



5.0 Roger Casement

Rinne sé iarracht briogáid Éireannach a earcú ó phríosúnaigh chogaidh Éireannacha agus chun airm Ghearmánacha a iompórtáil.

Rugadh Roger Casement (1864-1916) ag Teachín Doyle, Lawson Terrace, Cuas an Ghainimh, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath, mac leis an gCaptaen Roger Casement ón 3ú Garda Dragúin in arm na Breataine agus Anne Jephson ó Mhala, Co. Chorcaí. Bhaist a mháthair go rúnda é mar Chaitliceach Rómhánach cosúil léi féin, ach tógadh mar Phrotastúnach é, cosúil lena athair. Mar gheall gur bhásaigh a thuismitheoirí go hóg, chuaigh Roger chun cónaithe lena uncail, John Casement as Magherintemple, in aice le Baile an Chaistil, Co. Aontroma, agus cuireadh oideachas mar scoláire cónaithe air ag scoil na deoise sa Bhaile Meánach.

Tar éis an scoil a fhágáil i 1880, d'oibrigh Casement i bpoist éagsúla, lena n-áirítear mar chléireach, i riarachán, agus sa tseirbhís phoiblí san Afraic. Ó 1895 ar aghaidh, bhí ceapacháin consalacha aige ag áiteanna éagsúla san Afraic, lena n-áirítear Boma sa Chongó áit a bhfuair sé údarú ó Oifig Eachtrach na Breataine chun iniúchadh agus tuairisciú a dhéanamh ar mhíbhainistiú na Beilge. Cháin sé rialtas na Beilge ina thuairisc mar rialtas gan trua, agus nochtadh ann sárú córasach ar chearta daonna na ndaoine dúchais. Fuair Casement CMG (Order of St Michael and St George) in 1905 mar gheall ar an tuairisc.

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Chuaigh sé ar ais i mbun seirbhíse consalach in Santos, Para agus Rio sa Bhrasaíl. Nuair a coimisiúnaíodh é le tabhairt faoi thuairisc ar mhí-úsáid tuairiscithe oibrithe i dtionscal an rubair in imchuach Putumayo sa Pheiriú. Foilsíodh an tuairisc mar pháipéar parlaiminteach (1911) agus bhí tionchar suntasach aige, fuair Casement aitheantas idirnáisiúnta dá bharr mar dhaonnúlach, agus aithníodh a ionchur le ridireacht.

Ag an am céanna, bhí Casement ina bhall de Chonradh na Gaeilge ar feadh roinnt blianta agus ghlac sé páirt ian ghníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha pé uair a bhí sé in Éirinn. Bhí sé ag foghlaim Gaeilge agus bhí suim ghníomhach aige i litríocht, stair agus traidisiún na hÉireann. Ba chosúil chomh maith go raibh sé éirithe díomách faoin am gur fhág sé an tseirbhís chonsalach timpeall 1911 le himpireacht na Breataine agus an rud ar bhreathnaigh sé air anois mar an smacht éagórach a bhí aici ar Éirinn. Anuas air sin, d'éirigh sé níos radacaí mar gheall go raibh aontachtaithe Uladh ag cur in aghaidh an Rialtas Dúchais ó 1912 ar aghaidh. Nuair a bunaíodh Óglaigh na hÉireann i Samhain 1913, toghadh é ar an gcoiste sealadach. Nuair a thosaigh an cogadh i Lúnasa 1914 bhí sé sna Stáit Aontaithe ag bailiú airgid d'óglaigh na hÉireann. Sa staid pholaitiúil nua, d'aithin sé an Ghearmáin mar chomhghuaillí féideartha ag Éirinn agus chinn sé cúnamh a iarradh ar an nGearmáin.

Bhí sceipteachas ag go leor de náisiúnach na hÉireann i leith Casement a raibh amhras orthu faoina mhacántacht nó a cheap go raibh sé míshocair agus dainséarach. D'ainneoin sin, chuir ceannaire Chlann na Gael, John Devoy, a d'óstáil a chamchuairt ar Mheiriceá, i dteagmháil é le hambasadóir na Gearmáine a shocraigh cuairt dó i mBeirlín. Bhí trí éileamh ag Casement, airm, go dtreoródh oifigigh na Gearmáine éirí amach in Éirinn, agus go bhfoirmeofaí briogáid Éireannach ina mbeadh saighdiúirí Éireannacha in arm ba Breataine a bhí ina bpríosúnaigh chogaidh sa Ghearmáin ag an am. Níor gheall na Gearmánaigh ach líon réasúnta beag arm, agus ní raibh mórán de na príosúnaigh chogaidh sásta dul isteach sa bhriogáid Éireannach. Nuair a fuair Casement amach go raibh éirí amach pleanáilte don Cháisc, rinne sé cinneadh é a stopadh mar gur chreid sé nach n-éireodh leis gan go leor arm agus gan tacaíocht na Gearmáine.

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Gabhadh Casement ag Trá na Beannaí i gCo. Chiarraí ar Aoine an Chéasta 1916, tar éis d'fhomhuireán Gearmánach é a chur i dtír. Idir an dá linn, ghabh cabhlach na Breataine an long ar a raibh na raidhfilí Gearmánacha, an Aud, amach ó chósta an deiscirt agus chuir an captaen go tóin poill é. Tugadh Casement chuig Túr Londain agus cuireadh ar a thriail é as ardréas san Old Bailey. Ciontaíodh as tréas é. Sular cuireadh chun báis é, ghlac an Eaglais Chaitliceach Rómhánach leis. Crochadh Roger Casement ag Príosún Pentonville ar an 3 Lúnasa 1916. Ní raibh sé pósta.

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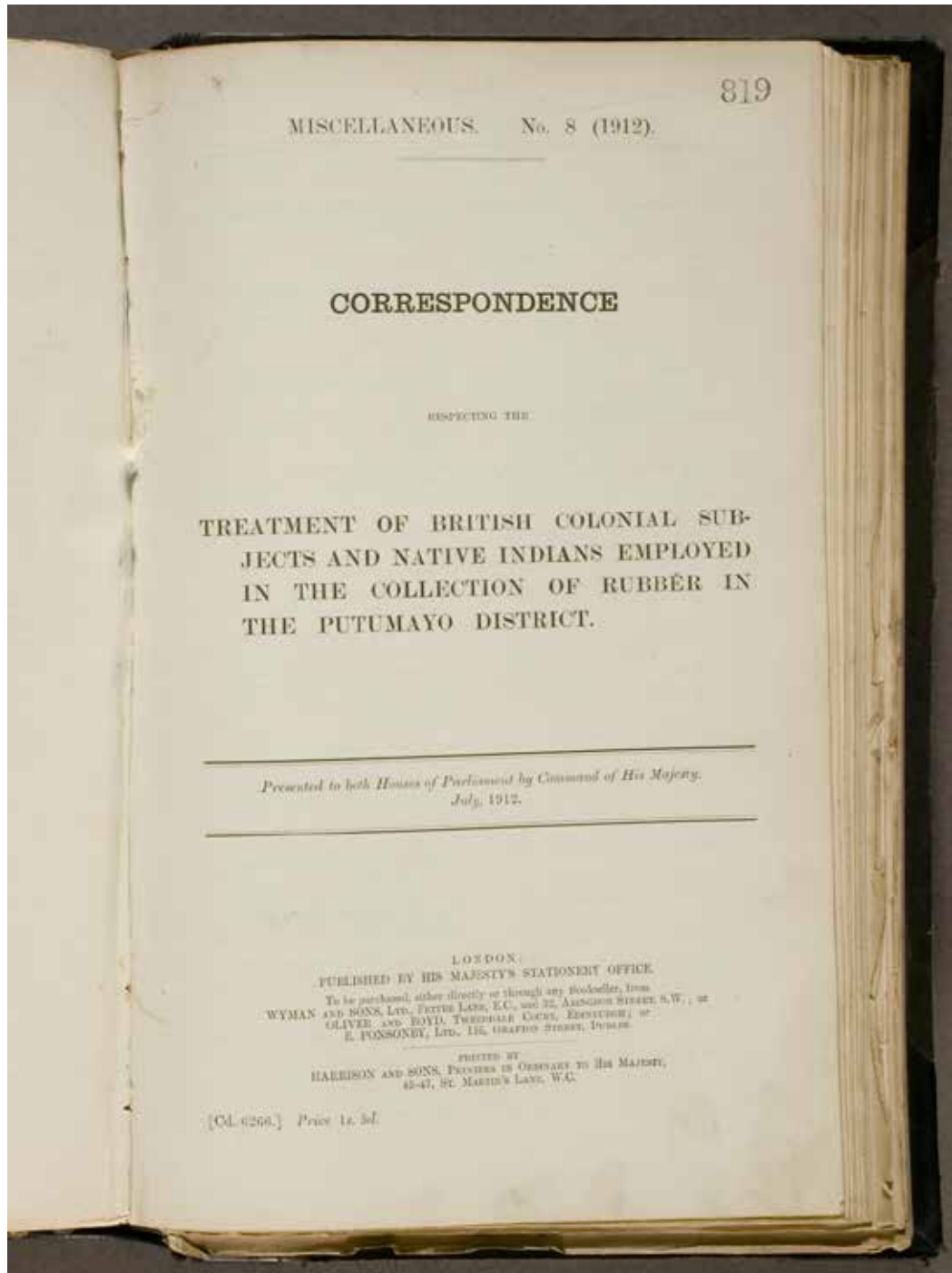
Roger Casement as a young man. (Ms. 21,536, Biggar Papers).

