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THE
PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

ON THE
ESTATE OF
MR. H. S. VANDELEUR,
KILRUSH.

FROM
EXTRACTS
FROM THE
PUBLIC PRESS.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN ON THE ESTATE OF MR. H. S. VANDELEUR, KILRUSH.

FROM EXTRACTS FROM THE PUBLIC PRESS.

(CLARE JOURNAL : Dec. 16th, 1886.)

“ On Wednesday the Tenants on the Estate of Mr. Hector S. Vandeleur, D.L., Mr. W. C. Burton, J.P., High Sheriff of the County Clare, and Mrs. Vandeleur, of London, from the Parishes of Kilmacduane, Kilmihill, Kilmurry, Coolmeen and Kilkee, met at Kilrush to consider the demands of 40 per cent. on the old rents and 25 per cent. on judicial rents on the Vandeleur property ; 35 per cent. on leasehold rents on the High Sheriff's property ; and 40 per cent. all round on Mrs. Vandeleur's property.

“ The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, P.P., V.G., presided.

“ There were about 1,000 of the tenants on these properties in attendance.

“ It was unanimously resolved to adhere to the reductions demanded, and unless granted to adopt the Plan of Campaign.

“ The committee, consisting of the Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, V.G. (chairman), the other priests, and two tenants from each parish, went to Mr. Vandeleur's rent office, in Moore-st., to hear the reply of their landlord.

“ Mr. Hallam Studdert, Agent on the Estate, who received the deputation courteously, informed Dr. Dinan and the committee that he had received Mr. Vandeleur's answer, and that he declined to give a further reduction to his tenants than 20 per cent. on the old rents, and nothing on the judicial rents. He thought this a very fair concession, and that, in justice to himself and his son, Mr. Vandeleur could give no more. He said the tenants seemed most pleased with this reduction last September (several cries of “ No”); but you did not object, and since there has been an improvement, a slight improvement, in agricultural produce. Mr. Studdert also said that those demands, which took Mr. Vandeleur somewhat by surprise, were more the result of agitation than of necessity. You paid your

rents last September ; those of you who could not do so then asked for time and got it ; but there was no objection then. He could only carry out the instructions given him—which were to take legal proceedings against the tenants if they did not pay their rents.

“The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan said—Mr Studdert, I am very sorry for this. I assure you the tenants need reduction, and we, the priests, are here only as mediators, and trying to effect peaceful settlements. Many of them are in terrible want, and it is a pity that Mr. Vandeleur could not meet them in a more liberal spirit. The Vicar-General has explained our position. The tenants are desperately poor, and need reductions in their present rents.

“Mr. Studdert—I don't know. They paid their rents in September, and nothing has transpired since to justify their demand. (Several cries of dissent and cheers for the Plan of Campaign.)

“The Rev. Thomas O'Meara, P.P.—Now, Mr. Studdert, this is not fair. The cattle and stock are further down in prices this very day. The Vandeleur tenants in the Parish of Killimer, my parish, are a most beggarly and needy lot, owing to exorbitant rents and monstrously high poor rates. No tenants are more needy.

“The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan then said, having Mr. Vandeleur's answer they could now retire, and he had to inform the agent that the tenants should now adopt the Plan of Campaign. (Cheers).

“Mr. Studdert—Well, I cannot help that, but it is a curious way of disposing of their money—giving it to irresponsible persons, from whom they could not afterwards recover it by law, as what you pay voluntarily you cannot get back.

“Fr. O'Meara—Oh! the rents will be quite safe till the landlords come to their senses.

“Mr Studdert—Why not lodge it in the banks ?

“Fr. Gilligan—It will be quite safe you may rest assured. A tenant putting the landlord's money into a bank is like putting it somewhere else, out of which there is no redemption. (Laughter).

“The committee then withdrew.

“The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan then addressed the multitude outside, amidst great cheering. He told them all to be in next Friday to lodge their rents with trustees, and that their Mem-

ber of Parliament, Mr. Jordan, would be present." (Great cheering.)

