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An Iarmhairt

Chomh maith leis an chúig dhuine dhéag a cuireadh chun báis i dtús mhí na Bealtaine, daoradh chun báis 97 duine eile acu siúd ar a cuireadh armchúirt orthu. Thaistil An Príomh-Aire Asquith go Baile Átha Cliath ar an 12 Bealtaine agus imní air faoin athrú i ndearcadh an phobail in Éirinn agus freisin mar gheall ar an bhfearg a chuir feisirí de Pháirtí Parlaiminteach na hÉireann in iúl i dTeach na dTeachtaí, Lawrence Ginnell agus John Dillon ach go háirithe. Ar an lá sin cuireadh Seán Mac Diarmada agus Séamas Ó Conghaile chun báis, d'ainneoin teileagraim ó Asquith chuig General Maxwell ag rá gan aon duine eile a chur chun báis seachas in imthosca speisialta eisceachtúla. Is dóigh gur shíl Maxwell go raibh ról chomh ceannasach ag Mac Diarmada agus Connolly nárbh fhéidir iad a iomalartú.

Níor cuireadh duine ar bith eile chun báis; iomalartaíodh na pianbhreitheanna den 97 duine eile go tréimhse phríosúnachta. Ach do na Sasanaigh, bhí cúrsaí doleigheasta: na daoine a cuireadh chun báis, dúnmharú Sheehy-Skeffington agus an fhorcheilt, na hainghníomhartha a n-imríodh i gceantar Shráid North King, crochadh Roger Casement, an feachtas clúmhillte bainteach leis, agus dlí míleata a bheith fós i bhfeidhm – ní amháin gur chuir sé uafás ar phoblachtaigh ach spreag é náisiúnaithe nach raibh radacach roimhe seo agus líon aontachtaithe nach beag. Thairis sin, chuaigh féinióbairt cheannairí an Éirí Amach agus crógacht de chuid na gnáthshaighdiúirí go mór i bhfeidhm ar na baill is mó díograis i bPáirtí an Rialtais Dúchais.

Mar gheall gur theip ar lucht an Éirí Amach a fhórsaí uilig a thabhairt amach ach ag an am céanna go ndearna siad gaisce a raibh a thairbhe le feiceáil, an cheist a bhí ag pobal na tíre ansin ná: dá mba rud é go raibh cuid bheag daoine in ann an oiread sin a bhaint amach ar a n-aonar, céard is féidir a bhaint amach agus páirt á ghlacadh againn ar fad ann? Is é an chaoi gur thuig go leor daoine nach raibh riail na Breataine chomh dosheachanta agus a creideadh roimhe sin. Idir an dá linn, coinníodh an 2,000 'reibiliúnach' a bhí díbeartha go Sasana i bpríosúin agus campaí imtheorannaithe, arbh ionann iad agus acadaimh cheannairce. Agus iad ag filleadh abhaile, thug cuid mhór acu faoi shochar a bhaint as an uafás agus olc, agus an dearcadh polaitiúil den phobal náisiúnach a athbhunú.

Chuaigh fir 1916 i muinín na seanmhodhanna a mbaineadh úsáid astu i laethanta na láimhe láidre, gan aird a thabhairt ar an chumhacht a ghabhann le sainordú toghchánach, agus a fhios acu go raibh a leithéid thar a n-acmhainn. Ní hionann sin is a rá gur dhiúltaigh poblachtach an ghlúin nua do fhoréigean, ach is éard a bhí i gceist ná gur thuig siad go raibh an cur chuige dé-straitéiseach – gunnaí agus an bosca ballóide araon a úsáid – ar fáil dóibh mar bhí go leor de na daoine de chuid Pháirtí an Rialtas Dúchais i bhfách iompaithe. Mar a tharla cuireadh Óglaigh na hÉireann, anois ina 'Irish Republican Army', agus an páirtí polaitíochta athchóirithe Shinn Féin le chéile mar an dá eite den ghluaiseacht nua ag iarraidh neamhspleáchas a bhaint amach, agus a raibh an Saorstát Éireann le bheith mar thoradh air in 1922, agus Poblacht na hÉireann a tháinig as ní ba dhéanaí.

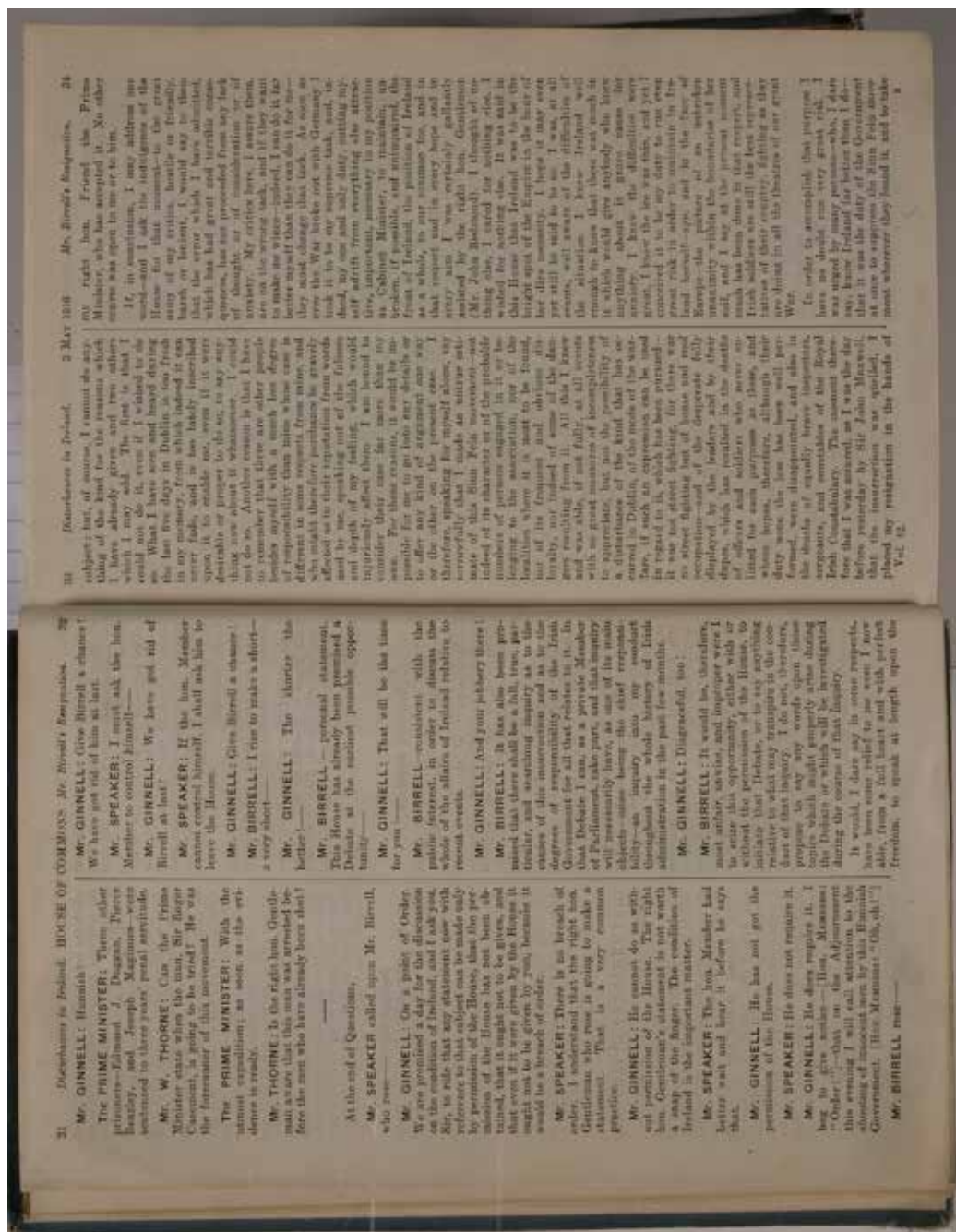
Is léargas na doiciméid sa chur i láthair seo ar dhearcadh cuid mhór de na daoine móra le rá agus na heagraíochtaí a bhí bainteach go díreach nó go hindíreach le hÉirí Amach 1916: lucht sínithe Fhorógra na Cásca, an IRB, Óglaigh na hÉireann, Arm Cathartha na hÉireann, Páirtí Parlaiminteach na hÉireann, na hAontachtaithe Uladh, Sinn Féin, Cumann na mBan, an Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Conradh na Gaeilge. Níor tugadh aghaidh go díreach ar úsáid na láimh láidre chun críoch polaitiúil. Ach tugann na doiciméid, áfach, léargas ar an dearcadh a bhí ag cuid mhór de na phríomhphearsana. Ina dhiaidh sin, ní féidir tada a rá seachas go mbeadh sé místuama dearcadh ón lae inniu a thrasnú go heachtraí stairiúla.

