible, and not only a political Republic, but a 'Workers' Republic. Every man, woman and child will be assured of a right to the land and the products of the land of the thirty-two counties.

The real difficulty with the working man is he is too willing to come forward at all times to take part in a struggle. The Irish working man is an emotional being. But although that readiness to fight in any cause is a good thing at times, it never gets you far unless you have behind it a well thought out scheme Look at what took place in 1914. There were not so many Republicans in the country then, and it took a long time before there were many more of them. Then we got a constitution—I don't know whether it was the constitution of '72 or McNeill's constitution.

A Voice—Would'nt you like to be king of Ireland now?

Mr. Larkin—If I was king I'd make you my Prime Minister, because although you are old in years you have no sense (laughter). A man has no kingdom but his mind, and unless he has that under control he is not worth his place in the body politic. Why should we have a king in Ireland. Why should we have a figurehead and its satelites in any country. The idea of kings we are going to wipe out of every country in the universe. We will make the kings go to work and we won't give them 29/- a week either. In 1914 when England went to war, this country was swamped. John Redmond is dead, peace to his ashes. He tried to sell the country with its tradition, and its glory, for a price. He made an unholy bargain with Asquith in the Mansion House. But who stopped him. The men who are fighting to-day.

There were some interruptions at this stage and Mr. Larkin said—Larkin's platform is no coward's castle. I will answer any man a question, but if it is an impertinent question I will answer it in another way. I don't care a tinker's thraneen for any man in the crowd (laughter).

Referring to further interruptions Mr Larkin said that the difficulty with his class, and it was mainly with his class the difficulty existed, was that they lost self-control when they had drink taken. Until they learned discipline they could not expect to get very far forward. He lived in the world for forty-five years and never found it necessary to get a false stimulation by drinking.

Continuing, he said that the men who saved Ireland in 1914 were James Connolly, Countess Markievicz, Gore Booth, and himself. There were only a handful in the whole country who stood up for it at that time. There were thousands running then to take the uniform of the enemy—to be tools for the Empire, and the founder of the workers' Union was the only man to speak out under the threat of the bayonets.

A voice—Kitchener ran you (laughter).

Mr. Larkin—I was never afraid of king or empire. My brother said that in Canada during the war and got fifteen years for it. Your country has been sold to the Empire for thirty bloody pieces of silver and the blood on the silver is the blood of the best of Ireland's martyrs—Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Joe McKelvey, and Barrett. What have we got for the lives of all the men who died since 1914?

A voice—Tim Healy (laughter).

Mr. Larkin—Yes. You have Tim Healy at a price of £40,000.

A voice—What about Kevin O'Higgins?

Mr. Larkin—Leave him to his God. Kevin is above the law and below the law. Every man who took part in the sacrifices of the past few years will answer for it in life as well as in death. They are already answering for it. The brood are split into factions. They are gone so far into the quarrel that they are frightened of each other, because they may make too many exposures.

In the course of his further remarks, Mr Larkin said that the country had gone through a purgatorial period, but the turning point was reached and he was confident that the majority of the people were determined to have the only freedom that was worth while, the freedom of a Workers' Republic. Freedom was a fourth dimensional term. It had length, breadth, height, and a fourth dimension, and could be defined as the liberty for every man to live his own life in his own way. The Treaty did not give that freedom. Words were too inadequate to express his contempt for Lloyd George and the Treaty. The Treaty was conceived in iniquity, drafted in hatred, and forced on the country by methods that no human being should use against another. At one time Lloyd George was on the side of the oppressed. That was during the Boer war after which he **(speaker) befriended** Lloyd George on an English platform when he was in danger from the mob, because he was pro-Boer. Lloyd George had changed but Larkin would not change. Neither money, nor power, nor place would change him from his objective—a free, united indivisible Ireland. For that ideal he had done years in practically every jail in England, in some in Ireland and in America, and in two jails in Scotland. There were men from Southern Ireland in jail to-day who were captured in the years 1918 to 1921—in Pentoville and Peterhead, and enough was not being done to release them. They would be told of the efforts made on behalf of Cahir Healy and John McCurtin, but these were leaders. Little effort was being made to release the rank and file.