"The proceedings then terminated.

"All the tenants on these three estates are to lodge their rents, less the reductions demanded, with trustees, in Kilrush, on Friday and Saturday next."

(CLARE SATURDAY RECORD: Saturday, June 4th, 1887.)

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AT KILRUSH.

"An immense demonstration took place in Kilrush, on Sunday, convened for the object of condemning the wholesale evictions about to be commenced on the estate of Colonel O'Callaghan at Bodyke, in East Clare, and other estates in West Clare, and of protesting against the Bill now going through Parliament. Contingents were present from Kildysart, Miltown Malbay, Lahinch, Mullough, Kilmurry-Ibrickane, Lisdoonvarna, Ennistymon, Corofin, Ennis, Kilmacduane, Limerick, Ballinalcally, Clare Castle, Kilkee, Carrigaholt, Listowel, Ballylongford, and other towns. All the branches of the National League sent delegates, bands, and banners. The town was decorated, and trees were planted along the streets, while large streamers spanned the principal thoroughfares bearing suitable inscriptions. A procession of "Clare's own cavalry" and the Kilrush, Miltown, Listowel, and Killadysart brass bands went through the town, and the various trade societies and guilds joined it with their flags. A little after two o'clock the proceedings commenced on the market square, where a platform had been erected. In addition to the local constabulary, a force of fifty police arrived in town on Saturday from Limerick, under the command of Mr J. B. Irwin, R.M. A Government reporter, protected by a knot of policemen, was present in front of the platform and took notes of the meeting.

"An address was presented at William's Commercial Hotel, from the Kilrush Board of Guardians to Messrs J. R. Cox and D. Sheehy, M.P.'s, to which Mr. Cox returned thanks in appropriate terms, in which Mr. Sheehy concurred.

"The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, P.P., V.G., Kilrush, presided at the meeting.

"The Chairman, who was warmly received, said he was glad to see the people of west Clare assembled for the relief of the down-trodden tenantry, to afford them the shield of protection—a meeting that was characteristic of the county of Clare.

These tenants have got invitations for the workhouse or roadside. He should say of the late Colonel Vandeleur that no evictions were carried out by him, as he had good agents. There were no death sentences by the late Colonel Vandeleur, but they came at last, and the priests were not slow to come forward to demand a reduction of rent commensurate with the distress of the times. They asked 25 per cent on judicial rents, and 40 per cent on the old rents—but the landlord would not yield, and their remedy then was the Plan of Campaign, and they would work until they obtained justice for these poor people.

“The following resolution, in addition to the resolutions passed at the late convention *in globo*, in reference to the death of the lamented Mr. Blake, M.P., was proposed by Mr. Studdert Gibson, seconded by Rev. Father Wall, P.P., and passed unanimously, the people uncovering their heads:—

“Resolved—That we deeply deplore the great loss the country has sustained by the untimely death of the veteran and true-hearted member for Carlow, Mr. John A. Blake; that we sympathise with the Irish Party in the loss of their true and faithful colleague, and that we tender our heartfelt sympathy and condolence to his heartbroken widow in her great grief, and that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the hon secretaries of the Parliamentary Party and Mrs Blake.”

“Mr. Cox, M.P. for East Clare, who was received with cheering and waving of hats, said it was with great sorrow he supported the resolution of regret regarding the death of their fellow labourer in the Irish Parliamentary Party, Mr. Blake. He was a tower of strength to them in the House of Commons, and he died a brave soldier of Ireland. It would seem the rent question would never find rest until landlordism was driven out of Ireland (cheers). In the words of the poet they had tyrants from the beginning. They stripped some of their claws, and would more. He arrived in Kilrush on the memorable day the Plan of Campaign was proclaimed by the gentleman of the Saxon or German name of Saxe Weimar (groans). He came to Kilrush, met the Vandeleur tenants in a certain yard, and he said the Irish Parliamentary Party would never back them up only that their case as detailed by the chairman was a just one (cheers.) When all chance of a settlement was broken off, it was then they “campaigned” their rents, and in one memorable night they collected £864. If any of Captain Vandeleur’s friends was at that meeting, or in its outskirts, he would send