Cé nach nglacfadh an chuid is mó de dhaoine ar na laethanta seo leis an lámh láidir i gcás mar sin, is cosúil go raibh eitic eile i réim i rith an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda, nuair ab éigean do 200,000 Éireannach, náisiúnach agus aontachtaí araon, a mbeatha a chur i mbaol do, dar leo, chúis uasal, agus an líon céanna daoine is dócha a mharú toisc gur amharctáí orthu mar naimhde. D'fhéadfadh go raibh cúinsí an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda agus an Éirí Amach 1916 difriúil óna chéile, ach b'ionainn an mhórcheist sa dá chás, is í sin do bheatha féin a chur i mbaol a bháis agus duine eile a mharú.

Ba ghá don chur i láthair seo bheith srianta agus roghnaíoch. Dóibh siúd ar mhaith leo dul i mbun níos mó taighde ar an Éirí Amach agus a chomhthéacs, b'fhéidir go mbeidh an leabharliosta gairid ina threoir áisiúil ar an réimse leathan litríochta ar fáil faoin tréimhse bharrthábhachtach seo i stair na hÉireann.

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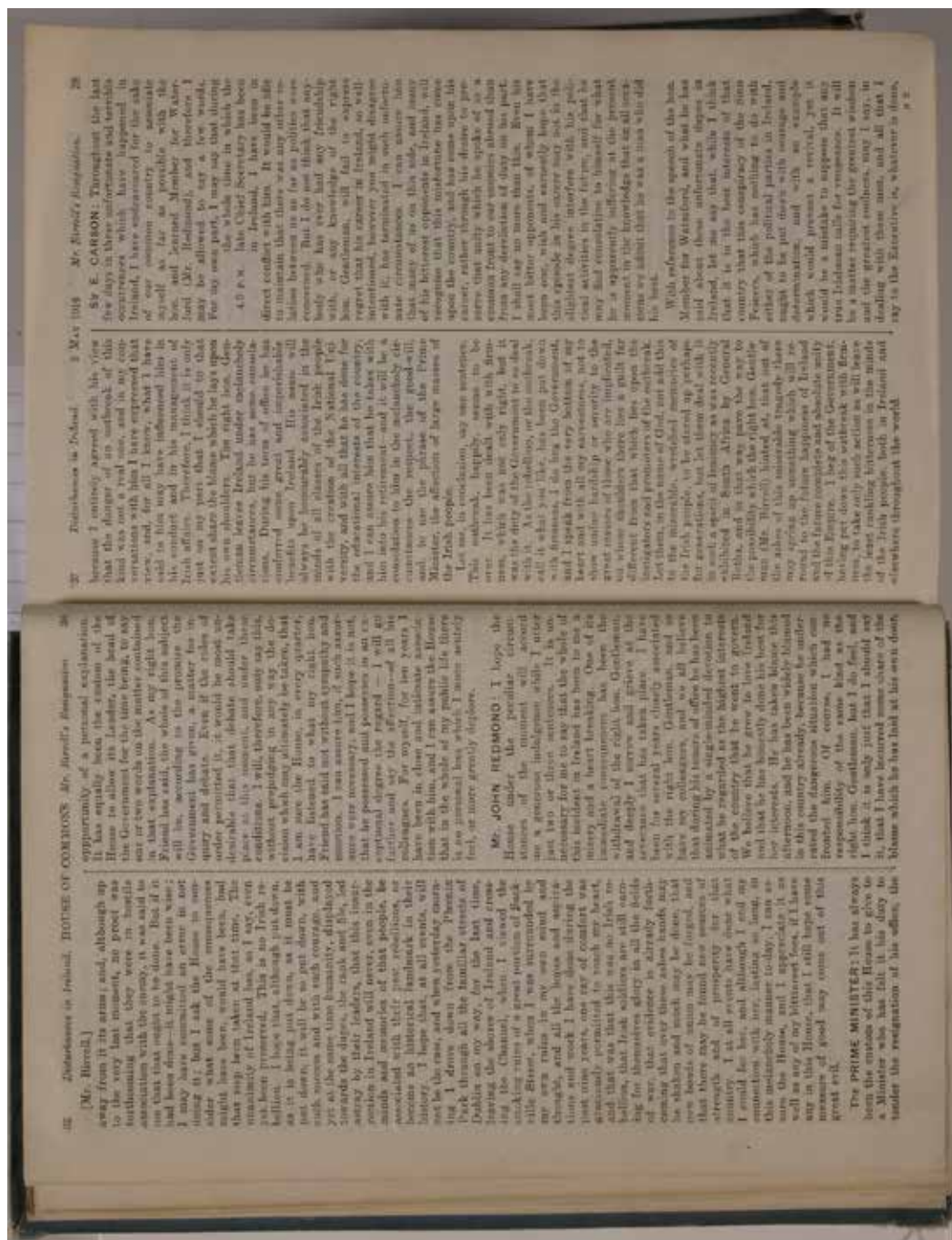
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Statements in the House of Commons: Birrell's resignation statement; reply by Redmond in which he makes a plea for leniency for the rank and file Volunteers; reply by Carson in which he says that the handling of the aftermath of the Rising requires 'the greatest wisdom and the greatest coolness'. (Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 3 May 1916).

