

Heroes or Traitors? Experiences of Returning Irish Soldiers from World War One

To the part of Ireland that became the Free State covering the period from the Armistice to 1939



Figure 1 Victory Parade Dublin 1919 © RTÉ Stills Library

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Dedicated to

Jack Hutchison

Robert Taylor

Soldiers of the Great War

Short Abstract

A number of academic studies assert that ex-servicemen were subject to intimidation, some killed as a punishment for war service, and that they formed a marginalised group in Irish society. Evidence based on records of the victims and perpetrators demonstrates otherwise; intimidation was mostly for reasons other than war service, for instance, membership of a particular class such as landowners or the judiciary, or for specific actions, including informing, supplying to or joining the Crown Forces. The violence towards ex-servicemen was geographically focussed, varying in intensity in correlation to the level of violence experienced by other sectors of the population; support for republicanism varied significantly by location. The great majority of ex-servicemen were not intimidated; many served in the IRA.

With the formation of the Free State there is little evidence that either the State or community marginalised ex-servicemen. They were treated equally before the legislature and the courts. Some half of the Free State army, formed to defeat extreme republicans, were ex-servicemen. Remembrance took place with considerable community support and acceptance from the State. According to credible contemporary reports they were not discriminated against and held high positions in the civil service, army and police. They were not a homogeneous group. Neither war service nor loyalism defined them; many were supporters of Fianna Fáil. Britain fulfilled its imperial obligation to the ex-servicemen with housing and pension benefits considerably more favourable than those for their counterparts in Britain.

The view that ex-servicemen were persecuted became persuasive. They became perceived through the prism of commemoration, and with the establishment of a republican historiography assigned to a national amnesia. Loyalist lobbying groups highlighted perceived discrimination to a willing press. It was a convenient collusion but at odds with the evidence. In reality the group truly marginalised after the Civil War was the anti-Treaty republicans.

Long Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of Irish soldiers returning from the Great War to the part of Ireland that became the Free State, covering the years from the Armistice to 1939. At the onset of the War they volunteered in large numbers and marched off accompanied by cheering crowds and the promise of a heroes' welcome home. In 1916 whilst its soldiers fought in the British army, Ireland witnessed an insurrection, the Easter Rising, against British rule. Its violent suppression and the intended introduction of conscription meant they returned to a changed Ireland with increased demands for an independent republic rather than limited Home Rule. Leonard argues that the ex-servicemen were subject to 'the extremes of intimidation including beating, mutilation, shooting, kidnapping, expulsion from Ireland and murder', and of the estimated 120 ex-servicemen killed by the republicans during the conflict, 'the vast majority appear to have been killed simply as a retrospective punishment for their service in the Great War', and that they 'formed a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society'. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the reality was more complex and multifaceted; that intimidation directed towards them during the time of conflict was mostly for reasons other than war service and was geographically focussed; that following independence they were not marginalised by the state or the community; and that the imperial power fulfilled its obligations to them with housing and pension benefits considerably more favourable than those for their counterparts in Britain, and despite accentuating circumstances.

Most researchers have used RIC police records or newspapers as a basis for their analysis of violence and intimidation during the period of conflict ending in 1923. This research focuses on the records of the victims and the perpetrators, respectively claims made

to the Irish Grants Committee (IGC)¹ and the IRA Witness Statements (IMA/BMH); the former is the most comprehensively documented archive of violence and intimidation by republicans against loyalists. Although ex-servicemen were encouraged to claim, out of 3,439 incidents recorded in the IGC files, only 262 (7.6%) related to ex-servicemen out of which 73 (2.1%) claimed that the actions against them were due to war service. An analysis of the 262 cases illustrates the cause of their intimidation was not war service per se, but one or a combination of reasons that fell into four main categories.

- Membership of a particular category of people including landowners, the gentry and Protestants, or of the judicial system.
- The result of a specific action on the part of the ex-serviceman, including spying or associating with or joining the Crown Forces, especially the RIC and the Black and Tans, or supplying to them in contravention of boycotts.
- Part of a general campaign by the republicans against all of the population, including to gather arms and equipment and to levy financial dues.
- Refusal to join the IRA.

These categories were applicable to all members of the population although ex-servicemen were more prone to accusations of association with the Crown Forces. Ironically bogus claimants were the ones most likely to claim persecution due to army service. The violence towards ex-servicemen was geographically focussed, varying in intensity in correlation to the level of violence experienced by other segments of the population. Of the 262 incidents, 152 took place in Munster, 74 in Leinster, 20 in Connaught and 16 in Ulster (3 counties). Taking into account the number of ex-servicemen, there were 86.86 incidents for every 10,000 servicemen in Munster, 30.77 in Connaught and 15.42 in Leinster. The number of ex-servicemen who lodged claims with the IGC was extremely low, both in relation to the

¹ Compensated post July 1921 claims but files record earlier incidents.

total number of claims and as a percentage of ex-servicemen; even in Munster less than 1% (0.87) of ex-servicemen lodged complaints and the equivalent figure for the whole country was only 0.34%. The geographical distribution of the ex-servicemen specific incidents recorded by the IGC are consistent with other metrics of violence directed towards the general population, including IRA violence as recorded by Hart, RIC members killed on duty and the total number of incidents recorded by the IGC. Of the IGC ex-servicemen specific incidents, 28.2% were recorded in Leinster. The equivalent figures for IRA violence were 27%, for RIC killings 20.9% and total incidents recorded by the IGC 28.8%. The comparative figures for Munster were 58% for IGC ex-servicemen specific incidents, 58.2%, for IRA violence, 60.3% for RIC killings and 49.9% for total incidents recorded by the IGC. IRA killing or attempted shooting of spies, as recorded in the witness statements, show a similar geographical pattern. There were therefore significant areas of Ireland where violence was comparatively minimal, and in areas where it increased there is no evidence that ex-servicemen were particularly singled out. The geographical variations in violence and intimidation correlated to such factors as attitudes to Britain, perceptions of Irish identity and economic independence. It was mirrored in army recruitment and political affiliation for example, and illustrates that support for extreme republicanism and any consequent anti-British attitude was by no means unanimous.

There are several reasons to question the proposition that ex-servicemen were specifically and extensively victimised. As a class they could not be defined as 'loyalist' any more than the general population could be defined as 'republican'. Many served in the IRA. It would have been ironic had the latter persecuted men for fighting in the same army in which they too had served. In numbers they were not an isolated minority, nor were they the negative stereotype of the pre-war regular soldier described by Hart; Borgonovo commented in relation to Cork that they 'were engrained in the city's social fabric'. If the IRA wished, as

Hart and Leonard argue, to make a statement that they were targeting ex-servicemen then they would have sought to assassinate high profile ex-officers. Most victims were of low status and from the same community background as the IRA; they were suspected of being informants, their local knowledge making them a dangerous threat.

Except in the area of remembrance few researchers have gone beyond the end of the conflict in 1923 in examining the experiences of the ex-soldiers. This research takes a more holistic perspective, looking at the practical support sought from the former imperial power and the soldiers' experiences within Irish society in the following two decades. They were no longer domiciled in the United Kingdom but the British Government, due to their service in the Great War, had an obligation to them. Conversely they were citizens of the Irish Free State but its formation was not based on their sacrifice, indeed it was achieved in conflict with the army whose uniform they had worn, and therefore the new state felt no obligation to them. The British obligation had several motives. During the conflict there was concern that disaffected ex-servicemen would use their skills on behalf of the republicans. There was a legal obligation; in the Treaty leading to the formation of the Free State, responsibility was specifically excluded from the new Irish Government. Morally there was also a perceived debt to those whose service to the crown had caused them hardship. There was a well-orchestrated lobbying campaign by veterans' associations, particularly the British Legion, and more general loyalist organisations such as SILRA, aimed at both the government and the British public. Legal, moral, pragmatic and political pressures therefore combined to ensure that the British Government was faced with the need to fulfil a special obligation to Irish ex-servicemen in the south, which was reflected in the provision of land and houses; pensions, training and health care for the physically and mentally disabled; and until the formation of the Free State employment programmes. The British were remarkably persistent in discharging this obligation in a time of conflict and thereafter in a country in which they

had limited and decreasing jurisdiction. Prior to the transfer of power, the Ministries of Labour and Transport provided employment schemes for ex-servicemen and newly established government training centres for the disabled often remained in operation, despite threats to its staff. When it was not able to open its own facilities, the Ministry of Labour funded the more expensive option of paying Irish employers. Some 360 ex-servicemen received 10,106 acres of land under annuity schemes and in an initiative unique to Ireland, 2,626 cottages were built including garden city developments that were not emulated by Free State housing projects for many years. The complaints of the ex-servicemen resulted in the Dáil Éireann in November 1927, establishing a committee to investigate their grievances which concluded, ‘nothing was brought to our notice to suggest that such ex-servicemen form a class with grievances or disabilities common to them as a class. Much of the evidence tendered related to grievances and disabilities common to all members of the community’. The grievances were similar to those of ex-servicemen in Britain. Although pension issues caused most complaints, the Irish ex-serviceman was far more generously treated than his British counterpart. A larger proportion of the men who enlisted in what became the Irish Free State were pensioned than elsewhere; the pension costs per enlistment in relation to men, widows or dependents were in all cases significantly higher, in some examples three times as much. Ex-servicemen complained that they were excluded from the benefit of assisted passage offered to ex-servicemen in the UK under the Empire Settlement Act. In reality residency requirements were often waived and privileges extended to southern Irish citizens. The British Government, however, was unlikely to meet the demands of all Irish ex-servicemen. In the absence of conscription, promises in terms of housing and land were made to encourage Irish enlistment and led to raised expectations upon demobilisation which could not be fulfilled; only 3% received housing. Additionally, although in housing and pension benefits the Irish ex-servicemen compared favourably with their counterparts in the United

Kingdom, the British state's treatment of its veterans was inadequate, particularly in comparison to that of other participants in the Great War, including Germany. In Britain this deficiency was compensated for by a societal effort, for example, schemes for the disabled such as the King's Roll, that was mostly absent in Ireland.

With the formation of the Free State there is little evidence that, either through the state apparatus or the community, ex-servicemen were marginalised. They were treated equally before the legislature and the courts. Cooper, a member of the Dáil Éireann stated, 'I heard no instance given of unequal treatment by the Legislature'. The Cosgrave Government showed on numerous occasions their active support for the ex-servicemen. In May 1925 Cosgrave wrote a detailed letter, six pages in length, supporting the cause of the tenants of the ex-servicemen's cottages in seeking a rent reduction. In November 1927, members from all parties in the Dáil Éireann spoke in support of examining the grievances of the ex-servicemen, although some like Patrick O'Dowd of Fianna Fáil, an ex-serviceman who joined the IRA, argued against the involvement of the British Legion. Consideration for the ex-servicemen was not synonymous with support for Britain. With their desire for close ties with the British Government, it may have been anticipated that the Cosgrave Government would be supportive of British ex-servicemen, but also under the republican de Valera Government they were not subject to unequal treatment. A report in 1936 by the British Ministry of Pensions stated that 'there is no discrimination against ex-servicemen', a similar conclusion to the British Legion from a decade earlier. Many ex-servicemen held high positions in the civil service, army and police. Reports from the (British Housing) Trust show that a considerable number of their ex-servicemen tenants were employed by the Free State Government and its agencies, despite many of them being members of the British Legion. The ex-servicemen were no cowed segment of society and were prepared to lobby aggressively for their interests with the Irish and British Governments and through the courts,

often with success and mostly supported by a sympathetic media. Great War service though brought no special favouritism; that was reserved for National army veterans. After a bitter war they lacked the ‘purification rights’ derived from appreciation of their sacrifice by state and community. However, perhaps a quarter of all ex-servicemen served in the National army; they made up half its number and in addition to employment preferences had the redemptive experience of helping to ensure the survival of the new state.

Remembrance took place with considerable support from the community and the acceptance of the State. Watching republicans at the first Dublin peacetime remembrance parade in 1924 despaired; their unpublished private correspondence untainted by later revisionism indicated the scale and nature of the celebrations, ‘the Armistice celebrations were absolutely huge. Talk about the country being Republican. Its British right through.’² The de Valera’s Government completed the Great War National Memorial and well attended commemoration ceremonies continued until the Second World War; Irish neutrality was the turning point.

The view that ex-servicemen were persecuted and marginalised became persuasive, partly because the perception of them has often been through the prism of commemoration and historiography. The only occasion when ex-servicemen could be considered as a class was when remembering fallen comrades but in reality this was only one small part of an ex-serviceman’s life. Neither war service nor loyalism defined them. Only a small minority were members of the British Legion. According to the Ministry of Pensions’ report, most were supporters of Fianna Fáil. They reflected all classes of Irish society; attempts to form a political party to represent their interests failed. When Fianna Fáil assumed power a historiography was developed, defined by the idea of republican predestination that implied an acceptance that republicanism had always enjoyed widespread support and as a

² UCDArchives, Kathleen Barry Moloney, 1924/1926.

consequence the British veterans none. The thirteen rebels executed by the British after the Rising were remembered, the thousands who died while serving in the British army assigned to a national amnesia. According to Cronin and Regan, for many years even the professional historical community did not venture far outside those parameters. More recent studies have focussed on the main areas of republican activity in Munster but it is misleading to consider that the events that took place there were representative of much of Ireland. Few researchers have gone beyond the period of conflict, except in the area of remembrance, and this has precluded a more holistic understanding of the everyday experiences of ex-servicemen in the interwar period. In Irish historiography the ex-servicemen were a more acceptable target than the group truly marginalised after the Civil War, the anti-Treaty republicans, many of whom were excluded from public life and employment or forced to emigrate. Special interests groups such as the British Legion and loyalist lobbying groups such as SILRA found perceived discrimination against those who had fought for Britain brought a sympathetic and well publicised response from both the media and politicians. It was perhaps a convenient collusion for both sides but at odds with the evidence.

Acknowledgements

As befits an exercise in history I start at the beginning. I am indebted to Tony Gynn, a schoolteacher who several decades ago inspired a reluctant pupil with an enthusiasm for history. A business career later, and after early retirement, this latent interest led to an MA in Modern History at University College London. The faith of Melvyn Stokes in accepting an under-qualified applicant earns him my grateful thanks, as does the support of Stephen Conway throughout my MA. I completed an elective at Kings College London under the head of the History Department, Paul Readman. It was Paul who suggested this subject for my dissertation and then took on the onerous task of supervising me. I little thought it would become my focus of research for over four years. The pertinent comments of John Horne of Trinity College Dublin and Richard Grayson of Goldsmiths College were so helpful during the early stage of my investigation.

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Many thanks for all their assistance to the staff of the Bodleian library, especially the History Faculty Library; the National Archives; the British Library; the Imperial War Museum; the National Archives of Ireland (particularly Catriona Crowe for helping me track down the elusive Shannon Report); the National Library of Ireland; the Irish Military Archives, Dublin; University College Dublin archives and the local libraries and archives I visited in Ireland.

My research started as an academic exercise but became something more when I discovered my grandfather, John (Jack) Hutchison, was an Irish soldier of the Great War. I took time out to research our family history and accompanied his daughter to the battlefields of Flanders where he had served. It was a new discovery for my mother; the War for my grandfather was a silent memory that he little discussed with his family. We learnt of a brave man who had fought and was badly wounded at the second battle of Ypres. We found our

family originated from Birr, Kings County (now Offaly), headquarters of the Leinster Regiment, and joined its Association. The friendship of its members, including David Ball, Sean Cooke and Ian Lowe, and their recollections of relatives who were Irish soldiers in the War, emphasised that behind such research as mine there is a human story.

Finally, thanks to my ever patient family for all their support over the last few years. Especially to my parents for the interest they took in my subject and for accompanying me on some of my research visits to Ireland and my niece Kate, an undergraduate with a keen interest in history. The critical eyes my sister Marilyn Trask, recently retired from many years as a teacher and headmistress, and her husband Roger cast over my final drafts was much needed and greatly appreciated. If mistakes remain, they are mine.

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Biographical Notes

Bryan Cooper	Member of the Dáil Éireann, supporter of ex-servicemen.
William Cosgrave	President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State 1922-1932.
(John) Lord French	British Great War Field Marshal, appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in May 1918.
(Douglas) Lord Haig	British Great War Field Marshal, President of the British Legion
Major General W.B. Hickie	President, British Legion, Southern Ireland
John Redmond	Nationalist leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.
William Redmond	Son of John, Member of the Dáil Éireann, supporter of ex-servicemen, founded pro ex-servicemen National League Party in 1926.
W.P. Walker	First chairman of the British Legion, Southern Ireland.
Éamon de Valera	President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State 1932-1937, Taoiseach 1937-1948.

Individuals referred to infrequently are referenced in the text of the thesis. See also Trust personnel in 3.7a

Glossary/Terms

Black and Tans (The Tans)	One of two paramilitary forces, the other being the Auxiliaries, both composed largely of British World War I veterans, employed by the Royal Irish Constabulary (Ireland's armed police force) as Temporary Constables from 1920 to 1921 to suppress revolution in Ireland.
British Crown Forces	British Army, Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries.
British Legion, Southern Ireland	The League of Irish ex-servicemen became affiliated to the British Legion in 1925, forming its southern Irish branch. It was referred to by different designations but, for consistency, the term British Legion, Southern Ireland (BLSI) is used irrespective of date and terminology in the source document. The important point is to distinguish it from its parent body the British Legion in Great Britain, as due to its independent origins it had a very different character: confrontational and aggressive, particularly in the 1920s. Many of the Trust's antagonists in the Killester Tenants' (Rights) Association were also members of the BLSI. When the term British Legion is used it refers to the parent body.
Cumann na nGaedheal	Governing Party from 1922. Origins in pro-Treaty Sinn Fein, merged with two smaller opposition parties in September 1933 to form Fine Gael
Currency	The sterling currency referred to is imperial i.e. pre 1971 decimal, with units of pounds (£), shillings (sh) and pence (d). There were 12 pence to the shilling and 20 shillings to the pound. Amounts less than a £ were expressed as sh/d, for example, for 8 shillings 6 pence as 8/6; 8 shillings as 8/ and 6 pence as 6d. Amounts of more than a pound were expressed as £ sh d, for example, for 2 pounds, 8 shillings and 6 pence as £2 8sh 6d. Sometimes for smaller denominations of pounds the amount was still expressed in shillings, for example, 2 pounds, 8 shillings and 6 pence as 48/6. Both options are used according to the original text. Ten old shillings is equivalent to 50 new pence, 12 old pence is equivalent to 5 new pence. £100 in 1925 would be worth £4,450 in 2010 based on Retail Price Index increases (Source: measuringworth.com)
Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, Teachtaí Dála, Senators, President	Irish political system consisting of the Dáil Éireann or House of Representatives whose members were Teachtaí Dála or Deputies and the Seanad Éireann or Senate whose members were Senators. The Government was headed by the President of the Executive Council until 1937, thereafter by the office of Prime Minister (or Taoiseach).

Ex-Servicemen	The terms ex-servicemen or veterans when used without further description, refers to soldiers who served in the British army in the Great War and returned to the area that became the Free State i.e. the subject of this thesis. Other ex-servicemen, for example ex-Irish National army, will be so qualified.
Fianna Fáil	Governing Party from 1932. Republicans with origins in anti-Treaty Sinn Fein Party
Great War/ First World War	Referred to as either, or, the War/war. Other conflicts e.g. the Anglo-Irish War are specifically designated.
Irish Free State	Consisted of the 26 southern counties of Ireland, established as a dominion under the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Became Eire/Ireland in 1937.
Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust (Abbreviated as the Trust)	A body constituted under the Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act 1922 to build and administer houses (not land despite the name) for ex-servicemen in Ireland as legislated by the Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act 1919. The Trust assumed responsibility for the administration of schemes developed by the Local Government Board in Ireland prior to its establishment. Properties built by the Trust were officially called cottages, although some could be more appropriately considered houses. They are referred to as either without distinction.
Irish Republican Army	From the First Dail in 1919, the Irish Volunteers (in which the Irish Republican Brotherhood was influential) changed their name to the IRA, both terms are used. In the Civil War, the anti-Treaty IRA were often termed Irregulars.
Loyalists	Southern Irish who remained loyal to the British Crown.
National Army	Irish Free State army initially formed to combat the anti-Treaty IRA.
Sinn Féin	Republican political party; they secured 73 out of 105 Irish seats in the 1918 election but split into pro and anti-Treaty factions with regards to the settlement with Great Britain.
Statistics	Statistics for Ireland prior to the Free State generally refer to all Ireland unless so noted.

Abbreviations

BL	British Legion
BLSI	British Legion, Southern Ireland
DO	Dominions Office
IFDDSS	Irish Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers
IFS/FS/Free State	Irish Free State
IGC	Irish Grants Committee
IMA/BMH	Irish Military Archives, Bureau of Military History
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
IT	<i>Irish Times</i>
Land Act 1919	Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act 1919
Lavery Committee/ Lavery Report	Committee on the Claims of British Ex-Servicemen, referred to after its chairman, Cecil Lavery, as is its resultant report.
LGB	(Irish) Local Government Board
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoP	Ministry of Pensions
MoT	Ministry of Transport
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
PM	Prime Minister
SILRA	Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
The Trust	Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust
TD	Teachtaí Dála
TNA	United Kingdom National Archives
WS	(IMA/BMH)Witness Statement

Map 1 Ireland: Provinces and Counties



Chapter 1 Preface

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the experiences of Irish soldiers returning from the First World War to the part of Ireland that became the Free State, covering the years from the Armistice to 1939.³ At the onset of the war, they volunteered in large numbers and marched off accompanied by cheering crowds and the promise of a heroes' welcome home. In 1916, whilst its soldiers fought in the British army, Ireland witnessed an insurrection, the Easter Rising, against British rule.⁴ Its violent suppression by the Crown Forces and the intended introduction of conscription changed Irish sentiment against the British Government and meant the soldiers returned to a much changed Ireland with increased demands for an independent republic, rather than limited Home Rule. On the 21 January 1919, the Dáil Éireann convened for the first time in Dublin. Republican Sinn Féin had secured an overwhelming majority with 73 seats in the general election of the preceding month.⁵ Instead of taking their seats in Westminster, they proclaimed their defiance of Britain by establishing an independent Irish parliament. The new assembly was held in Mansion House in the heart

³ Ulster (6 counties) has been excluded; religion and politics ensured the experiences of the soldiers from the north and south varied significantly. Also many of the sources differ, making the task of research one of duplication. There has been more research focused specifically on Ulster although there is scope for a comparison between the two areas of Ireland. The focus is on men; in the Great War women joined the WAAC, WREN and WAAF, and some Irish women undoubtedly did, but the numbers must have been minimal as they are conspicuous by their absence from secondary and primary reference material examined as part of this thesis.

⁴ The insurrection did not initially have popular support. The general population did not rise and Irish troops, including the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, helped suppress the rebellion, see Tim Coogan, *1916: The Easter Rising*, (London:2001), 120. It was the first Irish rebellion in which the Government had the support of most of the population; the middle classes treated the Crown Forces as their deliverers from anarchy, see Charles Townshend, *Easter, 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London:2005), 265-6.

⁵ The 'first past the post' system and the fact that a non-unionist vote did not necessarily imply support for independence, raises the question whether or not the election could be considered a referendum on separation. Many came to accept a continued link to Great Britain (see 2.3). Of 105 seats, the Republicans won 73, the Unionists 26 and the Irish Parliamentary Party 6, see Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic: the Partitioning of Ireland*, (Dublin:1951), 266.

of colonial Dublin. With an irony that well captures the atmosphere to which Irish soldiers were returning, ‘soldiers from the Dublin Fusiliers, just returned from France, had been lunching in the Mansion House just before the historic inauguration of Dáil Éireann. As they walked out to the tune of ‘God Save the King’, the republicans walked in’.⁶ In the Declaration of Independence issued that day, the Dáil Éireann declared, ‘foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right’, and demanded ‘the evacuation of the English garrison’.⁷ Irish soldiers returned to a country in increasing conflict with an enemy whose uniform they had worn, and the initial reaction to them has to be understood in that context. Sam Hutchinson convalescing in Dublin in 1918 complained that he and other recovering veterans were jeered and taunted. Jack Campbell also in Dublin recalled that two women spat at him, ‘that was their way of saying they didn’t like British soldiers’.⁸ In the Peace Day celebrations on 19 July 1919 to mark the end of the War, black IRA flags were flown in Dublin and Cork.⁹

For the two Irelands, both north and south, that emerged after the War, their relationship to Great Britain became the dominant theme. Lyons argues there was not just ‘a simple dualism between native (Catholic) and settler (Protestant), but a complex of Irish and Anglo-Irish cultures’.¹⁰ In contrast, the historiographies developed by the respective dominant forces in the nascent political entities of Northern Ireland and the Free State were uncomplicated and non-inclusive. Both new states gave a sense of purpose and identity to their supporters to the exclusion of others. In the north it was Protestantism, Unionism and loyalty; Protestant soldiers were mythologised, a thread of history created from the Boyne to

⁶ Maurice Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, (London:2008) 58; *Manchester Guardian*, 22 January 1919, 5.

⁷ Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 60; Ronan Fanning, et al. (eds.), *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, vol. I, 1919 – 1922*, (Dublin:1998), 1.

⁸ Jane Leonard, ‘Facing the Finger of Scorn: Veterans Memories of Ireland after the Great War’, in Magennis, and O’Doibhlin (eds.), *World War One-Ireland and its Impacts*, (Armagh, Northern Ireland:2005), 93, based on interviews conducted with the veterans.

⁹ *Irish News*, 21 July 1919, 5.

¹⁰ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, (Oxford:1979), 26.

the Somme.¹¹ In the south after the assumption of power by Fianna Fáil, it was a historiography based upon the idea of republican predestination, defined in opposition to Britain and marginalising those who had fought in her armies. It was based on the notion that republicanism had always enjoyed widespread support and, as a consequence, the veterans none. Boyce argues that those who had fought in the British army found themselves at odds with the ethos of the emerging state. He writes:

the War was soon perceived as the wrong war, fought in the wrong place, and against the wrong foe - a view which became political orthodoxy as Sinn Féin won a victory over the Home Rule party in the general election of 1918, and was set in tablets of stone when, after three years of terror and counter-terror, the Irish Free State was established on the ruins of the British administration.¹²

After the republicans assumed power in 1932, they celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Easter Rising as a State occasion. The simple 'heroics' of the Rising contrasted with the ambiguities engendered by the returning veterans, and indeed the bitterness caused by the Civil War. According to Boyce, the thirteen rebels executed by the British after the Rising were remembered, the thousands who died whilst serving in the British army were forgotten in a sort of Irish 'national amnesia', the cause for which they fought almost regarded as a form of treason.¹³ For its supporters, Ireland's progress to a republic free of British association was inevitable and immutable, and one which reflected the nationalist aspirations of the majority of its citizens. Cronin and Regan argue that Southern Irish schools taught a linear progression from the Ulster crisis (1912); the formation of the Volunteers (1913); the 1916 Rising; the War of Independence; the Anglo-Irish Treaty; concluding with the election of Fianna Fáil and the establishment of a Republic. They write:

¹¹ Gillian McIntosh, *The Force of Culture: Unionist Identities in Twentieth Century Ireland*, (Cork:1999), 222-232.

¹² D.G. Boyce, 'That Party Politics Should Divide Our Tents', in Gregory and Pasetta, (eds.), *Ireland and the Great War*, (Manchester:2002), 201.

¹³ *Ibid*, 191.

Republican ideology has no room for Redmond and Irish Volunteers in France, Flanders or Gallipoli. Such experiences were expurgated from a well cultivated past; even the professional historical community did not venture far outside those parameters, thus limiting the development of Irish historiography.¹⁴

According to Foster, ‘the popularisation of synthetically invented traditions in the Free State and the Republic served a directly political function’. He writes that teachers were told to stress the continuity of the separatist idea from Tone to Pearse, with the result that the function of the teaching of history was interpreted as undoing the conquest.¹⁵ O’Carroll writes that a political calendar evolved around the Rising, the founding of the Gaelic League and the first Dáil; their anniversaries celebrated in a mythical dimension that served the purpose of fostering a sense of Irish ethnicity and republican nationalism.¹⁶ Shaw, writing at the time of the 50th anniversary of the Rising in 1966, was one of the first historians to challenge what he called the ‘canon of Irish history’, that: ‘stamps the generation of 1916 as nationally degenerate, a generation in need of redemption by the shedding of blood’ and ‘condemns as being anti-Irish all who did not profess extremist nationalist doctrine’. He argues that Ireland in 1916 was not a suffering country, but one in which the people were already socially more advanced than at any time since the Union, and were moving to their goal of independence in their own way and at their pace. Pearse and the Rising inflicted ‘three grave wounds on the body of the unity of Ireland’: partition, for 1916 closed the door to a peaceful resolution of that question; the Civil War of 1922-1923, since the teachings of 1916 was that no compromise could be brooked, and that it was a separate republic or nothing; and the refusal of Ireland to honour those of her dead who fought in the Great War for the honour and freedom of their country. The publication of Shaw’s article was delayed

¹⁴ Mike Cronin and John Regan (eds.), *Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922-49*, (Basingstoke:2000), 4.

¹⁵ Roy Foster, ‘History and the Irish Question’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 33(1983), 187.

¹⁶ J.P. O’Carroll, ‘Eamon de Valera’ in O’Carroll and Murphy (eds.), *De Valera and His Times*, (Cork:1986), 27.

until 1972 as it was considered too sensitive.¹⁷ As Boyce writes, ‘revising national history is perilous, especially if cherished legends are debunked or heroes pushed off their pedestal’.¹⁸ Foster also questions the purpose of the Anglo-Irish War and indeed who wanted it. He argues that by 1919 the Irish revolution was an established fact; the British had already conceded Home Rule for the 26 counties and by 1920 the Labour Party and many liberals were supportive of Dominion status. He writes that it was the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) element in the Volunteer movement who sought through confrontational practices ‘to propel affairs to a point of no return’, and that ‘the campaign of killing policemen was a deliberate assertion against the political wing, as well as evidence of the continuing effort of a minority to enforce their own alternative reality’.¹⁹ Kee argues the extreme Fenian element in the new Sinn Féin movement gained domination over the political non-revolutionary element for which people had voted. By the spring of 1920, the country found itself committed to a violent rebellion against British rule for which it had given no sanction.²⁰ The point is relevant to this research, as it questions whether extreme opposition to Great Britain was such as to encourage antagonism to its ex-servicemen. Revisionist republican historiography may have found it convenient to whitewash support for the veterans but at the first major Dublin remembrance parade after the conflict in 1924, enthusiastic crowds of 50,000, wearing poppies and flying Union Jacks, cheered as 25,000 veterans marched through the city. Watching republicans despaired; their unpublished private correspondence written at the time, and untainted by later revisionism, indicated the scale and nature of the celebrations. ‘The Armistice celebrations were absolutely huge. Talk about the country being Free State or

¹⁷ Father Francis Shaw, ‘The Canon of Irish History: a Challenge’, in *Studies*, 61 (1972), 113 -53; D. G. Boyce, ‘1916, Interpreting the Rising’, in Boyce and O’Day, *The making of Modern Irish History*, (London:1996) 178 – 179.

¹⁸ Boyce and O’Day, *Modern Irish History*, 1.

¹⁹ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972*, (London:1989), 492, 506, 494.

²⁰ Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*, (London:1972), 698.

Republican. Its British right through'.²¹ It could also be argued that it was not service to the British Crown that divided society. According to Hopkinson the Civil War split families and communities creating rifts that never healed; many republicans were excluded from public life or forced to emigrate while employment was unattainable for many.²²

Research into the experiences of the ex-servicemen has increased in recent years although it remains relatively limited. Such studies have mostly focussed on violence towards ex-servicemen during the period of conflict encompassed by the War of Independence and the Civil War to 1923. Most of the studies have investigated the activities of the IRA or violence towards loyalists generally, particularly in Munster, with ex-servicemen only tangentially referenced as one of the groups targeted. Jane Leonard, one of the first scholars to focus specifically on the experiences of Irish ex-servicemen returning from the Great War, argues that ex-servicemen 'formed a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society', were subject to 'the extremes of intimidation including beating, mutilation, punishment shooting, prolonged kidnapping, expulsion from Ireland and murder', and of the estimated 120 ex-servicemen killed by the republicans during the conflict, 'the vast majority appear to have been killed simply as a retrospective punishment for their service in the Great War'.²³ In the thesis I demonstrate that the reality was more complex and multifaceted and in so doing examine an alternative proposition; that the violence and intimidation to which the ex-servicemen were subjected was not due to their war service but for other reasons, for example, their membership of a particular class (e.g. landowners, the judiciary) or a specific action on their return (e.g. informing, supplying the Crown Forces), and that these reasons were applicable to others who had not served in the War. I further examine whether it varied

²¹ University College Dublin Archives, Papers of Kathleen Barry Moloney, (September 1924/January 1926), 94/56, Letter to Kathleen from her sister Elgin, 13 November 1924, republican family associated with Collins and de Valera, see 4.5 for full quotation.

²² Michael, Hopkinson, *Green Against Green*, (Dublin:1988), 274-5.

²³ Leonard, 'Facing the Finger of Scorn', 93, 95; Jane Leonard, 'Survivors', in Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*, (Dublin: 2008), 218.

in intensity by province and county, and whether such variance simply reflected the general level of violence and intimidation experienced by other sectors of the population. In Chapter 2, I review the secondary literature (Leonard, Hart, Borghonovo, Augusteijn and others) in relation to violence and intimidation during this period. In contrast to most other researchers who have used Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) police reports (TNA, CO 904) and newspaper articles, I examine the violence from the perspective of the victims and the perpetrators, using the files of the Irish Grants Committee (IGC), which convened in the second half of the 1920s, and are the most comprehensively documented archive of violence and intimidation by republicans against loyalists, and also the Irish Military Archives, Bureau of Military History (IMA/BMH) files which contains 1,773 witness statements by republicans. My intention from this analysis is to understand the types of violence directed against ex-servicemen, and its frequency, causes and geographical distribution. In the context of the latter, the geographical variation in violence directed towards ex-servicemen is compared to other metrics of republican violence in order to understand whether it simply reflects the experiences of other sectors of the population. Additionally the reasons for such geographical variations are assessed, including the extent to which southern Ireland supported the republican cause, and as such may have been predisposed against those who had served in the Great War.

The IMA/BMH witness statements of republicans related to their experiences during the period from 1913 to July 1921, but were only recorded from January 1947 and should therefore be considered in the context of the passage of time, the bias of the contributors and the fact that they were by no means comprehensive. There was also the possibility of collusion, as an example, three officers from the same location in Athlone, County Westmeath, Thomas Costello, Harry O'Brien and Frank O'Connor all submitted statements, referring to the same incidents, in December 1955. In general, Ferriter notes, 'the tone of the

statements is measured, and while a number of witnesses were determined to settle old scores and indulge in hyperbole, many others seem to have been highly scrupulous in their testimony and, ‘where there was evidence of unreliability through “failing memory” or “self-glorification”, a report to that effect was to be appended’.²⁴ The files were only opened to the public in 2003 and were therefore not available for much of the research referred to in Chapter 2.

All the files related to compensation processes established in the aftermath of the conflict (see 3.4) should in theory provide source material for Chapter 2, but archival limitations restrict their usefulness. The Compensation (Ireland) Commission was established jointly by the British and Free State Governments in 1922 to examine claims in respect of damage or injury incurred between 21 January 1919 and 11 July 1921, but the records in The National Archives (TNA) provide minimal details on claimants and none on whether they were ex-soldiers. In 1923 the Free State Government passed the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act, dealing with the period 11 July 1921 to 12 May 1923 and the Personal Injuries (Compensation) Committee. The files of the Personal Injuries (Compensation) Committee in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) are missing or provide minimal details on claimants and whether they were ex-soldiers. The Damage to Property (Compensation) Act files exist in un-catalogued boxes in the NAI. In contrast the files of the ICG, established in October 1926, to consider claims related to hardship and loss by personal injuries, or malicious destruction to property in the area of the Irish Free State between 11 July 1921 and 12 May 1923, are extremely comprehensive. The hardship and loss had to result from the claimants’ loyalty to the Crown prior to 11 July 1921 (the IGC terms of reference specifically allowed that proof of loyalty could have been demonstrated overseas to allow for war service to be taken into account). The 212 boxes contain detailed documentation on each of the circa

²⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, ‘The Opening of the Bureau of Military History’, http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~irlcar2/Bureau_Military_History.htm, accessed 18 November 2011.

4,000 claims. Many applications were due to perceived inadequate compensation from the Irish Free State, including those made under the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act, and therefore cover claims that may be inadequately documented in the NAI files. Many of the claims predate July 1921. Claims related to incidents that occurred exclusively before July 1921 received no compensation but the details were still recorded and are included in this analysis. In addition many complaints that occurred after the Truce were a continuation of incidents that started beforehand.

Chapter 2 covers the period of conflict encompassed by the War of Independence and the Civil War to 1923. This produced an environment that was specific to that period in terms of the experiences of the ex-servicemen and few researchers have gone beyond this time, except in the area of remembrance and commemoration which has been the subject of significant research.²⁵ My research takes a holistic perspective, examining the interwar decades in terms of the practical support the ex-servicemen received from the former imperial power, and their experiences within Irish society. The period can be divided into that under the Cosgrave administration in which relations with Britain were reasonably positive and the Free State functioned as an imperial dominion, followed by the period of Republican Government under de Valera that witnessed a weakening of formal ties and increasing confrontation with Britain. The impact of the different dynamics of these periods on the experiences of the ex-servicemen is assessed. The year 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War represents a suitable cut off point, particularly with its impact on the relationship between a neutral Ireland and the United Kingdom. The structure of chapters 3 and 4 reflect the dilemma of the ex-servicemen. They were no longer domiciled in the United Kingdom but the British Government, due to their service in the Great War, had an obligation to

²⁵ E.g. McBride,(ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*; Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*. There is also a considerable body of research analysing post war support for British veterans in general. e.g. Anderson, *War, Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain*; Cohen, *The War Come Home*. See bibliography for others.

them.²⁶ Conversely the ex-servicemen were citizens of the Irish Free State but its formation was not based on their war service, indeed it was achieved in conflict with the army whose uniform they had worn, and therefore the new state felt no obligation to them. Chapter 3 examines the nature of the British obligation, the reasons for it and the extent to which it was fulfilled. Some of the obligations such as schemes to provide employment were only applicable up to the transfer of power to the Free State Government. I have categorised the provision of support arising from the British obligations in terms of employment, pensions/health, compensation, emigration, land and homes. As a consequence, for example, policies for disabled men are covered within each of the categories. This is logical as, for instance in the case of employment, their problems were similar in many regards to that of able bodied men, albeit accentuated by injury. The British Government categorised its provision of services in a similar way, when in 1919 the task of providing employment training for the disabled was transferred from the Ministry of Pensions to the Ministry of Labour, the former retaining responsibility for pension and health issues only. The chapter specifically focuses on ex-servicemen in southern Ireland but, for contextual and comparative purposes, there is a brief summary of the secondary literature related to the general obligations to ex-soldiers after the Great War, and the extent to which such obligations were fulfilled. Chapter 4 assesses the experiences of the ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State both in terms of state apparatus (government, army and the judicial system), and in the community, and in the context of both addresses the question as to whether the ex-servicemen were ‘a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society’. To provide context, the chapter begins with a review of the secondary literature with regard to the respective policies of the Cosgrave and de Valera administrations. The division between Chapters 3 and 4 results in some events being referred to in both chapters, albeit from differing perspectives.

²⁶ Similarly many other veterans following the collapse of empires, the instigation of new regimes and territorial transfers after the Great War ceased to reside within the jurisdiction of the country or government for whom they fought.

For example, the provision and management of houses for the ex-servicemen by the Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust (the Trust) is a British obligation and covered in Chapter 3. The role the Irish Government played in the disputes between the soldier tenants and the Trust is indicative of their attitude towards the ex-servicemen and therefore covered in Chapter 4. Similarly, the political motives of the Irish Government in establishing a committee to examine the grievances of the ex-servicemen (Lavery Committee) are assessed in Chapter 4; the results in terms of the claims against the British Government of unfulfilled obligations are dealt with in Chapter 3.

The files of the British departments or agencies operating in Ireland, particularly after independence, proved extremely useful in relation to Chapters 3 and 4. Not only did they have comprehensive networks in Ireland - the Trust with their rent collectors for each estate; the Ministry of Pensions with their Area Committees; and the Ministries of Labour and Transport, which established Irish offices before independence - but their reports and meetings were well documented, as might be expected from British bureaucracies. I have made extensive use of the Trust files. Although only circa 3% of the ex-servicemen population were awarded houses, the tenants were a representative cross-section, including officers and men, able bodied and disabled and were geographically dispersed throughout the Free State. The files contain details of not only housing issues (building policy, rent policy, rent strikes, and tenant associations) but also illustrate the attitudes of both the British and Irish Governments towards the ex-servicemen and, particularly in terms of the latter, how this varied over time. They also provide an insight into the daily life of the ex-servicemen, notably with regard to employment, pensions, emigration and veteran organisations. The secondary source material available in relation to the experiences of ex-servicemen in the period following the end of the Civil War to the Second World, except in relation to

remembrance, is comparatively limited and mostly restricted to journal articles, for example, on the Trust's housing.²⁷

In this thesis, I seek not a retrospective assessment of the experiences of the ex-servicemen, as the perception of them has often been more a reflection of political attitudes and the prevailing historiography at the time of observation. For example, the Troubles in Ireland from the 1960s and the advent of the peace process from 1985 both influenced attitudes towards the ex-servicemen. Equally, the advent of a republican government in 1932 created a new historiography based on the Easter Rising which provided a different perspective to that of the 1920s. In Irish historiography the ex-servicemen were a more acceptable target than the group truly marginalised after the Civil War, the anti-Treaty republicans. Rather the thesis seeks to use contemporary sources outside revisionist influence to better understand the experiences of the ex-servicemen at the time and how these varied chronologically and by geography. In this context it should also be recognised that much that was written during this period, especially in the press or by special interests groups such as the British Legion or the Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association (SILRA), also portrayed a bias, the latter in using ex-servicemen as an example of neglected loyalists. The view that ex-servicemen were persecuted and marginalised was perhaps a convenient collusion for both sides.

Perhaps an underlying weakness of much research related to ex-servicemen returning from the Great War has been to refer to them as a homogeneous group. I argue that they were not a distinct class; politically, socially or economically, neither when volunteering nor upon their return, including after the formation of the Free State. War service did not define them. They reflected all classes of Irish society and their motives in volunteering did not distinguish them from the general population. The thesis therefore starts with an

²⁷ Some documents are located in both the TNA and the NAI, for example, The Lavery Report (1928) and the IFS's response, the Government Memorandum on the Lavery Report (1929). In such cases the thesis is consistent in referring to only one source.

assessment as to who the ex-servicemen were, why they volunteered and in what circumstances, and what they did upon their immediate return.

1.2 Irish Soldiers: Who were they?

Irish service in the British army in World War One was a continuation of a long tradition; Irish regiments forged close associations with the areas from which they recruited. In 1914 the British regular army consisted of 200,000 men of which circa 10% were of Irish extraction. The soldiers who were recruited in large numbers at the outset of the War were different. They were volunteers, representative of all classes of society, who joined specifically to fight against Germany and its allies and not for a professional career. Fitzpatrick estimates 210,000 soldiers from all Ireland, excluding recruits in Britain, fought in the War; 'the greatest deployment of armed manpower in the history of Irish militarism', a figure all the more impressive as conscription was not enforced in Ireland. An estimated 57% of all Irish recruits were Catholic. Fitzpatrick's figures include 58,000 who were mobilised immediately (including 21,000 regulars, 30,000 reservists and 5,000 naval ratings), and a further 144,000 (134,000 army, 6,000 navy and 4,000 air force), who volunteered after initial mobilisation. Several thousand officers not included in the above statistics made up the total. Some estimates, which include those of Irish extract volunteering in Great Britain, are higher. Callan's estimate of volunteers is similar to Fitzpatrick; he also breaks the recruitment figures down by time.²⁸

²⁸ David Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland', in Bartlett, and Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland*, (Cambridge:1996), 386-9; Patrick Callan, 'British Recruitment in Ireland, 1914-1918', quoted in Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, (Cambridge:2000), 7; Based on questionable data and assumptions Harrison calculates 318,000 Irishmen enlisted, 255,000 from what became the IFS, see Henry Harrison, *Ireland and the British Empire, 1937*, (London:1937), 20-36.

Table 1: Recruits raised in Ireland per six month period

Period	Total
4 August 1914 to February 1915	50,107
February 1915 to August 1915	25,235
August 1915 to February 1916	19,801
February 1916 to August 1916	9,323
August 1916 to February 1917	8,178
February 1917 to August 1917	5,609
August 1917 to February 1918	6,550
February 1918 to August 1918	5,812
August 1918 to 11 November 1918	9,845
Total	140,460

Source: Callan in Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*.²⁹

Over half (75,342) joined in the first year, recruitment falling significantly thereafter.³⁰ Over half the volunteers were from the area that became the Free State.

Table 2: Geographical analysis of army recruits for the area that became the Free State

Province	Population	Recruits	% enlisted	Recruits per 10,000 population
Leinster	1,160,000	48,000	4.14	414
Munster	1,033,000	17,500	1.69	169
Connaught	611,000	6,500	1.06	106
Ulster (3 counties)	331,000	5,500	1.66	166
Total	3,135,000	77,500	2.47	247

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757 ; Population data from 1911 census.³¹

Within the provinces there were some significant variations. Cork City and County provided 10,106 recruits, 2.58% of the population, while Clare, Limerick and Kerry, provided 5,745 recruits, 1.42% of the population. Dublin City and County provided 24,276 recruits, 5.09% of the population.³² Southern Ireland remained predominantly agricultural and as farmers did

²⁹ War Office figures obtained by the Ministry of Pensions in 1927 show Irish per annum recruitment as follows: 1914 (from August): 44,134; 1915: 46,371; 1916: 19,057; 1917: 14,023, 1918 (until November): 10,616, totalling 134,202, see TNA, PIN15/757. The figures were obtained for an analysis of Irish soldiers in receipt of pensions, see 3.3a.

³⁰ As did recruitment in Great Britain, see Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 6.

³¹ According to War Office figures, recruitment for all of Ulster was 62,000. Further breakdown is only available by recruitment district and only to the end of 1917. The 3 counties that became part of the Free State were in the Omagh and Armagh regimental districts and recruitment figures for them are an estimate based on their pro rata percentage of male population within each district, see TNA, PIN15/757.

³² TNA, PIN 15/757. Based on War Office recruitment figures to the end of 1917 but as 1918 recruitment for all Ireland was, according to their figures, only 10,617, the total would not vary significantly; population data from 1911 census. Assumes recruits from Cork and Dublin Counties enlisted in Cork and Dublin Cities respectively.

well out of the war, rural prosperity may have undermined the economic impulse for enlistment.³³ The volunteers came from ‘all trades, professions and classes’, according to Ernie O'Malley contrasting it to the pre-war regular army in which only ‘scapegoats, those in debt or in trouble over a girl had joined the ranks’. Some 500 students and faculty of the predominantly Catholic University College Dublin volunteered. According to British Army recruiters, the farming and commercial classes were underrepresented among the recruits of 1915 as anti-war Sinn Fein propaganda made special headway among farmers' sons and commercial assistants.³⁴

Their motives in volunteering did not distinguish the soldiers from the majority of the population. Bryan Cooper in a Dáil Éireann debate in 1927 on the grievances of ex-servicemen said it was not ‘enthusiasm for the British Empire’ that caused them to enlist.³⁵ Paseta argues that the ‘rape of Belgium’ had a significant impact on the Irish population. She writes, ‘war fever swept over Ireland, not only because of the excitement generated by the Home Rule crisis, but also because of a genuine sense of outrage at German actions in Belgium and sympathy for the country’s plight’.³⁶ The Irish Nationalist Party under John Redmond supported the British Government in the hope of securing a Dublin parliament, a decision that caused a split in the Irish Volunteers with the majority supporting him.³⁷ The War was portrayed as the defence of a small country against a barbaric aggressor and the right for Home Rule, causes with which many in Ireland could identify. In 1920 MacDonagh wrote that most nationalists believed the causes for which the war was fought were morally

³³ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 31.

³⁴ Peter Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers in the British Army’, *Journal of Social History*, xvii (1983), 34-37 (quoting the IRA commander Ernie O'Malley, *Army Without Banners*, (Boston:1937), 21).

³⁵ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0021/D.0021.192711160053.html>), Cooper quoted from Thomas Kettle’s war sonnet that the soldiers did not die for ‘King nor flag, nor Empire’. Protestant Unionists in the south would be an exception to Cooper’s comments.

³⁶ Senia Paseta, ‘Thomas Kettle’, in Gregory and Paseta (eds.) *Ireland and the Great War*, 10.

³⁷ Nuala Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge:2007), 23. The Volunteers split with 170,000 supporting Redmond and 11,000 opposing.

right.³⁸ Desmond Fitzgerald, the future director of publicity for the Dáil Éireann, wrote that extreme nationalists were without influence and impotent; ‘Redmond’s exhortations that the Irish people should support Britain, really represented the views of the majority of the Irish people’.³⁹ According to post-war veteran organisations the vast majority of the population were in sympathy with the cause with which men volunteered.⁴⁰ A republican volunteer in Galway recalled how, ‘we tried to break up recruitment meetings but got beaten up ourselves as at least 80% of the population were hostile to Sinn Fein for a number of their husbands and sons were in the English army’.⁴¹ Catholic soldiers marched to war with the support of Nationalist leaders, the Catholic Church and their communities. When the Royal Munster Fusiliers left in August 1914 enthusiastic crowds sang ‘Rule Britannia’.⁴² Many Catholics were recruited into the 10th (Irish) Division and 16th (Irish) Division. Martin, a correspondent for the *Daily News* who was extremely critical of Britain’s post war Irish policy, wrote that it was the British War Office’s distrust of the loyalty of these formations, in contrast to its support for Ulster’s Protestant 36th Division, that caused the first impulse towards a new nationalism.⁴³

According to Boyce ‘the news of the Easter Rising was greeted by the Irish soldiers with a mixture of incredulity and shame’.⁴⁴ R.B. Marshall wrote to his mother, ‘I am glad the rebels are getting squashed. I hope they shoot a good many of them. The Irish regiments out here would like nothing better than to have a go at them with a bayonet’.⁴⁵ Jack Chappell wrote that a nationalist friend, Pat, ‘feels very grieved for his people whom he feels sure have been incited by German agents’.⁴⁶ H.J. Cholmeley wrote to his mother asking, ‘What was the

³⁸ Michael, MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, (Dublin:1920), 282.

³⁹ Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 48; *IT* 13–18 July 1991.

⁴⁰ TNA, LAB2/855, IFDDSS to Prime Minister 17 February 1920.

⁴¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 September 1914.

⁴² Martin Staunton, *The Royal Munster Fusiliers in the Great War, 1914–1919*, MA (University College Dublin, 1986), 23.

⁴³ Hugh Martin, *Ireland in Insurrection*, (London:1921), 32-33.

⁴⁴ Boyce, ‘That Party Politics Should Divide our Tents’, in Gregory and Paseta, *Ireland and the Great War*, p.198.

⁴⁵ Liddle Collection, University of Leeds, GS1056, R.B. Marshall, letter to mother.

⁴⁶ Imperial War Museum (IWM), 1674, Lieutenant Colonel Chappell, letter to parents.

Irish rebellion? I only saw one newspaper and that said it was all over. Who rebelled?’⁴⁷ R. Venables wrote, ‘We heard that there was a rebellion in Ireland, and we were having to send soldiers there instead of the war; we thought this was odd, as we were a lot of Irishmen in the firing line’.⁴⁸ In Dublin, Ernie O’Malley, then a student, and with a brother in the British army, witnessed different reactions. He met two Leinster Regiment officers who ‘had followed Redmond; now they thought by promising Irish help without getting a working measure of freedom in exchange, he had failed. No longer did they believe in what they were fighting for but, in honour, felt bound to return to their battalion in France’.⁴⁹ Tom Barry wrote that through the Rising he was ‘awakened to Irish Nationality’.⁵⁰ Irish soldiers were on duty in Dublin after the Rising. One told a rebel prisoner that, ‘he couldn’t understand why we should start a rebellion until the lads returned from the Dardanelles’.⁵¹ Another said, ‘Why didn’t you wait till the War was over, and we’d all be with you?’⁵² McGarry writes that many Irish soldiers openly expressed sympathy with the rebel’s objectives. Many were Irish Catholics and, for some, their loyalty to the Crown was strained. Many nationalists had enlisted in order to win Home Rule for Ireland rather than because of any particular sympathy for Britain, although ‘some Irish soldiers demonstrated no such ambivalence, and many rebels were brutally treated by their compatriots’; one rebel in Kilmainham jail said, ‘the Dublin Fusiliers were the worst of the lot’.⁵³

Estimates of the number of Irish soldiers who returned home vary as significantly as the numbers who fought. The British Ministry of Labour estimated the number of discharged men in April 1920 in all Ireland exceeded 100,000.⁵⁴ Fitzpatrick calculates for all Ireland, 100,000 were demobilised between the armistice and May 1920 (when records ceased).

⁴⁷ IWM, 10861, H.J. Cholmeley, Letter to mother, May 1916.

⁴⁸ IWM, 7421, R.L. Venables, ‘The Great War 1914-1918’, diary entry, 1916, 33.

⁴⁹ Ernie O’Malley, *On Another Man’s Wound*, (Dublin:2002–original edition 1936), 56.

⁵⁰ Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, (Tralee, County Kerry:1971), 8.

⁵¹ IMA/BMH/WS850, Colgan.

⁵² IMA/BMH/WS532, MacDonagh.

⁵³ Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising Ireland: Easter 1916*, (Oxford:2010), 255-7; IMA/BMH/WS1756, Murphy.

⁵⁴ TNA, LAB2/747. MoL internal note, April 1920.

Based on his calculation of war dead (27,400), he estimates 75,000 re-enlisted, demobilised elsewhere or were invalided out of the army before the armistice.⁵⁵ Hickie, President of the British Legion, Southern Ireland (BLSI), claimed in a Legion meeting in 1924, that 138,623 had returned to the area that became the Free State by the end of 1920, and 20,000 thereafter (with the disbandment of the five southern Irish regiments). He provided estimates of the ex-servicemen population in major towns, which illustrated that they formed a significant portion of the population.⁵⁶

Table 3: Ex-servicemen pro rata to population (1924)

Town	Population	Ex-Servicemen	Percentage
Dublin	304,802	30,000	9.8
Cork	76,673	16,000	20.9
Limerick	38,518	3,800	9.9
Waterford	27,464	3,700	13.5
Galway	12,255	1,216	9.9
Tralee	10,300	2,116	20.5
Athlone	7,472	1,257	16.8
Fermoy	6,863	800	11.7
Enniscorthy	5,495	640	11.6
Ennis	5,472	700	12.8
Nenagh	4,776	985	20.6
Ballina	4,662	900	19.3
Maryboro	3,270	882	27.0
Cavan	2,961	500	16.9
Total	510,983	63,496	12.4

Source: *IT*, 23 September 1924.

In the debate in the Dáil Éireann in November 1927, leading to the formation of a committee to examine ex-servicemen's grievances, Redmond said there were 150,000 to 200,000 British ex-servicemen who with their dependents accounted for half a million people. In the same

⁵⁵ Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland', 392, 397, 501; Myers estimates 35,000 war dead, see Kevin Myers, 'The Irish and the Great War: a Case of Amnesia', in English and Skelly (eds.), *Ideas Matter*, (Dublin:1998), 103-4; The 49,400 recorded on the National War Memorial at Islandbridge, Dublin includes non-Irish serving in Irish divisions; Based on questionable data and assumptions, Harrison calculates that by 1919, 199,000 soldiers returned to what became the IFS (Harrison, *Ireland and the British Empire*, 26-31).

⁵⁶ *IT*, 23 September 1924, Hickie used population figures from the 1911 census. The BLSI had perhaps a political interest in exaggerating the number of ex-servicemen (as did Redmond). Borgonovo writes in 1918 when Cork City had a male population of 38,000, over 5,500 were serving overseas with British forces, see 2.4. Even allowing for discharged and even retired ex-servicemen already in the city, it is difficult to justify the discrepancy to the BLSI figures. Using the more conservative figures, the ex-servicemen still formed a significant element of the population.

debate Cosgrave referred to '100,000 ex-servicemen in this country'. The concluding report referred to 150,000 ex-servicemen resident in the Free State.⁵⁷ It is unlikely that figures in excess of 150,000 were accurate; the more likely was nearer 100,000. Nevertheless given that the male population of the Free State was 1,499,000 in 1927,⁵⁸ the number of ex-servicemen represented a significant portion of the population.

The choices of ex-servicemen upon their return resulted in their taking opposing sides. According to Fitzpatrick, with their knowledge of fire arms and tactics, the ex-servicemen possessed military skills demanded by all sides in the violence that engulfed Ireland until 1923. Unemployment, ingratitude for their sacrifice and a desire for the type of comradeship they had known in the trenches may have encouraged them to join the conflict. As Fitzpatrick notes, 'many ex-servicemen easily lowered one flag for another in their quest for income or happiness', and that the 'veterans who changed allegiance found no inconsistency in reapplying their obedience and skill to new masters. They relished the military life, but often cared little for the contending rhetoric of patriotism'.⁵⁹ Returning soldiers were subject to suspicion from the British authorities; demobilisation centres were located outside of Ireland in case weapons were given to the IRA. They were advised by their officers to have nothing to do with the IRA.⁶⁰ Many returned home disillusioned; at meetings of INVA, the Irish Nationalists Veteran Association, the 'political treachery' of England was much cited.⁶¹ Large numbers refused to take part in parades organised to celebrate the end of the War in protest at the failure of the British Government to make good its promise of Home Rule. Between 2,000 and 3,000 nationalist soldiers declined to take part in the Peace Day celebrations in Dublin on 19 July 1919, INVA having decided to boycott it three days before.

⁵⁷ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen; TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

⁵⁸ TNA,PIN15/757, MoP.

⁵⁹ Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland', 397, 401.

⁶⁰ IMA/BMH/WS1011.

⁶¹ *Irish News*, 22 December 1919, 5, speech by Mary Sheehy, widow of Tom Kettle.

Similar reactions occurred elsewhere in southern Ireland.⁶² For some disillusionment caused a more extreme response. Fitzpatrick writes that ‘several hundred Catholic ex-servicemen found military or paramilitary employment after 1919 under a nationalist flag, despite the hostility which their war service often provoked’. He quotes a Colonel O’Callaghan-Westropp who wrote that the ‘great mass’ of demobs had been so disgusted by the government’s errors that they were ‘ready to throw in their lot with the Republicans where they have not done so already’. Fitzpatrick notes that in Clare many of the most efficient and reckless IRA men gained their experience in the War.⁶³ Jackson writes, ‘service with the British Army appears as a common characteristic of the IRA’.⁶⁴ Leonard comments, ‘of the hundreds who joined most served as drill and ammunition instructors or as flying columnists’.⁶⁵ The IMA/BMH files confirm this with many IRA officers referring to the contribution of ex-servicemen. Patrick Garvey from Tralee, County Kerry wrote, ‘many ex-servicemen cooperated with the IRA. They were very helpful in teaching the IRA men the use of arms’.⁶⁶ John O’Riordan from Tralee, County Kerry, wrote, ‘in 1919 our instructors were both ex-British soldiers’. He recounts how Major McKinnon, the Auxiliaries’ Commanding Officer was shot dead on the golf course by two bullets fired through the head by an ex-British army soldier who was a ‘crack shot with a rifle’.⁶⁷ A local brewer from Kilmallock, County Limerick told English writer Ewart, ‘The IRA used to drill under the instructions of ex-soldiers; some of the hottest Sinn Féiners are ex-soldiers’.⁶⁸ The veterans added a professionalism that was previously lacking. Augusteijn writes that ‘the importance of experience accounts for high numbers of ex-soldiers among the IRA fighting forces.’⁶⁹

⁶² *Irish Independent*, July 1919; *Dundalk Democrat*, 19 July 1919, *Evening Herald*, 17 July 1919.

⁶³ Fitzpatrick, ‘Militarism in Ireland’, 400; David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921*, (Cork:1998), 169.

⁶⁴ Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: Politics and War*, (Oxford:1999), 250.

⁶⁵ Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 218.

⁶⁶ IMA/BMH/WS1011.

⁶⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1117.

⁶⁸ Wilfrid Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland 1921*, (London:1922), 73-4.

⁶⁹ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The Experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence*, (Blackrock:1996), 97.

According to Fitzpatrick, the Irish Volunteers (later to become the IRA) owed far more to the British army than the recruitment of sympathetic ex-servicemen as from its foundation it had followed British army practice in its organisation and training.⁷⁰ British ex-servicemen also served in leadership positions in the IRA, including Emmet Dalton, Ignatius O'Neil and Tom Barry who became the most successful commander of the IRA in West Cork. Others joined the Crown Forces. Fitzpatrick writes that massive recruitment of ex-soldiers into the RIC was made possible by a long awaited award of pay rises in 1919; 300 Irishmen, including many war veterans, joined the RIC in the first 2 months of 1920. With the formation of the Black and Tans, in addition to the 683 men enlisting in Ireland between June 1920 and June 1921 (8% of the total intake), several hundred Irish ex-servicemen probably enlisted in Britain.⁷¹ Upon its formation many joined the National army to fight on behalf of the new state; it grew to almost 60,000 men and more than half its number were ex-servicemen.⁷² British veterans fought on behalf of the new state against anti-Treaty republicans. In helping to create a disciplined and professional force, they were one of the primary reasons for their defeat (see 4.4).

In summary, the ex-servicemen were not a homogeneous group neither when volunteering nor upon their return. They came from all walks of Irish society and were not exceptional in their loyalty to Britain; the reasons for many volunteering, to secure home rule and to fight for small nations, reflected popular opinion. They left with the support of their communities. On their return they often made choices that put them in conflict with each other.

⁷⁰ Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland' 401;

⁷¹ Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland' 399; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, 20.

⁷² Bryan Cooper, *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

Chapter 2 Conflict 1919 – 1923

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 covers the period of conflict encompassed by the War of Independence and the Civil War to 1923. This section reviews the existing literature in relation to violence and intimidation. Section 2.2 examines the type and frequency of violence and intimidation directed towards ex-servicemen, where it happened and the reasons for it, and specifically whether it was related to war service or for reasons that were applicable to other sectors of the population. The analysis is based on the records of the victims and the perpetrators in contrast to most other researchers who have used police reports and newspaper articles. IGC claims were mostly for reasons other than killings, whereas in contrast the IMA/BMH files are predominantly related to executions. The two repositories therefore covered the full spectrum of violence and intimidation. Section 2.3 assesses whether any geographical variation in violence directed towards ex-servicemen reflected the general level of intimidation experienced by other sectors of the population or was specific to them. Additionally the reasons for such geographical variations are considered, including the extent to which southern Ireland supported the republican cause and as such may have been predisposed against those who had served the Crown.

Most studies have dealt with the extremes of violence, and in which the ex-servicemen were a tangential part of a broader research. The geographical focus has generally been Munster and particularly County Cork, the area of greatest violence. Jane Leonard though focussed specifically on the experiences of Irish ex-servicemen returning from the

Great War. She writes that ex-servicemen ‘often experienced hostility and rejection’, and were subject to ‘the extremes of intimidation including beating, mutilation, punishment shooting, prolonged kidnapping, expulsion from Ireland and murder’. She estimates that ‘during the period from 1919 to 1924, upwards of 120 ex-servicemen were killed either by the IRA or by the anti-Treaty republican side during the Civil War’, and that, although some of these veterans were acting as intelligence agents for the RIC and military forces, ‘the vast majority appear to have been killed simply as a retrospective punishment for their service in the Great War’. She concludes British ex-servicemen ‘formed a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society’.¹ Commenting on the motives of the IRA in targeting ex-servicemen she writes, ‘within the nationalist community ex-soldiers weakened the revolution’s effectiveness by refusing to join Sinn Fein, subscribe to its funds, or obey the rulings of its courts; and also by maintaining economic and social contacts with the British administration and its security forces’.² Leonard was one of the first academics to research in this area. Her influential article ‘Facing the Finger of Scorn’, first published in 1997 was much quoted by later researchers. It was she wrote, ‘largely based on (28) interviews conducted with Irish ex-servicemen during the 1980s and 1990s’.³ Although the oral interviews were an important historical contribution, as they represented one of the last opportunities to record the comments of some of the ex-servicemen, there is a risk in generalising from such a limited sample. To support her argument, Leonard used the IGC files and wrote, ‘Michael Shannon, a former tailor in (Ennistymon) County Clare found that he ‘was never insulted until I returned from the War’ and as ‘an ex-soldier I was not wanted anywhere.’⁴ In fact the IGC declined his claim as they did not feel he had provided ‘full and acceptable proof’. They investigated

¹ Leonard, ‘Finger of Scorn’, 93, 95; Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 218.

² Jane Leonard, ‘Getting Them At Last: The I.R.A. and Ex-servicemen’, in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Revolution? Ireland, 1917-1923*, (Dublin:1990), 119.

³ Leonard, ‘Facing the Finger of Scorn’, 88; Leonard’s work has to be considered in the political context of the time when with, the advent of the peace process, the War was being ‘rediscovered’ in the Republic, and its exclusion from Irish historiography and the attitude of the State towards commemoration of the ex-servicemen questioned, see Kevin Myers, ‘The Irish and the Great War: A Case of Amnesia’.

⁴ Leonard, ‘Finger of Scorn’, 94, quoting from TNA,CO762/96/6.

79 cases from Ennistymon and Lahinch in County Clare and found them to be bogus and for the most part from republican supporters.⁵ They noted, ‘these cases in Ennistymon are almost impossible to investigate; confirmatory evidence can be obtained in that town for a few shillings’.⁶ An unusually high number of claimants from Ennistymon claimed intimidation was caused by their army service. Bogus claims submitted to the IGC were the ones most likely to claim persecution was due to army service (see 2.2a).

Augusteijn argues that the IRA acted only against civilians when they endangered their operations:

Only those who openly showed sympathy for the Crown Forces were targeted. This was limited to women who associated with soldiers or policemen, and to persons who associated with soldiers or policemen, and to persons who were clearly friendly towards them. The police acknowledged that all civilians shot in Wexford had been overtly friendly to the Crown Forces; some of them had even joined in raids on Republicans.

The IRA considered civilian spies the most dangerous of all as they, often local people, were well acquainted with the IRA men and the need to cut off sources of intelligence meant any civilian suspected of collaboration was likely to be targeted (see 2.2). Augusteijn writes, ‘A number of ex-soldiers who publicly mixed with the Crown Forces were shot. Their previous service to the Crown and continued association made them prime targets with a high symbolic value’. But the IRA was prepared to target any they presumed had informed. An elderly woman was tied to a lamppost with a note, ‘Long tongues beware’. Women had their hair shorn, others had their property destroyed or were told to leave. A few in Cork were even executed.⁷ Fedorowich writes, ‘even associating with serving soldiers and police, or having a family member in the British army or the RIC, was enough for the IRA to send threatening

⁵ TNA,CO762/2/Admin.

⁶ TNA,CO762/86/5.

⁷ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 291-3, 314-5.

letters warning ex-servicemen that reprisals would be taken if such contact continued'.⁸ In Wexford seven attempts to kill ex-soldiers who had continued contact with the Crown Forces were recorded by the police between January and April 1921. Similar attacks took place in Tipperary where eight civilians, mostly ex-soldiers, were killed.⁹ Jack Moyney, a Victoria Cross winner, avoided the company of local British servicemen in case he was suspected of providing information.¹⁰ Although both Augusteijn and Fedorowich recognise the risks for ex-servicemen associating with the Crown Forces, they reach different conclusions as to whether they were exposed to intimidation as a class. Fedorowich writes:

Like their colleagues in the RIC, ex-servicemen too were boycotted, ostracized and relentlessly targeted by Sinn Fein and the IRA. This was by no means a new phenomenon. Within republican circles there had been an abiding intolerance and resentment of Irishmen who had joined the British armed forces well before World War I. The real difference after 1918, however, was the intensity and ruthlessness of the nationalist campaign, coupled with the high number of ex-service casualties.

Fedorowich acknowledges there were regional variations, 'The tactics employed against Irish veterans and the intensity of the campaign directed against them varied depending upon the region, as it had with the RIC'.¹¹ Hart in his comprehensive study of County Cork where the propensity to violence was highest argues a 'tit for tat' dynamic of escalating conflict was driven by fear and a desire for revenge.¹² Augusteijn agrees that the execution of captured volunteers and the victimisation of their families caused 'a sharp increase in the attempted killing of members of the Crown Forces as well as civilians who were considered hostile, such as Protestants and ex-soldiers'.¹³ Hart writes that much of the violence, of which the war on informers was a part, was based on preconfigured communal animosities related to class,

⁸ Kent Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', *English Historical Review*, (1999), 1153.

⁹ Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 182-3; TNA, CO904, 151-156, County Inspector of the RIC. Wexford, Monthly Confidential Report 1921; County Inspector of the RIC, South Tipperary, Monthly Confidential Report, 1921.

¹⁰ Leonard, 'Facing the Finger of Scorn', 95.

¹¹ Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', 1152.

¹² Hart, Peter, *The IRA and its Enemies*, (Oxford:1998), 314.