him a message of peace, and that was that he could have this in twenty-four hours. But if he wanted war he would get it, and would get either peace or war, whichever he liked (cheers.) The Clare landlords, inspired by the Tory Government, and backed up by a wretched lot of Liberal Unionists, relied on coercion to crush the people, but when that becomes law they would know how to treat it, and the people would be told how that was to be done (cheers). The Irish Parliamentary party relied on the loyalty of the people to carry this out at the proper time by the means and advice they had devised. He would say regarding the Coercion Bill and the powers of resident magistrates as to having him before them they could summon and summon away, but one word they would never get out of him. When the Coercion Bill became law he would the next Sunday come here and tell the people how to act. He had tasted the plank bed before. The experience he had of it would not deter him. In this course they would have the support of the English members, and one of them would be here to-day only that he had gone to Bodyke (great cheering for the men of Bodyke). He would appeal to the people to ally themselves with the Irish Parliamentary party, to join the ranks of the National League, and with moral courage, side to side and shoulder to shoulder, and with God's blessing, under their brave leader, they would eventually win (great cheering).

“ Mr. David Sheehy, M.P., who received a great ovation, said there was no use of a priest without a clerk, and he would say in that way amen to the advice of saying not a word if summoned before resident magistrates under the Coercion Act regarding catechetical questions on the payment of rents, discipline of the organisation, and backsliders and landgrabbers. In the event of a betrayal of tenants by one another, they could not be doing their duty by affording unreasonable toleration to such a class, and they should get a wide berth for their necessaries. Those who were not with them were against them. No costs were to come out of the war chest for law purposes of the landlords.

(CLARE SATURDAY RECORD: Saturday, June 11, 1887.)

IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE—BRANCH MEETINGS—KILRUSH.

“ The ordinary meeting of the Kilrush Branch of the Irish National League was held at their rooms, Davitt-street, on Sunday. Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, P.P., V.G., chairman, presided. There were also present—Rev. John McKenna, C.C., V.C.,

Rev. W. Buckley, C.C., Secretary ; Mr. W. Ryan, Assistant Secretary ; Mr. M. S. Gibson, Chairman Kilrush Union ; Mr. D. R. Hilliard, Solicitor. The attendance was very large.

“ After the minutes of last day’s proceedings were read and confirmed, the Secretary read the correspondence.

“ A resolution from the Miltown Branch, censuring a local process server for seizing for rent, was adopted.

“ A local car proprietor was charged with driving the police to the Bodyke evictions, but the explanation of it was considered satisfactory.

“ The following resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

“ That we earnestly suggest to the tenants on the Vandeleur and Burton properties who have not joined the Plan of Campaign to do so before the 19th inst., as, at the expiration of that date, a list of such defaulters will be prepared, to be afterwards used against them with their landlords,” &c., &c.

On the 4th May, 1888, a meeting was held at Kilrush at which Messrs. Dillon and Sheehy, M.P.’s, were present, and advocated the Plan of Campaign and resistance by the tenants. The Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, P.P., V.G., presided ; and the following priests were present—The Rev. P. M. McKenna, C.C. ; Rev. Mr. Courtenay, C.C. ; Rev. Mr. Buckley, C.C., Kilrush ; Rev. Mr. O’Meara, P.P., Killimer ; Rev. Mr. Scanlan, C.C., Killimer ; Rev. J. G. McKenna, C.C., Cranny, &c.—*Vide Freeman’s Journal, 4th May, 1888.*

The following message was forwarded to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, in London, during the Vandeleur evictions, according to the *Freeman’s Journal*, 25. 7. 1888 :—