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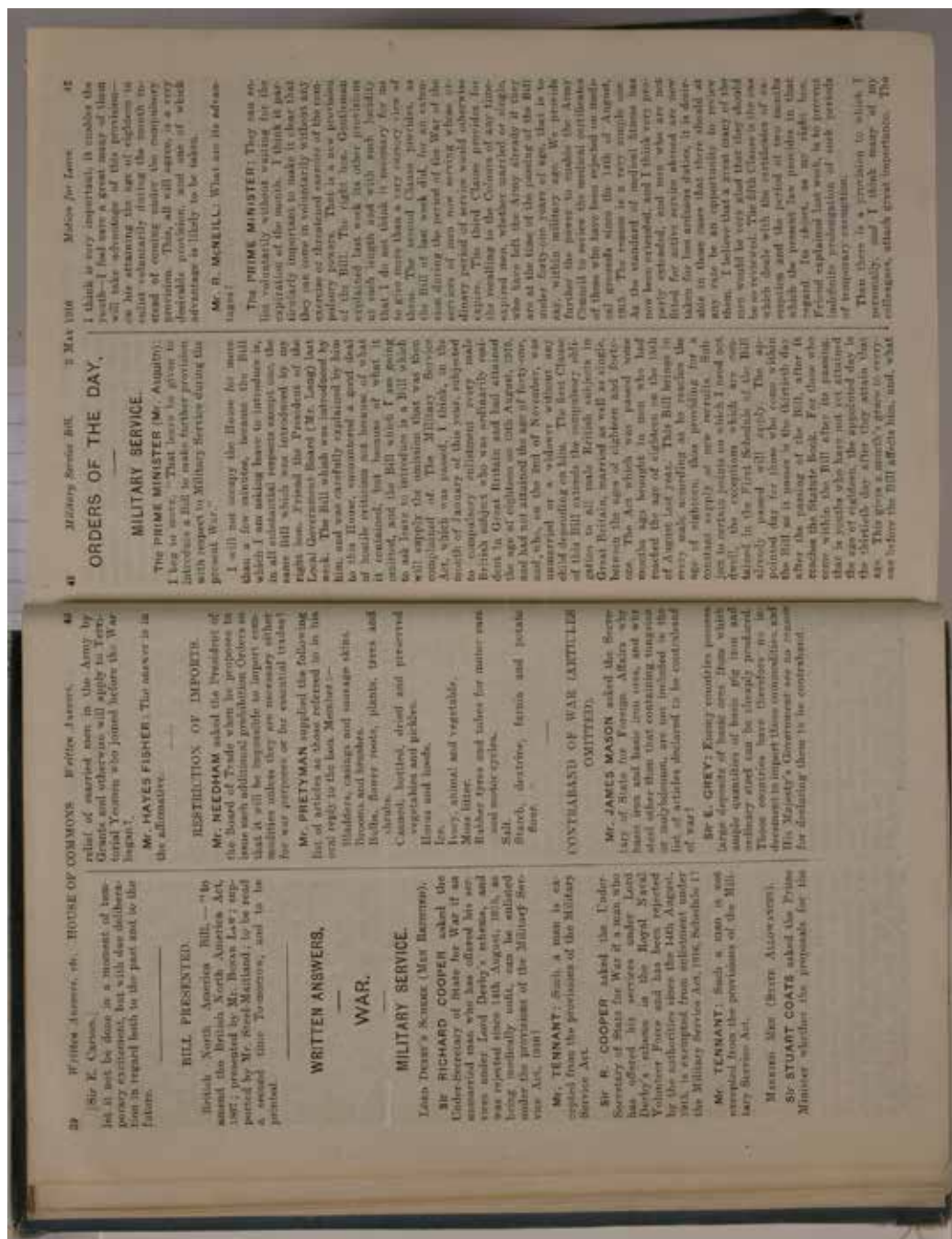
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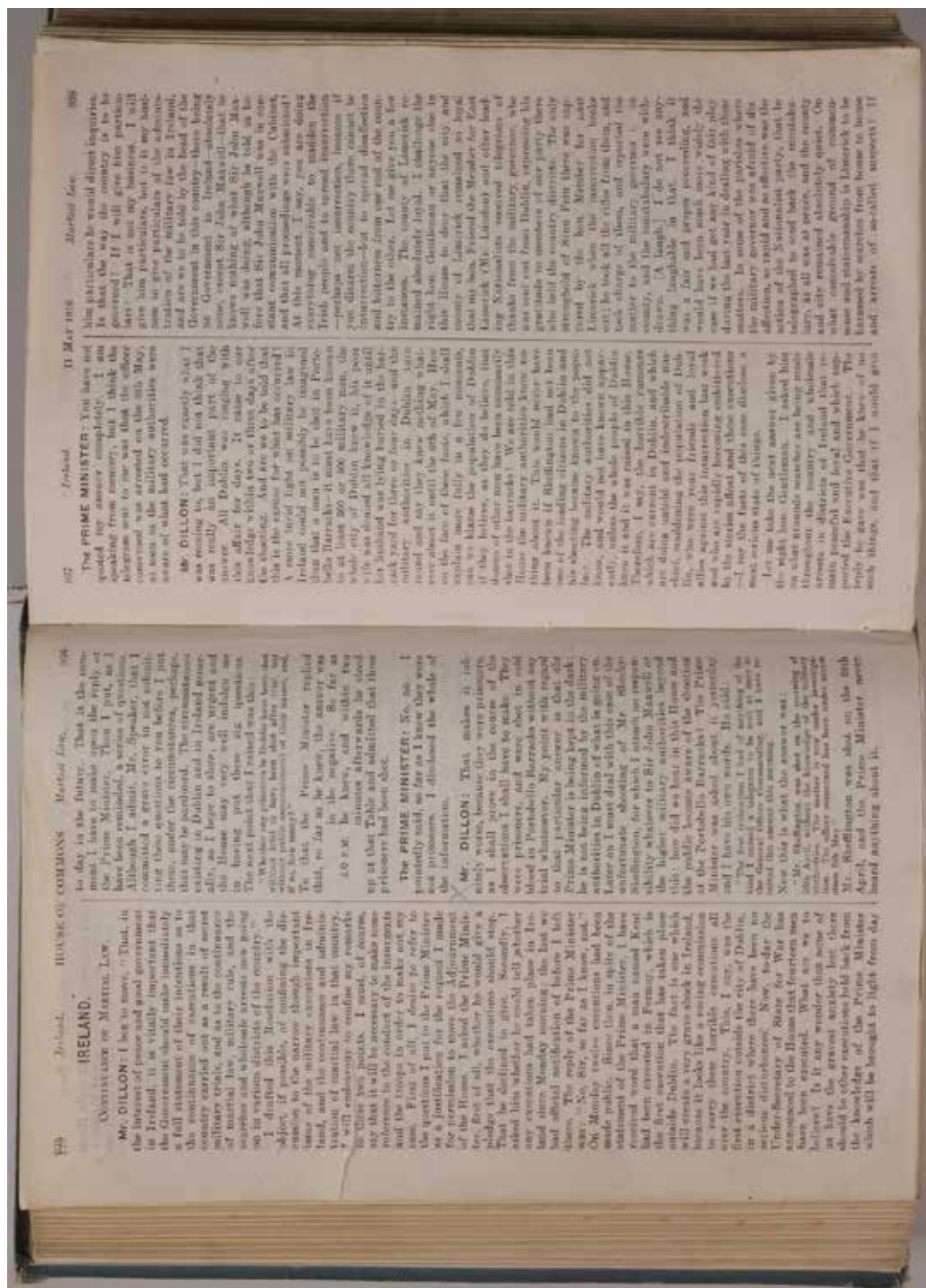
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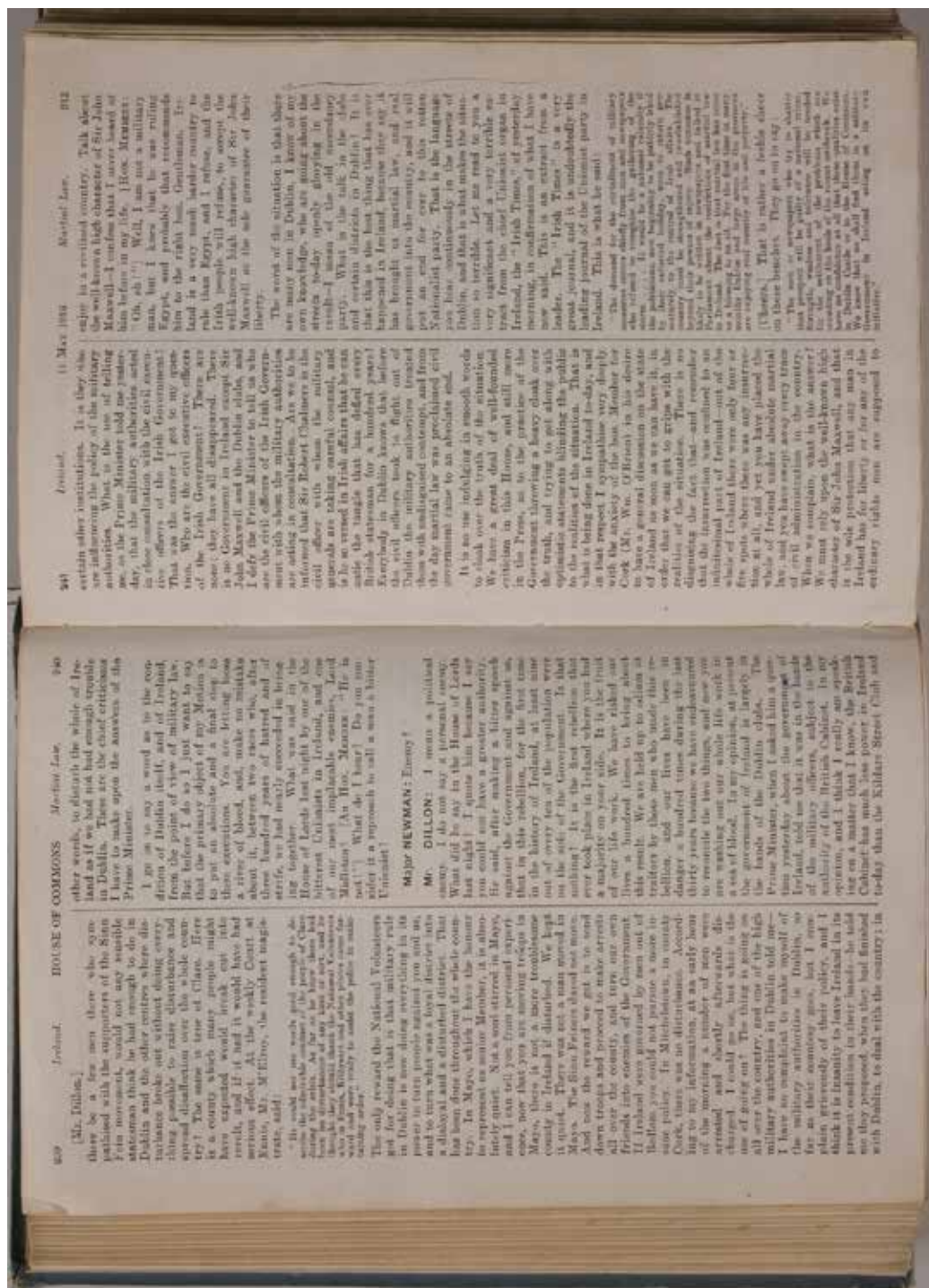
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Motion by John Dillon MP in the House of Commons regarding the executions and the alienation of public opinion in Ireland; includes references to the murder of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. (Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 11 May 1916).