¹³ Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 242.

sectarianism and other stereotypes and that beneath the welter of suspicions and accusations of betrayal, the IRA were 'tapping a deep vein of communal prejudice and gossip' against categories of people of whom such talk was normally confined behind closed doors but which the revolution took into the streets. The IRA saw their enemy as 'types' including, 'ex-servicemen, Orangemen, freemasons, tramps, fast women; people who were perceived as falling into such categories were the most likely to be denounced as informers or enemies of the republic and shot, burned out, or intimidated'. Hart argues that informers could be broken into three categories: suspects, informers and victims and that there was little overlap. That is, those suspected were generally innocent but not usually attacked, the majority of those who informed were never suspected or shot and those actually punished mostly never informed. In the latter category fell Protestants, ex-soldiers and 'tinkers'. They were killed for who they were not what they did, in a persecution that went beyond the hunt for informers. Hart claims Volunteers and respectable Catholics were most likely to give information but the least likely to be punished, whereas Protestants made up the majority of victims but despite being supposedly loyal to the Crown did not inform, perhaps out of fear of retribution. Hart calculated in County Cork Protestants represented 36% of the victims, Catholic ex-servicemen 25%. He also quotes an IRA West Cork report which said that Protestants made up 64% of the victims, ex-servicemen 15%. Even more than ex-servicemen, he argues Protestants were targeted in their guise as landlords and loyalists; violence based on historical sectarian animosities causing its population to almost halve by 1922 from pre-war levels. Hart claims soldiers and their families were harassed upon their return, precluded from employment and as the conflict escalated became subject to death threats. He concludes that IRA officers 'routinely insisted that those executed were proven, convicted traitors', whereas

in reality they acted on their own suspicions and without any evidence other than the suspect was not for the IRA and of the wrong type.¹⁴

Borgonovo, who conducted a study of violence in Cork City, questions Leonard's assertion that ex-soldiers were executed because of their previous military service and that they represented a 'soft target' as a comparatively unprotected symbol of British rule, when the superiorly equipped and trained Crown Forces became increasingly difficult to attack. There was a significant body of ex-soldiers in the city, including ex-officers, who were high profile in society but who were left unmolested. This also brings into question Augusteijn's assertion that killing ex-servicemen represented a high symbolic value as if that was the case high profile ex-officers would have been targeted. Borgonovo also contradicts Hart's conclusions, arguing instead that there was little indication that the IRA deliberately targeted ex-soldiers or Protestant unionists as part of a general terror campaign, or as reprisals for republican defeats. Meehan concurs, asserting that Hart refused to accept the possibility that IRA executions had a military connotation as it undermined his theory that their actions were motivated by sectarianism. Meehan also refutes that ex-servicemen were targeted as a class as many had joined the IRA. Borgonovo also argues that when reprisals occurred they were for more than just associating with the Crown Forces. Of the 26 ex-servicemen targeted by the IRA, nine had associations with the Crown Forces and five worked for them. This employment alone would not have caused their execution, scores of other ex-servicemen worked for the British authorities. Borgonovo believes that the likely explanation is that 'the Volunteers believed their victims were guilty of spying'. Again unlike Hart he asserted that the IRA had the means to identify their civilian enemies and were not just acting without evidence. The IRA identified an 'anti Sinn Fein Society' in September 1920 and in the following months gathered evidence before in February 1921 retaliating against those they

¹⁴ Hart, *The IRA. and its Enemies*, 291, 300-315; Peter Hart, *The IRA at War 1916-1923*, (Oxford:2003) 136; Leonard agrees that many of the confirmed spies came from within the IRA itself, see Leonard, 'Getting Them At Last: The I.R.A. and Ex-servicemen', 129.

believed to be spies. Borgonovo writes that given the strength of their well organised intelligence network, the IRA were probably mostly right in their decisions as to who to execute for informing.¹⁵ One of the reasons for these differing views is that Borgonovo, Leonard and Hart disagree with regards to the relationship between the ex-servicemen and both the general population and the IRA. Leonard writes that in local authorities controlled by Sinn Fein, ex-soldiers were refused admission to technical colleges, hospitals and asylums while officials and clubrooms of the two main veteran organisations, the Comrades of the Great War and the Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, frequently came under attack from the IRA.¹⁶ In contrast Borgonovo claims there was no antagonism between the Irish Federation of Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors and the IRA in Cork, rather the opposite. The IRA did not interfere in displays of ex-servicemen's solidarity and the Federation condemned the death of two republican mayors, one shot, the other through a hunger strike, and its members marched in both funeral processions. This is unsurprising given that according to Meehan, the secretary of the Federation was an IRA commander. Borgonovo claims that in contrast ill-will existed between the ex-servicemen and the Crown Forces. An ex-soldier named Burke was killed by an army patrol in July 1920. For the next two days ex-servicemen brawled with off duty soldiers and 5,000 ex-servicemen attended Burke's funeral.¹⁷ Leonard writes, 'ex-servicemen, by virtue of long absence on military service and the altered cultural and political identities that years of foreign service with the British army tended to have forged, were no longer part of the communities to which they returned on demobilisation'. This, she argues, made them inefficient as spies; isolated,

¹⁵ John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society'*, (Dublin:2007), 75-83, 172- 180; Niall Meehan, *Troubles in Irish History*, (Aubane Historical Society, 2008), 6,16,18. This society opposes what they perceive as revisionism of republican historiography, specifically Hart's argument that the IRA initiated sectarian violence and that executions were not only for military purposes, see 'Why bodies buried deep in the green bog must be raised', *Irish Independent*, 11 November 2007, <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/why-bodies-buried-deep-in-the-green-bog-must-be-raised-1216629.html>, accessed, 17 September 2012.

¹⁶ Leonard, 'Survivors', 215. Both veteran associations became part of the British Legion upon its formation which may have reflected a political orientation.

¹⁷ Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society'*, 79 -83. Borgonovo writes even ex-soldiers were killed by British forces in Cork in 1920-1, noting ironically it did not imply a general campaign against all ex-soldiers; Meehan, *Troubles in Irish History*, 18.

‘shunned in their localities or house-bound by virtue of their war injuries’.¹⁸ Hart argues that the long-established stereotype of the ex-soldier as a corner boy and drunk counted against them, particularly as many were unemployed.¹⁹ In contrast Borgonovo writes there was ‘little indication of open hostility in Cork City between Volunteers and ex-servicemen in 1920-1’, and that they ‘were engrained in the city’s social fabric’, and many ex-servicemen were intimate with local IRA volunteers.²⁰ Boyce states that although ex-servicemen on occasions suffered at the hands of both the Black and Tans and the IRA, they were not generally subjected to vendettas.²¹ Local historians with deep knowledge of their communities, some of whom were interviewed as part of this research, also provide a different perspective to Leonard and Hart. William Henry said that in Galway there was not widespread condemnation of the returning soldiers, with an economy entering recession the priority was to earn a living.²² Hall argues that in County Louth volunteers were mostly urban, recruitment had been considerably less in rural areas, and therefore almost every town or village was touched by the war generating sympathy for those who returned. He writes, ‘it is now part of the historical canon that these soldiers were subjected to a campaign of victimisation and murder. In truth, there is not much evidence of this in Co Louth and the overwhelming majority of soldiers returned quietly to their homes’.²³

There are varying estimates of the number of ex-servicemen who were killed in the conflict by the IRA. Leonard estimates in her ‘Facing the Finger of Scorn’, article that upwards of 120 were killed from 1919-1924. In an earlier article she wrote that at least 82 ex-servicemen were murdered prior to the Truce of July 1921 but that these statistics only included men whose military service (in the Great War or the Boer War) was considered a

¹⁸ Leonard, ‘Getting Them At Last: The IRA and Ex-Servicemen’, 127-129.

¹⁹ Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*, 312.

²⁰ Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society'*, 81, 83, 91, Borgonovo does point out that some of the ex-servicemen victims were impoverished and of low social standing.

²¹ D.G. Boyce, ‘That Party Politics Should Divide our Tents’, in Gregory and Paseta, (eds.) *Ireland and the Great War*, 201; Harrison, *Ireland and the British Empire*, 30.

²² Interview with William Henry, Galway, 3 August 2008.

²³ Donal Hall, *The Unreturned Army*, (Louth:2005), 15, 24-5.

major factor in their murder, ex-servicemen who joined or rejoined the RIC on demobilisation were excluded. To include them the total would be higher. She notes of 150 ex-servicemen killed by the IRA between 1 January 1920 and 1 April 1921, 80 were regular RIC men and 30 were members of the Auxiliary Division. Only 40 of them were civilians. She writes no ex-servicemen were killed in 1919 and only 9 in 1920.²⁴ The final stages of the War of Independence were the most vicious with the majority of victims being killed in 1921 up to the period ending with the Truce. British government figures state that 73 civilians were killed by the IRA between January and April 1921 of which 21 were ex-service men.²⁵ Borgonovo considers Hart's figures for violence inflated. The latter estimates that there were 131 victims of IRA shootings in Cork City in the months following November 1920, whereas Borgonovo calculates that in 1920-1, the IRA attempted to kill 33 suspected informers, of which fatal civilian attacks were 26, and in terms of ex-servicemen 26 were shot as suspected spies of which 19 died.²⁶ With the absence of RIC reports (and the IMA/BMH witness statements only covering the period to July 1921) there are no comprehensive statistics for those ex-servicemen killed during the Civil War. Leonard writes that at least 9 ex-servicemen were killed in the five months after the Treaty and a further 4 kidnapped and believed to have perished.²⁷ Hart writes that IRA antagonism to certain 'types' continued into the Civil War; in Cork 20% of civilians shot by the rebels after July 1921 were ex-soldiers, 44% were Protestant.²⁸

The analysis of the secondary literature indicates a number of contradictions. Some researchers, including Leonard, Hart and Fedorowich, conclude that ex-servicemen were intimidated as a class, while others, including Augusteijn and particularly Borgonovo argue

²⁴ Leonard, 'Facing the Finger of Scorn', 95, this article was first published in 1997; Leonard, 'Getting Them At Last: The I.R.A. and Ex-servicemen', 118-121.

²⁵ HC Deb 21 April 1921, Vol. 140 c2086W.

²⁶ Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society'*, 75, 83.

²⁷ Leonard, 'Getting Them At Last: The IRA and Ex-servicemen', 121.

²⁸ Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*, 314.

that intimidation was for causes other than war service per se, the latter further asserting that the ex-servicemen readily re-integrated back into society.

2.2 Violence and Intimidation: Types, Causes and Location

a) *The Victims*

The files of the Irish Grants Committee (IGC) are the most comprehensively documented archive of violence and intimidation by republicans against loyalists. Of the 3,439 incidents recorded only 262 (7.6%) related to ex-servicemen out of which only 73 (2.1%) involved claimants stating that the actions against them were due or partly due to war service.²⁹ Of the 262 incidents, 152 took place in the Province of Munster, 74 in Leinster, 20 in Connaught and 16 in Ulster. The discrepancy between Munster and Leinster is accentuated when taking into account the larger population of the latter; Leinster recorded 0.65 incidents involving ex-servicemen per 10,000 people, Munster 1.57 incidents per 10,000 people.

²⁹ The number of incidents, 3,439 incidents, is lower than the total claims (circa 4,000) in the IGC records. This analysis includes all applications, whether compensation was awarded or not, unless they were withdrawn. Cases in which there were multiple claims for the one incident, for example, a family making individual claims arising out of the burning of their home, are recorded as one incident. Also excluded are claims against Crown Forces and any claim related to Northern Ireland. The figures for ex-servicemen relate to only those who served in the War and returned home afterward and therefore exclude pre-war veterans. Only claims from the ex-servicemen or from family member in cases in which an ex-servicemen was referred to as a victim, e.g., a widow claiming for a dead husband, are included in the ex-servicemen figures. Excluded from the figures for ex-servicemen are non-ex-servicemen who claim injury arising out of a member of the family having served but without referring to that family member having been a victim. The analysis is based on the location in which the incident took place. In a very limited number of cases incidents took place at two locations within the one claim and both are included in the analysis.

Table 4: Geographical analysis of incidents recorded by the IGC

County	Population	Total		Ex-Servicemen		% of Total
		Incidents	per 10,000	Incidents	per 10,000	
Carlow	34,000	72	21.2	2	0.59	2.8
Dublin	505,000	203	4.0	17	0.34	8.4
Kildare	58,000	43	7.4	7	1.21	16.3
Kilkenny	70,000	40	5.7	3	0.43	7.5
Queens	51,000	292	57.3	13	2.55	4.5
Longford	40,000	43	10.8	2	0.50	4.7
Louth	63,000	17	2.7	1	0.16	5.9
Meath	62,000	62	10.0	8	1.29	12.9
Kings	53,000	91	17.2	5	0.94	5.5
Westmeath	57,000	35	6.1	6	1.05	17.1
Wexford	96,000	52	5.4	6	0.63	11.5
Wicklow	58,000	41	7.1	4	0.69	9.8
Leinster	1,147,000	991	8.6	74	0.65	7.5
Clare	95,000	315	33.2	30	3.16	9.5
Cork	365,000	780	21.4	58	1.59	7.4
Kerry	149,000	175	11.7	9	0.60	5.1
Limerick	140,000	123	8.8	16	1.14	13.0
Tipperary	140,000	280	20.0	35	2.50	12.5
Waterford	79,000	43	5.4	4	0.51	9.3
Munster	968,000	1,716	17.7	152	1.57	8.9
Galway	169,000	126	7.5	7	0.41	5.6
Leitrim	56,000	83	14.8	0	0.00	0.0
Mayo	172,000	139	8.1	7	0.41	5.0
Roscommon	84,000	75	8.9	6	0.71	8.0
Sligo	71,000	82	11.5	0	0.00	0.0
Connaught	552,000	505	9.1	20	0.36	4.0
Cavan	82,000	93	11.3	5	0.61	5.4
Donegal	153,000	112	7.3	8	0.52	7.1
Monaghan	65,000	22	3.4	3	0.46	13.6
Ulster (3 counties)	300,000	227	7.6	16	0.53	7.0
Total	2,967,000	3,439	11.6	262	0.88	7.6

Source: TNA, CO 762; Population data from 1926 census.

Perhaps surprising is that Connaught records only 0.36 incidents per 10,000 people. One reason is that the number of ex-servicemen in that area was significantly less than Leinster both absolutely and relative to population. If the number of ex-servicemen (based on recruitment figures) is taken into account then there were 15.42 incidents for every 10,000 ex-servicemen in Leinster and circa double, 30.77 incidents for every 10,000 ex-servicemen in Connaught. The discrepancy between Munster and Leinster is also accentuated further with the former reporting 86.86 incidents for every 10,000 servicemen, 5.6 times the total of Leinster.

Table 5: Geographical analysis of ex-servicemen’s related claims pro rata to enlistment

Province	Population	Recruits	% enlisted	Incidents	Per 10,000 Enlisted
Leinster	1,160,000	48,000	4.14	74	15.42
Munster	1,033,000	17,500	1.69	152	86.86
Connaught	611,000	6,500	1.06	20	30.77
Ulster (3 counties)	331,000	5,500	1.66	16	29.09
Total	3,135,000	77,500	2.47	262	33.81

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757 ; Population data from 1911 census (population was circa 5% higher than 1926).

Within the provinces there were some significant variations. Cork and Cork County which provided 10,106 recruits, 2.58% of the population, had 57.39 incidents for every 10,000 ex-servicemen, while Clare, Limerick and Kerry, which provided 5,745 recruits, 1.42% of the population, had 95.74 incidents for every 10,000 ex-servicemen. Most of the incidents in County Cork took place outside of Cork City. Dublin and Dublin County which provided 24,276 recruits, 5.09% of the population, had 7.0 incidents for every 10,000 ex-servicemen.³⁰

The figures show that the number of ex-servicemen who lodged claims with the IGC was extremely low, both in relation to the total number of claims and as a percentage of ex-servicemen; even in Munster less than 1% (0.87) of ex-servicemen lodged complaints and the equivalent figure for the whole country was only circa 0.34%.

Although the number of incidents varied significantly by geography (see 2.3 for an assessment of the reasons for this), the incidents involving ex-servicemen as a percentage of the total were relatively consistent across provinces. The Free State average was 7.6, in Leinster 7.5 and in Munster 8.9, suggesting that while levels of intimidation against the general population increased in Munster there is no evidence at a provincial level that ex-servicemen were particularly singled out. There were some variations at county level with a higher percentage of ex-servicemen being involved in incidents in Limerick, Tipperary, Westmeath and Kildare. In the latter two counties, both within Leinster, the low numbers make statistical analysis less reliable. Although Cork was the county that had significantly the

³⁰ TNA, PIN15/757, recruitment figures by recruitment district/county are only available for end 1917 but as 1918 recruitment for all Ireland was only 10,617 the total would not vary significantly, see 1.2 for further details; population data from 1911 census.

highest number of total incidents, the percentage of incidents involving ex-servicemen was less than the national average, indicating that they were not specifically targeted as a category of people even in an area of high republican activity.³¹ The incidents involving ex-servicemen increased away from the east and were higher in rural areas, particularly in areas where they formed a smaller percentage of the population.

The further questions are what forms did the violence and intimidation take and what were the reasons for it? An analysis of the 262 cases involving ex-servicemen, illustrates the cause was not war service per se but one or a combination of reasons that could be applicable to other members of the population that fell into four main categories:³²

- Their membership of a particular class of people, including landowners, the gentry and Protestants, or of the judicial system.
- The result of a specific action on the part of the ex-serviceman, including spying or closely associating with or joining the Crown Forces, especially the RIC and the Black and Tans, or supplying to them in contravention of boycotts.
- Part of a general campaign by the republicans against all of the population, including the levy of financial dues and confiscating arms and equipment.
- Refusal to join the IRA.

The majority of claimants to the IGC fitted these categories but did not serve in the Great War. There were some categories in which the ex-serviceman was more likely to feature, including suspicion for any association with the Crown Forces. Also given their

³¹ Queen's County is perhaps an anomaly in that it has a high number of incidents both for the general population and those involving ex-servicemen. There is no obvious reason for this but the incidents seem of a less severe nature than elsewhere.

³² The statements of the victims, all of whom were ex-servicemen, and their solicitors date from the time of the claims. Many of the files are extremely substantial and the enclosed documentation and statements often lengthy; the relevant extracts are used that reflect the substance of the claim and the IGC comments on them. As illustrated in the Maher case other sources may provide a different perspective.

military experience they were more likely to join the Crown Forces or be intimidated to join the IRA.

The targeting of landlords had a historic precedence. Agrarian agitators in rural Ireland in the Land Wars of the 19th century sought to remedy the perceived injustice of plantation settlements and ensure the redistribution of land to tenants especially from absentee landlords. Campbell and O'Shiel argue that the outbreak of agrarian conflict from March 1920 was caused by farmers with uneconomic holdings seeking to gain land; restrictions on wartime emigration causing a surplus of non-inheriting farmers sons; wartime and post war prosperity making land a more attractive prospect, and reduced state authority.³³ The latter providing an opportunity for disputed claims to be settled by force. Army officers who were part of the landed gentry were therefore often subject to intimidation. Henry Blake inherited land in County Mayo and in early 1920 his stock was driven off and the lands were seized 'by certain Committees formed for taking over such places'.³⁴ Colonel Henry Sidney inherited property in County Tipperary in 1921 while serving in the British army. In September 1921 his land and house were forcibly seized and damaged. He wrote that 'the British and afterwards the Irish Government remained powerless to protect property'. The IGC noted:

The injuries and loss complained of appear to have their foundation in agrarian troubles, and as it has been shown that the applicant has never been resident on the property it should hardly be contended that the injuries were directed against him on account of his support of the British Government.³⁵

Epenetus Fitzgibbon had an estate in Dripsey, County Cork. Throughout 1921 he suffered intimidation with raids, property stolen and demands for money. The house was occupied and in October 1922 burnt down. He wrote that 'if those in authority in England only went

³³ Fergus Campbell and Kevin O'Shiel, 'The Last Land War?', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 57 (2003), 161-2.

³⁴ TNA,CO762/165/1.

³⁵ TNA,CO762/32/1.

through some of sufferings of loyal people in Southern Ireland, they might cease to think that they had done so splendidly for Irish Loyalists'.³⁶ From 1919 George Davidge suffered attacks on his family, servants and estate in Listowel, Kerry. Fisheries were poisoned, fences smashed and trees damaged. He wrote:

so persistent were the outrages that we had to leave and go to England. Any hope of returning to reside was destroyed in June 1920 when the house was burnt down. The IRA took possession of the land. They were driven out by Free State Troops, leaving the land completely derelict.³⁷

William Roe owned a large farm in Rathmore, County Kerry. He claimed a conspiracy was organised to drive him out and on eleven occasions between March and June 1920 all his cattle were driven off and gates and fences were broken down. The local people became so hostile that Roe had to leave towards the end of 1920. He never recovered his lands.³⁸ Robert Otway-Ruthven claimed that from March to September 1922 he suffered 'malicious damage and destruction by fire' at his property, Castle Otway in Templederry, County Tipperary.³⁹ James Bryne owned a farm in Rathvilly, County Carlow and was subject to persecution and boycotting and was unable to continue farming. He was threatened to be shot on several occasions for denouncing the Sinn Fein movement.⁴⁰ Major J.R. North Bomford's mansion house in County Meath was destroyed by armed men in April 1923.⁴¹ Many of the landowners held privileged positions in the Ascendancy class, often in a position of authority. Captain Richard Winter Bayley from Ballinderry, Moate, County Westmeath was a Protestant and had been a Justice of the Peace for Roscommon and High Sheriff for Westmeath in 1902 and owned 952 acres of land where he bred horses. In January 1920 the stables were subject to a 'malicious burning', and he suffered threats and raids until January

³⁶ TNA,CO762/114/23.

³⁷ TNA,CO762/147/6.

³⁸ TNA,CO762/101/1714.

³⁹ TNA,CO762/78/12.

⁴⁰ TNA,CO762/128/3.

⁴¹ TNA,CO762/12/1.

1923.⁴² Major E.J.M. Briscoe of Tullamore, King's County owned Screggan Manor and 850 acres of farmland. His house was raided several times from May 1921 to October 1922 and was finally burnt down. He was a Justice of the Peace and Grand Juror, and said his family had been noted loyalists since 1580.⁴³ Henry Edwyn, Earl of Kingston, owned Kilronan Castle in Boyle, County Roscommon which was occupied by Irregulars from November 1921 until January 1922 with considerable loss and damage.⁴⁴

Several of the landowners complained of lack of support from the authorities. After the War, Captain Pim Goodbody returned to Ballytore, County Kildare where he had three farms. He wrote that after the RIC withdrew from the area, he was continuously raided and threatened by rebels. After receiving information from the police that he was to be shot, he left for London in May 1921 where he remained for three months. He then returned but was again raided and threatened. He complained to the police who told him they had instructions not to interfere with the rebels. He had 'refused to assist the IRA or to give them money or supplies but gave all the assistance I could to the RIC'. He sold his lands for £4,000, although they had been valued at £12,000.⁴⁵ Captain Butler-Stoney, a Protestant, owned property in King's County. In February 1921, he was visited by two members of the IRA who demanded money for support of their cause. After he refused the house was completely ransacked. In 1922, the IRA demanded that he give up his land from which they had driven his tenants' cattle, replacing it with their own. He said he was forced to leave and that he received little support, complaining that an RIC sergeant was in league with the IRA.⁴⁶

⁴² TNA,CO762/77/7.

⁴³ TNA,CO762/53/13.

⁴⁴ TNA,CO762/132/1.

⁴⁵ TNA,CO762/85/1.

⁴⁶ TNA,CO762/113/12, the house referred to is Portland Park, which other records show as in the neighbouring county of Tipperary. The family appear to have owned lands in both counties.

A number of land owning complainants mentioned their army service as a specific cause for their intimidation, but there was little to distinguish them from any other case. Colonel Raleigh Chichester Constable owned tenanted land in County Roscommon. He wrote that from ‘sometime prior to July 1921 a campaign of cattle driving and intimidation was in progress’. In July 1922 his mansion house was set on fire by irregular forces who had been illegally occupying it for ‘a considerable time’. The lands continued to be occupied by the raiders until 1923. He wrote, ‘I claim that the loss and injury described was occasioned because I was a retired Colonel in the British Army and because it was known I was in favour of British Administration in Ireland and was a loyal subject of His Majesty the King’.⁴⁷ Edward Kenelm, Baron Digby, was an absentee landowner of a large estate in King’s County. He wrote ‘prior to 1920 a conspiracy was organised to drive all Loyalists out of Ireland’, and as his loyalist sympathies were ‘well known and his family had been identified for years with the British Army’, he was prevented from grazing the lands, timber was looted and in August 1922 Geashill Castle was burnt down by Irregulars.⁴⁸ Colonel Cyril Cary-Barnard endured a boycott, looting and destruction of his estate in Galway, stating that service in the army and loyalty had aroused considerable hostility. He had remained in the army until August 1922 and served in Dublin from October 1919 to September 1920.⁴⁹ All three were absentee landlords and so would have been particularly vulnerable. In addition, the first two appeared to be prominent loyalists while Cary-Barnard’s service in Ireland may have counted against him. Major Arthur Blennerhassett owned a large house near Tralee, County Kerry. In 1920 and 1921 he was the victim of ‘several malicious injuries’, and in February 1922 was kidnapped and beaten before being returned to his home. Intimidation against his family continued and they left. He said the kidnappers ‘taunted me with having

⁴⁷ TNA,CO762/63/23.

⁴⁸ TNA,CO762/73/4.

⁴⁹ TNA,CO762/25/3.

been in the British service'.⁵⁰ Charles Hachett was the son of a JP and owned land on the border of counties Tipperary and Offaly. He wrote that he found country people extremely hostile and that 'all British soldiers were subjected to the same treatment'. Owing to the local pressure and boycotting, he agreed in February 1921 to sell his lands at much less than their true value.⁵¹ Captain James McLean of Borrisokane, Tipperary owned 56 acres of farming land and writes, 'the fact that I was an ex-British Officer my house was raided by armed men between 1921 and 1923'. In January 1923 he was threatened that if he did not leave he would be shot. He departed returning in January 1924.⁵² Captain Martin Daly from County Mayo claimed that on account of war service and refusing to join the IRA after demobilising, his cattle were driven off and his house burnt down between February and April 1922. His solicitor wrote to the IGC stating that 'Mr Daly served through the War with distinction; this in itself would render him extremely unpopular and make his property a likely subject of outrage in the country'. The unpopularity did not prevent him in May 1922 taking up the position of Superintendent for Shell Mex, residing in Galway.⁵³ Many landowners had served in the War but it was not the primary reasons for their intimidation. Certainly there were many claimants to the IGC of a similar profile with the exception of war service who were nevertheless persecuted.

The emotive issue of land affected another very different class of owners who were accused of being part of a new 'plantation' campaign by the British Government; ordinary soldiers who applied for and received small grants of land, usually circa 30 acres, in appreciation of their war service (see 3.6). Seven soldiers in Knocklong, County Limerick were forced from land allocated them under the scheme between March and July 1921. Joseph Wheeler claimed the IRA broke fences and threatened him. He reported the matter to

⁵⁰ TNA,CO762/55/18, In March 1923 republicans were executed by the IFS Army at Ballyseedy.

⁵¹ TNA,CO762/129/4.

⁵² TNA,CO762/86/14.

⁵³ TNA,CO762/29/2.

the police, but they were ‘not doing ordinary duty only just keeping in power and guarding themselves’, and that the Irish Land Commission also did nothing but continued to demand rent. He received a notice from the IRA to quit the land and wrote, ‘all the ex-soldiers got the same order’.⁵⁴ The IGC wrote of Edmund Harty that ‘in July 1921 owing to local hostilities and threats he was driven from the land and kept out of possession until February 1923’. He wrote that the IRA told me that ‘if I wanted land I should go to England and get it from the Government I acknowledge. My case was that of all or at least most of the British ex-soldiers in the Free State - Nobody’s Children’.⁵⁵ The solicitor of Robert Coll wrote that he:

on account of his being an ex-serviceman and it being implied that he was therefore a supporter of the British Government, suffered damage to his property, that he was deprived of the use of his farm for a period of 18 months, during which time the land was grazed and used by parties antagonistic to him.⁵⁶

Edmund Davern’s cattle were driven from his land in March 1921 after his fences, gates and crops were destroyed. He was a member of the Australian Imperial Forces having enlisted in Australia and when demobilised in 1919 he returned to his native country, his case suggesting that intimidation was not restricted to locally recruited volunteers. On his return to Ireland he was appointed Postmaster at nearby Elton, a position he still held at the time of application, indicating the antagonism against him arose out of the allocation of land.⁵⁷ Timothy Ryan, wrote, ‘I drew upon myself the hostility of the local people in general and the Republican Army in particular. My allegiance was well known and I received threatening communications’. His crops and fences were destroyed and he was forced off by the IRA, ‘in consequence of having been an ex-soldier’.⁵⁸ Similarly Gerald Harris⁵⁹ and William

⁵⁴ TNA,CO762/31/8, some of the ex-servicemen were from the area in which they were allocated land and therefore may have known those who dispossessed them.

⁵⁵ TNA,CO762/40/3

⁵⁶ TNA,CO762/40/2.

⁵⁷ TNA,CO762/49/12.

⁵⁸ TNA,CO762/43/8.

⁵⁹ TNA,CO762/53/21.

Fitzgerald⁶⁰ were forced off their land. The IGC noted that Limerick was ‘especially disturbed during the troubles in Ireland and the ex-service men who had been given lands were subjected to considerable interference’.⁶¹ Patrick Corrigan, ex RIC, wrote to the IGC in November 1926 in support of Ryan’s claim, ‘I know that he and all the other loyal subjects that got the lands were subjected to a deal of trouble and annoyance’.⁶² A solicitor writing in support of Fitzgerald’s application wrote, ‘he was in common with other ex-British soldiers who were allotted land in this district very badly treated and suffered considerable financial consequences’.⁶³ The time of dispossession was comparatively limited; most of the above claimants were back in possession by latest May 1923, following the reassertion of authority by the Free State, the latter willing to enforce the rights of the ex-servicemen against the republicans. Ex-servicemen allocated land elsewhere also experienced problems, usually in areas in which the IRA was most active. Twenty five former soldiers who had been offered land in County Cork received letters from the IRA stating they would be shot if they accepted.⁶⁴ James Cleary was allocated land near Cloyne, County Cork. He wrote, ‘I received a warning from the Churchtown Sinn Fein Club not to take up the land and if I did I would be immediately dealt with. I had to leave at once with my wife and family. In March 1924 I was given back possession of my land’.⁶⁵ Richard Walsh was allocated land in the same area but republicans took possession and damaged buildings and fences. He wrote during the troubled period 1920-22 other farms were unmolested, ‘but ex-servicemen’s property was specially selected for wanton destruction and we were threatened not to dare attempt to occupy it’. The IGC noted he found alternative employment from March 1921, indicating his problem was

⁶⁰ TNA,CO762/79/ 6.

⁶¹ TNA,CO762/53/21.

⁶² TNA,CO762/43/8.

⁶³ TNA,CO762/79/ 6.

⁶⁴ *IT*, 19 February 1921.

⁶⁵ TNA,CO762/199/10.

related to the land.⁶⁶ James Belfory was granted a small holding in County Kildare in 1920. He was also employed with the military at Curragh Camp. He wrote:

As the result of threats and intimidation, the military authorities made me leave the house and come to the barracks with my family for safety about June 1921. I had to leave my home in a hurry and it was looted a very short time later. On withdrawal of the Crown Forces from Ireland it was considered I was still in danger, and I decided to come to England, which I did in March 1922.⁶⁷

Belfory drew antagonism both for his allocation of a small holding and working for the military; unlike others he did not return, remaining in England.

Those who were part of the British judicial system were particularly targeted as the IRA sought to establish a republican alternative. Walter Butler farmed in Queen's County and Kildare. He wrote:

In the early summer of 1921 the RIC were ambushed in the neighbourhood, two of the Rebels being shot dead. I being the only Justice of the Peace in the district signed some 40 summaries which were served by the police on the rebels. I was boycotted and neither allowed to till or let my lands.⁶⁸

Captain C.R. Barton of Tipperary, a Justice of the Peace, was forced out of his house and land in May 1922 by the IRA.⁶⁹ Upon his return Captain Robert Thomas of County Cork served as a staff officer in Dublin until 1920, when on leaving service he took up an appointment in the Ministry of Labour, Cork and continued as a magistrate which he had been since 1907. He wrote, 'when the troubles in Ireland became acute during the year 1921, Fermoy (County Cork) where I resided was a centre for disaffection'. He said he was continually threatened owing to his position as a soldier and magistrate and transferred together with his family to England.⁷⁰ Laurence Roche from Limerick, a Justice of Peace,

⁶⁶ TNA,CO762/47/13.

⁶⁷ TNA,CO762/84/8.

⁶⁸ TNA,CO762/203/3679.

⁶⁹ TNA,CO762/16/12.

⁷⁰ TNA,CO762/47/3.

claimed damage to his property and theft and seizure of land by republicans between 1919 and August 1922. He wrote, 'I was a marked man and was several times threatened and revolvers pushed into my ribs'. He had a high profile; he had helped to recruit 2,000 men with whom he served in France and was employed by the British Ministry of Labour as the manager of a disabled soldiers centre in Tipperary (see 3.2b).⁷¹ Major Hugh Jones was appointed Crown Solicitor for Wexford in July 1920 but was dismissed in January 1922. He had to go into hiding, sleeping in a barricaded room with a gun after he received several anonymous letters warning there were plans to kidnap him. He left for England in August 1922. At the time of the claim in 1926 he lived in Waterford, where his situation was improving as he was 'living down' his former connection to the government. He attributed the harassment to his 'dual capacity' as an officer and Crown Solicitor.⁷² Norris Goddard from Rathmines, County Dublin was also a Crown Solicitor. He received threatening letters from the IRA imposing the death sentence as a result of which his health broke down. His business was boycotted and collapsed.⁷³

Intimidation was also motivated by sectarianism as Hart asserts. Colonel John Purvis of Innishannon, West Cork wrote that in May 1922 'several Protestants were murdered within a mile of my house'. His next door neighbour, another Colonel, was shot in his garage and 'all the Loyalist houses were burnt down'. He received warnings and threats telling him to leave and left for England, not returning.⁷⁴ Arthur Travers of Clonakilty, West Cork wrote that:

in April 1922 there were a number of Protestants shot around this part of the country. At the same period three armed men came to my residence, but I left through a back way. In August, as the trouble and conflict was getting more and

⁷¹ TNA,CO762/14/8.

⁷² TNA,CO762/77/11.

⁷³ TNA,CO762/152/13.

⁷⁴ TNA,CO762/89/13.

more acute, I left for England and stayed there until the end of September. I then returned home.⁷⁵

Henry Newton Kevin returned to Youghal, County Cork to set up a private medical practice.

He wrote:

I found that owing to my well-known loyal views, and also because I was a Protestant Loyalist, it was useless to start a practice while the Rebellion was in progress. I have been told that policemen in Youghal have openly said that they could not have me for a doctor owing to my support of the British Crown. I lost many cases owing to this form of boycott. People have been told in their chapels by their priest that they must have doctors of their own faith.⁷⁶

William McKenna, Tyrellspass, County Westmeath was a Protestant ex-serviceman whose wife's father was in the RIC. According to the IGC report he claimed for destruction of his house and crops and being forced to leave Ireland for a period of six months. In April 1922 he was turned out of his home and beaten during a raid by 50 republicans who told him to remember Belfast. His crops were destroyed and his land taken away as was that of his brothers (also ex-servicemen) and father. His solicitor wrote 'particular animosity was shown to him as his wife's father was a sergeant in the old RIC'. He wrote in his application, 'Thank God times are better and quieter, but a Protestant in Southern Ireland remains more or less in anxiety, because only a Protestant will admit themselves to be loyalist'. The actions against McKenna were related to his wife's father being in the RIC, his being a Protestant and Belfast revenge attacks, not specifically that he was an ex-soldier.⁷⁷ Protestant clergy were also targeted. Richard Madden, a Church of England chaplain in the War, wrote that due to not supporting the republicans in the period to 1923, he suffered raids and harassment at

⁷⁵ TNA,CO762/121/4.

⁷⁶ TNA,CO762/199/9.

⁷⁷ TNA,CO762/42/2.

his rectory in Tipperary from 1920-23, and at a farm in Galway from 1919.⁷⁸ Canon Charles Atkinson of Kilpeacan Rectory, County Limerick wrote that in March 1922:

a party of about 20 armed men entered my house, turned me out with my wife and daughter and set fire to it. We were sent away under armed guard to a house nearby and released after the fire had been in progress for an hour.⁷⁹

Those whose loyalism was well known were also threatened. Benjamin Rose of Limerick owned Boswell House describing it as a ‘gentleman’s residence and as one of the County family seats in Ireland’. He took up residence again in 1919 but wrote, ‘I was known to be a Loyalist and hostile to the aims of the rebels, I found that people could only live by compromising with them’. He claimed that owing to threats from armed men and constant raids and without protection, he left the country in 1920.⁸⁰ Jeremiah Connolly wrote, ‘before joining the forces I was employed under the Cork Corporation and I got my job back in 1920. After the election in that year it became republican. Anyone who was loyal was marked down for dismissal. I was Chairman of BLSI, Cork branch’.⁸¹ Francis Wallen from Dublin said he first became unpopular with the Sinn Feiners after enlisting and was ‘always outspoken in his views, and was recognised as one of the leading Loyalists’. After the withdrawal of British troops many of his old customers were afraid to do business with him and went elsewhere.⁸² Edward Ryan was a veterinary surgeon, who prior to the war worked for Roscommon Council. Despite a promise that the position would be kept open, he lost his appointment. He wrote that as ‘a result of my unpopularity as an ex-British soldier and supporter of his Majesty’s Government and with the council supporting the Republican movement’, he found it futile to try and recover his practice. He was raided several times and threatened and ‘my life was made intolerable in my own country and I had to leave it’. He acknowledged a

⁷⁸ TNA,CO762/44/5.

⁷⁹ TNA,CO762/184 3.

⁸⁰ TNA,CO762/41/2.

⁸¹ TNA,CO762/204/3686.

⁸² TNA,CO762/77/5.

contributory factor was ‘my open attitude of resentful disgust to the then popular movement of disloyalty and terrorism’.⁸³ Captain John Tighe’s dental practice in Clonmel, County Tipperary was boycotted. He wrote, ‘I was well known for loyalty, and when the trouble began I was a marked man and in a short time my practice consisted of local Loyalists’.⁸⁴ Thomas Good from County Cork claimed that he was forced to sell his farm because of intimidation by republicans and that his father, also a farmer in Cork County and a loyalist, was killed by rebels in March 1921. He writes, ‘my brother, William Good, an ex-Army Captain in the Great War, came home to attend my father’s funeral, he was taken out of his trap and killed, without any reason being given’. Another brother who had been living with the father escaped to England the night his brother was killed and after the farm was attacked by rebels. It is the type of story that may well have appeared in the press, as the execution of an ex-servicemen by the IRA, but it is clear the family were targeted as loyalists, not because one brother served in the army, indeed Thomas Good writes in his claim, ‘the losses were due entirely to my allegiance to the King and the British Government. I was a Loyalist living in a neighbourhood of rebels’. There is no mention of the father or other two brothers having been in the army.⁸⁵ The house of Colonel Charles Davis Guinness at Clermont Park, Dundalk, County Louth, was burned down in February 1923 by armed men and he had to leave Ireland. He was county representative of the Irish Unionist Alliance.⁸⁶ In February 1922 armed men failed in an attempt to kidnap Robert Lyon Moore from his house in County Donegal. From May to June 1922 they took possession of his house, looted the contents and did ‘considerable damage’. Moore was unable to return home unless under military protection and had to live in hotels in Northern Ireland for a year. There were several reasons other than war time service that were likely causes for the antagonism. He was a commandant in the

⁸³ TNA,CO762/62/23.

⁸⁴ TNA,CO762/117/4.

⁸⁵ TNA,CO762/32/18.

⁸⁶ TNA,CO762/104/1784.

Special Constabulary, a Deputy Lieutenant of the County, a member of the Irish Unionist Alliance and on the Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Alliance.⁸⁷ Army service was not necessarily an indicator of exceptional loyalty (see 1.2), although in the above cases it was almost certainly a manifestation of such. Yet it was only one aspect, they were in other regards high profile loyalists and this was the main cause of their problems.

Specific actions or behaviour on the part of the ex-serviceman, including spying or associating closely with or joining the Crown Forces, especially the RIC and the Black and Tans, or supplying to them, could cause intimidation. Civilian spies with local knowledge were of considerable danger to the IRA and could expect retribution. James Foran returned home to Milltown-Mal-Bay, County Clare in May 1919. He wrote, 'I remained a loyal supporter of the British Government and at once became a marked man. Armed men visited my home and accused me of being an English spy. Certainly I did do all in my power to help the British soldiers in their search for the IRA'. He claimed he was subjected to a 'severe beating'. It was surprising he was not executed.⁸⁸ Thomas Fitzsimons purchased a small farm in County Westmeath in May 1920. He wrote, 'my neighbours became cool towards me and threatening letters began to reach me because I had been a British Officer, and also I was friendly with the police'. Throughout 1921 he suffered continual harassment and damage to his property. The cause of intimidation was not that he was an ex-serviceman but an informer. He wrote, 'I reported information given to me by a girl, about an ambush, to the police. I was challenged for my action and taken by a party of men who fired shots across my face'.⁸⁹ In both these cases the claimants admitted informing. In other cases the situation was unclear. James Donovan of Kinsale, County Cork was killed in July 1922 as a suspected spy.⁹⁰ Kate O'Donovan from Bandon, County Cork wrote her husband, a navy pensioner,

⁸⁷ TNA,CO762/57/9.

⁸⁸ TNA,CO762/107/9.

⁸⁹ TNA,CO762/192/6.

⁹⁰ TNA,CO762/46/14, the claim was by his father, based on financial dependency.

was shot dead in front of her at their home in March 1921 because he was suspected of assisting the authorities.⁹¹ Robert Norman worked as a post office official in Cork City. In September 1922 a bomb was thrown through the kitchen window of his house. The bomb did not explode but a note was left in his backyard with the words, ‘Convicted spy. Traitors beware’. He left for England.⁹² George Thomson of Bandon, County Cork claimed he was kidnapped by the IRA in October 1920 because he was ‘suspected of thwarting republicans who were planning to attack the Military’, and was charged with treason and sentenced to be shot. He was released on condition that he left the country. He did so and did not return.⁹³ Shortly after starting a course at a college in Dublin in January 1921 with a guarantee of a job in the British Excise, James Fitzpatrick was ‘singled out as a spy’ and given 48 hours to leave the city. He reported this to the authorities. In May 1921 he was kidnapped by armed men and taken to Kingstown where he was told to leave on a night boat or be shot dead.⁹⁴ Paul Goodwin of Athy, County Clare wrote that he was ‘regarded as a spy and informer. My movements were watched’, and in June 1921 he was held up by armed men and told he was next to be shot for giving information. He left the country.⁹⁵ George Hall, a farmer from County Wicklow, received information in June 1921 that he was going to be shot. He went to Wexford for safety but was followed, beaten and told he was an English spy and a traitor. They let him go but warned him to leave the country.⁹⁶ In these cases the claimants stated the violence was caused by suspected spying. Their guilt is unclear from the files but according to Borghonovo the IRA had a well organised intelligence network providing the means to correctly identify informers (see 2.1). In the case of Hall, it seems unlikely that they would follow him to another county unless they had evidence. In many of the cases, the IRA had

⁹¹ TNA,CO762/78/13.

⁹² TNA,CO762/119/4.

⁹³ TNA,CO762/90/8.

⁹⁴ NA,CO762/61/17.

⁹⁵ TNA,CO762/193/7.

⁹⁶ TNA,CO762/59/5.

opportunities to kill the suspect but did not. If their objective was simply to kill ex-servicemen, they would have not have gone to the trouble of warning them to leave. The following case illustrates the conflicting information from different sources. Margaret Maher of Thurles, County Tipperary wrote that in December 1920 her son, John Maher, got information that the IRA had sentenced him to death for giving information to the RIC. In March 1921 he and another ex-soldier, Patrick Meara, were kidnapped and murdered by the IRA, who put notices on the bodies warning spies and informers to beware. In October 1922 her husband, Patrick Maher, also an ex-serviceman, was dismissed from his bank job after the manager told him he had received a letter from the IRA ordering him to do this. He was unable to get other employment. In October 1922 the IRA smashed the windows of their home with stones.⁹⁷ The IMA/BMH witness statements contain the republican perspective. James Leahy, an IRA officer, wrote that Maher (the son) and Meara were known to be close to the RIC and the Tans and were suspected of giving information on wanted republicans; a number of raids in the town were attributed to information supplied by them. He confirms the date of execution, March 1921 and the warning notices. In reprisal, republicans were raided in their homes and shot. RIC reports state that this was carried out by friends of the ex-servicemen but dispute the accusation that Maher and Meara were spies, claiming that they were ‘absolutely useless’ to them. According to Leahy the raiders were masked and armed policemen and one of their leaders, Sergeant Enright, gave him a detailed account of the shooting during the Truce.⁹⁸ Much research has been based on the RIC police files. The IRA witness statements, not surprisingly, provide a different perspective of events. What is interesting is the specific reference to the RIC officer involved. Martin Donohue’s case illustrates the stance often taken by SILRA in claiming that intimidation was only due to war service. They wrote of Donahue that, as he had been an ex-serviceman, he would probably

⁹⁷ TNA,CO762/67/9.

⁹⁸ IMA/BMH/WS1454, Leahy refers to the son as James; TNA,CO904/114,860.

have been discriminated against had he remained in Ireland. In reality Donohue who worked as a librarian in an internment prison for Sinn Feiners was 'a marked man' because he got the inmates into trouble by 'snitching'.⁹⁹ Due to a shared military background ex-servicemen may have been more susceptible to friendly relationships with the Crown Forces. In January 1921 a number of Tans were drafted into Arva County Cavan. Most were like Richard Kemp ex-soldiers and members of the Protestant Church. He noted, 'they used to visit my house and chat. This brought me under the notice of the IRA, who warned me to cease all communication and threatened to shoot me'.¹⁰⁰ There is no evidence that Kemp was an informer but it was inevitable the IRA would be suspicious.

Those who supplied to the British forces could be subjected to intimidation. Thomas Deignan an IRA battalion commander in County Sligo wrote, 'the police were boycotted. No one would supply them with food. No one would hire them cars or associate or speak to them and anyone doing so incurred the immediate displeasure of the IRA'.¹⁰¹ The republicans were concerned that not only goods and services would be supplied, but also that those with close connections to the Crown Forces would provide sensitive information. That they had cause to be suspicious was demonstrated by the case of Benjamin Stone, a Protestant from Cork with a family history of army and RIC service. He wrote that while with the RIC 'in the nineties I suffered great hardship through the Land War, protecting landlords from agrarian outrage'. Upon his return from the War he opened a shop that supplied the British Forces. He was also an informer. 'I gave them a great deal of help as to localities, individuals and happenings and prevented, at least, two ambushes of military'. His shop windows were broken by republicans, his donkey taken away and the delivery cart smashed and he received threatening letters. After an incident in which an ex-service man was shot returning from a dance, soldiers in retaliation broke windows except for his, making him a marked man; his

⁹⁹ TNA,CO762/53/8.

¹⁰⁰ TNA,CO762/187/10.

¹⁰¹ IMA/BMH/WS 894.

shop was boycotted by civilians. He was treasurer of the Comrades of the Great War. Their building was burnt down and he was warned his house would also be torched if he found new premises. His shop takings dwindled and in April 1923 he had to sell his house and business, but the IGC noted that the major part of his income came from Crown Forces and so declined when they withdrew.¹⁰² Edward Delany of Newport, County Tipperary, supplied the Crown Forces with food and acted as a guide for them in unfamiliar areas. Two of his friends, an ex-soldier called Patrick Galligan and an ex-RIC sergeant were murdered in May 1922, and he ‘got word’ he would be next, so he immediately left Ireland.¹⁰³ If acting as a ‘guide’ included providing information on the local IRA, it was inevitable that Delaney would receive retribution. Galligan’s wife Bridget wrote that her husband was murdered by irregulars in front of her and that ‘there was no other reason except that he had served many years in the British Army’.¹⁰⁴ As he was friends with Delany he may also have been an informer. Patrick Lynass from Cork was fired on by the IRA in May 1921 whilst coming home from a military dance where he was performing as a musician. Although Lynass sought to blame his problems on being an ex-servicemen, he wrote others ‘received threatening letters warning them not to attend the dance’, and that ‘while the trouble was on in Ireland I gave my moral support to the British Government and gave every assistance I could to members of the Crown’.¹⁰⁵ Simon Cartwright and his wife ran a boarding house in Bundoran, County Donegal. In May 1922 they were raided by republican forces and accused of ‘keeping two special policemen the previous night’. They received the following notice, ‘we want your house for the people your gang is putting out of the Six Counties. Go back and live with your brother Specials there. If you do not go within the week you will be shot’. They left

¹⁰² TNA,CO762/14/19.

¹⁰³ TNA,CO762/83/12.

¹⁰⁴ TNA,CO762/19/9.

¹⁰⁵ TNA,CO762/73/9.

eventually settling in Londonderry.¹⁰⁶ Patrick McGrath of County Carlow and his father, also an ex-serviceman, refused to support the IRA. His father gave evidence against them after the local police barrack was burned down, and provided laundry services for the military when others refused. An apprenticeship in motor engineering was organised for McGrath by the Civil Liabilities Department in 1921, following which he was approached by the IRA and told to join or leave the district. He refused and was arrested and told to depart or he would be shot as a spy. He rejoined the armed forces in August 1921 and was stationed in County Wicklow. His father obtained a pass to sell the troops fruit and confectionaries but was told by the IRA to stay out of the camp. They killed his pony, broke his cart and sent him threatening letters. McGrath wrote that he felt ‘everyone was against us’.¹⁰⁷ George Kelly was a partner in a general merchant business in Cahir, County Tipperary. He was threatened against supplying goods to the Crown Forces. Kelly wrote, ‘my association with H.M. Forces brought me into ill favour with the Republicans’.¹⁰⁸ The father of Richard Broderick from Youghal, Cork owned a pub, in which he helped, that was frequented by British soldiers. At the end of 1920 the IRA tried to close it; his father refused after which there was a boycott and civilians ceased using the pub. After the British Forces left all trade was therefore lost.¹⁰⁹ James McLoughlin of Youghal, County Cork worked at the local barracks as a harness repairer for the British army. He claimed he had been boycotted but the IGC attributed part of his loss to a diminution in trade, following the departure of the Crown Forces.¹¹⁰ Some shop owners on friendly relations with the Crown Forces suffered. Henry Alcock from Cork claimed he was waylaid and beaten by the IRA in September 1921, after which his haberdashery shop was boycotted. He helped recruit locally before volunteering and on his

¹⁰⁶ TNA,CO762/98/20.

¹⁰⁷ TNA,CO762/60/7.

¹⁰⁸ TNA,CO762/178/9.

¹⁰⁹ NA,CO762/35/15.

¹¹⁰ TNA,CO762/143/16, McLoughlin had previously received assistance from the Irish Loyalists’ Relief Association and the Army Benevolent Funds.

return organised annual poppy day functions and was friendly with military. Alcock's solicitor wrote that his business suffered 'on account of his connection and association with the Crown Forces'.¹¹¹ In January 1921 John Browlow opened a garage in Nenagh, County Tipperary. He wrote that from August 1921 he was boycotted because of his friendliness with the RIC and military. After receiving a threatening letter he left in December 1921. He returned in May 1922 but after more threats left for London returning in March 1924.¹¹² Vincent O'Riordan on returning to Tipperary started a motor hire business. He was friendly with the Crown Forces and had driven them on numerous occasions, and as a result lost business because customers knew 'that owing to his unpopularity with Sinn Fein his car was liable to be stopped and taken away when on a journey'. After the military left Ireland armed men seized his car in July 1922.¹¹³ In 1919 Charles Nyhan returned to his medical practice in Clonakilty, County Cork. He was appointed doctor to the British military and was on friendly terms with them. He gave evidence in a number of cases where members of the RIC had been injured performing their duties. In November 1921 his motor car was seized by the IRA. In April 1922 he was held up by Irregulars on a public road. In August 1922 his house was raided by armed men. He went to England for six weeks returning after hearing Clonakilty had been occupied by government troops. He claimed his practice suffered but the IGC concluded this was due to the Crown Forces withdrawing and the expulsion of many of the land owning classes.¹¹⁴ In a number of cases the IGC considered the problems of those who supplied to the Crown Forces was not caused by boycotts but due to the withdrawal of British forces, leading to a loss of business for which no compensation was due.

Some of those employed by the Crown Forces or their agencies in administrative and support roles claimed they were intimidated. Charles Kelly, wrote that he was attacked

¹¹¹ TNA,CO762/10/3.

¹¹² TNA,CO762/3714.

¹¹³ TNA,CO762/66/1.

¹¹⁴ TNA,CO762/120/2.

twice in 1920 and 1921 by republicans ‘due to my services to the British Government as a Dublin Castle official during the reign of terror in Ireland’, and because his son was Chief Intelligence Officer on the staff of General Strickland in Cork.¹¹⁵ John Kavanagh from Dublin was employed as a clerk at the Royal Army Service Corp until June 1922. He claimed there was a ‘relentless murder campaign by Republicans against loyal Government employees’, citing another ex-soldier clerk named Denis Lenehan who was badly wounded on his way home from work in 1921.¹¹⁶ While the IRA did sometimes target non-military personnel who worked for the Crown Forces (their employment released soldiers for active duty) according to Borgonovo most were left alone unless they were also informing. The majority of IGC claims relate not to intimidation caused while the claimant was working for the Crown Forces but to problems after their departure. Frank Redman worked as a clerk at Curragh Camp, County Kildare. After the British vacated he sought employment but received threats which caused him to leave with his family for England.¹¹⁷ Matthew Forsyth was employed as a canteen manager at the Fermoy Military Barracks in Cork. He lost the job when the troops withdrew in March 1922. Following warnings from the IRA he left Ireland in July 1922 with his family.¹¹⁸ William Chilcott worked as an auditor in the RIC office in Dublin Castle until July 1922, after which due to intimidation he left the country.¹¹⁹ David Kelley was employed as a civilian foreman mechanic with the army in the Royal Barracks, Dublin until December 1922. He claimed after the government changed he received threats and with no prospects of employment in Ireland went to England in January 1923.¹²⁰ Although working in administration functions for the Crown Forces may in some cases have caused intimidation or impeded future employment opportunities, the IGC concluded that, as

¹¹⁵ TNA,CO762/16/10.

¹¹⁶ TNA,CO762/14/14.

¹¹⁷ TNA,CO762/13/11.

¹¹⁸ TNA,CO762/96/16.

¹¹⁹ TNA,CO762/120/14.

¹²⁰ TNA,CO762/94/12.

with those who supplied the Crown Forces, the consequences of the Forces withdrawal, in this case loss of employment, was a primary reason for complaint and not a basis for compensation. In any case the problem was not caused by their being an ex-serviceman except to the extent that this was more likely to have led to their employment in the first instance.

Ex-servicemen who joined the RIC and particularly the Black and Tans or Auxiliaries were intimidated even after returning home following their disbandment. Michael O'Brien from Callan, Kilkenny joined the RIC/Black and Tans. After being disbanded in January 1922, a group of armed men broke into his house took him to the old RIC barracks and imprisoned him. He escaped and fled to England.¹²¹ Michael St. Legier of Durrow, Queen's County returned to the RIC after the War. He wrote, 'In 1922 I was disbanded from the RIC and obliged to leave this county'. He returned and in 1923 purchased two cottages and land. Notices were posted that a planter and spy and an enemy of the country was present. He was obliged to leave again, as, 'I was subjected to every annoyance and intimidation'.¹²² Dennis Roche of Dublin joined the RIC. He claimed his elderly father, a retired RIC officer, was shunned after refusing to influence him to resign. In 1921 he went to live with him. In March 1923 he claimed, 'the front door was battered down and a band of disguised ruffians rushed in and shouted for the dog that did England's dirty work'. He was accused of being involved in the shooting of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Sinn Féin's Tomás Mac Curtain, who was shot in March 1920 by, according to the inquest, the RIC. He was allowed to go but told if he returned he would be immediately shot.¹²³ John Lavelle was employed with the Auxiliaries in Galway as an Officer's mess servant. He lost his job with the disbandment of the RIC in 1922. He wrote, 'I was looked upon as a Tan, no one in the neighbourhood would employ me. I succeeded in getting employment but when I turned up

¹²¹ TNA,CO762/93/25.

¹²² TNA,CO762/186/6.

¹²³ TNA,CO762/192/18.

the 50 men employed on the works downed tools'.¹²⁴ Captain John Rogers joined the Auxiliaries and served in Cork. When they disbanded in January 1922 he claimed he had to leave Ireland for England to find work.¹²⁵ Edward O' Callaghan returned to Cork in 1919 and claimed he refused a 'high command' in the IRA but joined the Auxiliaries. He wrote, 'I was compelled to leave my home in May 1922. I am looked upon as a traitor as I fought in the British Crown Forces, during what they termed the Anglo-Irish War'. The IGC recognised the difficulties faced by those who had served in the RIC, concluding in O'Callaghan's case, 'in consequence of his connection with the Constabulary he found it impossible to get employment and was eventually obliged to seek refuge in Great Britain'.¹²⁶ The intimidation in these cases was because they had fought Irishmen on Irish soil. Likewise army service in Ireland during the conflict was a cause for retribution; a distinction was made to service overseas. Patrick McCormack enlisted in 1916 and served with the British Army in Ireland from April 1920 until February 1922. When he returned home to Ennistymon, County Clare he says he was 'considered an enemy of the country by everyone', beaten and called a Black and Tan'. In contrast, he claimed, 'other discharged British soldiers were set up in various businesses who never served against the IRA'.¹²⁷ Martin Conway wrote, 'when it became known in Limerick that I was serving in the British Army during the trouble here I was unable to find any employment'. If he obtained work it was only until 'it was found out I was serving under the British flag when the fight was on in Ireland'.¹²⁸ William Wilson wrote that he lost his job in 1923 at the Office of Public Works and had to leave Ireland on account of threats due to his army service against the rebels in 1916.¹²⁹ Cecil Burchett from County Tipperary served in Limerick during the Rising and was part of raiding parties which brought

¹²⁴ TNA,CO762/194/27.

¹²⁵ TNA,CO762/9/10.

¹²⁶ TNA,CO762/32/4.

¹²⁷ TNA,CO762/63/7, the IGC questioned the validity of claims from this area, see below.

¹²⁸ TNA,CO762/36/2.

¹²⁹ TNA,CO762/24/5.

him within a few miles of his home. After returning home he received warnings to leave Ireland. He also wrote that that his recruiting activities during the War were an additional reason for intimidation.¹³⁰ Recruitment activities in Ireland during the War increased the likelihood of retribution. Captain Daniel Sheehan was an MP for Cork, a barrister and journalist. He claimed to have helped recruit 5,000 volunteers before enlisting himself. He wrote, ‘as a consequence of my war service and especially because of my successful recruitment activities it was impossible for me to return to Ireland and resume my career’.¹³¹ Major Hamilton Johnstone of Glenties, County Donegal, rejoined his old regiment but due to age remained in Ireland taking a very active part in the recruiting campaign. He was also a Magistrate for the County of Donegal. In August 1922, armed men entered his house and shot him dead and the house was later burned down.¹³² Prior to enlistment Francis Costello from Nenagh, County Tipperary raised a troop of local yeomanry. He wrote that from 1919 to 1922 he owned three properties, but was forced to leave after he was raided.¹³³ Martin Bennett returned to Mountrath, in 1922 after the Leinster Regiment was disbanded. He claimed he met with a good deal of opposition as he had recruited in the area from 1916 to 1918.¹³⁴

The IRA launched general campaigns to obtain arms, equipment, supplies and finance in order to sustain their activities. Some of the claims from those subject to these campaigns were particularly trivial. Thomas Browning of County Tipperary said in 1922 his house was raided by Irish republican forces taking two field glasses. He claimed ‘as a British Officer I was always under suspicion’.¹³⁵ It seems likely that if the IRA were antagonistic to him for being an ex-British officer, the sanction would have been more severe. The house of

¹³⁰ TNA,CO762/57/4, Burchett’s case needs qualifying. He was able to run his business until 1924 when it was sold. He writes most of his customers were loyalists who had been driven out of the country; this was likely a significant reason for the sale of the business.

¹³¹ TNA,CO762/24/14.

¹³² TNA,CO762/123/3.

¹³³ TNA,CO762/174/1.

¹³⁴ TNA,CO762/148/6.

¹³⁵ TNA,CO762/62/17.

Sir Arthur Hance in Bantry, County Cork was raided several times by the IRA in 1921 and items, including two bicycles and binoculars were taken.¹³⁶ In Joseph Corcullion's case the threat was more serious. He opened a bicycle shop in Castlefin, County Donegal and in March 1921 and May 1922 armed men raided his premises, looting equipment. He was told he would not be allowed to carry on business in the Free State and was finally forced to vacate his shop, owing to threats to shoot him.¹³⁷ Between July and November 1922, armed men stole the motor car and horse of Major Richard Philips from County Tipperary. In a time of turmoil, as the IGC noted, it may have been a simple robbery.¹³⁸ The ambiguity between politically motivated intimidation and simple theft was illustrated in the case of Robert Browne from Rathkenny, County Cavan who was a member of the Loyal Orange Institution in his district. In 1920/21 his shop was raided because, he claimed, he had been purchasing goods from Northern Ireland at the time of the Belfast boycott. In April 1924 masked men came into his shop and attempted to extort money. In December 1925 he was again robbed.¹³⁹ It seems unlikely that these latter incidents were politically motivated, both in terms of the years and particularly as in 1924 his wife identified one of the men who was then arrested by the authorities and sentenced to one year imprisonment. Others were punished for refusing to pay levies. George Bradley owned a farm in Mountrath, Queen's County and, because he refused to subscribe to IRA funds, he was boycotted from 1920 to 1924 and his pigs were poisoned.¹⁴⁰ James Bannon resumed his tailor's business in Thurles, Tipperary. He wrote he was getting back his customers when boycotted in 1921, having refused to subscribe to IRA funds.¹⁴¹ Owen Gill of Nenagh, County Tipperary wrote that he refused to subscribe to IRA funds and his house was raided.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ TNA,CO762/84/9.

¹³⁷ TNA,CO762/109/11.

¹³⁸ TNA,CO762/67/10.

¹³⁹ TNA,CO762/95/20.

¹⁴⁰ TNA,CO762/148/10.

¹⁴¹ TNA,CO762/196/18.

¹⁴² TNA,CO762/193/19.

Those who refused to join the IRA suffered retribution. Given their military skills it was more likely that ex-servicemen would be particularly targeted. David Mullins of Queen's County wrote, 'there was the greatest hostility displayed to all old soldiers and Loyalists unless they joined the rebellion against the Crown'.¹⁴³ Simon O'Flaherty from Doolin, County Clare, claimed that in March 1920 he refused to join the IRA and consequently suffered severe threats and insults.¹⁴⁴ William Caldbeck from Mountrath, Queen's County claimed that because he refused to join the IRA, or subscribe to their funds, he was 'marked out for bad treatment', and could not get work between 1921 and 1922.¹⁴⁵ Wilfred Trey was refused his old job back in County Limerick unless he joined the IRA.¹⁴⁶ In other cases there were additional circumstances that caused intimidation. William Leahy of Cork City wrote that, as he was an ex-soldier and loyalist, he refused to join the IRA and consequently his house was raided in June 1920. In February 1921 a friend of his from the British army was shot dead on leaving his house in the company of his sister, suggesting the real problem may have been friendliness with British soldiers. Leahy lived in the barracks for fourteen months for safety, a protection normally offered informers, after which he left for England.¹⁴⁷ Patrick Baker from Liscannor, County Clare was asked to join the IRA in 1920 but refused. Later in 1920 when the Royal Marines came to Liscannor he volunteered to cart foodstuffs for them. In December 1921, he was kidnapped and court-martialled as a British spy and was sentenced to leave Clare or be executed. He remained and in July 1922 was 'severely beaten'.¹⁴⁸ Michael Martin of Wexford refused to join the republicans in 1920 and had his motor lorry taken in 1922. That he made a living with it in the intervening period does not indicate

¹⁴³ TNA,CO762/71/3.

¹⁴⁴ TNA,CO762/94/21.

¹⁴⁵ TNA,CO762/146/1.

¹⁴⁶ TNA,CO762/167/7.

¹⁴⁷ TNA,CO762/155/4.

¹⁴⁸ TNA,CO762/158/1.

significant intimidation. Additionally, he said that he had made many enemies through helping to recruit for the British army before enlisting.¹⁴⁹

The IGC described parts of County Cork as ‘very bad’.¹⁵⁰ Many of the claims were from West Cork; mostly they did not state that intimidation was due to war service (see below files).¹⁵¹ In others they did; Richard Jermyn worked as a driver. In August 1921 his employers dismissed him as ‘they did not want a British ex-soldier in their employment’.¹⁵² George Grogan worked for the railway until August 1921 when he ‘received a letter warning me under penalty of death to leave my employment owing to being an ex-serviceman’. He remained in the locality and lived on his army pension.¹⁵³ County Tipperary was another area of significant IRA activity and again most claimants did not attribute the cause of their intimidation to army service (see below files).¹⁵⁴ Patrick Maloney was an exception. He was employed as a postman before enlisting and was promised his job back on return, but was told that he ‘had no further claims on the post office as promises made to ex-British Soldiers were withdrawn’.¹⁵⁵ The case of Michael Dillon from Clonmel, County Tipperary is interesting as it illustrates how support for the Free State caused intimidation from Irregulars. His father’s home was attacked in July 1921 and his sister was murdered; he was fired on, but escaped. His younger brother was also killed. Dillon was subject to further intimidation until October 1922 when he gave up his position in the Post Office and left for England. Newspapers articles under the headlines, ‘Life Under the Irish Rebels’, and ‘Clonmel Savagery’, gave more details of the intimidation of the family. They refer to ‘the callousness which has marked the operations of the Irregulars in Southern Ireland’, and that the republicans tortured the younger brother and executed him. Whatever caused the murder of

¹⁴⁹ TNA,CO762/41/16.

¹⁵⁰ TNA,CO762/89/13.

¹⁵¹ TNA,CO762/187/17, John Harley; TNA,CO762/129/11. Richard Bright; TNA,CO762/105/10, Henry Synan.

¹⁵² TNA,CO762/192/23.

¹⁵³ TNA,CO762/21/13.

¹⁵⁴ TNA,CO762/147/15, Patrick Rourke; TNA,CO762/193/18, Samuel Dann; TNA,CO762/132/7, John Savage; TNA,CO762/88/19, Mary/ George Brophy TNA,CO762/196/5, George Holland.

¹⁵⁵ TNA,CO762/36/10.

his younger siblings it was likely more than Michael Dillon's army service. The paper states the younger brother was a 'Free Stater', and that 'this act has done more against the Republicans, even their own people are horrified'.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps surprisingly many complaints emanated from Queen's County, as comparatively it was not an area of significant IRA activity (see 2.3). A number of the claims indicated comparatively low levels of intimidation. Robert Milne of Mountrath had turf stolen and his pig poisoned.¹⁵⁷ More seriously, Henry Nagle of Mountmellick was ordered to leave but remained until in April 1922 his brother Robert was murdered in Clonakity, West Cork, and Henry decided it was too dangerous to stay and left for England.¹⁵⁸

A review of the 73 claimants who stated that war service was a contributory cause of violence indicates that in a number of cases the IGC concluded such claims were at the least questionable. Robert Tobin returned to Cork and worked for Cork City Pensions Office. In September 1922 he joined the Free State army. In January 1923 he returned home and was shot by three men. His wife wrote:

he joined the Free State Army, and this fact, coupled with his being an ex-British soldier was the cause of his assassination, several other ex-soldiers of the British Army were murdered previous to and subsequent to the murder of my husband, many others received notices of death and had to leave the City of Cork.

The IGC noted he might not be a loyalist as 'he had joined the Free State Army at a time when they were not anxious to admit any Loyalists', and that his death could have resulted from an action in the Free State army.¹⁵⁹ The case is interesting insofar that Tobin worked for the local council, implying he was not subject to prejudice due to his having served in the British army and that his death was caused by National army service not, despite the protestation of his wife, his having been a British soldier. In November 1922 Liam Lynch, the

¹⁵⁶ TNA,CO762/119/11.

¹⁵⁷ TNA,CO762/192/15.

¹⁵⁸ TNA,CO762/147/7.

¹⁵⁹ TNA,CO762/23/12.

commanding officer of the anti-Treaty Forces, ordered the assassination of British army veterans who had joined the Free State army (see 4.4).¹⁶⁰ Daniel Cretin was employed by Southern Railway in Mallow, County Cork in July 1921. He claimed he had to leave the country owing to his being a navy pensioner. The IGC report stated, ‘it does not appear from the evidence submitted that the claimant was obliged through threats or intimidation to leave’.¹⁶¹ William Brereton from Roscrea, County Tipperary bought a threshing mill in November 1920 for £800 paid for out of a £750 bank loan. He wrote, ‘on account of me being an ex-soldier of the British Army there was an agitation started against me and people who were inclined to employ me got threatening letters not to do so’. He claimed the boycott was also because his brother joined the RIC when he came out the army. The IGC reported that he had reduced his loan to £200 by 1926, which ‘does not suggest a rigorous boycott but rather a successful venture’.¹⁶² His having been given a bank loan of circa £40,000 in today’s money also does not imply victimisation. Captain Timothy Collins returned to run his grocery business in Cork City and claimed, ‘as a result of my service in H.M. Forces I have been practically boycotted in 1921 and 1922’, and that from January 1922 threats were made on his life and he was warned to leave the country. Canon Hodges replied to a query from the IGC stating that Collins was ‘a prosperous man and if he does not make the income he made in previous days it would be due to the present business depression and certainly not a boycott’.¹⁶³ Matthew Steele wrote that, ‘in February 1921 I commenced grocery business in Clonmel, County Tipperary and did a good trade until August 1921 when trouble between the Irregulars and Free State Troops began. A great portion of my stock was commandeered and my business suffered. Owing to being an ex-British Officer I was boycotted. Finally, in May 1923, I had to sell my business’. It seems unlikely that Steele’s problems were caused by his

¹⁶⁰ Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers in the British Army’, 54.

¹⁶¹ TNA,CO762/47/5.

¹⁶² TNA,CO762/50/20.

¹⁶³ TNA,CO762/120/12.

being an ex-British Officer or the problem would have been apparent earlier. Clonmel was a British army base and more likely his business declined with their departure which is perhaps why the IGC rejected his claim.¹⁶⁴ Thomas Glynn of County Longford complained that the Irregulars shot many ex-army officers on site. Yet his punishment for refusing to join the IRA in October 1921 was the theft of his bicycle. The IGC did not find this explanation satisfactory and he was not awarded any money.¹⁶⁵ Patrick Collins of County Cork wrote ‘ex-servicemen are victimised and prevented from obtaining employment’. The IGC asked for evidence but none was forthcoming so no compensation was paid.¹⁶⁶ In two other cases in which the applicant cited army service as a cause for their problems local newspapers provide a different perspective. Patrick Clarke wrote, ‘I was a Rate Collector to the Wicklow Urban Council from which I got permission to join the British Army, the then Council passed a resolution congratulating me and promising to keep my position open for me on my return. The Council during my absence had changed to Republican and when I made an application for my old position they refused to reinstate me because I had served in H.M. Forces’. He had not applied for reinstatement until 1922. According to the local newspaper the Council argued that he did not ask for his job in the time of Troubles but ‘now he comes when everything is over’, and that the current incumbent ‘had been a most efficient officer’.¹⁶⁷ On demobilisation John Dart returned to work in his father’s business in Roscrea, County Tipperary. He wrote, ‘during the troubled times in which we had the protection of the RIC, feeling was not so extreme against us although I received several threatening letters. But when the RIC were withdrawn and the Free State republicans were left in charge, things were made unpleasant for me as an ex-officer of the British Army’. He wrote that on account of an incident in which he was accused of removing a republican flag that the IRA had hoisted in

¹⁶⁴ TNA,CO762/194/24.

¹⁶⁵ TNA,CO762/74/5.

¹⁶⁶ TNA,CO762/45/3.

¹⁶⁷ TNA,CO762/45/7; *The Wicklow Newsletter*, 11 March 1922.

Roscrea, following which he was tried by a republican court but acquitted, his father's business was boycotted, the premises damaged and he was threatened, after which he left the country. The IGC report noted that 'the claimant on account of being an ex-British Officer, and he and his father being known as Loyalists, suffered a considerable amount of abuse subsequent to the withdrawal of the Constabulary'. An article in *The Midland Tribune* in March 1922, provides a different perspective, stating that Dart had attended a hearing held by IRA officers in March 1922 for being disrespectful to the flag of the Irish. The charge was withdrawn. In relation to the boycott and the damage to the business, the senior IRA officer stated that it was the action of 'irresponsibles' and it was the responsibility of he and his officers 'to see firms are accorded protection from unlawful interference'. The newspaper also condemned such actions writing, 'irresponsible people should not take the law into their own hands', and noted that the clergy at local masses had also criticized the damaging of the company's premises. The Darts had the support of the media, clergy and the authorities. Dart remained in England for 2 years and at the time of his claim was working as a commercial traveller and living in Dublin.¹⁶⁸

An unusually high number of claimants from Ennistymon, County Clare stated intimidation was caused by their army service; Joseph O'Brien wrote that employers were threatened not to give him a job as he was a British ex-serviceman.¹⁶⁹ Michael Shannon wrote, 'I cannot get work since I was an ex-soldier and am not wanted anywhere'.¹⁷⁰ Austin O'Connor attributed his lack of work to being a soldier.¹⁷¹ John Ronan stated, 'My loss of trade is attributable to service in the Great War'.¹⁷² Thomas O'Brien claimed, 'The reason I give for not getting work is on account of my father, three brothers and myself serving with

¹⁶⁸ TNA,CO762/40/1; *The Midland Tribune*, 11 March 1922.