“ Kindly say for local priests that they never stated that they were responsible for adopting the Plan of Campaign, but believe that the tenants were justified in doing so. It was the undoubted influence of the priests more than that of the forces of the crown that preserved the peace. The priests had nothing to say to the tolling of bell, but did not feel called upon to interfere, believing that the tolling of the bell, like putting up of shutters, was a mark of sympathy for tenants to be evicted.—Very Rev. Dr. Dinan, V.G. ; Rev. F. O’Meara, P.P., Killimer ; Rev. J. McKenna, C.C., Kilrush ; Rev. D. Courtenay, C.C., ditto ; Rev. W. Buckley, C.C., ditto ; Rev. M. Scanlan, C.C., Killimer.”

EVICTIIONS

ON THE

VANDELEUR ESTATE.

KILRUSH, CO. CLARE.

The evictions on the Vandeleur Estate, in the County of Clare, which have been long suspended in hopes that a settlement between landlord and tenant would be arrived at, will be shortly carried out. A large number of the tenants combined under the Plan of Campaign, and have strongly barricaded their houses with the object of resisting the Sheriff. Great hopes that the necessity of evicting would not arise were entertained till the late visit of Messrs. Dillon and Sheehy, M.P.'s, to Clare, but after a meeting held by them at Kilrush, which was largely attended by the Priests, and at which some very inflammatory language was used, inciting the tenants to stick to the Plan of Campaign and to defy the law, it was clear that no settlement was possible.

The arrears due on the estate are enormous. On the 1st May, '87, there was due in almost every case two years' rent, and in several hundred cases there were three or four years, and in many cases six years due. In June, '87, three cases were heard before the Irish Land Commission, in which an average reduction of $32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was made. Those three cases were connected with some of the worst land in the South. From the passing of the Land Act in 1881 to 1884 there were 57 judicial rents fixed, in which an average reduction was made of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; from May, 1884, to January, 1885, there were 41 judicial rents fixed, at an average reduction of 22 per cent.; in 1885 there were 37 judicial rents fixed, at an average reduction of $22\frac{1}{2}$

per cent. ; in 1886 there were 12 judicial rents fixed, at an average reduction of $24\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. All these rents, except in five instances, were fixed by the Commission on the basis that the tenants pay all the County Cess. In all the several cases heard, in which judicial rents were fixed, the Agent has offered through the Rev. Dr. Dinan, V.G., P.P. of Kihrush, to give to each lot of tenants a reduction equal to that given by the Sub-Commissioners in June, '87, *i. e.* a reduction which, added to that given by the Commissioners at the sitting in each year, would make a reduction equal to $32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the original rent, and fixed on the same basis that the tenants pay all the County Cess. The offer as regards the judicial tenants was approved by the Rev. Dr. Dinan, and accepted by the tenants as a final settlement ; but as regards the non-judicial tenants, Dr. Dinan wrote to say they required the reduction of 30 per cent. together with the allowance of half the County Cess, which would be about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This demand the agent was obliged to refuse.

The present difference between the landlord and tenant may be summarized as follows:—

The Landlord offers

(1.) To wipe off all arrears to March, '86, provided that a full year's rent with the following reduction is paid—

$32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. reduction on non-judicial rents ; on judicial rents the difference between the reduction given by the Land Commission and $32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

(2.) Tenants to pay Law Costs.

(3.) Tenants to pay all County Cess (about 15 per cent.)

The Tenants offer, under the Plan of Campaign—

(1.) To pay a year's rent with the following reduction, provided that all arrears are wiped off to March, 1887—

On judicial rents 25 per cent.,

On non-juicial rents 40 per cent.

(2.) Landlord to pay all Law Costs.

(3.) Landlord to pay half County Cess ($7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.)

Dr. Dinan, P.P., offered, as a compromise on behalf of the tenants, a year's rent provided all arrears were wiped off to March, 1887, with a reduction of

20 per cent. on judicial rents ;

35 per cent. on non-judicial rents.