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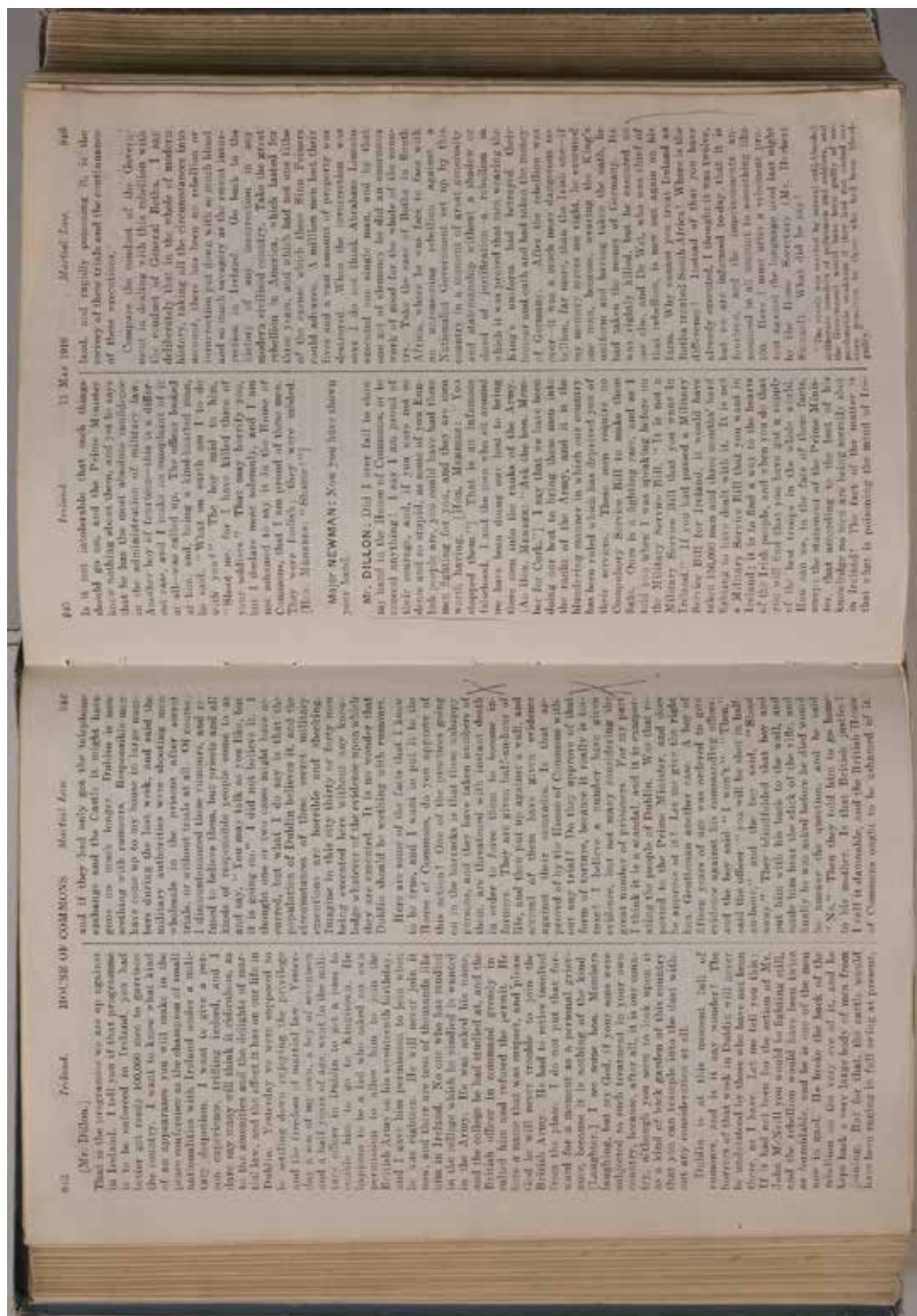
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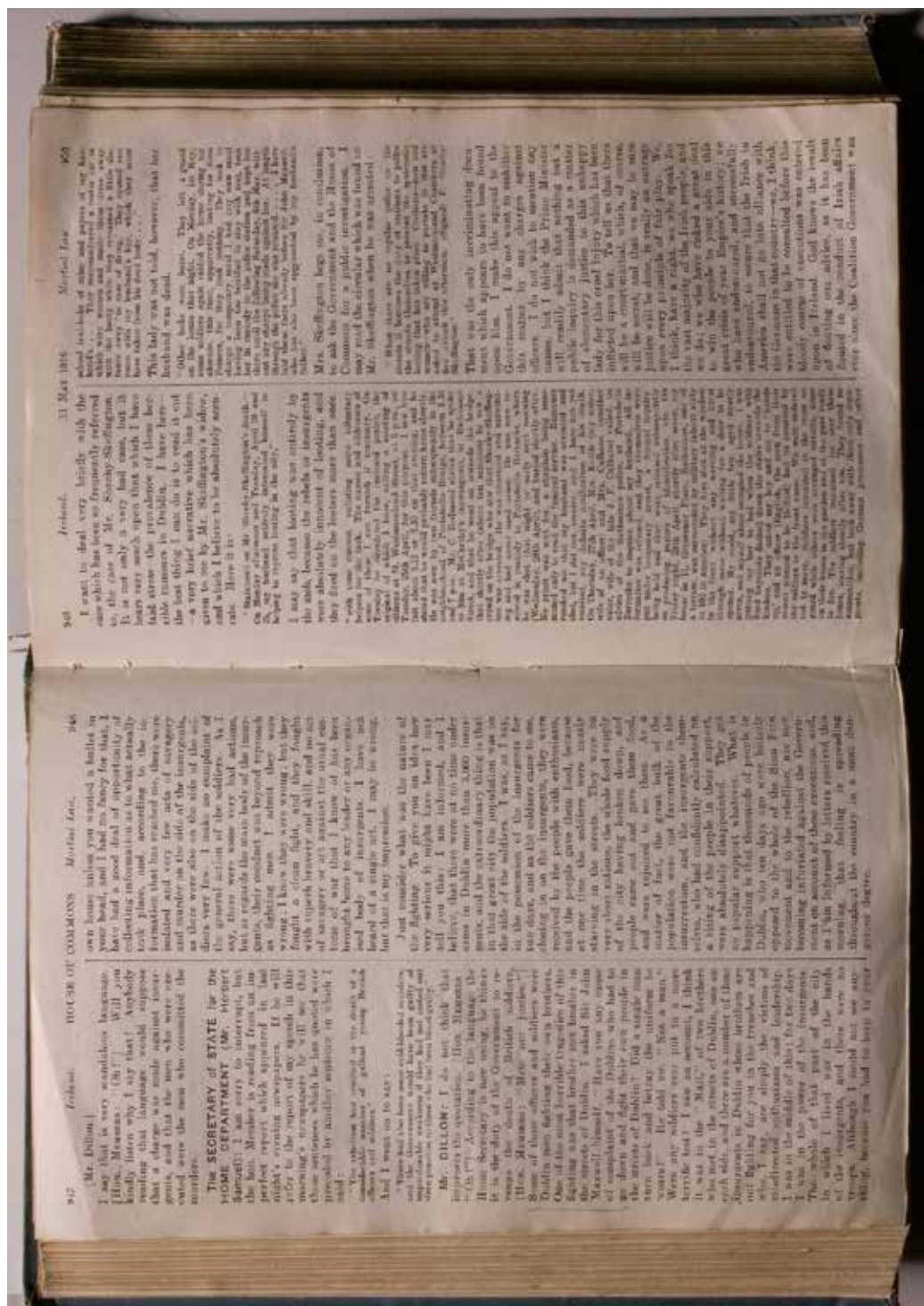
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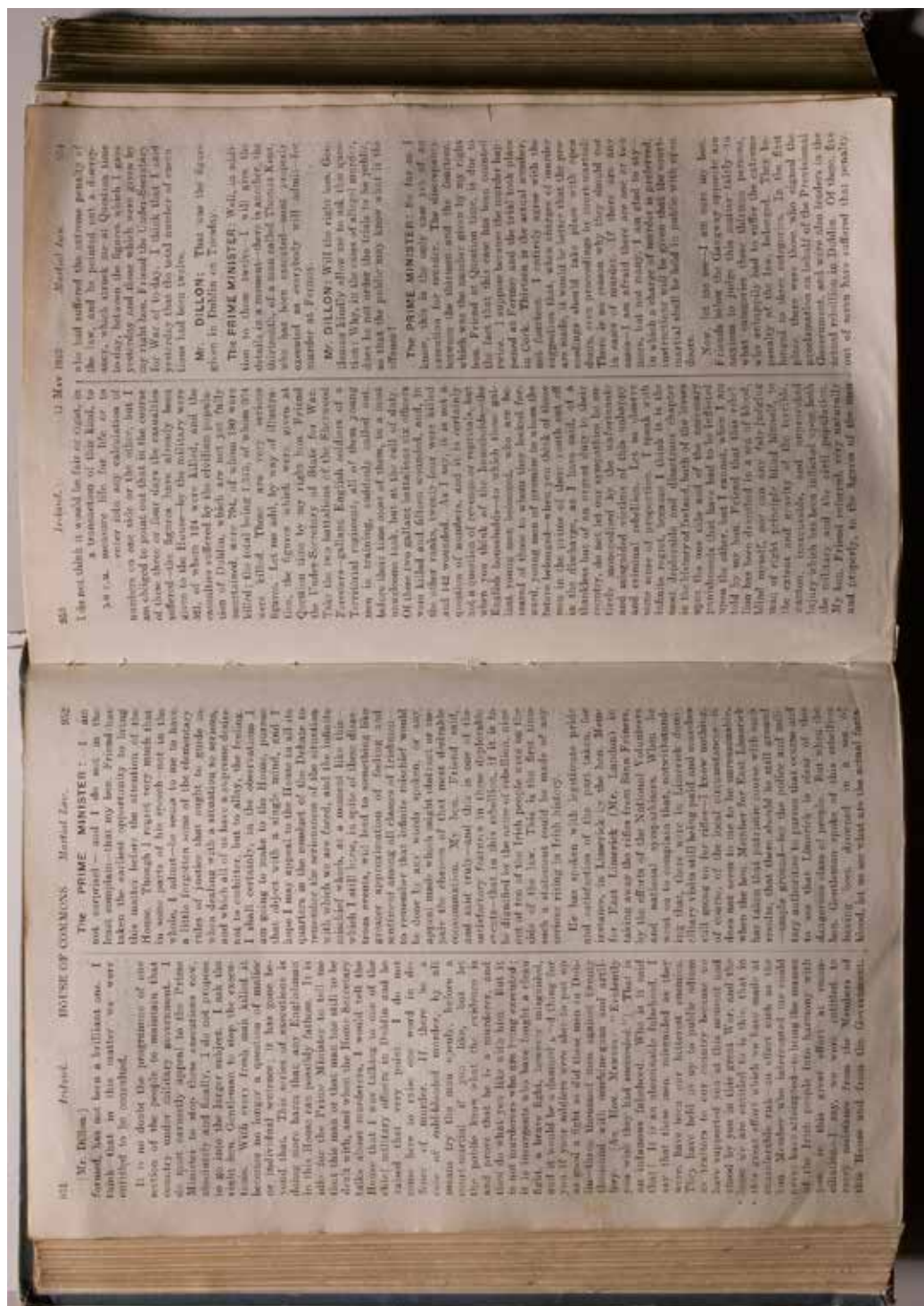
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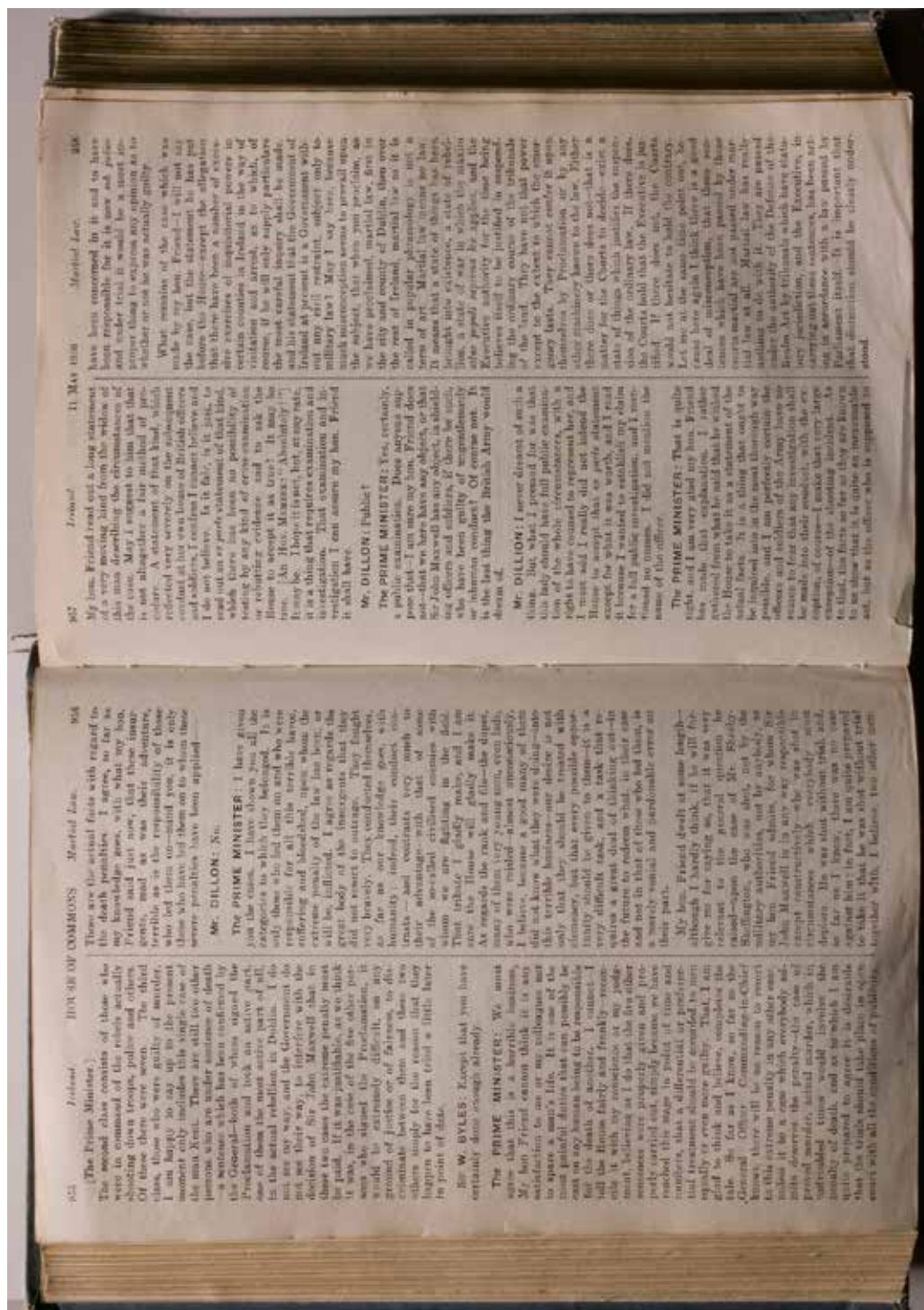
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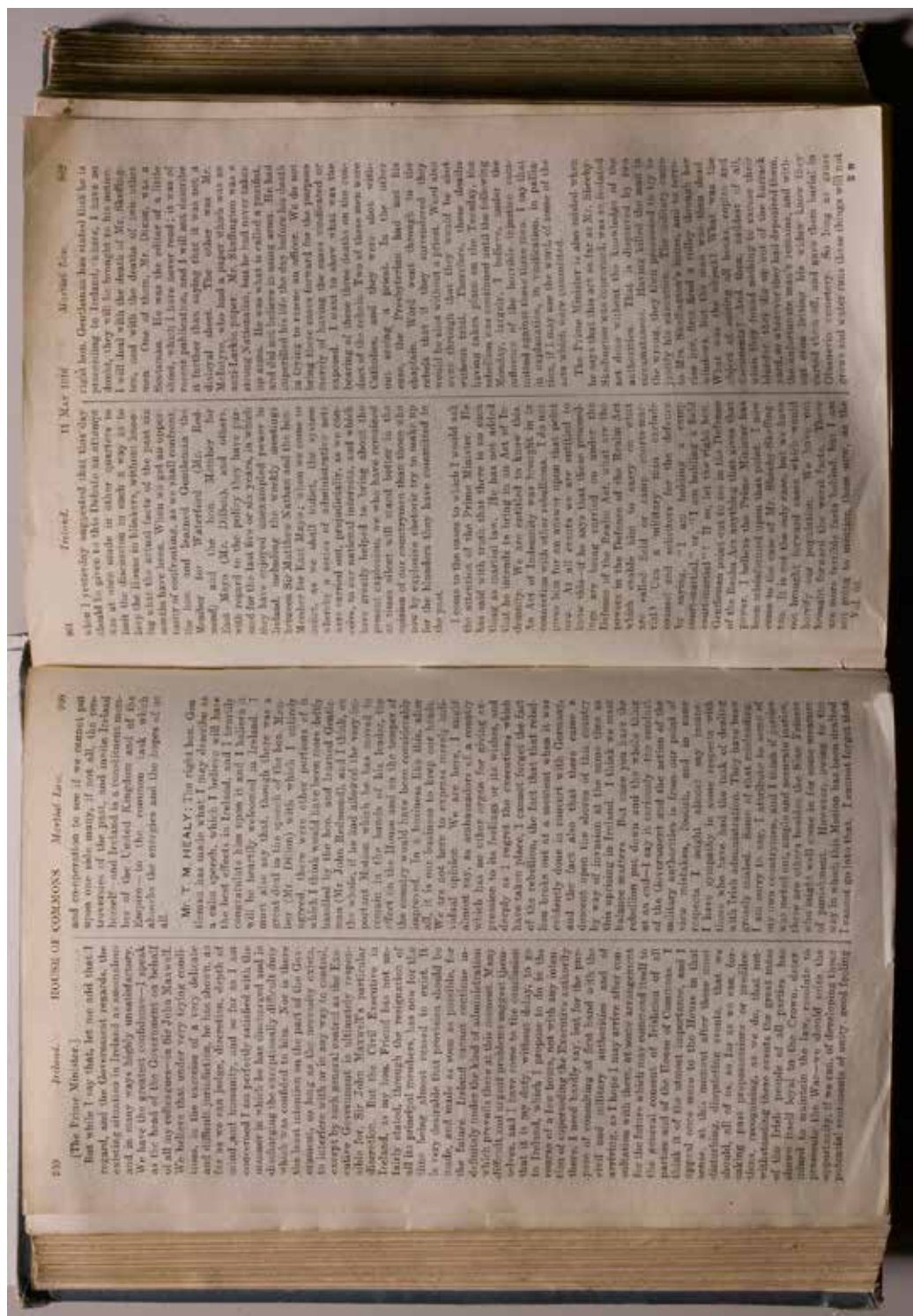
