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The I.R.B. Supreme Council, 1868-78

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Source: *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 75 (Mar., 1975), pp. 286-332

Published by: [Irish Historical Studies Publications Ltd](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30005192>

Accessed: 17/06/2014 06:42

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XXXII THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL, 1868-78

INTRODUCTION

It is of the nature of a revolutionary conspiracy that it tends to leave as little trace as possible of its internal history; and it is not surprising that documentary evidence of the activity of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood is scanty. The documents printed below are for this reason of peculiar interest and importance. They consist of the following :

- (A) Message from the I.R.B. supreme council to the Irish people, 24 April 1868;
- (B) Constitution of the I.R.B. supreme council, 18 August 1869;
- (C) Address of the I.R.B. supreme council to the people of Ireland, January 1870;
- (D) Address of the I.R.B. supreme council to the men of the I.R.A., [17 March 1873];
- (E) Amended constitution of the I.R.B. and of the supreme council, 17 March 1873;
- (F) Notes of proceedings of the I.R.B. supreme council, 1874(?)–8.

(A)–(E) are official statements of the supreme council which, though printed, were issued for secret circulation within the organisation and intended to be destroyed when read; (F), never hitherto printed, is a record, partly in shorthand, of the proceedings of council meetings in 1874(?)–8, kept by the secretary of the council, C. G. Doran. All these documents are from Doran's private papers except (A) and (C), which are from Fenian papers in the State Paper Office, Dublin, where there is another copy of (B), but without the appendix. They fill gaps in the fundamental sources for fenian history during the period when the movement was rehabilitating itself after the fiasco of 1867, and endeavouring both to preserve its integrity and to meet the challenge presented by the rise of the home rule movement under Isaac Butt.

Charles Guilfoyle Doran (1835–1909), of Dunworth House, Queenstown, for many years clerk of works to the great neo-Gothic

cathedral there, of which the foundation stone was laid in 1869, was secretary and a leading member of the supreme council in the 1870s. He was greatly respected for his integrity and his dedication to advanced nationalism,¹ but his efficiency as secretary of the supreme council did not match his zeal as a nationalist. He maintained a wide-ranging correspondence, by no means wholly with other fenians or exclusively on fenian matters; and a substantial portion of his papers, including many belonging to the 1870s, has recently come to light. We are indebted for the use of them to the late Michael Clifton, one of Doran's grandsons.²

The supreme council was the representative governing body of the fenian movement, set up after the 1867 rising to replace the original autocratic system of James Stephens. Document (A), dated 24 April 1868, may be its earliest official statement, addressed ostensibly to the people of Ireland, actually to the members of the I.R.B.; and it is important to observe that the terms Irish Republic, Irish Republican Army, and Irish Republican Brotherhood all appear in it. It was issued soon after the supreme council was set up and before its first formal constitution (document B) was adopted. Claiming as the representative body of the I.R.B. to have authority to act in the name of the Irish Republican Army, and of the Irish people in Ireland, England and Scotland, from both of whom it professes to derive its mandate, the council explicitly rejects any interference in the area of its jurisdiction by fenian organisations in America. Deploring the divisions that have frustrated American fenianism, it announces that an accredited agent will explain the requirements of the republican cause in Ireland to both sections of the fenian body in America, that is, the Fenian Brotherhood, the original organisation founded in New York by James Stephens and John O'Mahony in 1858, and its later rival, the United Brotherhood or Clan na Gael, founded by Jerome J. Collins, also in New York, on 20 June 1867.^{2a} The council goes on to castigate the 1867 rising as a 'disastrous outbreak', caused partly by the determination of certain American fenians 'to sustain their influence' and partly by 'the desire of some very brave men to precipitate the issue'. But the army that was to have been led to victory was grossly unprepared, through lack of military equipment, 'to attain even the most temporary success, except by fortuitous

¹ William O'Brien, *Recollections* (1905), pp 110-11.

² See Leon Ó Broin, 'A Charles J. Kickham correspondence' in *Studies* (autumn 1974), pp 251-8.

^{2a} *Devoy's post bag*, 1, 52-3.

circumstances and such an expenditure of human blood as no Christian men would sanction'. It is to prevent a repetition of premature military action, as well as to expedite the progress of military preparation and to restrain from violence and outrage all who have sworn allegiance to the Irish republic and its government, that the supreme council has been instituted.