Farrell and some of the Nenagh boys were telling him of the Mayboro jail. Maryboro was a home from home and Mountjoy was a hotel compared with Pentonville and such places. If some effort was not made while the Labour Government was in power, there was small chance of their release. He was a close comrade of "Jimmy" Macdonald and "Johnny" Wheatley for many years, and those men sat acquiescent in the continued imprisonment of Irishmen. He was speaking recently to some of the leaders of the English and Scotch Labour groups about the prisoners. Dowling was released, but other people got the credit for it. Other prisoners lay in Larne workhouse, in Crumlin jail, and in the American boat that was built to help to free small nations. While the Free State held their prisoners, the others would hold their prisoners too. There was only one body—the workers Union—non-political, non-sectarian, non-partisan, it was revolutionary only, and it demanded the unconditional release of the prisoners. The people of the country were not organised to effectively demand the release of the prisoners. The workers would show them the way. The workers were always faithful—they **never sold the country** for place or profit. On the shoulders of the workers would be the honour of having the prisoners released.

Referring to Nenagh workers, the speaker said there was a great bunch of the boys there. One of them, Wm. Gleeson, a silent lad, a man of action, not words, was locked up for two months because he carried out the mandate of his comrades. He was being released that week, and the hill sides of Tipperary would be alight to welcome him home.

He was asked where he was in 1916. There were four millions of people in Ireland then, but only two thousand fought. Had he been at home he would have fought too. He gave a gun to O'Brien before he left, but O'Brien left the gun on the rack, and went to Fairyhouse Races that Easter Monday. There would have been no 1916 only for Larkin. The Citizen Army was founded by him and by no other man. If they wanted to know what he did in 1916, let them ask John Devoy or Judge Coholan. He ran as many risks the world over, as any man who was on the Tipperary hills. He wanted to be assured before returning to Dublin that that day's work in Roscrea had forwarded the good cause. If he had offended anyone in the heat of the speech he regretted it. He was always sorry to hurt Irishmen—they were so thin skinned and sensitive compared with the other nationalities. All who had gone astray since 1916 should be brought back to unity. Since the first gun was fired in 1922 many had departed from the straight path. Let them come and face the hard and narrow road with the rest of their comrades for Ireland's sake and all would yet be well. He referred them to the motto upon their banner, "An injury to one is the concern of all." That was written by himself, and if they follow it, they would not go astray. The road workers on strike were only 30 in number. They should be supported, and he would send them help. And in the good days to come they would have the honour of saying that they bore the heat of the day. The people who held the power by injunction now would be driven out, and when that day came, he would depend on Tipperary to give them a hand (cheers).

Mr Larkin then invited questions. A member of the crowd asked, "What about Dan Morrissey?" and Mr Larkin replied, "Let him go back to obscurity from which he emerged.'

MR. McLOUGHLIN.

The chairman introduced Mr McLoughlin as a comrade recently released from prison.

Mr. McLoughlin said the men of Tipperary had gone through a considerable number of years of excitement, and while they were in danger, a good many of those who now control the country were conspicious by their absence. The Tipperary workers in common with the workers of Ireland wanted a Workers' Republic. They had a strike in Roscrea over the strets. People said the roads were very dirty. What did they care about the roads being dirty if the hearts of the working classes were clean. Why did not the Civic Guard go out and clean the streets. They were big, greasy and strong, paid a good wage, and fit enough for the job (laughter). There was no fundamental difference between the small farmer and the labourer. Both lived by their toil. The men who were not wanted were the Lord Dunalleys. They wanted a free and untramelled Ireland. That was the purpose of the workers league. (cheers).

Mr H. Pollet, Southampton, refrred to the labour difficulties in England, where, he said, a most amazing series of strikes and lock-outs had occurred recently. There was no use in the Unions in England or Ireland saying they stood alone. They should support each other. This was his first visit to Ireland, and he was tremendously impressed with what he had seen. He would be glad to bring to the Southampton workers, to whom he would speak on Tuesday, the hearty greetings of the Roscrea workers. The coming years would see the Unions developing, not nationally, but internationally, and a world-wide co-operative republic would be established.