¹⁶⁹ TNA,CO762/96/2.

¹⁷⁰ TNA,CO762/96/6.

¹⁷¹ TNA,CO762/91/3.

¹⁷² TNA,CO762/94/19.

the British Forces. Nobody seemed to want to have anything to do with the family'.¹⁷³ George Roberts said after demobilisation he 'considerably suffered in consequence of my loyalty'.¹⁷⁴ Michael Halloran and his two sons John and Michael made similar claims that they had suffered threats 'in consequence of his own and his family loyalty to the British Empire', but after an investigation the IGC concluded that 'the statements that they were boycotted and unpopular in the district and assaulted by the IRA are perfect nonsense', and that they had 'a thoroughly bad reputation'.¹⁷⁵ None of the above received compensation. Such cases may have been used by loyalist lobbying groups keen to illustrate the plight of ex-servicemen and they often received extensive press coverage. Unlike perhaps newspapers, the IGC had a duty to investigate more thoroughly as they had to make a decision whether to recommend compensation, also they did not have the political motivations of the lobbying groups. Under closer examination the claims were proved false. The IGC investigated 79 cases from Ennistymon and nearby Lahinch and found them to be bogus and for the most part from republican supporters.¹⁷⁶ They noted, 'these cases in Ennistymon are almost impossible to investigate; confirmatory evidence can be obtained in that town for a few shillings'.¹⁷⁷ It would be ironic if those most likely to directly attribute the cause of their intimidation to army service were fraudulent republican claimants.

Other archival sources, such as those related to the Lavery Committee, while not as comprehensive as the IGC files, contain records of similar grievances. For example, William Callan (he also applied to the IGC) and Peter Lesley from County Westmeath were given land and suffered from IRA harassment afterwards. Martin Forde of County Kerry wrote that 'in 1918 the IRA informed me that if I re-joined the Army it meant instant death, so through fear I never did'. Patrick Meade of County Westmeath joined the RIC but the IRA threatened

¹⁷³ TNA,CO762/108/5.

¹⁷⁴ TNA,CO762/86/5.

¹⁷⁵ TNA,CO762/51/1;762/63/9;762/68/3.

¹⁷⁶ TNA/762/2/Admin.

¹⁷⁷ TNA,CO762/86/5.

him with death if he continued service.¹⁷⁸ These complaints, unlike those to the IGC, were not investigated on an individual basis.

The IGC files demonstrate that intimidation towards ex-servicemen was predominantly for a reason other than just war service; of the comparatively small number of ex-servicemen who made claims the majority did not attribute war service as a cause of intimidation. The reasons they gave were applicable to other segments of the population who had not served in the War.

b) *The Perpetrators*

The Irish Military Archives/Bureau of Military History (IMA/BMH) files contains recollections of republicans related to their experiences during the period from 1913 to July 1921. Of the 1,773 witness statements less than 60 are related to ex-servicemen who suffered intimidation and in some cases these referred to the same incident.¹⁷⁹ There were 47 separate incidents of which 38 were for suspected spying and from which 31 ex-servicemen were executed and 7 others escaped or disappeared from view, some after being shot. Most of the executions took place in 1921 prior to the truce in the time period when the Tans and Auxiliaries were most active. Of the 38 spying incidents, 26 took place in Munster, 17 in County Cork. Almost all the cases contain details of the activities which led to the victim being designated a spy. In most cases the IRA sought to gather evidence on the suspect and in a number of cases held ‘trials’. In addition to those executed or in which execution was sought, there were other cases in which the evidence was deemed insufficient. Some of the

¹⁷⁸ NAI, Lavery Committee, Individual Claims.

¹⁷⁹ The files are not a comprehensive record of all intimidation. RIC reports, for example in TNA,CO 904/114, contain many further details on ex-servicemen targeted by the IRA. The extracts from the IMA/BMH Witness Statements used in this section represent the comments of the relevant IRA members whose names are contained in the related footnote. As illustrated in the Maher case, see 2.2a, other sources may provide a different perspective. In addition to the case studies referred to here there are some additional references in the files to unnamed ex-servicemen who were targeted but with little substantive information given. There were also some cases of ex-servicemen who were under suspicion of informing but due to lack of evidence they were not subject to violence, details are provided in this section.

suspects had received warnings and had been told to leave the area, only being shot if they failed to do so.

Table 6: Suspected spies targeted by the IRA

Executed		
Name	Location	Date Killed
Halpin	Clontarf, Dublin	Circa June 1921
Robert Pike	Drumcondra, Dublin	June 1921
‘Chanters’ Ryan	Dublin	Pre Truce 1921
Martin Darmody	Kilmanagh, Callan, County Kilkenny	May 1921
Michael Keefe	Kilmanagh, Callan, County Kilkenny	May 1921
Kenny	Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny	August 1920
John Donaogue	Dunshaughlin, County Meath	Spring 1920 to pre Truce 1921
Blagriff,	Athlone, County Westmeath.	January/February 1921
Maher	Athlone, County Westmeath	Winter 1920/21 (estimated)
Jimmy Morrissey	Marshallstown, County Wexford	Summer 1920
Begley	Cork City, County Cork	June 1920 to pre Truce 1921
Denis Dwyer	Bandon, County Cork	January 1921
Crowley	County Cork	July 1920
O’Sullivan	Cork City, County Cork	Circa September 1920
Major O’Connor	Cork City, County Cork	February 1921
Finbarr O’Sullivan	Cork City, County Cork	February 1921
William O’Sullivan	Cork City, County Cork	February 1921
T O’Sullivan	Cork City, County Cork	Early 1921.
McPherson	Mallow, County Cork	July 1921
Lt Colonel Peacock	Innishannon, County Cork	June 1921 (shot presumed dead)
Michael Walsh	Cork City, County Cork	February 1921
John Quinlisk	Cork City, County Cork	February 1920
John Fitzgerald	Tralee, County Kerry	June 1921
Paddy Foley	Castlegregory, County Kerry	After summer 1920
Denis O’Loughlin	Tralee, County Kerry	April 1921
John O’Mahoney	Tralee, County Kerry	April 1921
Jack Maloney	Bruff, County Limerick.	Spring 1921
Thomas Kirby	Dundrum, County Tipperary	January 1921
James Maher	Thurles, County Tipperary	March 1921
Patrick Meara	Thurles, County Tipperary	March 1921
Unnamed	County Roscommon	Winter, 1920
Not Executed		
Name	Location	Shot/escaped
Patrick Duke	Dunshaughlin, County Meath	Escaped but returned after conflict
S Flynn	Cork City, County Cork	Escaped early 1921
Hamill	Cork City, County Cork	Shot June 1920/pre Truce 1921 recovered, left Ireland
Hawkins	Cork City, County Cork	Shot June 1920/pre Truce 1921, recovered left Ireland
D(Monkey) Mc Donnell	Cork City, County Cork	Thought to have left Ireland in 1921
Shiels	Kanturk, County Cork	Escaped circa March 1921
Thomas Hanly	Newcastlewest, County Limerick	Shot June 1921 but survived

Source: IMA/BMH, Dublin, Witness Statements (1913-21).

The reason for the IRA's virulent reaction to informers was very apparent. Most of the victims were from the area in which they were shot. Without civilian spies and their local knowledge, the Tans and Auxiliaries would have been dramatically less effective. Most of the ex-servicemen spies were ordinary soldiers, not officers, and a number of them did it for the money.

Table 7: Ex-servicemen killed/targeted as spies pro rata to population

County	Population	Incidents	Incidents per 10,000
Carlow	34,000	0	0.00
Dublin	505,000	3	0.06
Kildare	58,000	0	0.00
Kilkenny	70,000	3	0.43
Louth	63,000	0	0.00
Meath	62,000	2	0.32
Kings	53,000	0	0.00
Westmeath	57,000	2	0.35
Wexford	96,000	1	0.10
Wicklow	58,000	0	0.00
Leinster	1,056,000	11	0.10
Clare	95,000	0	0.00
Cork	365,000	17	0.47
Kerry	149,000	4	0.27
Limerick	140,000	2	0.14
Tipperary	140,000	3	0.21
Waterford	79,000	0	0.00
Munster	968,000	26	0.27
Galway	169,000	0	0.00
Leitrim	56,000	0	0.00
Mayo	172,000	0	0.00
Roscommon	84,000	1	0.12
Sligo	71,000	0	0.00
Connaught	552,000	1	0.02
Cavan	82,000	0	0.00
Donegal	153,000	0	0.00
Monaghan	65,000	0	0.00
Ulster (3 counties)	300,000	0	0.00
Total	2,876,000	38	0.13

Source: IMA/BMH, Dublin, Witness Statements (1913-21); Population data from 1926 census

In terms of population Munster had 2.7 times the number of killings/ex-servicemen targeted per 10,000 than Leinster. If the number of ex-servicemen (based on recruitment figures) is taken into account, then there were 2.29 killings/ex-servicemen targeted for every 10,000 ex-servicemen in Leinster, and 14.86 every 10,000 ex-servicemen in Munster.

Of the nine incidents not related to spying, seven ex-servicemen were subject to firearm raids, one refused to resign as a JP and one to make a contribution to a levy. In each case the victims were not specifically targeted for their war service but as part of general activities by the IRA in the period 1919/1920 to collect much needed arms and money, and to dismantle the British judiciary system and replace it with a republican alternative. By July 1920 all British appointed Justices of the Peace in Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny had resigned except for Captain Howlett. He was arrested as he was 'likely to assist the enemy', and taken before a Sinn Fein court. Michael O'Carroll a local IRA officer wrote that Howlett defended himself in 'one of the finest speeches it has ever been my lot to listen to'. He was acquitted as the witnesses had failed to prove their case against him but he agreed to resign as a JP.¹⁸⁰ The IRA was desperately short of weapons. In autumn 1920 general headquarters ordered a raid across the country for arms; inevitably this included the big houses of the Ascendancy class, homes of RIC officers and of retired British army officers, the latter proving a valuable source of revolvers.¹⁸¹ One such raid was on Captain Clarke who lived just outside Cork City and was holding a shooting party. Clarke proved threatening and was shot in the hand. Sean O'Connell, a quartermaster in Cork City, who led the incursion bandaged Clarke's arm and then left with a number of guns. He wrote that this was the only occasion when it had been necessary to use a weapon on such a raid.¹⁸² The incident does not

¹⁸⁰ IMA/BMH/WS966, Walsh, Kilkenny; WS1609, O'Carroll, Kilkenny.

¹⁸¹ IMA/BMH/WS1454, Leahy, Tipperary; WS1296, Costello, Westmeath; WS1708, Barry, Cork; WS1503, McCormack, Westmeath; WS894, Deignan, Sligo.

¹⁸² IMA/BMH/WS1706, O'Connell, City; The IRA witnesses for the other named victims were: Hope Nelson, (WS742, Halpin, Tipperary); Colonel Hickey, (WS996, Carmody, Kerry); Hope Wilson, (WS1350, Davin, Tipperary) and Major Gubbins, (WS1631, Meaney, Cork).

evidence any general animosity towards ex-servicemen. In Bandon, County Cork in winter 1920/1921, cattle and other goods were seized from retired British officers and other loyalists who had refused to subscribe to the arms levy fund.¹⁸³ In late 1919, a levy was made on property owners in County Westmeath to raise money for arms based on a valuation of the property. All paid ‘willingly’ except Colonel King-Harmon of Athlone. He was visited by two IRA members and paid under threat. As they left the Colonel said, ‘There is no hope of your beating the British Empire’.¹⁸⁴

Table 8: Other offences

Name	Location	Incident	Date
Captain Howlett	Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny	Forced to resign as JP	August 1920
Colonel King-Harmon	Athlone, County Westmeath	Refused to pay IRA levy	Late 1919
Captain Clarke	Cork City, County Cork	Raided/firearms stolen	Early 1919
Major Gubbins	County Cork	Raided/firearms stolen	1920
Hope Nelson	County Tipperary	Raided/firearms stolen	1919
Hope Wilson	County Tipperary	Raided/firearms stolen	Winter 1918
Colonel Hickey	County Kerry	Raided/firearms stolen	1919
Unnamed	County Galway	Raided/firearms stolen	1919
Unnamed	County Sligo	Raided/firearms stolen	x1920

Source: IMA/BMH, Dublin, Witness Statements (1913-21)

The witness statements indicate there were two periods of the Anglo-Irish War, divided by the arrival of the Black and Tans. Michael McCormack an officer from County Westmeath wrote police work was the principal occupation of the Volunteers during 1919 and early 1920.¹⁸⁵ Thomas Costello, an IRA officer from Athlone, County Westmeath, wrote that from early 1920 when the RIC started to withdraw from their smaller stations to the arrival of the Tans, the IRA took over the function of policing and the courts. He claimed that when the RIC initially withdrew ‘unruly elements’ made capital out of the situation but this was stopped as the republicans took control and sought ‘to demonstrate to people of all

¹⁸³ IMA/BMH/WS1591, Russell, Cork.

¹⁸⁴ IMA/BMH/WS1500, McCormack, Westmeath.

¹⁸⁵ IMA/BMH/WS1503, McCormack, Westmeath.

shades of political thought that we could maintain discipline and order'.¹⁸⁶ The republican courts started sitting in Kilkenny in June 1920. One of the first cases related to the theft of jewellery and other valuables from Major Humphrey and Major Joyce, two ex-British army officers. They reported their loss to the RIC without result. They then reported it to someone with a Sinn Fein connection and the republican police became involved, found the culprits and returned the stolen property. Thomas Treacy, a brigade commander in Kilkenny, wrote that the majors, both of whom were Unionists, expressed their appreciation of the republican police, and one visited the RIC to castigate them for hopelessness. Treacy used this to illustrate that republican justice was even handed.¹⁸⁷ Costello claimed that the country was law abiding up to the arrival of the Tans and the Auxiliaries when it became impossible to maintain police work and deal with robbers and murderers, both official and unofficial.¹⁸⁸ The arrival of the Tans from March 1920 resulted in a change in the activities of the IRA and a significant escalation in the violence. Unlike the RIC, the Tans were generally not familiar with the area in which they operated. John Walsh, a battalion commander in County Kilkenny, wrote that without local knowledge the British Crown Forces would be powerless.¹⁸⁹ Robert Ahern an intelligence officer in Cork City wrote, 'civilian spies were considered the most dangerous of all. They were well acquainted with the IRA men in the different localities in which they operated, being natives of the district in certain cases, and unless they were quickly and severely dealt with would create havoc in our organisation'.¹⁹⁰ The IRA believed that there were organised spying groups working against them. William Foley an IRA officer from Bandon, County Cork wrote that in 1918, 'the loyalist section of the population formed an organisation known as the anti-Sinn Fein League, and were active

¹⁸⁶ IMA/BMH/WS1296, Costello, Westmeath.

¹⁸⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1093, Treacy, Kilkenny.

¹⁸⁸ IMA/BMH/WS1296, Costello, Westmeath.

¹⁸⁹ IMA/BMH/WS966, Walsh, Kilkenny.

¹⁹⁰ IMA/BMH/WS1676, Ahern, Cork.

in organising intelligence for the British'.¹⁹¹ William Barry, an IRA officer in Cork City, said an organisation run by the Freemasons and the YMCA had been established to spy on the IRA.¹⁹² Michael Murphy, a commander from Cork City, wrote that the YMCA was a Protestant organisation that had within it two sections, senior and junior, who informed on the IRA.¹⁹³ The IRA was also aware of traitors within their ranks. T. Crawley an officer in the South Roscommon brigade wrote, 'we were damned right from the start by having traitors and agents amongst us, even the intelligence officer worked for the British'.¹⁹⁴

Many of the 38 ex-servicemen accused of informing were local men who knew within the community who were members of the IRA and where they lived. A number had close associations with the Crown Forces. Paddy Foley was related to most of the Volunteer officers in his neighbourhood and provided the RIC with a notebook of all their names. Under suspicion he had been advised to leave but having failed to do so was arrested, tried and executed, the sentence taking place outside the area because of his family connections.¹⁹⁵ In July 1920, a British regiment stationed in Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny was aided by an ex-serviceman called Kenny who resided with them and accompanied them on their raids, pointing out IRA members. In August 1920 the IRA arrested him at the railway station. He had money and a ticket to Canada, a reward from the British Government for his services. He was tried and found guilty and executed by drowning to prevent the shots being heard by British soldiers. There was no more trouble from spies in the area.¹⁹⁶ John O' Mahoney and John Fitzgerald were both from Tralee, County Kerry and were executed in the locality and labelled as spies. O'Mahoney was reputed to be a 'tout' or informer and was known as a constant visitor to the RIC barracks in Tralee. He was arrested in a public house, tried, found

¹⁹¹ IMA/BMH/WS1560,Foley,Cork.

¹⁹² IMA/BMH/WS1708,Barry,Cork.

¹⁹³ IMA/BMH/WS1547,Murphy,Cork.

¹⁹⁴ IMA/BMH/WS718,Crawley,Roscommon.

¹⁹⁵ IMA/BMH?WS1413, Kennedy, Kerry. Another ex-servicemen, Michael Moriarty, was arrested at the same time but there is no mention of his being executed, The Witness, Kennedy, was also related to the Moriarty family.

¹⁹⁶ IMA/BMH/WS966,Walsh,Kilkenny.

guilty, sentenced to death and then executed in April 1921. Fitzgerald was suspected of spying and was under observation by the IRA. The suspicion was confirmed when an IRA man named George Nagle while in British custody was identified to the Tans by Fitzgerald who was later arrested by the IRA, tried and then executed in June 1921.¹⁹⁷ John Donogue from Dunshaughlin, County Meath gave information to the local police that resulted in the Tans arresting a volunteer and beating him. He was shot and a label, 'Spies and Informers Beware', put on the body. There were other people suspected in the area but there was no concrete evidence against them.¹⁹⁸ Michael Keefe and Martin Darmody gave information on the positions of the IRA at Kilmanagh, County Kilkenny from which the latter had planned an ambush in May 1921. Both were executed.¹⁹⁹ In June 1921, in Newcastlewest, County Limerick, the IRA shot Thomas Hanly an ex-serviceman suspected of spying. Nearby troops heard the shots and arrived in time to save his life.²⁰⁰ Jack Maloney from County Limerick was executed in Spring 1921 for providing information to the RIC on the whereabouts of IRA members.²⁰¹ Robert Pike was a member of the tinker class living in Druncondra, Dublin. The IRA had evidence that he was a 'tout' working for the British Intelligence Service and had followed republicans before informing the British on their whereabouts. He was shot outside a pub in June 1921.²⁰² An ex-British military policeman, 'Chanters' Ryan, was shot near his home in Dublin after giving information where Peadar Clancy, a senior IRA officer, was staying, leading to the latter's arrest and death by the Auxiliaries. Ryan was considered to have plenty of money although he did not work.²⁰³ A case in County Roscommon indicates the diligence of the IRA in checking if suspects really were spies. In the winter of 1920 two men, an ex-RIC man and ex-serviceman were suspected of informing. A group of republicans

¹⁹⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1011, Garvey, Kerry; WS1117, O'Riordan, Kerry.

¹⁹⁸ IMA/BMH/WS1539, Hall, Meath.

¹⁹⁹ IMA/BMH/WS1642, Halley, Kilkenny.

²⁰⁰ IMA/BMH/WS85, Kiely, Limerick.

²⁰¹ IMA/BMH/WS1525, Maloney, Limerick.

²⁰² IMA/BMH/WS43, Dalton, Dublin; WS818, Stafford, Dublin, (Stafford indicates Pike was shot in 1920).

²⁰³ IMA/BMH/WS818, Stafford, Dublin, (Charles Dalton said Ryan was a serving military policeman, WS 434).

dressed as British soldiers visited them and were given information on the IRA, confirming that both men were informers after which they were shot.²⁰⁴

By far the greater number of reported incidents took place in County Cork, including Cork City. Laurence Neville, an IRA officer from Cork City, wrote that parts of the City had a strong loyalist element, particularly in the Douglas-Blackrock districts where many 'big' businessmen and retired British army officers lived, almost all of whom were antagonistic to the republican cause.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, many of the ex-servicemen accused of spying were ordinary soldiers closely integrated into the same communities from which the IRA recruited. William O'Sullivan, a local Cork man who worked for Cork Corporation, was, according to IRA man William Barry, a paid spy of the Freemasons. He was followed for some time until it was established he was an enemy agent and executed in February 1921 with a note, 'Spies and Informers beware', left on the body. The intimate knowledge that William O'Sullivan would most likely have on republican activities was evidenced by the fact that his brother served in the local IRA. Given the family connection it seems unlikely he would have been shot without proof or for only being an ex-servicemen. D (Monkey) McDonald, also from Cork, was shot in February 1921 but survived. He lived at Cork military barracks until the Truce in July 1921 and went out on patrol until then, identifying IRA members and their houses. He left Ireland after the Truce and was not heard of again.²⁰⁶ In early 1921 T. O'Sullivan was shot dead in a quarry, while several attempts to execute S. Flynn failed and he left the country. Both men were suspected of informing and lived in the same street in Cork City.²⁰⁷ Three ex-servicemen from the city, Hawkins, Hamill and Begley were suspected of spying and taken outside the city and shot; the first two were found by the

²⁰⁴ IMA/BMH/WS1178,Keaveney,Roscommon; WS718,Crawley,Roscommon.

²⁰⁵ IMA/BMH/WS1639,Neville,Cork.

²⁰⁶ IMA/BMH/WS1676,Ahern,Cork; WS869,Murphy,Cork; WS1639,Neville,Cork; WS1547,Murphy,Cork; IMA/BMH/WS1708,Barry, Cork. According to Barry, McDonald survived his shooting because the ammunition stolen from the British was made deliberately defective by them.

²⁰⁷ IMA/BMH/WS869,Murphy,Cork.

military, recovered and left the country.²⁰⁸ After the Sinn Fein courts started to function in Cork (circa 1919), one of the first actions was the eviction of an ex-soldier, Michael Walsh, from a house owned by the father of P.J. Murphy, a company commander from Cork City. No reason for the eviction was given. After the trial Walsh gave the names of the court and the Volunteers to the police for which he was rewarded with money. He was arrested by the IRA and sentenced to be deported. He returned and two attempts were made to arrest him without success. On both occasions he went to military barracks with the result that the army visited the Volunteers in their homes. Walsh stayed in the barracks but became ill and was to be transferred to the workhouse in February 1921. As he was brought out on a stretcher he was shot by the IRA.²⁰⁹ Raids on the mail helped provide evidence. At the end of summer 1920 following such a raid the IRA came into possession of an incriminating letter from an ex-RIC officer called Nagle to an ex-servicemen called O'Sullivan. Nagle was arrested and gave information which led the IRA to travel to Cork City, where the two had been planning to meet. The IRA located O'Sullivan and shot him.²¹⁰ In July 1921 an ex-British sergeant major, McPherson, from Mallow was arrested for spying; suspicion was aroused as a result of a letter captured in a raid on the local mail and of cheques from the British that he had cashed. He was executed. Details of his case were recorded in three of the witness statements.²¹¹ This case illustrates the problem of conflicting information in academic studies. Daithi O'Corrain who is part of a project under the auspices of Trinity College Dublin to identify the dead of the Irish Revolution, writes that McPherson (who he refers to as Mac Pherson) 'had no record of any political activity'. He continues that he suffered from an illness contracted while serving in India which made him unfit for anything but light work

²⁰⁸ IMA/BMH/WS1706,O'Connell,Cork. (No date given but incidents probably circa June 1920 to pre-Truce, 1921).

²⁰⁹ IMA/BMH/WS869,Murphy,Cork.

²¹⁰ IMA/BMH/WS810,Tim,Herlihy,County Cork.

²¹¹ IMA/BMH/WS978,O'Callaghan,Cork.; WS1097,Morgan,Cork; WS1200,O'Regen,Cork.

and was unemployed.²¹² This may have explained a need to inform in return for payment. A number of informants were motivated by money; in July 1920 in West Cork an ex-soldier named Crowley was arrested and executed after informing for the payment of £20 on an IRA party who had ambushed the RIC.²¹³ Denis Dwyer incriminated himself when he met officers of an IRA Flying Column on a road near Bandon, West Cork, and believing them to be British Auxiliaries offered to give them information in return for money on the movements of IRA officers and where they could most easily be captured. His mistake led to him being court-martialled and executed in January 1921, and a label with the words 'Spies beware' placed on his body. He had already given considerable information to the British and after his execution the British raids whenever IRA Officers were in the area ceased.²¹⁴

Some of the spies were 'professional'. John Quinlisk, an ex-serviceman from Wexford, was a spy in the employment of the British. In February 1920 he arrived in Cork claiming he was from republican headquarters in Dublin and wanted to see Michael Collins. He gave information on a raid to establish his credentials but Michael Murphy, an IRA commander from Cork City, was suspicious of him. Quinlisk was shot and incriminating letters to the RIC proved his intention to capture Collins. His father, who had served in the RIC, came to collect the body.²¹⁵ Few senior British officers were named in the files; one such was Lieutenant Colonel Peacock, who had guided raiding parties while in disguise, but on a raid in December 1920 his mask slipped and he was identified. From this time he stayed in Bandon barracks only occasionally visiting his home in Innishannon, County Cork and then with a Tan guard. On a visit in June 1921 he was shot.²¹⁶ An ex-British officer with one leg named 'Slickfoot' Maher from Athlone, County Westmeath was for a long time under

²¹² Daithi O'Corrain, 'The Dead of the Irish Revolution 1921-25', *JRDA*, 12(2005), 3,

²¹³ IMA/BMH/WS443, Neville, Cork.

²¹⁴ IMA/BMH/WS470, London, Cork; Tom Barry refers to this incident in *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, 101-2, noting the informer was Catholic.

²¹⁵ IMA/BMH/WS1547, Murphy, Cork.

²¹⁶ IMA/BMH/WS1591, Russell, Cork; Barry refers to this incident in *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, 104.

suspicion for spying and, after incriminating evidence had been found in the mail, he was arrested, court-martialled and shot, his body quietly buried to prevent reprisals.²¹⁷ In February 1921, Major O'Connor was shot, according to Michael Murphy, in the company of a member of the senior secret service of the YMCA, although it was unclear whether O'Connor was suspected of spying.²¹⁸

It was local men who joined the Crown Forces, especially the Tans, who were of particular concern. At the beginning of 1921 an ex-serviceman called Blagriff was executed near Athlone. He was going to join the Tans and under the influence of drink had told his employer who had also found incriminating papers on him. He knew all the Volunteers and was a considerable risk to the IRA.²¹⁹ Finbar O'Sullivan was well acquainted with the IRA in the district where he lived in Cork City. He joined the Tans and when he returned to his home one evening, he was arrested and executed in February 1921. O'Sullivan was well known from childhood to Laurence Neville, a local IRA officer, again emphasising the close community ties of many of the informers.²²⁰ Denis O'Loughlin joined the Tans and was executed in April 1921 in Tralee, County Kerry.²²¹ Tadhg Dwyer, a battalion commander in County Tipperary, wrote that towards the end of 1920 it was clear that the British were getting information on the places used by IRA men on the run. Thomas Kirby, a local man, knew all the volunteers and drank with the Tans. He was ordered to leave the area but re-joined the British forces and was posted to Dundrum within the county. In disguise he helped the British in their search for wanted republicans. He was captured in a public house and

²¹⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1504,O'Meara,Westmeath; WS1336,Lennon,Westmeath.

²¹⁸ IMA/BMH/WS1547,Murphy,Cork.

²¹⁹ IMA/BMH/WS1308,O'Brien,Westmeath; WS1309,O'Connor,Westmeath; WS1500,McCormack,Westmeath; WS1503,McCormack,Westmeath.

²²⁰ IMA/BMH/WS1676,Ahern,Cork; WS1639,Neville,Cork; WS1547,Murphy,Cork, According to William Barry, an IRA officer in Cork, O'Sullivan was a member of the British army home on leave and about to join the Tans, IMA/BMH/WS1708.

²²¹ IMA/BMH/WS1011,Garvey,Kerry; WS1189 , O'Connor, Kerry, 1921, according to O'Connor, O'Loughlin (who he calls Loughlin) was an associate of Major McKinnon, an RIC (Auxiliaries) officer executed by the IRA.

admitted he was a spy but pleaded 'insanity'. He was executed in January 1921.²²² Patrick Duke of Dunshaughlin, County Meath provided details of a wanted Volunteer to the police, ironically a friend of his. He was arrested by two Volunteers but escaped and joined the RIC in Dublin, but did not provide further information regarding IRA activities in County Meath. He returned home after the conflict and married a local girl. David Hall, a senior IRA officer in County Meath, who provided the witness statement, said he had often spoken afterwards with Duke about the affair.²²³ Not providing further information appears to have saved Duke. The IRA reserved their most extreme reaction to spies from within their ranks. An ex-serviceman called Shiels joined the Kanturk Battalion, County Cork in 1920 and had a reputation for being absent when an engagement was due. In March 1921 the brigade's headquarters in Nadd planned an attack on nearby Mournabbey. Shiels went into Kanturk to draw his army pension and was seen calling into the RIC office and drinking with British soldiers. Next day a large concentration of British troops with Shiels accompanying them in a Tan uniform surrounded the IRA in Nadd. Shiels disappeared but the IRA pursued him; photographs were circulated in England and the USA but he was not found and was believed dead.²²⁴

The IRA on occasions gave warnings to suspects before, if necessary, taking action. Jimmy Morrissey a postman from Marshalstown, County Wexford was thought to be giving information to the police. He failed to heed a warning and was shot on his rounds in the summer of 1920 and a sign, 'shot by the IRA', was put on him.²²⁵ William Desmond a Volunteer from West Cork said two suspected spies were released on condition that they ceased associating with the enemy or they would be executed.²²⁶ Sometimes, if there was insufficient evidence for an execution, the suspect was told to leave the area. Seumas

²²² IMA/BMH/WS1356,Dwyer, Tipperary; WS1450,Ryan, Tipperary; WS1348,Davern, Tipperary.

²²³ IMA/BMH/WS1539,Hall,Meath.

²²⁴ IMA/BMH/WS978,O'Callaghan,Cork; WS1097,Morgan,Cork; WS1200,O'Regen,Cork.

²²⁵ IMA/BMH/WS1373,Balfe,Wexford; WS1041,Doyle,Wexford.

²²⁶ IMA/BMH/WS832/,Desmond,Cork.

O'Meara, senior officer from Athlone, County Westmeath, claimed he saved several people suspected of spying from being shot as there was no proof, only suspicion; such people were sent a warning letter which he said had the desired effect.²²⁷ John Walsh a battalion commander in County Kilkenny said the IRA was suspicious of anyone with close associations to the military. He cites an example of one person who spent time in the company of the RIC. There was no definite evidence but he was warned to leave the country.²²⁸ Tim Herlihy, an officer from County Cork, stated that when the republican courts were initially convened in November 1919, some of the first offenders were accused of spying but due to insufficient evidence not executed; two were expelled from Ireland, a third just released.²²⁹ McMahon and Anglis, who frequented the ex-servicemen's club in Merrion Square, Dublin, were suspected of spying but, although followed, were not shot.²³⁰ Not all executions appeared justified even to the IRA. Two men, Brady and Halpin, were shot by the IRA in Dublin just before the Truce. Brady, a Tan, was the principal target. Frank Saurin, an intelligence officer in Dublin wrote, 'Halpin was ex-British Navy, and it is open to question whether he deserved to be shot'.²³¹

2.3 Loyalists and Republicans

The experiences of the returning soldiers in terms of the intensity of violence and intimidation shown towards them varied considerably depending on locality. The question is what caused this variation and in comparison to other metrics of IRA violence did it simply reflect the general level of intimidation experienced by other sectors of the population in different locations? Republican support varied significantly, both geographically and over

²²⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1504,O'Meara,Westmeath. An ex-soldier called O'Halloran was suspected of informing but with insufficient evidence available he was given 'the usual warning', see WS1729, Togher, Galway.

²²⁸ IMA/BMH/WS966,Walsh,Kilkenny.

²²⁹ IMA/BMH/WS810,Herlihy,Cork. In 1919 an ex-soldier named Collins was suspected of informing and likely deported to England, see WS1593, Reilly, Westmeath. In September 1920 another suspect, an ex-officer named McLean, was arrested and released on condition he left the country, see WS1324 , Barrett, Clare.

²³⁰ IMA/BMH/WS434,Dalton,City.

²³¹ IMA/BMH/WS715,Saurin,Dublin.

time, partly influenced by attitudes to Britain. This reflected different perceptions of Irish identity and its impact on the meaning of Irish nationalism. According to Hutchinson, Eoin MacNeill, the ‘father’ of modern Irish historiography, perceived a Gaelic Ireland emerging from centuries of foreign domination through the heroism of its leaders to rediscover the Gaelic civilization that had been suppressed by the invader. Foster refers to Alice Stopford Green’s depiction of a pre-invasion Ireland as a classless, egalitarian ‘Commonwealth’ characterised by a passionate conception of nationality, the purity of ‘Gaelic’ culture and the moral superiority of Gaelic civilization. The alternative identity depicted Irish nationalism as a development through an association with British radicalism and was as Townshend argues, ‘a product of the British led state intervention which contributed to the modernisation of Irish society in the nineteenth century’.²³² Such constitutional Nationalists as Parnell and Redmond, ‘took as their reference point the Constitution of 1782, Grattan’s Parliament’.²³³ Paseta writes of Thomas Kettle that he believed ‘the maintenance of the Anglo-Irish relationship central to a vision for a free and sovereign Ireland’.²³⁴ As a constitutional nationalist he envisioned an Irish parliament within the United Kingdom in contradiction to advanced republicans who saw the enemy as Britain and wanted complete separation. Perceptions of the War of Independence reflected these diametrically opposite positions. As Hart writes, the republican movement considered itself as the expression of the national will of a ‘united, homogenous self-identifying nation’, seeking national freedom from a foreign invader. In contrast, unionists or other opponents would assert that rather than being a symbol of popular resistance, republicans used ‘manipulation and intimidation’ and were ‘coercive, sectarian and ethnically aggrandizing’.²³⁵

²³² John Hutchinson, ‘Irish Nationalism’, in Boyce and O’Day, (eds.) *Modern Irish History*, (London:1996), 100 -104; Foster, ‘History and the Irish Question’, 186 (in the same article Foster writes MacNeill indicated that the received framework of early Irish history was an invention of chroniclers, 186); Charles Townshend, ‘Modernisation and Nationalism: Perspectives in Recent Irish History’, *History*, 66 /217 (1981), 233 - 43;

²³³ Boyce, ‘1916, Interpreting the Rising’, 170.

²³⁴ Paseta, ‘Thomas Kettle’, 12-13.

²³⁵ Hart, *The IRA at War*, 4-5.

Augusteijn argues that the widespread support for extreme nationalism in the west of the country was due to a lesser acceptance of British rule. He writes, ‘the mental distance between the British Government and its Irish subjects was considerably greater in rural and western areas than in urban and eastern areas. Economic independence, a high number of Irish speakers, few Protestants and poor recruitment figures for the British Army are the main indicators of this’. The urban/rural divide was particularly important; urbanised Tipperary was conservative, the countryside radical.²³⁶ Fitzpatrick argues that, ‘wherever the economic interests of a community were closely linked to England, one might expect widespread opposition to the pursuit of separation; wherever violence was not a generally accepted means of achieving nationalist ends, one might expect a lack of willing helpers in the violent pursuit of separation’. According to Fitzpatrick, Rumpf asserts that these factors largely explained the relative quietness of Leinster and Ulster in the War of Independence. Leinster’s economy, dominated by farmers fattening stock for export to British slaughterhouses, was far more closely tied to the British economy than Munster’s (dominated by dairy farming for the home market) or Connaught’s (mostly small farmers).²³⁷ The geographical variation in attitude to Britain was therefore the result of several often interrelated factors, including perspectives of Irish nationalism and cultural, economic and military links. They were evidenced by, for example, army recruitment, employment opportunities for ex-servicemen, political affiliation, and the revival of Gaelic cultural activities. Army recruitment in Leinster both absolutely and as a percentage of population was significantly higher than in the other provinces (see section 1.2). Towns predominated; Dublin provided 24,276 troops, Cork City 10,106.²³⁸

²³⁶ Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 347.

²³⁷ David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Geography of Irish Nationalism 1910-1921’, *Past & Present*, No. 78 (1978), 118.

²³⁸ TNA, PIN15/757, recruitment figures to end of 1917. The recruitment offices were based in Dublin and Cork cities but recruits from their respective counties would most likely have enlisted there, see 1.2.

Table 9: Geographical analysis of army recruits for the area that became the Free State

Province	Population	Recruits	% enlisted	Recruits per 10,000 population
Leinster	1,160,000	48,000	4.14	414
Munster	1,033,000	17,500	1.69	169
Connaught	611,000	6,500	1.06	106
Ulster (3 counties)	331,000	5,500	1.66	166
Total	3,135,000	77,500	2.47	247

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757; Population data from 1911 census

Fitzpatrick writes that ‘the economic reception of veterans was least welcoming in the regions from which enlistment had been most scanty’. Unemployment rates for ex-servicemen as a percentage of enlistment varied significantly by area, influenced by levels of support offered by the local community. The figures for the provinces were Munster, 39% Connaught, 23%; Leinster 17% and Ulster, 12%. The highest proportion of unemployed ex-servicemen was in Cork; 4,500, representing almost half of wartime enlistment.²³⁹ The local elections of January 1920 highlighted the variation in support for Sinn Féin; excluding the four counties of north east Ulster they secured only 572 seats in comparison to 872 won by other parties. In Meath less than 20% of the electorate supported them,²⁴⁰ in Birr the Unionists won. In Leinster 19.7% of the vote was Unionist in comparison to 9.3% in Munster and 4.7% in Connaught.²⁴¹ Sinn Féin was significantly less successful in towns than in rural areas. Augusteijn notes, ‘in all provinces, Sinn Féin received less than half the level of support in the elections for the urban districts voted for in January 1920 than in their rural counterparts in June 1920’.²⁴² Karsten highlights the correlation between recruitment patterns and the Irish vote on the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1922. The areas of weak support for British army recruitment were also the areas that voted to reject the Treaty. The areas where

²³⁹ Fitzpatrick, ‘Militarism in Ireland’, 399, 501-2, the use of employment figures in this context requires qualification, e.g. due to the impact of pensions, see 3.2a/4.6a

²⁴⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 497.

²⁴¹ Fitzpatrick, ‘The Geography of Irish Nationalism’, 124.

²⁴² Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 261-4.

recruitment was strongest were also the areas to offer the greatest support for the Treaty.²⁴³ The resurgence of a Gaelic identity found an outlet throughout Irish life, from the revival of the Gaelic language and literature to the founding of sports clubs playing traditional Gaelic games, which flourished more in the south and west. In March 1916, Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) membership in County Dublin was 170 (0.4% of the population), in County Tipperary 1,115 (0.74% of the population), in County Limerick 1,393 (0.97% of the population), in County Galway 1,531 (0.84% of the population) and in County Mayo 1,059 (0.55% of the population).²⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick writes, 'From Spring 1917 onwards the RIC believed that the Gaelic League (an organisation to propagate the Irish language) was becoming an adjunct of Sinn Féin'.²⁴⁵ IRA officers in West Cork acknowledged the importance of the Gaelic revival. Patrick O'Brien wrote that through the Gaelic League, 'a further awakening of the national feeling was fostered'.²⁴⁶ Similarly Denis Lordon states, 'in 1917 in West Cork many Gaelic Classes were started. At these gatherings support was solicited for the cause of the Voluntary Movement and Sinn Fein who participated in Gaelic sports and used the events to raise money for the cause. There was, he concludes, perfect cooperation between all the organisations – Volunteers, Sinn Fein, Gaelic League and GAA'.²⁴⁷

These consequences of regional variations were accentuated with the collapse of central authority. The Dáil Éireann had successfully undermined British authority yet at the same time its own remit in the provinces was varied and often limited. In this power vacuum local influence prevailed, the level of violence varying significantly by region, depending on nationalist and loyalist sympathies. Hugh Martin, a correspondent for the *Daily News* who

²⁴³ Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army', 54.

²⁴⁴ TNA,CO904/99; W.F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, (Dublin:1987), 175 – 176; Hart, *The IRA at War*, 55, 60-61; Mandle concluded that the GAA link to the IRA was close, Hart the reverse. Both based their analysis on police reports (which Mandle referred to as 'imperfect') for the only period such figures were available, 1916/17.

²⁴⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, 129.

²⁴⁶ IMA/BMH/WS764,O'Brien,Cork

²⁴⁷ IMA/BMH/WS470,Lordon,Cork.

had toured Ireland in 1919, wrote that ‘a central gathering of well-meaning idealists such as the Dáil Éireann is utterly unable to control the physical force of men in the provinces. These men from Sligo hold Dublin meetings of mere talkers about moral force in the utmost contempt’. Martin concluded that the real power, as with earlier Fenian revolts, lay in the hands of gunmen in the countryside and provincial towns.²⁴⁸ Support for the IRA varied significantly by region; Hopkinson argues that the War of Independence was fought predominantly in Dublin City and Munster.²⁴⁹

An analysis of IRA violence (1917-23), members of the RIC killed on duty (1916-22) and incidents recorded in complaints to the IGC, demonstrates a consistency in the geographical distribution of violence and intimidation. The first two metrics focus on those killed and, in the case of IRA violence as measured by Hart, those wounded. Hart excludes lesser intimidation such as raids, vandalism, assaults and robberies because of the difficulty in obtaining accurate information. They are recorded in the IGC files and the three sources together demonstrate that the range of violence and intimidation from simple robberies to killings was uniform in its geographical variation. Of the two largest provinces, Munster both absolutely and pro rata to the population had circa double the propensity to all categories of incidents than Leinster. Although there are county anomalies (Queen’s has comparatively few killings and shootings but records large instances of ‘low level’ intimidation), Cork, Tipperary, Clare, Kerry and Limerick are the main centres of republican activity. Although, as Hopkinson argues, violence in Dublin was high this is only true in terms of absolute numbers; pro rata to the population it was on all metrics less than the national average.²⁵⁰ Taking into account population levels, Connaught and particularly Ulster had lower incidents

²⁴⁸ *Daily News*, 24 January 1919.

²⁴⁹ Hopkinson, *Green Against Green*, 200.

²⁵⁰ Hopkinson was referring to Dublin City; these metrics are for the county. The city was circa two thirds of the county population. The city was more violent than the rest of the county; extrapolating Hart’s figures for IRA violence there were 13.1 incidents per 10,000 people in the city compared to 2.4 in the countryside.

of violence than the national average on all three metrics. On two of the metrics, RIC killings and IGC incidents, Connaught had a higher ratio of incidents than Leinster.

Table 10: Analysis of violence and intimidation pro rata to population

County	Population	IRA Violence		RIC Killed		IGC Total	
		Incidents	per 10,000	Incidents	per 10,000	Incidents	per 10,000
Carlow	34,000	15	4.4	3	0.88	72	21.2
Dublin	505,000	460	9.1	32	0.63	203	4.0
Kildare	58,000	20	3.4	1	0.17	43	7.4
Kilkenny	70,000	35	5.0	4	0.57	40	5.7
Queens	51,000	34	6.6	1	0.20	292	57.3
Longford	40,000	55	13.7	12	3.00	43	10.8
Louth	63,000	37	5.8	6	0.95	17	2.7
Meath	62,000	24	3.8	10	1.61	62	10.0
Kings	53,000	22	4.2	5	0.94	91	17.2
Westmeath	57,000	37	6.5	4	0.70	35	6.1
Wexford	96,000	50	5.2	3	0.31	52	5.4
Wicklow	58,000	5	0.8	7	1.21	41	7.1
Leinster	1,147,000	794	6.9	88	0.77	991	8.6
Clare	95,000	113	11.9	35	3.68	315	33.2
Cork	365,000	876	24.0	96	2.63	780	21.4
Kerry	149,000	262	17.6	35	2.35	175	11.7
Limerick	140,000	196	14.0	38	2.71	123	8.8
Tipperary	140,000	217	15.5	43	3.07	280	20.0
Waterford	79,000	47	5.9	7	0.89	43	5.4
Munster	968,000	1,711	17.7	254	2.62	1,716	17.7
Galway	169,000	83	4.9	14	0.83	126	7.5
Leitrim	56,000	20	3.5	1	0.18	83	14.8
Mayo	172,000	103	6.0	21	1.22	139	8.1
Roscommon	84,000	66	7.8	14	1.67	75	8.9
Sligo	71,000	48	6.8	14	1.97	82	11.5
Connaught	552,000	320	5.8	64	1.16	505	9.1
Cavan	82,000	21	2.6	3	0.37	93	11.3
Donegal	153,000	41	2.7	7	0.46	112	7.3
Monaghan	65,000	53	8.1	5	0.77	22	3.4
Ulster (3 counties)	300,000	115	3.8	15	0.50	227	7.6
Total	2,967,000	2,940	9.9	421	1.42	3,439	11.6

Source: Herlihy, Hart, TNA, CO 762, Analysis of IGC boxes 1-212; Population data from 1926 census.²⁵¹

Analysing the same metrics, but this time in each case as a percentage of their total, and comparing it with the equivalent figures for violence and intimidation against ex-servicemen, as recorded in the IGC files, demonstrates that the pattern of violence and intimidation

²⁵¹ Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, (Dublin:1997), 152; Hart, *The IRA at War*, 36, the number of incidents for IRA violence for 1917-1923 is derived from an extrapolation of Hart's data based on the 1926 census except for the population of Dublin City which is from *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 239, 15 April 1969, Population Statistics, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0239/D.0239.196904150004.html>).

against ex-servicemen correlates with that of the population in general. There is no evidence that ex-servicemen were particularly singled out. Of the number of incidents involving ex-servicemen, 28.2% are recorded in Leinster. The equivalent figures for IRA violence are 27%, for RIC killings 20.9%, and total incidents recorded by the IGC 28.8%. The comparable figures for Munster are 58% for incidents involving ex-servicemen, 58.2%, for IRA violence, 60.3% for RIC killings and 49.9% for total incidents recorded by the IGC.²⁵²

Table 11: Analysis of violence and intimidation: general population v ex-servicemen

County	Population	IRA Violence		RIC Killed		IGC Total		IGC Ex-Servicemen	
		Incidents	% of Total	Incidents	% of Total	Incidents	% of Total	Incidents	% of Total
Carlow	34,000	15	0.5	3	0.7	72	2.1	2	0.8
Dublin	505,000	460	15.6	32	7.6	203	5.9	17	6.5
Kildare	58,000	20	0.7	1	0.2	43	1.3	7	2.7
Kilkenny	70,000	35	1.2	4	1.0	40	1.2	3	1.1
Queens	51,000	34	1.2	1	0.2	292	8.5	13	5.0
Longford	40,000	55	1.9	12	2.9	43	1.3	2	0.8
Louth	63,000	37	1.3	6	1.4	17	0.5	1	0.4
Meath	62,000	24	0.8	10	2.4	62	1.8	8	3.1
Kings	53,000	22	0.7	5	1.2	91	2.6	5	1.9
Westmeath	57,000	37	1.3	4	1.0	35	1.0	6	2.3
Wexford	96,000	50	1.7	3	0.7	52	1.5	6	2.3
Wicklow	58,000	5	0.2	7	1.7	41	1.2	4	1.5
Leinster	1,147,000	794	27.0	88	20.9	991	28.8	74	28.2
Clare	95,000	113	3.8	35	8.3	315	9.2	30	11.5
Cork	365,000	876	29.8	96	22.8	780	22.7	58	22.1
Kerry	149,000	262	8.9	35	8.3	175	5.1	9	3.4
Limerick	140,000	196	6.7	38	9.0	123	3.6	16	6.1
Tipperary	140,000	217	7.4	43	10.2	280	8.1	35	13.4
Waterford	79,000	47	1.6	7	1.7	43	1.3	4	1.5
Munster	968,000	1,711	58.2	254	60.3	1,716	49.9	152	58.0
Galway	169,000	83	2.8	14	3.3	126	3.7	7	2.7
Leitrim	56,000	20	0.7	1	0.2	83	2.4	0	0.0
Mayo	172,000	103	3.5	21	5.0	139	4.0	7	2.7
Roscommon	84,000	66	2.2	14	3.3	75	2.2	6	2.3
Sligo	71,000	48	1.6	14	3.3	82	2.4	0	0.0
Connaught	552,000	320	10.9	64	15.2	505	14.7	20	7.6
Cavan	82,000	21	0.7	3	0.7	93	2.7	5	1.9
Donegal	153,000	41	1.4	7	1.7	112	3.3	8	3.1
Monaghan	65,000	53	1.8	5	1.2	22	0.6	3	1.1
Ulster	300,000	115	3.9	15	3.6	227	6.6	16	6.1
Total	2,967,000	2,940	100.0	421	100.0	3,439	100.0	262	100.0

Source: Herlihy, Hart, TNA, CO 762, Analysis of IGC boxes 1-212; Population data from 1926 census; Ulster refers to 3 counties.

²⁵² RIC reports for 1916-1919 show a similar pattern; of 1,293 'outrages' by the IRA, 29% were recorded in Leinster and 48% in Munster, illustrating returning ex-servicemen did not alter existing patterns, see TNA,CO904/225.

IRA killing or attempted shooting of spies, as recorded in the IMA/BMH witness statements, show a similar geographical pattern, both in terms of incidents pro rata to the population and the percentage split of the total number of incidents.

Table 12: Ex-servicemen killed/targeted as spies pro rata to population by Province

County	Population	Incidents	per 10,000	% of Total
Leinster	1,147,000	11	0.10	28.9
Munster	968,000	26	0.27	68.4
Connaught	552,000	1	0.02	2.6
Ulster (3 counties)	300,000	0	0.00	0.0
Total	2,967,000	38	0.13	100.0

Source: IMA/BMH, Dublin, Witness Statements (1913-21); Population data from 1926 census.

The overall analysis indicates that violence and intimidation varies significantly by geography and this variation correlates to such interrelated factors as attitudes to Britain, perceptions of Irish identity and economic independence and is mirrored in such measurements of affinity to Britain as, for example, army recruitment, employment opportunities for ex-servicemen, political affiliation and cultural activities. Geographical patterns of violence and intimidation towards ex-servicemen simply reflect these regional variations.

The contrast in different parts of Ireland was captured by contemporary journalists and writers. Carl Ackerman, an American journalist wrote from Cork in April 1920, ‘everywhere I go, I meet Sinn Féiners, determined, defiant, confident’ and ‘I met the same group of eight, ten or twelve members of the RIC, huddled together in a corner, from outward appearance, terrified, while across the street crowds passed, avoiding the police as if they were contaminated’.²⁵³ Wilfrid Ewart, an English writer, toured Ireland in spring 1921. His observations have to be understood in the context that he was an ex-British army officer,

²⁵³ Carl Ackerman, *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, 5 April 1920, quoted in Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 137.

seeking to interview people of all political persuasion at the height of the conflict. He wrote of Birr, King's County that:

a noticeable characteristic of this placid oasis in the heart of stormy Ireland was its normal daily social life, the apparently well-to-do contentment of its inhabitants. Black and Tans played football with the local youths. Nowhere in the district did the landed gentry appear to be disturbed in their normal habits by local conditions.

Local inhabitants told Ewart that the town had contributed a higher proportion of volunteers to the army than any other town in Ireland and 'Birr and the district around it have always been loyal, chiefly I suppose, because it's been a garrison town. At the local election out of twenty one elected candidates, only four were Sinn Féiners'.²⁵⁴ The Unionist *King's County Chronicle* wrote of the celebrations on the return of the local Leinster Regiment in 1919, 'There was an immense gathering of enthusiastic spectators and the ex-servicemen were warmly cheered. Three cheers were given for the King.'²⁵⁵ Attitudes sometimes differed across short distances; Major John Lyster, King's County, claimed his cottage was burned down in March 1921 and in August 1922 he was raided by armed men. He had to move five miles to nearby Birr for safety.²⁵⁶

Contemporary reporters found people had become radicalised, not to an extreme but one step more than their original position and that Britain had caused this change, both through the introduction of the Tans and the perceived faithlessness of its political leaders. Nevertheless many, including republicans, found a continued association with Britain acceptable, albeit with local autonomy, and were prepared to compromise to gain peace. Liamon de Roiste, a republican member for Cork City, claimed, 'we feel no hostility to the English people or to the army; only to the Irregular Forces of the Crown'. He accepted the

²⁵⁴ Wilfrid Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland 1921*, (London:1922), 112, 118.

²⁵⁵ *King's County Chronicle*, July 24 1919; In contrast the Nationalist *Midland Tribune* reporting the same parade wrote, 'the people were not impressed with Saturday's "Peace" celebrations which in the main were confined to the garrison and its supporters. The day passed quietly, businesses stayed open. There were few flags. The Leinsters marched through the street. There was some booing of ex-servicemen later in the evening. A similar reaction was reported in surrounding towns', *Midland Tribune*, 26 July 1919.

²⁵⁶ TNA,CO762/51/14.

possibility of Dominion Home Rule as ‘all our economic interests, all our future, are bound up with yours’.²⁵⁷ A Cork unionist told Ewart, ‘Everybody’s taken a step to the left. Your old Nationalists have joined pacifist Sinn Féin; pacifist Sinn Féin has become active Republican. We Unionists take our stand on the old Nationalism’. A director of the Munster and Leinster Bank claimed, ‘the only thing the country wants is peace – peace under a liberalised form of self-government’. Another Cork man said:

the bulk of the country longs for peace under a decent measure of Home Rule. A constitution which would leave naval and military control and foreign affairs as at present, whilst giving the right to levy our own taxes, customs, and excise, would meet the views of all parties, providing a free vote could be obtained.

Another elderly man, a known loyalist whose son had fought in the British army, complained of the Tans who had harassed him, ‘It’s incidents like this that turn people into extremists’.²⁵⁸ A local resident of Mallow, West Cork told Ewart ‘people want a change, but they would be content with Dominion Home Rule or indeed any generous measure of self-Government, providing it brought peace. We don’t want an Irish army or navy, and we don’t want separation from the Empire’.²⁵⁹ S. O’Mara, the Sinn Féin ex-mayor of Limerick (his son, the mayor in 1921, had just been arrested and given a one year prison sentence) complained of ‘the bad faith and methods of the British Government’ but said that, ‘the majority in Ireland would accept a liberal measure of Home Rule for the sake of peace’. Similarly John Dooley, a Nationalist member of the King’s County Council said there was, ‘no personal hostility to English people’, but the problem is ‘the present policy of the Crown, all moderate people are being alienated by it’. O’Mara and Dooley both agreed that nationalists have become Sinn

²⁵⁷ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 40–3.

²⁵⁸ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 47–53.

²⁵⁹ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 61–2.

Féiners and Unionists had become Constitutionalist Nationalists.²⁶⁰ Ewart visited Kilmallock, County Limerick, childhood home of de Valera. A local brewer said:

The people only want to settle down. You cannot gauge the real state of feeling by the actions of the IRA. They only represent a section of the people. People would be content with a fair measure of Home Rule - yes, dominion Home Rule. We have no quarrel with England.²⁶¹

Augusteijn writes that Sinn Féin failed to win the hearts of all nationalists and that its inability to preserve unity within the movement over the Treaty with Britain in 1921 was to some extent a resurfacing of the differences between constitutional and revolutionary nationalists. He argues there was decreasing support for the use of violence, which started during the War of Independence and continued after 1923.²⁶² In the General Election of June 1922, out of 128 seats, the pro-Treaty party won 58, the republicans 36 and the minority parties and independents, most of whom backed the Treaty, 34.²⁶³ By early 1923 Ireland was ready for peace even in republican strongholds. Pritchett who visited Cork in February 1923 wrote, ‘the men who are causing the present troubles in the country are a noisy minority. People have only a theoretical sympathy, if any at all, with republican ideas, and no sympathy whatever with their methods’, and that most had, ‘realized that constructive economics are the better part of patriotic idealism’.²⁶⁴

Support for extreme republicanism was generational. Ewart writes, ‘one was repeatedly reassured in Cork that militant Sinn Féin was a Young Man’s Movement exclusively – that the parents disapproved, indeed begged their sons not to participate in political activity’.²⁶⁵ Pritchett referred to the irregulars as ‘mostly young men and the dupes

²⁶⁰ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 110-122.

²⁶¹ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 73-4.

²⁶² Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 339.

²⁶³ Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, 982.

²⁶⁴ V.S. Pritchett, ‘A Glimpse at a Southern Irish Town’, *Christian Science Monitor*, (6 March, 1923), 18, referring to a visit to Cork on 24 February 1923.

²⁶⁵ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 32.

of their leaders'.²⁶⁶ Frank Neville, an IRA officer from West Cork, wrote the small farmers were at least passive supporters of the IRA, although many of the sons were active participants.²⁶⁷ Hopkinson writes that IRA membership was 'overwhelmingly youthful'.²⁶⁸ Foster makes a similar point that 'IRA activists came from the youth of small towns, and the rural lower middle classes'. This demographic was also evident in the War; the West Cork branch of the Irish Volunteers was profiled by a police inspector in 1915 as, 'entirely composed of farmer's sons of military age' who were 'active propagandists, bitterly disloyal'.²⁶⁹

Support for extreme nationalism was limited by geography and generation and decreased over time. Ireland was by no means radicalized and republican with a resultant animosity to all that was British, including by association its ex-servicemen.

2.4 Conclusion

Irish soldiers returned to a country in increasing conflict with the army in which they had fought. With the country in armed struggle for independence, followed by a bitter Civil War, it was understandable that the needs of those returning from a distantly fought war had little purchase on a population with other concerns. They could not expect the homecoming celebrations evident in Britain and north of the border. But there is little evidence that war service per se caused ex-servicemen to be victimised as a class; other reasons were the cause of violence and intimidation and such actions were very focussed both geographically and in time. It is difficult to support Leonard's argument that ex-servicemen often experienced hostility and rejection, or that the vast majority of those killed were simply retrospective punishments for their service in the Great War. In applications to the IGC, whose files

²⁶⁶ Pritchett, 'A glimpse at a southern Irish Town', 18, referring to a visit to Cork on 24 February 1923.

²⁶⁷ IMA/BMH/WS443.

²⁶⁸ Michael Hopkinson, *Irish War of Independence*, (Dublin:2002) 200.

²⁶⁹ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 500, 473.

represent the most comprehensive and detailed repository of claims arising out of violence and intimidation by the IRA, the percentage of incidents involving claims by ex-servicemen was only 7.6% (262), a particularly low figure as ex-servicemen were encouraged to apply. The terms of reference of the IGC did not require support of the Crown to have been given only during the struggle immediately preceding the Truce nor on Irish soil, thereby including service in the Great War as a demonstration of loyalty. The final report of the IGC in 1930 stated that, ‘the demobilised soldier or sailor, who was victimised within the post-truce period, while residing or carrying on business in the Free State, because he had served in the British army or Navy during the European War, was fully entitled to consideration’, provided the nexus between loyalty and injury be clearly established.²⁷⁰ Of the total incidents recorded only 2.1% (73) were from ex-servicemen who cited their war service as a cause of intimidation. This was particularly surprising as the claims application form required proof of loyalty and war service was an obvious means to do so. Based on a conservative estimate of the number of ex-servicemen in the Free State only 0.34% were involved in incidents leading to a claim, even in Munster the figure was less than 1% (0.87). The IGC found in a number of cases that claims that the victim suffered intimidation due to war service were false, particularly those from Ennistymon, County Clare and Lahinch in North Clare; many were in fact republican supporters. Such claims may have been promoted by lobbyist groups and received widespread publicity but were exposed under IGC investigation. Of the 262 incidents that involved ex-servicemen the majority took place in Munster. Relative to population and numbers of ex-servicemen, the number of incidents was far higher in Munster than Leinster, in terms of the latter metric there were 5.6 times more incidents in Munster. The geographical variation is also mirrored in the IMA/BMH files. Due to the geographical bias of the claims, in particular the far higher number of incidents recorded in the south, there

²⁷⁰ TNA,CO762/212.

were large swathes of the country where the violence and intimidation recorded against ex-servicemen was negligible. The violence towards ex-servicemen varied in intensity in correlation to the level of violence experienced by other segments of the population. There is no evidence that ex-servicemen were particularly singled out. Support for republicanism varied significantly by location. Based on all metrics; IRA violence, RIC officers killed, IGC general and ex-servicemen specific complaints, Munster had circa double the number of incidents in comparison to Leinster.

Violence and intimidation against ex-servicemen was mostly for reasons other than just war service, including membership of a particular class such as landowners, Protestants or the judiciary; specific actions including informing, supplying to or joining the Crown Forces or refusal to join the IRA. Such reasons were applicable to other segments of society irrespective of war service, which indeed the majority of claimants did not have, although their military background made veterans more likely to associate with or join the Crown Forces or to be intimidated into joining the IRA. The final report of the IGC identified illustrative cases of those who submitted claims as follows: mansion/ estate owners and their employees, small farmers, merchants and shopkeepers (which the report noted could be boycotted if they sold British or northern Irish goods or sold to the Crown Forces) and professional classes (including solicitors, doctors, dentists, schoolmasters). Ex-servicemen received no special mention in the illustrative cases but the report noted that the type of injuries for which claims were considered found its victims among all classes of the loyalist community and mentioned the demobilised soldier as one.²⁷¹

The targeting of landlords and Protestants had a historic precedence. David Mullins of Queen's County claimed he had suffered from the 'hostility displayed to all old soldiers and Loyalists', when the Luggacurren Land Committee forced him from his land in March

²⁷¹ TNA,CO762/212.

1922. Luggacurren was the location of evictions in the 1880's of forty families who were forced from their homes for failing to pay Lord Lansdowne's rent.²⁷² As Fitzpatrick writes, 'the revolution gave bite to the agrarian struggle and drew much of its vitality from it'.²⁷³ The collapse of authority also gave the opportunity for old scores to be settled. Protestant landowners who held positions of power in the Ascendancy were particularly vulnerable, partly motivated by sectarianism. IRA officers admitted houses of prominent Protestant loyalists were burnt in retaliation for the destruction of property of republican sympathisers by the British.²⁷⁴ The evidence supports Hart's argument that Protestants were specifically targeted. Grants of land under the provision of the Soldiers and Sailors Re-settlement Act were viewed as a new plantation, and ordinary soldiers who received small holdings were threatened. Aalen comments, 'any attempt by a British Government to interfere with Irish Land inevitably aroused deep, almost paranoid, responses'.²⁷⁵ The ex-servicemen received the land in appreciation of war service but it was their acceptance of it that was the perceived offence. The IRA was determined to undermine the structure of British rule. Members of the British judicial system, Justices of the Peace, solicitors and court officials, were targeted as the IRA sought to establish a republican alternative. Those who supplied or worked in administrative and support role capacities for the Crown Forces could be subjected to intimidation but this generally stopped short of killing, unless it was associated with informing. The Dáil Éireann passed a decree of social ostracism against members of the RIC to undermine their morale, while a boycott of them caused the IRA to seek to prevent traders from supplying them with goods.²⁷⁶ Similar steps were taken against the army and upon their arrival the Tans and Auxiliaries. The IRA considered the RIC, 'were the chief weapon by

²⁷² TNA,CO762/71/3; <http://athyeyeonthepast.blogspot.com/1999/06/luggacurran-evictions.html>.

²⁷³ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, 65.

²⁷⁴ IMA/BMH/WS443,Neville,Cork; WS1296,Costello,Westmeath; WS1547,Murphy,City.

²⁷⁵ F.H.A., Aalen, 'Homes for Irish heroes', *Town Planning Review*, 59:3 (1988:July), 307

²⁷⁶ IMA/BMH/WS718,Crawley,Roscommon; Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 69; Charles Townshend, 'Policing Insurgency in Ireland' in Anderson and Killingray (eds.), *Policing and Decolonisation*, (Manchester:1992), 36.

which the British Government maintained such a hold on the country'.²⁷⁷ Ex-servicemen who planned to join were threatened and those that did often found problems in returning home, following their disbandment. Not all violence was for a political cause. The IGC believed that the breakdown of law and order, particularly in the period after the withdrawal of the British and the enforcement of authority at a local level by the new Irish state, may have been the reason for some intimidation. In one case it was hard to determine whether the injuries claimed for were the result of a specific vendetta arising out of loyalty to the British or just 'the lawless element', taking advantage of anarchic conditions prevalent in parts of Ireland'.²⁷⁸ Many of the complaints were for economic reasons including loss of business due to the departure of the Crown Forces or the inability to find employment.

From the perspective of the perpetrators, the witness statements contain many examples of non-ex-servicemen being victims of intimidation but of 1,773 files less than 60 specifically refer to ex-servicemen in such a context. The incidents that didn't involve spying were part of general IRA campaigns and not specifically related to ex-servicemen. They took place before the escalation of the conflict with the arrival of the Tans. The IRA also sought to demonstrate they were even handed in their dispensation of republican justice. Regarding suspected informers it was inevitable that due to their military background there would be a natural suspicion of ex-servicemen and their possible association with the Crown Forces. But there is little indication that ex-servicemen were deliberately targeted because of their war record. Of the many thought to be informers, 38 were ex-servicemen. In most cases the files give reasons as to why these men were suspected of spying and appear to give incriminating evidence. For example, James Maher, Meara and John O' Mahoney had close associations with the British forces; Kenny, McDonald, Walsh and Peacock actually resided in their barracks and were seen on patrol with them; Blagriff, Finbar O'Sullivan, O'Loughlin, Kirby

²⁷⁷ IMA/BMH/WS1296, Costello, Westmeath.

²⁷⁸ TNA, CO762/78/2; 762/114/12.

and Shiels joined or planned to join the Tans (the latter while serving in the IRA); while incriminating evidence was found against Foley, ‘Slickfoot’ Maher, Fitzgerald, Pike, Quinlisk, William O’Sullivan, McPherson and Dwyer. The statements have to be considered in the context of the possibility of bias and collusion but Ferriter concludes that they are for the most part measured and scrupulous. They are also very comprehensive and, although sometimes contradicting in points of detail when more than one officer described the same event, they were broadly consistent. The evidence supports Borgonovo’s contention that the IRA had a well organised intelligence network to identify spies, and challenges Hart’s argument that most of those who were punished never informed. That suspects were given warnings or told to leave or in some cases left alone because of insufficient evidence, contradicts the proposition that ex-servicemen were executed simply for their war service. In the witness statements, the IRA claimed that executions took place only after they had satisfied themselves that their suspicion was correct. Barry Egan, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork and a leading republican, said, ‘I believe that no executions are carried out by the IRA except after the most careful investigation, and when the accused has been found guilty of being a murderer or a spy’.²⁷⁹ Tom Barry, commander of the West Cork IRA, wrote there were cases when after investigation alleged informers were released due to lack of evidence.²⁸⁰ The ex-servicemen who were suspected of informing were often low ranking soldiers, members of the same community from which the IRA drew its volunteers. The witness statements provide significant evidence of the threat posed by such informers. Without this local intelligence the Tans would have been ineffective as unlike the RIC they generally had little knowledge, both in terms of geography and people, of the areas in which they operated. Barry wrote that by 1920 the effectiveness of the locally recruited RIC had been reduced to such an extent that spies and informers were practically the only source of

²⁷⁹ Ewart, *A Journey in Ireland*, 39.

²⁸⁰ Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, 100-1.

British intelligence; ‘these were the bloodhounds who nosed out the victims for the British murder gangs. From June 1920 they were a menace to the very existence of the Army of the Republic’.²⁸¹ Given the devastating impact informers had on their ranks it was inevitable that that on occasions the IRA would err on the side of caution in executing suspect spies. There was no campaign specifically against veterans. In a vicious war the IRA targeted anyone they suspected of collaborating with the British. Barry wrote that they demanded that the local population, ‘should not commit any hostile act against us and that they should not actively aid the British troops or administration’.²⁸² According to an officer in the south Roscommon brigade, anyone who informed was punished, including women; their houses were burnt and they were compelled to leave.²⁸³ The extent to which the IRA were prepared to exact revenge against informers was indicated in the case of six IRA men who were killed in March 1921 after being betrayed by one of their own members. The informer was eventually traced to New York and shot, two volunteers going out for the purpose.²⁸⁴ In the Civil War, Irregulars targeted those who joined the new National army of which large numbers were ex-servicemen.

There are several reasons to question the proposition that ex-servicemen were specifically and extensively victimised. As a class they could not be defined as ‘loyalist’ any more than the general population could be defined as ‘republican’. Volunteering for the Great War did not imply exceptional behaviour or loyalty to the Crown; large numbers did so with the support of their communities, and the motives for Catholics volunteering were often expressed as less to do with support of the imperial power and more the rights of small countries and the fight for Home Rule. In this regard the soldiers may have returned home disillusioned; veteran organisations condemned British ‘political treachery’. Many ex-

²⁸¹ Ibid, 99.

²⁸² Ibid, 107.

²⁸³ IMA/BMH/WS718,Crawley,Roscommon.

²⁸⁴ IMA/BMH/WS1547,Murphy,Cork.

servicemen joined the IRA.²⁸⁵ It would be ironic if they had persecuted fellow ex-servicemen only for serving in the same army that they did. In contrast as Borgonovo points out there was antagonism between the Crown Forces and ex-servicemen. He also argues that ex-servicemen were an integrated part of the social fabric. Hart's view of the negative stereotype of Irish soldiers as corner boys and drunks may have had validity for those serving in the ranks of the pre 1914 regular British army but the Great War volunteers were from different backgrounds, more representative of society. In numbers they were not an isolated small minority. Borgonovo writes in 1918 when Cork City had a male population of 38,000, over 5,500 were serving overseas with British forces. To this number must be added the large number of discharged and retired ex-servicemen already in the city.²⁸⁶ The BLSI in a survey of 14 towns (see 1.2), estimated ex-servicemen made up on average 12.4% of the population, circa 25% of the male population; in Cork's case over 40%. While the Legion may have overestimated the number of ex-servicemen, it is clear they made up a sizable portion of the population. If the IRA wished to make a statement that they were targeting ex-servicemen then it would have sought to assassinate higher profile ex-officers. Most of those executed were of low status and the resultant publicity minimal. Support for extreme nationalism was limited by geography, generation and time, increasing in rural areas in the south and west of the country, particularly amongst the young. Based on the observation of contemporary writers, Ireland was by no means radicalized and republican with a resultant animosity to all that was British, including by association its ex-servicemen. Intimidation was also limited by time. Of the claimants to the IGC who were forced to leave almost all, including those soldiers driven from their allocated small holdings by the IRA, returned after the Anglo-Irish War, often under the protection of the Free State army. Even when a group was deliberately targeted as a class such as the RIC, who were described by one IRA officer 'as the number

²⁸⁵ Later evidence indicates a majority of ex-servicemen became Fianna Fáil supporters (see 4.6b).