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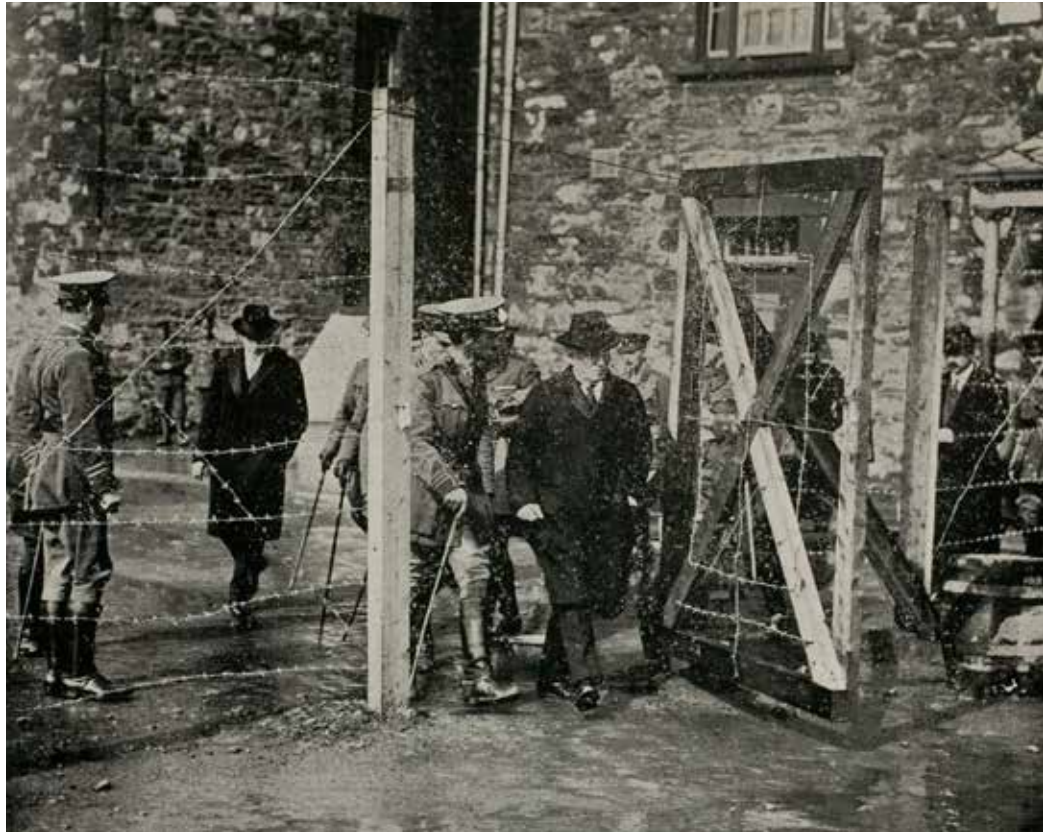
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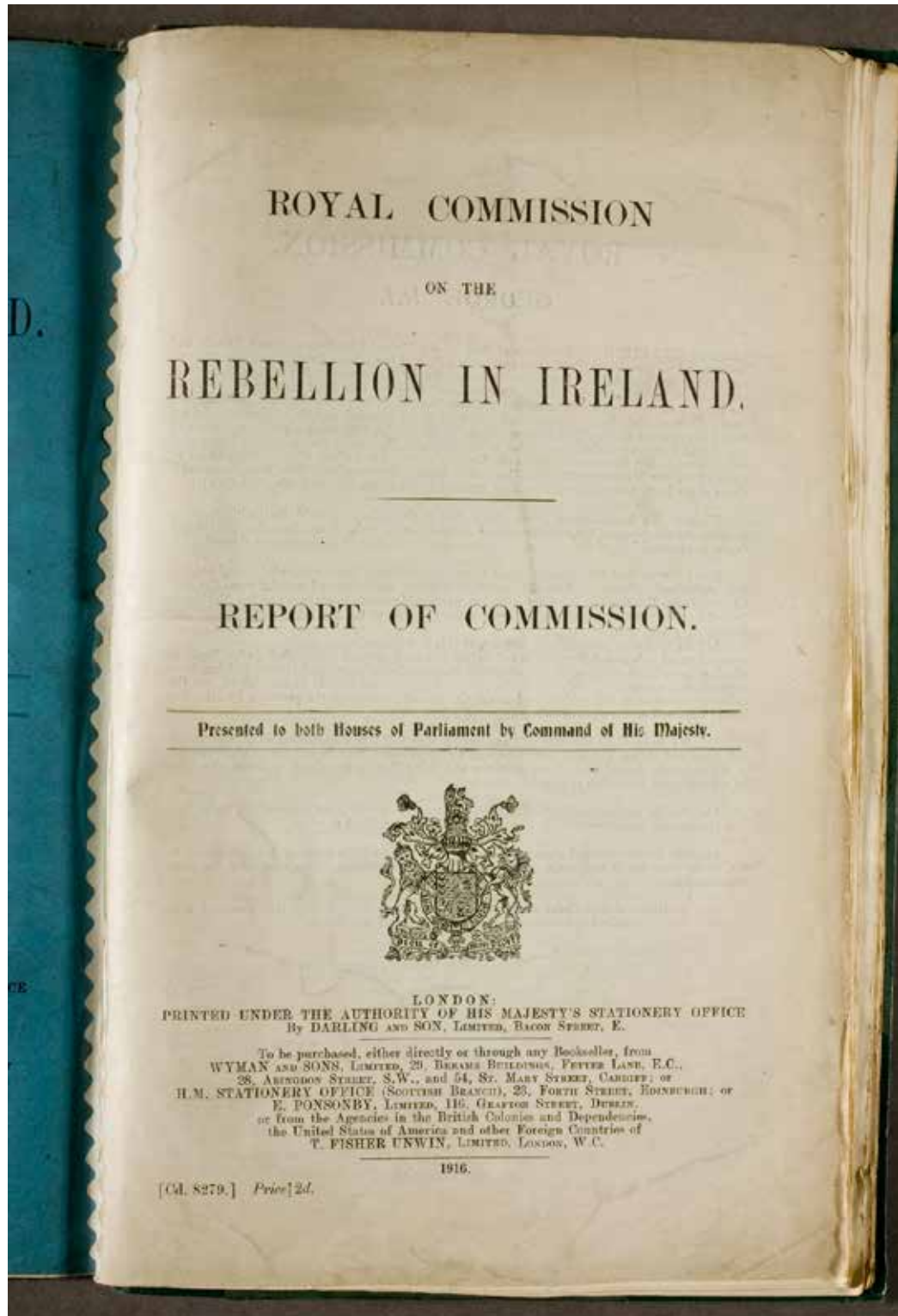
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Asquith arrived in Ireland on 12 May; this photograph shows him leaving Richmond Barracks following an interview with some of the insurgents held in custody. (Manchester Guardian History of the War, 16 Aug. 1916).