Mr Cunningham, in bringing the proceedings to a close, thanked the crowds who had supported the hurling tournament, which was organised in aid of the workers hall. The branch had asked the Executive for £200 loan to build the hall, but the Executive had no money to lend to the Roscrea branch, although they had thousands of pounds to lend to the Free State Government (cheers) He invited the workers to the Courthouse next day to show the Justices who would be there that the workers were standing on their own. They would not deny they held the books of the Union, and had the balance sheet prepared, and they would let the "injunction executive" know that they would not get the books nor the money. He thanked all connected with the day's proceedings, for their assistance in making the occasion so successful.

BORRISOKANE MARKET

The market on Tuesday was rather small. Eggs sold at 10d. per doz; butter at 1/6 per lb, and pigs at 53/- per cwt. l.w. Bonhams fetched 15/- each.

CLOUGHJORDAN ACCIDENT

Mrs. Bridget Williams, Cloughjordan, was injured on Saturday last as a result of a collision at Knocknacree between a car she was driving and a motor lorry. She was conveyed to her home where she is progressing favourably towards recovery.

EAST LIMERICK HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

At the Markets Field, Limerick, on Sunday, the final of the East Limerick hurling championship was played between Pedemore and Young Ireland, before a large crowd of spectators. Young Irelands won a fast game by 2 goals 4 points to 2 goals.

GRANTS IN AID

Local authorities in the Free State were recently informed by the Government that payment of grants to the extent of £533,000 was authorised. This included Exchequer contribution, Estate Duty grant and Agricultural grant, and the welcome distribution followed directly upon improvement in the payment of Land Purchase annuity arrears. Grants in aid of local taxation are payable in the first instance into the Guarantee Fund established under the Land Acts. The deficiencies caused by delayed payment of land purchase annuities are met out of the guarantee fund. During 1921 and 1922 there was an accumulation of arrears of annuities, but with the recovery of a large portion of the arrears in 1923, money detained in the Guarantee Fund has been released for transfer to the local taxation account, from which the grants in aid are distributed to local bodies.

Robbery Near Nenagh.

TEN YEARS' PENAL AND TWENTY STROKES OF THE CAT

TOOMEVARA, BALLINTOTTY, AND HOLYCROSS RAIDS

On Wednesday at Thurles before Judge Sealy, K.C, and a jury, an extraordinary story of hold-up, assaults, and robberies in Toomevara district was told, when Wm. Coman and Michael Fitzgerald were charged in connection with holding-up P. V Mahon, Nenagh, on the 28th Jan, and taking £128 from him after a prolonged struggle on a country road, stealing a bicycle from Patrick Hennessy, Toomevara, and entering Ed. Nolan's Hoycross, and having assaulted the owner and his wife, stealing clothing and money.

Fitzgerald was stated to be from Birr district, and Coman told the court that he was in the British army, that he mutinied with the Connaught Rangers in India, and that he was also in the Free State Army.

Fitzgerald was defended by Mr J I Esmonde, B.L. (instructed by Mr Loughrey, solicitor, Birr). Coman was not professionally represented.

Mr James O'Brien, State Solicitor, Nenagh, prosecuted.

Prisoners pleaded not guilty.

Mr Mahon's Evidence.

Patrick V. Mahon, examined by Mr J O'Brien, State Solicitor, said he was a foreman for a building contractor in Dublin. On the 28th Jan. last he was travelling from Ballintotty, to Nenagh, in his motor car about 6.30 in the evening. It was quite dark but the lights of the car were on and he had a clear view. He heard a shout of 'stop,' and saw two figures between 10 and 15 yards in front. He pulled up the car in that distance. Two men came along, one each side of the car and ordered him out; he refused to get out and they opened the doors and began punching him with their clenched fists. They continued to strike him for about five minutes. They did not say what they wanted. Witness felt very hurt about the face; he was dragged out on the road and kicked. For about a quarter of an hour they continued beating him. "Of course," said witness, "I fought them on the road, and knocked them down several times. Eventually I got exhausted and they got my hands behind my back and rifled my pockets." £127 in notes, 35s or 37s, watch, correspondence, compass, etc. were all taken from his pockets. He identified various letters, books, etc. produced. The men pulled the wires from the switchboard, dismantling the car and put out the lights. He was left lying on the road. He had a good opportunity of seeing the men and now identified prisoners as his attackers. The Tuesday following he occurrence he saw Fitzgerald in Nenagh Guards barrack and the following Thursday saw Coman in Thurles Guards barracks. He never got back any of the money taken from him.