The message concludes with reflections on the two sensational incidents that had followed the rising. The rescue of the I.R.A. officers, Col. Thomas J. Kelly and Capt. Timothy Deasy, from a police van in Manchester (18 September 1867) was 'justified by the law of nations'; the killing of the policeman in charge of them, Sergeant Charles Brett, was 'the result of an accident'; and the trial and execution of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien for the killing were the negation of justice. On the other hand the council is unsparing in its condemnation of the explosion outside the wall of Clerkenwell prison, in the city of London (13 December 1867), intended to effect the escape of the imprisoned fenian, Richard O'Sullivan Burke, but resulting only in the death of twelve innocent people and injury to many more. 'This dreadful and deplorable event . . . was the work of persons . . . without authority'; and the council saw it not only with horror but also with indignation: 'were the perpetrators within our control . . . their punishment would be commensurate with our sense of justice'.

In thus expressing the outlook and aims of the newly-formed council, document (A) serves as an appropriate curtain-raiser to the other five documents here printed. Document (B), the original constitution of the council, dated 18 August 1869, is so little known that P. S. O'Hegarty, an authority on fenian history and a member of the supreme council before 1916, believed that 'a definite written constitution' was not promulgated till 1873.⁸ The 1873 constitution (document D) was an expanded and amended version of that of 1869. It is here printed from a manuscript copy among Doran's papers, in the preparation of which Doran's copy of the 1869 constitution was used and marked. A printed copy of it was produced in evidence for *The Times* before the *Times*-Parnell commission on 16 July 1889 and used in the cross-examination of Matthew Harris, who had been a member of the I.R.B. when the amended constitution was drawn up and was present at the convention that approved it. He said that he had then had a copy but, in accordance with the general practice, had

⁸ O'Hegarty, *Ire. under the union* (1952), p. 466.

studied and then destroyed it. He confirmed many of its clauses and rejected others, as read to him by cross-examining counsel (Sir Henry James) from a printed copy that was evidently identical in substance with the second part of (D).⁴ A copy made by Bulmer Hobson from one 'printed for the supreme council about 1910' is identical (save on a few points of detail) with (D). Hobson notes that 'only a few copies were ever in existence at any one time'.⁵ The 1873 constitution remained in force till 1917, when it was replaced by a new constitution.⁶

The two I.R.B. constitutions printed below differ mainly in three ways. (a) The first, though describing itself as the 'constitution of the Irish Republic', is in fact only the constitution of the supreme council of the I.R.B., whereas the second comprises not only the constitution of the supreme council but also that of the I.R.B. as a whole. The second part of the 1873 document corresponds broadly with the whole of the 1869 document, while the first part of the later document is new. (b) The assertion in the constitution of 1869 (clause III) that 'every act or attempted act to subvert the authority of the supreme council . . . shall be deemed treason, and punishable with death' is qualified in that of 1873 to read: 'every act or attempted act of any member of the I.R.B. to subvert the authority of the supreme council shall in time of peace be a grave misdemeanour and punishable accordingly, and, in time of war, every such act or attempted act shall be treason and punishable with death' (pt II, clause 8). (c) The first part of the 1873 constitution commits the I.R.B. to three new principles: while preparing for war it shall confine itself, in time of peace, to exercising moral influence; it shall not resort to war until the time for doing so shall have been decided by a majority of the Irish nation; pending such a decision it shall support every movement calculated to advance the cause of Irish independence consistently with the maintenance of its own integrity. Judged by these principles, the 1867 rising and the Clerkenwell explosion stood condemned; and the dynamite campaign of the 1880s and the Easter rising of 1916 itself, so far as the I.R.B. was concerned, were unlawful. More significant

⁴ *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, x, 172-6.

⁵ Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland yesterday and tomorrow* (Tralee, 1968), pp 103-7.

⁶ Diarmuid Lynch, *The I.R.B. and the 1916 insurrection . . .*, ed. Florence O'Donoghue (Cork, 1957), pp 32-3. The constitution of 1917 is the document printed in H. B. C. Pollard, *The secret societies of Ireland: their rise and progress* (London, 1922), pp 290-303, where it is described as 'Constitution of the I.R.B. in 1914'.

for the immediate situation was the principle of supporting other movements for national independence. For this opened the way for the policy of giving provisional support to Butt's home-rule movement, adopted by a number of leading fenians⁷ before the critical conference held at the Rotunda, Dublin, in November 1873, at which Barry, O'Connor Power and Doran himself were among the fenian speakers who endorsed Butt's initiative.⁸

