

Castle File No.1407.

174

(S.I.)

S E A R S, William.  
-----

*"The Freeman's Journal"*  
13-9-22

After question time at the meeting of Dail Eireann yesterday, a debate opened on a motion tabled by Mr. Wm. Sears (South Mayo-Roscommon). It was as follows:—

"That the House approve of the action the Government has taken and is taking to vindicate the authority of Parliament."

The President's statement the previous day was received by the majority of members with the deepest satisfaction, and he was sure it would give the same satisfaction to the majority of the people outside. It would increase the faith of the people in the judgment and courage and steadfastness of those in charge of the country. He asked the House to endorse the action taken by the Government.

#### THE CHALLENGE

Mr. Sears then proceeded to narrate the outrageous and lawless events which followed the adoption of the Treaty and the acts which precipitated the present conflict. Appeals came to the Government from all parts of the country for protection of life and property, and for a long time the Government, elected by the majority of the people, was in the humiliating position of being unable to give that protection.

It seemed as if the country had escaped from the throttling hand of England only to perish by suicide. Thank God, there were men in Ireland then, as there were to-day, brave enough to grapple the situation. The men who fought the English and won the war were equal to the new situation. Future generations would be grateful to those men.

#### THE COMMUNIST WAY

No need to ask, Mr. Sears continued, what the Government of any other country would have done under such a situation when their authority was flouted. What would be done in France or in England or in the United States? Would not immediate action be taken? and even where the workers ruled—even in Bolshevist Russia—the Labour man liked to rule as well as the capitalist. But in Russia when revolts were attempted, those who attempted them were not put in jails, but in their graves. The talk about militarism should be more specific and more definite.

They were compelled by the facts of the situation to take action. It was the duty of that House to endorse that action, because in undertaking it they defended the principle of majority rule, upon which all Parliamentary Government was based.

#### PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

There were men, women and children hungry. There was land to be divided and a thousand projects ripe for action. That was the cry of their people, and it was for them to give it effect. But they must restore order and get back to common sense, and that was what the Cabinet proposed to do. They were all glad to hear the President say that the door was open for peace. There was no one in any part of the House would wish to close it, and these young men would be welcomed, and it would be no disgrace for them to take their stand with the majority of their fellow-countrymen.

Speeches on Ratification  
by  
SEARS! W<sup>m</sup>

'IRISH TIMES'  
5-1-22.

VOICE OF MAYO.

REJECTION "SHEER MADNESS."

Mr. William Sears (Mayo) declared that if the Treaty was rejected that assembly would be guilty of the greatest act of political folly that was recorded in history. They sent the plenipotentiaries to London to make a bargain. They did not expect them to bring home a Republic, and the Treaty would put them on the shortest road to complete independence. Within its four corners were provisions which would strengthen the nation.

Mr. Sean T. O'Kelly had said that the fight for the independence of Ireland must go on. Certainly it would go on. If instead of entering upon a disastrous way, they took charge of the schools and universities they would be taking steps to preserve the ideal. The Irish people were the shrewdest people on the face of the earth—(applause)—and, if they went to them, the farmer and the labourer would tell them that they would be fools to throw away that advantage.

Addressing the opponents of the Treaty, Mr. Sears said: "You have not three per cent. of the people behind you. Are you going to commit them to a shambles and a desert? . . . You have not the people of Ireland behind you, because it is madness, sheer madness. The people of Ireland are a shrewd people. They know a good thing when they see it, and they have a good thing in this Treaty." (Applause.)

'INDEPENDENT' 1-4-22.

MR. SEARS, T.D. AND MR. DE VALERA

Mr. W. Sears, T.D., writing to the "Enniscorthy Echo," says:—"I should like to say what my recollection is of what was said by Mr. de Valera about the Republic at the Enniscorthy Conference in 1917. He was speaking of the republican form of government, and he said that, personally, he had no preference for it, and that it did not appeal to him at all; but that in Dublin he and others had decided to adopt the Republic, as no other word could bring home so well to the outside world the fact that the Irish people were claiming full independence. These may not be his exact words, but I am perfectly clear that this was the position he took up."

'INDEPENDENT' 27-9-21.

#### "THE FOURTEEN POINTS."

Mr. W. Sears, T.D., speaking at a demonstration at Balla, Rev. Father Eaton, C.C., presiding, said that Mr. Lloyd George had peculiar ideas of a conference. Not only did he expect concessions inside, but he wanted the Irish leaders to yield vital points before they went in at all.