Cross-examined by Mr Esmonde, witness said he never saw Fitzgerald previous to the robbery.

You had the very large sum of £127 in your possession on this occasion?—It was usual for me to carry as much as £350.

To further questions, witness said the bulk of the sum was his own private money which he carried around. It was owing to the papers being got in Fitzgerald's possession he was convinced he was one of the men. It would be untrue to say he was in a publichouse in Sharavogue with Fitzgerald on the 28th January.

Coman questioned the witness as to whether he had been in the publichouse in Sharavogue at 10.30 on the day in question—He was not speaking to the parish priest there and did not know him; did not ask them (prisoners) to come a "joy-ride in his taxi."

Coman—You were not speaking in different languages to the girl behind the bar—French, Arabic, or Hindustani?—No.

Michael Fitzgerald did not produce papers concerning the mutiny of the Connaught Rangers in India?—I never saw you until I saw you in Thurles.

To the judge, witness said he did not know what Coman was referring to in his questions. When the men went away he remained by his car until brought into Nenagh by a passing motor.

PURSUIT AND CAPTURE

Martin Fogarty said when going into Toomevara on January 28th at 9.30 he met two men on bicycles whom he recognised as prisoners. Coman asked were they on the right road to Nenagh, and witness, who did not like the look of him, misdirected. Coman was swearing because he could not get a train to Dublin that night. When he went into Toomevara, in consequence of what a man named Hennessy told him, witness went with others in pursuit of the two men in a motor car. They caught up the two men and Hennessy said the bicycle Coman was riding was his. The motor was pulled up and Coman had gone up a laneway and Hennessy and McDonald (the driver) pursued him. The other man came back after cycling some distance. Witness searched the man who said he got the bike he had from a man in Toomevara. Witness found 33s. in silver and papers (produced). Coman got away and Fitzgerald was brought into Nenagh and handed over to the Civic Guard.

To Mr. Esmonde the witness said Fitzgerald stated the articles he got were handed to him by whom he would not say.

To Coman witness said he recognised him (prisoner) the night in question and had no doubt as to his identity.

Patrick Hassett gave corroborative evidence.

THE MISSING BICYCLE

Patrick Hennessy testified as to the missing bicycle which he left outside a house in Toomevara on January 28th and later, in consequence of what Fogarty told him, going in pursuit of the two men.

Sergt. John Cuneen gave evidence as to the arrest of Coman at Clonoulty, when he had in his possession a bicycle which Mr. Hennessy later identified as his. Coman, when arrested, gave his name as O'Brien.

THE DEFENCE

Mr. Esmonde told the jury that a witness who would dispute certain statements made by the principal witness was not present. They had intended to produce evidence that Mahon had previously been drinking with the prisoners. If Fitzgerald was to be convicted the evidence of Mr. Mahon was to be taken as beyond doubt. Counsel wished to direct attention to the remarkable fact that in January of this year when times were still disturbed and robbery still rife, a man should carry about £127 in pound notes on the roads of North Tipperary.

Coman, in the course of a long statement, alleged on the morning of the date in question Mahon entered a publichouse in Sharavogue where he and his fellow-prisoner were and stood them a drink and drove them around the country. They visited Roscrea and Toomevara and Mahon stood them a drink at various points on the way.

Mr. O'Brien characterised Coman's statement as a cock-and-bull story. It had been stated a material witness for the defence would not attend, and reference had been made by Coman to meeting Father Gleeson in Sharavogue, but there had been no attempt to produce Father Gleeson—from which the jury could only draw one conclusion.

JUDGE'S CHARGE

The judge said the offence with which prisoners were charged was very serious—next in gravity to murder. If people could go around the roads at night prepared to knock people down and rob them with violence there would be no living in the country. Reviewing the evidence at length, the judge said a very strong case had been made out against the prisoners. In these cases there was always an attempt to make something like an alibi defence, but not in this. There was great corroboration of what Mr Mahon stated, and was a man who would have money about him, and who would have no motive in stating he was robbed of a large sum, not to be believed. Fitzgerald had been found in possession of some of the stolen property and was captured by amateur guards, whose action was one for great approval, at Toomevara; while Coman was later taken in possession of the stolen bicycle. If the jury felt these men were guilty they should return the verdict for the peace and security of the country. If the people were determined to put down crime they could put it down.