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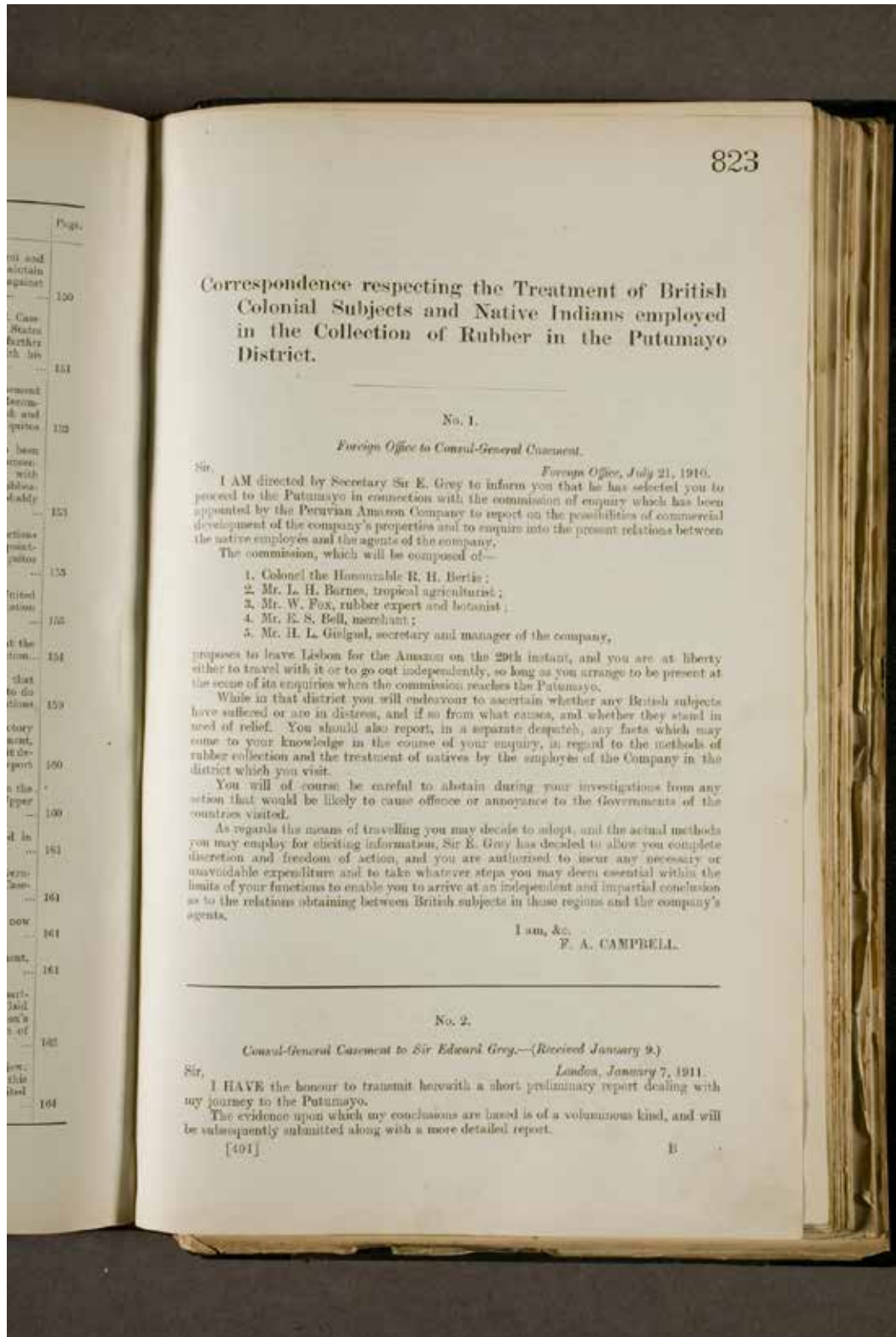
Insignia of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George awarded to Casement in June 1905. (Heraldic Museum).

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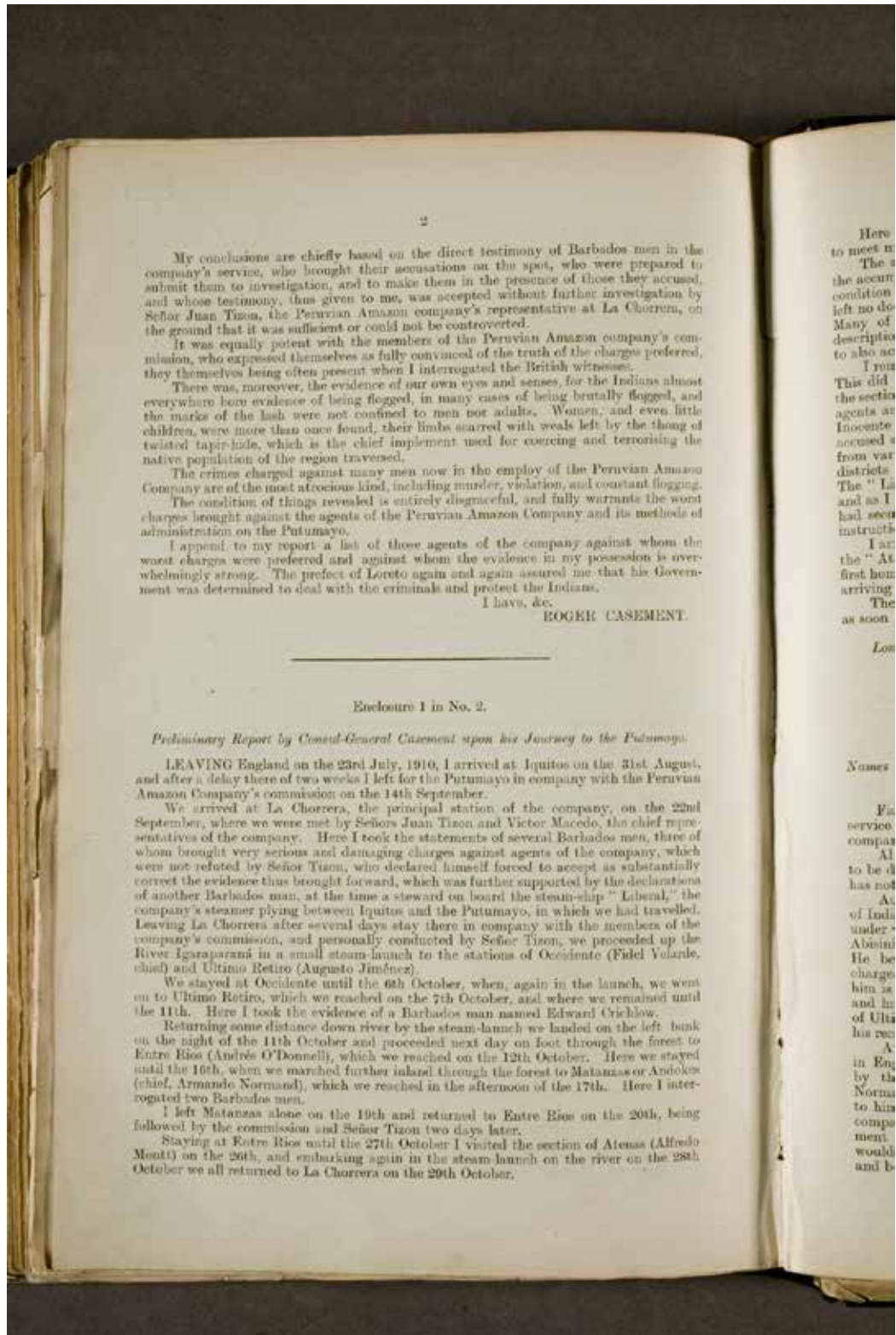
Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.