²⁸⁶ Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society'*, 79.

one enemy of the people', there was much variance in their treatment.²⁸⁷ Herbert Deane, a solicitor, wrote to the IGC in January 1927 on behalf of 40 policemen who were expelled from Ireland:

that such men were driven out because they were especially loyal to the British Crown. Those policeman who were not operating in troubled districts and who were regarded as innocuous and doing no special services for the Crown against the then rebels, were allowed to remain in Ireland.²⁸⁸

In 1922, 160 ex RIC members joined the newly formed Garda Siochana.²⁸⁹ Persecution was not such as to stop British army recruitment, 20,000 enlisting throughout Ireland between 1919 and 1921. Dublin recruited more than Belfast. The most successful recruitment office in Ireland in 1919-20 was Clonmel, County Tipperary. Some were reenlisting, perhaps escaping intimidation, many were not; recruitment rates in the south for 17 year olds were twice the pre-war rate.²⁹⁰ There may have been reasons to resent ex-servicemen with their preferential treatment in employment and training schemes, allocation of land and housing and generous pensions, while according to Fitzpatrick, the economic expectations of labourers, enhanced by wartime labour shortages, were threatened with the arrival of hordes of soldiers seeking jobs.²⁹¹

The view that ex-servicemen were persecuted and marginalised became persuasive. One reason was that high profile conflict in areas such as West Cork was widely publicised at the time, and obscured the reality that in much of Ireland intimidation was minimal. They were also the areas that later became the focus of academic research. Loyalist lobbying groups, such as SILRA, found perceived discrimination against those who had fought for Britain brought a sympathetic and well publicised response from both the media and

²⁸⁷ IMA/BMH, WS1296, Costello, Westmeath.

²⁸⁸ TNA, CO762/21/18, Letter from Herbert Deane, London solicitor, to IGC, 31 January 1927.

²⁸⁹ Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, 153.

²⁹⁰ Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army', (1983), 49; Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish Military Tradition and the British Empire' in Jeffery (ed.), *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire*, (Manchester:1996), 101. In the interwar years recruitment carried on with the tacit support of the Irish authorities.

²⁹¹ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, 233.

politicians and aided their cause. War service was highlighted even if it was not the cause of the violence; SILRA did not have the same motive to investigate cases as the IGC. In reality incidents of violence and intimidation were highly focussed both geographically and chronologically, and with regards to ex-servicemen usually occurred for a cause, and one that was also applicable to the general population.

Chapter 3 Britain: Legacy of Obligation 1919 – 1939

3.1 Introduction

a) *The Obligation to Ex-Servicemen*

The scale of destruction and loss of life arising from the Great War was unprecedented with even the victors questioning the value of the carnage. In total, 20 million were severely wounded, 8 million permanently disabled, all seeking reintegration into much changed societies.¹ In the United Kingdom 6.1 million were mobilised; 722,785 lost their lives, 1.7 million were wounded of which 755,000 were permanently disabled. With the collapse of empires many of the countries for which they had fought had ceased to exist. All countries were impoverished by the cost of an industrial scale war but, to varying degrees, there was recognition of both a state and societal obligation to the returning soldiers, particularly those who were disabled. In Britain following previous wars, after-care of disabled ex-servicemen was managed by the War Office and the Army. Conscription and the scale of enlistment established the precedent that the State was directly responsible for pension gratuities, disabled rehabilitation and all facets of recovery and maintenance and the establishment of the necessary agencies to provide such support.²

Cohen contrasts the experiences of ex-servicemen in two of the major combatants, Britain and Germany, arguing that although the German state provided Europe's most comprehensive support for disabled veterans with far more generous benefits than those

¹ J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, (London:1985), 71; Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany*, (London:2001), 1, 193; Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, (London:2003), 329.

² Ward, Stephen R., 'Intelligence Surveillance of British Ex-Servicemen, 1918-1920', *The Historical Journal*, 16/1 (1973),180-1.

available within Great Britain, German ex-servicemen became alienated from it, contributing to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. The British State assumed only the bare minimum of responsibility for its disabled veterans. Between 1925 and 1933, Germany spent circa 20% of its national budget on war pensions, some three times that of Britain, although it had only double the number of disabled. British ministries sought to limit the state's liability for wounded soldiers pleading fiscal stringency. According to Cohen there was little difference between the political parties in their attitude to them, 'in its first-ever government, Labour had, like the Conservative government that followed, done little to assist these men'. The comparative paucity of British Government support was compensated for by philanthropy, community initiatives and private business; the gratitude of society reconciled the disabled with those for whom they had suffered, and shielded the state from hostility. In contrast, German bureaucratic regulations limited the functioning of charities, causing in the veterans a perception of public ingratitude that alienated them from society and resulted in a profound antagonism towards the state.³ The King's National Roll Scheme (KNRS), an employment programme for disabled ex-servicemen, illustrated the cooperation of the state and community in Britain. Previously the government had attempted to train disabled men in government run instructional factories as part of the Industrial Training Scheme but the programme was judged to be a failure, predominantly due to the difficulty of ensuring that jobs existed upon completion of training.⁴ In contrast, as part of the KNRS, companies were encouraged to employ disabled ex-servicemen in return for which they were listed on a national Roll of Honour and awarded the King's Seal for use in correspondence. The State led by example, increasing the number of disabled ex-servicemen in government offices, encouraging local authorities to employ them, reserving lucrative contracts for companies on the Roll and instructing employment exchanges to give preference to disabled ex-

³ Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 4, 46, 188-194.

⁴ Meaghan Kowalsky, 'Enabling the Great War', PhD (University of Leeds, 2007), 98-102.

servicemen. But it was the cooperation of private enterprise that was essential. Although the KNRS was voluntary, it achieved remarkable success. As many as 30,000 companies were on the Roll at any given time, employing an average of 341,000 men per year throughout the 1920s. The scheme helped reduce unemployment among disabled ex-servicemen; approximately 80 per cent of all disabled men in receipt of a pension were employed through the KNRS between the years 1921 and 1938. Unemployment figures for disabled ex-servicemen hovered between 8 per cent and 11 per cent during the interwar years, significantly lower than for the able-bodied population. Local King's Roll committees cooperated with employment exchanges, local war pensions committees and hospitals. Kowalsky writes that the formation of the KNRS was the most important piece of legislation put in place for disabled veterans in interwar Britain. It was significant not simply in providing employment but also because it invoked substantial changes in both governmental policy and societal attitudes towards the disabled, increasing awareness and tolerance and integrating them into industry and the community.⁵ Cohen argues that the British Legion played a significant role in reconciling the ex-serviceman to the community. It tempered hostility towards the state within a non-political ideology that brought them closer to society; a central tenet of the Legion was an acknowledgement of the public support for the ex-servicemen both in terms of voluntary activities and in pressurising the British Government. The latter was criticised for inadequate provision but usually with a narrow focus directed towards the pension bureaucracy and the Treasury. This lack of confrontation led to accusations that the Legion was a 'sell out', its privileged relationship with the establishment at odds with rank-and-file opinion.⁶ Wootton agrees that the Legion assisted Britain in

⁵ Kowalsky, 'Enabling the Great War', 98-102; Meaghan Kowalsky, 'This Honourable Obligation', *European Review of History*, 14/ 4, (2007), 567-584, Cohen disagrees with Kowalsky arguing, 'Government departments baulked at joining the King's Roll', see Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 47.

⁶ Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 49-51. By contrast the short lived National Union of Ex-Servicemen was socialist and confrontational, see David Englander, 'The National Union of Ex-Servicemen and the Labour Movement, 1918-1920', *History*, 76/246 (1991).

reaching a new consensus, whereas in France the political culture was too far divided and ex-servicemen's organisations mirrored societal extremes.⁷

The mentally disabled had particular difficulties. According to Bourke the emotional stress of such men was exacerbated by the realisation that their actions in wartime were not appreciated, their loyalty was derided and they were considered 'too lazy to find employment', 'weak and degenerate' or 'childish and infantile', their masculinity in doubt. Mental illness arising from the battle was little understood by the public with the suspicion that the cause was cowardice. Pension officers sought to prove that mentally ill men were liars and malingerers. Although work was widely regarded as the best remedy for psychiatric patients, it was in short supply in the interwar years. An investigation of Scottish neurasthenics noted the high level of relapse caused by 'secondary economic neurasthenia', arising from unemployment and economic stress.⁸ The treatment meted out to mentally distressed ex-servicemen in asylums was often one of prolonged misery.⁹

British dominions (in contrast to the Free State which had the same status) initiated significant government and societal programmes to support ex-servicemen. In 1917 the Australian Parliament passed the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act, which provided the framework for a federally coordinated rehabilitation programme for disabled soldiers, including medical care, housing, education and training and reflected the strong public feeling that the 'wounded heroes of the Great War' must be looked after by the State. Again non-government organisations such as the Red Cross were a vital part of the national rehabilitation infrastructure; generating funds, managing convalescent facilities and providing a formidable volunteer workforce. The return of battle-scarred and wounded men became the 'emotive core of national mobilisation', with the intent of making the men feel 'valued and not

⁷ Graham Wootton, *The Politics of Influence*, (London:1963), 260.

⁸ Joanna Bourke, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35/1, (2000), 57-69.

⁹ Peter Barham, *Forgotten lunatics of the Great War*, (Yale:2004), 358.

forgotten'.¹⁰ Australia, Canada and New Zealand instigated large scale programmes, significantly more ambitious than those envisaged in the United Kingdom, to provide farming land for ex-servicemen. In Australia conscription for military service never became law, and the principal motive for embarking upon so ambitious a scheme of land settlement was the desire to redeem promises made to ex-soldiers that every man who returned should have a farm of his own, if he wanted it.¹¹

b) *The Obligation to Irish Ex-servicemen*

Britain retained the same legal obligation for Irish ex-servicemen even after the formation of the Free State. The Transfer of Function Order, 1922, transferred to the Provisional Government the whole body of public officials, excluding Crown Forces. Clause nine of the Order specifically stated that the Crown Forces would not be transferred to the Free State Government, including the duties with respect to pensions and allowances and provision for the training, education and assistance for the re-instatement in civil life of ex-servicemen.¹² The obligation to Irish ex-servicemen had several motivations in addition to the general obligation to all ex-servicemen. It included a perceived debt to those whose service to the Crown had caused them hardship in the conflict in Ireland after the transition of government. More pragmatically during the Anglo-Irish War there was a concern from the British Government that disaffected ex-servicemen would use their skills on behalf of the republicans, knowing that the combination of a hostile homecoming and unemployment would make them susceptible to Sinn Fein propaganda. A conference of British Ministers meeting in February 1919 to discuss help for Irish ex-servicemen acknowledged both points, concluding 'that ex-servicemen were being excluded from employment and for this reason

¹⁰ Marina Larsson, 'Restoring the Spirit', *Health and History*, 6/ 2, Military Medicine (2004), 45-59.

¹¹ A. J. Hannan, 'Land Settlement of Ex-Service Men in Australia, Canada, and the United States', *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, Third Series, 2/3 (1920), 225-237.

¹² TNA,AP1/143, Leggett Case, 10 March 1932.

and general propaganda were forced into the ranks of the disaffected', and that this was not a state of affairs that could continue, 'having regard for the duty the Government owed these men'.¹³ The Ministries of Labour and Transport were responsible for helping ex-servicemen find employment. In 1919 an official of the former noted, 'I should be glad if authority could be given us to place fit demobilised men in training. There are a large number of these in the country being driven into disloyalty through not being able to find work, and the unrest is very considerable in consequence'.¹⁴ The following year a Ministry of Transport official in Dublin wrote that in view of the state of the country, special steps should be taken to initiate essential projects on which the ex-servicemen could be employed, 'while ex-soldiers are unemployed they are liable to be influenced in other directions, making the position in Ireland worse than it is'.¹⁵ Veteran organisations warned that these conditions created 'the possibility of thousands of these once loyal men being won over to the side of the extremists'.¹⁶ Some claimed that specific promises were made to Irishmen as an inducement to volunteer. Conscription, unlike in Britain after 1916, was not enforced in Ireland, other incentives were needed. William Redmond in a Dáil Éireann debate on the grievances of British ex-servicemen in November 1927 said, 'they were told that if they survived the war they would get special, preferential treatment from the Government'.¹⁷ Sir Henry McLaughlin wrote in 1925, 'shortly after Lord Kitchener appointed me as Director General of Recruitment for Ireland, the British Government gave me authority to say publicly from the platforms that everything would be done for the ex-service man on his return, and particularly in the way of housing. Time and again men have come to me and informed me

¹³ TNA,LAB2/492, Conference of Ministers, 13 February 1919.

¹⁴ TNA,LAB2/628, MoL, note, 29 Aug 1919

¹⁵ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 12 January 1920.

¹⁶ TNA,LAB2/855, IFDDSS to the Prime Minister, 17 February 1920.

¹⁷ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

that the British Government is not upholding the promises made through me'.¹⁸ In June 1918, Lord French, the new Viceroy of Ireland, to encourage volunteers announced, 'land shall be available for men who have fought for their country.'¹⁹ The Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act 1919 (hereafter referred to as the Land Act 1919) reflected a desire to make good these recruitment promises and a pragmatic need to be seen to be doing something for the ex-servicemen, particularly as there was a concern that because of the republican dominated local authorities they might be excluded from social housing.²⁰

There was a well-orchestrated lobbying campaign by veterans' associations, chiefly the British Legion, and general loyalist organisations such as SILRA, aimed at both the government and the British public reminding them of the obligation towards those who had served the Crown. While allegiance to Britain may not have been their reason for volunteering, service in its armed forces gave the ex-servicemen the right to claim the same debt as loyalists. SILRA's primary objective was 'to keep before the Public the great hardships endured by Loyalists and ex-service men under conditions in Southern Ireland'.²¹ In 1925 its chairman, the Duke of Northumberland, wrote to the *Daily Mail* to describe the condition of ex-servicemen in Ireland as 'heartbreaking'. An editorial endorsed the letter stating that, 'almost all of them are in extreme poverty and distress'.²² There remained a significant number of advocates for the loyalists in parliament, particularly the House of Lords. Veteran organisations ensured questions were often raised on the grievances of the ex-servicemen, the *Irish Times* reporting that the secretary of the British Legion said that he was 'instrumental in having questions raised in the House on the slow progress of house building for ex-

¹⁸ *IT*, 12 December 1927, reporting on a BL meeting in December 1927 in which Major G Studdert quoted a letter from the late Sir Henry McLaughlin in 1925 to L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies; TNA, AP1/209, it was also quoted in a letter from Jack Jones MP to the British Minister of Health, 20 September 1932.

¹⁹ Aalen, 'Homes for Irish Heroes', 307.

²⁰ Murray Fraser, *John Bull's Other Homes: State Housing and British Policy in Ireland, 1883-1922*, (Liverpool:1996), 240.

²¹ PRONI, D/989/B/5/6.

²² *Daily Mail*, 2 February 1925.

servicemen'.²³ Ex-servicemen organisations through emotional appeals argued that 'the promises and pledges given by the Government' should be honoured; the Irish Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers (IFDDSS) wrote to the Prime Minister in February 1920, complaining that ex-servicemen had lost all through their duty to the British Empire and were 'forced to line up in queues and accept charity', and now 'regard prison as a haven of refuge from the horrors of starvation in the streets'. They complained of the failure of government schemes to provide employment and to train disabled men, of inadequate out of work donations and inefficient pension administration. The letter concluded 'that the case of the ex-servicemen in Ireland is one of special urgency', and 'the Irish ex-serviceman has no friends capable of helping him in his own country, and he looks to the Government for that assistance which he justly considers his right'.²⁴ The Ministry of Labour considered that the comments of the Federation 'did not greatly exaggerate the general conditions of the ex-servicemen in Ireland',²⁵ although they advised the Prime Minister's office not to reply to it.²⁶ Much of the lobbying was carried out in the mainstream media and both the Irish and British press provided extensive and generally sympathetic coverage (see 4.6e). Politicians of all persuasions found it necessary to respond; in the General Election of 1922 over 300 candidates pledged their support for the claims of disadvantaged Irish loyalists.²⁷ Brennan writes, 'it was the point from which no party in Britain could escape; the debt of honour had been acknowledged by all parties in 1922'.²⁸

The grievances expressed by the ex-servicemen were such that in November 1927 the Free State Government established a 'Committee on Claims of British Ex-Servicemen' (hereafter referred to as the Lavery Committee after its chairman), specifically to determine:

²³ TNA,AP1/98, Statement by Colonel Heath, Secretary of BL, *IT*, 7 July 1926; Duckworth wrote to Haig complaining about the Legion's lobbying, 14 June 1926.

²⁴ TNA,LAB2/855, IFDDSS to Prime Minister, 17 February 1920.

²⁵ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 12 March 1920.

²⁶ TNA,LAB2/855, IFDDSS to Prime Minister's Office, 17 February 1920; MoL to Prime Minister's office, 24 March 1920.

²⁷ TNA,DO 35/343/3.

²⁸ Niamh Brennan, 'A Political Minefield: Southern Loyalists, the IGC and the British Government, 1922-31', *Irish Historical Studies*, 30/119 (May 1997), 406-419.

- The nature and extent of the claims made by ex-servicemen against the British Government in respect of rights to have arisen out of past services.
- The nature and extent of their claims, if any, against the Government of the Irish Free State in respect of alleged discrimination against them in regard to employment or otherwise.

The Committee examined grievances in relation to employment, housing, land, pensions and health provision. The ex-servicemen were encouraged to write through veteran associations such as the BLSI but there were also several hundred individual submissions. It was without precedent that a dominion government would sanction a report into the failure or otherwise of the British Government to fulfil its obligations. The Committee presented its report in November 1928 (hereafter referred to as the Lavery Report). Most of the grievances were directed at the British Government and its findings received extensive press coverage, forcing the British Government to justify its record in seeking to meet its obligations to the ex-servicemen.²⁹

Legal, pragmatic, moral and political pressures therefore combined to ensure that the British Government was faced with the need to fulfil a special obligation to Irish ex-servicemen in the south. This obligation was reflected in schemes to encourage employment, pension and health care for the physically and mentally disabled, support for emigration, compensation, and the provision of land and houses. Some obligations such as those related to employment and land were only relevant up until the formation of the Free State. The British were faced with discharging this obligation in a time of conflict and thereafter in a country in which they had limited and decreasing jurisdiction. The balance of Chapter 3 assesses the extent to which the British Government was successful in fulfilling these obligations, particularly in the context of the expectations placed upon them.

²⁹ TNA,PIN15/757-8

3.2 Employment

a) *The Able Bodied*

In their efforts to remedy the high unemployment of ex-servicemen and the possibility of their disaffection to Sinn Fein, the British Government was faced with significant problems; lack of cooperation from companies and local authorities, diminishing British control and the collapse of commerce due to the conflict. The methods used in Great Britain, particularly through the cooperation of private industry, were much less appropriate in Ireland. This did not stop British Government departments, specifically the Ministries of Labour and Transport, making significant efforts to help the ex-servicemen. Such preferential treatment generated considerable resentment from a wider population also suffering hardship, an antagonism of which the republicans sought to take advantage. British ministers did not expect the armistice to create the same economic difficulties in Ireland as in Britain; the economy remained predominantly agricultural and less dependent on war work, particularly in the south.³⁰ Nevertheless Irish recruitment was primarily urban and a significant number of the ex-servicemen returning to Ireland faced unemployment, a higher percentage than in Great Britain. Ferriter writes, 'By October 1919, 35,000 ex-servicemen were receiving the out-of-work donations in Ireland, accounting for an unemployment rate of 46%, compared with only 10% in Britain'.³¹ According to the British Ministry of Labour, the number of demobilised men to February 1920 in Britain was 3,365,000 and in Ireland 83,500. The number of unemployed (on donation) ex-servicemen in Britain was 311,646 and in Ireland 27,648. This gives a percentage of unemployed to the total number demobilised of 9.3% in Great Britain and 33.1% in Ireland, a ratio of 3.6 times greater in Ireland.³² The Ministry of Transport estimated that there were 40,000 unemployed ex-servicemen in Ireland in February

³⁰ TNA,LAB2/492, MoL, note, 11 February 1919; TNA,LAB2/492, Conference of Ministers, 13 February 1919.

³¹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, 209; Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland', 399.

³² TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 23 Feb 1920.

1920.³³ Irrespective of the exact figures the problem was serious and the Ministry of Labour noted that ‘one of the most urgent of the outstanding problems is that of finding employment for the ex-service men in Ireland’.³⁴ A briefing note to Bonar Law MP in April 1920 from the Ministry of Labour outlined the severity of the problem, ‘there is no doubt that the position of ex-servicemen in Ireland at present is very difficult indeed, in view of the unsympathetic attitude of the great majority of employers’, and that ‘there is political antagonism to the employment of ex-soldiers in the south and west. Local Authorities and employers holding public positions are afraid to run counter to this feeling’. The note outlined several other factors that accentuated the problem: before the War 30,000 emigrated every year but emigration was prohibited in the War, increasing the labour market; civilians had taken the place of those who enlisted and with the growth in trade unions could not be easily replaced without trouble; the ex-servicemen were prejudiced against the Unions, making their absorption into industry more difficult and finally the conflict restricted the development of the economy and the establishment of new enterprises, and consequentially caused considerable unemployment among all civilians.³⁵ The Ministry of Labour reported that ‘it will be practically impossible to place fit men in training or employment under ordinary conditions anywhere except in the North, and that the only hope was Lord French’s scheme of providing factories where ex-service men could be employed together. Training in Ireland will have to be highly centralised’,³⁶ that ‘due to the political situation it has not been possible to apply the methods used in Britain for obtaining employment for ex-servicemen’,³⁷ and ‘that in the present political state of Ireland, the ex-service man is a God-send to those who want a concrete political bone to pick’.³⁸ The Ministry, after interviews with veteran

³³ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 2 February 1920.

³⁴ TNA,LAB2/747, MoL, note, 8 April 1920.

³⁵ TNA,LAB2/747, briefing note to Bonar Law, MP, 28 April 1920 from MoL in relation to a question expected to be raised by Captain Coote in the House of Commons.

³⁶ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 6 June 1919.

³⁷ TNA,LAB2/747, MoL to Foreign Office, early 1920.

³⁸ TNA,LAB2/747, MoL, note, 9 Feb 1920.

organisations such as the Irish branches of the Comrades of the Great War and the Discharged Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation, concluded that the position of ex-servicemen in Ireland was so serious and pitiful that they should be treated as disabled men were in Great Britain, that is, as a disability made it impossible for a man to resume his old employment, so military service in Ireland disqualified a man from employment.³⁹

Lord French was eager to help returning Irish veterans; in November 1918 he proposed to the British cabinet that the Dublin Castle administration be given £2 million for industrial and agricultural development but was declined.⁴⁰ A Conference of Ministers in February 1919 made an interim grant of £250,000 for employment programmes, with further sums to follow;⁴¹ £175,000 had been allocated by July 1919.⁴² The expenditure was supervised by an Inter Departmental Committee and the division of responsibility caused problems with using the money effectively.⁴³ Lord French was not satisfied. In January 1920 he invited 15 to 20 representatives from each province to request them to give more work to ex-soldiers, influence other employers to do likewise and form local committees to achieve this; meetings were arranged the same month. At the same time a further grant was sought from the Treasury to build roads, harbours etc. to provide work for the ex-servicemen.⁴⁴ The Ministry of Transport took over responsibility for the execution of public works and a sum of £100,000 (which would provide 1,500 with employment for 5 months) was allocated as a first instalment - only the amounts related to ex-servicemen would be charged against the sum. The Irish Office of the Ministry of Labour was responsible to Parliament for the expenditure and to say where the work should be carried out. The Ministry of Transport submitted proposals to the Chief Secretary for Ireland in London for approval, the latter to the exclusion

³⁹ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 4 May 1920.

⁴⁰ Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', 1154; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

⁴¹ TNA,LAB2/492, Conference of Ministers, 13 February 1919.

⁴² TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 19 Jan 1920.

⁴³ TNA,LAB2/747, MoL, note, April 1920.

⁴⁴ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 12 January 1920.

of Dublin Castle.⁴⁵ It was considered that submitting the schemes to Dublin Castle after negotiations with the local authorities would excite political opposition.⁴⁶ Numerous local bodies; harbour boards, local councils and highway authorities made applications for harbour, rail and road improvements.⁴⁷ Lord French thought only ex-servicemen should be employed on such schemes but the Ministry of Labour disagreed noting 'it would be clearly impossible in the present state of Ireland to engage ex-service men exclusively'.⁴⁸ The Ministry of Transport concurred, arguing that grants to provide employment for only ex-servicemen would 'aggravate the unfortunate feeling in Ireland' towards them⁴⁹ and that it was not politic to 'inaugurate works where ex-soldiers only would be employed, because such a course would only mean that the men would be boycotted and made uncomfortable in other ways. General employment should be given on the works, care being taken to give preference to the ex-soldiers',⁵⁰ and 'that any public reference to the arrangements made to provide work for them on schemes under the Ministry of Transport would seriously mitigate against the success of those scheme'.⁵¹ They also argued that money invested in infrastructure was better than paying unemployment benefits.⁵² In any event the prevailing political climate, and the inability to aid specifically ex-servicemen, significantly reduced the effectiveness of these schemes. Training was also organised in growth industries, including the training of wireless operators. By March 1920, 136 men were in training or had just completed training; the Treasury even paid for their uniforms upon completion.⁵³ According to Leonard, training courses at universities and technical colleges and placements on farms and in workshops

⁴⁵ TNA,LAB2/747, Meeting of Ministries of Labour/Transport 4 May 1920 (the exclusion of Dublin Castle was omitted from the official minutes); MoL, note, April 1920.

⁴⁶ TNA,Lab2/747/10, MoL, note, 19 April 1920.

⁴⁷ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 12 January 1920.

⁴⁸ TNA,Lab2/747/10, MoL, note, 19 April 1920.

⁴⁹ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 2 February 1920.

⁵⁰ TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 12 January 1920.

⁵¹ TNA,LAB2/747, briefing note to Bonar Law MP 28 April 1920 from MoL.

⁵² TNA,MT47/6, MoT, note, 12 January 1920.

⁵³ TNA,LAB2/628, MoL, note, 29 August 1919; Treasury note, 31 March 1920, sent to MoL 14 April 1920.

were provided for veterans.⁵⁴ But little progress was made as evidenced by a report in March 1921, following a visit to Ireland by Dr. P.L. Forward who had responsibility for pensions in Ireland. Although his primary focus was disabled soldiers, he commented on the general problems of providing employment for ex-servicemen and that work was difficult to obtain ‘owing to the present hostile attitude against men who served in the Great War. Even those employers who are sympathetically disposed towards the ex-soldier are prevented from offering employment to these men, owing to threats and other methods of intimidation’. Forward proposed a ‘work colony’, a similar proposal to that of Lord French, to build factories where ex-service men could be trained and employed together. He believed that even after the country became settled, the ex-soldier would remain ‘an outcast and an undesirable by his fellow men’. Forward did not think that such a colony would be subject to molestation as in his opinion it was individuals not communities that were subject to such treatment. He cited the building of homes for ex-servicemen at Clondorf near Dublin, where veterans were employed in its construction.⁵⁵ Work at Killester, the Trust’s largest development was also carried out by demobilised soldiers and tenants;⁵⁶ some 800 veterans were employed on the scheme.⁵⁷

The government also committed to intervene in cases where soldiers found their jobs no longer available when they returned home. John O’Brien was employed before the War by Limerick Corporation as a night watchman and on joining the British army in 1915 claimed he was promised re-employment upon his return. When this was not offered he sued the Corporation for breach of agreement and was awarded £25 compensation. In the House of Commons on 11 November 1919, Sir Maurice Dockrell asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, if the Irish Government would afford legal assistance to others in a similar position? Mr

⁵⁴ Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 215.

⁵⁵ TNA, PIN15/899, Forward ‘Provision of Employment for Ex-serviceman in Ireland’, 11 March 1921; LAB 2/522, MoL, note, 6 June 1919.

⁵⁶ *IT*, 5 Aug 1933.

⁵⁷ Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 217; Fraser, *John Bull's Other Homes*, 240 271.

Macpherson in reply said the Government would intervene, ‘in all cases where the demobilised soldier or sailor is penalised because of his loyalty to Ireland’.⁵⁸

Efforts were made to employ ex-servicemen in government offices although their percentage of the work force was generally lower than in Great Britain, partly due to the political climate. The Substitution Scheme, to facilitate the employment of ex-servicemen in British ministries and introduced into Britain in 1919, was not enforced in Ireland. Notwithstanding this, from October 1919 to March 1920, the Ministry of Labour secured 350 appointments for ex-servicemen in 60 different government offices in Ireland. In March 1920 within the Irish offices of the Ministry of Labour, 50.8% of the total male staff and 32.9% of the total staff were ex-servicemen, with measures in place to increase the latter figure to 38.9%. The corresponding figures for the whole Ministry were 80% and 44.7%. The percentage of the temporary male staff in Ireland who were ex-servicemen was 63% compared to 83% in the United Kingdom.⁵⁹

Table 13: Ministry of Labour, Ireland, Staffing

Category	Total Staff Employed			Ex-Servicemen Employed		
	Men	Women	Total	Disabled	Others	Total
Permanent	155	40	195	1	24	25
Temporary	443	285	728	99	180	279
Total	598	325	923	100	204	304

Source: TNA, LAB 2/855.

The IFDDSS presented a contrasting perspective stating, ‘a considerable number of ex-officers, suitable for clerical position, are unable to find employment and the efforts of the Ministry of Labour on their behalf do not appear to be successful. The enormous outlay of

⁵⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 13 November 1919, 5; *Hansard*, HC Deb, 121, 11 November 1919.

⁵⁹ TNA, LAB2/855, MoL to PM’s office, 16 and 24 March 1920, give slightly different figures, the latter stating there were 315 ex-servicemen employed in its Irish offices out of a total male staff of 534.

public money by the Appointments and Training Branch of the Ministry of Labour is not justified by the results achieved'.⁶⁰

Other methods of obtaining employment were limited. The Ministry of Labour noted that since the Armistice there had been considerable difficulty in finding employment for ex-servicemen through the Irish employment exchanges. Only 9,256 ex-servicemen were placed by them between the Armistice and 5 March 1920; the number placed during the 3 months preceding the 5 March 1920 was 2,086, and the total number on the registers of employment exchanges in Ireland in March 1920 was 22,884.⁶¹ Irish employers did not use employment exchanges to the same extent as those in Britain, and Irish exchanges were therefore less successful in obtaining jobs.⁶² Another factor distorting employment in Ireland was the out of work donation scheme that allowed unemployed ex-servicemen 26 weeks donation at 24/ per week, within a period of 12 months from the end of their 4 weeks furlough.⁶³ Many were willing to remain on donation, as except in Dublin and Belfast, the low cost of living made it an adequate substitute for wages. Wages seldom exceeded the donation,⁶⁴ and in most cases it was in excess of the average wage,⁶⁵ as it was designed for the higher living costs in Britain. It was referred to as the stop work donation, an 'inexplicable phenomena' that made work economically unattractive for a large segment of the population.⁶⁶ The problem was quickly recognised and part remedied when in February 1919 ministers restricted the donation in Ireland to insured trades, trades designated by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and demobilised soldiers. Ex-servicemen continued to be eligible and therefore to have an incentive not to work at least until the donation period ended. The number of ex-servicemen on out of work donation fell from 301,588 in Great Britain and 34,979 in Ireland in November 1919 to

⁶⁰ TNA,LAB2/855, IFDDSS to PM, 17 February 1920.

⁶¹ TNA,LAB2/747, MoL, note. Recorded number of discharged men exceeding 100,000, April 1920.

⁶² TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 23 Feb 1920.

⁶³ TNA,LAB2/492.

⁶⁴ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 23 Feb 1920.

⁶⁵ TNA,LAB2/492 Conference of Ministers, 13 February 1919.

⁶⁶ TNA,LAB2/492, MoL, note, 11 February 1919.

correspondingly 199,871 and 19,001 in May 1920, declining consistently each month as entitlement ended.⁶⁷

With the formation of the Free State, Britain ceased to have any meaningful influence in terms of the ability to provide employment schemes for ex-servicemen, nor indeed had they any longer responsibility for unemployment benefit.

b) *The Disabled*

The objective of the government to train disabled servicemen and then help them find employment was to prove challenging in Britain, even more so in Ireland. The designation as to who was entitled to such support was well defined and reasonably inclusive. Any man disabled at the time of discharge whose disability was attributable or aggravated by war service, or whose disability existed at the time of discharge, even if the cause was not attributable to war service, was entitled to training if it was medically certified that due to their disability they could not resume their job or profession, or could not do so without a reduction of earning.⁶⁸ The problems in providing employment were those faced by all ex-servicemen but accentuated due to disability. A Ministry of Labour report in April 1919 summarised the challenges, noting that there were 100,000 unemployed in Ireland and 100,000 soldiers waiting to be demobilised and such a surplus of labour made it difficult to find employment for the 4/5,000 disabled men. The Ministry of Pensions had arranged training for only 180 men. Training was also only the first step; afterwards employment had to be found and the report concluded that given political considerations and the economic environment this would only be achieved if the government put together a scheme to provide

⁶⁷ TNA,LAB2/492, Note, 21 Feb 1919, arising out of the Conference of Ministers, 13 February 1919; TNA,LAB2/222.

⁶⁸ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 30 April 1919 and 6 June 1919.

permanent employment. Special officers had been allocated to employment exchanges to help disabled men but only in a few of the larger ones and not in the 152 other exchanges.⁶⁹

The British Government was not prepared for the task of training and finding work for the disabled. It was unclear which department would have responsibility and there were inadequate resources in Ireland. Initially the Ministry of Pensions was responsible and they admitted that ‘few facilities exist for disabled soldiers in Ireland such that exist in England and many of the men are really badly off’.⁷⁰ In terms of training and employment the Ministry of Labour was the more appropriate agency. It was intended that they should take over these functions in June 1919 and that the War Pension Committee would be restricted to determining whether the applicant was eligible for training.⁷¹ A disabled man undergoing training, unless he required curative treatment as well, would fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour.⁷² The Ministry of Labour did not initially have the necessary resources; in June 1919 it established an Irish Department in Dublin with an Appointments and Training Branch but had yet to recruit the necessary staff.⁷³ It was recognised that the new Irish Department should not be ‘a mere outpost of the departments in London, but that it should have ample authority and full powers as industrial and labour conditions in Ireland are fundamentally different to Britain’.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Labour was disdainful of its inheritance from the Ministry of Pensions, claiming that the latter’s organisation was in a ‘hopelessly chaotic condition’, and that only 300 men had been trained but no assessment had been made as to their suitability for the trade in which they were trained. According to the Ministry of Labour, the men ‘were seething with discontent at nothing having been done for them, were mocked for having served in the British army and were forced to join the Sinn Fein through

⁶⁹ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 5 April 1919

⁷⁰ TNA,LAB2/528, MoP, note, 18 May 1919.

⁷¹ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 30 May 1919.

⁷² TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 10 May 1919.

⁷³ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 30 May 1919; TNA,LAB 2/522. MoL, note, 28 June 1919.

⁷⁴ TNA,LAB2/522, MoP, note, 10 April 1919.

discontent, and as the only chance to get employment'.⁷⁵ By November 1919 the Ministry of Labour had assumed full responsibility for training⁷⁶ and over 447 ex-servicemen had been trained and 2,085 registered for training.⁷⁷ It also found it difficult to make sufficient progress, in March 1920 writing to the Prime Minister's office that the training of disabled men was in a very unsatisfactory state due to insufficient premises and staff and a lack of vacancies.⁷⁸ It claimed the delay 'is entirely on the Treasury's part', as it had been in correspondence with that department since October 1919 and their long delay in approving additional staff has 'hindered very seriously the work of the Appointments and Training branch in Ireland', and prejudiced the success of the Industrial Training Scheme.⁷⁹

Progress was hindered not only by bureaucratic infighting but also an increasingly adverse political climate. In May 1919 the Ministry of Labour had proposed setting up an Irish Industrial Conference with employers and trade unions to persuade them to establish joint trade committees but eventually realised such cooperation was unforthcoming.⁸⁰ By December 1919 an internal report stated that the political unrest had increased the hostile attitude of employers and their employees and, as long as the political attitude remained, it was almost hopeless to find employment for disabled ex-servicemen. The employers wanted fees and wages to be paid by the Ministry of Labour. The report advocated government factories for disabled ex-servicemen paid at union rates and with the goods produced sold in the open market.⁸¹ Irish employers would generally only accept ex-servicemen for training if they were paid for it.⁸² No steps were taken to apply the King's National Roll Scheme; it was feared that republican and trade union opposition would make the scheme unworkable. The Ministry of Labour had written to the Comrades of the Great War that as there were no local

⁷⁵ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, notes, 5 May and 18 November 1919

⁷⁶ TNA,LAB2/628, MoL, note, 21 November 1919.

⁷⁷ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL, note, 18 November 1919

⁷⁸ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL to PM's office 24 March 1920.

⁷⁹ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL to PM's office 16 March 1920

⁸⁰ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL note, 5 May 1919.

⁸¹ TNA,LAB2/522, MoL note, undated but circa December 1919.

⁸² TNA,LAB2/522, MoL note, 20 February 1920.

employment committees in Ireland, it had not been possible to apply the Scheme but employers who desired to cooperate in the Scheme were entitled to do so.⁸³ In 1920 the Ministry of Labour believed that in the north of Ireland there would also be difficulty in implementing the Scheme.⁸⁴ Even Dublin Castle in the contracts it awarded informed the Ministry of Labour that there would be problems in giving preference to firms employing disabled ex-servicemen, as their contracts (e.g. for the RIC and the Prisons Board) were too small or specialised to have a far reaching effect, and that there was no comprehensive list of approved companies. The Office of Public Works wrote that ‘no general condition with regards to the employment of disabled men could be laid down without seriously increasing the difficulty of obtaining tenders for works and enhancing their costs’, but by negotiation a certain number of such men could be employed. They also stated that larger building firms employed a number of ex-servicemen but would not be prepared to give a specific undertaking.⁸⁵

The Ministry of Labour persisted in its efforts to provide training for the disabled, despite the difficulties caused by continued conflict. As post offices and employment exchanges could not be used to publicise training courses, the BLSI and the Ministry of Pensions were used as alternative forms of communication.⁸⁶ A report from the Ministry of Labour in July 1923 to the Treasury, noted that the Industrial Training Scheme to train all disabled men was late in starting in Ireland, and that communication with trainees and training centres outside Dublin was uncertain and staff worked in conditions of extreme difficulty and danger. The Government Instructional Factory (GIF) in Tipperary, which provided training for 182 men, was the only building of size in the locality not to be destroyed, although threatened by the British army, the Tans, the Sinn Feiners, the IRA and

⁸³ TNA,LAB2/220; Reply to question in House of Commons as to why no names of Irish Employers on King’s National Roll, 29 March 1920; MoL to Comrades of the Great War, 11 May 1920; Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 216.

⁸⁴ TNA,LAB2/222, MoL, note, 31 March 1920

⁸⁵ TNA,LAB2/222, Dublin Castle to MoL, London, 4 Oct 1920; Office of Public Works to Dublin Castle, 15 October 1920.

⁸⁶ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, note, 16 May 1922,

the Free State army. It had been preserved by the manager, Major Roche, with help from the local training committee, chaired by the parish priest. The report noted that owing to the difficulty of establishing the Ministry's own centres due to the disturbed nature of the country, a larger proportion of training than in England was carried out with private employers, which was 'not a satisfactory arrangement given the Irishman's attitude to the Government'. There was also difficulty getting reliable medical help to review claims for training. Some men on the waiting list had served in the Free State army, and as it was disbanded they renewed their application for disability training, perhaps having accentuated injuries. The report noted that even after training, until trade revived, there were limited opportunities for employment. It also contained details of the men trained, the infrastructure in place and the many still awaiting training.⁸⁷

Table 14: Numbers trained/awaiting training

	May 1923	November 1922	May 1922
Waiting List	2,289	3,914	3,101
GIF	163	163	181
Other Centres	109	124	104
Employer's workshops	345	568	517

Source: TNA, LAB 2/528, Report from Ministry of Labour 6 July 1923, sent to the Treasury 27 July 1923.

Table 15: Activities of training centres

Name	Courses
Tipperary GIF	Boot and Shoe, Harness Making, Basket Making, Commercial, Estate
Clonmel Tech School	Blacksmithing, Estate Carpentry
Dublin, Hume Street	Watch and Clock
Dublin, Kearney and Co	Marine Motors
Dublin Training Centre	Boot and Shoe

Source: TNA, LAB 2/528, Report from Ministry of Labour 6 July 1923, sent to the Treasury 27 July 1923.

The same report also commented on the implications of the formation of the Irish Free State. From a legal position under the Government of Ireland Act 1920, confirmed under the Order

⁸⁷ TNA, LAB/528, MoL, report, 6 July 1923, sent to Treasury, 27 July 1923

in Council of 1 April 1922, training was a reserved service. In subsequent legislation with regard to the establishment of the Free State, training was not mentioned, and the effect was that this service remained an Imperial obligation for which the Free State Government was not in any way responsible. The Ministry of Labour therefore continued with both responsibility and resources in the Free State. There were local training committees composed of persons of standing who were supportive of the Ministry's training scheme. The Free State Government was accepting of the British Government investing money in Ireland and did not display hostility to the scheme. They were careful though to avoid any open connection and did not wish to be regarded as in any way responsible for the activities. The report noted it was an anomaly having a Department of the British Ministry of Labour functioning in the Irish Free State. There was an arrangement that the Secretary of the Free State's Minister of Labour, Gordon Campbell, would exercise general supervision but in practical terms this did not happen.⁸⁸ The British Ministry of Labour concluded therefore that 'the right course for us is to carry on quietly as may be with the scheme on present lines'.⁸⁹ The Treasury concurred stating, 'the view now held in this Department is that transfer of administrative responsibility for training to either of the local Governments is not practicable'.⁹⁰ Despite considerable efforts, 'owing to the disturbed state of affairs in many parts of Ireland', it had been impossible for the Ministry of Labour 'to make arrangements to afford training to all the men who are entitled to it'. In December 1923 there were still 1,865 men on the waiting list with a further 560 in training; 182 were at the GIF in Tipperary but the majority (258) were in employers' workshops. Although discussions took place with the Board of Works in Dublin to open a large, centralised training facility at Gormanston Camp on a three year lease from 1924,⁹¹ the training programme for 1924/5 estimated that of 1,230

⁸⁸ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, report, 6 July 1923, sent to Treasury 27 July 1923

⁸⁹ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, note, 9 July 1923.

⁹⁰ TNA,LAB2/528,Treasury to MoL, 16 Aug 1923

⁹¹ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, note, circa December 1923.

men, 790 would be trained in employers' workshops and only 190 in GIFs, with an estimated budget of £198,328.⁹²

In addition to the physically disabled, the need to make training and employment provision for the mentally disabled was also recognised. Employment was a critical factor in the recovery and self-esteem of soldiers suffering mental illness. Dr. P.L. Forward from the Ministry of Pensions wrote in March 1921, 'these patients, in addition to their nervous disabilities resulting from the stress of the War, all have the super-added anxiety states occasioned by the hopeless outlook for the future in respect to their obtaining employment, and earning the means wherewith to maintain themselves and their dependents. No amount of psychotherapy can relieve this super-imposed anxiety condition', and that the only solution to enable them to leave hospital 'is to provide an occupational outlet through which a man on discharge from treatment may be placed in a suitable position to allow of his earning a living, and by his own efforts to become self-supporting'. Forward continued, 'in many instances men are kept on treatment allowances and in hospital because they have no prospect of employment'. To counter the hostility to ex-servicemen, he advocated 'work colonies' (see 3.2a), where they could be trained and employed with a section set aside for the mentally ill. He concluded that without such employment there would not be a decrease in the number of men listed for treatment for neurasthenia but rather, because of the stress the men were subject to, the numbers were more likely to increase.⁹³ The therapeutic need for men suffering with neurasthenia to have remunerative occupations was also acknowledged by the Ministry of Pensions, Medical Service in Ulster, but the report highlighted the 'great lack' of such opportunities even in the north.⁹⁴ The problem was accentuated in the south with little real possibility of remedying it; mentally ill ex-soldiers were the most disadvantaged of those seeking employment.

⁹² TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, note, 22 Aug 1923.

⁹³ TNA,PIN15/899, Forward 'Provision of Employment for Ex-serviceman in Ireland', 11 March 1921.

⁹⁴ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, Medical Service, Ulster, letter, 21 March 1921.

c) *Transitional Arrangements and Post 1922*

The ability of the British Government to provide substantial help regarding employment ended with the formation of the Free State. Yet problems persisted. The Ministry of Labour wrote to the Treasury in July 1923 that as the country became more settled, Civil Liability Grants, available in Britain from 1919 to help returning soldiers, could be used to provide assistance.⁹⁵ There were also some concerns that British Government entities that continued to operate in Ireland did not give preference to ex-servicemen; the BLSI complained that the Trust employed civilians despite there being ‘an appalling state of unemployment existing amongst ex-servicemen’.⁹⁶ The complaint appeared unjustified; of the 53 males employed by the Trust 45 were ex-servicemen.⁹⁷ The reality that the British Government had little influence with regard to employment was acknowledged in the mandate given to the Lavery Committee; with regards to employment it was tasked with examining any claims against the Irish Government in respect of alleged discrimination by them in regard to employment. A primary grievance against the British Government was that they did not ensure, through Treaty provisions at the time of the transfer of power, security of employment or adequate compensation upon dismissal for British ex-servicemen who had become civil servants, specifically for those employed on a non-permanent basis, or a reasonable opportunity for them to obtain a permanent post. They could therefore be dismissed without compensation and in reapplying considered themselves to be disadvantaged against ex-National army servicemen.⁹⁸ This was particularly important as most ex-servicemen were usually only eligible for temporary appointments.⁹⁹ There was validity in the criticism. In the United Kingdom irrespective of any contractual conditions the

⁹⁵ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL, report, 6 July 1923, sent to Treasury, 27 July 1923.

⁹⁶ TNA,AP1/98, BLSI, Council to Secretary of State, 3 February 1926, copy sent Duckworth, 4 Feb 1926.

⁹⁷ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth to Haig, 13 Nov 1925

⁹⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

⁹⁹ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL to PM’s office, 24 March 1920.

government could not dismiss ex-servicemen without public protest but there were no such moral safeguards in the Free State (see 4.2b). The Lavery Report acknowledged the problem but proposed no solution. An additional complaint by the ex-servicemen civil servants was that they were no longer considered for posts in the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁰ A further claim by those who continued in employment with the Free State Government was that those who had been Lytton entrants (a scheme for ex-servicemen to gain employment in the civil service) did not benefit from subsequent improvements to the conditions of service in the United Kingdom (see 4.2b).¹⁰¹ The Lavery Report noted that the British Government might wish to remedy these problems. The Civil Service Clerical Association made a representation to the British Government to provide compensation to Irish Lytton entrants or allow them to re-enter the British civil service. The British Government responded that they could not see any reason for their involvement in the concerns of Irish civil servants, arising out of an improvement, after the date of transfer, to the employment conditions of United Kingdom civil servants.¹⁰² In both the latter cases the reason for the complaints was an unwillingness to accept that Ireland was a separate state, and that pay rises in Britain were no longer applicable in Ireland, or that civil service transfers between the two countries were no longer appropriate.

¹⁰⁰ Haughton, Branch General Secretary of the Association of Ex-Service Civil Servants, letter, *Dublin Evening Mail*, 28 November 1927.

¹⁰¹ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹⁰² TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report; IFS Government Memorandum on Lavery Report; TNA, AP1/121, DO to BL, 17 March 1930.

3.3 Pensions and Health

a) *The Physically Disabled*

The Ministry of Pensions was formed in 1917 to deal with war pensions and its administrative structure and processes in Ireland, and later the Irish Free State, were similar to Britain, and pensioners benefited from the same entitlements. It was established in Ireland under hostile circumstances. The staff and premises of local War Pension Committees frequently came under attack from republicans.¹⁰³ There were early charges that the Ministry was ineffective. In 1920 the IFDDSS complained of the deplorable conditions under which pensioners had to attend the offices of the Local Pensions Committee; the premises were inadequate, the staff unable to cope, men women and children herded together in a stifling and insanitary atmosphere for as many as seven hours in the day, and long delays from the Ministry in London in issuing documentation.¹⁰⁴ The Ministry of Labour on several occasions criticised the performance in Ireland of the Ministry of Pensions, noting in a report to the Treasury that its organisation was ‘unreliable’.¹⁰⁵

By 1927 P.W. Shaw, TD for Longford-Westmeath and Chairman of Mullingar and district area pension advisory committee, presented a contrasting picture. In a debate in the Dáil Éireann in November 1927 on the grievances of ex-servicemen, he noted that the British Ministry of Pensions had a comprehensive structure in the Free State for the administration of benefits. There were five war pension advisory committees with a membership of 62 supported by 524 voluntary workers. In addition there were area offices in Dublin and Cork, with 36 sub offices throughout the country employing 164 people. Shaw described the workload at these offices for a typical month; in September 1927 there were 3,602 direct interviews, 456 applications dealt with and 1,711 disabled men examined. The average

¹⁰³ Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 215.

¹⁰⁴ TNA,LAB2/855, IFDDSS to PM, 17 February 1920.

¹⁰⁵ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL report, 6 July 1923, sent to Treasury, 27 July 1923.

monthly expenditure on pensions alone (excluding administration or special allowances) was £85,500 to disabled men, £25,300 to widows and £13,300 to dependents. The role of the advisory committees was to see every claimant received the maximum pension, treatment allowance, sickness benefit and educational grant, as well as grants from voluntary funds. He explained his local pension advisory committee had arranged for the education of 60 children, the Ministry paying for their maintenance, education and clothing.¹⁰⁶ The Ministry of Pensions could not have succeeded without local infrastructure and for a British government department to establish this required the support of the Irish Government. This was forthcoming. The Ministry's comparative ease of operation after the transition may have been due to it being the most substantial source of finance from the British Exchequer to the Free State and of benefitting from the support of influential people such as Shaw, who in turn gained politically from the distribution of such largesse.¹⁰⁷

Pensions were the major source of grievance raised with the Lavery Committee. One complaint from the British Legion related to ex-servicemen and their dependents who were in receipt of a need pension, paid by the Ministry of Pensions. A person in receipt of such a pension in Great Britain suffered no reduction of income when becoming eligible for the old age pension, whereas a resident in the Free State had a fall in income of up to 4/. This was caused by the difference in the 'standard income' (or minimum income) between the two countries; 20/ a week in the United Kingdom, 16/ in the Free State. The maximum pension payable in both countries was 10/ (the pension in the Free State was increased from 9/ in April 1928). A United Kingdom recipient of a need pension of 20/ upon becoming eligible for an old age pension was subject to a reduction of 10/, the amount was then made up by the 10/ pension. In the Free State a similar deduction was made but the amount of pension paid was only 6/ due to the lower 'standard income', leading to a financial loss. The Committee

¹⁰⁶ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen; 1927; *IT*, 23 November 1927 (reporting the debate).

¹⁰⁷ TNA, PIN15/757, MoP to Major General Lovat, 28 November 1927.

acknowledged the problem but no remedy was suggested.¹⁰⁸ The complaint illustrated the problems faced by the ex-servicemen in dealing with two governments. The Irish Government Memorandum on the Lavery Report noted that the number of cases was small and for the Irish Government to alleviate them would not do justice to the other more numerous classes with equal claims for relief. They suggested it should be proposed to the British Government that in the case of Irish recipients of need pensions exceeding 16/, they should continue to pay them in full and not reduce them by 10/ when the recipient reached pensionable age.¹⁰⁹ In the House of Lords in June 1930 in a debate on the Report, Lord Danesfort noted with reference to this proposal, ‘according to the usual fashion of communications from the Free State, it appears to me that they want to throw an additional burden upon the British Government’. Lord Passfield explained that given the Irish standard income being fixed at 16/ it was impossible to resolve the issue of a decline in income without the British Government paying the entire amount adding:

It is not true that the beneficiary always suffers a reduction in the need pension when he or she obtains an old age pension. In the vast majority of cases it so works out that the beneficiary receives an increased income. It is only in the cases in which the need pension is 16/ or more per week that there is in the Irish Free State an automatic reduction in the need pension. It is a theoretical case that has been discovered.¹¹⁰

The British Legion raised the issue with the Ministry of Pensions after the publication of the report. The latter reiterated the British government’s position and concluded that the ‘standard income’ adopted by the Irish Free State was fixed with reference to a standard of living appropriate to the whole class of pensioners in the Free State, and that a special exception should not be made for persons eligible for a need pension from the British

¹⁰⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹⁰⁹ TNA,PIN15/758, IFS Government memorandum on Lavery Report.

¹¹⁰ *Hansard*,HL Deb 25 June 1930, vol. 78.

Government.¹¹¹ In reality the anomaly arose in the first instance because war pensioners resident in the Free State benefitted from higher pensions and allowances set in the context of the more expensive cost of living in the United Kingdom. The problem of pensions impacting on benefits received by ex-servicemen from the Irish State persisted. The annual meeting of the BLSI in February 1935 passed a resolution protesting against the Irish Government, taking into account a disability pension in the means test in the Public Assistance Act in contradiction to assurances given by the government in April 1934.¹¹² A BLSI conference in February 1938 complained that British ex-servicemen with pensions remained subject to means testing.¹¹³

The Lavery Report did recognise some disadvantages suffered by Irish pensioners, noting that ‘ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State form a small proportion of the population and that a large number do not belong to any veteran organisation, owing to being scattered over wide geographical areas’, and because of their geographical dispersal Irish veterans were ‘less well acquainted with their rights and were less liable to have pension regulations brought to their attention’. Additionally the Report continued, ‘ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State were at a disadvantage owing to the disturbed state of the country in the years 1918-1923’; ‘normal postal services were not available resulting in loss of letters dealing with their pensions’, including those related to the right of appeal.¹¹⁴ The Report indicated that in contrast, as British ex-servicemen were a larger portion of the population, concentrated in industrial centres, they were better able to know their rights. The Ministry of Pensions disagreed that Irish ex-servicemen were at a disadvantage noting:

That having regard for the smaller number of men from the Free State mobilised in relation to the male population, the number of pensioners is on average similar to the

¹¹¹ TNA,PIN15/758, BLSI to the MoP, 9 August 1929; MoP to BLSI, 24 October 1929; TNA,PIN15/757, MoP report (and earlier draft) to DO, 3 May 1929.

¹¹² TNA,AP1/145, *IT*, 4 February 1935.

¹¹³ TNA,AP1/148, *IT*, reporting BLSI meeting, 21 February 1938.

¹¹⁴ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

UK and most were mobilised in the towns and those in the countryside were in a similar position to those in Scotland and Wales. Pension administration was not through ex-servicemen associations but local offices of the Ministry with which the Free State is well served and which provided information even during the times of disturbances.

The Ministry also argued that if an applicant had been prejudiced by the disturbances, then upon appeal special consideration would have been given but a 'general plea could not be considered as to the state of the country 6 years ago, and where a final award was seriously inadequate then a system to rectify it already existed but in many cases appeals were made arising out of hardship wholly unconnected to war service'.¹¹⁵ The latter point echoes the Committee's overall finding; that the hardship of many of the ex-servicemen was typical of the labouring class in Ireland. They were not caused by a failure of the British Government to fulfil its obligations.

Of over 500 letters of complaint sent to the Lavery Committee from individuals, the majority, 337, related to pensions mostly to do with them not being awarded or deemed insufficient or later reduced or stopped, that is, the same complaints as British ex-servicemen. There were no grievances specific to Ireland.¹¹⁶ The Lavery Report noted that with regards to dealing with complaints 'the existing machinery seems adequate for this purpose'; and that 'nothing was brought to our attention that as regards War Pensions, ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State are treated in any way differently from such men in Great Britain'; and concluded that with the administration of such an elaborate code, cases of hardship would happen but 'they are in no sense peculiar to ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State'.¹¹⁷ The British Treasury observed that 'on the whole it seems that the Committee give quite a handsome testimonial to the Ministry of Pensions'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ TNA,PIN15/757, MoP report (and earlier draft) to DO, 3 May 1929.

¹¹⁶ PIN15/758, IFS to DO, with attached details of pension complaints, 31 December 1929.

¹¹⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹¹⁸ TNA,PIN15/757,Treasury to MoP,19 February 1929.

The bureaucratic ‘buck passing’ following the publication of the Report was perhaps indicative of some more of the challenges faced by the ex-servicemen in dealing with two states. The Lavery Committee recommended that individual complaints should be sent to the Ministry of Pensions in London. Consequently, in December 1929, the Free State Government sent the list of pension related complaints to the Dominions Office, who in April 1930 forwarded it to the Ministry of Pensions. The Ministry in an internal memorandum noted that the only means of identifying the complainants were the addresses and after two years they could not be relied on, and that therefore the labour of identifying the claimants would be too great. They decided that the complaints were in any event notified in vague terms and therefore mostly ‘without definite basis’ and, that given the lapse in time, ‘if there was good ground for application to the Ministry, some further action will have been taken in the interval’. The memorandum concluded that ‘we should not be justified in making any attempt to investigate these cases but, if the Free State considers any action should be taken, they should advise the complainant to apply to the relevant British Government department’. The Dominions Office was informed accordingly in May 1930 that the Ministry of Pensions would take no further action.¹¹⁹

In responding to the Lavery Report, the Ministry of Pensions conducted an analysis that demonstrated that war pensioners in Ireland were in comparison to the United Kingdom extremely favourably treated.¹²⁰

A larger proportion of men who enlisted in what became the Irish Free State were pensioned than elsewhere; the percentage being 31.6% as against 9.9% in England/Wales.

¹¹⁹ PIN15/758, IFS to DO, with attached details of pension complaints, 31 December 1929; DO to MoP, 11 April 1930; MoP, note, 23 April 1930; MoP to DO, 13 May 1930.

¹²⁰ TNA, PIN15/757, MoP report, February 1928., Tables 16-23 are based on this report.

Table 16: Percentage of enlisted men pensioned

	England/Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Irish Free State
Enlisted	4,279,082	557,618	62,104	72,104
Men Pensioners	422,055	49,750	9,947	22,767
% of Enlisted	9.9	8.9	16.0	31.6

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Number of pensioners as at financial year 1926/7. Enlistments in Ireland exclude Irish recruitment in Great Britain.¹²¹

The pension costs per enlistment in relation to men, widows or dependents were in all cases significantly higher in the Free State; in the case of men, over three times as much as England/Wales, using 1926/7 as the comparable year, although previous years showed similar disparities.

Table 17: Cost of pensions related to the number of enlistments

	England/Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland		Irish Free State	
	Amount	Cost per man	Amount	Cost per man	Amount	Cost per man	Amount	Cost per man
Enlisted	4,279,082 men		557,618 men		62,104 men		72,104 men	
	£s	£ Sh. d.	£s	£ Sh. d.	£s	£ Sh. d.	£s	£ Sh. d.
Men	21,994	5 2 10	2,327	4 3 7	619	9 19 8	1,251	17 7 6
Widows	14,185	3 6 4	1,524	2 14 9	249	4 0 4	339	4 14 2
Dependents	5,991	1 8 0	947	1 14 0	122	1 19 4	178	2 9 5

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Costs of pensions for financial year 1926/7. Pensions include treatment allowances. Amount of pensions rounded and in pound thousands.

In the financial year 1922/3 to 1926/7, the total disbursements on pensions and treatment allowances fell significantly more in the England/Wales and Scotland than both parts of Ireland:

Table 18: Decrease in pension related cost

Country	Percentage Decrease
England/Wales	17.4
Scotland	18.6
Northern Ireland	6.0
Irish Free State	7.2

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757.

In terms of pensions the amount expended in the Free State actually increased:

¹²¹ The MoP based their analysis on recruitment figures, not the estimated number of ex-servicemen, and appear to have excluded regular soldiers serving in 1914. Recruitment figures (circa 5,500) for the three Ulster counties that became part of the IFS seem to have been included as part of Northern Ireland. Conversely, Irish ex-servicemen may have left the IFS after the War; it was the only part of what had been the UK to have a reduction in population, which would have decreased the number of pensioners.

Table 19: Pensions and treatment allowances paid

Financial Year	England/Wales			Scotland			Northern Ireland			Irish Free State		
	Pensions	Treatment Allowances	Total	Pensions	Treatment Allowances	Total	Pensions	Treatment Allowances	Total	Pensions	Treatment Allowances	Total
1922/3	46,172	4,888	51,060	5,394	498	5,892	907	148	1,055	1,607	297	1,904
1923/4	43,054	3,745	46,799	5,087	296	5,383	874	106	980	1,615	177	1,792
1924/5	42,167	3,007	45,174	4,990	259	5,249	909	74	983	1,591	196	1,787
1925/6	41,610	2,480	44,090	4,794	213	5,007	946	56	1,002	1,636	155	1,791
1926/7	40,138	2,032	42,170	4,613	185	4,798	943	48	991	1,632	136	1,768

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Pensions include men, widows and dependents. Costs rounded and in pound thousands.

In the financial year 1923/4 to 1926/7 the total disbursements on pensions and treatment allowances per pensioner (including pensions paid to men, widows and dependents) fell in England, from £51 11sh 11d to £50 8sh 6d, but increased in the Free State from £49 15sh 7d to £52 0sh 7d.

The percentage of pensioners drawing treatment allowance in the Irish Free State was much higher than in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In December 1927 the number of pensioners drawing allowances outside the Irish Free State was 228 in every ten thousand, while in the Free State the comparative figure was 365:

Table 20: Percentage of pensioners drawing treatment allowances

	England/Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Irish Free State
Pensioners	388,061	39,298	11,483	22,366
Men on Treatment Allowances	8,715	999	274	817
Percentage on Treatment Allowances	2.25	2.54	2.39	3.65

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Number of pensioners as at December 1927, excluding cases of insanity.

The amount paid in treatment allowances related to the number of enlistments, show that the cost per enlisted man in the Irish Free State was far in excess of that elsewhere; the cost in 1926/7 was roughly four times that of England/Wales:

Table 21: Cost of treatment allowances per enlisted man

Enlisted Financial Year	England/Wales		Scotland			Northern Ireland			Irish Free State			UK/IFS	
	4,279,082 men		557,618 men			62,104 men			72,104 men			4,970,902 men	
	Total	Per man	Total	Per man	Total	Per man	Total	Per man	Total	Per man	Per man		
	Allowance	£ Sh. d.	Allowance	£ Sh. d.	Allowance	£ Sh. d.	Allowance	£ Sh. d.	Allowance	£ Sh. d.	£ Sh. d.		
1922/3	4,888	1 2 10	498	17 10	148	2 7 9	297	4 2 6	1 3 6				
1923/4	3,745	17 6	296	10 6	106	1 14 2	177	2 9 2	17 5				
1924/5	3,007	14 1	259	9 4	74	1 3 10	196	2 14 5	14 3				
1925/6	2,480	11 7	213	7 8	56	18 1	155	2 3 1	11 8				
1926/7	2,032	9 6	185	6 8	48	15 6	136	1 17 9	9 8				

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Amount of allowances rounded and in pound thousands.

The amount paid in treatment allowances in the Free State related to the number of pensioners was also higher but less so due to the higher pro rata number of pensioners than in Great Britain.

Table 22: Cost of treatment allowances per pensioner

Financial Year	England/Wales			Scotland			Northern Ireland			Irish Free State		
	Total Pension	Total Allowances	Cost per Pensioner	Total Pension	Total Allowances	Cost per Pensioner	Total Pension	Total Allowances	Cost per Pensioner	Total Pension	Total Allowances	Cost per Pensioner
1923/4	465	3,745	8 0 11	54	296	5 9 9	10	106	10 14 7	25	177	7 2 7
1924/5	454	3,007	6 12 5	53	259	4 17 1	10	74	7 10 1	23	196	8 10 11
1925/6	432	2,480	5 14 9	52	213	4 2 4	10	56	5 11 7	23	155	6 14 11
1926/7	422	2,032	4 16 3	50	185	3 14 6	10	48	4 16 7	23	136	5 19 8

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Number of Pensioners in thousands. Total of Allowances rounded and in pound thousands.

The cost of administration was significantly higher in the Free State in comparison to Northern Ireland. The figures are for the financial year 1926/7, previous years showed similar discrepancies:

Table 23: Cost of administration

Northern Ireland			Irish Free State		
General Administration	Medical Services Administration	Total	General Administration	Medical Services Administration	Total
15,836	8,258	24,094	39,424	18,380	57,804

Source: TNA, PIN 15/757. Costs are for financial year 1926/7 and in pounds.

Information that indicated that Free State pensioners were disadvantaged was suppressed. An internal document noted that the number of pension committees in the Free State was five and this resulted in a lower ratio of committees to both population and area covered in the Free State in comparison to the United Kingdom. The document recommended excluding this

information from any circulated comments.¹²² Notwithstanding this point the evidence indicates that compared to their counterparts in the United Kingdom, the Free State pensioners were very favourably treated.

There were several possible reasons for the higher cost of pensions in Ireland. Most surviving Irish soldiers would have served longer than their British counterparts; some 68% of recruitment for all Ireland took place before February 1916, over half volunteered in the first year of the War.¹²³ The percentage for southern Ireland was likely even higher given the dearth of recruits after 1916, as a result of both increased radicalism and opposition to conscription. The Irish divisions fought in many of the main battle areas including Ypres, the Somme and Gallipoli. In the latter and in Salonika and Palestine, the troops may have been exposed to malaria, a disease which was often recurring. Injuries may have been accentuated during the post Great War conflict, particularly with the large numbers who joined the Free State army. The Irish Government admitted that they accepted for active service men who would not normally be regarded as medically suitable for enlistment but refused to provide the British Government with any records.¹²⁴ One other possibility is that knowing the disabled had little benefit from civil society, the Ministry of Pensions may have responded more favourably to the Irish pension advisory committees; P.W. Shaw noted that ‘the British Ministry of Pensions are very sympathetic, and if there is any possibility of falling in with the claims we put before them they do so’.¹²⁵ Or as Lord Danesfort implied the Irish may have been more adept at extracting money from the British Treasury.

¹²² TNA, PIN15/757, MoP, note, 25 April 1929.

¹²³ According to some pension authorities, Irish recruits may also have been in poorer health on enlistment than recruits from the UK. see 3.3b, specifically, Bourke, ‘Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma’, 61.

¹²⁴ See 3.3c.

¹²⁵ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen, 1927; *IT*, 23 November 1927.

b) *The Mentally Disabled*

The Ministry of Pensions was responsible for the payment of treatment for ex-servicemen designated as mentally ill. For the payment to be made they had to be classified as 'service patients'; disabled by reason of mental illness attributable or aggravated by war service. The designation included military personnel where mental illness was not due to or aggravated by military service, provided that the arrangement did not extend beyond one year. Service patients were to be placed on the same footing as a paying patient.¹²⁶ The problem was that asylums received a higher grant for men designated criminal lunatics. Hence the Medical Superintendent of Waterford District Lunatic Asylum wrote to the Ministry of Pensions, complaining that they had classified three inmates as 'service patients' but that 'these men are Criminal Lunatics by Act of Parliament and the Committee of this Asylum will not accept any other classification which means a loss in the cost of maintenance'.¹²⁷ The problems extended to the process of admissions. Applications for asylums for discharged disabled men suffering from insanity had to be signed by a relative (or the secretary of a war pensions committee or the head of the receiving asylum), a medical practitioner and a magistrate or, if dangerous, the police called. In terms of non-violent cases the medical expenses incurred in certification were only repaid by the Ministry if the man was subsequently designated a service patient. This created a problem as medical practitioners and families were reluctant to assume the risk of non-payment.¹²⁸ If the man was considered dangerous to the community, the police were responsible to bring him before a magistrate and for the payment of fees to doctors to certify him. In certain regions though the police force was non-effective, Ministry of Pension officials recording that 'the arresting of lunatics is in abeyance, owing to other difficulties', and that 'lunatics have been admitted

¹²⁶ TNA,PIN15/898; Dublin Castle note, 6 Aug 1919; TNA,PIN15/899, Dublin Castle circulars, 28 Aug 1919.

¹²⁷ TNA,PIN15/899, Medical Superintendent of Waterford District Lunatic Asylum to MoP, 22 October 1919.

¹²⁸ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note, 30 Dec 1920; MoP to Departmental Committee of Enquiry, London, 15 March 1921.

through the police of the Irish Republic, but this was not a process to be relied on for ex-soldiers'. In some districts the magistrates were Sinn Feiners.¹²⁹ The Dublin office of the Ministry of Pensions reported to London that, particularly in some areas, 'owing to the local political difficulties there is not much tendency to assist the ex-soldier'.¹³⁰ An attempt to alleviate this problem was made through the Commissioner of Medical Services of the Ministry of Pensions, assembling a Board to include medical expertise and asylum management to make a decision on commitment.¹³¹ Asylums were subsidised by government grants and as the Ministry noted, 'a great majority of the local authorities have declined to recognise the government and to submit their accounts for audit, so there are no government grants available. Asylums are carrying on in a very reduced condition, and not admitting any patients if it is possible to avoid doing so'. Ex-servicemen were particularly excluded. At the same time the Ministry wished to delay the discharge of the mentally disabled because of 'the possibility of action being taken by their neighbours on their return home, which may make them in a worse condition than they were when they were admitted to hospital'. Dr. P.L. Forward believed the therapeutic value of work was essential for recovery but this was not easily provided given the hostile attitude to ex-servicemen (see section 3.2). The absence of suitable employment meant that those who were in hospital were detained as, given the political climate, the alternative was to 'allow the men to drift and starve'. In some republican areas their discharge could not be prevented as local authorities were saving expense by discharging inmates, except those certified by Sinn Fein magistrates. The political situation was forcing the Ministry to put patients into private clinics.¹³² Richmond District Asylum in Dublin was an example of an asylum which proved uncooperative. They had already written

¹²⁹ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note, Dublin to London based on interview with Dr Dawson, Inspector of Lunatics, 20 September 1920; MoP note, 24 March 1921.

¹³⁰ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note, Dublin to London, 26 May 1920.

¹³¹ TNA,PIN15/899, Circular from Office of Lunatic Asylums, Dublin Castle, October 1920.

¹³² TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note, Dublin to London, 26 Nov 1920; MoP note, 24 March 1921; Forward, 'Provision of Employment for Ex-Serviceman in Ireland', 11 March 1921.

to the Ministry in September 1919, complaining with regards to the lower payment for service patients and stating that, while a portion of the building had been set aside as a war hospital, it had not been contemplated that the institution would become a central mental hospital for discharged soldiers from every part of Ireland.¹³³ In October 1920 with reference to the problems of dealing with this asylum, the Ministry noted that ‘it is not the desire of the committee of this asylum at present instituted to have anything to do with service patients, and however the Ministry may meet them on this occasion, until there is some resettlement of a lasting nature of the present position in Ireland, there will be perpetual friction with this committee’. A patient from Clonmel was refused a transfer to the asylum, even though he was born and had lived in Dublin.¹³⁴ In the following month the Ministry identified alternative accommodation in a private asylum at Farnham House, Finglas, County Dublin.¹³⁵

Southern Ireland had a high proportion of ex-servicemen receiving pensions for neurasthenia and awaiting treatment. Various reasons were postulated for this by British medical experts; a legacy of mental weakness dating from the sufferings of the famine years and that Irishmen were ‘childlike’. Even the pension authorities attributed negative reasons. The District Commissioner of Medical Services for 'Ireland (South)', Dr Boldie, argued that it was not only due to the 'special political conditions' but also to 'a definite neurasthenic temperament which is prevalent amongst the South Irish'. Dr Wallace claimed that recruitment practice in Ireland was more lax and therefore some recruits were physically unfit, mentally defective, and subject to a wide range of nervous disorders.¹³⁶ More realistically the propensity of Irish soldiers to require treatment for neurasthenia may have mirrored some of the reasons for the larger proportion of physically disabled veterans as outlined in the previous section. There is some evidence that Irish troops may have been more

¹³³ TNA,PIN15/899, Richmond District Asylum, Dublin to MoP 18 September 1919.