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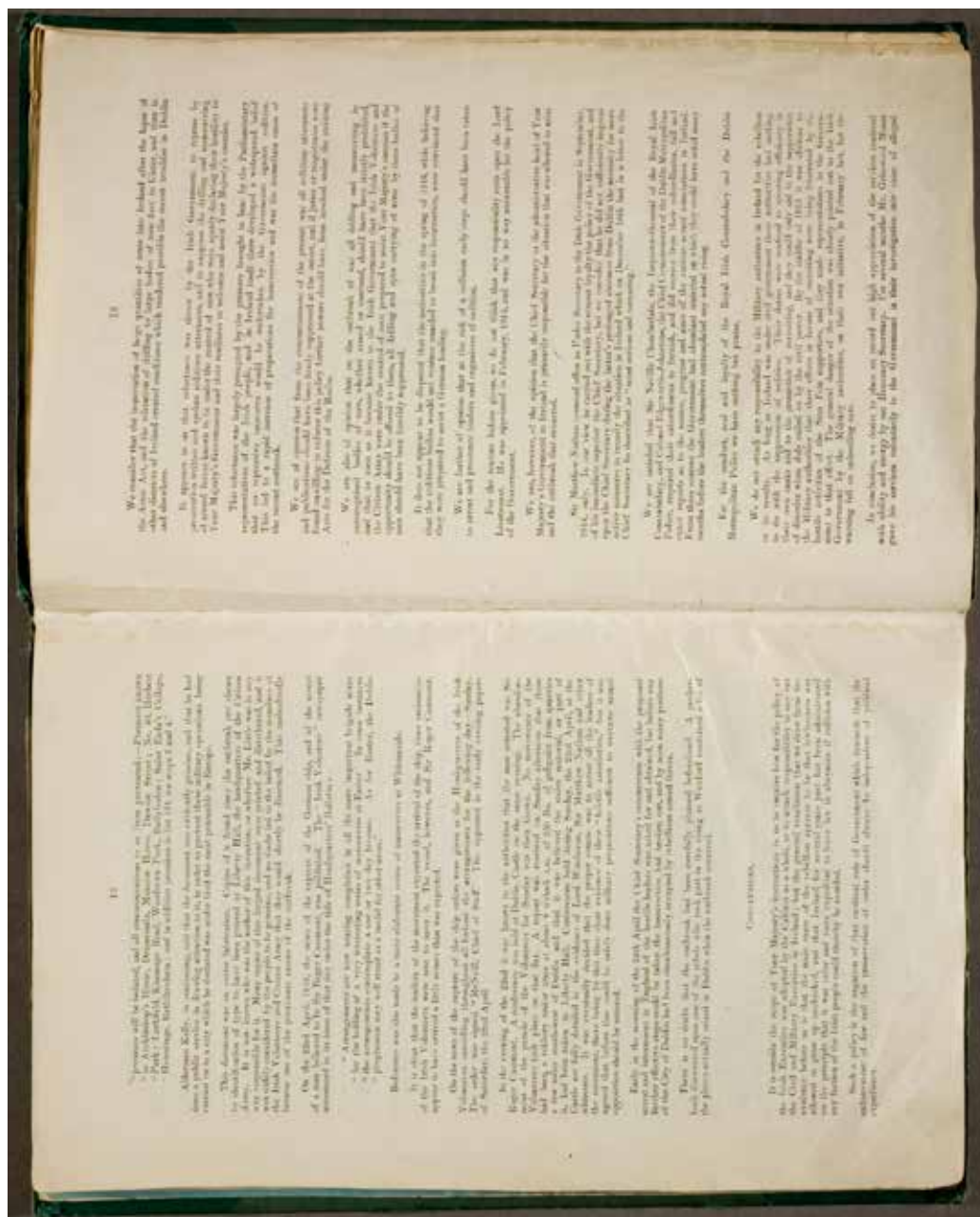
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The conclusions of the report of the royal commission of enquiry into the Rising. (Command 8279).