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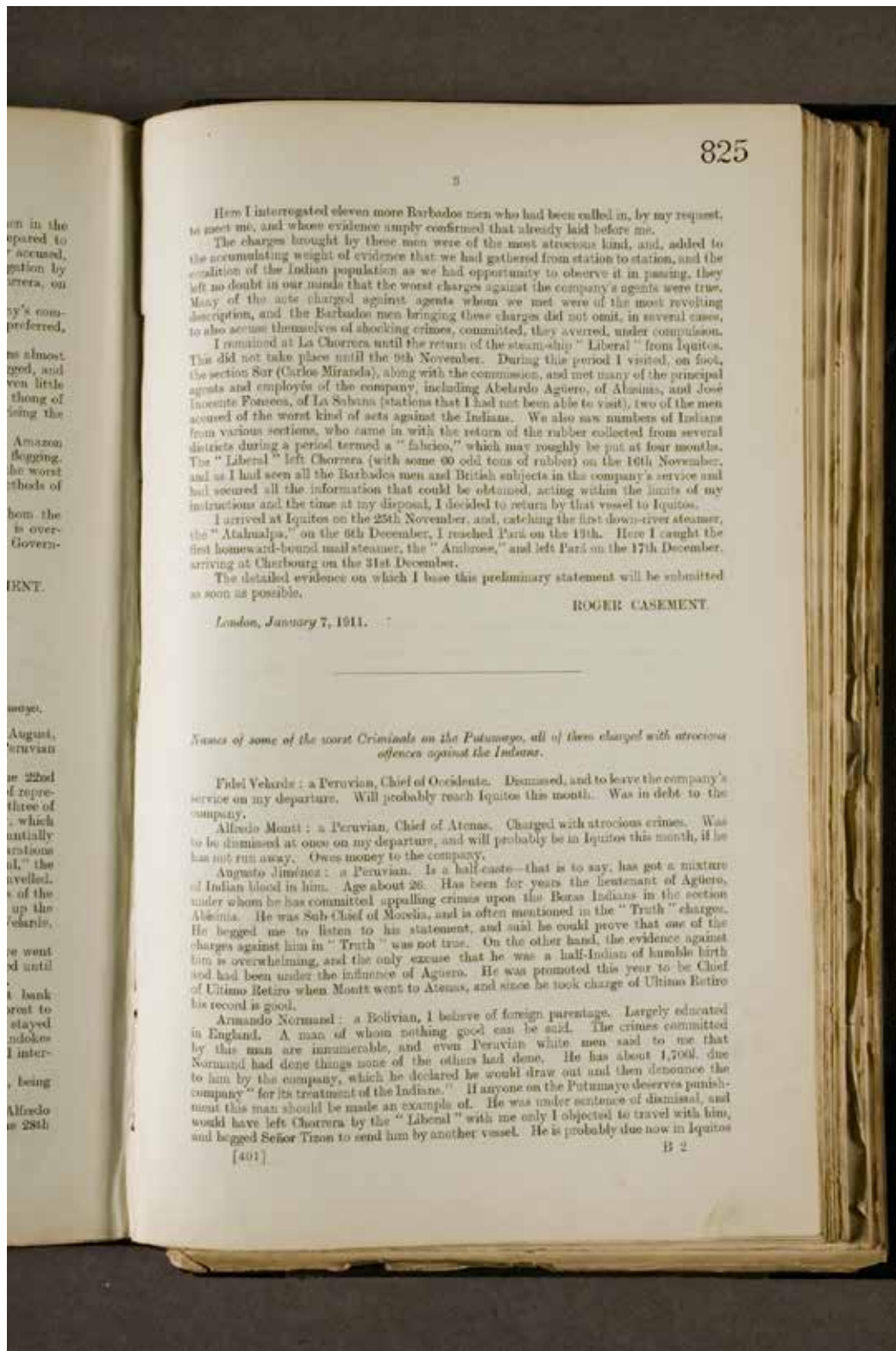
Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.

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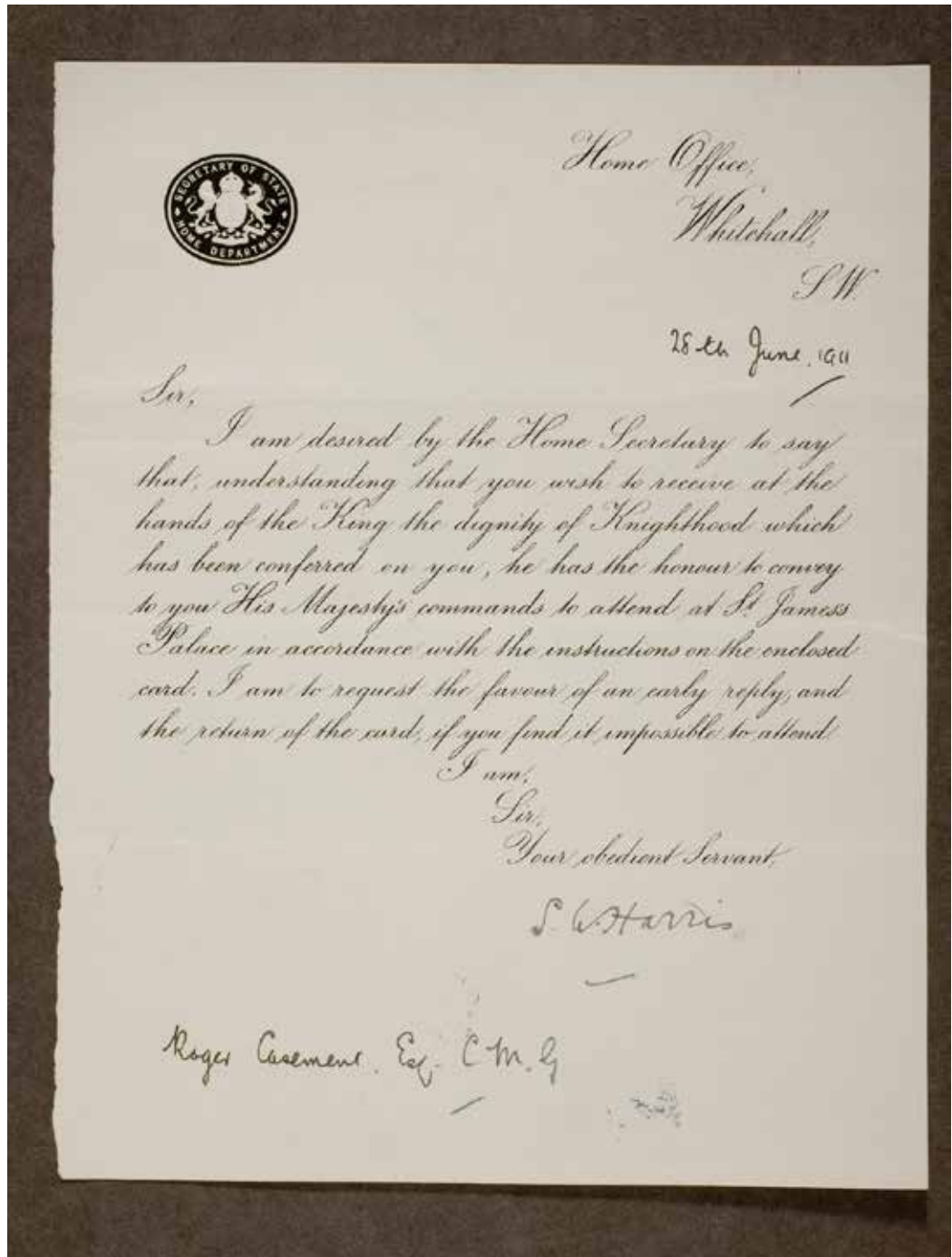
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Indian rubber-gatherers in the stocks on the Putumayo. (From W.E. Hardenburg, *The Putumayo: The Devil's Paradise*, 1912).