¹³⁴ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note Dublin to London, 27 October 1920.

¹³⁵ TNA,PIN15/899. MoP, note, 4 November 1920.

¹³⁶ Bourke, ‘Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma’, 57-69.

susceptible to mental trauma during the War, perhaps again due to their long service. According to Oram, they were four times more likely to be condemned to death by a British court-martial than British troops.¹³⁷ Despite the assumption that Irishmen were predisposed to lunacy there were inadequate means for treatment. In 1921 the percentage of patients awaiting treatment in southern Ireland was significantly higher than both the north and all regions of Great Britain.

Table 24: Mental health patients awaiting in-patient or out-patient treatment, 1921

Area	% Awaiting In/Out Patient Treatment	% Awaiting In Patient Treatment	% Awaiting Out Patient Treatment
Scotland	2.5	21	0
North	7.5	0	13.5
North West	37.1	22.5	56.3
Yorkshire	20.9	7.3	24.5
Wales	4.5	5.3	7.6
North Midlands	40.9	22.2	53.1
Midlands	58.6	39.2	64.8
South West	7.6	8.7	7.3
London	7.2	32.8	5.9
Northern Ireland	22.2	42.1	4.3
South Ireland	69	87.9	48.2

Source: Bourke from TNA PIN15/56.¹³⁸

In 1917 the first Irish hospital for shell shocked soldiers was opened in Lucan, west of Dublin and later another at Leopardstown Park, south of Dublin; the latter expanding to provide general treatment for veterans in the 1920s. Leopardstown and its counterpart in Ulster, Craigavon Hospital, were constantly under threat regarding resources and even closure.¹³⁹ According to reports from March 1921 there was a lack of facilities to deal with specialist mental illnesses attributable to war. There was no epileptic colony in Ireland and it was not even possible to ascertain how many cases there were; there were 142 men under treatment

¹³⁷ Oram, Gerard, *Worthless Men: Race, eugenics and the death penalty in the British Army during the First World War*, (London: 1998), 69, the death sentence could be for offences other than those potentially related to mental trauma.

¹³⁸ Bourke, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma', 69.

¹³⁹ Leonard, 'Survivors', 212.

and almost all were out patients due to limited facilities. An estimate of the actual number of cases was 247. There were 120 officers and 1,200 men awaiting hospital treatment for neurasthenia, the majority of whom were on home treatment allowances, costing the Ministry £2,000 per week. The payments were expected to continue indefinitely due to insufficient clinics and an inadequate supply of trained staff. The inability to provide services was not just an economic one but very much influenced by the 'present situation in Ireland'.¹⁴⁰

The mentally disabled in Ireland suffered from the lack of understanding and scarcity of resources prevalent in Britain, but the political conditions in Ireland meant that perhaps the most vulnerable group of returning soldiers were also denied the therapeutic benefits of employment and in many cases support from the community.

c) *Pensions and Service in the Free State Army*

As the Free State army rapidly grew to 60,000 men it was inevitable that a source of manpower would be Great War veterans. The Ministry of Pensions was concerned that British ex-servicemen on disability pensions would join the new army and aggravate injuries, which could lead to further claims on the British Government. The Ministry proposed that the Free State army should require recruits to provide any regimental details related to Great War service and whether they were in receipt of a pension, and that the Free State Government should then check these details with the Ministry, and on demobilisation provide a précis of service and medical history, if the man was a British army pensioner.¹⁴¹ The Ministry also wished for the Free State army to keep the recruitment of disabled men to a minimum and intended to scrutinise more carefully any applications for treatment on the part of ex-soldiers who had served in it.¹⁴² Although by January 1923, the Free State had ceased enlisting men

¹⁴⁰ TNA,PIN15/899, MoP, note, 15 March 1921; TNA,PIN15/899, Forward, 'Provision of Employment for Ex-serviceman in Ireland', 11 March 1921.

¹⁴¹ TNA,PIN15/663, MoP, note, 31 October 1922.

¹⁴² TNA,PIN15/663, MoP, note, 22 November 1922.

with more than 20% disability and was in fact discharging the same, prior to this date, according to the Ministry, astonishingly, a considerable number of pensioners with disabilities of up to 100% were enlisted and an estimated 2,000 by then had been discharged.¹⁴³ Equally the Irish government was concerned that ex-soldiers would not declare a pensionable disability when enlisting and might then seek a second pension from the Free State. Colonel Commandant Hackett of the Free State army wrote to the Ministry asking whether information could in suspected cases be provided in confidence. The Ministry was prepared to cooperate subject to reciprocal information regarding the Free State army service of all British ex-servicemen, including when they were discharged and a précis of their medical history and military service.¹⁴⁴ This information was not forthcoming. T.M. Healy, Governor-General of the Irish Free State wrote to the British Government that during the national emergency men were accepted for active service who would not normally be regarded as medically suitable for enlistment, and no information was sought as to receipt or otherwise by them of disability pensions in respect of service with the Imperial Forces and, that due to the exceptional circumstances under which the Free State Force served, medical reports were not available for many of the discharged.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps even more controversially ex-servicemen in receipt of pensions may have also fought for the republicans during the War of Independence and thereafter for the anti-Treaty forces in the Civil War. A former disabled ex member of the Royal Munster Fusiliers wrote to the British Government complaining that there are ‘dozens of men who are drawing pensions from the British and are traitors to King and Country’, due to service in the

¹⁴³ TNA,PIN15/663, MoP, note, 31 January 1923.

¹⁴⁴ TNA,PIN15/663, Colonel Commandant Hackett of the IFS army to MoP, October 1922 and attached MoP note.

¹⁴⁵ TNA,PIN15/663, TM Healy, Governor-General of the IFS, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1 September 1923.

Republican army. Service in the Free State army or indeed the rebel forces did not preclude the payment of pensions.¹⁴⁶

3.4 Claims and Compensation

In the aftermath of the conflict many claimed that their allegiance to the British Crown had caused injuries and/or financial loss due to the activities of the IRA. Ex-servicemen could argue that war service, particularly as theirs was voluntary, constituted a demonstration of allegiance to the Crown and entitled them to be considered along with other loyalists. There was a well organised campaign by loyalist organisations, supported by influential politicians, which received extensive media coverage from an often sympathetic press, who highlighted perceived atrocities and demanded compensation for its victims. In a House of Lords debate in July 1922, Lord Carson referred to the ‘outrages’ committed against ‘those who have been loyal to this country’, and were ‘absolutely helpless’ due to the ‘utter want of protection’. He claimed he received many hundreds of letters from such victims and asked the government to set up a commission to help and advise them. The Marquis of Salisbury noted that upon the withdrawal of the British, Ireland was left with ‘no proper provision of courts, or of law, recognised by the Provisional Government, or of armed forces or of police forces’.¹⁴⁷ Such pressure on the British Government to help loyalists, who had suffered during the War of Independence and after the British withdrawal, resulted in the establishment of an extensive system of compensation. The Anglo-Irish Treaty stated that ‘fair compensation should be paid for criminal injuries inflicted during the conflict’. As a consequence the Compensation (Ireland) Commission was established jointly by the British and Free State Governments in 1922. It sat in Ireland under the presidency of, initially, Lord

¹⁴⁶ TNA,PIN15/663, Gerald McDonnell, disabled ex-member of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, born in Tralee but residing in Liverpool, to DO, 13 July 1935; TNA,PIN15/248, ex-servicemen serving in rebel forces under internment as defined by the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 also remain entitled to their pension.

¹⁴⁷ *Hansard*,HL Deb 3 July 1922, Vol. 51-53.

Shaw of Dunfermline, and subsequently, Sir Alexander Wood-Renton. The Commission's terms of reference were confined to the consideration of claims in respect of damage or injury incurred between 21 January 1919 and 11 July 1921. They dealt with 41,000 claims with an outlay of circa £7 million.¹⁴⁸ The expenditure was apportioned between the two governments; each compensated their own supporters and split the cost where the injured person was a neutral in the Anglo-Irish conflict.¹⁴⁹ The records provide minimal details on claimants and none on whether they were ex-soldiers. While the two governments were jointly responsible for the pre-truce settlement, the Free State Government was alone responsible for the settlement of post-truce compensation (see 4.3).¹⁵⁰ Claimants were frustrated at the slow speed of the Irish judicial process. The British Government remained involved. The Irish Distress Committee was established in May 1922 with the objective to help Irish loyalist refugees settle in Great Britain. It was re-constituted as the original Irish Grants Committee in March 1923, its brief extended to cover advances for well-founded claims made under Irish compensation legislation. It made grants totalling £64,000.¹⁵¹ The problem though was more fundamental than a delay in receiving compensation; lobbying groups such as SILRA argued that the recompense sought and deserved by loyalists was not forthcoming from Free State judges or ministers, and it was the responsibility of the British government to compensate its supporters for what the Free State had neither the power nor the inclination to grant.¹⁵² As an example many of the ex-servicemen who were provided land through the Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act were forced to leave during the period of conflict. Compensation procedures allowed for damage to property but not the consequential loss arising out of an inability to work the land. A committee was constituted in 1925 under Lord Dunedin to assess any further action that the British Government should take in terms of

¹⁴⁸ TNA,CO762/212, Final Report; TNA,CO905, File Introduction.

¹⁴⁹ Gemma Clark, 'A study of Three Munster Counties During the Irish Civil War', PhD (University of Oxford 2011) 31.

¹⁵⁰ *Hansard*, HL Deb 2 July 1925, Vol. 61 cc 977-8.

¹⁵¹ TNA,CO762/212, IGC Final Report.

¹⁵² Brennan, 'A Political Minefield', 406-419.

injuries to person or property in Ireland since 11 July 1921. The report concluded that while no legal obligation existed it was desirable, given past pledges of successive Ministers, to assess what other grants should be made.¹⁵³ The British Government was under pressure to accept a special obligation towards those who had supported the Crown. Brennan writes that Dunedin acknowledged the needs of loyalists to better compensation than they may have got from the Free State and that:

The report was a turning-point in the compensation saga because it finally forced the British authorities to acknowledge their debt to southern Irish Loyalists. It was the qualified confession of neglect, even guilt, which Carson, Northumberland and others in the House of Lords had spent years trying to extract from the highest levels of government. For however much their criticisms of the Irish authorities were inspired by a sense of righteous indignation, Loyalists had always reserved their greatest bitterness for their grievances at the failures - as they perceived them - of His Majesty's Government.¹⁵⁴

The new Irish Grants Committee (IGC) was therefore established in October 1926 to consider 'claims from British subjects now or formerly residing or carrying on business in the area of the Irish Free State who on account of their support of His Majesty's Government prior to 11 July 1921 sustained hardship and loss by personal injuries or by the malicious destruction of or injuries to their property in the area of the Irish Free State between 11th July 1921 and 12th May 1923'. The IGC considered compensation related to: forcible dispossession of property or lands, expulsion from the Free State by threat or intimidation, loss arising from boycotts, the theft or destruction of property and fines imposed by irregular troops. The IGC dealt with 4,032 claims (originally 3036 but the time limit to apply was extended); 895 were ruled outside the scope of the Committee's terms of reference, often because the incident upon which the claim was based, predated the Truce. Compensation was refused in 900 cases and recommended in 2,237 cases with grants totalling almost £2.2

¹⁵³ TNA,CO762/212, IGC Final Report.

¹⁵⁴ Brennan, 'A Political Minefield', 406-419.

million awarded.¹⁵⁵ The IGC considered service in the Great War a suitable demonstration of loyalty but comparatively few ex-servicemen applied for compensation (see 2.2a). An attempt was made by the Irish Loyalist Association (not the more established SILRA), through a petition to the British Government in May 1931, to have a new committee established on the basis that there were some 500 people who had failed to submit claims. They were a new association and regarded by the Dominions Office as not credible, not least because they were charging people a guinea to take details of their claims. The Government decided that they had met their obligations and were not prepared to open up another enquiry.¹⁵⁶

3.5 Emigration

Ex-servicemen resident in the newly created Dominion were excluded from the benefits of assisted passage available, under the Empire Settlement Act 1922, to veterans in the United Kingdom who wished to migrate to other parts of the Empire.¹⁵⁷ Bryan Cooper in the Dáil Éireann debate on the claims of ex-servicemen in November 1927, refuted Redmond's assertion that there had been a promise of assisted emigration at the outset of the war, rather what was promised was 'a land fit for heroes', but when it became clear that it was beyond the power of the British Government to achieve this then emigration was suggested as a substitute.¹⁵⁸ The issue was raised as a grievance to the Lavery Committee and its report suggested that a means should be found to extend such benefits to the Free State. It noted there was no evidence that 'there is anything like a widespread demand for the application of the Empire Settlement Act to British ex-servicemen resident in the Free State', and that 'there was no desire for any scheme calculated to bring pressure upon British ex-

¹⁵⁵ TNA,CO762/212.

¹⁵⁶ TNA,DO35/343/3.

¹⁵⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹⁵⁸ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

servicemen in the Free State to leave the country', only should they wish to, ex-servicemen in the Free State should have the same assistance to emigrate as ex-servicemen in the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁹ The British Government also considered that requests from Irish veterans for subsidised passages would be small as any animosity towards them had disappeared. They too thought demand would come primarily from unemployed veterans residing in urban centres who would be unwanted in the dominions, as immigrants with agricultural experience were preferred, a point with which Cooper agreed.¹⁶⁰

During the conflict it was not the intention of the British Government to actively promote emigration from Ireland, the Ministry of Labour declaring in 1920 that 'any steps to encourage the emigration of ex-servicemen from Ireland ought to be regarded as a measure of despair and should not be entertained at this stage'.¹⁶¹ Indeed there was a rationale in encouraging them to stay. According to Fedorowich, 'it was clear in some departments of Whitehall that Irish veterans, if properly handled and rewarded, could act as a leaven in the nationalist lump'. Perhaps for the converse reason nationalists were prepared for the imperial authorities to subsidise free passage for those ex-servicemen, former RIC and southern unionists who had remained loyal to London. However, many ex-servicemen were not loyalists, and nationalists and republicans did not want to encourage general emigration. Cathal Brugha, the Minister for Defence for the Revolutionary Government, stated in June 1920:

The enemy has declared that there are too many young men in Ireland, and he is anxious to clear them out. It suited his purpose to refuse them passports during the War, but he will now give them every facility to emigrate. Those facilities must not be availed of, Ireland wants all her young men. Their presence in the country is more necessary now than ever.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹⁶⁰ Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', 1172; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹⁶¹ TNA,LAB2/747, Ministries of Labour and Transport meetings, 4 May 1920.

¹⁶² Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', 1162, 1176.

Within Whitehall there were conflicting views regarding assisted migration, with the Colonial Office advocating a liberal interpretation of the existing legislation because they argued the British Government were duty-bound to help ex-servicemen and loyalist refugees, and the Treasury objecting on financial and jurisdictional grounds. Even up to 1929, the Dominions Office advocated schemes to help ex-servicemen emigrate but were opposed by the Treasury, and as there seemed little requirement the idea was dropped.¹⁶³ The debate was in any event theoretical. Irish ex-servicemen were sponsored for emigration if they lived in England for six months.¹⁶⁴ According to Fedorowich the conditions were not even that onerous:

Despite the exclusion of the Irish Free State Empire Settlement Act after 1922, residency requirements were often waived and privileges extended to southern Irish citizens, provided that they embarked from ports in Northern Ireland or Britain. ‘In effect’, carped one cynical Treasury official, ‘they have only to set foot on these (United Kingdom) shores in order to take their passage to the Dominions’.¹⁶⁵

In fact before the Act was passed and the formation of the Free State, the British Government did provide assistance to officers and men who had served in the War, including free passage for them and their dependents provided they were accepted by the territory to which they intended to emigrate. By May 1920, 326 free passages from Ireland to the ‘Empire Overseas’ had been granted to ex-servicemen. There were submitted and approved applications for a total number that exceeded 3,000 men, women and children.¹⁶⁶ William Greene of County Wexford, a claimant to the IGC, wrote that his shipping agency was ‘doing a lot in preparing ex-British service men for Canada’.¹⁶⁷

Migration from Ireland had declined by 90% from 1913 to 4,300 in 1919, due in part to war restrictions.¹⁶⁸ It increased again after the War with Ireland’s population declining by

¹⁶³ Fedorowich, ‘Reconstruction and Resettlement’, 1160

¹⁶⁴ Captain F.C. Hitchcock, ‘Plight of ex-servicemen in the IFS’, *Morning Post*, 19th December 1927.

¹⁶⁵ Fedorowich, ‘Reconstruction and Resettlement’, 1999.

¹⁶⁶ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 3 May 1920.

¹⁶⁷ TNA,CO762/8/1.

¹⁶⁸ TNA,LAB2/855, MoL, note, 3 May 1920.

over 5% between 1911 and 1926. There is little evidence though of a more than proportional demand from ex-soldiers wishing to leave the country and making demands of the British Government to assist them. Permanent migration was, in general, not due to threats of violence or intimidation; most of the ex-servicemen who lodged complaints to the IGC remained in the area where the incident took place or if they left returned home after 1923, including those who had been allocated land. In the late 1930s Irish emigration to Britain increased due to lack of work at home and the additional employment opportunities as Britain prepared for the Second World War. That many of these were ex-servicemen is evidenced by the number of tenants from Trust properties who left to find work in the Britain. The Trust's policy was to allow them to retain their cottage if they left for war related reasons.

3.6 Land

The Land Act 1919 allowed for the provision of land and housing to ex-servicemen. The Land Commission had responsibility to provide holdings to ex-servicemen who had served in the War and 'who satisfied the Land Commission as to their fitness and suitability to work land, amongst the classes of people as defined by the Irish Land Act, 1909'. The transaction was carried out as a sale under the Land Purchase Acts with the soldier-purchaser paying the purchase price for his farm by means of an annuity paid back over a prescribed number of years, allowing him to become the absolute owner of the land. In total 360 ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State received 10,106 acres, the land costing £249,944. Some £130,417 was expended on the provision of buildings, roads and fences to make the land workable. Of this amount, £30,527 was included in the price at which land was sold to the purchasers. The balance of £99,890 was constituted as a free gift by the British Government; otherwise the ex-servicemen acquired their holdings on conditions identical with other tenant purchasers. In relation to land the Lavery Committee received complaints from the ex-

servicemen tenants falling into three categories. The first was that insufficient holdings were available.¹⁶⁹ In practice the award of holdings by the Land Commission was limited to areas in which land had been acquired, or was in the process of acquisition at the time of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. It was the change of government that precluded the British Government from any long term plans to continue the scheme. Land ownership remained a sensitive issue within Ireland and the award of land to soldiers was depicted by republicans as a new form of ‘plantation’. The *Cork Examiner* in 1919 described the scheme as an attempt to create ‘soldiers colonies’ in Ireland, and predicted that it would rekindle the devastating fires of land wars. The article continued that the colonies were being justified by the need for the self-protection of ex-servicemen but argued instead that ‘the project aims at stereotyping them as a separate class by planting colonies in different localities in what is regarded as a reversion to the Cromwellian plan’.¹⁷⁰ Even an ex-serviceman wrote, ‘the Land is still there, but the same old landlord still has it, not the “landless” who fought for it’.¹⁷¹ Fedorowich writes that ‘the revolutionary government was adamant that the compulsory taking of land by the British Government for ex-servicemen was completely unacceptable. This “new Plantation” had to be resisted declared Robert Barton TD. To undermine British policy further, while at the same time reinforcing its own legitimacy, the Dáil Éireann announced its own land acquisition scheme’.¹⁷²

The second cause for complaint related to excessive purchase annuities. The Lavery Report noted that evidence was heard that the purchase annuities payable in respect of holdings occupied by ex-servicemen were excessive and consequentially uneconomical and the British Government should be approached with a view to reducing them. It was noted that immediately following the war land prices were high although this affected all others. The

¹⁶⁹ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report; By 1923, 16,800 ex-servicemen had settled on smallholdings in England and Wales, see Aalen, ‘Homes for Irish Heroes’, 307).

¹⁷⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 22 November 1919, 5.

¹⁷¹ Article by anonymous ex-serviceman, *Honesty*, 2 November 1929.

¹⁷² Fedorowich, ‘Reconstruction and Resettlement’, 1159.

report concluded ‘that on present values the annuities payable in respect of many of the holdings occupied by ex-servicemen are uneconomical’. The final issue related to the inadequacy of improvement works. The report recorded the complaints but stated that the policy of the Land Commission was the same as for holdings provided for other persons under the Land Purchase Act. The Irish Government memorandum on the report concurred with this point, noting that there was no evidence that improvement works carried out by the Land Commission were inadequate, and that holdings for ex-servicemen were dealt with by the Land Commission in exactly the same way as holdings for other persons. The memorandum also stated that in the majority of cases the holdings were not uneconomical and moreover any difficulty was not confined to ex-servicemen.¹⁷³ Some of the complaints related to an inability to use the land due to republican activity. William Callan of Mullingar, County Westmeath, secured land under the scheme but was prevented from working it, ‘owing to the hostile activities of the IRA in the year 1921, that is to say the first year we had the land, it was rendered useless’.¹⁷⁴ Although they themselves were unable to enforce the law and prevent evictions by the republicans, and knowing that after their departure an absence of civil authority persisted, the British Government continued to insist that the annuities be paid even though the farms could not generate income. In doing so they showed a remarkable insensitivity. Edmund Davern was allocated land in Knocklong, County Limerick and, although deprived of the use of the land from March 1921 until May 1923, he was obliged to continue to pay annuities to the Irish Land Commission and other outgoings, including poor rates. According to the IGC report, ‘owing to the Truce at that time existing and the non-enforcement of the law, either during that period or the period during which Civil War raged in Ireland from 1922 to May 1923, no protection could be afforded him by the

¹⁷³ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report; Irish Government Memorandum.

¹⁷⁴ NAI, Lavery Committee, Individual Claims.

Civil Authorities'.¹⁷⁵ Irrespective of the complaints to the Committee regarding the working of the land being uneconomical, most of the ex-soldiers who were forced to leave by republicans returned after the conflict ended when the Free State Government enforced its authority. The IGC recorded complaints from seven soldiers awarded land in Knocklong and evicted by republicans all of whom had returned by May 1923 (See 2.2a).

The provision of land differed to that of housing in one key respect. The capital cost of the land was paid for by a purchase annuity; in the case of housing the tenants only paid the cost of maintenance and after 1933 not even that, although the advantage with regard to land was that the purchaser assumed ownership. Housing was a significant capital outlay for the British Government and, as such, they were making a real contribution to the Irish economy in terms of building works and the provision of much needed housing stock. Under the scheme to provide land the British Government was effectively a mortgage provider. With little added value from the British, and given the sensitivity of the land issue, it was inevitable that the Irish Government would assume control as to who it allocated holdings. The Free State Government passed the enabling legislation to allow a Trust, established by the British Government, to acquire and hold land upon which to build houses. No such legislation was enacted with regards to land for farming. The ability of the British Government to provide land to ex-servicemen was terminated by legislation passed by the new government shortly after the establishment of the Free State. The Land Act, 1923, abolished all classes of person for whom land might have been provided under the Land Purchase Acts, establishing a new series of classes of persons without specific mention of British ex-servicemen who henceforth could only receive land under the general articles of the act to provide land 'to any person or body to whom in the opinion of the Land Commission an advance ought to be made', thus ending any preferential treatment for ex-

¹⁷⁵ TNA,CO762/49/12.

servicemen.¹⁷⁶ Irrespective of the opposition of the IRA and the Irish Government, the impact of the British Government's scheme to allocate land to Irish ex-servicemen was always going to be limited, because it lacked the financial resources and ambition of equivalent schemes in Australia and Canada. The British Government was under significant pressure in 1919 to be seen to be doing something for Irish ex-servicemen and, although inadequately funded, the announcement of the Irish Land Act helped it achieve that objective.

3.7 Homes

a) *The Management of the Trust and the Building Programme*

Under the Land Act 1919, the Irish Local Government Board (LGB) had responsibility for the administration of the provision of housing for ex-servicemen.¹⁷⁷ As this remained an imperial responsibility, a new structure was required after the formation of the Free State. In January 1924 the Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust was established under the provision of Section Three of the Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act passed in December 1922 by the British parliament. The Irish Government passed the Land Trust Powers Act 1923, allowing for the transfer of the relevant assets of the LGB to the Trust and for it to acquire and hold land in the conduct of its responsibilities. The Trust had five Trustees, two responsible for southern Ireland, one appointed by the Free State President.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, November 1928.

¹⁷⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, November 1928; *IT*, 5 August 1933.

¹⁷⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, November 1928.

Table 25: Trust personnel

Trustees	
Chairman	George Duckworth, Chairman, replaced upon his retirement in 1927 by Sir James Brunyate.
Southern Trustee (nominated by President of the Free State)	General the Rt. Hon. Sir Bryan Mahon replaced upon his death in 1930 by Major General Sir George Franks
Southern Trustee	Major Harry Lefroy replaced upon his termination in December 1925 by Brigadier General the Earl of Meath
Northern Trustee/Deputy Chairman	Brigadier General Ross
Northern Trustee	Lord Dufferin.
Permanent Staff	
Secretary	G.F. Alexander replaced upon his death in 1937 by A.A. Phillips
Director, Dublin Office	Cyril Browne
Deputy Director, Dublin Office	Richard Grubb

The Trust was a microcosm of the imperial relationship between Britain and Ireland with the London Head Office acting within the guidelines of the Dominions Office and the Treasury, and often in conflict with the Irish Trustees who sought greater independence. George Duckworth, the first Chairman, would not consent to the headquarters being in Ireland.¹⁷⁹ The director of the Dublin office, Cyril Browne, initiated schemes for the approval of the local trustees before submission to London for final sanction.¹⁸⁰ There was sometimes a condescending tone towards the Irish, Duckworth writing, ‘It is bewildering to the English mind to have to listen to such continuous complaints and to find that the Irishman when the power lies wholly in his own hands takes so few active steps to see that the work is carried out’.¹⁸¹ Duckworth terminated the appointment of Major Harry Lefroy, a southern trustee because he refused to sign eviction orders, and failed in Duckworth’s view to realise that, in addition to the ex-servicemen, he also represented the British Exchequer, a responsibility ‘the Irishman is apt to regard as somewhat immaterial’.¹⁸² The BLSI wrote to the British Government that Lefroy’s removal had ‘created a feeling of hostility and suspicion amongst ex-servicemen’, and advocated that the London office should be abolished.¹⁸³ Field Marshal Earl Haig, President of the British Legion, was insistent on cooperation between the Trust

¹⁷⁹ TNA, AP3/19.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, AP1/39.

¹⁸¹ TNA, AP1/98, Duckworth to Haig’s representative, 9 July 1926.

¹⁸² TNA, Duckworth to DO, 10 September 1925; AP 3/7, Duckworth to Lord Cavan, 22 October 1925.

¹⁸³ TNA, AP1/98, BLSI to British Secretary of State, 3 February 1926.

and the Legion but this reflected attitudes in London rather than Dublin.¹⁸⁴ The BLSI, particularly under W. P. Walker, its first chairman (until his death in September 1925), was antagonistic and confrontational towards the Trust. The BLSI was originally the Legion of Irish ex-servicemen until its absorption into the British Legion in 1925.¹⁸⁵ It worked closely with the militant Killester Tenants' Association, many of its members including its leader, William D. McLean, were members of the BLSI. The latter passed a resolution stating that 'the whole workings of the Housing Trust is most unsatisfactory'. Walker wrote in March 1925, 'Mr Duckworth's lack of knowledge of Ireland, the Irish people and the psychology of the Irish ex-servicemen is leading him to think more of the British tax payers pocket than the payment to Irish ex-servicemen of part of the price that was agreed upon by the British Government when our men went voluntarily to the Great War'.¹⁸⁶ The Trust was aware of the difficulties caused by this antagonism, particularly given the problems of administering a scheme scattered throughout the Free State. A Trust report stated, 'there are signs of a determined propaganda which belittles the work of the Trust. In the remote districts where the tenants are hardly ever visited there can be no counter propaganda', resulting in 'a curious ignorance of the purpose and policy of the Trust, and a want of that sympathy as between landlord and tenant which is essential to good relations'.¹⁸⁷ Ironically it was the largest estate where tenants could most readily combine together which proved the main source of friction. The replacement of Lefroy with Brigadier General, the Earl of Meath improved matters considerably. The second trustee was General Sir Bryan Mahon who was replaced upon his death in 1930 by Major General Sir George Franks. These three senior officers had the respect of the ex-servicemen and the Irish Government and contributed effectively as southern trustees for some two decades.

¹⁸⁴ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth to Ross, 21 November, 1925.

¹⁸⁵ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth to BL,16 March 1925.

¹⁸⁶ TNA,AP1/54, Walker to Alexander (referring to BLSI meeting, 4 February 1924), 6 March 1925.

¹⁸⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report; First report of Trust, January 1924–March 1926.

The 1919 Act did not specify the number of houses to be built as the amount expended was to be decided annually by parliament. With the transfer of power the Treasury allocated £1.5 million as a final settlement. By the end of 1923, £1.9 million (including expenditures prior to the transfer of power and a portion of the final settlement) had been expended, leaving the Trust upon its formation in January 1924 with £1.3 million to complete 2,626 cottages in the Free State and 1,046 cottages in Northern Ireland.¹⁸⁸ By March 1928 1,927 houses had been built in the Free State. This was made up of 1,508 taken over from the LGB, 157 houses which were either under construction when the Trust took over or subsequently bought and 262 houses that the Trust built. The distribution of the 1,927 houses by province were Leinster, 1,122 (526 in County Dublin); Munster, 644 (268 in County Cork); Connaught, 144; and Ulster (3 counties), 17.¹⁸⁹ The majority of houses were in large urban areas or near towns.¹⁹⁰ Based on recruitment figures there was one cottage per 42.8 soldiers in Leinster and one cottage per 27.2 soldiers in Munster. As many of the cottages were built or planned during the conflict there is therefore some indication that the British sought to pacify the ex-servicemen by providing benefits in areas of greatest republican activity.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, The £1.3 million included an additional £150,000, allocated in March 1925; TNA,AP1/209 British Government to Jack Jones, MP, 29 October 1932.

¹⁸⁹ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

¹⁹⁰ TNA,AP1/10, Browne to Duckworth, 16 May 1924.

¹⁹¹ Using recruitment figures to the end of 1917 (see 1.2) there was one cottage per 46.1 soldiers in County Dublin and one cottage per 37.7 soldiers in County Cork. The majority of the cottages in County Dublin were in the vicinity of Dublin City, the Killester estate alone constituted 247 cottages, whereas the cottages in County Cork were more geographically dispersed with only 72 in Cork City. As Dublin City was a focus of republican activity this could again explain the desire to focus housing projects in that area to seek to placate large numbers of ex-servicemen.

Figure 2 Trust House, Birr



Source: Paul Taylor, 2008

Walker was extremely critical regarding the speed of building after the Trust assumed responsibility and of the quality of the housing, writing, ‘I have lost count of the number of occasions that Cork was visited in the past by highly paid officials, and not a single house built yet’.¹⁹² Walker claimed that delays in the building programme were caused by the Trust demanding a guarantee of too high rents before proceeding. Writing with regards to planned schemes, he claimed that Duckworth ‘has cancelled the lot, as he insists on a guarantee by the local Trustees of a minimum rental of 8/ per week. This is absurd enough to be ridiculous, and is only another proof that there is no real intention of carrying out the work of the Trust’.¹⁹³ There seemed some justification to the Walker’s comments. The LGB built 1,508 houses during the conflict, the Trust only 262 houses in the four years to March 1928. The BLSI believed that many of the initial houses were built of poor quality and located out

¹⁹² TNA,AP1/39, Walker to Lefroy, 8 July 1924.

¹⁹³ TNA,AP1/84, Heath to Duckworth, containing comments from Walker, 18 May 1925.

of town with no services.¹⁹⁴ Commenting on a scheme outside Dublin, Walker said ‘the sanitary accommodation is similar to what existed in the wilds of Connemara fifty years ago’.¹⁹⁵ He wrote in the *Irish Truth* that the Trust houses were ‘dog kennels’ and that the Treasury was saving money at the expense of the Irish ex-serviceman.¹⁹⁶ An ex-serviceman wrote, ‘despite having capital free of all charge the Trust was far slower in providing houses than the majority of public bodies’, and ‘what would be said of a modern society building a thousand houses without making any provision for a water supply?’¹⁹⁷ Cooper commented, ‘the Trust succeeded to a legacy of delay, which has already caused a considerable amount of exasperation among ex-service men. These confidently anticipated that, on the establishment of the Trust, everything would come right, and they are unable to realise the difficulties that delay the progress of the work’.¹⁹⁸ The Lavery Committee expressed concerns at the speed of the Trust’s building programme, comparing it to the 4,128 houses completed by municipal authorities between 1922 and 1928. The Trust argued that the delays were the result of inherited problems, rent strikes and, until March 1925, an unrealistic Treasury imposed restriction of £500 per house. The Trust also blamed legacy problems for lack of local infrastructure and the condition of some of the houses, stating that half the houses that they took over required expenditure to bring them up to the Trust’s standards. The Committee noted that the Trust’s property was in general maintained in good condition. They also concluded that the monies allocated by the British Government were inadequate; some 18,000 applications had been received for housing and a minimum of 10,000 houses were required.¹⁹⁹ The Trust acknowledged that demand exceeded their resources. Practically every town of any size asked for a scheme and when a scheme proceeded, due to financial

¹⁹⁴ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 12 May 1924.

¹⁹⁵ TNA,AP1/39, Walker to Lefroy, dated 8 July 1924.

¹⁹⁶ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth, note, 29 October 1925.

¹⁹⁷ Article by anonymous ex-serviceman, *Honesty*, 2 November 1929.

¹⁹⁸ TNA,AP1/54, Cooper to Duckworth, 2 January 1925.

¹⁹⁹ TNA,PIN15/758, First Report of the Trust for period January 1924-March 1926, quoted in Lavery Report; TNA,AP1/121, Browne to Alexander, 22 February 1929.

constraint, the number of houses was less than those needed.²⁰⁰ 150 cottages were built in the City of Cork but 1,000 applications were received for them.²⁰¹ The Trust had accepted a final grant from the Treasury that limited the number of houses to be built, leaving it open to criticism that it had surrendered the rights of the ex-servicemen.²⁰² Walker claimed that the intention had been for 40,000 houses to be built.²⁰³ There was also criticism that the Trust built too large houses. The BLSI and the local Trustees were advocates of smaller cheaper houses.²⁰⁴ In 1930 the Trust eventually agreed to build more two bedroom cottages.²⁰⁵ The Trust did not agree with the Committee's criticisms; Browne wrote that, 'apart from the Ministry of Pensions, the work of the Trust is the only concrete effort to benefit the ex-serviceman in the Free State. I think that the practical results already attained by the Trust are widely admitted to be highly successful; the character and quality of their housing schemes are acknowledged to be of the highest class. All this is ignored by the Committee, who have thought fit to adopt the arguments of the Legion'.²⁰⁶ The *Irish Times* agreed writing in 1933 that Killester, the Trust's largest development with 247 houses, was Dublin's first garden suburb and still the 'biggest and best', a notable advance in town planning and, 'its creation under the disturbed conditions of 11 years ago a unique kind of achievement'.²⁰⁷ Aalen comments, 'the ex-servicemen's houses helped to improved standards for Irish working-class housing generally'.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁰ TNA,AP1/10, Browne to Duckworth, 16 May 1924.

²⁰¹ *IT*, 24 January 1928.

²⁰² TNA,AP1/121, Alexander to DO), 8 August 1930.

²⁰³ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 12 May 1924.

²⁰⁴ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 14 May 1924; TNA,AP1/10, Browne to Duckworth, 16 May 1924.

²⁰⁵ TNA,PIN15/758, DO to BL, 17 March 1930.

²⁰⁶ TNA,AP1/121, Browne to Alexander, 22 February 1929.

²⁰⁷ *IT*, 5 Aug 1935.

²⁰⁸ Aalen, 'Homes for Irish Heroes', 321.

b) *Rental Policy and the Selection of Tenants*

The Trust's policy on rent and the basis on which it was calculated was the subject of considerable controversy. Central to the argument was whether the rents should cover the costs of maintenance and basic services, or include a component to provide additional capital for the building of more cottages; and whether they should be comparable to the rent level of similar social housing. Rental policy also impacted on the selection of tenants. Were the houses to be allocated to those who could afford the highest rent or to those most in need? Duckworth said a 'minimum rent' would cover the costs of administration, insurance, repairs and maintenance and empties while a 'full economic rent' would include interest on the money invested.²⁰⁹ The BLSI argued that paying the full economic rent would imply repaying the British Government and that was not the intent of the enabling legislation.²¹⁰ Duckworth presented the argument for the inclusion of a capital component as meeting the needs of the majority on the waiting lists against those fortunate to have already been allocated a cottage. He believed that when the original capital was expended, and if the Trust responded to pressure to reduce rents, 'the unhoused ex-serviceman would say too little rent was asked and the sitting tenant had been favoured at the expense of the unhoused'. He wished to allow a margin for additional houses through creating a contingency, arguing that it was important not to 'unduly favour sitting tenants at the expense of the unhoused'.²¹¹ A Trust report stated that even with lower rents they hoped 'a small annual surplus will be made available which will eventually be used for additional building' as, although no interest was calculated on capital, a 'liberal calculation' was made regarding costs.²¹² The BLSI objected, 'You want the Irish ex-services man to do something which the British Government promised to do;

²⁰⁹ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/Ulster Ex-servicemen's Association meeting, 15 July 1924.

²¹⁰ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 14 May 1924; Reply from Walker in letter from BL to Duckworth, 28 April 1925.

²¹¹ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth/Haig's representative meeting, 16 November 1925; TNA,AP 1/84, Duckworth to Ross, 21 Nov 1925.

²¹² TNA,PIN15/758, First Report of Trust for period January 1924-March 1926, quoted in Lavery Report.

apart from paying their own rents they are paying for other men's houses'.²¹³ The Trust also argued that the rents were 25% lower than that for comparable social housing and that the accommodation was superior to that in which the tenants had previously lived with lower rent.²¹⁴ For example, the tenants' leader William McLean paid a small amount more for twice the accommodation.²¹⁵ The Trust contended that at the outset of the tenancies, the rents had been agreed and the applicants had declared their ability to pay. According to the Trust, the Killester tenants had previously paid high prices for rooms and that the salaries they showed when they were originally accepted as tenants indicated an ability to pay the Trust rents.²¹⁶ The BLSI argued economic conditions had changed, 'many had signed agreements that are now not affordable as the average workman had suffered at least a 20% reduction in wages and many were unemployed or had suffered a reduction in pensions'.²¹⁷

The Trust was under escalating pressure to decrease rents. In response to strikes by Dublin tenants in May 1924 it reduced Killester rents by up to 30% with a promise from the BLSI that arrears would be paid and future rent paid punctually.²¹⁸ This agreement was not kept. In February 1925 tenants started to pay 'provisional rents' at a rate they fixed and asked for further rent reductions.²¹⁹ In July 1925 the Trust set up an internal committee to review rents which concluded that, while rents were low in comparison to the open market, as the Trust did not have to take into account a provision for interest, capital outlay or profit, average rents for all properties could be reduced to 6/ per week and the Killester rents

²¹³ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 12 May 1924.

²¹⁴ TNA,AP1/84, Alexander (on behalf of Duckworth) to Heath, BLSI, referring to earlier correspondence with Walker, 16 March 1925; TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924; TNA,AP1/8, internal report.

²¹⁵ TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926; TNA,AP1/130,1929-30 ejections; TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 20 April 1926.

²¹⁶ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth, note, 29 October 1925.

²¹⁷ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 14 May 1924.

²¹⁸ TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926.

²¹⁹ TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Alexander, 19 November 1926; TNA,AP1/84, Internal report, 29 October 1925.

reduced further (Killester rents were higher than the average for the IFS).²²⁰ The new rents were implemented from January 1926.²²¹

Table 26: Killester rent reductions (per week rents)

House Category	Large			Medium			Small		
	£	Sh.	d.	£	Sh.	d.	£	Sh.	d.
Pre May 1924	1	0	0	16	0		12	6	
May 1924		16	0		12	0		8	6
January 1926		12	6		10	6		8	6

Source: AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926.

The Lavery Committee noted that the Trust sought to generate capital for building out of the rents and concluded, ‘we consider that the policy of providing capital for building out of the rents of tenants is out of accord with the spirit of the provision made by the British Government in the Acts of 1919. The capital provided by the British Government is admittedly insufficient to provide adequate accommodation for ex-servicemen, but it appears a sorry expedient to try and make good this insufficiency by raising capital out of the pockets of ex-servicemen’.²²² The report stated that the costs that the Trust sought to recover through rents were not just ‘fairly liberal’ but ‘extremely liberal’ and as such ‘the basis upon which the average rent of 6/ per house was arrived at in 1925 should be reviewed by the Trust’, and the rents reduced.²²³ Average weekly rents were reduced to 5/6 in 1933, then 4/9 after eliminating an allocation to reserve, then 4/3 if the tenants did internal repairs.²²⁴ Average rents at the time the Trust was constituted were 7/9d per cottage, indicating that the Trust was overcharging at its inception.²²⁵

²²⁰ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report;TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926.

²²¹ TNA,AP3/32, Trust meeting, 6 January 1926.

²²² TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ TNA,AP1/148, Browne note, 28 January 1938. Figures vary in files; TNA,PIN15/758, DO to BLSI, 17 March 1930, records average rent of 5/2d per cottage by 1930.

²²⁵ TNA,PIN15/758, DO to BL, 17 March 1930.

The question of rental policy was also linked to the selection of tenants. The Land Act 1919 was the basis for the provision of housing for any man who served in the Great War.²²⁶ In his summary in the Callan/Duggan case (see 3.7d) the judge said that the code underpinning the Labourers (Ireland) Acts 1883-1919 was made applicable to the LGB in relation to the Land Act 1919. The Board felt bound by the Labourers Act (1906) and sought to recoup capital expenditure. In reality and in contrast to the Labourers Act, there was no requirement to recover the original capital. To pay the higher rents the Board ‘necessarily passed over the needy and deserving and selected the tenants better able to pay the substantial rents demanded’.²²⁷ The judge in the Leggett case (see 3.7d) determined under the Land Act 1919 it was not intended that rents should be paid and that the intention to charge had led to the houses being rented on the ability to pay rather than those most in need as the legislation intended.²²⁸ The British Legion said the spirit of the Act was that the houses should be let at as ‘state subsidised houses’ and the rents affordable for those most in need.²²⁹ Before the Leggett ruling tenants were required to provide information on income and existing rents on their tenancy application forms.²³⁰ In 1940 the Trust admitted that an inability to pay had excluded applicants and that the houses were previously given to those who could afford the rent. Under the LGB distinguished service was taken into consideration.²³¹

The Trust was extremely inconsistent in its rental policy and the principle upon which it was based. They claimed the rental income only covered essential costs of maintenance and repair when they actually sought to include a capital component to fund new housing, which contradicted both the legal basis and spirit of the establishing legislation. Although they implemented significant reductions, it was under the duress of rent strikes. The

²²⁶ TNA,AP1/165.

²²⁷ TNA,AP4/11, Trust meeting, 15 April 1937, summary of Judge J Murnaghan in Callan case (Duggan, Casey and Caprani were other applicants).

²²⁸ *IT*, 5 March 1937.

²²⁹ TNA,AP1/84,Trust/BL Ulster meeting, 29 July 1924.

²³⁰ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth, note, 29 October 1925.

²³¹ TNA,AP1/150, Browne evidence to Shannon Committee, April 1940.

scale of the reductions indicated the initial rents were most likely too high and resulted in demands that new rental levels be retrospective. The animosity created was to result in a legal challenge as to whether any rent should be levied. The desire to optimise rental levels precluded the likelihood that the cottages would be allocated to those who most needed them.

c) *Rent Strikes and Evictions for Rent Arrears*

The agitation to reduce the rent became a power struggle between the Trust and both the BLSI and the Killester Tenants' Association. A rent strike commenced in May 1924 and the Trust responded by reducing the Killester rents on an undertaking by Walker that rents and arrears would be paid.²³² The BLSI considered the reduction an interim measure, pending the defining of a 'minimum rent' for all tenants.²³³ Both sides were disappointed; the Killester tenants rejected the agreement and the Trust made little progress in a general rent reduction. In November 1924 the BLSI called a meeting of all tenants in County Dublin at which a rent strike was called.²³⁴ Browne believed that a general strike was being deliberately engineered by the BLSI and the purpose of the meeting was to 'influence the tenants against the Trust'.²³⁵ He wrote that 'a large number of tenants are intimidated into striking', afraid of incurring the hostility of the Legion's Executive.²³⁶ BLSI canvassers followed rent collectors to induce the tenants to join the strike.²³⁷ The Ministry of Pensions complained that their 'staff were unwilling partisans in this action and that they had been subject to threats of violence unless they fell into line'.²³⁸ Guinness employees, many of whom were tenants of the Trust, had got into trouble with their employers for joining the strike.²³⁹ The Legion told

²³² TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Alexander, 19 November 1926.

²³³ TNA,AP1/54, Walker to Alexander, 6 December 1924.

²³⁴ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

²³⁵ TNA,AP1/39, Walker to Duckworth, 27 Oct 1924 and Duckworth to Walker, 30 October 1924; Browne to Alexander and Duckworth, 30 October 1924.

²³⁶ TNA,AP1/54, Browne to Alexander, 31 December 1924; TNA,AP1/84, Dublin to London, 8 May 1925.

²³⁷ TNA,AP1/54, Trust meeting, 2 December 1924.

²³⁸ TNA,AP1/54, MoP to Colonial Office, 9 February 1925.

²³⁹ TNA,AP1/98, Trust meeting, 30 March 1926.

the press that they were ‘fighting with the Trust and gradually compelling them to fulfil the duties entrusted of them’.²⁴⁰ Likewise, the Trust considered the rent strike was ‘a trial of strength’, and issued eviction notices, including to the strike leaders, which resulted by March 1925 in many tenants paying rent albeit often at a reduced rate.²⁴¹ The southern trustees, after meeting in June 1925 with Legion representatives from London and Dublin, halted eviction proceedings and offered reduced rents, which were accepted by the Killester tenants. Hickie, the BLSI President, informed the tenants that the southern Trustees were on ‘our side’. Lacking Duckworth’s approval the actions of the southern Trustees had no validity.²⁴² Walker thought that all individual members of the Trust acknowledged that the rents were too high but Duckworth prevented any readjustment.²⁴³ Duckworth was to resign in 1927 citing concerns with the southern Trustees.²⁴⁴

In January 1926 the Trust introduced new lower rents, the Dublin office reporting, ‘we have quite a number of tenants thanking us’, with only Killester anticipated to be a source of continued trouble.²⁴⁵ The continuing problem was a demand that the reduction should be retrospective on the basis that the tenants had been asked to pay rents which were too high. The Lavery Committee concluded that ‘some limited retrospective adjustment’ was warranted.²⁴⁶ Total arrears were £14,000 in March 1926. The British Legion recommended the reduction should be backdated to April 1924 at a total cost of £5,500 including a credit for those who had paid.²⁴⁷ The Trust were against making rent reductions retrospective as being ‘fatal to rent stability, encouraging slackness of payment and persistent agitation for further

²⁴⁰ TNA,AP1/84, *IT*, 25 September 1925.

²⁴¹ TNA,AP1/54, Duckworth to Treasury, 27 November 1924; TNA,AP1/54, Trust Meeting report, 17 December 1924; TNA,AP1/54, Grubb to Alexander, 7 March 1925.

²⁴² TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 22 June 1925; Browne and Grubb to Alexander, 23 June 1925; Duckworth to BL, 24 June 1925; Tenants’ meeting, 26 June 1925.

²⁴³ TNA,AP1/84, Reply from Walker contained in letter from BL to Duckworth, 28 April 1925.

²⁴⁴ TNA,AP 3/19.

²⁴⁵ TNA,AP 3/32, Browne to Alexander, 25 January 1926.

²⁴⁶ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

²⁴⁷ TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Alexander, 19 November 1926; TNA,AP3/32, BL to Duckworth, 20 May 1927.

reductions’, and that they would make future rent decreases impossible.²⁴⁸ They were also concerned at the precedent of giving credit to those who had paid.²⁴⁹ Browne argued against compromise claiming that the agitation was led by the British Legion in Dublin and a small group at Killester directed by McLean, against whom eviction proceedings were taking place, and that most tenants were paying well and to compromise would demoralise the majority of tenants and increase bad debt.²⁵⁰ Duckworth said individual cases of hardship could be considered in proportion to an individual’s efforts to repay any arrears.²⁵¹ In September 1926, although Browne claimed that ‘the agitation engineered by the Legion has died a natural death’, they and the Killester strike leaders continued to lobby for the rent reduction be made retrospective.²⁵² The matter was only finally resolved with the Leggett case, which ruled against the Trust’s right to charge rent.

The inconsistencies of lowering rents, initially only for Killester, and the delay in conducting a general review of rents caused considerable antagonism, of which the more extreme tenant leaders at Killester and the Legion sought to take advantage.

Between 1925 and 1933 there were 98 evictions, all for rent arrears.²⁵³

Table 27: Evictions by year

Year	Number of Evictions
1925	16
1926	30
1927	14
1928	12
1929	8
1930	2
1931	4
1932	9
1933	3
Total	98

²⁴⁸ TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926; TNA,AP1/121, Alexander to DO , 8 August 1930; TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Alexander, 15 June 1927.

²⁴⁹ TNA,AP 3/32, Grubb to Alexander, 12 March 1926.

²⁵⁰ TNA,AP 3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 15 March 1926; TNA,AP 1/98, Trust Meeting, 30 March 1926.

²⁵¹ TNA,AP 3/32, Trust meeting, 30 May 1927.

²⁵² TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 1 September 1926; TNA,AP3/32, McLean to Browne, 18 Sept 1926; TNA,AP 3/32, BLSI to Trust, 6 Oct 1926.

²⁵³ TNA,AP1/155, Report on evictions, 1933.

Many of the tenants in arrears were in employment in skilled or regular jobs such as tailors, civil servants and commercial travellers or had army or RIC pensions.²⁵⁴ Thomas Gilliard was employed by Guinness and refused to pay a rent of 10/6 per week, building up arrears of over £21. A decree for ejection was obtained in February 1927.²⁵⁵ John Molloy was a butcher earning 70/ per week. His rent was 3/6 per week and his arrears circa £7. A decree was obtained on 26 September 1932.²⁵⁶ Patrick Carroll was employed as a labourer at 30/ per week and had a pension of 19/1 per week. Despite the family income he had arrears of almost £16 and a decree was obtained 15 June 1927.²⁵⁷ In some cases, although the Trust acknowledged an inability to pay, they still sought eviction. Thomas Hibbitts was unemployed and according to the Trust ‘the man appears to be entirely without means’, but still they concluded that ‘there is no reason why proceedings should not be taken against him’.²⁵⁸ Percy Goodridge had no pension and was unemployed with arrears of £4 8sh and was recommended for eviction.²⁵⁹ John McMahon was a casual labourer with little chance of employment and only a small pension and arrears of £23. A decree for possession was obtained in October 1925.²⁶⁰ Two tenants described as ‘decent’ but badly off were evicted in 1927/8; one went to live in a damp unhealthy cellar and was in bad health, the other a council house.²⁶¹ Duggan lived in a cottage for 2/10 rent and though old it provided shelter. The Trust’s predecessor bought the land and erected new houses of which one was rented to him at 5/ per week. His pension, initially adequate to pay the rent, was reduced and he was ejected and lived with his family in a primitive dug out.²⁶²

²⁵⁴ TNA,AP1/138, Report on evictions, 1931; TNA,AP1/155, Report on evictions 1933.

²⁵⁵ TNA,AP1/117,

²⁵⁶ TNA,AP1/153, Alexander, note, 3 October 1932.

²⁵⁷ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 5 July 1927.

²⁵⁸ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 4 February 1927.

²⁵⁹ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 5 May 1927.

²⁶⁰ TNA,AP1/108

²⁶¹ TNA,AP1/155, Report on evictions, 1933.

²⁶² TNA,AP4/11, Meeting 15 April 1937, summary of Judge J. Murnaghan in Callan case (Duggan, Casey and Caprani are other applicants).

Disability did not prevent eviction. Patrick Moreland of Balbriggan was unemployed with rent of 4/6 per week and arrears of £3 9sh. The Trust obtained a decree against him in June 1933 together with costs of £5. He had a disability pension of 46/ per week due to vascular disease of the heart.²⁶³ William Riggs had a rent of 4/6 per week with arrears of £8 8sh, a decree for possession was obtained in January 1926. He received a pension of 28/ per week due to the loss of a leg.²⁶⁴ In the above cases the disability pensions were of a size for which there was little excuse not to pay the rent. In other cases tenants with disabilities could not afford to pay but were still evicted. Francis Mohill had a £1 per week disability pension for deafness and gastritis and was unemployed with arrears of over £18, which the Trust could not see any hope of his paying; a decree was obtained in December 1925.²⁶⁵ Thomas Smith was unemployed with a pension of 34/6 awarded on account of tuberculosis. His arrears were £7 11sh and a decree was obtained against him in August 1927.²⁶⁶ In some cases the tenants suffered mental illness most likely related to war service but eviction was still sought. James Monaghan was employed as a labourer and had a pension of 12/ per week on account of a gunshot wound. His arrears were £18 and a decree was obtained in February 1927, although the Trust noted he was described as ‘a half-wit, and it is possible that his mental condition may have been caused by his war service’.²⁶⁷ John Appleby was unemployed and ‘entirely without means’, and described as a ‘half-wit’ who begged from house to house. He had arrears of over £11 and a decree was obtained in April 1927. Duckworth noted ‘one cannot but feel very sorry for him. Probably he should never have been selected as a tenant’.²⁶⁸ Evictions were sought even when young children were present, including for Frank Smith who had had 5 children between the ages of 10 months and 11

²⁶³ TNA,AP1/155, Alexander, note, 31 July 1933.

²⁶⁴ TNA,AP1/108.

²⁶⁵ TNA,AP1/108.

²⁶⁶ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 15 Aug 1927.

²⁶⁷ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 24 February 1927.

²⁶⁸ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 20 April 1927.

years; James Palmer who was unemployed, disabled and with 4 young children; and Hugh Callan of Killester who was serving a 5 year prison sentence while his wife and four children aged under 7 lived in the house. In the latter case the Trust wished to evict them, provided they had friends to live with.²⁶⁹ The Trust sought eviction for comparatively small amounts of arrears, John Collins £4 7sh, William Boshell £2 18sh and Patrick Dwyer £2 18sh, noting, ‘it is much better to take an action against a tenant when he owes £2 or £3 rather than when he owes £20 or £30’.²⁷⁰

In some cases the tenants were unsuitable for reasons additional to rent arrears; houses in a deplorable state, lodgers kept and families deserted. A Trust report described some of the tenants as ‘bad characters’ with 12 of the 98 evicted addicted to drink.²⁷¹ The Trust’s agent at Killester wrote, EG Roberts was ‘a most undesirable tenant, he spends his money on drink and boasts to other tenants that he does not pay his rent’, and ‘P. Kett’s conduct ever since he has been a tenant has been very bad, he has been prosecuted for insulting the local stationmaster, other tenants complain of his conduct, and if he is not evicted the moral effect on them will be ruinous’.²⁷² C. Dineen and his family from Cork were described by the local agent as ‘blackguards, unfit to live among human beings’. Other tenants were withholding rent because of Dineen’s behaviour; he had a ‘terrible fight’ that resulted in three members of the Corcoran family being admitted to hospital.²⁷³ Some tenants refused to leave and the Trust required the assistance of the authorities to ensure their physical removal. H. J. Hayden of Clontarf owed £67 as of June 1925. He had vacated the house in May 1924 leaving his family in occupation. They were evicted on 10 August 1925, their goods stacked on the kerbside. Lt. Colonel Robinson, a Trust Inspector, wrote that he attended with the sheriff and a police sergeant with four constables and on entering found the

²⁶⁹ TNA,AP1/117, Alexander, note, 28 February 1927; TNA,AP1/130, TNA,AP1/108.

²⁷⁰ TNA,AP1/153, Alexander, note, 19 April 1932 and 14 June 1932; TNA,AP 1/130, Alexander, note, 4 March 1929.

²⁷¹ TNA,AP1/155, Report on evictions, 1933.

²⁷² TNA,AP1/69, Grubb to Alexander, 7 February 1925,.

²⁷³ TNA,AP1/153, Alexander, note, 31 Aug 1932.

house in a 'filthy condition'. The occupants re-entered the house and on the 12 August 1925, again with the presence of the sheriff and police, were evicted but not before they were warned by the Police Sergeant of the consequences of seeking to re-enter the house.²⁷⁴

The number of evictions, even during the rent strike, was comparatively small with many paying at least some arrears upon a legal threat. The policy of the Trust in terms of the amount of arrears owing before legal redress was pursued was inconsistent. Although the Trust argued that cases of individual hardship were considered, in many instances little regard was given as to the tenants' circumstances or ability to pay. Some were in arrears because they had been charged rents which the Trust was later to acknowledge as excessive. There were no evictions for other causes of tenancy abuse alone, indicating that the Trust was predominately focussed on non-payment of rent. The problem of rent arrears persisted up to the time the tenants took action in the Supreme Court to dispute the validity of the Trust claiming rents, after which the Trust was unable to seek payment.

d) *Supreme Court Rulings: Leggett and the Aftermath*

In what became known as the Leggett case nine tenants from Killester, with the support of the Killester Tenants' Association, succeeded in the Irish Supreme Court in July 1933 in an action against the Trust to prove it had no right to charge rent. The case undermined the authority of the Trust and caused considerable confusion as to the responsibilities of both the Trust and the tenants, and the rights of the latter. The Trust for over a decade sought a resolution through further court actions, requests to the Irish Government to enact corrective legislation and finally through attempts to reach a settlement with the occupiers. The judge in the Leggett case declared that the Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) 1922 created a Trust with funds from the British Treasury for the

²⁷⁴ TNA,AP1/69, Grubb to Alexander, 27 April 1925; Grubb to Alexander, 7 May 1925; Colonel Robinson, Trust Inspector, to Grubb, 10 and 12 of August 1925.

purpose of the provision of accommodation to men who served in the Great War but made no mention of intent that rents should be levied. He dismissed a claim that the houses were absolute gifts, or that widows or dependents could live in them after the death of the ex-serviceman tenant. The Trust could if the occupiers were guilty of waste and destruction have recourse to the courts to remove the ex-serviceman tenants.²⁷⁵ The judgement created considerable ambiguity as to the exact status of the tenants and who had liability for maintenance, central services and the payment of rates. Browne argued the ruling was not in the tenants' interests, 'it is now admitted that the sole practical benefit derived from the Leggett judgement is immunity from the admittedly uneconomic rents hitherto paid. Against this they find themselves burdened with new obligations and new disabilities'.²⁷⁶ Due to the uncertainty of their legal position and future liabilities and without income, the Trust halted the building programme and ceased repairs, the payment of rates and evictions.²⁷⁷

The Trust was potentially liable for the return of the £275,000 of rent collected prior to the ruling.²⁷⁸ The liability of tenants previously evicted for non-payment of rents was in question. The Killester Tenants' Association hoped to compel the Trust to refund all 'back rent'.²⁷⁹ In *Callan and Others versus the Trust*, the Supreme Court in March 1937 found in favour of the Trust and that the tenants could not recover rents as they had been paid under a 'mistake of law'. The judge concluded that the tenants were 'tenants at will' (a weakening of their position from the Leggett ruling) and that existing letting agreements were void.²⁸⁰ The consequence according to the Trust's legal counsel was that the occupiers could only be evicted if they were 'no longer fit and suitable objects of the Trust but not related to any formal rental agreement'. It remained unclear whether the Trust was liable for repairs but in

²⁷⁵ TNA,AP1/150, Note (reviewing previous seven years), 15 January 1940; TNA,AP 4/9, Trust meeting, 30 October 1934; TNA,AP1/142, *IT* 31 July 1933.

²⁷⁶ TNA,AP4/9, Trust meeting, 30 October 1934; TNA,AP1/144, Browne, report, 16 October 1934.

²⁷⁷ TNA,AP4/8, Trust meeting, 9 Aug 1933; TNA,AP4/9, Trust meeting, 30 October 1934.

²⁷⁸ TNA,AP4/8, Trust meeting, 9 Aug 1933 (Judge in Callan case put sum at £294,000).

²⁷⁹ TNA,AP4/9, Trust meeting, 26 March 1935.

²⁸⁰ TNA,AP1/147.

any case such liability would be limited to the money available and, as the use of the reserve was subject to Treasury sanction, the Trust could refuse to do any remedial work.²⁸¹ The Trust sought clarification through a judicial ruling but without success and therefore ceased to carry out repairs, resulting in the ‘progressive deterioration’ of the properties.²⁸²

Patrick Bray, a Killester tenant, and others formed an association, the Ex-Servicemen’s Defence League, with the intention of securing a legal ruling against the tenants’ liability for rates. Following the Leggett ruling local authorities in many cases had obtained decrees for rates against tenants. The tenants had responsibility for rates but, under the Rates on Small Dwellings Act of 1928, the Trust as landlords were liable in the first instance on their cottages with a Poor Law Valuation of £6 or under, although in such cases the landlord normally recovered the amount through the rent. The Supreme Court in Cork County Council versus Tuohy in July 1939, found that tenants covered by the 1928 Act were not liable for rates. The position of the tenants not within that definition was the subject of an action, Beattie versus Dublin Corporation, in the High Court in July 1939 in which no decision was given. None of the Dublin schemes came under the 1928 Act and the tenants were directly liable for the rates, except the Clontarf estate of 38 cottages that was in the Corporation area, and came under a local Act of 1849 in which the landlord was liable but would again in normal circumstances recover the rates from the tenant. Forty five Killester tenants argued that their properties were Crown land and therefore rates were not due to the Dublin Corporation. Bray’s case in which he was one of the four plaintiffs seeking to prove that the Trust was liable for rates was dismissed for want of prosecution. The Trust remained not liable for rates but the situation was confusing.²⁸³ The Irish Government passed legislation in 1941 imposing the liability on the tenant, showing a willingness when it was in

²⁸¹ TNA,AP4/11, Trust meeting, 15 April 1937.

²⁸² TNA,AP1/150, Note,15 January 1940; *IT*, 3 March 1939; TNA,AP1/151, Brunyate to Treasury, 24 April 1945.

²⁸³ TNA,AP1/150, Note, 15 January 1940; TNA,P1/164, Notes, 8 and 20 July 1937; TNA,AP1/144; TNA,AP 4/11, Trust Meeting, 15 April 1937.

their interest to take legislative action to correct inconsistencies arising from court rulings that was lacking in resolving the problems encountered by the Trust.²⁸⁴

In addition to litigation the Trust sought to resolve the issues arising out of the Leggett ruling through both seeking an accommodation with the tenants and in persuading the Irish Government to enact corrective legislation. The Trust canvassed the tenants and concluded that a majority, including those at Killester, would ‘welcome a reasonable settlement’, the exception being the Killester Tenants’ Association.²⁸⁵ James Hornibrook, a Cork tenant, wrote that he would ‘prefer to be paying rent so that my wife and family would be left the house’.²⁸⁶ Those without houses also wished for a settlement as the building programme had been halted. The Trust recognised that ‘there is a strong feeling among those who have not yet been fortunate to obtain houses that they have been badly let down’.²⁸⁷ In August 1934, the Trust submitted to the Free State Government a proposal for a settlement, including tenancy for life, rights for widows, a charge for maintenance and rates and a purchase scheme.²⁸⁸ The Killester representatives also put their proposals to the Irish Government which were more onerous on the Trust.²⁸⁹ The Free State Government took no action but suggested that if all parties could agree, they would be prepared to introduce legislation.²⁹⁰ A meeting took place in June 1936 in Dublin attended by Father T. J. Traynor and P. Griffen from Killester, representing the tenants, the BLSI representing the ‘unhoused’, and the Trust. The meeting concluded with ‘Agreed Proposals’, that the Trust believed were ‘with no serious variation’ to those submitted to the Free State Government in August 1934.²⁹¹ In September 1936 Traynor and Griffin wrote to the Trust that that they could not

²⁸⁴ TNA,AP1/162.

²⁸⁵ TNA,AP1/144, Clonmel Tenants’ Association to Trust, 5 January 1934; Browne, report, 16 October 1934.

²⁸⁶ TNA,AP1/162, Hornibrook to British Government, 26 April 1935.

²⁸⁷ TNA,AP1/144, Browne, meeting, 16 October 1934.

²⁸⁸ TNA,AP1/144, Trust/Treasury/DO, meeting, 5 June 1934; DO to John Dulanty, IFS High Commissioner, 20 August 1934.

²⁸⁹ TNA,AP1/145; Killester representatives/Irish Attorney General, meeting, 17 December 1935.

²⁹⁰ TNA,AP1/146 Browne to Brunyate, 21 February 1936.

²⁹¹ TNA,AP1/143, Meeting 4/5 June 1936; TNA,AP1/146, Alexander to Brunyate, June 1936.

secure support for the ‘Agreed Proposals’ from the occupiers. The two circulated ‘bogus proposals’, claiming the houses would be given free and that any Trust funds remaining distributed to the tenants.²⁹² At a meeting of Dublin tenants in April 1937, Traynor claimed that they only had the meeting with the Trust to play for time, as the Tenants’ Association had no funds for litigation. He announced a new organisation, the Ex-Servicemen’s Tenants Association, to cover all the country but admitted the Cork tenants were not supportive of Killester.²⁹³ The Trust saw little point meeting with Traynor and Griffen again, but without an agreement the Irish Government refused to introduce legislation.²⁹⁴ In January 1937 the Trust circulated a copy of the Agreed Proposals to all occupiers and claimed positive feedback, particularly from tenants in County Cork but mistakenly they did not ask for a formal reply.²⁹⁵ They circulated the proposals again in December 1938 with similar terms but this time asking for a reply. Out of 2,492 tenants (excluding 227 widows) circa 25% replied with 70% in favour of the Trust’s proposals, despite the intensive lobbying of the Ex-Servicemen’s Association. Almost no replies were received from the Dublin estates but a tenants’ association in Cork wrote in favour of the Trust’s proposal. In February 1939, the Trust wrote to de Valera’s office with the results, asking for legislative action to allow their implementation.²⁹⁶ The Irish Government’s response was to set up the Shannon committee to make recommendations. Its findings were never published.²⁹⁷

Given the lack of maintenance of the estates and the uncertainty caused to families of deceased tenants, it is perhaps unsurprising that a seemingly significant number of tenants supported an agreement. The opposition of a group of tenants, mainly from Killester, and the

²⁹² TNA,AP1/146, Traynor/Griffin to Trust, 9 Sept 1936; Browne to Alexander, 26 September 1936.

²⁹³ TNA,AP1/147, Dublin tenants, meeting, 4 April 1937.

²⁹⁴ TNA,AP1/148; TNA,AP1/143, de Valera’s secretary to Alexander, 3 February 1937.

²⁹⁵ TNA,AP1/172, Browne to Phillips, 5 February 1937; Patrick Potter of Cork to Trust, 26 May 1937; TNA,AP1/143; TNA,AP1/172, Browne to Phillips, 5 February 1937.

²⁹⁶ TNA,AP1/148, Browne to London, 29 December 1938; Circular from The Ex-servicemen’s Tenants’ Rights Association to the tenants, 15 December 1938; *IT*, 23 December 1938; TNA,AP1/149, Ross (as acting chairman) to President’s office, 10 February 1939.

²⁹⁷ *IT*, 6 March 1940; TNA,AP1/151.

ultimate disinterest of the Irish Government, precluded a resolution despite the persistent efforts of the Trust.

e) *Appeasement and the Reassertion of Authority*

After the Leggett case the Trust ceased evictions. They no longer had a legal basis to proceed with outstanding cases of rent arrears, while the Irish Government pressurised them to halt legal proceedings for other offences, supposedly to ensure a better atmosphere for the negotiations with the tenants, although the latter continued legal action against the Trust.²⁹⁸ Most importantly the Trust was uncertain of its authority. The Killester Tenants' Association encouraged occupiers to assume 'ownership'; to sell or sublet houses or hand them over to relatives.²⁹⁹ Browne wrote, 'there is a deliberate propaganda to persuade the tenants to refuse to recognise the Trust's authority'.³⁰⁰ Tenants made alterations to the houses and opened them as commercial premises in the belief that the Trust had little power.³⁰¹ A Trust meeting in March 1935 noted, 'The question of trafficking in houses was becoming more urgent, breaches of agreement becoming more frequent and the Trust risked resigning all authority over their property'.³⁰² Browne wrote in September 1936 that the Trust should have their 'legal powers defined to put an end to an undignified situation'.³⁰³

The Trust referred to the period following the Leggett judgement, as one of 'appeasement'.³⁰⁴ From 1937 they considered that they were free to tackle the question of irregular tenancies and seek evictions.³⁰⁵ Three factors led to this change of policy: the unwillingness of the Irish Government to enact legislation to clarify the Trust's legal

²⁹⁸ TNA,AP1/155, Report, 5 January 1933; TNA,AP1/146, Browne to Alexander, 30 January 1936; Browne to Alexander, 16 September 1936.

²⁹⁹ TNA,AP1/150, Note (reviewing previous seven years), 15 January 1940.

³⁰⁰ TNA,AP1/144, Browne, report, 16 October 1934.

³⁰¹ TNA,AP1/144, Alexander to Treasury, 12 July 1934.

³⁰² TNA,AP4/9, Trust meeting, 20 March 1935.

³⁰³ TNA,AP1/146, Browne to Alexander, 16 September 1936.

³⁰⁴ TNA,AP1/150, Brunyate to Browne, 25 January 1941.

³⁰⁵ TNA,AP1/151, Browne to Phillips, 15 March 1944.

position; the failure of negotiations with the tenants' representatives; and finally the Supreme Court ruling in the Callan case in March 1937. The latter stated that the occupiers were objects of charity with the status of tenants-at-will or tenants-on sufferance, a ruling that increased the legal powers of the Trust to stop the widespread misuses of the properties.³⁰⁶ After the Callan case, the Trust in seeking evictions made a formal declaration that the tenant was no longer a proper object of the Trust. This applied only to those who had signed tenancy agreements, others had not even the status of tenants-at-will but were trespassers or occupiers with no legal title and therefore no declaration was necessary.³⁰⁷ Brunyate advocated 'systematic litigation' to ascertain the Trust's power.³⁰⁸ The Trust was successful in seeking evictions against a number of tenants for a range of offences, including using the premises for industrial purposes, selling the 'key' (to the cottage), otherwise unauthorised transfers such as reassigning the house to other family members, subletting, absence, and alterations to the house. Eviction was sought due to the death of both parents. In July 1937 there were 78 cases in which the Trust was taking action of which 18 involved tenants leaving the country, 17 to England and 1 to the USA. From July 1937 to August 1938, 36 tenants left Ireland, 34 for England and 2 for the USA. In some cases the tenant was absent for several years, while his family remained in possession. Once the Trust became aware of the absence, it set a deadline for the tenant's return and on some occasions they did, in others the house was surrendered.³⁰⁹ Andrew McLaughlin and Thomas Downey of Cork claimed that they could not find employment in Ireland and were working on a temporary basis in Dagenham, leaving their wives and children (all 18 or under) in possession of the cottages. Both were interviewed by Franks and Meath. McLaughlin wrote afterwards that he had secured work in

³⁰⁶ TNA,AP1/150, Note, 15 January 1940.