It appears that the rents of this property were considerably raised in 1874 ; before which they were very low indeed. Having regard to the very large amount of arrears proposed to be swept off by the landlord, the terms offered by him must be considered fair and reasonable, and had not the Plan of Campaign come, like the Upas tree, to shed its blight over the district, there is no doubt that a satisfactory settlement would have been arrived at. There is very faint hope, indeed, now of averting the utter ruin of the unfortunate tenants who have been deluded into following the precepts of those who have persuaded them to join this dishonest and illegal conspiracy.

Ennis, July, 1888.



“In the House of Commons on July 26th, the following questions were asked:—

“Mr Jordan asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been directed to the resolution which appeared in the *Irish Times* and *Freeman's Journal* on Friday, the 20th inst, signed by the Very Rev. M. Dinan, D.D., P.P., V.G., Kilrush, and 15 other priests, in whose parishes the Vandeleur property was situated, protesting against the insult alleged to be offered to them by their exclusion from the inner circle at the evictions on the Vandeleur estate; whether he would state by what law, statute, or authority those clergymen were so excluded; and whether he would take steps, should there be any further evictions, to prevent a similar occurrence.

“Mr. A. J. Balfour—I understand that a resolution of the nature indicated has appeared in the newspapers. The ground upon which the Divisional Magistrate felt it his duty to refuse to permit the local Roman Catholic clergy to pass inside the cordon formed by the troops was as I have already stated in reply to another question, the fact of their having been (as they also admitted) the authors of the Plan of Campaign upon the estate, and at the commencement of the evictions some of their body have been seen to enter the church and set the bell tolling to assemble the people, notwithstanding that a proclamation had been issued forbidding an assembly as likely to lead to a disturbance. The Divisional Magistrate in so refusing acted under the general powers conferred by statute upon magistrates to secure the peaceable carrying out of the law. I cannot undertake to interfere with the administration of the law in the manner suggested in the concluding portion of the question.

“Mr. Sexton asked whether the right hon gentleman was not aware that the clergy had solemnly denied that they had had anything to do with the Plan of Campaign, and whether it was not due to the presence of the clergy that peace had been preserved among the population so dreadfully excited by those proceedings.

“Mr. A. J. Balfour said his opinion was not to that effect. (Cheers.)

“Mr. Jordan asked whether it was not a matter of public notoriety that the priests had done their utmost to bring about a satisfactory settlement and to keep the peace, and that this attitude of theirs had been endorsed by the Local Government Inspector and the brother-in-law of Mr. Vandeleur.

“Mr. A. J. Balfour said his information was that the clergy had not denied having anything to do with the Plan of Campaign.

“Mr Sexton—They do deny it. (Cheers.)

“Mr. A. J. Balfour—Well, my information is that they do not deny it.

“Mr Sexton asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the nature to the incitement to resistance on which

the authorities considered themselves justified in excluding the hon. member for South Galway from the immediate scene of evictions on the Vandeleur property; what was the occasion of such incitement; and if any such incitement had been made by the hon. member why had not the Government taken proceedings under the provisions of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act.

“Mr. A. J. Balfour—As reported in the *Freeman's Journal* the hon. member made a speech at Kilrush on May 4 last, in which he said that “Mr Dillon and he had come down to take a look over the battlefield—the Vandeleur estate—on which the landlords were going to face them in West Clare and to see if the popular forces were in good order. He had no fear of what the result would be. The Government appeared to imagine that they could support the Union by the same means by which they carried the Union, that they could drive the people of Clare to desperation and then that Colonel Turner could dragoon them. Let them stick by the national organization and by the Plan of Campaign.” On July 21 he is reported in *The Times* to have said that “What he himself wanted the world to understand was that no man would go tamely out of his house; that no man would be so base or so cowardly as not to resist the forces that attempted to root him from his place.”