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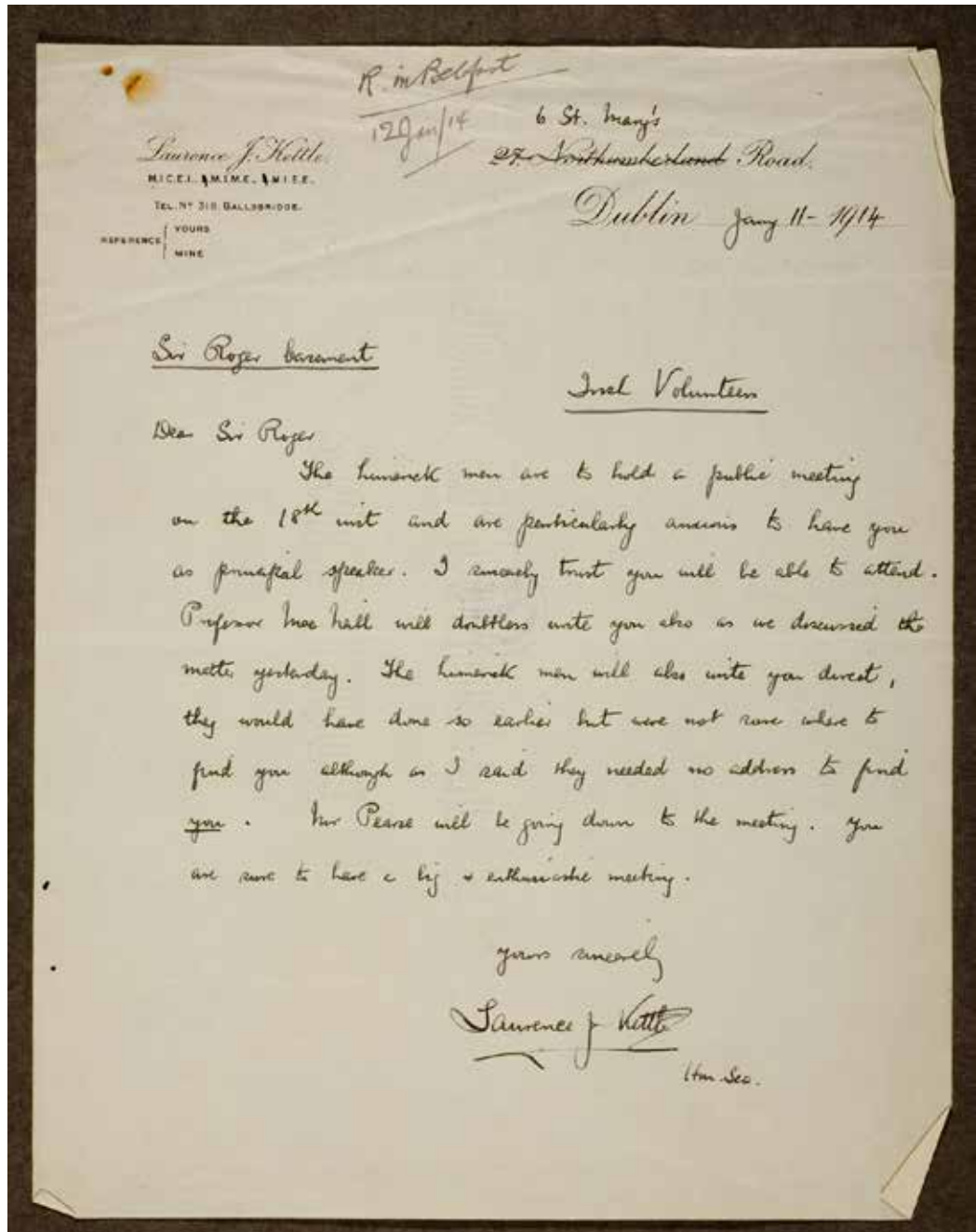
Invitation to Casement to attend for his knighthood, 28 June 1911. (Ms. 13,073).

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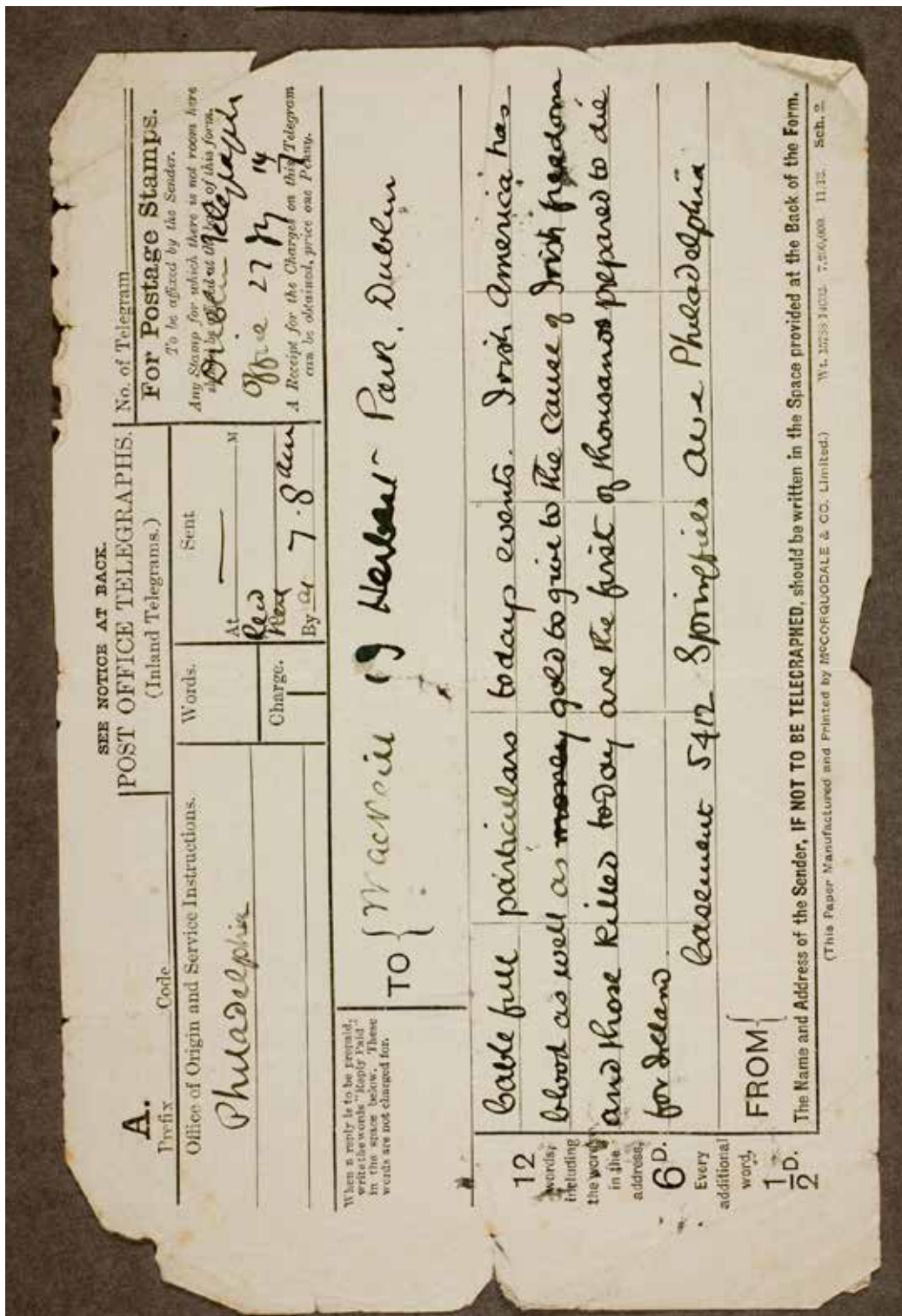
Casement in formal dress, possibly on the occasion of his knighthood.
(Ms. 21,536, Biggar Papers).