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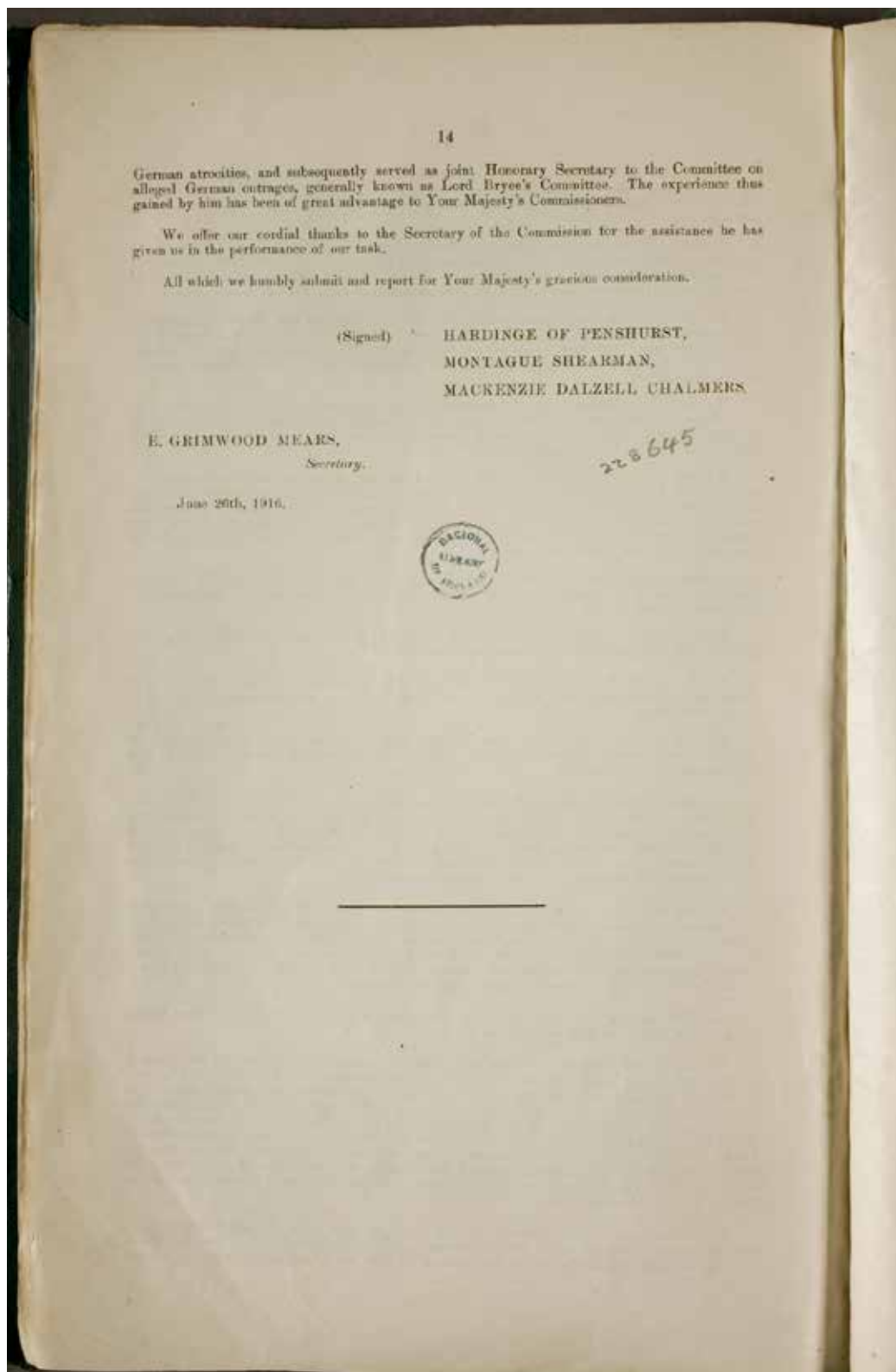
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Nathan and Birrell, formerly chief-secretary and under-secretary, leaving the royal commission on the Rising.