³⁰⁷ TNA,AP1/167, Browne to Alexander, 19 April 1937.

³⁰⁸ TNA,AP1/147, Brunyate to Ross 14 February 1937.

³⁰⁹ TNA,AP1/167, Reports including one submitted to Trust Meeting, 2 July 1937.

Ireland and would return home. These were borderline cases; other tenants were long term absentees and had left relatives other than wives and children in possession of the property.³¹⁰

There was considerable ‘trafficking’ in houses and even in more deserving cases the Trust sought evictions. William Coffey of Galway had ‘bought the key’ from a tenant for £25, although he was warned by a Trust representative not to do so. He pleaded in a letter to the Trust in February 1938 that he had served 4 years in France and Mesopotamia, after which he joined the RIC in which he had served for 2 years, and through that service had to leave Ireland, and when he could return there were no houses available. Although the Trustees recognised he was qualified, they would not countenance trafficking or give him priority over the many deserving applicants on the waiting list and took out a decree for repossession. After the judge’s order for eviction he refused to leave until forced by the sheriff.³¹¹ W. Leckie obtained a cottage in Limerick by an unauthorised transfer in November 1936 and was given notice to quit, despite a recommendation from the Commanding Officer of the Irish Guards with whom he had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was not a Limerick man and local applicants who had been on a waiting list for years were deemed a priority.³¹² Other cases involved marital problems. Edward Adair, a Killester tenant since 1923, left his wife and the property deteriorated to ‘the worst features of a slum dwelling’. The Inspector of Cruelty to Children made Adair take his children away. Adair said he would only return if the Trust would get his wife out. The Trust was successful in reclaiming the property after a court hearing in July 1937.³¹³ Some tenants used their properties for commercial purposes. Henry O’Neill from Bluebell, Dublin used his entire plot for the manufacture of cement blocks, erecting a large shed and employing six men. Meath

³¹⁰ TNA,AP1/167, McLaughlin to Trust, 2 November 1938.

³¹¹ TNA,AP1/167, Coffey to Trust, 7 February 1938; Browne to Phillips, 5 April 1938.

³¹² TNA,AP1/167.

³¹³ TNA,AP1/167, Browne to Phillips, 10 May 1937; *IT* 28 July 1937.

interviewed O'Neill and reported that he was defiant and insolent.³¹⁴ The Trust was both diligent in investigating cases and prepared to show patience. Henry McMullin of Westport, County Mayo did not reside in the cottage and had sublet it. Franks ruled that a notice to quit be served but only after giving McMullin the chance to get rid of the lodgers and go back into residence. Thomas Muldoon of Ballymote, County Sligo lived in England for two years and was allowed two months to resume residence although he failed to return.³¹⁵ In March 1938, Browne reported that:

since we were instructed to institute proceedings, in April last, we have recovered possession of 60 houses, not including those voluntarily handed over. In addition, no fewer than 132 cases have been struck off the black list - bona fide occupation having been resumed, lodgers got rid of, badly kept houses put in order and inspections allowed. In seven cases decrees have been obtained, but not yet executed. There are 65 cases still on the list today.³¹⁶

By October 1939, 118 houses had been recovered since May 1937, again excluding a considerable number of cases where houses were surrendered without having to institute proceedings. From 1937 to 1944, 49 cottages were recovered in cases where both parents were dead.³¹⁷ Some tenants claimed the Trust's rules were too harsh and that, for example, in contrast to council house tenants, they were prevented from keeping lodgers, fowl etc. to supplement income.³¹⁸ Brunyate noted it 'shows how imperatively necessary it had become to resume control'.³¹⁹ In 1939 cottages were still being sold illegally, but in general the Trust had succeeded in reasserting its authority.³²⁰

The advent of war brought new issues for the Trust as tenants, and or their families, joined the armed forces or secured jobs in industries deemed critical to the War effort. P. Ryan, Secretary of the Ex-Servicemen's Tenants' Rights Association, wrote to the Trust in

³¹⁴ TNA,AP1/167.

³¹⁵ TNA,AP1/167, Grubb to Phillips, 19 May 1938.

³¹⁶ TNA,AP1/167, Browne, Report, 14 March 1938.

³¹⁷ TNA,AP1/151, Browne to Phillips, 15 March 1944.

³¹⁸ TNA,AP3/34, Letter from Galway tenant in the *Connacht Tribune*, 29 September 1928.

³¹⁹ TNA,AP1/168, Browne to Philips, 6 October 1939; Philips to Brown, 19 October 1939.

³²⁰ TNA,AP1/149, Grubb to Phillips, 20 May 1939.

September 1939 asking that evictions of dependents be halted as some had joined HM forces, claiming the Trust's policy was a 'victimisation of widows and orphans'. Referring to Ryan's letters Browne wrote to Phillips, 'the suggestion that we should stop legal action against occupants during the period of the War is tantamount to a plea that, because there is a state of war, the Trust should countenance all manner of irregularities. Every case must be considered on its merits'. The Trust replied to Ryan that they could not enter into general discussion against unauthorised or otherwise unsuitable occupants of its cottages but 'there is no question whatever of harassing the dependents of authorised occupants absent on approved National Service'.³²¹ One such case involved an ex-serviceman from Killester who died in October 1938 leaving a son, Nicholas Flanagan, who was in the British army, 2 daughters aged 20 and 18 and a younger son of 14. Reverend James Kenny of Killester wrote to the Nicholas's Commanding Officer to ask his support in having the Trust reassign the house to the son. The Commanding Officer sent the request to the War Office, who forwarded it to the Dominions Office, who sent it to the Trust. The plea was to no avail, by January 1940 a decree for eviction was obtained and the cottage re let. This was a particularly harsh decision; a less deserving case was John Mulcahy of Killester who had an unsatisfactory history as a tenant. He departed for England stating he was going to join the Labour Corps. He left the house empty and sold the furniture which he had bought on credit and not paid for. His wife and child were said to be in Dublin. The Trust took possession of the property and re-let it.³²² Although the Trust was unable to charge rent or indeed any levy to maintain and repair the houses and the surrounding estates, they were successful in court actions in seeking evictions for the more extreme forms of tenancy abuse and in reasserting their authority.

³²¹ TNA,AP1/168, Ryan to Trust, 13 September 1939, 29 September 1939, 21 October 1939; Browne to Phillips 15 September 1939; Trust to Ryan, 4 November 1939.

³²² TNA,AP1/168, Browne to Phillips, 27 November 1939.

f) *Treatment of Widows and the Disabled*

The issue of widows and whether to allow them to continue occupancy after their husband's death was sensitive and it became increasingly so with the rapid rise in their numbers; by December 1938 there were 227.³²³ The Trust did not wish to make homeless a widow and possibly a family of young children but she was depriving other ex-servicemen, some of whom had been on waiting lists for a number of years and who themselves often had families, of the much needed house. The situation was yet more complex if the widow remarried especially to a non-ex-serviceman. Without her husband's income or full pension, widows were more likely to be unable to pay the rent (before 1933) and often took in a lodger which was contrary to Trust rules; in either case she faced eviction. In general the Trust's policy was to allow the widow to remain in occupation although, aside from the needs of the unhoused ex-servicemen, the Trust also operated under legal constraints. The legislation setting up the Trust made no provision for widows, but in 1929 the Trust obtained authority from the Treasury by statutory order to permit widows to continue occupation, subject to the needs of unhoused ex-servicemen.³²⁴ The Supreme Court's judgements in the Leggett and Callan cases weakened the position of the widow, the former giving a life's interest, personal to the ex-serviceman tenant, and therefore no protection to his widow, and the latter allowed her eviction if the cottage was demanded by an unhoused ex-serviceman.³²⁵

The case of Mrs Slowey illustrated the problem faced by the Trust with regards to their treatment of widows. After her husband died in 1931 she took in two lodgers. An ex-serviceman who had been on the waiting list for five years applied for the cottage. Court proceedings commenced and by November 1935 she had been evicted. There was widespread criticism. In August 1931 the chairman of Palmerstown Ex-Servicemen's Tenants'

³²³ TNA,AP1/148, Browne to London, 29 December 1938.

³²⁴ TNA,AP1/30, Franks to Private Secretary of President, 21 November 1935; Alexander to Chairman of Palmerstown Tenants' Association, 11 August 1931.

³²⁵ TNA,AP1/144, Browne, report, 16 October 1934; TNA,AP4/11, Trust meeting 15 April 1937.

Association wrote protesting at the contemplated eviction of ‘the widow of one of our deceased comrades’. Later protests were received from the Lord Mayor of Dublin, William Cosgrave and the Private Secretary of the President of the Executive Council. A Catholic priest from Tipperary wrote that the public would expect ‘an ex-serviceman to be spared the anticipation on his death bed of his wife and dependents going to the workhouse after his funeral’. The Trust was consistent in their replies, referring to the original legislation and to the subsequent impact of the Supreme Court rulings which limited their ability to show discretion as they would ‘have preferred to leave the widow undisturbed, a course that would have been in consonance with Irish opinion’.³²⁶

While sitting tenants generally supported the rights of widows to security of tenure, motivated by the possibility their own wives could be in a similar position, the ex-servicemen on the waiting list had a different view and formed an association to lobby for their interests. The British Ex-Service Men’s Non-Tenant Protective Association of Cork wrote to the Trust in November 1936 proposing 11 ex-service men to replace widows currently in occupation.³²⁷ Despite such pressure, when from 1937 the Trust started evicting undesirable tenants, they generally allowed widows to remain provided they did not re-marry; although they sometimes used the threat of eviction to illustrate to the Irish Government the legal limitations of their position (see 4.2a).³²⁸

Initially even total disability did not give preference in the allocation of cottages, although the Trust accepted that in rejecting such a man there was a ‘burden of proof’ to specify the reasons. From July 1928 they decided to offer overt preferential treatment in terms of a 20% reduction in rent to all tenants with 100% disability and, at the discretion of

³²⁶ TNA,AP1/30, Browne to Alexander, 6 August 1931; McCabe, Chairman of Palmerstown’s (Co. Dublin) Ex-servicemen’s Tenants’ Association to Brunyate, 1 August 1931; Alexander to DO, 28 August 1931; Alexander to Ross, 15 November 1935; Canon Dunne to DO, 7 November 1935, and subsequent letters.

³²⁷ TNA,AP4/11, Trust meeting, 8 Dec 1936; The British Ex-Service Men’s Non-Tenant Protective Association of Cork to Trust 12 November 1936.

³²⁸ TNA,AP 1/167, Trust meeting report, 2 July 1937.

the Irish trustees, an amount up to 20% for those in urgent need of relief whose war disablement resulted in a practical total loss of earning. In both cases, again at the discretion of the Irish trustees, if the circumstances of the above men required it then existing arrears could be remitted up to a maximum of 20% of the total rent demanded from the commencement of the tenancy. If the disablement was not permanent, or if the ability to work improved, then the concession could be withdrawn. Not all trustees agreed, Ross argued against ‘differential treatment of tenants who have already been compensated by the State in exact proportion to their disabilities’. There were 68 pensioners in the Free State who were 100% disabled of which 62 were permanent and 6 subject to quarterly review. The estimated per annum cost for the concession was £240 per annum. The reaction from some other tenants was not positive. A Galway tenant wrote to the *Connacht Tribune* that ‘the reason for this reduction is beyond my powers of reasoning as someone with no pension and no work is worse off than a 100% pensioner’. Timothy Hyde from County Cork, wrote to the Dominions Office in October 1928, claiming that those ‘without a disability pension, and who gave the full term on active service, as in my case, should also have the same consideration’. The Dominions Office replied that every tenant of the Trust is privileged in comparison to the general body of ex-servicemen and there is no ‘ground of complaint if a small additional benefit is conferred on those of their comrades who have suffered the exceptional calamity of total disablement’.³²⁹

3.8 Conclusion

The British Government had the responsibility to help the reintegration into society of large numbers of returning soldiers, many with physical and mental disabilities, and to support them in terms of pensions, medical care, training and employment programmes. New

³²⁹ TNA,AP3/34, Trust meeting, 30 March 1928, 4 June 1928; *Connacht Tribune*, 29 September 1928; Hyde, County Cork, to DO, 26 October 1928; Reply, 23 November 1928.

administrative machinery had to be established and the difficulties of doing so were accentuated in Ireland, initially due to conflict and thereafter the transfer of power. For the first four years after the Armistice, the breakdown of British or indeed any central authority impeded the ability to support the ex-servicemen. Political circumstances, economic stagnation and the attitude of employers meant that many returned to a position of unemployment. The risk of disaffected ex-servicemen joining the IRA was recognised but Treasury parsimony, coordination problems and bureaucratic infighting hindered substantial progress, although there was persistence to the British efforts. The Local Government Board, the Trust's predecessor, built 1,508 houses during the conflict, even though there were shortages of materials and opposition to establishing 'colonies' for ex-servicemen. Government established training centres for the disabled such as that in Tipperary remained in operation, despite threats to its staff. When it was not able to open its own training facilities, the Ministry of Labour funded the more expensive option of paying Irish employers, who unlike British firms were reluctant to make any financial contribution to training schemes for disabled ex-servicemen. But the political climate precluded the success of any large scale schemes to provide employment for ex-servicemen.

The grievances of the ex-servicemen in southern Ireland were not unique; Protestant veterans occupied the Lord Mayor's office in 'loyalist' Belfast in 1919; ex-servicemen in Britain disrupted peace celebrations, the town hall in Luton was burnt down; the protests were about pensions, employment and housing.³³⁰ According to Englander, inadequate disability awards and inept administration aggravated the growing sense of injustice amongst ex-servicemen.³³¹ Of 1,250,000 unemployed men in the United Kingdom in 1922, the British Legion estimated that up to 600,000 were ex-servicemen.³³² The continuing complaints of

³³⁰ Stephen Ward, 'Intelligence Surveillance of British Ex-Servicemen, 1918-1920' *The Historical Journal*, 16/ 1 (1973), 187; *Irish News*, 5 July 1919, 5; *Belfast News Letter*, 21 July 1919.

³³¹ Englander, 'The National Union of Ex-Servicemen and the Labour Movement', 28.

³³² Graham Wootton, *The Official History of the British Legion*, (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1956), 46.

Irish ex-servicemen led the Free State Government in 1927 to establish the Lavery Committee to examine their grievances with regards to the obligations of the British Government in relation to pensions, land, housing and emigration. With the exception of transitional arrangements for temporary government clerks it did not address British obligations with regards to employment, as this was then a Free State responsibility. Given the unusualness of a Dominion Government investigating the performance of the Imperial Government, it is likely that the Committee did not want to be over critical. The Ministry of Pensions noted it was a ‘departure in Imperial relations which may easily become an awkward precedent’. Despite the sensitivities related to their mandate, and some criticism of the process, the Committee were diligent in their task, adding validity to their conclusions. Some 500 individual complaints were submitted which generally reflected the same issues put forward by ex-servicemen organisations. Of the individual complaints, 337 related to pensions and 67 to land and housing.³³³ In their report of November 1928, the Committee’s concluding remarks put the complaints into context, noting that the ex-servicemen were distributed through all classes of the community, and that:

Nothing was brought to our notice to suggest that such ex-servicemen form a class with grievances or disabilities common to them as a class. Much of the evidence tendered related to grievances and disabilities common to all members of the community being dealt with e.g. bad housing conditions amongst the labouring classes, unemployment, unsatisfactory working conditions of employment in the Civil Service or amongst ex-temporary Civil Servants. Again many of the disabilities complained of were in no way peculiar to British ex-servicemen but were the result of the setting up of the Free State as a distinct entity. Generally speaking, all the grievances and disabilities complained of were grounded on claims to special treatment by reasons of promises given or of war service generally, or were the result of the severance of the Free State Government from that of the United Kingdom.³³⁴

³³³ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

³³⁴ Ibid.

Mahon, writing on behalf of the BLSI, expressed similar views, ‘many ex-servicemen are in need, but as a class (in Ireland) they are not alone, nor are ex-servicemen in any other country, free from distress’.³³⁵ An internal memorandum of the Trust commented on the report:

Out of 56 pages, no fewer than 27 relate to the work of the Trust. I think the explanation is that the Committee found that the ‘claims’ against both governments were so thin, and there was so little in the way of claims or grievances to enquire into, that they were glad to seize the opportunity of swelling their report by a detailed analysis of the Trust’s work.³³⁶

Pension issues constituted the main grievances brought to the Committee. However, other than issues related to the delay of mail during the conflict, the type of complaints made in terms of inadequate pensions, pensions being stopped and administration problems, were little different to those of British veterans. The Committee noted that with such an ‘elaborate code’, cases of hardship would happen but they were in no sense peculiar to ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State, and that the ex-servicemen in the Free State were treated no differently to the United Kingdom. War pensions were not reduced to take into account the lower cost of living in Ireland. A limited number of recipients of need pensions were affected upon retirement, but this was due to the Irish Government’s minimum income. The Ministry of Pensions’ own comprehensive analysis, while admittedly designed to prove that point, indicated that by almost all criteria, including the percentage of ex-servicemen receiving pensions, and the amount of pensions and treatment allowances awarded, the Irish ex-serviceman was far more generously treated than his British counterpart. The Ministry established a comprehensive infrastructure in Ireland, described by the judge in the Leggett case as an elaborate scheme of pensions and gratuities and free medical and surgical

³³⁵ *IT*, 3 February 1925.

³³⁶ TNA,API/121, Browne to Alexander, 22 February 1929.

treatment.³³⁷ It benefitted from the support of prominent politicians, such as P.W. Shaw TD, who was chairman of an area pension advisory committee. Such support may have been due to it being a substantial source of cash supply to the Free State from the British Exchequer.³³⁸ Leonard argues that problems with the Ministry of Pensions were such that in 1920, none of the responsible authorities could estimate the number of disabled men in Ireland, and a civil servant visiting Cork that year was horrified to find that nothing had been done with thousands of applications for financial assistance from Munster veterans.³³⁹ Although initial problems occurred, infrastructure was established, comprehensive records kept, and benefits exceeded those in Britain.

The Trust built over 2,600 cottages, its largest estate at Killester, a garden city development that was a showcase not emulated by Free State housing projects for many years. Ironically it was also the main source of antagonism towards the Trust. Rents were initially excessive, certainly more than that necessary to maintain the estate and led to the houses being allocated to those who could afford them, not to those most in need. Even when rents were reduced, the continued adversarial tactics of the Killester Tenants' Association and the BLSI eventually halted the building programme. The Killester Association in time received the opprobrium of other tenants and eventually the BLSI (see 4.6c). The Trust sought during the 1930s, through court action and negotiations with the tenants and the Irish Government, to resolve the uncertainty caused by the inconsistencies arising out of the Leggett judgement, which precluded it from charging any rent. The negotiations proved fruitless; the more militant tenant representatives reneged on agreements and the de Valera Government took no substantive action to resolve the problems. Yet the Trust persisted and succeeded in re-establishing its authority in order to manage its estate and prevent most of the misuse of the cottages. As a landlord and an imperial body in an independent Ireland the

³³⁷ TNA,AP1/143, Leggett Case, 10 March 1932.

³³⁸ TNA,PIN15/757, MoP to Major General Lovat, 28 November 1927.

³³⁹ Leonard, 'Survivors', 215.

Trust was always going to face challenges. These were at times accentuated by bureaucratic intransigence and tenant militancy. Brady and Lynch note that for a charitable body the Trust spent much of its time in litigation against the people it was serving.³⁴⁰ Yet the scheme gave the tenants a unique advantage, Duckworth commenting, ‘how much more generously in the matter of the provision of houses and land the ex-serviceman in Ireland is being treated by the British Government than his comrades in England’. Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, said the same in 1926 when refusing additional funds.³⁴¹

The complaints regarding the exclusion of ex-servicemen from the Empire Settlement Act 1922 seem from a pragmatic perspective unjustified; prior to the Act schemes existed for subsidised passage which ex-servicemen took advantage of and in practice the theoretical limits of the Act were ignored as Irishmen who reached British shores qualified for assistance, and by 1926 there seemed limited demand in any event. There were some areas in which British actions could have been more supportive. In the Treaty leading to the foundation of the Free State, the British Government did not ensure security of employment for British ex-servicemen acting as temporary civil servants. They could therefore be dismissed without compensation and in reapplying considered themselves to be disadvantaged against ex-National army servicemen. The complaints though that improved employment conditions in Great Britain were not reflected in Ireland, or that it was no longer possible to be considered for a position in Britain was a failure to accept the reality of a change of government. As with the lower limit of the need pension such cases were the inevitable consequences of Ireland’s new status as a separate state rather than a failure of the British Government to fulfil its obligations.

British motives in fulfilling an obligation to the ex-servicemen were varied. There was a legal duty as pensions, health and the responsibilities of the Trust remained an imperial

³⁴⁰ Joseph Brady and Patrick Lynch, ‘The Trust and its Killester Nemesis’, *Irish Geography*, 42/ 3, (2009), 261-292.

³⁴¹ TNA,AP1/54, Duckworth to Lefroy, 25 February 1925; TNA,AP1/84, Alexander, on behalf of Duckworth, to BLSI, 16 March 1925; Fraser, *John Bull's Other Homes*, 265.

responsibility. The efforts to ensure the loyalty of ex-servicemen during the Anglo-Irish conflict was partly based on pragmatism, but the comment from an ex-servicemen that the Irish Land Provision Act, 1919 was ‘only a “sop” to help stop the ex-servicemen from joining the Republican forces, to keep him out of harm for the time being’, was an exaggeration; the “sop” lasted the rest of the century and far beyond any political benefits for the British Government.³⁴² The persistent efforts made by the British Government, despite the difficulties presented by the conflict and afterwards operating in a country that was no longer part of the United Kingdom, sometimes with the seeming ingratitude of the recipients, and in a period of financial retrenchment in Britain, indicated a motive for obligation beyond legal requirements, republican threats and lobbyists. The moral obligation that was reflected in the British attitude to all loyalists applied also to the ex-servicemen. The British Legion contributed a portion of the money received from poppy sales in Great Britain to the Free State ex-servicemen. In the context of compensation schemes for those whose service to the Crown had caused them a disadvantage in an independent Ireland, the *Irish Times* wrote, ‘no other Government would have gone nearly so far as the British Government has gone in the honouring of a moral responsibility’, while Sir William Davison, Conservative MP for Kensington, commented that it was ‘a debt of honour recognised by successive governments of all parties in this country for years past’.³⁴³ The files recording the correspondence and minutes of the meetings of the Ministries and the Trust are, as befits British government organisations, extremely comprehensive. What is apparent throughout, despite the inevitable bureaucracy, politics and the desire of the Treasury to limit financial commitments, was the commitment of many individuals, some of them over a long period, to fulfil the perceived obligations towards the ex-servicemen. In the Trust, Cyril Browne was the director of the Dublin office from 1924 to his retirement in October 1949 (at which point he was awarded

³⁴² Article by ex-serviceman, *Honesty*, 2 November 1929.

³⁴³ *IT*, 21 February 1928 quoted in Brennan, ‘A Political Minefield’, 417-8.

the OBE).³⁴⁴ The unpaid southern Trustees, Mahon, Franks and Meath were diligent in their administration of the Trust, and in their representation of the interests of the ex-servicemen. Meath's predecessor, Major Lefroy, too much so, as he refused to sanction evictions or condemn strikes and was removed from his responsibilities. Despite his antagonistic relationship with the BLSI, Duckworth still considered the Trust's houses were 'an expressive memorial of the gratitude felt by the British public to the Irish soldiers who fought in the Great War'.³⁴⁵ The report by Dr. P.L. Forward from the Ministry of Pensions on disabled soldiers was that of a man with an acute sense of the wider problems related to returning soldiers.

The complaints of the ex-servicemen were those of their counterparts in the United Kingdom and of their own class in the Free State, although with regards to both pensions and housing they received benefits in excess of veterans in Britain, and such benefits gave them an advantage over their fellow countrymen. That the British Government was still severely criticised for a failure to fulfil its obligations was due to four main reasons: false expectations based on war time promises and ambiguous legislation; the antagonism of the BLSI and loyalist lobbyists; that most ex-servicemen were not in receipt of pensions or housing; and most importantly the lack of a societal contribution to complement government efforts. The Lavery Report highlighted that many grievances were based on promises claimed to have been made during the War to encourage recruitment. The British Government refuted such obligations stating, for example, that it had 'never accepted responsibility for providing the total cost of housing all ex-service men in the Irish Free State', and that there was a general housing problem which was the responsibility of the Free State Government.³⁴⁶ The Report noted that promises were made that cottages would be provided to returning servicemen, but

³⁴⁴ TNA,AP4/19, Trust meeting, minutes, October 1949,

³⁴⁵ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth to Haig, 12 November 1926.

³⁴⁶ TNA,AP1/209, British Government to Jack Jones, MP for Silvertown, 29 October 1932; TNA,AP1/121, DO to BLSI, 6 October 1930.

‘we have not received any evidence that such promises were made in any formal manner or with the sanction of the British Government’.³⁴⁷ There may have been no legal commitment but, Sir Henry McLaughlin, Director General of Recruitment in Ireland, acknowledged such inducements were offered. The ambiguity of the Land Act (1919) with regards to the number of houses to be built and their financing, and the absence of an authority to charge rent, in both it and the legislation establishing the Trust, encouraged false expectations and provided an opportunity for legal challenges. In Great Britain, the British Legion sought consensus, in southern Ireland, partly because of its different antecedents, it was highly confrontational. According to the Trust, the BLSI’s antagonism was an attempt to increase its minimal membership. It publicly criticised the British Government and sought the help of the Free State Government in lobbying against it. In BLSI meetings any indication of support provided by the Irish Government was gratefully recognised, with almost all opprobrium directed at the British Government and its agencies. Lord Danesfort was representative of the powerful lobby that spoke on behalf of loyalists in general and of the ex-servicemen in particular. Loyalist lobbying groups found it useful to use ex-servicemen as examples of distressed loyalists; they were more likely to engender sympathy with the public than absentee landowners. The appeals were emotional, exaggerated and intended to convince a British audience that the British Government needed pressurising to meet unfulfilled obligations to ex-servicemen, Lord Danesfort stating in Parliament:

It is no exaggeration to say that they and their families are living under conditions of great poverty and in many cases of destitution. The British Government has not made itself responsible for relieving the sufferings of these men. I do hope the time has come when (they) will be responsible for the grave hardship under which these men labour, and will do something to relieve sufferings, having regard to the fact that their sufferings are, in a very large measure, due to the action of the British Government at the time of the Treaty.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report.

³⁴⁸ *Hansard*,HL Deb 25 June 1930, vol. 78.

The complaints of the veteran and loyalist organisations were played out in generally sympathetic media, as was the report of the Lavery Committee. Such coverage of ex-servicemen, particularly at the time of Armistice Day, drew a cynical response from one ex-serviceman, ‘the sad plight of the ex-serviceman in Ireland are obsessing the minds of the English Press but the time has come when the ex-servicemen must state his own case, when he must get rid of those patronising articles, and those people who have used him as a political lever’.³⁴⁹ Although many ex-servicemen benefitted from comparatively generous benefits, most were not in receipt of a cottage (97%) and did not receive a pension (80%). The judge in the Leggett case said in addition to pensioners for whom there was ‘an elaborate scheme’ of support, ‘there was a large body of men who had lost their place in the social economy and who required help which ought not be regarded as charity but more in nature of a right’.³⁵⁰ The British Government had limited means to support such men. Whether they received benefits or not, Irish ex-servicemen were disadvantaged insofar as the British Government’s treatment of all its veterans was inadequate, but in Britain this deficiency was compensated for by a societal effort that was missing in Ireland. For example, government efforts to train disabled servicemen in state run workshops ultimately failed in both countries. The King's National Roll Scheme was a success in Britain but unworkable in Ireland; the commitment of Irish business and society in general was lacking. To an extent the British Government compensated with additional benefits but the lack of support from the community and private enterprise meant not just the absence of practical assistance but the loss of reconciliation with those who had sent them to war. In this respect the experiences of Irish ex-servicemen mirrored those of German veterans where the dearth of societal support caused hostility towards the state. In Ireland veterans directed their antagonism to the British government and its representatives.

³⁴⁹ Article by ex-serviceman, *Honesty*, 2 November 1929.

³⁵⁰ TNA,AP1/143, Leggett Case, 10 March 1932.

Chapter 4 Ireland: State and Community 1922 – 1939

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the experiences of the ex-servicemen in the Free State.¹ It assesses the extent to which the state and the community were supportive or discriminatory, and the degree to which the ex-servicemen were able to integrate and prosper. The attitude of the government is best understood through its willingness or not to intercede in the conflict between the Trust and its tenants, its responses to the grievances of the ex-servicemen and its treatment of them with regards to employment. Their position in relation to other state organs is reviewed; specifically the attitude of the judiciary and their role in the National army. The participation of ex-servicemen in politics is also considered. Community can be looked at from different perspectives. The economic conditions in Ireland in the interwar years meant that many, particularly the working class, suffered from unemployment and poor housing. An important question is whether the conditions of the ex-servicemen reflected those of the general population or whether they were worsened by discrimination. The extent to which the ex-servicemen were defined by war service either by themselves or the community is evaluated and their portrayal in the mainstream media is assessed. State and community remembrance is closely interrelated and is discussed as one topic: the focus is to understand from contemporary sources the remembrance experiences of ex-servicemen in the interwar period. Ireland was governed by two parties with contrasting ideologies in each interwar decade and how far this affected the experiences of ex-servicemen is considered. Both parties were influenced by the legacy of the Civil War and their role within it.

¹ And upon its formation in 1937, Ireland/Eire.

The Free State's existence at its inception was jeopardised by a bitter internal conflict that put erstwhile allies in opposition with each other. Walsh argues that, 'the methods used by the Provisional Government to suppress the threat to its authority were an even more vicious version of the reprisal tactics that had been used on its leaders by Lloyd George and the Black and Tans'. The republicans assassinated members of the Free State parliament and in retaliation rebel prisoners were executed, some 77 by the end of the conflict. Neeson writes that The Public Safety Act of 1923 allowed the state to arrest anti-Treatyites without trial. The cost to lives and property of the Civil War exceeded that of the War of Independence.² There were an estimated 4,000 military and civilian deaths.³ Those who opposed the Treaty were subject to religious sanction; rebels were condemned in April 1922 by Catholic bishops. In October a pastoral letter, circulated to all churches, stated that, 'they (the anti-Treatyites) carry on what they call a war, but which in the absence of any legitimate authority to justify it, is morally only a system of murder'. The Catholic Church ordered the general excommunication of republicans who continued to fight, depriving them of the Holy Sacrament.⁴ Walsh writes that with the defeat of the rebels, 'the Irish people were ready to close ranks behind their government', and there was a 'resilient normality and the triumph of commerce over political passion'.⁵ The Civil War ended in May 1923 but with a legacy of hostility and bitterness that would continue to pervade Irish society. It was more traumatic to Ireland than the War of Independence not only due to the greater violence but also because, as Foster writes, 'the Civil War created a caesura across Irish history, separating parties, interests and even families, and creating the rationale for political divisions that endured'.⁶ Hopkinson also argues that the Civil War created deep social and political fissures in Irish society; 'many contemporaries have related that the War ended any social

² Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 168; Eoin Neeson, *The Civil War 1922-23*, (Dublin:1989), 294.

³ J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1985*, (Cambridge:1989), 69.

⁴ Neeson, *The Civil War*, 282.

⁵ Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, 169.

⁶ R.F Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 511.

contact with anyone on the other side of the Treaty split'. Those that opposed the Treaty were subject to social, economic, legal and religious sanctions. According to Hopkinson, 'many Republicans were excluded from public life and considerable numbers were forced to emigrate. Employment was unattainable for numerous anti-Treatyites'.⁷ Anti-Treatyite veterans were excluded from pensions until 1934 on grounds of disloyalty to the state.⁸ O'Brien refers to one relative, Eugene Sheehy, who served in the Great War, was pro-Treaty and became a Circuit Court judge, while another, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, supported the republicans in the Civil War and as a consequence lost her job as a teacher.⁹ It was not service to the British Crown but the Civil War that split families and communities, creating rifts that never healed and ostracising those that fought on the wrong side.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty leading to the formation of the Free State was far from a republican ideal. Ireland became a Dominion within the Empire with all the apparatus of imperial show; the British Monarch remained as head of state, the Governor-General had the right to withhold assent to bills and the Royal Navy retained port facilities. Crucially members of the Dáil Éireann were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown. The Treaty provided Northern Ireland, which had been created by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, an option to opt out of the Irish Free State, which it exercised. In the elections of June 1922 pro-Treaty candidates secured a significant majority. Politics in southern Ireland in the interwar years was defined to a significant extent by the difference between those who compromised and accepted the Treaty and radical republicans who sought complete independence. The unresolved issues of the Anglo-Irish War were reflected in the policies of what was to become the two main political parties; Fianna Fáil, with its origins with the anti-Treatyites and Cumann na nGaedheal /Fine Gael with its origins with the pro-Treatyites.

⁷ Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, 274-5.

⁸ Eunan O'Halpin, 'The Army in Independent Ireland', in Bartlett and Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland*, (Cambridge:1996), 414.

⁹ C.C. O'Brien, *States of Ireland*, (Hutchinson, 1972), 104-5.

Kissane writes, ‘the identities of the main two political parties in the Republic of Ireland, the institutions of the state, and, for a long time, the governing personnel themselves all have their origins in the Civil War’. In 1946 twelve of the fourteen members of the then Fianna Fáil Government had fought on the losing side in 1922, with over three-quarters of them having seen out the conflict in the government's prison camps in 1923.¹⁰ Considerable antagonism pervaded attitudes. Valiulis writes that Cumann na nGaedheal displayed an implacable hostility towards de Valera, while Cosgrave was unwilling to display even polite formalities towards him. In return de Valera derided Cumann na nGaedheal as thwarters of the goals of Irish nationalism due to their close connection to Britain.¹¹ Hopkinson argues differing attitudes to Britain became one of the chief distinguishing marks between the two parties.¹² Cumann na nGaedheal was, according to Boyce, ‘pro-British’,¹³ whereas Fianna Fáil was nationalist, seeking to end ties to Britain. Cumann na nGaedheal under William Cosgrave won the election of August 1923 and remained in power until 1932.¹⁴ Kissane argues Cumann na nGaedheal prioritised economic development over the redress of nationalist grievances.¹⁵ Daly writes Cumann na nGaedheal was forced to adopt a pro-British attitude on political matters and a conciliatory economic policy. Its priority was to stabilise the country and the economy; positive relations with Britain, not revolutionary fervour would best achieve this. She claims the administration was dominated by men who had run the country under Britain and who retained British values, and that the government was forced to befriend a commercial and economic establishment that was dominated by men who had prospered under the Union.¹⁶ Lysaght writes, ‘The institutions of the republic were scrapped

¹⁰ Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War*, (Oxford:2005), online extract.

¹¹ Maryann Valiulis, ‘The Man who Could Never Forgive’, in O’Carroll and Murphy (eds), *De Valera and His Times*, (Cork:1986), 92, 99.

¹² Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, 274-5.

¹³ Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics*, 80.

¹⁴ Out of 153 seats Cumann na nGaedheal secured 63, the Republicans (who did not enter the Dáil) 44, the Farmers Party 15, Labour 14 and Independents 17, see Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, 982.

¹⁵ Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War*, online extract.

¹⁶ Mary E. Daly, *Industrial Development and Irish National Identity, 1922-1939*, (New York:1992), 14-15.

in favour of refurbished forms of those of their colonial opponents. Socially and economically, all traces of socialism were banished in what would now be called an ultra-monetarist policy'.¹⁷ O'Carroll argues there was, 'an air of business as usual, only under different management'. There were few changes resulting from independence and an unwillingness to erode the goodwill of the British who had helped Cumann na nGaedheal restore stability.¹⁸ Boyce comments, 'There was much troop in Balfour's jibe', "What was the Ireland that the Free State took over? It was the Ireland that Britain built".¹⁹

After the 1927 election Fianna Fáil, including anti-Treaty Sinn Féiners, participated in the Dáil under the leadership of de Valera. They won the 1932 general election although their mandate for change was limited; they were the largest party in the Dáil but without an overall majority, securing a majority of only one in the general election in January 1933.²⁰ De Valera sought to remove British influence politically and culturally and move the Free State towards a republic. He encouraged an increased interest in Gaelic history, traditions and language, and initiated a series of acts to significantly loosen ties with Britain, including the abolition of the oath of allegiance to the Crown in 1933, followed by the abolition of both the right of appeal to the Privy Council, and the right of the Governor General to withhold assent to bills passed by the Dáil. A new constitution in 1937, approved by a referendum, removed all mention of the monarch and his representative from the constitution. British control of Irish naval bases was relinquished following the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938, allowing De Valera to declare that the withdrawal of British military forces was an affirmation of Irish sovereignty.²¹ O'Brien claims the new Republican Government was made up of Sinn Féiners, all of whom denounced the wearing of the British uniform as treason to Ireland.²² Fianna

¹⁷ O'Connor Lysaght, 'A Saorstát is born', in Hutton, and Stewart, (eds.), *Ireland's Histories*, (London:1991), 49.

¹⁸ J.P.O'Carroll, 'Eamon de Valera: Charisma and Political Development' in O'Carroll and Murphy (eds), *De Valera and His Times*, (Cork:1986), 19-20

¹⁹ Boyce, '1916, Interpreting the Rising', 175.

²⁰ In the 1932 election Fianna Fáil secured 44.5% of the vote on a 76.5% turnout.

²¹ Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics*, 82-89.

²² O'Brien, *States of Ireland*, 105.

Fáil's policies were also influenced by economic pressures in addition to the party's ideological commitments. Economic activity had peaked in 1929, falling substantially thereafter partly due to the global recession. One of de Valera's first actions in order to save money was to refuse to pay 'land annuities', annual instalments paid by tenant farmers purchasing their land through loans advanced by the British Government under the Land Purchase Acts. This led to the Anglo-Irish 'economic war' of 1932-1938. The British responded by imposing a customs duty on Irish imports, which were predominantly agricultural, to make good the loss. According to Canning, the British Government did not want to weaken the position of Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal Party, who they viewed as supportive of the maintenance of the British connection, by making concessions to de Valera who was regarded as a head-strong fanatic. De Valera retaliated by withholding money for pensions due the Royal Irish Constabulary and imposing import tariffs. The latter was also intended to encourage an indigenous industrial sector and lessen dependency on British goods. It also led the Irish people to close ranks behind de Valera. Relations were not normalised again until the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938.²³ According to Dunphy, Fianna Fáil was pragmatic in its approach, inherently conservative in both cultural and economic terms, with gradual changes to improve the conditions of the working class that did not challenge the established economic order and were articulated in terms of nation rather than class. Fianna Fáil shifted to the centre and in doing so moved significantly from their revolutionary origins, partly due to de Valera's own innate conservatism. Dunphy writes that in the 1932 election Cumann na nGaedheal's attempt to portray de Valera as, 'a front man for the gunmen and the communists', failed to resonate with the electorate. Although Fianna Fáil's natural constituency was the small farmers of the west of Ireland, they were sensitive to the business elite; a move to change Dublin street names, many named after British overlords,

²³ J. Peter Neary and Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Protection, Economic War and Structural Change', *Irish Historical Studies*, 27/107 (1991), 250; Paul Canning, 'The Impact of Eamon De Valera', *Albion: British Studies*, 15/3 (1983), 179-205.

was abandoned for fear of offending the business community. Upon assuming power, and despite pressure from some in his party, de Valera did not make significant changes in the civil service, police, the army or the judiciary. Maguire writes, Fianna Fáil reinstated civil servants of republican sympathies who had been dismissed under previous administrations but, despite pressure from the IRA, there was no purge of existing civil servants even though some, particularly in the Department of Finance, were considered Free Staters attached to the English interest and hostile to the new government. According to Dunphy, one group that sometimes experienced exclusion were Protestants. He writes, ‘the identification of Irishness with Roman Catholicism was soon to become a constant theme in de Valera’s discourse’, and that there was evidence of exclusion of Protestants from youth employment schemes and government and local authority appointments.²⁴ The *Irish Press* wrote during the 1932 election that the Anglo-Irish differed not in race but national allegiance and ‘that the future is with the older race, the older faith’.²⁵

4.2 State: Government

a) *Attitude to Ex-Servicemen*

From a legal perspective under the Transfer of Function Order 1922, the Free State Government was excluded from all liability in respect of the re-instatement into civil life of the ex-servicemen and their dependents and from any future support.²⁶ Although not responsible for ex-servicemen, the Free State Government took measures to ensure that supporters of the Crown were not penalised. Under an agreement on the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Treaty the Irish Government undertook, ‘to protect from molestation or victimization the persons, property and interests of all who are thought to have sided or

²⁴ Richard Dunphy, *The Making of Fianna Fáil Power in Ireland, 1932-1948*, (Oxford:1995), 19-24, 129-30, 143, 146, 211; Martin Maguire, *The Civil Service and the Revolution in Ireland*, (Manchester:2008), 207.

²⁵ *Irish Press*, 3 February 1932.

²⁶ TNA,AP1/143, Leggett Case, 10 March 1932.

sympathised with the Forces of the Crown'.²⁷ As a consequence the Dáil Éireann enacted legislation which provided an amnesty for all members of the naval, military, police or civil services of the British and all other persons 'by whom acts of hostility against the Irish people were committed, aided or abetted during the past six years'.²⁸ This may have not have been relevant to the British forces withdrawing from Ireland but it was important for Irish ex-servicemen who had been part of or aided the Crown Forces and remained in Ireland.

The Irish Government took the unusual step of allowing a British Government Agency, the Trust, to operate in the Free State after the transfer of power, passing the necessary legislation, the Land Trust Powers Act in 1923, to enable it to function. This was in contrast to the views of the revolutionary government; Michael Collins's resolving in 1920 to thwart British reconstruction policies aimed at helping returning veterans to find employment, purchase land or establish a business, as he believed benefits should accrue to nationalist supporters not to enemies of the republican state, and that the British Government intended through suitable rewards to ensure the ex-servicemen were a bulwark against nationalism.²⁹ Although they halted the more controversial land allocation scheme, a financially constrained Free State Government was prepared to let the construction of housing for ex-servicemen carry on, if the British Government funded it; money from the British exchequer to help with an acute housing problem outweighing the anomaly of the continuation of an imperial scheme. It was politically impossible for the Irish Government to accede to the British Government's request to contribute financially as there was no intended similar scheme for ex-National army servicemen, even less IRA veterans.³⁰ The attitude to the ex-servicemen and how it changed over time is illustrated by the willingness or otherwise

²⁷ TNA,CO905/18.

²⁸ Sheila Lawler, *Britain and Ireland 1914-23*, (Dublin:1983) 215; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 2, 20 December 1922, Legislation Enacted, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0002/D.0002.192212200006.html>); *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 2, 11 January 1923, Amnesty (British Military) Bill, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0002/D.0002.192301110006.html>).

²⁹ Fedorowich, 'Reconstruction and Resettlement', 1176.

³⁰ Fraser, *John Bull's Other Homes*, 262.

of the Irish Governments under Cosgrave and de Valera to intercede in the various conflicts between the Trust and its tenants. The period until 1932 in which the Free State was governed by Cumann na nGaedheal with Cosgrave as President was characterized by Cosgrave's active involvement and support for the tenants and his close relationship with two ex-British army generals, Mahon and Hickie, in their respective roles as a Trust southern Irish trustee and Chairman of the BLSI. Mahon and his successor Franks were nominated by the President. After Fianna Fáil, under Éamon de Valera, came to power in 1932, Franks publicly expressed an appreciation of the de Valera Government but in reality the Trust was not its priority; they did little to help resolve the impasse between the Trust and its tenants. Cosgrave supported the southern trustees in their conflict with the Trust's head office in London. When it became apparent that Lefroy's appointment as one of the southern trustees was to be terminated, Duckworth believing he put the interests of the ex-servicemen before that of the British Treasury, the Free State Government became involved. His termination highlighted many of the concerns in Dublin as to how the Trust was run. Mahon and Lefroy wrote to Cosgrave requesting support, after which the Governor General, T.M. Healy, complained to L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for the Dominions. Healy raised the disadvantages of having the Trust headquarters in London in terms of cost and remoteness and the restrictions on the southern Trustees in performing their duties. He concluded that 'the delay in providing houses has given rise to great discontent among ex-servicemen, and, this is bound to lead to a serious situation'. Amery rejected the criticism and confirmed the termination of Lefroy's appointment.³¹ From 1924, the Trust was under pressure to reduce rents and deal with tenants withholding payment. Both the Trust and the Killester Tenants' Association and their allies, the BLSI, sought the help of the Irish Government. The tenants were supported by Bryan Cooper, a member of Dáil Éireann, who claimed issues related to ex-servicemen's

³¹ TNA, AP3/7, Healy to Amery, DO, 26 Aug 1925; Amery to Healy, 31 December 1925.

housing took up 25% of his correspondence.³² Cooper asserted that the rents charged were significantly higher than that for his tenants; ‘the ex-serviceman is paying double/treble and even if the house is better he will become discontented’³³ He advised using an outside agency with experience in Land Agency work to decide a reasonable rent.³⁴ The Anglo-Irish perspective made the rent strike and the evictions highly political. Cooper argued that it would be injudicious for the Dáil Éireann to involve itself in the affairs of the Trust, even less would it be appropriate for Forces of the State to assist in evictions. He claimed that he could not raise the matter of the Trust in the Dáil Éireann, as the Trust was financed by the British Government and any reference to it would be ruled out of order. Cooper said, ‘if the forces of the Free State were employed at the instances of the British Treasury’ to evict tenants then a very difficult political situation would arise, as de Valera’s party would represent the situation, ‘to show that the Free State Government does not act independently, but is merely a mask to conceal the fact that the British Government still controls Ireland’.³⁵ Cooper’s remarks were somewhat disingenuous; the courts and police supported the Trust in effecting evictions, and the affairs of the Trust were often raised in the Dáil, extensively so during the debates related to the committee established to examine the complaints of British ex-servicemen. Indeed Cooper himself met Cosgrave and lobbied for his involvement. He said Cosgrave, who had been a member of the Dublin Housing Corporation, thought the rents too high and at Cooper’s urging contacted the Colonial Office. He claimed he approached Cosgrave because the rent strike ‘will raise a political issue of a very serious nature’, and the ex-servicemen ‘begin to talk revolutionary nonsense, and it is very difficult to deal with all these outcries unless we can put something tangible to them, there is an enormous amount of

³² TNA,AP1/54, Cooper to Duckworth, 2 January 1925; TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

³³ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

³⁴ TNA,AP1/54, Cooper to Duckworth, 2 January 1925.

³⁵ TNA,AP1/54, Cooper to Duckworth, 2 January 1925.

feeling among ex-servicemen scattered all over Ireland'.³⁶ The BLSI also lobbied Cosgrave; Walker in a meeting with the Trust in May 1924 said that Cosgrave had written to the Colonial Secretary stating, 'the houses, particularly at Killester, are not worth the money and that the rents are excessive'. Duckworth said a telegram would be sent to Cosgrave informing him that the rents would be sympathetically reviewed in comparison to local rates and requesting Cosgrave's help in calling off the rent strike.³⁷ The Trust was slow in reviewing rents and discontent continued. In May 1925, Mahon wrote to Duckworth:

All our rents will have to be reduced soon as I hear the North have refused to have any rents above 5/ and are supported by their Government; if true we will have to follow suit. The Legion is working to get the Free State Government to interfere and sent a deputation to the President. He told them he would do nothing without consulting me but I have not heard from him since. Will try and see him this week.³⁸

Cosgrave wrote a draft letter to Mahon responding to a deputation from the BLSI and the Killester Tenants' Association, including Hickie and Walker who asked that he request the British Government to instigate an inquiry into the working of the Trust, and in the meantime to halt evictions. Cosgrave's letter demonstrated his significant level of involvement with its references to the building programme, the costs of the houses and the impact of the strike. He expressed concerns at the high rents and the delay of the Trust in reviewing them. Cosgrave argued that rent for the houses built under the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts were lower, even taking into account capital costs which were excluded from the Trust's calculation. He concluded, 'this matter which is at present at such a dangerous turn causes me a great concern. The ex-servicemen form a large section of the community in this country and any unrest must react on the entire state'.³⁹ Cosgrave's detailed letter was six pages in length

³⁶ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

³⁷ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 12 May 1924.

³⁸ TNA,AP1/84, Mahon to Duckworth, 16 May 1925.

³⁹ TNA,AP1/84, Private draft of a letter from Cosgrave to Mahon, 19 May 1925, attached to a note from Grubb to Alexander, 20 May 1925.

and reflected almost exactly the arguments of the BLSI, illustrating both the extent of his involvement and his sympathies. It also showed the importance he attributed to the ex-servicemen and to the risk of unrest arising out of their dissatisfaction. Duckworth replied to Cosgrave, 'I must ask you not to rely wholly on the statements of the Executive of the Irish Branch of the British Legion'. He also noted that the evictions of tenants had the approval of Irish Courts, despite the opposition of the Legion.⁴⁰ Browne argued that Cosgrave's figures on rent were incorrect and that 'the working classes and the superior lower-middle class of which many of our ex-servicemen are members, pay very much higher rents than the Trust charge for their houses'.⁴¹ Cosgrave remained concerned that evictions for non-payment of rent continued, writing to Mahon that he understood from Cooper that the Trust were proceeding with the evictions whereas he thought it had been Mahon's intention to halt them pending a revision of the high rents. He warned the Trust that 'in a conflict with the Killester tenants, sympathy would be entirely with them'.⁴² Mahon expressed his concern about Cosgrave's letter to Alexander, the Trust's secretary and the latter suggested Mahon and Brown, the Director of the Dublin Office, should see Cosgrave to explain the 'true position'.⁴³ The conflict between the Trust and its tenants continued even after the introduction of new lower rents in January 1926, as the tenants argued the reductions should be retrospective and rent arrears remained unpaid. Cosgrave again supported them, writing to Mahon in March 1926 that arrears should be calculated on the basis of the revised rents. Mahon concurred, arguing to his colleagues that a concession would ensure that 'the Government of Southern Ireland is on the Trust's side'. Hickie asked the President to again meet a deputation from the BLSI. Cosgrave wanted Mahon involved and arranged a meeting with him and Hickie, during which both informed Cosgrave that discontent still

⁴⁰ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth to Cosgrave in reply to his letter to Mahon, 27 May 1925.

⁴¹ TNA,AP1/84, Browne to Duckworth, 15 June 1925.

⁴² TNA,AP1/84, Cosgrave to Mahon, 18 June 1925.

⁴³ TNA,AP1/84, Alexander to Browne, 20 June 1925.

prevailed with the Trust's tenants, and Hickie warned him there would be resistance to evictions and that it would be undesirable to have Free State soldiers assisting in their enforcement.⁴⁴ Browne argued against compromise.⁴⁵ Duckworth generally agreed but at the same time wanted to 'foster friendly relations with the President of the Free State'.⁴⁶ Given the degree of antagonism between the Trust and its more extreme tenants it was inevitable that differences would remain, but Cosgrave sought to play a constructive role in seeking to resolve them.

A request from Cosgrave indicated the extent of his involvement with the Trust and tenants' issues. During a meeting Browne had with the Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government, the latter, 'mentioned that Mr Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council, would be very glad to receive from the Trust a word of thanks for his action in getting the Dáil to pass certain rating concessions and make them applicable to the Trust's houses'. The Secretary said the letter should be sent to the Ministry of Local Government and from there he would forward it to Cosgrave.⁴⁷ Lefroy in a letter to the *Irish Times* acknowledged the support given by Cosgrave, writing that he had seen several allusions (presumably negative) made regarding the attitude of the President to ex-soldiers but, that regarding the work of the Trust, the President had written to the Colonial Office urging that more houses should be built, rents lowered and evictions delayed pending an inquiry.⁴⁸

The progress of the construction of the houses was also discussed in the Dáil Éireann; the Trust's work was important in helping to alleviate the chronic housing shortage in the Free State. In the Dáil in July 1924, in response to concerns raised regarding delays in the provision of housing, Kevin O'Higgins on behalf of the government said, 'in view of the

⁴⁴ TNA,AP3/32, Trust meeting, 30 March 1926; Cosgrave to Mahon, 6 March 1926; TNA,AP1/98, Trust meeting notes, 30 March 1926.

⁴⁵ TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 15 March 1926.

⁴⁶ TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Dublin office, 17 March 1926.

⁴⁷ TNA,AP1/121, Browne to Alexander, 28 November 1927.

⁴⁸ *IT*, 12 September 1927.

housing shortage, the delay as regards these schemes has been giving me much concern. The administration of the Act is a matter for the Trustees who were appointed in February last, and I will communicate with them in the matter'.⁴⁹ Some two years later the *Irish Times* reported, 'In the Dáil Éireann last week President Cosgrave announced that about one thousand houses had been built in the Free State out of funds that are in possession of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Trust'. The article also referred to Redmond's statement in the Dáil that the Trust's houses would benefit the whole community as it would lessen the pressure on existing housing accommodation and would provide a considerable amount of employment at a time when work was scarce'.⁵⁰ The Free State made no contribution to the Trust for the building of cottages for the ex-servicemen.⁵¹ The Trust was exempt from housing subsidies provided to encourage the building of public housing, including those provided under both the 1924 Housing Act which granted £100 for each newly built house and the 1925 Act, in the latter the Trust was excluded by name.⁵² The Irish Government Memorandum commenting on the Lavery Report, noted that the complaint that the Trust was excluded from subsidies under the Housing Acts overlooked the fact that it was never intended to subsidise a scheme for a particular class, and that the benefits of the various housing schemes were available to British ex-servicemen 'in their capacity as individuals, and that no discrimination in this regard has been made between them and their fellow citizens'. The Irish government argued that the Trust already had funds allocated and must build anyway. In addition only a prescribed number of houses were to be built, the Irish Government intimating that they

⁴⁹ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 8, 9 July 1924, Housing Sailors and Soldiers, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0008/D.0008.192407090003.html>); *IT*, 10 July 1924.

⁵⁰ *IT*, 26 June 1926; In response to a question from A. Byrne, an ally of Redmond, on number of houses built, a Government representative responded that as the Executive Council had no responsibility the deputy should inquire of Trust, see *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol.16, 20 July 1926, Soldiers' and Sailors Land Trust – Erection of Houses, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0016/D.0016.192607200003.html>).

⁵¹ TNA, AP1/39, Browne to Alexander, 22 October 1924.

⁵² Anthony O'Brien, 'The Soldiers Houses in Limerick, *The Old Limerick Journal*, 35 (1998), 4.

would reconsider the position if more houses resulted.⁵³ In 1930 they relented, the Dominions Office writing to the Legion, ‘Under the Irish Free State Housing Act of 1930, the Trust will in future be entitled to a subsidy for all cottages begun after 15 July 1930, amounting to £45 per cottage, and it is hoped that this will enable the Trust to build a further small number of cottages’.⁵⁴

The Trust’s relationship with the de Valera Government was dominated by attempts to resolve the impasse caused by the Leggett ruling through persuading the Irish Government to enact corrective legislation and asking for its support in the discussions with the tenants. In October 1933, Franks met with De Valera and the Attorney General and afterward wrote optimistically, ‘de Valera’s general attitude was helpful and indicated a very definite interest in the problem and a wish to find a solution to the difficulties’. He noted that de Valera was interested in the status of widows, the possibility of a purchase scheme and particularly the continuation of the building programme. De Valera acknowledged that the Trust was in an impossible situation which needed to be rectified. Franks gave him a table of proposed reduced rents. De Valera said his ‘Government is most willing to be helpful’.⁵⁵ The optimism was premature; in December 1933 de Valera’s office wrote to Franks that the affairs of the Trust were under consideration but there would be no early statement.⁵⁶ The deteriorating relationship between Ireland and Britain, including trade sanctions affected the Trust. In December 1933 Franks informed Alexander that the effect produced by the latest embargo on Irish cattle made it inopportune for him to again approach the President.⁵⁷ In January 1934, the Treasury, Dominions Office and the Trust requested meetings with the finance and legal representatives of the Free State Government, taking the view that if a

⁵³ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report; TNA,AP1/2, Ardee to Brunyate, 21 November 1927; Browne to Brunyate, 11 March 1930.

⁵⁴ TNA,AP1/121, DO to BLSI, 6 October 1930.

⁵⁵ TNA,AP1/142, Franks to Brunyates, 1 November 1933.

⁵⁶ TNA,AP1/142, De Valera’s office to Franks, 16 December 1933.

⁵⁷ TNA,AP1/142, Franks to Alexander, 22 December 1933.

settlement was not reached the Trust would cease to operate in the Free State. De Valera responded by suggesting that the Trust and its beneficiaries come together to reach an agreement which would help the Irish Government departments in making a recommendation to the Executive.⁵⁸ In August 1934, the Trust through the Dominions Office submitted to the Free State High Commissioner, what in their opinion were generous terms most likely to meet the approval of the general body of tenants, with the request that they should be encompassed in new legislation; these included tenancy for life, rights for widows, a charge for maintenance and rates and a purchase scheme.⁵⁹ Franks met de Valera in December 1934, commenting afterwards he ‘found his attitude was everything that could be desired. He was courteous and willing to help’. De Valera said the proposals were ‘very reasonable’, and requested the Attorney General join the meeting suggesting to him that early legislation should be enacted to give them legal enforcement. The Attorney General brought a report from the Local Government Board that indicated a general desire on the part of the tenants to settle.⁶⁰ De Valera asked Franks if the Irish Government representatives could disclose the proposals, the Trust replying it had no objection.⁶¹ The Trust was frustrated by the lack of initiative thereafter by the Free State Government. In May 1935, Alexander and Browne met E.P. McCarron, secretary in the Irish Ministry of Local Government and Public Health, who said ‘it was quite incorrect to suggest that the matter had been lost sight of or pigeon-holed; that his Government looked sympathetically upon the proposals, and were anxious to have the matter satisfactorily settled’, and as the tenants had not agreed a ‘working arrangement’ with the Trust, the government could not move. Alexander pointed out, as the matter had been under consideration since August 1933, the delay was unreasonable.⁶² The Trust

⁵⁸ TNA,AP 1/144, Treasury/DO/Trust meeting, 23 January 1934; HMG to John Dulanty, the Irish High Commissioner, 1 February 1934; Office of the President to Franks, 7 Feb 1934..

⁵⁹ TNA,AP1/144, Trust/Treasury/DO meeting, 5 June 1934; DO to Dulanty, 20 August 1934.

⁶⁰ TNA,AP 1/144, Franks to Brunyate, 19 December 1934; TNA,AP1/150, Note, 15 January 1940.

⁶¹ TNA,AP1/145, De Valera to Franks, 3 January 1935.

⁶² TNA,AP1/145, Alexander, note, 27 May 1935.

believed it futile for it to ascertain the opinion of the tenants and considered that the Free State Government should satisfy itself.⁶³ At a meeting in July 1935 with the High Commissioner for the Free State, attended by the Dominions Office and the Treasury, Brunyate said the Trust had been deprived of all practical powers to maintain the estate and the remedy could be further litigation, which could take years to settle, or legislation, and that a proposal had been submitted to the Irish Government.⁶⁴ Brunyate's lobbying was for little purpose; in August 1935 the Free State informed the British Government of its decision to postpone discussions. At the same time and in contradiction, McCarron approached Browne to discuss informally the memorandum sent to the Irish High Commissioner in August 1934.⁶⁵ When it became obvious that the Free State was not going to legislate to give force to its proposals or canvas the opinion of the tenants, the Trust through Franks wrote again in December 1935 to de Valera, referring to the memorandum given to the High Commissioner in August 1934 and to de Valera in December 1934, confirming that the terms had the approval of the involved British Ministries and suggesting a round table discussion to include one delegate each from Killester and Cork, and one non-tenant to represent the unhoused men together with representatives of the Trust and the President.⁶⁶ De Valera replied that the suggestion was under consideration.⁶⁷ At the same time the Killester representatives, Father Traynor and Mr P. Griffen, were also lobbying, meeting along with their legal advisers, the Free State Attorney General and McCarron. They proposed a right to buy at a low market value, taking into account rent previously paid and a charge for maintenance but not administration or central services. The Attorney General said the matter would be referred to the President and the appropriate government departments.⁶⁸

⁶³ TNA,AP1/145, Trust meeting, 25 June 1935.

⁶⁴ TNA,AP1/145, High Commissioner for the IFS, DO, Treasury and Trust meeting, 4 July 1935.

⁶⁵ TNA,AP1/145; DO to Brunyate, 23 Aug 1935.

⁶⁶ TNA,AP1/145, Franks to de Valera, 7 December 1935.

⁶⁷ TNA,AP1/150, Note, 15 January 1940; De Valera to Trust, 1 February 1936.

⁶⁸ TNA,AP1/145; Killester representatives /IFS, 17 December 1935.

In January 1936, Browne wrote to Alexander that de Valera was ‘engaged in considering the affairs of the Trust and hoped to arrange a conference in the next week’, and had asked that pending evictions be postponed to ensure a better atmosphere. The Trust agreed. De Valera did not however put the same pressures on the Killester Tenants’ Association to halt its legal actions against the Trust.⁶⁹ In February 1936, Browne wrote to Brunyate informing him de Valera’s office had contacted him to ask for a meeting with Franks and Major Tynan of the British Legion to discuss representatives for a planned meeting between the Trust and the tenants. Browne reported that de Valera had seen the Attorney General and the atmosphere was ready for an agreed solution but that ‘the President wished to hold aloof, to regard the conference with interested benevolence’, and if all parties could agree he would be prepared to introduce legislation.⁷⁰ At the British Legion conference in February 1936 Franks said:

I should like to pay tribute to the President of the Executive Council, to the Attorney General and to the Government of the Free State, for the way in which they have tried to help us mutually, both the Trust and the tenants to come to a solution of our difficulties (applause). I have had two personal interviews with the President on this matter, and far from receiving me with any form of hostility as a Major General of the British Army, I received nothing but the greatest courtesy and I found in him every desire to help us to find a way out of our difficulties (loud applause).⁷¹

In February 1936 Franks met the Attorney General, confirming afterwards that the Trust were ready for a conference. The Office of the President reiterated that the government’s role was limited to issuing formal invites and the sympathetic examination of any agreed recommendations with a view to introducing the necessary legislation. It was also suggested to Franks that as the Trust’s nominee of the Free State President, his formal participation could be viewed as committing the government to acceptance of recommendations arising from the meeting and that as the President might find ‘it desirable to seek your advice’, it

⁶⁹ TNA,AP1/146; Browne to Alexander, 30 January 1936; Browne to Alexander, 16 September 1936.

⁷⁰ TNA,AP1/146 Browne to Brunyate, 21 February 1936.

⁷¹ Report on BLSI Annual Meeting, *IT*, 24 February 1936.

would be best if he was not directly associated. Franks attended but not as a delegate. In June 1936, de Valera wrote to the delegates convening the meeting.⁷² The meeting took place in June 1936 and concluded with the ‘Agreed Proposals’ similar to the Trust’s original proposals.⁷³ The Trust wrote to de Valera in December 1936, stating it did not believe the proposals were given to the tenants by the Killester representatives, and that the Trust saw little point to meet again with the tenant representatives and be asked for further concessions. The Trust asked the Irish Government to initiate legislation to give effect to the proposals.⁷⁴ In February 1937, de Valera’s secretary replied that as the tenants’ representatives had been unable to secure approval of the occupiers, there was no agreement and the government was therefore unable to introduce legislation.⁷⁵ Brunyate wrote to the Treasury in February 1938, stating that the Trust saw little point in a plebiscite of tenants’ opinions as the Irish Government’s view was that ‘the Trust’s difficulties are not a matter of public interest, they are a private matter between the Trust and the tenants, and it is only in the event of these two parties coming to an agreement that the Irish Government can undertake legislation’. Brunyate continued that it had been the assumption of the Trust that it was ‘an institution of general public importance in which both governments must presumably be interested, that the two governments are also interested in fair treatment of ex-servicemen of all classes, and that they might be expected to come together to correct by a just settlement a situation which has only arisen from legislative error’.⁷⁶ The Irish Government claimed an ‘impartial attitude’ but their position was inconsistent. They said that they would be open to a referendum to ascertain the tenants’ views but did not wish to be seen to endorse it; conversely they wanted to see any circular in advance should one be sent. In February 1938, junior officials in the

⁷² TNA,AP1/143; Franks/IFS Attorney General meeting, 17 February 1936; TNA,AP1/146, Franks to the Attorney General, 6 March 1936; Office of President to Franks, 30 March 1936; de Valera to delegates, 4 June 1936.

⁷³ TNA,AP1/143, Tenants representatives/Trust meeting.

⁷⁴ TNA,AP1/143, Trust to de Valera, 30 December 1936

⁷⁵ TNA,AP1/143, de Valera’s secretary to Alexander, 3 February 1937.

⁷⁶ TNA,AP1/148, Brunyate to the Treasury, 3 February 1938.

Irish Government indicated to the Trust that they would consider a settlement possible in the absence of the evidence (i.e. the tenants' views) they had previously sought from them.⁷⁷ The Trust had hoped its affairs would be discussed in the Anglo-Irish discussions of March 1938 but this did not happen.⁷⁸ In July 1938, the Trust suggested to the Treasury that its assets be handed over to the Eire and Northern Ireland Governments.⁷⁹ In October 1938, Irish Ministry of Finance officials informed the Trust that they wished for a settlement, but once more requested the Trust to provide proof of acceptance from the tenants. They were concerned regarding the possible expulsion of widows to which Browne responded that the Trust was 'coerced by their legal obligations'.⁸⁰ The Trust seeking again to meet the requirements of the Irish Government and expecting a positive response, circulated a letter to the tenants in December 1938 with similar terms to the 'Agreed Proposals' but this time asking for a reply as to whether the tenants found them agreeable. A ratio in excess of two to one was in favour but only just over a quarter replied.⁸¹ In February 1939, Ross, the Deputy Chairman of the Trust, wrote to the President's office informing him of the result and asking for legislative action to allow for the implementation of the 'Agreed Proposals'.⁸² In May 1939, Irish Government officials intimated to Browne that the Government was considering the Trust's legal position but that a solution would be jeopardised if the Trust continued with the eviction of the Cork widows and a postponement was requested to avoid embarrassment. Browne noted 'the imminence of the evictions has had some influence in taking the Trust's dossier out of the Government's pigeon holes'. At a Trust meeting in June 1939 it was agreed to halt evictions.⁸³ In September 1939 the Irish Government wrote to the British Government, stating that with regards to the Trust they had established a committee to 'make

⁷⁷ TNA,AP1/148, IFS Department of Finance, to Grubb, 2 February 1938; IFC Department of Finance/Browne meeting, 10 February 1938.

⁷⁸ TNA,AP1/148, *IT*, 2 July 1938.

⁷⁹ TNA,AP1/148, Brunyate to Treasury, 29 July 1938

⁸⁰ TNA,AP1/148, Browne to London, 21 October 1938.

⁸¹ TNA,AP1/148, Browne to London 29 December 1938.

⁸² TNA,AP1/149, Ross (as acting chairman) to President's office, 10 February 1939.

⁸³ TNA,AP1/149, Browne to Phillips, 11 May 1939; AP1/168, Meeting, 9 June 1939.

recommendations as to the remedial action calculated to remove such difficulties as exist'.⁸⁴ By November 1939 the Trust had received no word from the Irish Government and had concluded that 'the appointment of a committee at some time in the future means that the whole business will be prolonged indefinitely'.⁸⁵ The committee though was appointed on 6 March 1940 and included General Hickie and Senator David Robinson under the chairmanship of Judge Shannon, and was asked to consider the issues of repairs, public services, house purchases and widows.⁸⁶ The Shannon Report was presented to the Irish Government on 9 May 1940 but a year of inactivity later the Trust concluded that they 'are shirking from the task of implementing the recommendations of the Shannon Committee and have not even published the report and are to take no action but to shelve the whole question of the Trust's affairs'. Neither de Valera nor the Minister of Local Government was prepared to meet the Trust.⁸⁷ Browne commented that that 'the last thing the Irish Government want is to have anything to do with the administration of an activity which is British in its inception, its purpose and its function'. By October 1941, although the Trust had not received a copy of the Shannon Report, it understood that it was 'substantially in accordance with the case presented to the committee by the Trust'.⁸⁸ The Trust suspected that the tenants' leaders influenced the suppression of the Report.⁸⁹ It remained unpublished and in June 1947 the Irish Ministry of Local Government responded to a British Legion request for a meeting, 'that no purpose would be served by receiving the proposed deputation at present'. In the previous six years the issue was raised at least six times in the Dáil Éireann to no effect.⁹⁰ In 1947 Franks informed the BLSI 'that the attitude of the Irish Government made further

⁸⁴ TNA,AP1/149, High Commissioner for Ireland to DO, 25 September 1939.

⁸⁵ TNA,AP1/149, Browne to Phillips, 24 November 1939.

⁸⁶ *IT*, 6 March 1940.

⁸⁷ TNA,AP1/150, Browne to Meath, 2 May 1941; Browne to Phillips, 1 July 1941; Phillips to DO, circa July 1941.

⁸⁸ TNA,AP1/151, Browne to Brunyate, 9 October 1941.

⁸⁹ TNA,AP1/151, Browne to Phillips, 15 March 1944.

⁹⁰ TNA,AP1/151, Irish Ministry of Local Government to BLSI, 18 June 1947.

negotiations impossible'.⁹¹ The Shannon Report was never published.⁹² A copy of the report is now in the NAI. Its recommendations were similar to the Trust proposals of August 1934, specifically with regards to the rights of widows, the introduction of a purchase scheme and most importantly the allowance for the Trust to charge rent to cover the cost of maintenance, repairs, administration and other outgoings and that the Irish Government should pass enabling legislation.⁹³ The suppression of the report is unsurprising. De Valera had provided no substantive support for similar proposals in the previous six years and would have found it difficult to reject the findings of a committee that he had established. Even more than before, the priorities of de Valera, and indeed the British Government, lay elsewhere.

De Valera's intermittent involvement seemed only to seek to dissuade the Trust from proceeding with potentially politically damaging evictions and avoid the consequences of media criticism of the government. The evictions of widows was a sensitive issue for the de Valera Government and the Trust sought to capitalise on it; Alexander proposing to use the eviction of the widow Slowey to 'emphasise to the Irish Government the seriousness of the general position'.⁹⁴ Franks wrote to the Private Secretary of the President of the Executive Council in November 1935 that the Trust had no power to give preferential treatment to widows over the claims of unhoused ex-servicemen. He also noted that there were some 140 widows in similar cases with ex-servicemen pressing their claims to take possession.⁹⁵ The Trust responded to de Valera's requests in the hope of gaining his support but in each case the wider negotiations with the Irish Government failed and were most likely only under consideration in the first place to delay the evictions.

The attitude and involvement of Cosgrave and de Valera in the affairs of the Trust and its tenants were in marked contrast. Cosgrave was willing to intervene, was highly

⁹¹ TNA,AP1/151, Trust report, 26 June 1947.

⁹² *IT*, 6 March 1940; TNA, AP 1/151.

⁹³ NAI, TSCH/3/S11344A, Trust/Shannon Report.

⁹⁴ TNA,AP1/30, Alexander to Ross, 15 November 1935.