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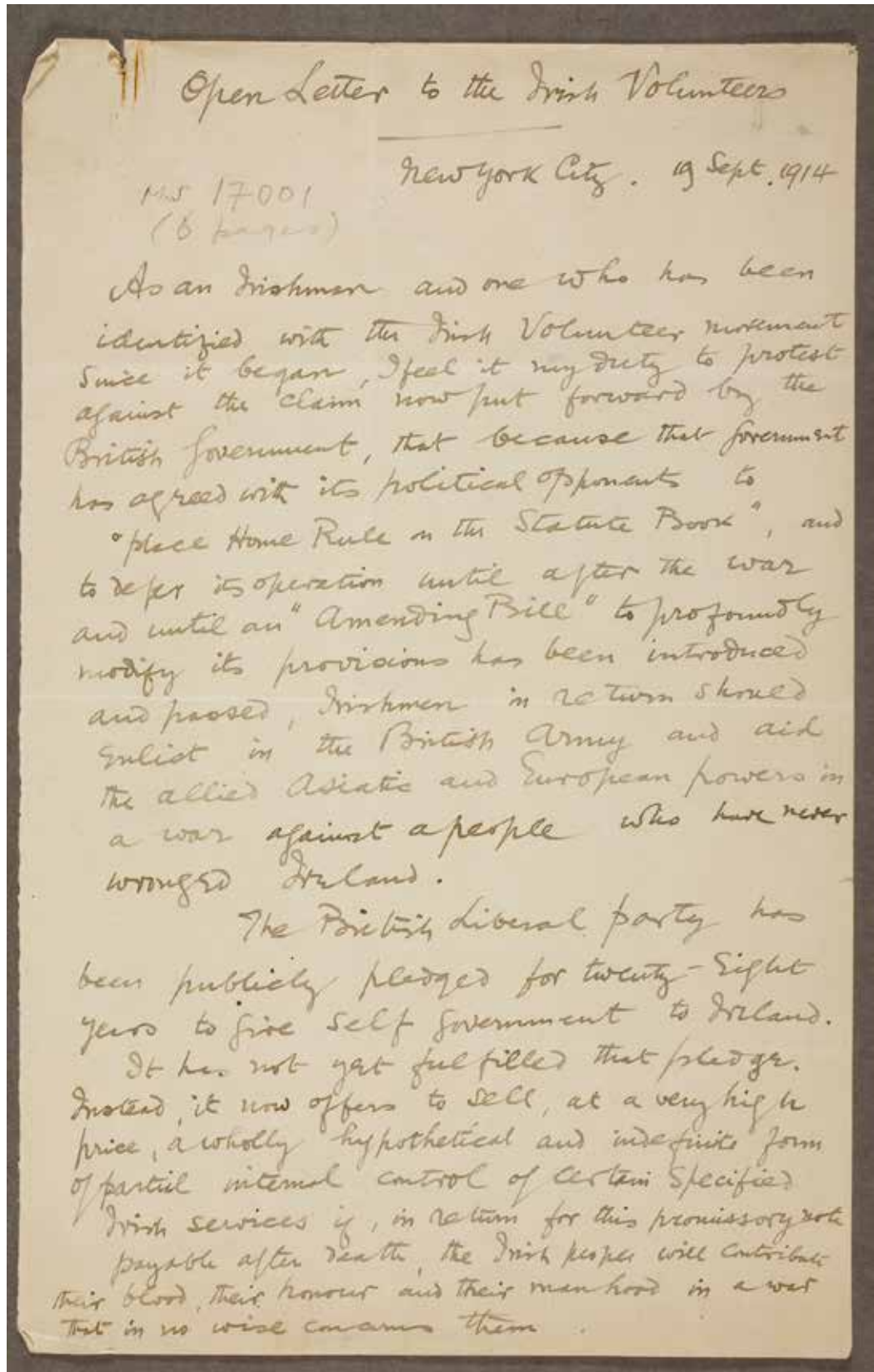
Invitation to Casement to address the Irish Volunteers in Limerick, 11 Jan. 1914.
(Ms. 13,073(9)).

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Telegram from Casement in Philadelphia to Eoin MacNeill requesting information regarding the shooting of people in Dublin by police and military following the landing of arms at Howth; 27 July 1914. (Ms. 13,174(6), Hobson Papers).

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Ireland has no quarrel with the German people
 or just cause of offence against them.

I will not pronounce an opinion upon the
 British standpoint in this war, beyond saying that
 the public professions under which it was begun,
 namely to defend the violated neutrality of
 Belgium, is being daily contradicted by the
 official spokesmen of Great Britain.

The London Times, in its issue of the 14th
 inst. declared that Great Britain would not
 consent to peace on any terms that did not
 involve the "dismantling of the German Navy"
 and the permanent impairment of Germany's
 place in the world as a great sea-faring
 nation. That may or may not be a
 worthy end for British statesmanship to set before
 it and a warrant for the use of British arms
 against Germany, but it is no warrant for Irish
 honour or common sense to be involved in this
 conflict. There is no gain, moral or
 material, Ireland can draw from assailing
 Germany. The destruction of the German Navy
 or the sweeping of German commerce from the seas
 will bring no profit to a people whose own
 commerce was long since swept from land and
 sea.

Ireland has no blood to give to any

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land to any cause but that of Ireland.

Our duty as a Christian people is to abstain from bloodshed; and our duty as Irishmen is to give our lives for Ireland. Ireland needs all her sons. In the space of sixty eight years her population has fallen by far over 4,000,000 souls and in every particular of national life she shows a steady decline of vitality. Were the Home Rule Bill all that is claimed for it and were it freely given today, to come into operation tomorrow, instead of being offered for sale on terms ~~that~~ of exchange that only a fool would accept, it would be the duty of Irishmen to save their strength and manhood for the trying tasks before them, to build up from a depleted population the fabric of a united national life.

Ireland has suffered at the hands of British administrators a more prolonged series of trials, deliberately inflicted, than any other community of civilized men.

Today, when no margin of vital strength remains for vital tasks at home, when its fertile fields are reduced by set design to producing animals and not men, the

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Remnant of our people are being urged to lay down their lives on foreign fields, in order that great and inordinately wealthy communities may grow greater and richer by the destruction of a rivals' trade and industry.

Had this were the highest moral aim in view, as its originators claim for it, it would still be the duty of Irishmen to keep out of it.

If Irish blood is to be "the seal that will bring all Ireland together in one nation and in liberties equal and common to all" then let that blood be shed in Ireland where alone it can be righteously shed to secure those liberties. It was not Germany destroyed the national liberties of the Irish people and we cannot recover the national life struck down in our own land by carrying fire and sword into another land.

The Cause of Ireland is greater than the Cause of any party; higher than the worth of any man; richer in its poverty than all the riches of Empire. If we sell it now we are unworthy of the name of Irishmen.

If today we barter that Cause in a sordid bargain, we shall prove ourselves a people unworthy of freedom — a dwindling

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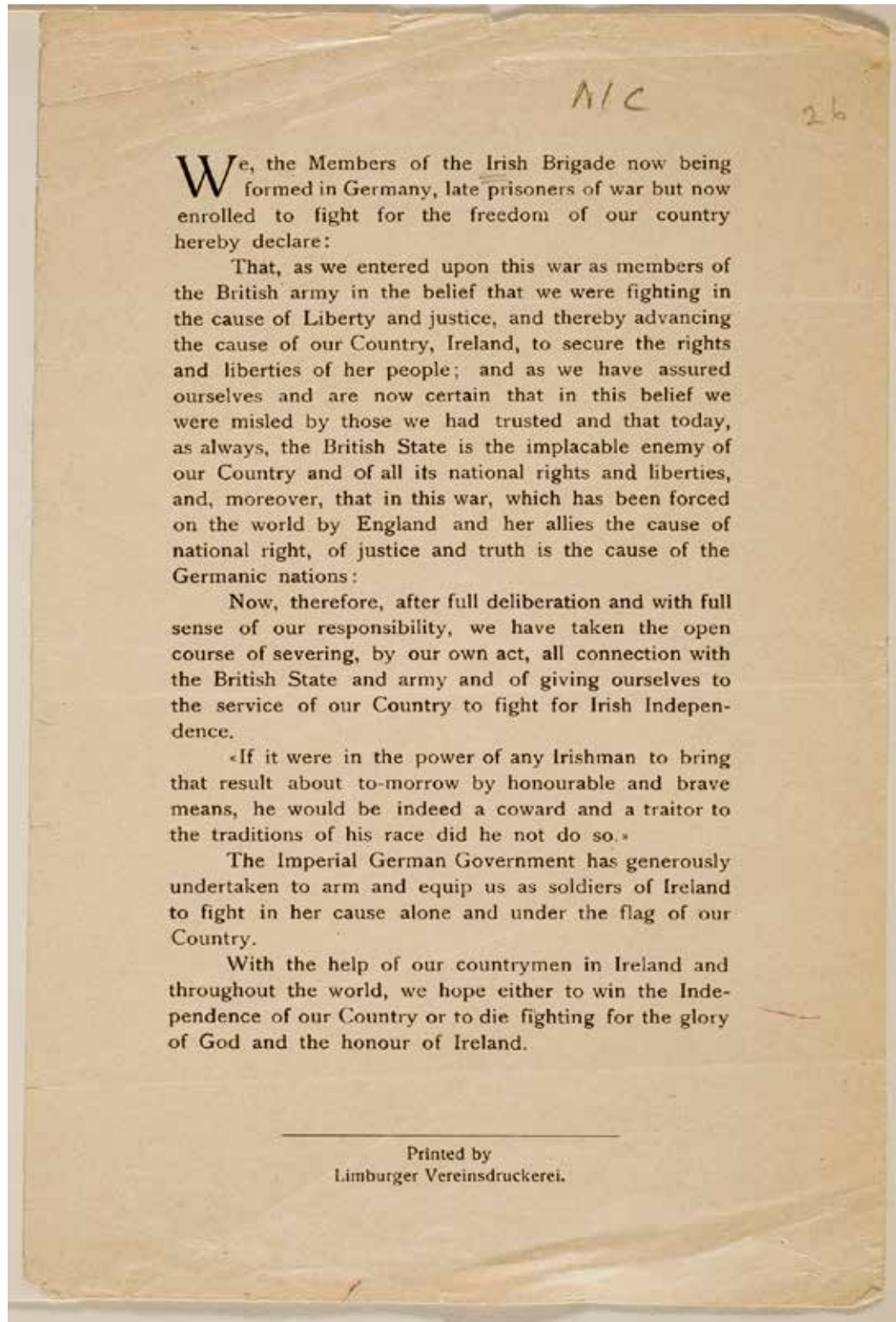
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race of cravens from whose veins the blood
 of manhood has been drained. If to now
 fight is our duty, then let us fight on that
 soil where so many generations of plain Irishmen
 lie in honour and fame. Let our graves
 be in that patriot grass whence alone the
 corpse of Irish nationality can spring life.
 Ireland will be "false to her
history, to every consideration of honour, good
faith and self interest" if she now willingly
 responds to the call of the British Government
 to send her brave sons and faithful hearts to
 fight in a cause that has no glint of
 chivalry or gleam of generosity in all
 its line of battle. If this be a war
 for the small "nationalities", as its planners
 term it, then let it begin, for one small
 nationality at home.

