

Gaggin, Bandon,

60. CORK.

Jany 14th, 1922.

C. J. France Esq.,
Standard Hotel,
DUBLIN.

Dear Sir:-

I am in receipt of your letter of January 6th, and am most willing and anxious to give all information and details in connection with the official reprisal carried out in my place on May 24th, 1921, by Military and Crown Forces. It is my wife has given me all information, as I at the time was undergoing a term of imprisonment in an English Jail.

She tells me the Military and Crown Forces arrived in eight lorries and an armoured car. The Military Officer in charge, (Lieut. Doherty), known here in this locality as the one-eyed Officer, entered the house and read a Notice for her, telling her she had one hour to remove food-stuffs, as her place was to be burned as a reprisal for an attack on His Majesty's Forces on May 14th. (There was a soldier shot in this attack). When he had finished reading the Notice he ordered her into a room to be searched by two women searchers. She indignantly refused, but subsequently had to give in. The only occupants of the house at the time were herself and two helpless little children, one aged 2 years, the other 9 months. When the women had completed their search, she had to travel a good part of the farm to call in the assistance of an old man and a little boy who were assisting her with the farm-work. Two soldiers were ordered to escort her. When she returned the Officer told her she then had only 21 minutes of the time left to remove her Goods. She, with the two helpers managed to remove the food stuffs as far as possible from the house, but when any attempt was made to remove clothing of any kind, they were ordered to leave it behind at the point of the revolver. Even when she asked for a cup to give a drink to the child, the Officer callously told her not to dare take it. She was trying to remove some of her own and the children's wearing apparel, but they were roughly taken from her. Before he gave orders ~~xxxxxx~~ the dwelling house and out-offices on fire, he went round the premises with some of the men, and ordered them with a couple of sledges to smash all the machinery and anything that could not be destroyed by fire. When the hour was up he told my wife and helpers to clear off. She went with her two children to the old man's cottage, and from there had a full view of the preparations carried on in the farmyard. The tacklings were removed from the horses and thrown into the flames. The out-offices were set on fire first. Many tins of petrol were used to destroy same. The dwelling house was the last destroyed. It burned very quickly as there was a good deal of timber ~~in~~ work in it. During the burning many soldiers and tans looted Goods of every description, and removed them to the lorries under the supervision of their Officers. The whole place was reduced to ashes in a couple of hours. Even the washed out clothes were ordered to be gathered up by the Officer and thrown into the flames. There were four broods of little chickens burned also. A little grove near the house was partially destroyed by the fire. While the fire lasted, the Tans and Soldiers showed their sympathy by playing an Accordeon which was looted from the house. There were sentries around the whole farm, and at 4 or 5 farmhouses convenient to my place; The Officer stopped in the yard until he saw nothing could be saved. He took precautions to break the pump & spill any water available. When he and his men went away, a few of the neighbours came to offer their assistance and sympathy, but

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found there was nothing left for them to save. My wife and children had to share the cottage with the old man & his family. A kindly neighbour supplied her with bed & bedding. My sister (who was from home on the day of the burning), had to go a distance of half mile every night to sleep. Inconsequence of the destroying of the stalls the cattle had to be turned into another farmyard for a length of time, until my wife got assistance to erect a temporary shed. The work of the farm was at a stand-still, as there was no machinery or toolings to do business. I had all the buildings erected a few years before, and had purchased all new machinery. The same cost me a lot of money, and I had no money to start building operations again until I got assistance from the White Cross.

Previous to the Loan, I got £2 a week for 5 weeks, and £1.10.0. for one week. I then got the first loan of £200, which I have expended in putting on a roof on the dwelling-house, and making it habitable. I have now received another loan of £100.0.0.

Owing to the terrorism in the Country at the time, we got no photo of the premises taken. You can use this letter as you wish, and I sincerely thank you for your kind interest.

With every good wish.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd). Michael Walsh.