⁹⁵ TNA,AP1/30, Franks to Private Secretary of the President, 21 November 1935

knowledgeable regarding housing issues and extremely supportive of the tenants, and he worked closely with the southern trustees and the BLSI. Cosgrave appeared very concerned and aware of the political ramifications of the discontent of the ex-servicemen, a concern probably accentuated by the insecurities of the nascent state. In the following decade the Trust sought a resolution to the impasse caused by the Leggett judgement, either through legislation from the Irish Government or a negotiated settlement with the tenants but the ultimate lack of interest of the de Valera administration precluded a solution. That they could easily have resolved the problem was indicated by the legislation enacted to remove any ambiguity caused by court decisions regarding the payment of rates by the Trust's tenants. In 1937 Brunyate wrote that 'the deceased Chief Justice and the present President have possibly between them dealt us an irretrievable blow'.⁹⁶ The reasons for the lack of interest of the de Valera administration were several: the diminished influence of the ex-servicemen, a realisation that no further houses would be built, but perhaps most of all a lack of political empathy made more acute by the hostile attitude to Britain arising out of the economic war. The actions of the Killester Tenants' Association also diminished sympathy, even from the BLSI and Cosgrave. In 1935 they approached Cosgrave, the Minister for local government and members of the Dáil Éireann for support and all refused, one TD stating that they had quite enough to do to look after their own people in slum and rural districts.⁹⁷ In contrast to the lack of support given by de Valera to the Trust, the experiences of the British Ministry of Pensions were more positive. They anticipated that with Fianna Fáil in power there might be problems but instead found the new government had 'gone out of its way to help not only the Ministry but also the children (of ex-servicemen) in whom we are interested'.⁹⁸ One motivation may have been the continued inflow of Treasury money to Ireland.

⁹⁶ TNA,AP1/147, Brunyate to Ross, 14 February 1937.

⁹⁷ TNA,AP1/145; Killester Tenants' Association meeting, 5 September 1935 (a tenant sent the minutes to the Trust).

⁹⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

The reaction of the Irish Government to the grievances expressed by the ex-servicemen was indicative of their attitude towards them. What is notable is that the ex-servicemen were confident enough to lobby to have their claims considered and the Irish Government felt a need to react. In November 1927 the Dáil Éireann voted to establish a committee (the Lavery Committee) to investigate their grievances against the British Government in relation to housing/land, pensions and health provision for the ex-servicemen, and the Irish Government in relation to employment. Most of the complaints were directed at the British Government. Lord Genavy, Chairman of the Senate, said in the *Westmeath Independent* that the responsibility for the ex-servicemen, 'rests on the shoulders of Great Britain, and to Great Britain it should be not only a duty but an obligation'.⁹⁹ The motion for the formation of the committee was proposed by William Redmond, who headed a small group of TDs, the National League, who sought to position themselves as representatives of the ex-servicemen. He also made it clear that the complaints were predominantly directed towards the British Government and that the role of the Irish Government was to ensure that the grievances of its citizens were suitably communicated to it. In the debate in the Dáil Éireann leading to the formation of the committee Redmond explained:

I am not blaming the Free State Government. They did not make promises. But what I am asking the Government to do by the setting-up of this Commission is to investigate and report with regard to the promises made by the British Government and the obligations which, I say, the British Government are under to these men, is that if this Commission reports favourably in regard to the claims made against the British Government, that then it should be their duty as an Irish Government to make immediate official representations to the British Government on behalf of a large body of the citizens of this State.¹⁰⁰

During the debate there was not dissent that the grievances should be examined, only with regards to the process for doing it. Cumann na nGaedhael, the governing party, opposed the

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Independent*, 26 November 1927.

¹⁰⁰ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0021/D.0021.192711160053.html>).

motion, concerned at the reaction of the British authorities to the formation of a committee to investigate grievances against it, and the potential limitations of a committee without the right to call British Government representatives as witnesses, Cosgrave arguing, ‘this is a commission which is to try two governments, and in respect of which no case has been made for their trial’. Likewise Ernest Blythe (Cumann na nGaedhael), Minister for Finance, opposed such a body as it would put the British Government ‘in the dock’ and that they would not appear before a committee on which they have no representation and if the British Government had set up a committee to look at claims against the Irish Government ‘we would be irritated and annoyed by it’. Michael Heffernan (Farmers Party) was concerned that ‘an official commission set up by the Executive Council to sit in judgment on the treatment that the British Government are meting out to the ex-members of its forces, is a rather dangerous direction’.¹⁰¹ Brunyate, the Trust chairman in a meeting in May 1928 with Cecil Lavery who was appointed chairman of the committee, noted the sensitivity of a committee which was ‘the creation of a Dominion Government asking questions of the Trust which was an imperial body created by the British Government, functioning in the Dominion as a result of a Treaty arrangement between the two Governments’. Brunyate was there at his own volition, the committee had no power to summon him.¹⁰² Opposition to Redmond’s motion also came from two TDs who were very active in their support of ex-servicemen; Bryan Cooper (Cumann na nGaedhael) worked closely with the British Legion and P.W. Shaw (Cumann na nGaedhael) was Chairman of a pension advisory committee (see 3.3a). Both argued that there were existing means to deal with the grievances. Cooper proposed an amendment to the motion that associations authorised to speak on behalf of ex-servicemen (e.g. the British Legion) should bring the alleged grievances to the Executive Council. He

¹⁰¹ TNA,PIN15/757; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹⁰² TNA,AP1/121, Lavery/Trust meeting, 12 May 1928.

argued that the Legion provided the optimum forum for addressing grievances as there were no concerns specific only to Irish ex-servicemen:

The laws and the code governing administration are the same in the Great Britain as in the Free State. There is common interest between ex-servicemen in Great Britain and the ex-servicemen here. They both have grievances, and we have been striving by working together with the ex-servicemen in Great Britain, to try and get the grievances complained of remedied.

He said that it was unimportant that many ex-servicemen were not members of the Legion as they still represented non-members, and 75% of their pension work was on behalf of non-members. Cooper stated that in addition to the Legion, 'the (Free State) Government has always been accessible and ready to listen to these grievances and to do their best to remedy them'. Commending Cosgrave he said:

The only satisfactory action that has been taken has been by this Government, and the only sure shield against injustice has been the influence of the Government of the Saorstát. I was with the President time and again on this matter (regarding housing) when I was an Independent member of the Dáil. He was always accessible and was always anxious to help us. I do not believe that any commission, merely reporting to the Saorstát Government on the question, could teach the President anything about housing.

He disputed Redmond's claim that the ex-servicemen did not have equal rights of citizenship stating, 'I heard no instance given of unequal treatment by the Legislature'. Cooper concluded that the proposed committee would not provide an effective means to remedy grievances. Shaw said, 'I am sure we are all agreed that something ought to be and could be done for the purpose of assisting ex-servicemen'. He outlined the Ministry of Pensions structure in the Free State stating, 'my reason for explaining the present machinery is to show that they (the ex-servicemen) are not, by any means, neglected'. Shaw said that in 1924 the Free State had appointed an advisory council with General Sir William Hickie as chairman and Sir Henry McLoughlin as vice chairman together with a large number of persons, well

known supporters of ex-servicemen, 'who met in Dublin regularly and undoubtedly did a great deal for ex-servicemen and had influence with the British Government and brought to the Ministry of Pensions all possible cases'. He said the pension area advisory committees effectively took over this work and there was no need for another committee. He concluded that the machinery exists 'to ventilate any grievances the ex-servicemen have got. We have a large number of responsible men all over the country connected with the Legion', who could report to the Executive Council if they are not satisfied with the treatment they have received from the British Government.¹⁰³ Ironically those supporting Redmond's motion included two TDs who had fought in the British army in the Great War and on their return joined the IRA.

Patrick O'Dowd (Fianna Fáil) said:

The majority of ex-servicemen do not belong to the British Legion or any other ex-servicemen's organisation. There are in Ireland to-day many ex-servicemen in dire distress who, prior to the Treaty in 1921, took service with the IRA, and these men who, like myself, joined the IRA on their return from France, will not seek help through the British Legion to-day.

Frank Carney (Fianna Fáil) another ex-serviceman who joined the IRA also supported Redmond as he disagreed that the Legion and other ex-servicemen's organisations could best deal with grievances as 'there are hundreds and thousands of cases of ex-servicemen who do not belong to any of those organisations. It would be simply impossible for those organisations to deal with the cases of men who do not come on their roll'. He agreed grievances existed, citing that when soldiers enter a mental institution their pension goes to pay costs except for a small deduction for dependents but, if the soldier dies in the institution, his pension dies with him, only on appeal might the dependent receive a pension. He claimed there were hundreds of such cases.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

There seemed considerable unanimity that grievances existed that should be looked into and the ex-servicemen treated fairly; Joseph Murphy (Cumann na nGaedhael) said, ‘We all agree that there are grievances and they should be remedied’, only deputies have a different view as to the method. George Wolfe (Cumann na nGaedhael) commented, ‘The substance of this debate will find favour with all Parties in the House, because there is no Party that does not reckon amongst its supporters men who have served in the Great War. It is a matter that concerns the whole country’. Richard Corish (Labour) said, ‘In the interests of the common citizenship of the country, everybody here should see that strong representations are made to the British Government, so as to make them realise that they cannot make promises to Irish citizens and break them as disgracefully as they have done’. Heffernan, who fought in the Dominion forces in the War, said, ‘I realise that owing to the political change which took place in this country between the time when Irishmen joined the British forces to serve in the Great War and the present time those men have become to a certain extent nobody’s children, and that their grievances are not receiving the attention which they would have received if no change of government had taken place’. Heffernan continued that ex-servicemen in the Dominions were treated well and that Irish ex-servicemen should not be treated any worse because Ireland has changed from being part of the United Kingdom to Dominion status, ‘I am sure that there is general agreement here that the men who offered their services in the Great War are as good and as patriotic as those who did not’.¹⁰⁵

The vote was therefore between Redmond’s motion to establish a committee and Cooper’s amendment, which was supported by Cumann na nGaedhael that associations authorised to speak on behalf of ex-servicemen should bring alleged grievances of British ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State to the Executive Council. The amendment was defeated with 63 voting for it and 66 against. The motion was carried with 66 supporting it and 64

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

opposing.¹⁰⁶ The government was therefore defeated and Redmond succeeded with the support of de Valera and Fianna Fáil. The Lavery Committee presented its report in November 1928 and the report was published the following January. The Irish Government produced a Government Memorandum on the Lavery Report, December 1929, with responses to claims against the Free State.¹⁰⁷

Despite his opposition to the motion, the *Irish Times* acknowledged Cosgrave's support for ex-servicemen; 'He opposed Captain Redmond's motion for an enquiry into ex-service men's grievances,' as he 'held that the British Government would resent such an enquiry',¹⁰⁸ but 'Mr Cosgrave has no grudge against the ex-servicemen and is quite willing to help them'. In contrast the motive of de Valera who voted for the committee was questioned; 'Here Mr de Valera would have a fine opportunity to make trouble between the British and Free State Governments, and we cannot doubt that he would employ it to the full'. He voted for the committee because he 'declared that the British Government would resent such a proposed enquiry'.¹⁰⁹ The *Irish Times* quoted from the *Daily Express* that critics wished to use Cosgrave's defeat:

as a stick to beat Mr Baldwin's Administration, arguing that the defeat was brought about because of the Irish Opposition's desire to see justice done to ex-Service men. This contention means that Mr de Valera and his followers have suddenly become zealous champions of the ex-servicemen. That, of course, is ridiculous. Mr de Valera is out after two things. He wants to hit Mr Cosgrave's Government as hard and as often as he can, and he wants to ingratiate himself with the ex-servicemen. To try and represent him as sincerely concerned about any affair of an ex-serviceman, apart from his voting power, is stretching credibility too far.¹¹⁰

The *Morning Post* commented, 'De Valera and his Irish Republicans found the chance to attack the Government irresistible. But the crisis nevertheless suggests the unsuspected

¹⁰⁶ TNA, PIN15/757; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Committee.

¹⁰⁸ *IT*, 24 November 1927.

¹⁰⁹ *IT*, 18 November 1927.

¹¹⁰ *IT*, 24 November 1927, quoting the *Daily Express*.

political strength of the British cause in Ireland'.¹¹¹ The press were critical of de Valera but the last point was most valid. The support for the ex-servicemen was considerable across all parties; the disagreement was only in the context of how best to examine their grievances. Fianna Fáil representatives highlighted that many ex-servicemen had supported the republican cause and deserved a forum for their grievances other than 'imperialistic' organs such as the British Legion; support for the needs of the ex-servicemen was not perceived as support for Britain. Cosgrave opposed the formation of a committee only because of sensitivity to possible criticism of the British Government; he was otherwise supportive of the ex-servicemen. The fact that there was a debate on their grievances and that there was support from all parties was indicative of both the sympathy towards ex-servicemen and their considerable political influence. It certainly did not portray a marginalised segment of the society.

b) *Government and Employment*

The Lavery Committee investigated the nature and extent of claims against the Irish Government in respect of alleged discrimination against ex-servicemen with regard to employment. These grievances covered several areas: central government departments; government sponsored public works; local authorities; government agencies such as the Post Office and government schemes aimed at influencing private sector employment. An underlying complaint was that there was no favourable treatment of British ex-servicemen and that they were disadvantaged against ex-National army servicemen. After the Civil War the Free State Government was faced with the task of finding employment for large numbers of demobilising men, a not dissimilar position to that of the British Government in the

¹¹¹ *Morning Post*, 10 November 1927.

aftermath of the Great War. Inevitably they used many of the same methods. Some grievances were the consequence of Ireland becoming a separate state.

The issues related to government employment were parity with British salary levels and the position of temporary civil servants. Of the circa 500 letters received by the Committee from individuals, 42 were complaints against the Irish Government regarding the civil service. In 1920 the Lytton Committee recommended that 75% of clerical grades in the British civil service should be reserved for ex-servicemen. Lytton entrants in Britain benefitted from a salary increase in April 1923, creating a differential to those employed by the Free State. The Lavery Report noted that the Free State Lytton entrants had ‘conditions of service not less advantageous than those enjoyed at the date of transfer’, and although they have suffered by the change of government they ‘cannot be given conditions of service better than those given other civil servants, and that the Irish Free State service must be governed by Irish Free State conditions’. The attitude of the Free State Government as expressed in the Irish Government Memorandum on the Report was that Lytton entrants could not be granted better terms than those given ex-members of the National army. A second category of complaint was in relation to temporary civil servants who had transferred from the British Government to the Free State Government and had subsequently lost their jobs. W.A. Haughton, General Secretary of the Association of Ex-Service Civil Servants, stated that his Association ‘has been fighting the cause of ex-servicemen discharged from the Irish Free State Departments for the past three years’.¹¹² Redmond, in the Dáil Éireann debate leading to the formation of the committee, highlighted a grievance that if they failed the exam for permanent status they were not allowed to re take it:

If there had not been a change of Government, they certainly would have been in a much more advantageous position to-day. It appears that there were 658 British ex-servicemen serving as temporary clerks transferred to the Irish Free State; that there

¹¹² Letter from Haughton , *Dublin Evening Mail*, 28 November 1927.

were 212 left in the service, and that out of this number 158 sat for the qualifying examination in June and July, 1925. They have a grievance in as much as while they were not allowed to sit again for re-examination, those who had served in the National Army were.¹¹³

The Lavery Report noted that after the War, the British Government reserved all temporary civil service appointments for ex-servicemen and as Redmond stated 658 such employees were transferred to the Provisional Government. They were afforded no security of tenure or compensation for dismissal and were disadvantaged against ex-National army servicemen and younger better educated entrants from school, particularly in examinations for permanent posts. Marks were given for answers in Irish which likely disadvantaged British ex-servicemen. The Free State's intention to provide civil employment for men demobilised from the National army inevitably led to the dismissal of temporary civil servants, including ex-servicemen in order to make room for them. By 1928 there was a considerable reduction of British ex-servicemen serving as temporary clerks; some may have achieved permanent status, resigned or died but, although the Report did not mention the number discharged, it was likely a significant one. The Report noted that the British Ex-Service Civil Servants' Association stressed that those discharged found employment outside the civil service difficult, as preference was given to ex-members of the National Forces. It was also claimed that many temporary civil servants volunteered for the National army in 1922 but were required to remain in their jobs and were so precluded from the preferential treatment that service in the latter would have afforded. The Report concluded:

The position of ex-temporary Civil Servants, including British ex-servicemen, is undoubtedly a difficult one, and we have a great deal of evidence of the hardships endured by these men consequent upon unemployment. Many of them certainly suffered by the change of policy in the Civil Service consequent on the setting up of the Irish Free State. In the British Civil Service ex-servicemen were first in order of

¹¹³ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen. The number of 658 ex-servicemen serving as temporary clerks was in a letter from IFS Minister of Finance to Redmond, 15 July 1927.

preference for absorption into the permanent service and last for dismissal, whereas, in the Irish Free State Civil Service, another class, ex-members of the National Forces, had certain limited advantages in examinations and had a preference for retention when discharges became necessary. It is hard to find the remedy.

The Irish Government Memorandum on the Report noted before and subsequent to the change of government, a number of simple examinations were held for established posts and as those that remained in temporary posts had failed, or not taken the examination, then 'the capacity of this class may be taken to be below the average'. They had been given several opportunities of becoming established. Regarding the discharge of temporary clerks the Memorandum commented that the steps taken by the Free State were less drastic than those previously take by the British Government, noting that it had been the British practice after the War to dismiss civilian clerks to make room for ex-servicemen:

Some of the British ex-servicemen who now complain of being discharged entered Government employment in such circumstances. In view of the precedent set by the British Government it could not have been held to be unreasonable if all the Temporary Clerks were discharged to make room for ex-members of the Defence Forces, but this course of action was not taken. It should also be remembered, moreover, that ex-members of the Defence Forces who entered the Civil Service comprised a percentage of British ex-Servicemen.¹¹⁴

The British ex-servicemen had opportunities to enter the permanent civil service both before and after the change of government. An examination was held in July 1925, after which 651 (including British ex-servicemen) qualified out of the 1,244 who entered. Ex-National army servicemen were given another opportunity in May 1927 to the exclusion of others, including ex-British army, as a result of which 128 of them entered the civil service. Ernest Blythe (Cumann na nGaedhael) argued that there was no discrimination against British ex-army temporary clerks but no discrimination in their favour, and certain discrimination in favour of

¹¹⁴ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report, IFS Government Memorandum on Lavery Report.

ex-National army candidates.¹¹⁵ Blythe's comments encapsulated the problem for the ex-servicemen in the Free State. He was right that they were not discriminated against insofar as all non-ex-National army servicemen were excluded from a further opportunity to take the examination but in Britain they would most likely have received preferential treatment.

In the debate in the Dáil leading to the formation of the committee, Redmond raised the issue of employment on public works under the grants made for road expenditure, claiming that even British ex-servicemen with large families and in poor circumstances had a lower priority for employment than National army veterans, who did not need to be either married or particularly destitute. British ex-servicemen had the same status as all other civilians.¹¹⁶ After the Irish Civil War, the Free State army was reduced considerably in size and its former soldiers were given priority in connection with works carried out using public funds. The Lavery Committee received evidence that in connection with government grants for road and relief schemes, the policy of giving preference to ex-National army servicemen resulted 'in hardship on British ex-servicemen, a very large proportion of whom are stated to be unemployed and in great distress'. The British Legion suggested that a preference be given to ex-servicemen of both armies. The Lavery Report noted that the British Legion acknowledged that there was no discrimination against British ex-servicemen on the part of the Free State, although it was 'alleged that in the choosing of men locally, there was often discrimination by the foreman of works against British ex-servicemen', but stated that it was impossible to frame regulations against such incidents. The Report concluded that the scale of the problem was not significant; the average number of men employed each month by County Councils on roads and bridges between December 1926 and April 1928 and paid for out of rates and government grants was 17,674 of whom 1,740 or only 9.8% were ex-members of the National Forces, and therefore as 'the average percentage of employment for such men is

¹¹⁵ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

so small there appears no real foundation for the complaint' by British ex-servicemen of discrimination with regard to employment on public works. The Irish Government Memorandum on the Report concurred, also noting that 'in so far as British ex-servicemen are also ex-National Irish sailors and army men, they share in the preference accorded to that class'. There were also some complaints regarding Post Office employment; specifically the adverse effect of British army service in securing a permanent job, the preference given to ex-members of the National Forces, or the loss of employment to make room for ex-members of the National Forces. Similar complaints were made against local authorities. The Report also acknowledged the difficulty of partially disabled men with small pensions. The Free State was a predominantly agricultural country and such men could not work alongside farm labourers and the opportunities of employment as watchmen, caretakers, hall porters were much fewer than in Britain.¹¹⁷

As in the United Kingdom after the War, the Irish Government sought the cooperation of private industry in giving preference to ex-members of the National army. In October 1923 Cosgrave wrote to employers:

The resettlement of all demobilised (National Army) soldiers in civil life is an urgent problem and it is with confidence that I appeal for the most active co-operation on your part. Schemes for the absorption of ex-soldiers in the industrial and commercial life of the Nation are under consideration; but manifestly it is the first duty of employers to reinstate men who left their employment to join the National Forces in the hour of the country's need; and secondly, to set aside a fair proportion of vacancies for those who have rendered such loyal service to the people's cause.

The letter concluded, 'A record will in due course be prepared of the provision for the re-establishment in civil life of demobilised men made by employers, both public and private, and I trust that on that record you will occupy a high and honourable position'. The reaction was monitored; a letter from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce followed that of

¹¹⁷ TNA, PIN15/758, Lavery Report, IFS Government Memorandum on Lavery Report.

Cosgrave, providing a questionnaire to be completed and returned to local employment exchanges with the estimated number of men to be re-instated, and new vacancies to be offered. Pressure was put on companies benefiting from supplying the government by compiling a list of 'the names and addresses of firms holding government contracts together with the amounts of the contracts in order that steps might be taken to place before these firms the desirability of employing demobilised ex-servicemen'. A list of organisations that had received government contracts was furnished to the Executive Council. Letters were sent from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to industrial and commercial employers, the Ministry of Agriculture to agricultural employers and the Ministry of local government to public bodies.¹¹⁸ Plain clothes forces such as the Civil Defence Force were treated similarly to men who had served in the army. Disabled men who had had been discharged as medically unfit were given preference in terms of employment.¹¹⁹ The Free State Government in giving preference to National army veterans was fulfilling an obligation made while trying to recruit large numbers of men to deal with the anti-Treaty threat. In July 1922, the Provisional Government approved for 20,000 men to join the new volunteer army in addition to 15,000 regulars, promising that service would be for six months and 'arrangements will be made with employers whereby men who join the Volunteer Reserve will not lose their civilian occupation as a result'.¹²⁰ The pressure put upon the Free State Government by National army veterans and the challenge of dealing with high levels of unemployment, partly explain the reluctance to give special consideration to British ex-servicemen. The Irish National Army Demobilised Soldiers' Federation wrote in January 1924 to the government that many of its members 'as you are aware are in dire circumstances owing to their inability to obtain

¹¹⁸ NAI,3/S1956 Department of the Taoiseach, Resettlement in civil employment: President Cosgrave to employers, 12 October 1923; Memorandum from Ministry of Finance, 31 October 1923; Executive Council minutes, 11 October 1923.

¹¹⁹ NAI,3/S1956 Department of the Taoiseach, Resettlement in civil employment: Executive Council minutes, 7 July 1923 and 16 July 1923.

¹²⁰ NAI,3/S1302 Department of the Taoiseach, Army Recruitment 1922, Communication from Brigadier Niall MacNeill, Commanding No2 Brigade, 2nd Eastern Division, July 1922.

employment'. In November 1924 a representative of the Association of Ex-Officers and Men, National Army wrote to the President and Ministers of the Executive Council stating:

I am directed by my Committee to put before you the present destitute position of our thousands of members. Perhaps you are not aware of the heart rending suffering they now have to endure; some of those men are demobilised since October, 1923 and have got neither a day's work nor the Dole with the result that little by little they have to sell out their home. You are aware that the Government has done little to help ex-National Army Men. After all considering what the British Government done for their ex-Servicemen we are not asking for much.

The Irish Government replied summarising the support given to the 43,000 ex-National army servicemen in terms of employment and benefits, concluding that the Government had received a complaint from the 'Council of the Unemployed' that 'the Government is doing nothing for civilians and everything for ex-Army Men'.¹²¹ As Minister for local government and Public Health, Mulcahy resisted demands from job-hungry Free State army veterans that British army veterans in public employment be dismissed.¹²² The Free State Government was aware that anything it did to help British ex-servicemen or help the British Government fulfil its obligation to them would result in comparable demands from National army veterans. The Free State's Minister of Labour, Gordon Campbell, would not accept any responsibility for the training of British disabled servicemen even when paid for by the British Government.¹²³

Complaints related to discrimination in favour of ex-National army servicemen during the period of mass demobilisation inevitably diminished over time and Fianna Fáil upon its assumption of power ended any preference.¹²⁴ Other issues occasionally arose. In the Dáil Éireann in March 1937, Peadar Doyle (Cumann na nGaedhael) said that married British ex-servicemen with families, receiving small pensions, were not eligible for employment on

¹²¹ NAI,3/S3555 Department of the Taoiseach, Irish National Army Demobilised Soldiers' Federation to Major General Price, Resettlement Section, 16 January 1924; Association of Ex-Officers and Men, National Army to President and Ministers of Executive Council, 25 November 1924; Irish Government reply to Association of Ex-Officers and Men, National Army, 24 December 1924.

¹²² Tom Garvin, 1922: *The Birth of Irish democracy*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan 1996), 168–9, cited in Ronan Fanning, 'Richard Mulcahy', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/>).

¹²³ TNA,LAB2/528, MoL report, 6 July 1923, sent to the Treasury 27 July 1923.

¹²⁴ Maguire, *The Civil Service and the Revolution in Ireland*, 207.

relief schemes and as a result were suffering severe hardships. Preference in such employment was given to recipients of the highest rates of unemployment assistance and, as pensions or other income were taken into account in the calculation of the latter, ex-servicemen with pensions were likely to receive lower rates of unemployment assistance, and as a consequence less likely to be eligible for employment on relief schemes. While Seán Lemass' (Fianna Fáil) statement that 'British ex-servicemen in receipt of pensions were in precisely the same position as any other class in the community', was technically correct it was probable that ex-servicemen would more likely have disability pensions and therefore be more than proportionally affected.¹²⁵ A British Ministry report in 1936 noted that, 'ex-servicemen in receipt of pensions were barred from work provided by County Councils and other Government Bodies, although the pension may only amount to 8/ per week'.¹²⁶ The case has similarities to the situation in which an ex-servicemen in receipt of a need pension from the British Government could be disadvantaged with regards to his Irish State old age pension.

Some of the complaints of the ex-servicemen were the consequence of the transfer of power and were unrealistic in terms of expecting the Irish Government to retain parity for its civil servants in relation to their British equivalents, particularly as the cost of living was lower in Ireland. Although there was not official discrimination against ex-servicemen there was not the positive discrimination in their favour as with Great War veterans in the United Kingdom. That was reserved for ex-National army servicemen, inevitably so as they were deemed to have played a critical role in the foundation of the State, and perhaps more pragmatically, and similar to the British Government after the Armistice, employment had to be found for large numbers of these demobilising soldiers. Many British ex-servicemen were

¹²⁵ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 65, 11 March 1937, British Ex-servicemen and Relief Schemes, (<http://www.oireachtas.debat.es.gov.ie/D/0065/D.0065.193703110016.html>), Doyle question was asked on behalf of James Reidy (Cumann na nGaedhail).

¹²⁶ TNA, PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

also National army veterans and therefore enjoyed preferential treatment; those that were not were in the same position as all other classes of society.

c) *Ex-Servicemen in Politics*

The Houses of the Oireachtas (National Parliament) consisted of the President and two Houses: Dáil Éireann (the House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate). Ex-soldiers were represented across the political spectrum. Cooper in the debate in November 1927 leading to the formation of the Lavery Committee said, 'I think there is only one Party in the Dáil that has not amongst its members some person who served in the British Army during the period of the Great War. That Party, I think, is the Labour Party'.¹²⁷ Fianna Fáil members included Frank Carney, who on demobilisation from the British army, commanded an IRA Brigade during the War of Independence. Supporting the Treaty, he served as chief supplies officer in the Free State army. Standing at the request of de Valera he represented Donegal from 1927 until his death in 1932. While forthright in republican conviction, he worked energetically in the interests of former British servicemen. In the same debate he said, 'In rising to support the motion of Deputy Redmond I may mention that I do not speak on this question of ex-soldiers as one who is entirely ignorant of the subject, because I happen to be an ex-soldier myself. As a matter of fact, the only brother I had in the world is buried three miles north of Cape Helles'. He also raised the issue of ex-Connaught Rangers who mutinied in India and who he claimed had been 'disgracefully, treated by the Free State Government'.¹²⁸ Patrick O'Dowd joined the IRA on his return from France and as a member of Fianna Fáil represented Roscommon from 1927-32 and 1933-1937, losing elections in 1932 and 1937. He supported Redmond in the debate as he said many ex-servicemen took

¹²⁷ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹²⁸ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen; Lawrence William White, 'Frank Carney', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database (<http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp>).

service with the IRA and would not wish to make their complaints through the British Legion.¹²⁹ Bryan Cooper, a landowner, served in the British army until 1905. In the January 1910 election he became Unionist MP for Dublin County South, but was defeated in December 1910. His wartime experiences weakened his unionism, and as political unrest intensified he publicly advocated a settlement with Sinn Féin. In December 1922 the Irish Farmers' Union unsuccessfully recommended him for a nomination to the Senate. In August 1923 he was elected independent TD for Dublin County, unofficially leading a group of independent pro-business and ex-unionist TDs until 1927. A very active parliamentarian he served on numerous committees and was supportive of the tenants in their conflict with the Trust. In August 1927, the Labour Party intended to offer Cooper a ministerial post in a Labour-National League cabinet. Cooper declared his support for the Cumann na nGaedheal Government and helped it to survive a vote of no confidence and switched his allegiance to them in the September 1927 general election until his death in 1930. Fianna Fáil regularly cited him as exemplifying Cumann na nGaedheal's alleged subservience to British vested interests.¹³⁰ In the debate on the Lavery Committee's Report in the House of Lords in June 1930, Lord Danesfort referred to William Redmond as 'the recognised leader of the ex-servicemen in Southern Ireland'.¹³¹ Redmond, the son of John Redmond, the leader of the Irish parliamentary party, was elected to the House of Commons in 1910. After service in the War he returned to parliament in the 1918 election. He entered Irish Free State politics in 1923 when he was elected as an independent TD for Waterford in the general election and represented them until his death in 1932. A prominent member of the British Legion, Redmond promoted the welfare of British ex-servicemen in Ireland as one of his principal political policies. In 1926 he helped form the National League party as a pro-Treaty

¹²⁹ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹³⁰ Patrick Maume, 'Bryan Ricco Cooper', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹³¹ PIN15/758, Debate on Lavery Report, House of Lords, 25 June 1930.

opposition to Cumann na nGaedheal. In the June 1927 election on a platform of increased welfare spending for the elderly and support for British ex-servicemen, the party won eight seats with Redmond as their leader. An abortive attempt to form a Labour-National League coalition to replace Cumann na nGaedheal led to a loss of credibility and at the subsequent September 1927 election, the National League was reduced to two seats. The League was dissolved in January 1931 and Redmond successfully represented Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1932 general election. Upon his death shortly afterwards he was succeeded as TD for Waterford by his wife, Bridget, who represented the seat until her death in 1952.¹³² Sydney Minch, soldier, politician and businessman, was elected Cumann na nGaedheal TD for Kildare at the 1932 and 1933 general elections, and re-elected as a Fine Gael member for Carlow–Kildare in 1937 but was defeated in 1938.¹³³ Major James Sproule Myles was an independent TD for Donegal from 1923-1943.¹³⁴ Robert Barton was born into a wealthy Irish Protestant land-owning family. Educated in England at Rugby and Oxford, he became an officer in the Dublin Fusiliers and was stationed in Dublin during the Rising but resigned his commission in protest at the heavy-handed British Government suppression of the revolt and joined the republican movement. At the 1918 general election he was elected as the Sinn Féin member for West Wicklow. He won election to the Dáil Éireann in June 1922, but did not take his seat, taking the anti-Treaty side and was defeated at the 1923 General Election.¹³⁵ Several members were ex-soldiers from before the Great War. In the debate leading to the formation of the Lavery Committee, George Wolfe (Cumann na nGaedheal) said, ‘although I served 11 years in the British Army, it is 38 years since I left it. My interest in the men's welfare still remains, and I am desirous that everything to which they are entitled by their service, and that was promised them by the British Government, should be obtained for

¹³² Marie Coleman ‘William Archer Redmond’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹³³ Marie Coleman, ‘Sydney Basil Minch’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

¹³⁴ Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹³⁵ Pauric J. Dempsey and Shaun Boylan, ‘Robert Childers Barton’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

them'.¹³⁶ Ironically the politicians most associated with the support of ex-servicemen were in conflict in the debate leading to the formation of the Lavery Committee. Cooper and Redmond proposed opposing motions and Shaw commented, 'although Deputy Redmond takes considerable interest in the ex-servicemen, and although it was mentioned at the last election that nobody should vote for persons except the National League candidates who support ex-servicemen, I say we get no help whatever down the country from persons who may be supporters of Deputy Redmond'.¹³⁷ Cooper while an advocate of ex-servicemen, disagreed that political loyalty should be based on such narrow factional interest as service in the British army and opposed Redmond's attempt to position the National League as the ex-serviceman's party. He stated in the debate:

I was peculiarly glad to hear Deputy Redmond say that this (ex-servicemen's grievances) is not a political question. It confirms a belief that I had, that he had no knowledge of a leaflet that was issued in the County Dublin during the June election. I shall quote a few words from it: "If you served in the Great War, or if you lost anyone dear to you in the Great War, then vote for....," and there followed the names of the three National League candidates. I think reopening wounds and reopening sorrows for political purposes is a thing that Deputy Redmond would never have allowed.¹³⁸

Ex-servicemen were also prominent in the Seanad to which they could be elected or appointed by the President of the Executive Council. General Sir Bryan Mahon, a Protestant and unionist, commanded the 10th (Irish) Division and served as commander-in-chief in Ireland from 1916 to 1918, displaying a sympathetic attitude to nationalist grievances. He was appointed by the President in 1922 and 1925 and elected in 1928 and was an advocate of better treatment of ex-servicemen. He was the southern trustee nominated by the President for Trust.¹³⁹ Sir William Hickie, a Catholic and a Home Ruler, was a British army general and commander of the 16th (Irish) division until 1918. During the Irish war of Independence

¹³⁶ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ David Murphy, 'Sir Bryan Mahon', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

(1919–21) he was critical of the indiscipline of the Black and Tans. He became chairman of the BLSI in Ireland, tirelessly campaigning on behalf of ex-servicemen. Hickie served as an elected senator from 1925 to his retirement from public life in 1936.¹⁴⁰ Commenting on Hickie's election in 1925 Lefroy wrote, 'The ex-servicemen in Ireland during the Senate Elections have shewn in a very remarkable manner their power in electing General Hickie with an overwhelming majority at the head of the poll for 26 Counties and also General Sir E Bellingham to a very high place, No Government either British or Irish can ignore these very striking facts'.¹⁴¹ Browne, however, believed that Hickie's support for the Trust's tenants was for political motives 'to court popularity' and secure the ex-serviceman's vote.¹⁴² Brigadier-General Sir Edward Bellingham was a career soldier who was an elected member of the Seanad from 1925 to 1936.¹⁴³ Geoffrey Taylour, Marquess of Headfort, was a nominated member of the Seanad between 1922 and 1928.¹⁴⁴ Sir John Keane was a landowner and before the War, High Sheriff of County Waterford, and was nominated to the Senate from 1922-34. His unwillingness to act in concert with the ex-unionist group in the Senate led to his failure to win re-election in 1934. When de Valera reconstituted the Senate in 1938, he nominated Keane as a representative of the Protestant minority and of business interests. Keane retired in 1948. He was also a member of the Council of State and was noted as an outspoken Anglo-Irish critic of the increasingly restrictive Gaelic-Catholic ethos which dominated the first decades of the new Irish state.¹⁴⁵ David Lubbock Robinson returned to Ireland from the War, joined the IRA and opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He was elected in 1931 to the Seanad, of which he served as vice-chairman from March 1936 until its abolition in May that year. He sat in the new Seanad from 1938 to 1943 on the Taoiseach's nomination.

¹⁴⁰ David Murphy, 'Sir William Hickie', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹⁴¹ TNA, AP3/7, Lefroy to Duckworth, 22 October 1925, Lefroy claimed his efforts were partly responsible for this success.

¹⁴² TNA, AP 3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 15 March 1926.

¹⁴³ Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Maume, 'Sir John Keane', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

As a Senator he often represented the government at Protestant functions.¹⁴⁶ Bernard Forbes, Earl of Granard, was a nominated member between 1922 and 1934.¹⁴⁷ Henry FitzMaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, was a nominated member from 1922 to 1929 when he resigned.¹⁴⁸ As with the Dáil Éireann some members were ex-soldiers but from before the Great War. Colonel Maurice Moore served in the British army from 1874 to 1906. By 1917 he was a supporter of Sinn Féin. He was a member of the Senate from its establishment in 1922 until his death in 1939.¹⁴⁹ Although not in large numbers, ex-servicemen were represented across the party spectrum in the Irish Parliament; some had served in the IRA or National army, and perhaps as such had ‘redeemed’ themselves. Others though had not served in either. War service was not a barrier to participation but nor did it define the politician; efforts to form a political party based, at least partly, on partisan ex-serviceman support ultimately failed.

4.3 State: Courts and Judiciary

The Free State Government enacted legislation in relation to compensation for injuries to property or person for which it was responsible. In 1923 it passed the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act dealing with the period 11 July 1921 to 12 May 1923. The compensation was limited and excluded most personal effects or consequential loss. In the same year they also established the Personal Injuries (Compensation) Committee to deal with claims of non-combatants injured during the conflicts between the British Forces and the Irish National Forces and later the Free State and anti-Treaty armies, for incidents between 21 January 1919 and 12 May 1923. This new legislation restricted compensation that may have been obtained under the Criminal Injuries Acts of 1919 and 1920.¹⁵⁰ Some of the ex-servicemen who applied to the IGC had first applied to the Irish Courts based on the above

¹⁴⁶ Adam Pole, ‘David Lubbock Robinson’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

¹⁴⁷ Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Marie Coleman, ‘Maurice George Moore’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

¹⁵⁰ TNA,CO762./212, Final Report.

legislation but had considered the compensations inadequate. Cornelius Donovan in respect of his son James Donovan (an ex-serviceman who was shot by the IRA, see 2.2a), received an award of £25 from the Personal Injuries Committee, his solicitor stating that they made ‘hopelessly inadequate awards’. He later received £300 from the IGC.¹⁵¹ Benjamin Rose, an ex-serviceman, made a claim for the destruction of his mansion house in County Limerick in a conflict between Irish National Troops and Irregulars in July 1922 (and was therefore outside the scope of the IGC) through the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act 1923. He claimed £13,726 which was reduced to £3,250 as he did not want to rebuild or live in the country due to terrorism, but even this amount was not paid. His London solicitor stated that in common with other Irish loyalists he did not consider it useful to appeal and relied on the British Government to see that justice was done.¹⁵² Criticism of the Free State’s compensation legislation, especially the Damage to Property (Compensation) Act, was particularly strident from the supporters of Irish loyalists in Britain.¹⁵³ The courts were restricted by the enabling legislation and the fiscal constraints of the Irish Government. A Free State judge acknowledging that redress was utterly inadequate commented, ‘I have to confine myself within the law, and must administer the law and give compensation accordingly’.¹⁵⁴ The legal processes related to compensation were open to other segments of society and were not therefore necessarily indicative of the attitude of the courts to ex-servicemen. In contrast the numerous legal actions of the Trust and its tenants in both the Supreme and County Courts provide an indication as to whether the judiciary reacted differently in cases specific to ex-servicemen. The Trust used the County Courts mainly to effect evictions in two periods; firstly up to 1933, particularly during the rent strike, entirely for non-payment of rent and secondly as it reasserted its authority from 1937 for a range of

¹⁵¹ TNA,CO762/46/14; Donovan’s solicitor to Trust,16 May 1927.

¹⁵² TNA,CO762/41/2; Rose’s solicitor to IGC, 11 Jan 1927.

¹⁵³ Brennan, ‘A Political Minefield’, 410.

¹⁵⁴ HL Deb 02 July 1925 Vol. 61 cc 986.

irregular behaviour, including improper use of the premises for industrial purposes, unauthorised transfers, subletting and prolonged absence. There was some sensitivity in a British imperial body seeking evictions of Irish citizens. During the rent strike, Cooper warned against court proceedings that would result in the Irish Free State being ‘asked to lend its forces to eject an Irishman at the behest of the British Treasury’, as such a move would bring down Cosgrave’s Government. The BLSI and Cooper said that the situation had been made worse by the Trust using the Public Safety Act, a political measure previously used to expel republicans who had seized property, to remove tenants.¹⁵⁵ Duckworth argued that the Trust followed due process before evictions and therefore the judges upheld their position,¹⁵⁶ that they took ‘meticulous care’ regarding ejections and had received the commendation of Irish judges for the manner in which enquiries were conducted before ejections were sanctioned¹⁵⁷ and that the Irish Courts recognised the Trust had been fair and just in taking into account circumstances in seeking evictions.¹⁵⁸ The Trust was successful in securing 98 evictions for rent arrears, often in cases in which two British institutions, the Trust and the Legion, took opposing sides. In one particular initiative in the course of the rent strike, the Trust took action against 15 tenants for arrears of from £7 to £45. The BLSI argued that, ‘the men did not want to evade payment of rents, but they were of opinion that the rents were exorbitant, and that they should be adjusted to a figure which would cover all essential costs’. The judge concluded that the Trust were ‘anxious to administer the Act properly’ and gave orders for the ejections.¹⁵⁹ The courts were prepared to order evictions for comparatively small amounts or in what might appear accentuating circumstances with the tenant unemployed, disabled or with a young family. The willingness of the courts to evict the ex-servicemen for rent arrears is understandable in the context that local authorities owned an

¹⁵⁵ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

¹⁵⁶ TNA,AP1/84, Duckworth, note, 29 October 1925).

¹⁵⁷ TNA,AP1/98, Duckworth to BL, 1 March 1926.

¹⁵⁸ TNA,AP3/32, Duckworth to Mahon, 13 May 1926.

¹⁵⁹ TNA,AP1/69, *IT*, 31 March 1925.

increasing stock of social housing and it was important for them that there was a robust system of legal redress against undesirable or non-paying tenants. The legal process ensured the tenant had time to comply; a notice to quit was given to the tenant after which, if they refused to leave, an eviction decree for possession was issued, and if necessary enforced by the local sheriff and police.¹⁶⁰ The process could take considerable time even if the Trust's case appeared justified; Joseph O'Flaherty was provided with a cottage in June 1924, never occupied it but put relatives in it. After a long court case the Trust in November 1930 obtained an order for possession.¹⁶¹

Although the Trust was successful with many evictions after 1937, they did experience difficulties with some judges. Following a case in 1937 in Wexford, Browne wrote, 'the judge was not in any way sympathetic to the Trust, and showed great reluctance in giving a decree in their favour', the Trust's solicitors noting, 'the Judge raised every conceivable point together with many points which were inconceivable'. The Treasury solicitor wrote to the Trust, 'I am afraid that the Trust may encounter rather a lot of unsympathetic treatment from the Courts'.¹⁶² The Trust had a particular problem with a judge in Cork; Grubb (Deputy Director, Dublin office) had been advised to attend a court hearing by the Trust's solicitors because of 'the Circuit Judge's attitude towards the Trust'. The judge had previously given a ruling against the Trust which was reversed on appeal.¹⁶³ In the Circuit Court at Naas, R. Doyle of County Kildare appealed against a decree for possession. Doyle, a Boer War and Great War veteran was living in England and his son and son's wife in the cottage. The judge said, 'On strict legal grounds I grant the decree for possession. Doyle would appear to have been a brave soldier. The Trust was in existence to aid men who served as Doyle had served. I cannot assume that the Trust is blind to its responsibilities. I

¹⁶⁰ TNA,AP1/138.

¹⁶¹ TNA,AP3/16, Grubb to Alexander, 18 November 1930.

¹⁶² TNA,AP1/167, Browne to Phillips, 6 December 1937; Trust's solicitors to Trust, 1 December 1937; Treasury solicitor to Phillips, 11 December 1937.

¹⁶³ TNA,AP1/167, Grubb to Phillips, 13 May 1938.

hope the Trust will act with compassion'.¹⁶⁴ In most cases the police and sheriff enforced when needed the decisions of the court, although on one occasion in 1939 the Sheriff in Limerick refused to remove the chattels of a tenant against whom a decree for eviction had been obtained. Browne wrote, 'clearly we cannot admit his contention, which revolutionises long established practice and would create difficulties all over the country'. Browne argued that as with the courts so with those who enforce their decisions, there had to be a uniform and consistent approach or all landlords would be detrimentally affected. The Trust decided to take proceedings to compel the Sheriff to obtain possession of the cottage. The Sheriff backed down when he realized that the Trust was in earnest and he carried out the decree without further trouble.¹⁶⁵ There was a general problem with the efficiency of the courts; Browne wrote that 'owing to the extraordinary manner in which the Law Courts in this country are serviced, the case cannot be heard until next April at the earliest. This is only a specimen of what is occurring every day. The delays in hearing cases are not peculiar to us, but every litigant in the country is hampered in the same way by the ineptitude of the Ministry of Justice'.¹⁶⁶ In summary there were cases in the 1930s of particular judges who were antagonistic to the Trust, perhaps as an imperial body, but with regards to the ex-servicemen before the law they appeared to be treated in a similar way to other tenants, evictions being granted when due process was correctly adhered to.

That the tenants' associations were so aggressively litigious and ambitious in their aims indicated that they did not anticipate unfair discrimination in the courts. The Killester Tenants' Association launched an action (the Leggett case) against the Trust to prove it had no right to charge rent. Failing in the High Court the decision was reversed by the Supreme Court in 1933, resulting in a judgement that according to the Trust chairman was 'so perverse and wrong that it passes the wit of the legal people to find any rational basis consistent with it

¹⁶⁴ TNA,AP1/167; *IT*, 29 July 1938.

¹⁶⁵ TNA,AP1/168, Browne to Phillips, 21 March 1939; Browne to Phillips, 26 September 1939.

¹⁶⁶ TNA,AP1/168, Browne to Phillips, 15 December 1942.

on which to found decisions on the connected problems'.¹⁶⁷ The tenants then initiated a second action (the Callan case) for the return of rent paid but failed in both the High and the Supreme Courts, resulting in a weakening of their legal position. These actions were highly controversial as no landlord could contemplate that rent would not be paid. In these cases the legal premise was based on legislation specific to ex-servicemen. The court rulings were mixed, indicating decisions were derived from legal argument rather than any intrinsic bias towards ex-servicemen. The judges' remarks in the summoning up of these cases indicate a fair measure of sympathy towards the ex-servicemen. In the Leggett case the judge said that 'amongst those who suffered most from that dislocation of society for which the Great War was and is responsible were those men who served in His Majesty's Forces and who were thrown back in large numbers into civilian life with meagre resources and a very doubtful future'. He concluded that they 'required help which ought not be regarded as charity but more in nature of a right'.¹⁶⁸ The judge in the Callan case said that, 'a good understanding should be arrived at between the Trust and the ex-servicemen so that as many ex-servicemen as possible should enjoy in peace and quiet in their declining years the cottages which the Trust has been able to provide'.¹⁶⁹ A Dublin based official of the Ministry of Pensions wrote in 1936, 'I have often heard District Justices and judges in Law Courts give the greatest credit to ex-soldiers and make reference to the gallant part they played in the War'.¹⁷⁰ The courts also found in favour of the ex-servicemen in cases that were detrimental to the interests of the Irish Government. The Supreme Court in *Cork County Council versus Tuohy* in July 1939 found that tenants covered by the Rates on Small Dwellings Act, 1928 were not liable for

¹⁶⁷ TNA,AP1/168, Brunyate to Brown, 11 April 1939.

¹⁶⁸ TNA,AP1/143, Leggett Case, 10 March 1932.

¹⁶⁹ TNA,AP4/11, Trust Meeting, 15 April 1937.

¹⁷⁰ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP, Report, 1936.

rates. The Irish Government could not rely on the courts and passed legislation in 1941 imposing the liability for rates on the tenants.¹⁷¹

The cases involving the Trust were those in which the ex-servicemen's status was apparent before the courts. The legal system, on the evidence of these cases, seemed not discriminatory towards ex-servicemen either positively or negatively. The ex-servicemen when they initiated proceedings were confident to pursue their claims even though they were sometimes controversial. The decisions of the courts varied, in their favour and against, indicating that there was no preconceived bias to a particular class.

4.4 State: Armed Forces

Under threat from anti-Treaty republicans the new Irish Free State responded by rapidly establishing a National army which eventually numbered almost 60,000 (O'Halpin estimates 50,000; Hopkinson, 52,000; and Lee, 58,300) men, twice the size of the British army of 1914 in Ireland.¹⁷² Initially the National army had loosely followed the order of battle of the IRA in the War of Independence, but in October 1922 instructions to regularise enlistment, pay, organisation and reporting were issued.¹⁷³ Its organisation was heavily influenced by that of the British army.¹⁷⁴ Even IRA members who supported the Treaty were, with their experience of revolutionary guerrilla warfare, less suited to the emerging National army than British ex-servicemen. Lee writes that to enable its rapid build-up, Richard Mulcahy, Minister of Defence and Army Commander, 'had naturally turned to the main reservoir of military experience in the country, British ex-soldiers and officers. These men were often more amenable to the discipline of normal army life than many who had flourished in the less disciplined ranks of the IRA'. Republicans demanded that British

¹⁷¹ TNA, AP1/150, Note, 15 January 1940; TNA, AP1/162, Cork tenants, Tuohy case.

¹⁷² O'Halpin, 'The Army in Independent Ireland', 408; Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, 265; Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 96; Henry Harris, *The Irish Regiments in the First World War*, (Cork, 1968), 202.

¹⁷³ Donal MacCarron and William Youngusband, *The Irish Defence Forces Since 1922*, (Osprey Publishing, 2004), 4.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Cottrell, *The Irish Civil War 1922-23*, (Oxford, 2008), 23.

influence in the army be curbed but Mulcahy in need of an efficient army could not accept ‘that because a man was an ex-British officer he should not be in the army’.¹⁷⁵ In addition to those demobilised after Armistice, the disbandment of the five southern Irish Regiments in June 1922, provided more manpower. These regular soldiers either transferred to British regiments or returned to Ireland. Many republicans remained with the anti-Treaty forces. Michael Davern, an IRA commanding officer (and from 1948 local TD) from south Tipperary, said the Treaty was a ‘bombshell’ and almost the entire Tipperary brigade ‘remained loyal to the oath of allegiance which they had given the republic, but a few who accepted the Treaty became active in organising the Free State Army and, to our grave concern they began to recruit ex-British soldiers and many others who were hostile to us during the War of Independence, into their ranks’.¹⁷⁶ In November 1922, Liam Lynch, the commanding officer of the anti-Treaty Forces, ordered the assassination of British army veterans who had joined the Free State army.¹⁷⁷ It appears to have not affected their recruitment. According to Leonard it was officially estimated that approximately half of the 55,000 who enrolled in the National army were ex-servicemen.¹⁷⁸ Cottrell writes 50% of its soldiers and 20% of its officers had served in the British army.¹⁷⁹ Cooper in the Dáil Éireann said, ‘It is, I believe, a fact that 50 per cent of the members of the National Army were men who served in the British Army’.¹⁸⁰ General Liam Tobin, an IRA intelligence officer who fought with the pro-Treaty forces, said the National army was, ‘*largely officered by and recruited from ex-British soldiers, some of whom had fought against us* in the War for Independence’.¹⁸¹ Its Officer Corps between 1922 and 1924 included more than 600 veterans

¹⁷⁵ Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1985*, 99-100.

¹⁷⁶ IMA/BMH, WS1348.

¹⁷⁷ Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers in the British Army’, 54.

¹⁷⁸ Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 219.

¹⁷⁹ Cottrell, *The Irish Civil War*, 23.

¹⁸⁰ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

¹⁸¹ Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers in the British Army’, 53-4. quoting from Major General Liam Tobin, *The Truth about the Army Crisis* (Dublin, 1924), 4, 11 (italics in original).

of the Great War.¹⁸² The IRAO, an organisation formed to represent members of old IRA was concerned at a perceived preference for British ex-servicemen and claimed that 50% of National army officers had served with the British Forces.¹⁸³ According to Karsten many of the National army's original officer corps were former British army NCOs, and that they borrowed some distinctively British customs, to the annoyance of those among them whose military service had been spent fighting the British in the IRA.¹⁸⁴ British ex-officers were appointed to important posts causing friction with IRA veterans who considered that they were 'overtaken in the military hierarchy by former foes'.¹⁸⁵ Some were decorated war veterans including Dr B.J. Hackett who served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was appointed by Lord French as Resident Medical Officer, Mountjoy Prison, Dublin and later served as a Colonel Commandant in the Free State army.¹⁸⁶ Others had served with the republican forces. William Murphy, a Lieutenant Colonel in the British army, returned in 1919 and worked initially as a school inspector before joining the IRA. On the outbreak of Civil War he was asked by Michael Collins to join the Free State army and served as commanding officer in County Kerry.¹⁸⁷ Emmet Dalton was a major in the British army who after demobilisation joined the IRA and then served as a Major General in the National army.¹⁸⁸ George Adamson returned from service in the War to Westmeath and led an IRA flying column before the Treaty. A Brigadier in the National army he was killed near Athlone Barracks in April 1922. The overlap between the two wars was evident at his funeral when hundreds of local ex-servicemen turned out to pay their respects.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸² Leonard, 'Survivors', 219, based on Leonard's analysis of National Army personnel files in the Department of Defence Archives, Dublin, *Iris Oifigiúil*, 14 October 1924.

¹⁸³ John Regan, *The Irish Counter Revolution, 1921-1936*, (Dublin:1999), 165-7.

¹⁸⁴ Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army', 53.

¹⁸⁵ Eunan O'Halpin, 'The Army in Independent Ireland', 408.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, PIN15/663, note, 20 October 1922; Colonel Commandant Hackett of the IFS army to the Minister of Pensions, October, 1922.

¹⁸⁷ Karl Murphy, 'An Irish General', *History Ireland*, 13/6 (2005), 10-11; Niall C Harrington, *Kerry Landing*, (Dublin:1992), 37, (according to Harrington he was in the IRA but this was not in the *History Ireland* article).

¹⁸⁸ Pauric J. Dempsey and Shaun Boylan, 'Emmet Dalton', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

¹⁸⁹ Leonard, 'Survivors', 219.

After the Civil War the intention was to reduce the National army to 28,000 by December 1923. Some 762 officers had left by this date with 1,000 still to be demobilised. There was considerable criticism with regards to this process, leading to a mutiny by the IRAO. An Army Enquiry was established to examine the accusation that British ex-servicemen received favourable treatment in comparison to pre-Truce volunteers; specifically that they were more likely to be retained in the army and promoted. In 1923 the IRAO even issued death threats to British ex-army officers serving in the National army. Gearóid O'Sullivan, the Adjutant-General, was accused of bias in favour of British veterans although he had impeccable republican credentials; he was a cousin of Michael Collins and took part in the Rising.¹⁹⁰ Valiulis disputes that British ex-servicemen received preference and that those who were retained had particular skills that a 'professional' army needed.¹⁹¹

British veterans helped create a disciplined and professional National army and were one of the primary reasons for the defeat of the anti-Treaty forces. They fought on behalf of the Free State against anti-Treaty forces, their service in the Civil War providing an opportunity to demonstrate their credentials as supporters of the new state and gain absolution for service in the British army.

4.5 State and Community: Commemoration and Remembrance

The conflicts in the years after the War inevitably restricted commemoration, the *Irish Times* commenting, those years 'had not been favourable to all but the most unobtrusive celebrations'.¹⁹² By 1922 poppy sellers in Dublin were 'literally besieged....stocks were cleared and replenished time and again, and soon everybody seemed to be wearing poppies'.¹⁹³ In the remembrance ceremony in Dublin in 1924, the first full year of peace,

¹⁹⁰ Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, 265; Regan, *The Irish Counter Revolution*, 170.

¹⁹¹ Maryann Valiulis, 'The 'Army Mutiny' of 1924', *Irish Historical Studies*, 23/92 (1983), 358-9.

¹⁹² *IT*, 15 November 1924.

¹⁹³ *IT*, 13 November 1922.

enthusiastic crowds of 50,000, wearing poppies and flying Union Jacks, cheered as 25,000 veterans, most wearing medals, marched through the city. A two minutes silence was followed by the Last Post. The event was marked by enthusiasm and the Union Jack was raised.¹⁹⁴ Watching republicans despaired; private correspondence written at the time, and in contrast to later revisionism, indicated the scale of support for Britain and the ex-servicemen. Kathleen Barry knew Collins and de Valera and was from a staunch republican family. Her sister Elgin wrote her:

But the worst shock of all was Remembrance Day. The Armistice celebrations were absolutely huge. Talk about the country being Free State or Republican or Mutineer or anything. Its British right through. There was never anything like the crowd that attended the ceremony. And red poppies, I dream about them now. If you didn't know how to count past ten, you could count the people who weren't wearing them during the weekend. Really I think we are rather wonderful to have the cheek to think that we could ever have made a republic out of this country.¹⁹⁵

Remembrance ceremonies continued to be well supported in the twenties by both ex-servicemen and the public. In 1925 services were attended by large crowds in towns across Ireland.¹⁹⁶ Leonard writes, 'in 1927, 18,000 veterans were said to have paraded in the Phoenix Park before a crowd of 80,000. While such statistics need to be treated with caution, the visual evidence, police reports and records of poppy sales all suggest that Armistice Day in Dublin of the 1920s was even more widely observed than in Belfast'.¹⁹⁷ In 1925, 250,000 poppies were sold in Dublin,¹⁹⁸ considerably more than the 100,000 in Belfast.¹⁹⁹ Although the money raised was to alleviate poverty amongst veterans, the wearing of a poppy was

¹⁹⁴ *The Times*, 19 November 1924; *IT*, 15 November 1924.

¹⁹⁵ University College Dublin Archives, Papers of Kathleen Barry Moloney, (September 1924/January 1926), 94/56, Letter to Kathleen from her sister Elgin, 13 November 1924. Republican family associated with Collins and de Valera. Kathleen at the request of de Valera accompanied Countess Markievicz as member of republican delegation to USA in 1922. Jim Maloney was an IRA commander. Both opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Her brother Kevin Barry was executed by the British for his part in killing three British soldiers in 1920. Her grandson is Eunan O'Halpin who deposited the papers in 1990).

¹⁹⁶ *IT*, 12 November 1925.

¹⁹⁷ Leonard, 'Survivors', 221.

¹⁹⁸ *IT*, 11 November 1925.

¹⁹⁹ *IT*, 12 November 1925.

symbolic of British imperialism and ‘poppy snatchers’ were common during remembrance.²⁰⁰ In 1930 in Dublin, 5,000 ex-servicemen marched to Phoenix Park, Union Jacks were flown, the crowd cheered and God Save the King was sung.²⁰¹ The *Irish Times* wrote that ‘in every town of note ex-servicemen paraded and marched to the churches where the special services were attended by large congregations’.²⁰² This included traditional republican areas; the *Cork Examiner* describing Armistice Day in the city in 1930 wrote:

The procession proceeded to the Cenotaph, where a large crowd of civilians were already assembled. The men made an imposing spectacle as they marched through the streets, the company numbered about 2,000 and the majority also displayed the poppy emblem. A touching feature was the number of young boys wearing their dead father’s medals, who took part. Yesterday’s parade was undoubtedly the largest yet seen in Cork, and one of the most impressive.²⁰³

The paper reported, ‘that the amount of money raised in Cork this year through the sale of poppies had exceeded all records’, and that well attended remembrance ceremonies took place at Tipperary, Athlone, Connel and Nenagh.²⁰⁴ According to Boyce, ‘between 1919 and 1931 Armistice Day was celebrated throughout southern Ireland’. In addition to annual commemoration, memorials were raised locally. Even in traditionally republican towns such as Dundalk and Cork.²⁰⁵ In Cork there is a memorial to the Munster Fusiliers with an inscription noting that it was erected by the nationalist-leaning ‘Cork Independent Ex-Servicemen’s Club’.²⁰⁶

Although with the advent of the republican Fianna Fáil Government, imperial symbols were discouraged, there was according to Fitzpatrick, ‘little effect on official

²⁰⁰ BLSI annual meeting, *IT*, 4 February 1935.

²⁰¹ *Cork Examiner*, 12 November 1930, 7-8.

²⁰² *IT*, 15 November 1930.

²⁰³ *Cork Examiner*, 12 November 1930, 7; Until 1925 there were two remembrance parades in Cork, broadly divided by religion, see Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 129.

²⁰⁴ *Cork Examiner*, 12 November 1930, 8.

²⁰⁵ Boyce, ‘That Party Politics Should Divide Our Tents’, 191, 201.

²⁰⁶ Keith Jeffery, ‘Echoes of War’, in Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*, (Dublin: 2008), 268.

attitudes towards Irish commemoration of the Great War'.²⁰⁷ In 1933 the *Irish Times* wrote that permission was given by the de Valera Government for the British Legion to carry out its regular street sale of poppies on Remembrance Day, as well as the parade to Phoenix Park, Dublin.²⁰⁸ In 1934 the remembrance service at St Patrick's Cathedral was attended by a congregation of around 3,000, including members of the Free State Senate and Dail. The government also ensured participants were protected from poppy snatchers; 'police arrangements were adequate, and a show of batons restored good order'.²⁰⁹ In 1936, the *Irish Times* reported large attendances throughout Ireland with around 5,000 parading in Sligo.²¹⁰ In 1937, a great gathering attended the ceremony in Phoenix Park and the crowd sang 'God Save the King'. Local dignitaries continued to participate; in Sligo the mayor delivered a speech at the town's parade while the ceremonies in Cork, Drogheda and Roscrea were well attended, the latter, 'witnessed one of the biggest Armistice Day parades during the past 10 years'.²¹¹ In 1938 there were impressive ceremonies in Dublin.²¹² From 1939 there was an 'absence of outward show or parade', but still in 1940 at the new Irish War Memorial, 'instead of being smaller in number the crowd seemed to have been swelled to many hundreds more'.²¹³

Great War commemoration was identified with unionist support and association with Britain and inevitably drew republican protests. In 1925 members of Cumann na mBan removed British flags from various buildings around Dublin marking Remembrance Day and burnt them, some outside Trinity College.²¹⁴ In 1926 the *Irish Times* reported that 40,000 people attended a remembrance ceremony in Phoenix Park, Dublin and over 3,000 ex-

²⁰⁷ David Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the IFS', in McBride, (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: 2001), 194.

²⁰⁸ *IT*, 25 October 1933.

²⁰⁹ *IT*, 12 November 1934.

²¹⁰ *IT*, 14 and 16 November 1936.

²¹¹ *IT*, 12 and 15 November 1937.

²¹² *IT*, 12 November 1938.

²¹³ *IT*, 18 November 1939, 12 November 1940.

²¹⁴ UCD, Papers of Kathleen Moloney, 94/56, Letter from Elgin to Kathleen, 13 November 1925.

servicemen took part in a parade in Cork, while an anti-Remembrance Day protest was held against an ‘unjust and unholy’ war. Scenes of violence occurred as gangs of youths were seen picking poppies off pedestrians’ clothing.²¹⁵ In 1927 the *Irish Times* wrote that a Fianna Fáil gathering in College Green, Dublin expressed their discontent at what they saw as the ‘repetition of displays of British imperialist sentiment’, while there were ‘the largest ever crowds seen at a Remembrance Day in Dublin’.²¹⁶ The *Cork Examiner* wrote that in the evening of a well-attended Armistice Day in the city, ‘a party of young men, numbering it is believed 25, forced an entry into the park enclosing the Great War cenotaph and tore down a Union Jack which had been placed there in connection with remembrance ceremonies’.²¹⁷ In 1932, the *Irish Times* reported that large attendances were, ‘eloquent proof that the memory of those who fell in the Great War has not been dimmed by the passage of time’, but there were also scenes of discontent in Dublin, where police fired shots in order to disperse the ‘disorderly’ crowd.²¹⁸ What is apparent from these and other contemporary newspaper articles is that despite the publicity these protests attracted, they were marginal in comparison to the considerable support for commemoration, caused not least by the scale of Ireland’s participation in the Great War, with so many communities and families affected. The BLSI were sensitive to the exploitation of remembrance by unionists; in 1935 Hickie said there were people who were trying to make the 11 November into the 12 July and promised, ‘we will prevent the 11 November from being a political demonstration’. Referring to the waving of the British flag the previous year he said ‘it was unfortunate that the Union Jack was a political emblem’, and that Armistice Day should be of a ‘reverent nature’.²¹⁹ A British Ministry of Pensions official wrote in 1936 that, ‘displays and parades which gave publicity

²¹⁵ *IT*, 12 November 1926.

²¹⁶ *IT*, 9 and 12 November 1927.

²¹⁷ *Cork Examiner*, 12 November 1930, 8.

²¹⁸ *IT*, 12 and 17 November 1932.

²¹⁹ *IT*, 23 September 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

to the British connection', caused problems for the ex-servicemen.²²⁰ Many ex-servicemen were Fianna Fáil supporters (see 4.6b) and did not associate remembrance with unionism. They sometimes spoke at demonstrations against 'imperialistic displays'. In 1935 the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* were accused of suppressing a letter from an ex-serviceman who spoke at such a gathering.²²¹

That Free State Governments needed to take a cautious approach to commemoration was inevitable given the need to reconcile the remembrance of the Great War, the Anglo-Irish War and, perhaps the most sensitive, the Civil War. There was an alternative tradition of remembrance from republicans who had fought against the British. In December 1922, Dr. Hearty, Archbishop of Cashel and Emlly in unveiling a 'glorious monument' to the men of the Limerick Brigade, killed in action against the British in the war of 1920-1921 said 'to these men we are paying a nation's tribute of respect'.²²² The government's ambivalence was reflected in their attitude towards a National Memorial for those who had died in the Great War; Kevin O'Higgins, Justice Minister, argued that it should not be located in front of the seat of government as, 'it is not on their sacrifice that this State is based'.²²³ Nevertheless, ex-servicemen formed a substantial part of the electorate and Irish Governments had to respect their needs. Jeffery writes, 'in the 1920s the Cumann na nGaedheal Government was represented every year in the wreath-laying at the Cenotaph in London'.²²⁴ In 1923 Cosgrave was amongst the congregation in an Armistice Day service in Cork.²²⁵ Cosgrave's sensitivity was indicated by his declining to attend a memorial ceremony in London in 1926, instead sending O'Higgins, whose two brothers had served in the War.²²⁶ In 1929 thousands of veterans marched in Phoenix Park, and a representative of the Free State laid a wreath. 'God

²²⁰ TNA, PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

²²¹ *IT*, 11 November 1935.

²²² M. O' Callaghan, 'Language or religion: the quest for identity in the IFS', (MA, University College Dublin, 1981), 1.

²²³ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol.19, 29 March 1927, Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927, (<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie/D/0019/D.0019.192703290013.html>).

²²⁴ Jeffery, 'Echoes of War', 270.

²²⁵ *Weekly IT*, 17 Nov 1923.

²²⁶ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 125-6.

save the King' was sung.²²⁷ Under de Valera, the Free State was also represented at Cenotaph ceremonies in London. De Valera's Government continued to subsidise the completion of a National Memorial; a site was eventually chosen at Islandbridge outside of Dublin after much procrastination by Cosgrave.²²⁸ Jeffery writes that de Valera was well disposed towards its completion and initially planned to attend the opening in 1939 although war tensions postponed the dedication.²²⁹ He argues, 'The real turning point was the Second World War, when the Free State remained neutral and any commemoration of the Great War could become identified with support for the British war effort, so much so that Armistice Day parades in Dublin were banned'.²³⁰ Boyce writes it was Irish neutrality that 'opened up a great emotional and political gap between Britain and Eire'.²³¹ The isolationism of the war years and the breaking of the final historic links with Britain in 1949 when Ireland became a Republic caused both the state and national consciousness to become even more distant from a British association and World War One commemorations.²³² In the 1950s veterans attended remembrance ceremonies at Islandbridge although there were attempts to blow it up and gradually it fell into serious disrepair.²³³ According to Jeffery, 'official silence was compounded by a growing public reticence to commemorate the Great War openly, especially with the onset of civil conflict in Northern Ireland in 1969'.²³⁴ As Boyce writes, 'ex- servicemen, and their cause, simply sank into political oblivion, as nationalists applied a sort of field dressing, in the shape of a national amnesia, to the Great War experience'.²³⁵ Yet

²²⁷ *IT*, 12 November 1929.

²²⁸ Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the IFS', 192-194.

²²⁹ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 122-3.

²³⁰ Jeffery, 'Echoes of War', 272.

²³¹ Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics*, 93.

²³² Interview with Professor John Horne, Trinity College, Dublin, 6 August 2008.

²³³ Fergus D'Arcy, *Remembering the War Dead*, (Dublin: Irish Government Publications, 2002), 356.

²³⁴ Keith Jeffery, 'Echoes of War', 272.

²³⁵ Boyce, 'That Party Politics Should Divide our Tents', 201.

these later restrictions distort the reality that ‘thousands...participated in the annual Remembrance ceremonies throughout the interwar period in the Free State’.²³⁶

4.6 Community: Integration and Acceptance

a) *Employment and Housing*

In the Dáil Éireann debate in 1927 on the claims of British ex-servicemen, employment and housing problems were raised. Redmond said Colonel Crosfield, the Chairman of the British Legion who had just toured Ireland and met both Legion members and ex-servicemen unconnected to it, ‘gave a fearful description of the condition of many of the ex-servicemen’. Redmond added, ‘it has reached such a stage that Field Marshal Earl Haig has made an appeal in Great Britain for the destitute and suffering ex-servicemen in this country’. Shaw illustrated the conditions of ex-servicemen with a reference to an ex-Irish Guard who had a 12sh per week disability allowance, was unable to obtain work and lived with his wife and five children in a house with practically no roof.²³⁷ The *Irish Times* commenting in 1927 on the need to examine the complaints of ex-servicemen wrote that there were 50,000 ex-soldiers unemployed, of whom nearly 30,000 were in the City of Dublin, and that ‘thousands of ex-servicemen in the Free State are in dire distress’, and are helped by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the British Legion, the United Services Fund, and the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Help Society, ‘but thousands are dependent on poor law relief’.²³⁸ The *Morning Post* wrote at the same time, ‘There are in all about 186,000 British ex-servicemen in Southern Ireland, and of these approximately one third are unemployed and without any hope of getting employment’.²³⁹ In 1928, Crosfield claimed in Wexford alone there were 800 unemployed ex-servicemen who existed mainly on a parish relief of 6sh per week per

²³⁶ Keith Jeffery, ‘Echoes of War’, 270.

²³⁷ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

²³⁸ *IT*, 15 November 1927.