Speaking as one of those who helped to found
 the Irish Volunteers I say, in their name, that no
 Irishman fit to bear arms in the cause of his
 country's freedom can join the allied millions
 now attacking Germany in a war that at the
 best, concerns Ireland not at all and that can
 only add fresh burdens and establish a new
 drain, in the interest of another community upon
 a people that has already been bled to the verge
 of death.

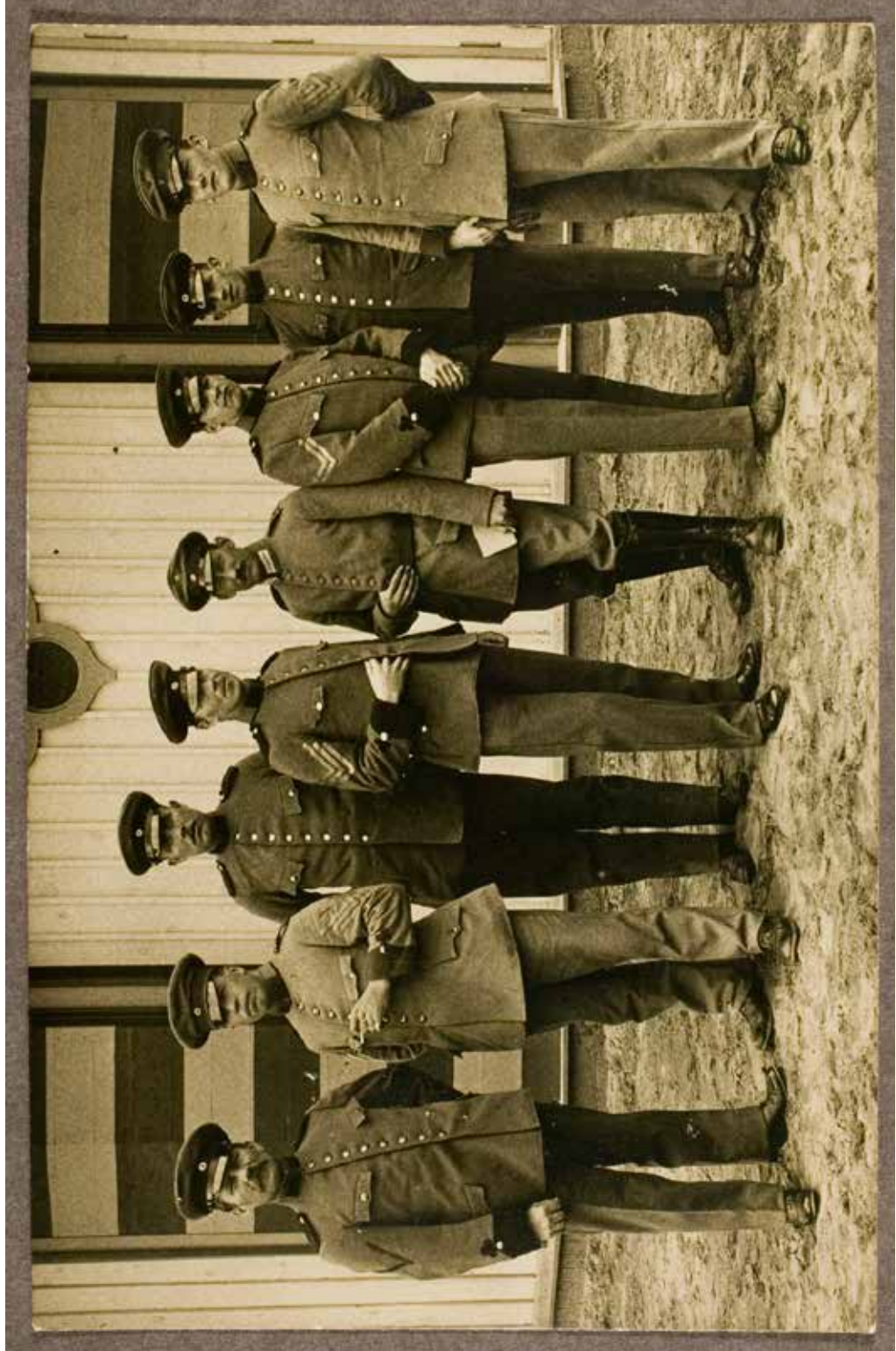
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Printed text of declaration by members of Casement's Irish brigade in Germany; the text was drafted by Joseph Plunkett.

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Non-commissioned officers of Casement's Irish brigade at Zossen, Germany, 1915.
From left: Corporal Peter Golden, Sergeant-Major Keogh, Corporal O'Mahony, Sergeant Daniel Julian Bailey (alias Beverley), Interpreter Zerhussen, Corporal Kavanagh, Corporal O'Callaghan and Quartermaster-Sergeant H. Quinlisk. (Ms. 18,081(10)).

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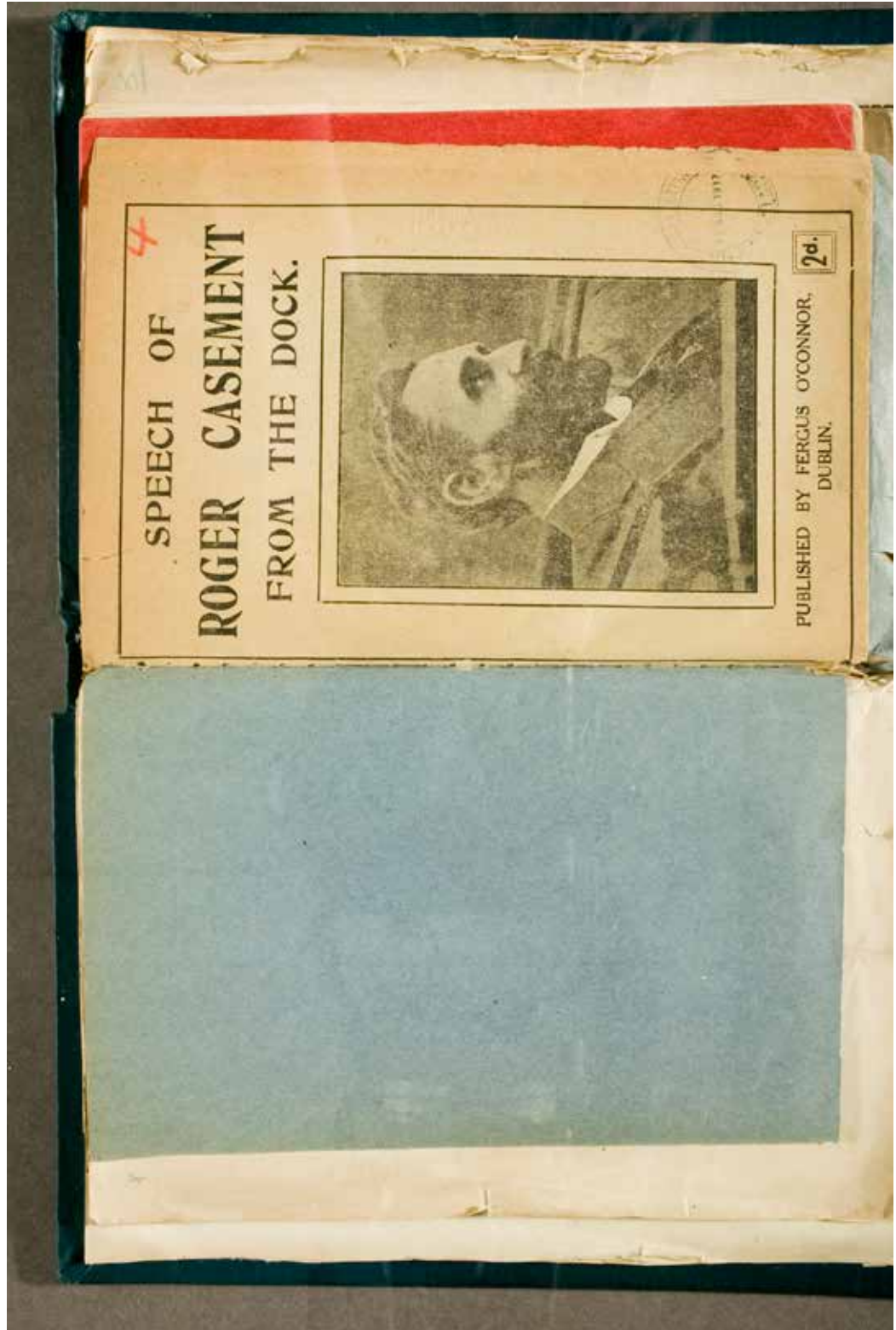
The reference to 'the king's liege' in the Daily Mirror relates to Casement's unsuccessful defence that as his actions took place outside the area of the king's jurisdiction they did not constitute treason.

