

34  
Coolborbeen.  
Newport.  
Co. Tipperary.  
Jan. 23rd.

Mr. C.J. France.  
Standard Hotel.  
Dublin.

Dear Sir,

In compliance with a request contained in your circular under date Jan. 6th. 1922. I beg to submit the following account of the destruction on my dwelling-house and out offices under the headings designated in your circular by the letters (a) (b) (c) (d) (e).

(a) My premises were destroyed by a military detachment sent from Limerick under the command of an officer Royal Engineer as an Official Reprisal for the ambushing and shooting of District Inspector Biggs near my house on May 14th. 1921. Although in no way connected with, and having no previous knowledge of this occurrence which fact was certified by neighbours who were able to prove where I was working when the party with whom the D.I. was travelling was fired upon and he himself shot dead, even the survivors, including an English Officer and two civilians were emphatic in declaring when I was brought before them with other neighbours that I was not among the ambushers. Yet, notwithstanding all this on the 17th. May just three days after as I was working on a part of my farm some distance from my dwelling, word was conveyed to me that military in large numbers were around my house and were inquiring for me. From past experience of their brutal behaviour and treatment of unfortunate men in similar circumstances as I now was, I considered it more prudent to keep out of harms way. (I afterwards learned that their business with me on this occasion was to read me a proclamation authorising them to demolish my homestead) After a lapse of half an hour or so a deafening explosion told me the work of destruction on which they were bent. I imagined the very ground under my feet shook and a cloud of slates, stones and timber were driven high in the air. After another half hour a second explosion went off. In all there were four explosions and then this Glorious Army, those Champions of Small Nations moved on to wreck a similar vengeance on two more farmsteads. When I reached home not one house was standing, not a stone was left in the walls, even the foundation stones were uprooted. Nor even did a new hay barn escape, its pillars were broken across by a bomb or something and a large quantity of hay was set on fire. In fact every farm implement and any article that would burn was piled on the fire, also cars and harness, gates, etc. My sister Mrs Ryan who lives in the next house claimed certain things which were her property she would not be allowed bring them out but they were thrown into the fire. The dwelling house was new being built in 1913.

(b) Apart from the financial loss sustained the disaster could not cause me much of a shock as people around were used to those acts on the part of the military. On one occasion soldiers under an officer searched my house and threatened me when they would not get me to tell them secrets which they thought I possessed. On another occasion at night fall they came in a lorry and while I was absent burst in the door, broke my bicycle, smashed pictures, took away a clock and watch and anything that seemed useful to them. I may say that during this period and up to the time of the reprisal I was living alone. My loss financially was very great as I was left neither cars or harness or implements of any kind to carry on my work, and had to rely on the generosity of neighbours.

(c) I received no assistance whatsoever from the White Cross prior to the time I obtained the first instalment of loan nor did I apply for any help in the nature of grant.

(d) I received a loan of £250 from the White Cross which I used for the purpose of building out-offices for shelter for my cows etc. for the winter.

(e) I regret that I have no picture of my houses after destruction I shall have then taken and send you one.

Allow me in conclusion to thank through you the friends who contributed the money that helped so many in their need.

(Sgd) Denis Flannery.