After a long absence the jury returned and the foreman announced they could not agree on the question of whether £127 was taken from witness Mahon. They were satisfied with the other evidence.

The Judge pointed out that Fitzgerald was found in possession of stolen property. If they were satisfied there was a robbery they could return a verdict of the other articles excepting the notes.

The jury again retired, and after another long interval found the prisoners guilty and they were put back.

HOLYCROSS RAID

Coman was on Thursday morning put forward on the other charges against him to which he had entered a plea of not guilty. He was not professionally represented.

Ed. Nolan, coachman, Holycross, said on the night of the 28th December when he was at home with his wife a knock came to the door about 9.30. When he asked who was there a voice said O'Brien from Galberstown. Witness said there was no O'Brien there, and the voice said he would push it in. Immediately the window was pushed in and the prisoner jumped through. He had a double-barrelled gun in his hand and a dirty-white muffler twisted about his face. The muffler shifted and he had no difficulty in identifying Coman whom he knew before. He put the gun up to my body and said he would riddle me if I did not give him all the money I had in the house. He said he would spill my blood on the floor. I said I had no money and he produced a cartridge and put it up to my face and said "You are going to get that." The cartridge disappeared—I don't know where—and he said "Kneel down." I said "No." He then said to get up against the door. My wife got terrified and said "Stop, I will give you money." My wife then handed him her purse. He then went outside the door apparently to consult someone else. I heard him talking to someone. He came back and struck me a violent punch over the heart and asked me for my watch and searched my pockets for it. Witness, proceeding, detailed how the man asked him for clothes and took his overcoat in which was a pair of gloves. He identified the gloves produced as similar to those taken but they were much worn since they left his possession. The man said he wanted the coat and gloves for "one of his men." The over coat was black with a satin collar.

Judge—You have no doubt whatver this is the man?—Witness—Not the slightest.

Mrs. Nolan corroborated.

IN THE ARMY

Thomas Coman, Glentrigh, said on the night of December 28th he heard a tap at the window and opening the door found William Coman outside. He was dressed in a dark overcoat similar to the one Mr. Nolan described as stolen from him. It had a shiny collar. Prisoner also had a muzzle-loading shot-gun in his hand. He had been in the British army and when he came out of gaol after the mutiny of the Connaught Rangers he joined the Free State army. He stayed at witness's for a while, and as far as witness knew was a decent chap. Witness could not say if prisoner stayed in his house that night as he left the place.

Evidence of arrest at Clonoulty was given by Sergt. Cuneen. When searched there was found on prisoner half a horseshoe round which was the belt of a trench coat, two gloves (produced), army papers, etc.

COMAN'S DEFENCE

Coman, asked if he had anything to say, stated that the gun which he was supposed to have had was an old disabled gun. On the date in question he met men whom he knew in the village of Holycross and they gave him drink. He had been working at timber during the day at Mr. Clarke's. When he took drink it affected him as he got a shrapnel wound in the head in Egypt. "I was sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude. I completed two years and seven months both in Portland and Maidstone in England. I did ten days on hunger-strike and 26 days bread and water, which I can get witnesses to prove. That is all."

"NO EXTENUATION"

The judge told the jury the case was one of the most serious they could try. It was a terrible thing to think men might break into a person's house and threaten to take life if they did not get money. Ed. Nolan gave his evidence and was one of the best witnesses he had ever seen. Nolan was evidently a stout man and resisted the raider but the poor wife got terrified and handed over the purse. A suggestion was made by the prisoner that he wanted the clothes for his men—suggesting that he was one of these Republicans on the run. The Republicans were men of high ideals out to establish a Republic against the Free State, but there was a number of robbers and scoundrels going about the country posing under the name of I.R.A. It was men of this type who had to be put down. This man said he was in the British army and then in the Free State, but at the time of this robbery he was in no army—he was probably living on the proceeds of robbery from the peaceful inhabitants of the country. The only attempt at defence was the statement he had a shrapnel wound in the head and that drink affected him. Whether he had drink taken or not was no defence to the charge. Nine out of ten criminals brought to trial in England said they got shrapnel wounds in the War but that was no extenuation of the crime of robbery. The issue for the jury was a clear one.

