

Lyre, Miltown,

CO. KERRY.

January 18th, 1922.

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

Dear Sir:-

In reply to your circular letter of the 6th inst. I beg to inform you that on the 1st November, 1920, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a number of Auxiliary Forces of the R.I.C. motored from the adjacent town of Killorgling (5 miles from here). I was in the town of Miltown at the time, - the only persons in the house were, my father-in-law - over 70 years of age, my youngest son aged 14, and an elder boy aged 21 years. The latter saw the motor approaching, and got away with the old man and little boy. My eldest son was "on the run" some time previously, and was not at home. I saw the motor going in the direction of my house, and shortly afterwards saw it and the contents of my haggard, (which included a large quantity of hay, straw, etc) on fire. I was afraid to go near it to extinguish the flames, and did not do so until the Crown Forces left. I then obtained help, and when I reached the house I found that all my hay and straw were destroyed, and the kitchen of my dwellinghouse on fire. I succeeded in preventing the flames extending beyond the kitchen, which was partly destroyed. In addition all my household effects were either burned or smashed to pieces, excepting one bed which I succeeded in saving.

As a result of the burning my family were homeless during the winter months. The old man and my youngest son I had removed to a friend's house, and I had to find refuge myself wherever available, as I constantly dreaded the Auxiliaries would return, and I knew if they did so my life would be in grave danger. Until the Truce, the uninjured part of my house remained unoccupied, and it was only then I repaired it temporarily so that we could live in it. After the burning my second son had to fly for his life, but was later arrested and remained in prison until the Truce. My financial loss was over £400, apart entirely from the loss entailed owing to myself and my son being unable to do any work on my farm.

I am deeply grateful to the White Cross for their timely and much acquired relief. I am very grateful for the Relief given me, and am only too glad to permit you to have this letter published with my name, as a small mark of appreciation for the help given me.

I shall send Photo later.

Yours gratefully,

(Sd). John Leahen.