²³⁹ *Morning Post*, 10 November 1927.

family.²⁴⁰ *The Times* reported in 1931 that ex-servicemen were finding it difficult to get employment or houses.²⁴¹ The Legion estimated that in 1933/4 an estimated 20,000 ex-servicemen were in need of work.²⁴²

In contrast, Trust surveys indicated that many of the ex-servicemen were in employment and that some of those who were not had chosen not to work. The Trust produced a report on the employment of tenants for a Trust Meeting held in December 1924 (the survey excluded a number of large sites including Cork City, Mullingar, Naas and Limerick). Most tenants were in employment, many with the Free State Government or state run organisations such as the railways, others were employed in trades. The evidence was only based on Trust tenants but it can be argued that they were a representative sample. The tenants ranged from the officer class to the ordinary soldier and were geographically dispersed and located in both urban and rural areas.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ *Morning Post*, 6 January 1928, Letter from Crosfield, Chairman, BL.

²⁴¹ *Times*, 15 December 1931.

²⁴² *IT*, 19 February 1934 in TNA,AP1/144, reporting on BLSI annual meeting.

²⁴³ TNA,AP1/54, Report for Trust meeting, 17 December 1924

Table 28: Employment of Trust tenants 1924

Location	Houses	Employment
Killester, County Dublin	247	Civil servants, postmen: 57, mechanics, artisans: 39, Guinness brewery: 22, clerks: 14, watchmen, warehousemen: 12, railway, tram workers: 9, stewards/managers: 9, tailors, shoemakers: 5, carters: 4, commercial travellers: 4, policemen: 3, motor vehicle owners: 2, miscellaneous e.g. journalist, watchmaker, chemist: 14, Pensioners: 6. The remainder in employment included serving soldiers in the Free State army, labourers and other trades. Unemployed: 15.
Clontarf, County Dublin	38	Free State or British government employees: 21, various trades: 10, GN railway officials: 2, Secretaries of the Legion: 2, pensioners: 2, unemployed: 1.
Bluebell, County Dublin	32	With 3 exceptions all were in good employment at for example the Guinness brewery, Great Southern and Western Railway or working for the Free State Government.
Kells, County Meath	28	All farm labourers.
Castleknock, County Dublin	28	Free State government clerks: 17, Guinness brewery: 6, self-employed contractors: 3, ordinary labourers: 2.
Kingstown, County Dublin	20	Labourers in good employment (railway porters etc): 14, British government clerks: 2, Free State government clerks: 2, Secretary of the local Legion: 1, unemployed: 1.
Dundrum, Dublin	15	Free State government clerks: 3, British government clerks: 3, labourers: 2, unemployed: 7.
Palmerstown, County Dublin	14	Free State government clerks: 11, labourers: 2, unemployed: 1.
Thomastown, County Kildare	14	Farm labourers: 14.
Raheny, County Dublin	12	Free State government clerks: 3, railway officials: 3, clerks: 2, school master: 1; sailor: 1; tailor: 1; labourer: 1.
Trim, County Meath	10	All farm labourers: 10.
Edenderry, County Kildare	3	Farm labourers: 2, 1 cottage vacant.
Puckstown, County Dublin	2	Grave digger: 1, Free State government clerk: 1.

Source: TNA, AP 1/54, Report on employment of tenants prepared for Trust Meeting, 17 December 1924.

In December 1932, the Trust conducted a further survey of 2,202 tenants, (the figure excluded tenants who paid rent directly to the Dublin office rather than through rent collectors) that indicated 666 were without work and that 73 were on 100% disability pensions with many others on lesser allowances. Some 30% of the tenants were therefore seemingly unemployed, but the accompanying comments of the rent collectors who as neighbours had first class knowledge, show the difficulty of relying on such figures. They noted that those on disability pensions might not accept work even if offered jobs while others left employment temporarily in order to obtain a medical certificate to prevent the pension board from docking their pension. One rent collector from Cork commented, ‘a good number of the cases would not accept work if offered to them’. A colleague wrote,

the majority are in receipt of a big pension, plus insurance benefit, plus family earnings, and are in no way a deserving case. To quote one case, my neighbour Mr T. O'Leary who is unemployed is in receipt of £2 a week pension, and about £6 per week family earnings, you would not call this man a deserving case, but he is still unemployed. I have got very few deserving cases to be classed as genuine unemployed.

Grubb wrote in a memo accompanying the figures, 'taking Devlin, the 5 unemployed are not really unemployed at all; taking Navan, of the 14 unemployed, really only 1 could be placed in that category'.²⁴⁴ Ex-servicemen in receipt of pensions were less willing to work, particularly if in so doing such pensions were jeopardised. Captain Whitehead, a resident of Birr stated problems also arose in building houses 3 to 4 miles outside of towns (as at Birr) as ex-servicemen were unwilling to face the journey and were prepared to live on a small pension.²⁴⁵

Ex-servicemen often suffered from poor housing. The *Times* wrote in 1927 that housing schemes have been handicapped by the civil disturbances of recent years and as a consequence, 'thousands of ex-servicemen throughout the Free State are living in one-room tenements, for which they pay exorbitant rents, and the provision of decent accommodation for them is long overdue'.²⁴⁶ The *Cork Examiner* interviewed Brooke Brasier, a local politician, who said that ex-servicemen lived in 'small and unhealthy dwellings', men were deprived of their disability allowance and little employment was to be had. 'Emigration has taken the skilled away, leaving the ineffective behind'.²⁴⁷ Trust reports (see 3.7b) indicate that its tenants had previously paid higher rents for significantly inferior accommodation. A Trust survey in Dublin 1930, found 1,182 ex-service families were each living in one room. The popularity of the Trust houses, irrespective of the comments of their more antagonistic

²⁴⁴ TNA,AP3/17.

²⁴⁵ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 12 May 1924.

²⁴⁶ *Times*, 16 November 1927.

²⁴⁷ Brooke Brasier, *Cork Examiner*, 1 November 1927.

tenants, indicates that alternative accommodation was inadequate and in short supply. In the last Trust scheme completed in Dublin there were 2,666 applicants for 66 houses.²⁴⁸

In some aspects ex-servicemen were in a comparably advantageous position compared to the general population; the BLSI even claimed there was some resentment towards those living in Killester, who were viewed as ‘Crown colonists’ with favourable housing.²⁴⁹ The Ministry of Pensions argued in 1936 that ‘rent free Trust houses and the comparatively high monetary value of our pension scale places him (the ex-serviceman) in a better position than the civilian of his own class in the Irish Free State’. Children of pensioners had the advantage of an assured income and the parents therefore were able to keep them longer at school, while the children of ex-servicemen living in housing colonies enjoyed a higher standard of health.²⁵⁰ Most ex-servicemen though did not benefit from a Trust house or a pension.

b) Discrimination

In 1927 in the Dáil Éireann debate on the claims of British ex-servicemen, Redmond argued that that the employment problems of ex-servicemen were caused by discrimination, ‘there is not a day passes when I ask a man, who comes to me and says he is a British ex-serviceman, why he does not go to the Labour Exchange, that the inevitable reply is not: “what is the use of my going there? I am a British ex-serviceman and I will be told to stand down”. Cooper disagreed, ‘I know of many cases of British ex-servicemen, who were also ex-National army men, who have been unable to get employment through the Labour Exchange. But I do not think the state of affairs is peculiar to them. I think you will find in every section of society complaints that there was nothing doing at the Labour Exchange’. Shaw argued that the ex-servicemen were in no different a position to others, ‘no doubt a

²⁴⁸ TNA,AP1/121, BL to DO, 18 June 1930.

²⁴⁹ TNA,AP1/84, Meeting Trust/ BLSI, 12 May 1924.

²⁵⁰ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

large number of them (the ex-servicemen) are unemployed but they are no worse off than all the other unemployed'. Carney said the Connaught Rangers mutinied in India and were recognised as having fought for Irish freedom but those who survived were almost all unemployed. Crosfield in his tour of Ireland, according to Shaw, 'could not find one single concrete case of a man being victimised because he was an ex-soldier'. Shaw added, 'as far as my experience is concerned, I have never found any discrimination in the counties I represent against ex-servicemen'.²⁵¹ Duckworth also refuted the existence of discrimination, 'my fellow Trustees tell me that very little of the original feeling against them (the ex-servicemen) now remains'.²⁵² Mahon said, 'a lot of humbug is talked about their being badly treated and kept out of positions because they served with the British Forces. I have enquired into many cases myself and have never found yet an instance of hostility to anyone because he was an ex-Service man', and that he had not been able to substantiate a single case of alleged victimisation. He stated Hickie had similar views.²⁵³ The Trust, the Legion and the TDs had good contacts throughout Ireland and therefore were well placed to understand what was happening at a local level. Particularly in the case of the Legion, they would have had little reason to diminish any accusations of discrimination. An insightful aspect of the Trust's survey of employment in 1924 was that many tenants worked for the Free State Government or its agencies. One explanation for the lack of discrimination against ex-servicemen was that many had republican leanings (see below). Yet in the case of the Trust's tenants, the majority were members of the Legion but even this closer association with Britain did not seem to count against them.²⁵⁴ In 1924 Duckworth and Walker both stated ex-servicemen were disadvantaged in applying for local authority housing; Duckworth said that ex-servicemen had an impossibility to find a house elsewhere when in competition with a man who is not an

²⁵¹ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

²⁵² TNA,AP1/98, Duckworth to Ruggles-Brise, 17 June 1926.

²⁵³ Mahon, *Daily Mail*, 22 November 1928, *IT*, 3 February 1925.

²⁵⁴ TNA,AP1/54, Report for Trust meeting, 17 December 1924; TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 18 December 1924.

ex-serviceman.²⁵⁵ One explanation may have been that local councils knowing that ex-servicemen had an option for housing excluded to others gave them a lower priority. Walker wrote, ‘service houses in many districts render the men ineligible for houses at the disposal of the local authorities’, and that Killester ex-servicemen had been turned down by Dublin Corporation and had no chance of transferring to local authority housing.²⁵⁶ The Lavery Committee investigated the issue and found that in September 1926, 547 British ex-servicemen were tenants of Dublin Corporation. Their report also concluded that while the ex-servicemen had grievances regarding lack of employment and bad housing, they were common to all members of the community, particularly the ‘labouring classes’ and were in no way peculiar to British ex-servicemen.²⁵⁷

With advent of a Fianna Fáil administration it may have been anticipated that discrimination would occur but reports from British agencies again indicated that this was not the case. The British Ministry of Pensions was present throughout Ireland with a network of area committees, and was in regular contact with large numbers of ex-servicemen. In 1936 they asked their local offices to ascertain whether ex-servicemen or their children were subject to discrimination, and if this varied either by location or whether the ex-serviceman was a pensioner or not. The request was in response to a claim by an ‘official lady visitor’ to a Minister that ex-servicemen were subject to discrimination with regard to employment and assistance. Ten replies were submitted to the Ministry’s head office giving a cross-section of views; many of the managers had considerable experience in working with ex-servicemen. The Ministry’s concluding summary of the report noted, ‘the consensus of opinion is that there is no general discrimination against ex-servicemen’. The submissions from the individual managers provided further detail. One of them, who had worked for the Ministry since 1921 and visited every town in the Free State, stated in his submission that he had,

²⁵⁵ TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 14 May 1924.

²⁵⁶ TNA,AP1/39, Walker to Lefroy, 22 July 1924; TNA,AP1/84, Trust/BLSI meeting, 14 May 1924.

²⁵⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, 1928.

‘never known a pensioner or ex-soldier to be victimised because he was a British soldier’. He knew several republicans who employed ex-servicemen and their children and who would assist ex-soldiers. He claimed that British ex-servicemen in the Free State were much more popular than a man serving in the Free State forces. He concluded that when disclosing that he worked for the British Government he was considered a ‘somebody’ and ‘every attention and courtesy is paid to me’. Another manager who worked in Counties Meath and Wexford wrote, ‘I have never known one proved case of victimisation of an ex-serviceman or his family’. A manager from Dublin reached a similar conclusion to the Lavery Committee, a decade earlier, when he said that an ex-serviceman’s difficulties, ‘do not spring from his war service but are indigenous to the economic conditions of the country and are shared by all other members of the same community’. Another wrote that since leaving the armed forces in 1922 he had been in close contact with ex-servicemen in Limerick, both due to his Ministry role and as a member of the Legion and, ‘I have not heard any complaints of victimisation’, and that ‘the majority of the employers of any consequence employ our men as a rule’. He claimed a ‘good man’ would find employment but the one who is indifferent to work ‘scrounges on every fund and charity known to him’. Many men who were not working wrongly claimed discrimination as the cause of their not finding employment but this was just an excuse for not seeking work. One manager wrote, ‘regarding victimisation of the men, most of this seems to exist in the mind of the complainant’. The report though noted other reasons for unemployment including those related to age, lack of training and the economic conditions of the country. Some 90% of ex-servicemen sought employment in the unskilled labour market. In this regard, by the 1930s, they were significantly disadvantaged as they were older than and not as educated as those with whom they competed. The typical ex-serviceman was, ‘less capable of adapting himself to the requirements of the new industries that are being nurtured under the high tariff wall’. In addition, ex-servicemen in receipt of

pensions were sometimes denied employment. Given two men of equal merit, private employers preferred a workman who was solely dependent on his income and therefore was more likely to be motivated, but such decisions were commercial not political, one manager within the Ministry of Pensions commenting, 'the average employer seeks only to get best value for his money by securing the man best suited to his requirements and no other consideration is allowed to apply'. On the other hand men with pensions had an advantage; their assured fixed incomes gave them standing in the community. According to the report, ex-servicemen were considered equally with others in terms of government appointments and the majority of local authorities and public bodies. The one exception was the preference given to National army veterans, the report noting that 'De Valera has been more successful in impressing these views on employers in general than with his predecessor in office', a perhaps surprising claim given he fought in opposition to them. Only one respondent claimed that discrimination existed and that it was caused by ex-members of the National army and the IRA. He cited a case in which an ex-serviceman obtained a job because of his republican credentials and was concerned when he was admitted to hospital that the Ministry would approach his employer and his war service would become known. The report also stated that children of ex-servicemen were not handicapped in seeking employment or apprenticeships. The Ministry provided financial support to help dependants obtain training through the payment of premiums which 'has undoubtedly been the means of obtaining many an ex-serviceman's child a job'. The likely result of such payment was the reduction of cost of wages to the employer. One submission stated, 90% of applicants seeking work for their children claimed that no one would give employment to them because of the father's army service but the writer could not produce any concrete case of such treatment. He continued that the apprenticeships recognised by the Ministry were with long standing, reputable firms who were pro-British and provided openings for the children because of the father's service.

He also gave the example of Monument Bakery, which earned money to erect monuments for fallen Sinn Feiners, and received the Ministry's representative 'most courteously' and provided an apprenticeship. The writer noted however that in some country districts or republican counties problems may arise; the County Council and University in Galway were considered anti-British. The report also stated that no difficulties were placed in the way of ex-servicemen seeking voluntary or charitable help, 'the sole criterion applied by such organisations is the real need for assistance and the urgency meeting it'. One submission concluded that there was no 'organised boycott' but a 'definite lack of interest in, and sympathy for, ex-servicemen', but only in exceptional circumstances does that feeling mitigate against his employment prospects. The report also explains that one reason that the ex-servicemen were not affected by prejudice was that 'the majority of ex-servicemen are stated to be members of the Fianna Fáil Party and supporters of the present (Fianna Fáil) Government', and 'being anti-British in sentiment themselves are in no way hampered'. Several of the respondents emphasised this point.²⁵⁸ Bourke with reference to the above report wrote that many ex-servicemen took refuge in the Fianna Fáil party but even this could not safeguard them from prejudice, particularly in the western counties. The segment of the report she quoted stated the opposite; that prejudice from officials was the 'exception, not the rule', and was in any event mainly confined to the western counties.²⁵⁹ As with Leonard in the case of Michael Shannon, the example used to demonstrate ex-servicemen were subject to intimidation or were marginalised is questionable. The Trust also refuted prejudice existed under the Fianna Fáil Government. Edward Godfrey of Cork left for England in 1935 and obtained a permanent job, his wife and daughters remaining in the cottage. Browne wrote in

²⁵⁸ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

²⁵⁹ Bourke, 'Shell-Shock, Psychiatry and the Irish soldier', 163. TNA,PIN15/758, MoP, report 1936, sub report from Dublin, 22 June 1936, 2.

1937, 'Godfrey's statement that he could not get work in Cork on account of antipathy to ex-servicemen is pure nonsense'.²⁶⁰

The problem for the ex-servicemen was not that they were discriminated against but as the Lavery Report concluded, 'all the grievances and disabilities complained of were grounded on claims to special treatment by reasons of promises given or of war service'.²⁶¹ They were disadvantaged in comparison to their counterparts in Britain where communal support was more forthcoming and employers were often sympathetic and encouraged by the government to give them preference.²⁶² One manager in the Ministry of Pensions report wrote that unlike in Britain the ex-servicemen did not enjoy the support of the public as there was, 'no wide appeal to public sympathy backed by Church and State, no claim on their fellow countrymen for services rendered'. Another wrote that the Free State refused to regard itself as having participated as a nation in the War and had repudiated responsibility for the costs of its after affects and as consequence, 'the Great War and its aftermath does not enter into the ethical conscience of the Free State, with the result that those who volunteered their services excite neither interest nor sympathy'. It was noted that the ex-serviceman was only disadvantaged by his own indiscretion; if he persisted to plea war service as a reason for obtaining employment the likely response was 'go to the British for compensation'.²⁶³ Nevertheless, there were in Ireland, according to the Ministry, many large employers, such as brewers, distillers and manufacturers of biscuits, sweets and cigarettes, including Guinness Brewery and Jacobs Biscuits, that adopted the principle of the King's Roll; 542 brewery men returned to the Guinness. Such firms gave preferential treatment to ex-servicemen, handicapped or not, and their children.²⁶⁴ Mahon accepted though that, 'the Free State

²⁶⁰ TNA,AP1/167, Browne to Phillips, 29 May 1937.

²⁶¹ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, 1928.

²⁶² Report on BLSI, Annual Meeting, *IT*, 24 February 1936.

²⁶³ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

²⁶⁴ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936; Burke, 'The Royal Dublin Fusiliers', 30.

Government cannot be expected to single out ex-servicemen from other unemployed men for preferential treatment'.²⁶⁵

Their experiences were not such that it precluded many ex-servicemen from serving Britain again. In 1939 many, perhaps for economic reasons, once more supported Britain's war effort. Browne wrote, 'A considerable number of tenants have re-joined HM Forces or are engaged on work of national importance'. Some 461 tenants were absent for reasons related to war time service.²⁶⁶

c) *Integration*

Hart comments on the negative stereotype of Irish soldiers. Great War veterans though differed significantly from pre-war regular soldiers. The Ministry of Pensions made this distinction in their report, in contrast to the reintegration of Great War veterans, they state that the 'old time serving soldier', through many years of service had lost touch with family and friends and their 'lot is a pitiful one', as they are 'unwanted aliens in their own country'.²⁶⁷ Those who had volunteered for the War were more representative of Irish society, far greater in numbers, not an isolated minority and not absent for such a long period, so making assimilation back into the community easier. Based on Hickie's estimates they constituted from 20% to 40% of the male population of many towns (see 1.1). Referring to Cork, Borgonovo wrote that ex-servicemen 'were engrained in the city's social fabric'.²⁶⁸ They were part of the community and received support from it. In 1926 the *Irish Times* reported that, 'various churches had thoughtfully decided to hand over one day's collection to Earl Haig's Fund'.²⁶⁹ Leonard writes, 'vigorous lobbying by the parish priest at Claddagh, Co. Galway, yielded loans for fisherman, who had served in the Royal Navy, to buy their

²⁶⁵ Mahon quoted in the *Daily Mail*, 22 November 1928.

²⁶⁶ TNA,AP1/177, Browne to Phillips, 4 October 1939; Browne to Phillips, 20 January 1948.

²⁶⁷ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

²⁶⁸ See 2.1 for details of Hart's and Borgonovo's comments.

²⁶⁹ *IT*, 13 October 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

own boats'.²⁷⁰ In 1936 the Lord Mayor of Dublin attended the British Legion dinner.²⁷¹ Voluntary organisations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Society helped ex-servicemen.²⁷² A British Legion meeting held in Ennis, County Clare in December 1927 to discuss housing problems indicated the extent to which the ex-servicemen were part of the local community. The meeting was presided over by Lord Inchiquin (a local peer), and attended by the local clergy, the Reverend Canon King, and TD, Patrick Hogan. It was reported in the *Irish Times*. Hogan's background may have suggested he would have little empathy with ex-servicemen, yet he was sympathetic to their problems. He was a member of the Labour Party, was active in the Gaelic League and had served with the local IRA.²⁷³ Other TDs were also supportive of the ex-servicemen at a local level. Patrick Shaw represented Longford-Westmeath for Cumann na nGaedhael from 1923 until his retirement in 1933 and sat on local pension committees. Brooke Brasier was a member of Cork county council (1925–40) and represented local constituencies from 1932/3 as an independent and from 1937/43 as a Fine Gael candidate. He was prominent in both the Trust and the BLSI.²⁷⁴

Ex-servicemen attained positions of prestige within the community and followed successful careers. The Ministry of Pensions report from 1936 stated 'many of the higher posts in the Civil Service, Army and Police (the Gardai) are held by British ex-servicemen', and that quite a number of the non-commissioned officers in the Free State army were ex-servicemen.²⁷⁵ William Murphy after his service with the National army was appointed chief commissioner of Dublin Metropolitan Police in May 1923 until its amalgamation with the Garda Síochána in 1925, when he was appointed a deputy commissioner of the latter. For political reasons he was never awarded the position of commissioner but this was owing to

²⁷⁰ Leonard, 'Survivors', 216.

²⁷¹ Report on BLSI, Annual Meeting, *IT*, 24 February 1936.

²⁷² TNA,PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

²⁷³ *IT*, 12 December 1927, reporting on local BLSI meeting held in Ennis, County Clare, 11 December 1927; Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Patrick Hogan', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

²⁷⁴ Pauric J. Dempsey, 'Brooke Wellington Brasier', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Houses of the Oireachtas, Members Database.

²⁷⁵ TNA,PIN15/758, MoP, report 1936.

the bitter legacy of the Civil War not his service in the Great War. Murphy was a friend of Kevin O'Higgins. During the Second World War de Valera asked Murphy to organise an auxiliary force that was to number 65,000 men as a back-up to the army and Garda. He retired from the police force in 1955, his career having encompassed service to the state under different regimes. He was an active organiser of amateur boxing and was instrumental in having the National Stadium built. He died in 1975 and was given a state funeral.²⁷⁶ Robert Barton re-entered public life on Fianna Fáil's accession to power in 1932 holding a number of public appointments, including membership of the banking, currency, and credit commission (1934/8) and chairman of the Agricultural Credit Corporation (1933/59).²⁷⁷ Captain J.C. de Lacy, the Trust's representative at Killester, was a successful candidate for Fine Gael at the Dublin Municipal Election of 1936. The Trust allowed him to stand but emphasised that he was not representing them and that the Trust could not be associated with any political party. De Lacy wrote 'it was a very hard fight for an Ex-British Officer but I came out victorious'.²⁷⁸

The ex-servicemen were no cowered segment of society and were prepared to lobby aggressively, collectively and individually, for their interests with both the British and Irish Governments to remedy perceived grievances. They forced a debate on their complaints in the Dáil Éireann and litigated up to the Supreme Court against the Trust. Trivial grievances seemingly without foundation were also pursued. The Trust enclosed some common land at the rear of the house of Henry Jones in Killester depriving him of a back entrance. He wrote to the Trust in March 1931, complaining and that 'until this matter is settled to my proper satisfaction, I intend to withhold the payment of rent'. The Trust replied that he had no legal claim and having received no satisfaction his wife wrote to Winston Churchill. The Trust sought an order of the court after which Jones paid his rent. During the process the Trust

²⁷⁶ Murphy, 'William Richard English Murphy', 10-11.

²⁷⁷ Pauric J. Dempsey and Shaun Boylan, 'Robert Childers Barton', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

²⁷⁸ TNA,AP1/163; De Lacey to Alexander, 8 July 1936.

attempted informally to resolve the conflict, two officers visited ‘to explain to him quietly that his grievances were purely imaginary’. In 1937 he formed the Killester volunteer ex-servicemen’s association (in opposition to the existing association) but little came of it. He complained bitterly over the next decade that the area had become ‘one vast slum’ and the houses had been taken over by lodgers and the children of ex-servicemen. With the support of a TD he tried to transfer to another Trust property in 1945 but without success.²⁷⁹

Their integration into society was not defined by war service. The term ex-servicemen implied a homogeneity which in reality, beyond attendance at remembrance ceremonies, did not exist. Most were not members of veteran associations (see 4.6d). The Lavery Report concluded they were, ‘distributed through all classes of the community’.²⁸⁰ Redmond failed to develop a political party, the National League, which had as one of its defining messages that it represented all ex-servicemen. Wolfe said, ‘There is no Party that does not reckon amongst its supporters men who have served in the Great War. Redmond’s attempt to portray the National League as a party for all ex-servicemen was condemned.’²⁸¹ Nor did unionism or loyalty to Britain define them, indeed the reverse; the majority supported the republican Fianna Fáil. Even issues unique to ex-servicemen resulted in divisions between them; there were in many instances a lack of comradeship. Those who had secured houses did little to help the majority without. The cost of the rent strike caused the Trust to transfer £10,753 (the equivalent of 18 houses) from its capital fund to the reserve. Browne noted, ‘morally this is a deplorable illustration of the ‘comradeship’ of the men, the Trust are prevented from building for innocent men, who are in sore need of houses’.²⁸² The BLSI’s attitude to the tenants changed over time as it became clear that the aims of the more extreme agitators were against the interests of the majority, who were without housing, as building

²⁷⁹ TNA,AP1/152, Henry Jones to the Trust, 7 March 1931; Browne to Alexander, 20 March 1931.

²⁸⁰ TNA,PIN15/758, Lavery Report, 1928.

²⁸¹ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

²⁸² TNA,AP3/32, Browne to Duckworth, 20 April 1926.

work was suspended after the Leggett ruling. Its Chairman, A.P. Connolly, said that the Legion ‘did not agree that it was in the best interests of the ex-service men community as a whole’, for no rent to be paid. He continued that if comradeship was not to be a ‘hollow mockery’, then those who had the advantage of a house should pay sufficient to cover maintenance and that ‘3,000 out of 200,000 ex-servicemen should have the abnormal benefit conferred upon them of having these cottages without paying anything at all was, frankly, absurd’. The remarks were made at the Legion’s annual meeting in 1934 to the cheers of the audience.²⁸³ Even those with houses were in conflict with each other. The Killester Tenants’ Association representatives claimed they represented 65% of the tenants although other tenant associations refuted this.²⁸⁴ Browne commented that ‘the better class of tenant had never had much sympathy with the tenant associations; it is a lower class of tenant who belongs to these organisations’.²⁸⁵

d) *Ex-Servicemen Associations*

The majority of the ex-servicemen were not members of the British Legion or other veteran organisation. Redmond in the debate on the grievances of the ex-servicemen said that ‘the great bulk of British ex-servicemen are not connected with the principal (ex-serviceman) organisations - they do not represent anything like a sufficiently large proportion of the ex-servicemen to say that they are authorised to speak for them’.²⁸⁶ The estimate of the numbers who were members varied. The *Irish Times* in 1927 wrote, ‘we believe that fewer than one-quarter of them are members of the British Legion and that a majority belong to no organisation at all’.²⁸⁷ In 1929 Hickie said that the Legion represented only 3% of the ex-

²⁸³ *IT*, 19 February 1934, in TNA,AP1/144, reporting on BLSI annual meeting.

²⁸⁴ TNA,AP1/146, Franks to Alexander, 21 July 1936 and Browne to Alexander, 24 July 1936.

²⁸⁵ TNA,AP1/151, Browne to Phillips, 15 March 1944.

²⁸⁶ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

²⁸⁷ *IT*, 24 November 1927, reporting on Dáil Éireann debate on claims of ex-servicemen, 16 November 1927.

servicemen in the Free State.²⁸⁸ According to the BLSI annual conference in 1934, 10% of ex-servicemen were members of the Legion.²⁸⁹ Leonard writes that membership of the British Legion throughout the island between 1925 and 1939 never exceeded 9,000, less than 10% of the veteran population. She writes that most veteran organisations in Britain merged in 1921 to form the British Legion; in southern Ireland this did not happen until 1925 with several rival organisations remaining active for some years after the Legion was established, including the Irish Nationalist Veteran's Association (whose founders included Tom Kettle's widow Mary). According to Leonard the associations of the disbanded southern Irish regiments were sometimes considered more congenial than the Legion.²⁹⁰ When the League of Irish Ex-Servicemen became affiliated to the British Legion in 1925, Hickie, its president, assumed the same role for what became the British Legion, Southern Ireland. He said it had been a struggle to keep the League alive the previous 8 years and because of debt they had been forced to join the British Legion.²⁹¹ The BLSI's continued low membership was not only due to geographical dispersal; even when there was a high concentration of veterans in a particular area membership was low. Of the 3,000 ex-servicemen in Waterford only a small portion were members of the Legion.²⁹² The Legion was imperialist, conferences concluded with God Save the King, and this must have deterred republicans.²⁹³ According to a Ministry of Defence report of 1936, the majority of ex-servicemen fell into this category and it was therefore unsurprising that so few were members. Patrick O'Dowd the Fianna Fáil TD who had joined the IRA after service in the British army, in referring to men such as himself said in the debate on the Claims of British Ex-servicemen, 'this house should not ask these men to

²⁸⁸ TNA,AP1/121, Trust, Browne to Alexander, 29 November 1929.

²⁸⁹ *IT*, 19 February 1934, in TNA,AP1/144. The percentage of ex-servicemen in the BL in the UK was also comparatively low; male member in the 1920s remained below 300,000 (with some exclusions), see Wootton, *The Official History of the British Legion*, 305. In comparison in France in 1930s, circa 50% of the ex-servicemen were in a veteran association, see Prost, Antoine, *In the Wake of War: 'Les Anciens Combattants' and French Society*, (Oxford: Berg, 1922), 44.

²⁹⁰ Leonard, 'Survivors', 220-1 (BL membership estimates from Niall Barr, *The Lion and the Poppy*, (2005), 59-60).

²⁹¹ *IT*, 23 September 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

²⁹² *IT*, 7 July 1926.

²⁹³ *IT*, 19 February 1934, reporting on BLSI annual meeting, in TNA,AP1/144.

go back to the British Legion, or any other ex-servicemen's organisation, because they are in want.... they will not submit to such a display of Imperialism again. I could refer Deputy Cooper to many hundreds throughout the country'.²⁹⁴

Hickie said the BLSI had three aims: to foster comradeship, to look after those in need and remember the fallen.²⁹⁵ He wanted the Legion to be 'non-religious, non-political and non-sectarian', and questioned a Legion band joining a political meeting organised by Redmond in Waterford as it was 'against the spirit of the Legion'. He maintained it was the business of all parties to look after the interests of the ex-servicemen and therefore the Legion could not declare for one party and that there should be no political meetings in Legion Clubs.²⁹⁶ Hickie's comments reflected many of the sentiments expressed in the debate on the claims of the ex-servicemen; that their political allegiance was not specific to one party and that correspondingly all parties had a responsibility for them. According to Leonard the Legion never became a political force in the Irish Free State.²⁹⁷ But that was not the case. While they may not have had allegiance to any particular party, they were intensely involved in political lobbying and, particularly under the Cosgrave Government, enjoyed close contact with government ministers and were successful in prosecuting their case both in relation to the Trust for the lowering of rents, and in highlighting grievances generally. The BLSI claimed that, 'the relations between the Service organisations and the Government are of the friendliest nature'.²⁹⁸ They had close association with TDs such as Redmond, Cooper and Shaw. Redmond and Cooper were both Vice Presidents of the Legion.²⁹⁹ Hickie himself was a senator. Cooper said that as the Free State was not represented in the Commons there was no constitutional lines to bring criticism on the Trust; hence the importance of the Legion in

²⁹⁴ TNA,PIN15/757; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

²⁹⁵ *IT*, 23 September 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

²⁹⁶ *IT*, 23 September 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

²⁹⁷ Leonard, 'Survivors', 220.

²⁹⁸ Mahon, *IT*, 3 February 1925.

²⁹⁹ *IT*, 23 February, 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

representing the ex-servicemen to the Trust.³⁰⁰ Due to its independent origins the BLSI had a very different character to that of the London headquarters; confrontational and aggressive, particularly in the 1920s. Many of the Trust's antagonists in the Killester Tenants' Rights Association were also members of the BLSI. The Trust sought initially to work with the BLSI but the latter's confrontational tactics led to a breakdown in relations. Many of the Trust's tenants were in the Legion and the Trust thought that the BLSI's Dublin headquarters was deliberately antagonistic in order to gain their support. Browne wrote 'the Legion is seeking to dominate the Trust and the local branches are encouraged by headquarters. The latter are losing their influence and find it difficult to get financial and moral support from the ex-servicemen in the country and Mr Walker (the BLSI chairman) is seeking to make his office popular by supporting the extremists'.³⁰¹ De Lacy, the Trust Superintendent at Killester, reported during the rent strike that he visited the tenants regularly and they said when the Legion tells them to pay their rent they will. He concluded that the BLSI's headquarters was 'directly responsible for nearly all the rent trouble'.³⁰² The tactics of the BLSI was not welcomed by all the tenants. Browne said that many were critical of the interference of Hickie.³⁰³ An unnamed ex-serviceman and Legion member wrote in the *Irish Truth*, 'the Legion in Ireland is split into factions. There is no common policy; no unity about its decisions; no reciprocity between it and organisations that should be allied for the common good'. The writer noted that the Head Office of the Legion in Ireland fought the Ministry of Pensions and the Trust; 'the whole of the relations between the Legion and the Trust are bitter'. He wrote that there were cases where the Trust allowed debts of £20 before taking any action, of arrears wiped out for humane reasons but some tenants refused to pay 'because they know the state of affairs between the Legion and their landlords, and they take

³⁰⁰ TNA,AP1/84,Trust/BLSI meeting,18 December 1924.

³⁰¹ TNA,AP1/39, Browne to Duckworth, 1 October 1924.

³⁰² TNA,AP1/84, De Lacy to Trust, May 1925.

³⁰³ TNA,AP1/98, Trust meeting, 30 March 1926.

advantage of it to play the part of martyrs'. The article argued for a 'friendlier way' and for members of the Trust to be members of the Legion.³⁰⁴ In fact Lefroy was a prominent member of the Legion but was removed from his position of trustee as Duckworth thought he favoured the tenants too much. Following the publication of the Lavery report Browne commented, 'Hickie and Connolly (Chairman of the BLSI) want to make capital out of the very colourless report of the Committee. Their influence, never very great, has been waning, and they will take to themselves the credit for the reduction of rent recently passed by the Trust, and try to recover some of their lost ground by showing themselves hostile to the Trust'. He continued, 'the Legion are most disappointed that the Report of the Committee has fallen so flat, and they are doing everything in their power to work up some kind of interest in the matter; but over here at any rate the Report aroused no interest whatever'. Browne considered there was little need to respond to the Legion's continued lobbying.³⁰⁵

Although the number of branches grew steadily, by 1934 there were 119 in the Free State and 23 women's branches, the Legion's objective to foster comradeship and to be a centre for social activity was not always successful.³⁰⁶ Elizabeth Whitham of London travelled to Ireland in 1927 with a view to establishing an ex-servicemen's club in memory of her son who was killed in the War. After a three week tour she concluded, 'I visited the clubs for ex-servicemen in Youghal, Cork, Bandon, Kinsdale, Kilkenny etc. With two exceptions, I found these clubs a hopeless failure; comfortless, miserable rooms, never cleaned or swept, old crazy forms to sit on, no fires, old newspapers on the floor, mismanagement, disorder, chaos. No wonder that the membership has dwindled from two to three hundred to less than ten or at most twenty men'.³⁰⁷ A British Legion conference in 1939 acknowledged that

³⁰⁴ *Irish Truth*, 5 March 1927, in TNA,AP1/98.

³⁰⁵ TNA,AP1/121, Browne to Alexander, 13 June 1929; Browne to Alexander, 29 November 1929.

³⁰⁶ *IT*, 19 February 1934, in TNA,AP1/144, reporting on BLSI annual meeting.

³⁰⁷ *Northern Whig*, 21 November 1927.

‘Ireland should follow more closely the example of England where the British Legion was looked upon as a social centre of the community’.³⁰⁸

The Legion was active in supporting those in need with 130 local committees of its Relief Fund. It denied SILRA’s allegations that only its own members were looked after, claiming 75% of those helped were not in the Legion.³⁰⁹ The Dublin Relief Fund in the 12 months to September 1926 helped 9 legionnaires and 1,234 none legionnaires.³¹⁰ Cooper in the Dáil Éireann said, ‘I think three-fourths of our pensions work is done on behalf of men who are not members of the Legion’.³¹¹ According to Leonard, as unemployment persisted throughout the 1920s, the British Legion initiated several employment schemes including the IREX furniture factory in Dublin.³¹² The SILRA chairman, the Duke of Northumberland, questioned the merit of spending money providing employment ‘when there are large numbers of starving families who are in most urgent need of food and clothing’.³¹³ Some of SILRA’s comments were motivated by a desire to encourage donations to it, rather than the Legion.³¹⁴ The BLSI in fact played a supportive role in providing need grants, helping find employment and resolving pension issues. In the year to September 1933, they administered grants to the amount of £31,142, an increase of £4,000 on the previous year and the BLSI’s employment bureau in Dublin had secured 322 permanent and 266 temporary positions, a total of 588, while local branches were responsible for 134 permanent and 1,087 temporary placements.³¹⁵ Employment placements for 1933/34 by the Legion were 637 permanent jobs, 1,446 temporary, 821 casual, a total of 2,904.³¹⁶ The BLSI claimed that pensions were being decreased but the position would have been worse except that they were successful in 50% of

³⁰⁸ TNA,AP1/149.

³⁰⁹ *IT*, 3 February 1925, 1 May 1926.

³¹⁰ *IT*, 13 October 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

³¹¹ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

³¹² Leonard, ‘Survivors’, 216.

³¹³ *Morning Post*, 9 January 1928.

³¹⁴ *Daily Mail*, 29 April 1926; *IT*, 1 May 1926.

³¹⁵ *IT*, 19 February 1934, in TNA,AP1/144, reporting on BLSI annual meeting.

³¹⁶ BLSI annual meeting, *IT*, 4 February 1935.

the appeal cases in which they represented ex-servicemen.³¹⁷ The role of the Legion locally was illustrated by a meeting held in Ennis, County Clare in December 1927 to highlight grievances, particularly in nearby Kiltrush. The Reverend Canon King said ex-service men and their families lived there in terrible and crowded conditions. A disabled ex-soldier, Tom Keane, said he was an example of the conditions prevailing in Kiltrush. He was in receipt of a pension of 18s 3d a week for wounds received in the Great War. He had been promised a home when ‘going out’ but his wife and seven children were condemned to live in a one-roomed hovel without sanitation. A branch of the British Legion was to be established in Kiltrush and a public meeting held there to focus attention on local conditions.³¹⁸ The Legion used Poppy Day to raise funds. In 1925 the BLSI collected £5,000 on Poppy Day and another £5,000 had been sent from England.³¹⁹ Poppy sales in Ireland in 1926 raised £13,197. This was supplemented by money from outside Ireland which was £9,885 for 1926 and £7,638 for the preceding year.³²⁰ The BLSI was criticised by the Duke of Northumberland in 1928 regarding, ‘the meagre results of Poppy Day in Ireland’, although his comments have to be taken in the context of his attitude to the British Legion.³²¹ The BLSI annual meeting in February 1934 reported annual receipts for the previous Poppy Day in the Free State were £73,000 with a net profit £58,000.³²²

e) ***The Media***

The considerable media coverage that the ex-servicemen received indicated that as a class they were high profile and that the majority of the mainstream press were sympathetic

³¹⁷ *IT*, 23 February 1926, in TNA,AP1/98, reporting on meeting of BLSI.

³¹⁸ *IT*, 12 December 1927.

³¹⁹ *IT*, 23 September 1926, in TNA,AP1/98.

³²⁰ Letter from Crosfield, Chairman, BL, *The Morning Post*, 6 January 1928, The figures vary, Hickie said £5,000 was sent from England in 1925 (*IT*, 23 September 1926).

³²¹ Letter from the Duke of Northumberland, *Morning Post*, 9 January 1928.

³²² *IT*, 19 February 1934, in TNA,AP1/144, reporting on the BLSI annual meeting, the figures seem surprisingly high, previous years were circa £10,000 pa (circa half million pounds in today’s money) from a population of circa 3 million (per head the IFS raised circa one third of the UK).

towards them. The key events in the ex-servicemen's calendar; Armistice Day and the annual meeting of the British Legion were extensively reported even though there was some republican pressure not to do so.

Figure 3 Letter to *Irish Times* November 1935

A CHARA,—I have been instructed by the Executive of the above to forward you copy of resolution passed at last meeting:

“That this Federation, comprising the following organisations—Sean Oglagh na hEireann, Clau na nGaedheal (pre-Truce I.R.A.), Old I.R.A. Association (Dublin District), Association of Old Dublin Brigade, Associated Easter Week Men, Old Republican Soldiers' Rights Association, Association of Old Fianna—calls upon you not to publish in your paper any picture dealing with 11th November celebrations.

“Mise le meas,
“P. BYRNE, p.p. Runaide.”

The press also covered their numerous complaints, for example, against the Trust or in lobbying to establish a committee to examine their grievances, and in general the largest circulation newspapers were supportive of their aims to the extent that the republicans considered the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* as reactionary.³²³ In 1926 the *Irish Times* noted that 1,000 Trust houses had been completed but ‘2,500 houses remain to be built, while men who risked their lives for their country are living in the squalor of single-roomed tenements’.³²⁴ In the same edition, the paper published a letter from Hickie and Connelly claiming that almost no new houses had been built by the Trust between its inception in January 1924 and January 1926.³²⁵ The many meetings that the ex-servicemen and their representatives had with the Irish Government were extensively reported. When the BLSI met with Cosgrave in May 1925, the *Irish Times* published their demands, ‘the Council of the

³²³ TNA,AP1/163.

³²⁴ *IT*, 26 June 1926.

³²⁵ *IT*, 26 June 1926.

British Legion, Southern Ireland has asked the President of the Free State to receive a deputation to explain their grievances and ask him to request the British Government to inquire into the workings of the 1919 Housing Act and the Trust appointed to carry out its provisions, and hold in abeyance eviction notices against tenants withholding rent, or paying provisional rent pending a readjustment of charges'.³²⁶ The meetings Cosgrave had with Mahon and Hickie during the rent strike were 'broadcasted' all over Ireland.³²⁷ In the period leading to the formation of the committee to examine the claims of British ex-servicemen, their grievances received extensive media coverage and most publications were supportive that an enquiry to investigate their concerns was needed. The perspective of the different newspapers had much in common; an understanding that the ex-servicemen had returned to a changed Ireland, sympathy for their living conditions and a view that the obligation to improve them was with the British not the Irish Government. The *Irish Times* wrote that when the soldiers returned from the War, 'the British Government was engaged in fighting for its existence in this country', and 'that it had no time to think of the men who had fought its battles in France and Flanders. At home the ex-soldiers found that a new generation had grown up, and that their own people had lost sympathy with the ideals which had inspired them in their great adventure'. It continued, 'The British Government has primary responsibility for housing and overseas settlement, and no ex-soldier can blame the Free State Government for neglect of his interests in these respects', and that the ex-servicemen were considered worthy of help as the 'vast majority are excellent citizens'.³²⁸ The publication also noted that advocacy of the claims of the ex-servicemen against the British Government might benefit the Irish State with the large expenditure of a building campaign and subsidised emigration to help reduce unemployment.³²⁹ The *Westmeath Independent* wrote that the *Daily*

³²⁶ *IT*, 8 May 1925.

³²⁷ TNA,AP1/98, Trust Meeting notes, 30 March 1926.

³²⁸ *IT*, 15 November 1927.

³²⁹ *IT*, 18 November 1927.

Mail had sought to give the impression that the ex-servicemen are victimised because of past affiliations but ‘the inquiry will, we hope, effectively expose such a calumny and prove to the British people the delinquency of their Government’.³³⁰ The *Dublin Evening Mail* said many of the ex-servicemen after years of unemployment are suffering acute distress and ‘they are undoubtedly deserving of sympathy. When their heroic services ended, the Irish ex-servicemen came home to find their country in the throes of a political upheaval. They found the British Government was too busy to carry out the great housing and overseas settlement schemes which had been promised them, but what was worse, they found that their heroism, too, had been forgotten by many of their own people’.³³¹ The *Morning Post* which claimed to have ‘frequently pleaded’ the cause of ex-servicemen wrote that with the withdrawal of the British army and with many of the gentry driven out, a source of employment was lost creating ‘a desperate economic situation’, and with a ‘general population struggling for mere sustenance, it was inevitable that the political friends of the new regime should be served first, and their enemies should go to the wall’.³³² The press in republican areas were also sympathetic. The *Cork Examiner* wrote, ‘forming a substantial proportion of the population of the Free State, the position of the British ex-serviceman is far from enviable. His position as a citizen calls for the intervention of the Irish Government’, to bring pressure to bear on the British Government.³³³

The press coverage of ex-servicemen, particularly at the time of Armistice Day, drew a cynical response from one, ‘we have “walked with death” and the glories of this “great death” are generally raked up at this time of year, coming on to the 11th of November.

³³⁰ *Westmeath Independent*, 26 November 1927.

³³¹ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 15 Nov 1927.

³³² *Morning Post*, 10 Nov 1927.

³³³ Brooke Brasier, *Cork Examiner*, 1 November 1927.

Mails, Expresses, Chronicles, Times, Independents, Irish and otherwise, are sadly perturbed regarding the many grievances of the British ex-serviceman, or what is now left of him’.³³⁴

4.7 Conclusion

War service brought no privilege from the State or community but nor did it result in discrimination. The State’s view was that ex-servicemen should not be considered as a class, that as individuals they held the same rights and obligations as all citizens and that it would not be in their interest to claim otherwise. Cooper said, ‘I have always held that the British ex-serviceman is a citizen of the State and must regard himself primarily as a citizen of the State. It is not of any service to him to single him out specially’, but ‘I heard no instance given of unequal treatment by the Legislature’.³³⁵ Likewise Redmond stated, ‘I make no special claims on behalf of British ex-servicemen from the Irish Government. I want them to be regarded and recognised by the Irish Government of the day as Irishmen with equal rights of citizenship in this State’.³³⁶ SILRA had a vested political interest in portraying the ex-servicemen as subject to distress caused by the State but the BLSI refuted that the Free State Government was unsympathetic to ex-servicemen.³³⁷ Attempts to build political representation based on ex-servicemen’s interests received opprobrium; Cooper criticized Redmond for seeking to exploit the ex-serviceman’s vote, arguing their interests were represented by all parties. In the debate in 1927 on the grievances of ex-servicemen, all parties agreed their complaints should be investigated, differing only on whether it should be through the auspices of the British Legion or a specially established committee. Support for the needs of the ex-servicemen was not perceived as support for Britain, a point emphasised by Fianna Fáil representatives who had fought in both the British army and the IRA. The

³³⁴ Article by ex-serviceman, *Honesty*, 2 November 1929.

³³⁵ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ Mahon, *IT*, 3 February 1925.

Irish Government's relationship with the Trust was indicative of changing priorities. Cosgrave was personally involved, using his experience in housing administration to write detailed critiques of rental levels in support of the ex-servicemen tenants. He seemed concerned with regards to their disruptive influence on a still fragile state. Cooper in the Dáil Éireann said, 'The (Cosgrave) Government have always been accessible and ready to listen to these grievances and to do their best to remedy them'.³³⁸ In contrast the de Valera administration did little to resolve the legal ambiguities arising out of the Leggett ruling, becoming actively involved only when seeking to halt politically sensitive evictions such as the Cork widows. That it could have helped was indicated by its willingness to enact legislation to overcome other court rulings to ensure the payment of rates by the tenants. The refusal to publish the findings of the Shannon report demonstrated de Valera's intent to take no action. His attitude did not represent one of antagonism; indeed he had seemingly cordial relationships with Trust representatives. Rather his priorities were elsewhere, while the economic war with Britain was not conducive to his helping their agencies. There were other reasons. The financial motivation had diminished. The Irish Government welcomed the contribution to the economy gained through the support provided to the ex-servicemen by the British Ministry of Pensions and the Trust, and as such was prepared to cooperate with these organisations. When de Valera came to power the Trust was nearing the end of its building programme; the Leggett ruling in any event ensured its curtailment. The political influence of ex-servicemen had also diminished. Using Trust information on the number of widows and emigration, and assuming these were representative of all ex-servicemen, their ranks would have decreased considerably, and with the passage of time the War had become a more distant memory. In the interwar years ex-servicemen participated in the political process; they were present in both Seanad and the Dáil Éireann, and were members of all parties.

³³⁸ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 21, 16 November 1927, Motion by Deputy Redmond - Disabilities of British Ex-servicemen.

The ex-servicemen's grievances expressed to the Lavery Committee in relation to the Free State civil service pay was a failure to acknowledge the separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom. One group that was prioritised over the ex-servicemen and indeed all other segments of Irish society were National army veterans who were given preferential treatment regarding state employment. The government encouraged private companies to do likewise. The motives of the Free State Government were, as with the British Government after the Armistice, to avoid the unemployment of large groups of demobilising soldiers, and the methods used were the same. British ex-servicemen though were recruited in large numbers into the National army. If figures that they constituted half of its strength are correct then over 25% of the estimated British veterans would have seen service with it. As such they would have enjoyed the employment privileges outlined above and perhaps more importantly would have had the redemptive experience in the new order of helping to ensure the Free State's survival. They helped defeat the Irregulars and their importance to the army was such that pro-Treaty republicans who fought alongside them in the Civil War complained British ex-servicemen were given preferential treatment, both with regards to promotion and retention. A problem for the Irish Government was that despite the complaints of British ex-servicemen in terms of pensions, healthcare and housing, they received benefits immeasurably more than ex-National army veterans, still more than ex-Irregulars. Irrespective of the lack of any legal obligation, the Irish Government could not be seen to give practical support to British ex-servicemen when financial constraints precluded it providing for those with a greater claim to have helped in the establishment of an independent Ireland. Before the law the ex-servicemen were treated equally. Trust tenant associations used the legal system to further their aims and court decisions went both for and against them but with no indication of prejudice; indeed the summing up of Supreme Court judges indicated a sympathetic attitude towards them. The County Court system was used by

the Trust to evict tenants and there is little evidence that it operated any differently to that of any other landlord; tenants were evicted for cause. Cooper claimed that there would be sensitivities in the apparatus of the state being used to physically remove tenants but this was not the case; the police and the sheriff's office were used when needed. Both private landlords and the State with their social housing needed the ability to remove errant tenants and it would have made little sense to create unwanted precedents by an inconsistent approach to ex-servicemen. That the ex-servicemen were not discriminated against under the Cosgrave Government is perhaps unsurprising in the context of a review of the secondary literature which characterised it as seeking continuity and having a dependency on Britain, resulting in an unwillingness to erode its good will. While change may have been expected under a republican government, the de Valera administration was pragmatic in its approach, inherently conservative and made gradual changes, having moved significantly from its revolutionary origins. There were no appreciable changes in the civil service, police, the army or the judiciary. If Fianna Fáil saw no reason to purge 'Free Staters', their bitter opponents, it is unlikely they would have wished to target ex-servicemen, many of whom supported them.

Remembrance ceremonies continued throughout the interwar years. Although Armistice Day was often marked by republican protests, particularly due to its association with imperialism, these were marginal in comparison to the support of the majority. Large numbers attended; both ex-servicemen and the public, inevitably so given the extent to which the Great War had affected Irish communities. As many ex-servicemen became Fianna Fáil supporters it is unlikely that they associated Remembrance with support for Britain, even the BLSI was sensitive to the risks of political connotation. That Free State Governments dealt sensitively with Great War commemoration was inevitable, given the disputed nature of commemoration in Ireland. This was epitomised by the attitude of the Cosgrave Government to the location of a National Monument to the Great War. Perhaps more pertinently one was

built; there is no equivalent in loyalist Ulster. It was completed under the de Valera Government which in a time of fiscal limitation provided the finance. Despite some restrictions related to the trappings of imperialism there was little change under a republican government to the nature of public commemoration; that was only to come with the Second World War.

There is little to indicate that the ex-servicemen 'formed a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society'. The Lavery Committee stated that the grievances of ex-servicemen reflected those of their social class, they were not specific to them. Housing problems and unemployment afflicted many, particularly of the working class to which many ex-servicemen belonged. The conditions of which ex-servicemen complained were not due to war service. The ex-servicemen who received pensions, set for a United Kingdom cost of living, and housing, free of rent after 1933, had advantages over much of the population and this may have incurred some resentment. The ex-servicemen were not subject to discrimination according the British Legion, the British Ministry of Pensions, the Trust and politicians who were supportive of their interests. The first two organisations stating so in reports, the Legion in 1926, the Ministry of Pensions a decade later in 1936, after the advent of a republican government. Reputable figures such as Mahon were emphatic in declaring so. All had good contacts throughout Ireland and none a vested interest in such a conclusion, rather they would have had an inclination to emphasise any discrimination that existed, particularly in the case of the British Legion. The Ministry's report also stated that many of the higher posts in the civil service, army and police were held by British ex-servicemen. The Trust's records provide an indication that many ex-servicemen were in employment, often in government jobs. Some preferred unemployment to ensure continuity of their pension. The ex-servicemen were not a cowered segment of society; they were prepared to lobby vociferously with the Irish and British Governments for what they considered their rights and

made full use of the courts and newspapers, the mainstream press generally giving them sympathetic coverage.

They were disadvantaged in comparison to their counterparts in Britain. Although as the Ministry's report states, many large companies did favour ex-servicemen and their children, and voluntary organisations helped on the basis of need not politics, the level of societal support offered in Britain was lacking in the Free State. The Great War did not enter into the ethical conscience of the Free State, with the result that those who volunteered their services excited neither interest nor sympathy. Bourke argues that the ex-servicemen endured the psychological trauma of returning to a much changed Ireland that no longer recognised their motives for fighting. She writes that as with returning Vietnam veterans, Irish ex-servicemen suffered from an absence of 'purification rights' from a grateful populace willing to bestow understanding and forgiveness on uneasy consciences.³³⁹ The Ministry of Pension report from 1936 noted that the ex-serviceman 'suffers from a sense of inferiority and helplessness born of his isolation from England and the apathy and lack of interest that surround him'.³⁴⁰ As Higgins made clear, theirs was not the sacrifice upon which the Free State was founded. Mentally disabled Irish veterans suffered further disadvantages. Bourke writes, 'not only were they outcasts for having fought for England instead of Ireland, their maddened minds debarred them from "making good" in the War of Independence and the Civil War'.³⁴¹ The ex-servicemen had no claim on their fellow countrymen for services rendered and lacked the level of communal support enjoyed by their counterparts in the United Kingdom, a particular disadvantage for the large majority who received neither pensions nor housing.

But there is a difference between a state and society that does not recognise the motives for fighting and one that discriminates against those who fought. There are several

³³⁹ Bourke, 'Shell-Shock, Psychiatry and the Irish Soldier', 155, 158.

³⁴⁰ TNA, PIN15/758, MoP report, 1936.

³⁴¹ Bourke, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma', 68.

reasons why ex-servicemen have come to be considered as marginalised. Attitudes towards them are significantly perceived through the prism of commemoration, particularly Remembrance Day an occasion in which they received significant media coverage and where the displays and parades gave publicity to the British connection. Republican protests, and particularly restrictions following the Second World War, distort the reality that in the interwar years remembrance ceremonies received considerable support, as contemporary unpublished correspondence from republicans acknowledges. Perhaps even more fundamentally, the term ex-servicemen suggests a homogeneity that did not exist. The only occasion when ex-servicemen could be considered as a class was when remembering fallen comrades but in reality this was only one small part of an ex-serviceman's life. They did not recognise themselves as a class and nor should they be considered as thus. War service did not define them, only a minority were members of ex-servicemen's societies; nor did loyalty to Britain. The BLSI with its imperial connotations struggled to survive. Many had fought in the IRA, more in the National army. A majority became Fianna Fáil supporters. It seems unlikely in daily life that the ex-servicemen would have been marginalized because of loyalty to the Crown. They were distributed through all categories of the community and they could take opposing sides. In terms of housing, the interest of tenants and those without accommodation were in conflict. The Legion and the Trust condemned the former for a lack of 'comradeship'. Loyalist lobbying groups found it useful to emphasize the victimisation and isolation of ex-servicemen. But it was not service to the British Crown that divided society; rather it was the Civil War which split families and communities. The Civil War was an inconvenient truth; later republican historiography found the ex-servicemen a more acceptable target than the group truly isolated by the conflict, the anti-Treaty republicans. Both loyalist lobbying groups and republicans found reason to portray the ex-servicemen as marginalised; it was a convenient collusion but at odds with the evidence.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The reaction to returning Irish soldiers was significantly influenced by the changes the War had wrought on Irish society. At the onset of the conflict they had volunteered in large numbers to fight for the liberty of small nations and Home Rule. They marched off accompanied by cheering crowds and the promise of a heroes' welcome home. In 1916, whilst its soldiers fought in the British army, Ireland witnessed an insurrection, the Easter Rising, against British rule. Its violent suppression and the intended introduction of conscription led to a significant change in sentiment and increased demands for an independent republic rather than limited Home Rule. The soldiers came home to a much changed Ireland that no longer recognised their motives for fighting and which was at war with the country in whose army they had served; the initial reaction to them has to be understood in that context. Leonard claims that the ex-servicemen were subject to 'the extremes of intimidation', and of the estimated 120 ex-servicemen killed by the republicans during the conflict, 'the vast majority appear to have been killed simply as a retrospective punishment for their service in the Great War', and that they 'formed a marginalised and unwelcome group in Irish society'. The reality was more complex and multifaceted. Intimidation was mostly for reasons other than war service; it was geographically focussed and occurred within a limited time period. After the conflict ex-servicemen were not marginalised by the state or the community. While perhaps not to the extent of the more unrealistic claims on them, the imperial power fulfilled its obligations, certainly with benefits

that compared favourably with their counterparts in Great Britain, and which were provided despite accentuating circumstances.

Of the claims to the IGC whose files represent the most comprehensively documented archive of violence and intimidation by republicans against loyalists, only 7.6% related to ex-servicemen, only 2.1% claimed that the actions against them were due to war service. In republican strongholds there were cases of IRA intimidation of veterans during the conflict but, in almost all cases, the causes of their intimidation was for reasons other than war service per se, and were mostly applicable to other members of the population. Ironically bogus claimants were the ones most likely to claim persecution due to army service. Given the devastating impact spies had on IRA ranks, extremes of violence were reserved for those who informed. In a vicious war the IRA targeted anyone they suspected of collaborating; the IMA/BMH files contain many such examples, some happen to be ex-servicemen. There was no campaign specifically against veterans. If the IRA had wished to undertake one, there were many high profile ex-officers to target. Most victims of violence were from the same community background as IRA members, and it was the local knowledge arising from this which made them such a threat. The number of ex-servicemen who lodged claims with the IGC was extremely low, both in relation to the total number of claims and as a percentage of ex-servicemen. The geographical distribution of violence of all types, as recorded in both the IGC and IMA/BMH files, was highly focussed with most taking place in Munster. Violence and intimidation towards ex-servicemen and the population in general closely correlated, indicating that ex-servicemen were not particularly singled out. There were considerable areas of Ireland where violence was minimal. Support for extreme republicanism, and even more so its methods, varied by geography and decreased over time. Loyalty to Britain did not define those who volunteered at the outset of the Great War, even less so did it on their return. Many were disillusioned, often to the extent of the joining the

IRA. It would have been ironic had they persecuted men for fighting in the same army in which they too had served.

With the formation of the Free State, the ex-servicemen were no longer domiciled in the United Kingdom but the British Government, due to their service in the Great War, had an obligation to them. Conversely they were citizens of the Irish Free State but its formation was not based on their sacrifice, indeed it was achieved in conflict with the army whose uniform they had worn, and therefore the new state felt no obligation to them. The British obligation had several motives. During the conflict there was a concern that disaffected ex-servicemen would use their skills on behalf of the republicans. There was a legal obligation; in the Treaty leading to the formation of the Free State, responsibility for any support for the ex-servicemen arising from their war service was specifically excluded from the new Irish Government. Morally there was also a perceived debt to those whose service to the Crown had caused them hardship. There were well-orchestrated lobbying campaigns by veterans' associations, particularly the British Legion, and more general loyalist organisations such as SILRA, aimed at both the government and the British public. Legal, moral, pragmatic and political pressures therefore combined to ensure that the British Government was faced with the need to fulfil a special obligation to Irish ex-servicemen in the south, which was reflected in the provision of land and houses; pensions, training and health care for the physically and mentally disabled; and until the formation of the Free State employment programmes. The British were remarkably persistent in discharging this obligation in a time of conflict and thereafter in a country in which they had limited and decreasing jurisdiction. Prior to the transfer of power, the Ministries of Labour and Transport provided employment schemes for ex-servicemen, and newly established government training centres for the disabled often remained in operation, despite threats to staff. In an initiative unique to Ireland, 2,626 ex-servicemen's cottages were built in the south, including garden city developments that were

not emulated by Free State housing projects for many years. In November 1927, the Dáil Éireann established a committee to investigate the complaints of ex-servicemen, which concluded 'nothing was brought to our notice to suggest that such ex-servicemen form a class with grievances or disabilities common to them as a class', they were 'common to all members of the (Irish) community'. The grievances were also similar to those of ex-servicemen in Britain. Although pension issues caused most complaints, the Irish ex-serviceman was far more generously treated than his British counterpart. There may have been reasons for this, Irish recruitment patterns meant that those who survived had fought longer, but this seems insufficient to explain the extent of the favourable treatment. A larger proportion of the men who enlisted in what became the Irish Free State were pensioned than elsewhere; the pension costs per enlistment in relation to men, widows or dependents were in all cases significantly higher, in some examples three times as much as their counterparts in Great Britain. Those ex-servicemen in receipt of pensions and housing enjoyed benefits in excess of veterans in Britain and such benefits gave them an advantage over their fellow countrymen. Most of them though did not receive such benefits. Ex-servicemen complained that they were excluded from the advantage of assisted passage offered to ex-servicemen in the United Kingdom under the Empire Settlement Act. In reality, residency requirements were often waived and privileges extended to southern Irish citizens. Although in housing and pension benefits the Irish ex-servicemen compared favourably with their counterparts in the United Kingdom, in general the British State's treatment of its veterans was inadequate, particularly in comparison to that of other participants in the Great War, including Germany. In Britain this deficiency was compensated for by a societal effort. Some of the larger firms did help ex-servicemen, but for the most part the support of the community and business was absent in the Free State. In this respect their experiences mirrored those of German veterans where the dearth of societal support caused hostility towards the state. In Ireland veterans

directed their antagonism to the British Government and its representatives. The lack of societal support meant not just the absence of practical assistance but the loss of reconciliation with those who had sent them to fight. After a bitter war they lacked the 'purification rights' derived from appreciation of their sacrifice by state and community. Great War service brought no special favouritism; that was reserved for ex-Free State veterans. The Free State Government followed the precedent set by the British Government in giving priority to its demobilising soldiers. However, perhaps a quarter of all ex-servicemen served in the National army; they made up half its number and in addition to employment preferences would have had the redemptive experience of helping to ensure the survival of the new state.

Following the creation of the Free State there is little evidence that either through the state apparatus or the community, ex-servicemen were marginalised. The Cosgrave Government showed on numerous occasions their active support for the ex-servicemen. In May 1925 Cosgrave wrote a detailed letter, six pages in length, supporting the cause of the tenants of the ex-servicemen's cottages in seeking a rent reduction. In November 1927, members from all parties in the Dáil Éireann spoke in support of examining the grievances of the ex-servicemen although some like Patrick O'Dowd of Fianna Fáil, an ex-serviceman who joined the IRA, argued against the involvement of the British Legion. Consideration for the ex-servicemen was not synonymous with support for Britain. With their desire for close ties with the British Government it may have been anticipated that the Cosgrave Government would be supportive of British ex-servicemen, but also under the republican de Valera Government they were not subject to unequal treatment. A report in 1936 by the British Ministry of Pensions stated that 'there is no discrimination against ex-servicemen', a similar conclusion to the British Legion from a decade earlier. The Ministry's report also noted that ex-servicemen held many of the higher posts in the civil service, army and police. Trust

reports show that a considerable number of their tenants were employed by the Free State Government and its agencies, despite many of them being members of the British Legion. The ex-servicemen were no cowered segment of society and were prepared to lobby aggressively for their interests with the Irish and British Governments and through the courts, often with success and mostly supported by a sympathetic media.

The view that ex-servicemen were persecuted and marginalised became persuasive. There were several reasons for this. Partly it was the success of loyalist lobbying groups such as SILRA who found perceived discrimination against those who had fought for Britain brought a sympathetic and well publicised response from both the media and politicians, perhaps more so than an absentee landowner suffering damage to his property. Another reason is that research into the experiences of ex-servicemen within the period examined by this thesis remains comparatively limited. Cronin and Regan write that for many years even the professional historical community did not venture far outside the parameters of republican historiography.¹ Since the 1990s there have been a number of studies on violence and intimidation during the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars. These have inevitably focussed on the main areas of republican activity in Munster, but it is misleading to consider that the events that took place there were representative of much of Ireland. In many of the studies, such as Hart's detailed assessment of violence in County Cork, ex-servicemen are included tangentially. As one of the first academics to focus specifically on ex-servicemen Leonard's work is influential and much quoted. Her interviews of surviving veterans were timely and an important contribution to an oral record, but they were insufficient basis for a generalised conclusion that ex-servicemen were intimidated and marginalised. Much research predates the release of the IMA/BMH files which provide an additional, although still biased, perspective to the RIC and newspaper reports. Borgonovo's work is more recent and he is

¹ Cronin and Regan (eds.), *Ireland: The Politics of Independence*, 4.

one of the first academics to refute that ex-servicemen were subject to widespread violence and discrimination. Few researchers have gone beyond the period of conflict, except in the area of remembrance, and this has precluded a more holistic understanding of the experiences of ex-servicemen, particularly with regard to their everyday lives in the interwar period.

Another factor is that the perception of ex-servicemen has often been through the prism of historiography and commemoration. After the Great War, Irish society remained multifaceted but the historiographies developed by the nascent states in the north and south were uncomplicated and non-inclusive, giving a sense of purpose and identity to their respective supporters to the exclusion of others. In the south with the advent of a Republican Government a historiography was developed based on the idea of republican predestination; a linear path to a republic free of British association that was inevitable and immutable and which its supporters claimed reflected the nationalist aspirations of the majority of its citizens. The northern Irish state also found it convenient to propagate a simple historiography, this time in contrast based on Protestantism, unionism and loyalty to Britain. The Ulster Protestants returned from the War to a heroes' welcome, the political situation accentuating the need to laud their achievements. In 1966 Ulster and Ireland commemorated the 50th anniversary of the events that so defined their historiography, respectively the Somme and the Rising. These events had achieved a mythological status far outweighing their original relevance and both dismissed the contribution of nationalists who had served in the British army. Irish state building distorted the past by foregrounding the winners while consigning the losers, the thousands of nationalist Irishmen who had fought in the War, to a 'national amnesia'. In the decade after the Great War, ex-servicemen attended commemoration ceremonies often with the attendance of Free State officials and local dignitaries, indeed in 1924 Dublin witnessed a remembrance ceremony which in size and enthusiasm caused republicans to despair. Although with the advent of a Fianna Fáil

Government there were restrictions on the wearing of uniforms and the display of flags, well attended commemoration ceremonies were still held. The most significant change came with the advent of the Second World War when, to preserve neutrality, the government banned commemoration parades, due to their inevitable association with Britain. Irish neutrality opened up an emotional and political gap between Britain and Eire. The isolationism of the war years, and the breaking of the final historic links with Britain in 1949 when Ireland became a republic and left the Commonwealth, caused both the state and national consciousness to become even more distant from a British association and World War One commemorations. Remembrance remained hostage to the prevailing political climate. In the 1950s veterans attended remembrance ceremonies at Islandbridge but gradually it fell into serious disrepair, while the public space for commemoration declined still further with the advent of the Northern Ireland troubles.

Irish ex-servicemen became excluded from Irish historiography and their sacrifice ignored in state commemoration but this does not mean that they were marginalised from Irish society or subject to discrimination. It would be misleading to consider the experiences of the ex-servicemen in the interwar years only through the perspective of historiography and commemoration. Fitzpatrick writes, 'Irish public life continues to dwell in imagined pasts as well as an equally fictionalised present, the link being most powerfully expressed through commemoration'.² Annual remembrance ceremonies received significant media coverage, the displays and parades giving publicity to the British connection. But these were the only occasions when ex-servicemen could be considered as a class. War service did not define them and nor did loyalism; only a minority were members of ex-servicemen societies. The British Legion struggled to recruit in Ireland. Unlike pre-war soldiers they formed a large segment of the population and were part of the social fabric of their communities, they were

² Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the IFS', 186.

distributed through all classes and across the political spectrum. Attempts to form a political party to represent their interests failed. The majority became supporters of republican Fianna Fáil. Many had fought in the IRA, more in the National army.

The Rising may have become the defining event in southern Irish historiography but it was those who most adhered to its principles that after the conflict found themselves excluded from public life and employment and forced to emigrate. National servicemen, some half of whom had fought in the British Army, were given precedent over IRA soldiers who had opposed the treaty. Following the Great War, it was not service to the British Crown that divided society; the civil war split families and communities, creating rifts that never healed. In Irish historiography the ex-servicemen were a more acceptable target than the group truly marginalised by the conflict, the anti-Treaty republicans.

The perception of the ex-servicemen changed with the political climate. Foster writes that by the 1960s, and with the advent of the Troubles, the accepted orthodoxies of north and south were called into question as ‘it became devastatingly evident that the two cultures had been hermetically sealed into two divergent interpretations of history; the production of history-writing to serve the moment became, as so often in the Irish past, a commonplace’.³ Hutchinson refers to ‘disillusionment with the legacy of nationalism emerging in the late 1960s as a result of the resurgence of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and the sense of failure of the Irish Republic as a state’. He writes ‘Irish historians have called into question almost all the verities of the nationalist perspective: the idea of a pre-conquest Irish nation, the conception of Ireland as a victim eternally set against a ruthless and manipulative British oppressor’.⁴ The Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 started the peace process which allowed a reassessment of Ireland’s role in the Great War. Indeed reconciliation and remembrance became intrinsically linked with the intention of ‘using the

³ Roy Foster, ‘The Problem of Writing Irish History’, *History Today*, 34:1 (1984), 28.

⁴ Hutchinson, ‘Irish Nationalism’, 103.

Great War dead as a means of healing the wounds of the contemporary Northern Ireland Conflict'. The change was caused not only by an end to conflict; Ireland became more confident and cosmopolitan, defining itself as a member of the European Community rather than in conflict with Britain.

Loyalist propagandists, the dictates of republican historiography, a reliance on the prism of commemoration and perhaps the narrow focus of academic research have combined to distort an understanding of the experiences of Irish ex-servicemen, not only during the conflict but in the interwar decades, following the formation of the Free State. They were not neglected by the imperial power. They may have lacked the emotional and practical support from within their own communities that war service might otherwise have brought, but they were not persecuted in the time of conflict for service in the British Army, and in the period thereafter they were not marginalised in Irish society. Indeed they did not even define themselves as a homogeneous group outside of remembrance; they were neither heroes nor traitors. Some suffered the economic hardship inherent within their class, many as individual citizens prospered in society and public life.

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