After a brief absence a verdict of guilty on all counts was returned by the jury.

The charge of larceny of a bicycle was not proceeded with.

Prisoner was put back.

SEVERE SENTENCES

Coman and Fitzgerald were put forward next day for sentence.

Mr. Esmonde, pleading for leniency for the latter, said he had served in the war and had been wounded and was undoubtedly under the effect of drink at the time of the robbery.

Coman, asked if he had anything to say, said he would like the State solicitor to read some documents.

The State solicitor read recommendations of the prisoner from Very Rev. Dean Ryan, Cashel, and Mr. F. Phillips, Chairman Cashel U.C. for entry into the Civic Guards. There was also a Press report of what was described as an imposing reception of Coman as one of the released mutinying Connaught Rangers in India.

The judge said the prisoners were found guilty on the clearest evidence of brutally assaulting Mr. Mahon and robbing him on the road near Nenagh. It was one of the clearest case he had ever heard. This robbery with violence was a most serious crime in a civilised country, and he regarded the two prisoners as the most dangerous marauders ever in Tipperary. Coman had produced a document to prove he was a great man in India, but all he could say was that Tipperary would be so much the better off if he stayed in India either as a mutineer or anything else. Coman and Fitzgerald and the likes of them had made the roads of Tipperary impossible for the traveller and the houses even unsafe to live in.

He imposed a term of five years' penal servitude on both prisoners, and in addition twenty strokes of the cat. If the doctor certified them unfit to bear it they might escape the flogging. Coman had by himself been found guilty of an armed raid and for that crime was sentenced to a further term of five years, to start on the expiration of the first. Fitzgerald had already been sentenced to a term of three years at Nenagh, the five would follow on the expiration of that sentence.

The prisoners were removed in custody and the court rose.

Dail Contracts

In An Dail recently keen interest has been shown and some searching questions put in regard to Army contracts.

Ald. A. Byrne asked the Minister for Defence if he would take steps to see that contracts for the supply of provisions, etc, for the Army which terminated on 21st March, 1924, were re-advertised, if he would see that contracts which expired at that date were not extended without competitive tenders being sought.

President Cosgrave, in reply, said the owing to recent changes in organisation in the army it had not been practicable to avoid extending contracts for a month. Traders had been invited by advertisement to tender for a period from May 1st to July 31st.

Meat For Naas Barracks

Mr. G. Wolfe asked the Minister for Defence if he was aware that contrary to the usual custom the last tender for meat to be supplied to Naas Military Barracks was given away privately and not advertised and whether he would see that in future outside tenders would be considered.

In reply President Cosgrave said owing to re-organisation in the army it was necessary to extend the contracts for all provisions from March 31st until the end of April. Traders holding contracts were invited to continue supplies at their last quotation. In the case of meat for Naas Barracks he contractor asked for higher prices. It was therefore considered desirable to ask the only other trader who had tendered for the period which ended on March 31st to give quotations. He did so and his prices were the lower, and the contract for the month of April was given to him. The supply of meat beyond the end of April would be on a fresh contract for which tenders had been invited by advertisements.

Contracts For Provisions

Reply to Mr. Thomas Johnson, President Cosgrave said contracts for the supplies of milk, eggs, bacon, and other provisions, which were to expire on March 31st, had been extended until April 30th, except in the case of butter and eggs, in respect of which articles new contracts had been entered into, in order to take advantage of lower prices now prevailing. Tenders for supplies of all foodstuffs required by the Army during the period from May 1st until July 31st had now been invited by advertisements in the Press.

To get one of the O'Gorman Famous TONNEAU TRAPS
you need not go to Clonmel, as their Cloughjordan Agents, G. PATTISON & CO. will be happy to supply you on PRECISELY SAME TERMS.

LIMERICK ELECTIONS

A county and city Cumann na-nGaedheal conference will be held in Limerick on the 23rd inst to select a candidate to contest the vacancy in the constituency occasioned by the resignation of Dr. R. Hayes.