It was difficult to recognise in the twisted paragraphs from Gairloch the Fourteen Points to which Mr. Lloyd George had put his signature in Paris.

Commandant T. McGuire, T.D., chairman, Ballinrobe D.C., said that if England tried again to impose her will on the people and the I.R.A. were called upon to man the guns they would respond to the call.

Among those who attended at the Mansion House yesterday were:—Messrs. de Valera, A. Griffith, Erskine Childers, A. Stack, J. M'Donagh, G. Duffy, D. Fitzgerald, and Ald. W. T. Cosgrave.

FREEMAN'S. 27-9-21.

#### THE NEXT FIGHT.

##### SINN FEIN M.P.'S VIOLENT SPEECH.

Speaking at a demonstration at Balla, Co. Mayo, on Sunday, over which the Rev. Father Eaton, C.C., presided, Mr. William Sears, M.P., said that he did not know how the peace negotiations would end, but they might rest assured that the men who led them through the fight would lead them through the truce.

The manner in which de Valera, Griffith, and Collins were conducting the negotiations, he said, had excited the admiration of the whole world. They had taught Lloyd George how to read his own letters, and they would teach him a few more lessons before they were done with him. Lloyd George had called the truce, not because the world was crying shame on him for letting loose his hordes on defenceless men and women, but because he realised that the young men of Ireland had rifles and knew how to use them. (Cheers.) It was because he discovered that Ireland had soldiers like Sean McKeon and Commandant McGuire, the victor of Tourmakeady. Lloyd George bluffed in talking of another fight. If they told him that at the next fight in Tourmakeady it was not twenty men, but twenty thousand men that Commandant McGuire would have, they would cause him tooth ache in the other jaw. (Laughter and cheers.) The message that de Valera and his Cabinet sent to the country was to strengthen their organisation, because they did not know when Lloyd George might decide on an election.

'INDEPENDENT' 18-10-21.

#### IRELAND READY TO FORGET.

At Claremorris Mr. Liam Sears, T.D., said the Irish people had a lot to forget, and they would try to forget it if Ireland got a square deal. But England, for her own sake as well as for Ireland's, must drop her latest pretext for delaying evacuation—that Ireland might be a jumping-off ground for a foreign foe.

If Ireland's delegates came back and reported that all their fair offers of friendship and equality were spurned, and that, despite her promises, England still sought to hold Ireland by the mailed hand, there would be a rally to the side of Pres. de Valera that would astonish Mr. Lloyd George.

'IRISH TIMES' 2-11-21.

#### SINN FEIN AND ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. William Sears, M.P., addressing a meeting at Ballindine, Co. Mayo, on Sunday, said that there was talk of the Conference breaking down on the question of allegiance. If England, after consenting to the restoration to Ireland of control of her trade, her money, and other affairs, were to resume hostilities because we lacked loyalty to her King, she would be guilty of one of the most tragic follies in history. Ireland was anxious for a settlement, and willing and eager to live in amity with England, but it must be a free and untrammelled settlement. She would resist a dictated peace as long as there were Irish soldiers left, and a nation to sustain them.

Winstown Urban Council last night

'INDEPENDENT' 4-10-21.

#### SOURCE OF UNEASINESS.

The chief source of uneasiness about the conference was the spirit still inspiring British policy towards this country, said Mr. W. Sears, T.D., speaking at Ballinrobe.

Mr. Lloyd George, revolver in hand, says "If you don't accept my offer I will blow your brains out, massacre your people, and destroy their property." There could be no greater obstacle to peace than such a threat.

#### THE INTERNEES.

Was it not hard, continued Mr. Sears, to believe that Mr. Lloyd George meant peace when, now with the truce on, he heartlessly kept under lock and key thousands of Irishmen and women uncharged and untried.

In the concessions already made, Mr. Lloyd George had practically admitted that England had not a shred of right in arresting or detaining these prisoners, and he (speaker) could not believe that peace was intended until these men and women were released.

SEARS. William, 74, Leinster Road, Rathmines, Dublin.

---

Age 59. (1921).

Elected Sinn Fein M.P. for South Mayo, May 1921.

Prior to May 1921 Election, was a Member of the "Local Government Board", "Agriculture", and "National Civil Service" Committees, Dail Eireann. Also Arbitration Courts & Loan Banks.

*Voted for Treaty on Sat 7-1-22*



Commandant on Staff I.R.A.

Son of an ex Head Constable R.I.C.