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The caption reads: 'The real Ireland, as opposed to the false doctrines of the Sinn Féin rebels: Captain William Redmond, Mr John Redmond's soldier brother, leading Irish troops'. Captain Redmond was killed at the front in 1917. He was but one of over 30,000 Irish in the British army killed in the First World War—imagining James Crawford Neil's fund of unrealised potential magnified by a factor of 30,000 may point up the destructive legacy of war and all armed conflict. (Illustrated London News, 6 May 1916).

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Newspaper editorial advising on future government policy for Ireland. (Weekly Irish Times, 13 May 1916).

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Crowds at Westland Row (now Pearse) railway station welcoming home the internees from Frongoch, Christmas 1916. (Keogh).

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The welcome at Liberty Hall for Countess Markievicz who had been imprisoned at Aylesbury Jail in England, 18 June 1917. (Album).

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William T. Cosgrave, who served in the South Dublin Union in the Rising, became the first President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State.

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Harry Boland, Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, three survivors of the Rising having a chat between sessions of Dáil Éireann (the provisional Irish parliament established in Jan. 1919 without British consent), 1 April 1919. All three had major roles in the War of Independence (1919-21) and the Civil War (1922-23). Both Boland and Collins were killed in the Civil War. de Valera afterwards held the positions of President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, Taoiseach (prime minister) and President of Ireland. (Irish Independent Collection 54).

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Desmond FitzGerald, a member of the GPO garrison in the Rising and then minister for external affairs, greeting John Devoy at Cobh, Co. Cork on a visit to Ireland in 1924. (Irish Independent Collection 357).

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Mr Seán Lemass, Taoiseach (prime minister) of the Republic of Ireland, meeting Captain Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, on 14 Jan. 1965. In the Rising, Lemass served in the GPO. (Irish News, 15 Jan. 1965).