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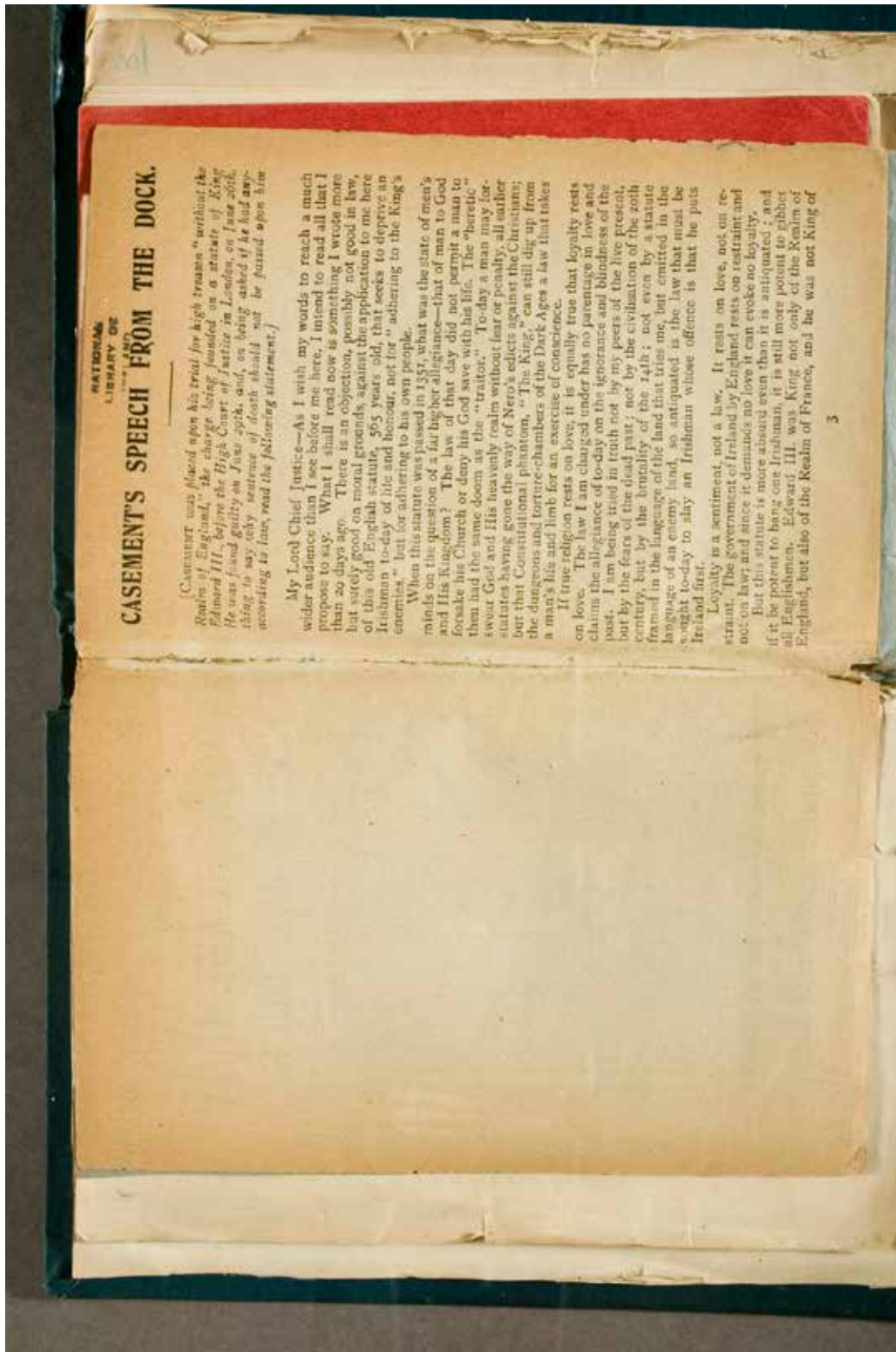


New York Freeman's Journal: Casement's reputation as a humanitarian was such that his trial and sentence made international news.