An extremist and advocates the murder of Crown Officials. (ix)0180)

Was Editor of the "Enniscorthy Echo" which came under notice in 1914 owing to the publication of various anti-recruiting paragraphs. In December 1914, the proprietors were cautioned by order of the G.O.C.-in-Chief. The warning was disregarded and the paper was suppressed in May 1916. The entire staff were then well known extremists. The paper was again issued in February 1917, and SEARS re-instated as Editor. He is still believed to have an interest in that paper.

Took part in the 1916 Rebellion. Arrested and deported to Wandsworth Prison.

Released December 1916.

Made a seditious speech at Rush, Co. Dublin 21-10-17. also at Balbriggan on 25-11-17, Referring to overtaxation etc.

In November 1917 was elected President of the North Wexford Sinn Fein Executive. A dispute between himself and Etchingham discussed by Meeting.

In January 1918 was busy in connection with the Armagh Election.

Addressed a Sinn Fein Meeting at Foxford on 31-3-18. At this Meeting he said:- "John Bull imagines he can have the young men of Ireland at a beck in case conscription is enforced, but remember Easter Week and be ready to resist to the death. If a life is taken, take two for it. You would have to go to the lowest strata in Hell to find anything like John Bull. England is done - Hindenburg is driving them back so fast that he cannot keep up to them. The English ships are afraid to come out of Glasgow Harbour - the Germans have them bottled up there."

Ordered to be arrested on Warrant and bound to the peace.

Addressed/  
Made.

contd.

Made seditious speech at Tullyurn (Cavan) and Tullyvin on 3rd and 4th May 1918.

Spoke at Sinn Fein Meeting at Stradone (Cavan) 8-6-18.

On 23-6-18 addressing a Sinn Fein Meeting at Wexford protesting against the internment of a number of extremists in connection with the German Plot in the previous May, said:-

"if such a Plot existed, it was manufactured in Dublin Castle; that for the past 700 years the rule of England was a cursed rule - black and dishonest".

Arrested. Sentenced on June 29th to four months imprisonment for seditious speech.

Discharged from Sligo Jail in October 1918 and went to his mother's home.

In November 1918 addressed Sinn Fein Meetings at Swinford, Ballina, and Ballyhaunis, all in Co. Mayo.

At Bangor, Co. Mayo on 11-12-18 spoke at a Sinn Fein Meeting and used very seditious language.

Prosecuted and sentenced to six months imprisonment 7-1-19.

He had addressed another meeting at Ballyhaunis on the 5th.

On 10th June 1919 a full history of this M.P. to date was sent to the Government in connection with an appeal for remittance of sentence.

Was due for release from Mountjoy Prison on 28th June.

Returned home to the Neale on 23-8-19 after his release.

There was no demonstration, though the S.F. did their best to organise one.

At several Sinn Fein Meetings in September 1919 advised people to subscribe to the Sinn Fein Loan.

At a Meeting of the "Irish Self-Determination League held in Liverpool 30-11-19 he appealed for funds to support the Irish Republic that is now set up as a result of the Rebellion of 1916.

Made a very bad speech at another Meeting of the I.S.D.L. held at Birmingham 1-3-20. in reference to the raiding of houses etc. by Military and Police in Ireland.

Made vicious and seditious speech at Craigdunloof, Co. Antrim 18-7-20 re establishment of Republican Courts etc., rooting out of the English Garrison all over the Country, and the marking and shooting of individuals.

Arrested 28-11-20 at his house. Seditious Literature found.

Interned at Ballykinlar. V.O. No. 2002.

Released 8-8-21 as a T.D. to attend the Peace Conference at the Mansion House, Dublin.

Made/

contd.



Made bitter speech at Balla against Military and Police.  
(IX/0132) (Freeman's Journal 27-9-21) see also IX/0225.

Made speech at Ballinrobe 4-10-21 (Independent).

Made speech at Claremorris. (Independent 10-10-21) IX/0166 x IX/0236

Extract from "Irish Bulletin" Vol.5. No.20. dated 29-6-21 "Imprisoned 1916, 1918-19 (Twice) 1921. Now interned.....? S.F. M.P. South Mayo and South Roscommon.

Unanimously nominated for re-election as a Pro-Treaty candidate for his present constituency in the forthcoming elections. (Ex. 'Irish Independent' dated 30.5.22.)

*Returned unopposed for above constituency.*

See press cutting for speeches made ~~in the Dail~~ at the first session of the Third Dail. (Ext. "Freeman's Journal" 13-9-22).

Unsuccessful attack made on house by armed men. (F.J. 9-1-23).

