

Tribute To Nation's Patriot Dead

Limerick Memorial Unveiled

I AM most keen to abolish the memory of past differences and dissensions especially among the men and women who through the Republican Movement won for us the measure of independence we now enjoy." So said President Sean T. O'Kelly at Newcastle West yesterday when, in the presence of a huge concourse of people, he unveiled an impressive memorial to 17 West Limerick men who died during Easter Week and the War of Independence.

Mr. O'Kelly said that since he had been inaugurated as President almost ten years ago, he had endeavoured to bring together again the friends and comrades sundered by the divisions of 1922. He was grateful, he said, to the people of West Limerick for the practical help they had given to this noble purpose.

"This impressive monument which you have come together to erect to your fallen comrades bears eloquent testimony to your desire to heal old wounds and restore the friendships of the battlefield."

The President went on: "May I beg of the old soldiers of the fighting days of 1916 to 1923 in other parts of Ireland to take note of your glorious example. I ask them to do this as good Christian men and as loyal sons and daughters of Ireland. I pray them to do this for Ireland's sake.

"It will require the united efforts of all Ireland's children—all their will power, all their brains and talents, to complete the tasks we set out to accomplish in 1916. Who can give Ireland a nobler lead than the men and women who brought our Republic into being. Those of them who by the mercy of God are still with us should join together again as one united body to give renewed hope and heart and enthusiasm to the Ireland of to-day so that a new and reinvigorated Ireland may be led into the freedom and happiness we promised them in 1916 and 1919."

The President said we honoured all the men and women, of all generations, who strove in the cause of Ireland's freedom. It was natural and right, nevertheless, that we should cherish those of our own times, alive and dead, whose sacrifices won for us our own place in the community of nations. I also ask people to consider the problems of Partition. Let them not accept Partition as an accomplished fact. They should think earnestly on the subject and bring it into their everyday thoughts. The men whom they honoured that day and their comrades did not die for a partitioned Ireland.

"If you put your minds and your hearts into the solving of this problem you will succeed" he said. The British-made border which partitions Ireland cannot forever continue to divide the historic unity of the Irish Nation. Let it be then the dedicated task of young Ireland to bring to our Six Northern Counties the independence that is ours.

PRESIDENT WELCOMED

The President was met a half-mile outside the town by an escort party led by Mr. Donnach O'Briain, T.D., joint hon. secretary of the Memorial Committee; Mr. J. Doody, Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. M. Sheehy, joint hon. treasurer, and escorted to the Square where he inspected a Guard of Honour of F.C.A. under Capt. Miceal de Burca. He then proceeded to Assumpta Park where a parade of 1,000 Old I.R.A. men drawn from Limerick, Cork, Kerry and Tipperary were assembled under parade marshals. Messrs James Roche and Amos Reidy.

Led by the Millstreet Pipe Band and a colour party of Old I.R.A., under Mr. M. Murphy, the procession marched through the beflagged streets to the memorial.

Here the huge throng, which included relatives of the seventeen men honoured by the memorial and members of the Limerick Co. Council, bared their heads and stood to attention as buglers of the No. 4 Army Band sounded the Last Post and Reveille, after the President had slipped the cord that unveiled the impressive monument. The blessing of the memorial by Right Rev. Mgr. Hannan, P.P., V.G., Newcastlewest, followed.

Earlier addresses of welcome from the West Limerick Brigade read by Mr. J. O'Shea, N.T., Organising Secretary of the Memorial Committee, and from the Limerick Co. Council, read by the Council's Secretary, Mr. D. F. Donovan, were presented to Mr. O'Kelly.

Mr. James Doody, Chairman of the Memorial Committee, presided over the ceremonies at the memorial, and the parade, which was in charge of Comdt. M. Dalton, former O/C West Limerick Brigade and a cousin of Col Colbert, the executed 1916 leader, included contingents of Cumann na mBan, Fianna Eireann, O.N.E., Gaelic League, G.A.A., Rugby, Soccer, Fire Brigade and Red Cross. There were a total of six bands present.

TORCH OF FREEDOM

The memorial, designed by Mr. P. J. Sheahan, F.R.I.A.I., M.I.C.E.I., Limerick, himself a member of the Old I.R.A., is 36 feet high and stands on ground kindly placed at the disposal of the Committee by Mgr. Hannan. Built of Irish stone, granite and marble brought from the four Provinces, it has three crosses, each representing a Province, and a missing cross, representing the Six Counties outside the Republic. Marble figures at its base are symbolic of Eire handing on the Torch of Freedom from a dying Volunteer to a youth representative of the future generations.

The seventeen men commemorated are: Brigadier Comdt. Sean Finn, Capt. Col Colbert, Capt. Donal Sheehan, Capt. Donal McEniry, Capt. Patk. Dalton, Comdt. Eddie Cregan, Lieut. David Brennan, Sec-Comdt. Liam Danaher, Vol. Richard Boyce, Capt. Paddy Naughton, Capt. Liam Scully, Capt. Tim Madigan, Lieut. Donal Neville, Sec-Comdt. Paddy Buckley, Lieut. M. O'Shea, Vol. P. O'Brien, Vol. Mortimer Duggan, N.T. Two of them, Capt. Colbert and Cregan were born near Newcastlewest; thirteen of them fell in the War of Independence and another two met their deaths on opposite sides in the Civil War.

The attendance included Very Rev. Canon Wall, P.P., Ballingarry; Very Rev. Canon Punch, P.P., Mungret; Very Rev. Canon Carroll, P.P., Rathkeale; Rev. Fr. Fitzgerald, P.P., Kilcolman; Rev. Fr. O'Sullivan, P.P., Askeaton; Mr. J. J. Collins, T.D., Chairman Limerick Co. Council and Vice-Chairman of the Memorial Committee; Ald. G. E. Russell, Mayor of Limerick; Messrs. P. J. Meghan, Limerick Co. Manager; D. J. Madden, T.D.; Senator S. Hartney, Sean Bruder, joint Hon. Sec. Memorial Committee; James Halpin, joint Hon. Treas (do.); James Colbert, Ned Cregan, Lieut.-Col. J. Healy, O/C 12th Batt., Sarsfield's Barracks representing Col. S. Collins-Powell O/C Southern Command; Supt. P. Colleran G.S., representing Chief Supt. T. Dieren, and Supt. P. McKenna, Newcastlewest.

A vote of thanks to the President was proposed by Comdt. M. Colbert, former O/C West Limerick Brigade, and seconded by Major General D. O. Annagain, O/C East Limerick Brigade.