

**KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE TREATY**

A special meeting of the Kildare County Council was held on Friday, having been called on the following requisition: "You are requested to attend a meeting of the Kildare Co. Council. To be held at the above address (council chambers Naas) on Friday next the 30th at 11:30 a.m. to consider the terms of the proposed treaty between Ireland and England. – John Fitzgerald, Hugh Colohan, Michael Fitzsimons, Mark Carroll, James Cregan."

Mr. Eamonn Moran, vice chairman presided and there were also present Messrs. H. Colohan, J. J. Fitzgerald, J. Cregan, M. Carroll, T. Harris, H. Fay, N. Hannigan, M. Fitzsimons, N. Travers, Mr. W. F. Coffey, secretary was in attendance. The chairman asked if the meeting should be held in private. Messrs. Fitzgerald, Faye, Colohan, Fitzsimons and other members expressed themselves in favor of the meeting being a public one.

Mr. Harris said he did not like discussing the matter at all as the question was a most momentous one and they had not full information as to the facts leading up to the present position. Mr. Fitzgerald proposed resolution expressing the council's opinion in favor of ratification of the treaty and calling on the five Dail representatives for Kildare and Wicklow to support it. Mr. Fitzgerald was proceeding to address the meeting when the chairman said the question of the first meeting being private or public must first be settled. Mr. Travers expressed views similar to Mr. Harris.

Mr. Fitzgerald, proposed and Mr. Colohan seconded that the meeting be in public. Mr. Travers proposed to be private but there was no seconder for the amendment and motion was passed. Mr. Travers said he did not mind publicity if the rest of the council wanted it. Mr. Fitzgerald again proposed the resolution in favor of ratification and said that the deputies of the Dail were elected in 1918 on the republican ticket. When the truce was entered into with English representatives, for the time being anyway, the Republic was lost sight of. As far as he was concerned, he thought the plenipotentiaries did their work well. He looked on the treaty as a long step forward towards full independence, and looked forward to all they would possess in their own army, control of education and finance. They should pause well before rejecting all that. With the British Army out of Ireland. this country could never be reconquered. With regard to the partition of the north. the position was that economic pressure was bound to end it. With regard to the financial obligations incurred under the treaty, the counter claims which Ireland had against England would cover them several times over. Concluding, Mr. Fitzgerald said there was nothing in the nature of a split. The deputies were all honest and honorable and the minority would abide loyally by the decision of the majority. He had the assurance of the two Kildare deputies that they would be influenced by the public opinion in the constituency, and he held there was an overwhelming majority for the ratification all over the county.

Mr. H. Fay in seconding, said that 90 per cent of people of his district favored ratification. He agreed with Mr. Fitzgerald that the deputies in the Dail were carrying on a clean and honorable debate on the treaty under which, as Mr. Collins said. they would be masters in their own house, and they would have very little further to fight for. They had not, he admitted, gained the Republic. But he believed with Mr. Griffith that the difference was only a quibble of words. The country was in a bad way economically; some of the finest men in the country were getting relief in the union, and now they had a good opportunity to end all that and build up the industries of Ireland. He believed that the fight was won by the men who went out and shouldered the gun. All honor to them, and they saw the leaders of these men – Collins, Mulcahy, McKeon, O'Sullivan, Lynch, and others – today with Griffith for peace, and nothing influenced him more in coming to a decision than that. Mr. H. Colohan supported the motion, and said if they availed of the powers conferred by the Treaty, they

would build up a nation powerful and, eventually independent. They could get rid of English customs and English vice. He believed that independence was within easy reach under the Treaty. The deputies should be guided by the opinions of their constituents and 90 per cent of the people of Kildare were in favor of ratification.

Mr. Fitzsimmons also supported. Mr. Travers said he supported, not because of his own opinion but because he would not be truly representing the views of the people who sent him there if he did otherwise. Ireland would never be satisfied till the last link with England was severed. Mr. Harris said he desired to make his position clear. He was a Republican and stood by Clark, Pearse and others in 1916. and he was a Republican still. He would not vote against ratification, but he would keep himself clear by not voting at all. He was glad that De Valera took up the attitude he did for he believed they had nothing to thank England for. They had done their best in war and in threats of war. The names of the Fenians were dragged in the mud by place-hunters and people of that kind, and that should not be allowed to happen again. He still stood for the old Republican ideal and would continue to do so.

The Chairman said he was a Republican all his life, and he was against ratification and opposed to the resolution. The resolution was put and passed, the chairman dissenting and Mr. Harris not voting.