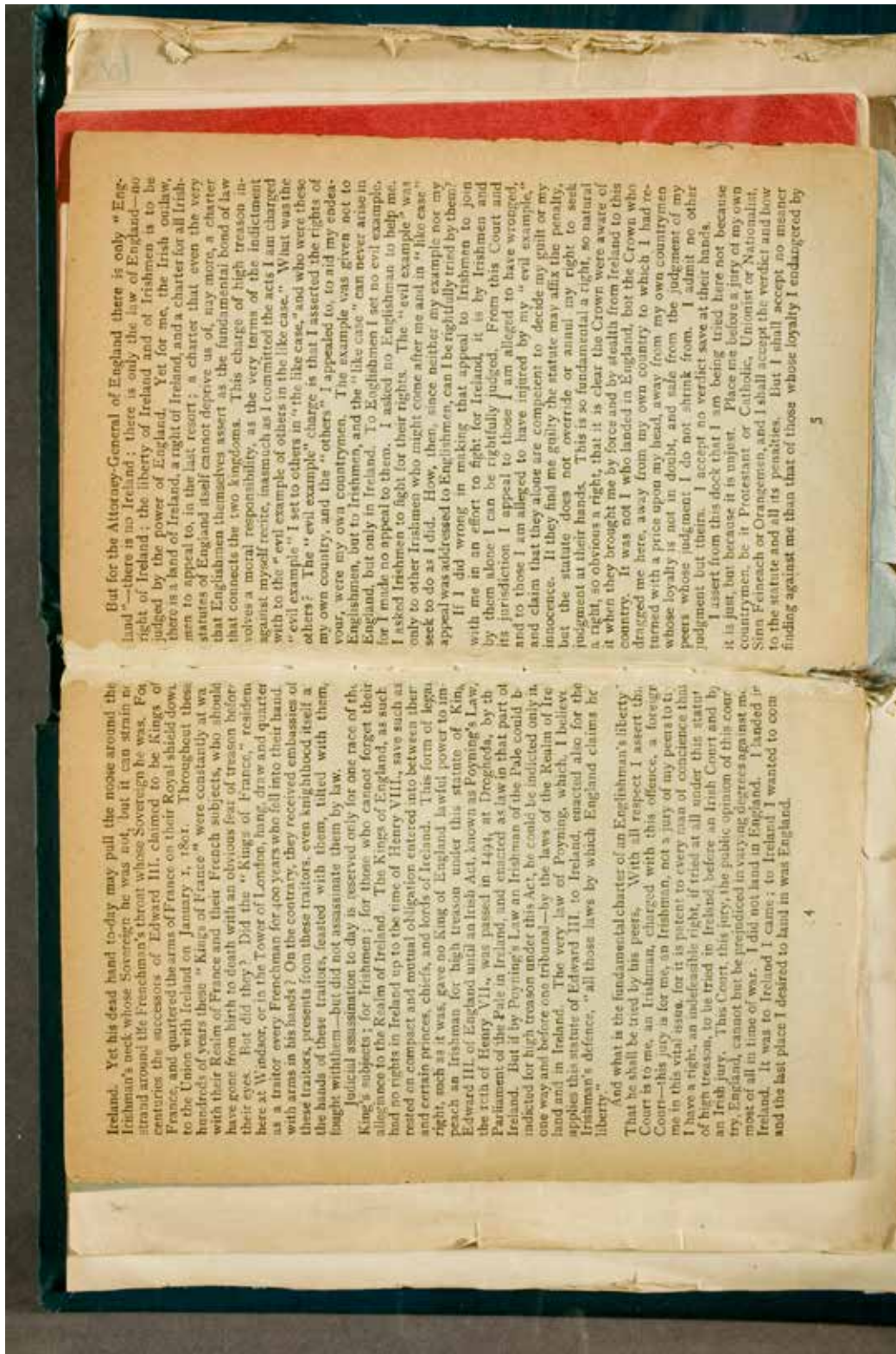
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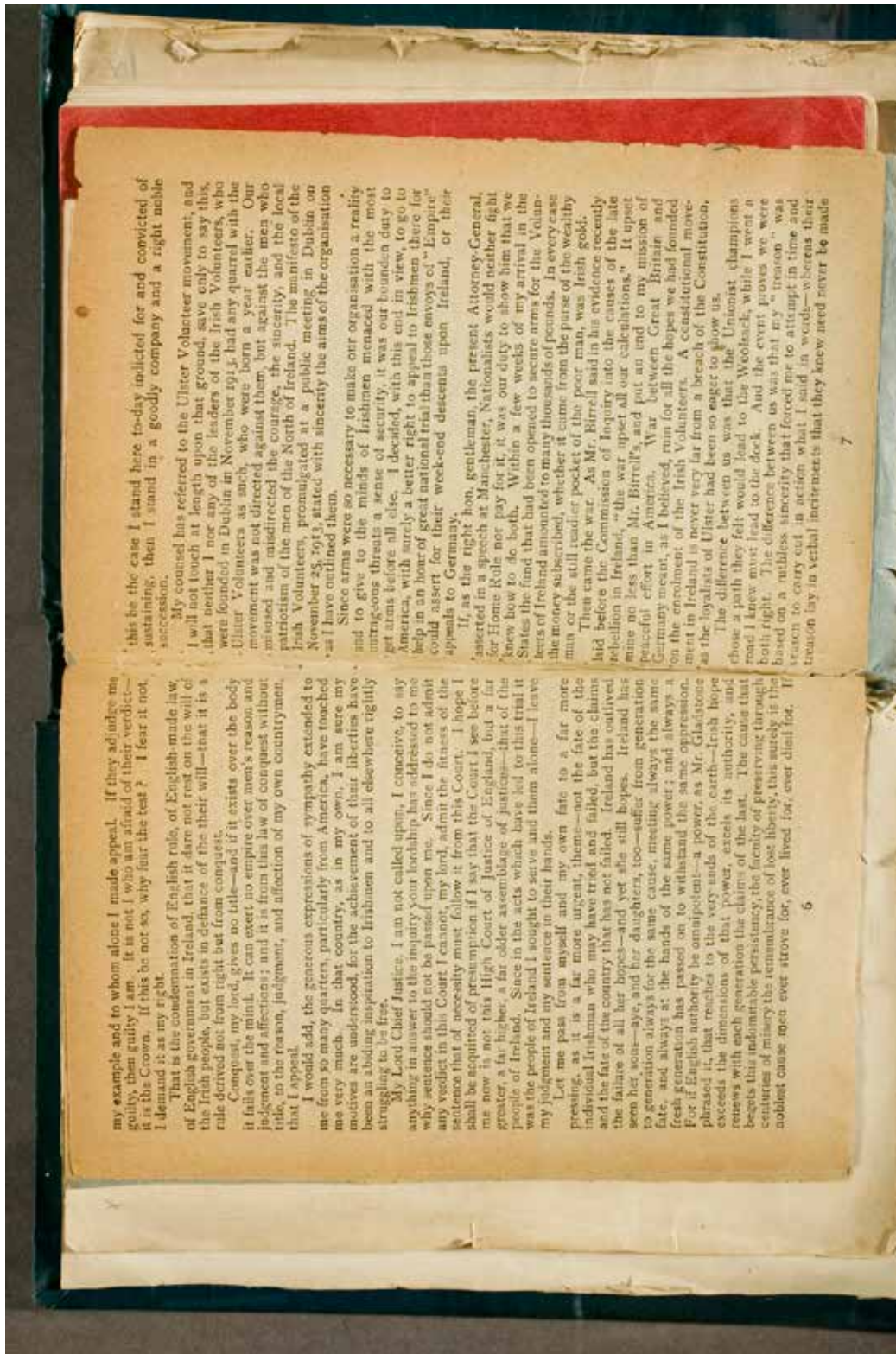
One of many printed editions of Casement's speech from the dock; undated but probably 1916.



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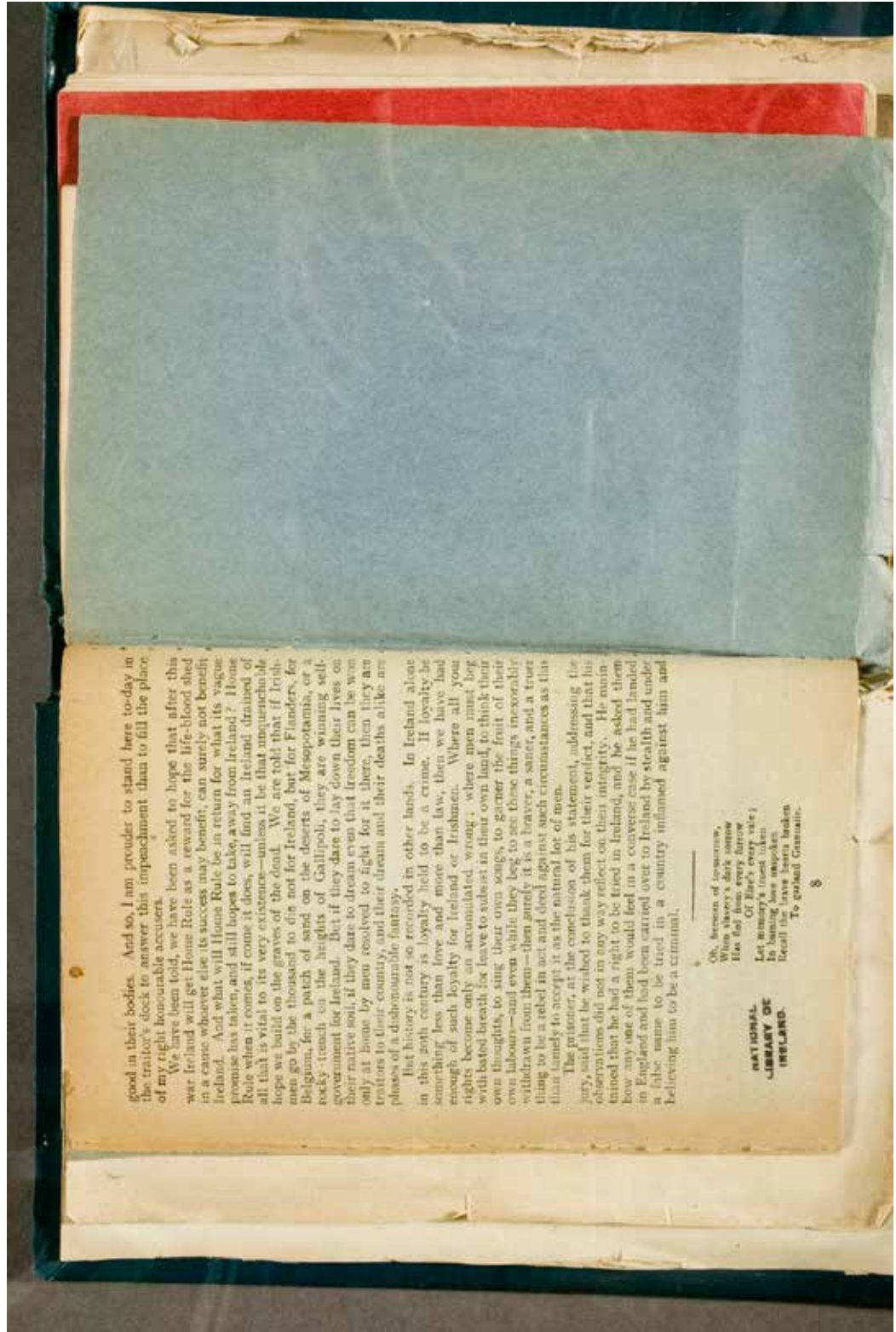


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