This deviation from what had been fenian orthodoxy led to deep-seated and passionately-felt differences within the fenian body on both sides of the Atlantic. It was later claimed by the strict-observance fenian, John Daly of Limerick, that just before the Rotunda conference Butt gave a secret pledge to Doran, Barry and others as the price of fenian support. This was a signed statement to the effect that 'if the English parliament did not grant him a home-rule bill inside of three years—that was, by the year 1876—he would come back to Dublin and submit himself to the fenian party'.⁹ No proof of this statement has ever been produced, and it is inherently unlikely that Butt, with his great legal experience, would have put his hand to such a document. But there is contemporary reference to the three-year limit, and from 1876 there was open fighting between fenians and home-rulers at home-rule meetings in Ireland, England and Scotland, John Daly being conspicuous for his animosity against the leading opportunist fenian, O'Connor Power. Doran's notes of the proceedings of the supreme council, and related documents among his papers, cast further light on the fenian split over the home-rule question and in other ways augment our knowledge of fenian history.

There is no evidence that a formal and authenticated record of the proceedings of the supreme council was kept at this time, and good reason why it should not have been. But some record of decisions taken was necessary, and for most of the 70s the man whose duty it would have been to keep it was Doran. His notes, printed below, bear no official title or authentication; but it is beyond question, both from internal evidence and from external confirmatory sources, that they

⁷ R. B. O'Brien, *Parnell* (1898), i, 64-9; William O'Brien, *Recollections* (1905), pp 139-41; T. de V. White, *The road of excess* (1946), pp 239-41, 262, 272-82; Thornley, *Isaac Butt* (1964), ch. iv.

⁸ *Proceedings of the home rule conference held at the Rotunda, Dublin, on the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st November 1873 . . .* (Dublin: Irish Home Rule League, 1874).

⁹ John Daly's reminiscences in *Irish Freedom*, Apr. 1913, quoted in Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, pp 161-2.

amount to a quasi-official record, made by the council's chief executive, at, or soon after, the meetings to which they refer, and preserved by him, for the purpose of carrying on the council's business. They are written in Doran's hand, on seventeen pages of flimsy paper, stapled together, and without a title-page. They were highly portable, could easily have been concealed or destroyed, and their contents were to some extent disguised by the writer's use of shorthand for the place of meeting, the names of members present, and occasionally for other matters. There are complete notes for only four meetings—those of 13 June and 8 August 1875, and of 28 May and 20 August 1876—together with incomplete and undated notes of a meeting probably held in August 1874,¹⁰ agenda for an adjourned meeting on 21 August 1876, a table, dated 28 January 1877, of the strength of the I.R.B. in Munster, and five pages of loosely-written jottings, relating to a meeting of (?) March 1878.¹¹ Since the first part of the record for the meeting of (?) August 1874 is missing, it is impossible to say how far back the notes may originally have extended; and since they terminate with the meeting at which a new secretary is appointed, they probably represent, as they now stand, only the tail-end of a record that Doran may have begun when he became secretary at, or soon after, the inauguration of the I.R.B. constitution in 1869. Even as a tail-end they are incomplete, since they include no reference to council meetings in 1877.

The deciphering of Doran's shorthand involved a long pursuit, which, starting from consultations with skilled stenographers in Radio Telefís Éireann and Leinster House, led us to the Pitman Institute in London, the University of Bath, Mr Harry Butler (an outstanding authority on the history of British shorthand), and ultimately to Mr Frank Higenbottam, formerly city librarian of Canterbury. It was Mr Higenbottam who identified Doran's shorthand, from among the many British systems in existence at the time, as one invented by Samuel Taylor and first published in 1786¹² He succeeded in deciphering most of Doran's shorthand passages, though some difficulties remain, owing to Doran's practice of representing consonants only and of sometimes distorting the symbols or altering the slopes of the outlines.

¹⁰ See note 3 (below, p. 326).

¹¹ See notes 33-8 (below, p. 332).

¹² Samuel Taylor, *An essay intended to establish a standard for an universal system of stenography, or short-hand writing* (London, 1786; 3rd edition, 1801).

Doran's notes are fragmentary and allusive, but read in relation to other contemporary sources they have unique historical value, as documentary evidence of the composition, working and business of the council. They show that the usual place of meeting was the Imperial Hotel, in O'Connell Street, Dublin, where Clery's shop now stands; and they name eleven members, of whom three, Barry, Doran and Levy, attended all four meetings for which there are complete notes, and others, Biggar, Egan, Power and Ryan, attended three. But while eleven members are named, two of these, McGuinness and Walsh, appear for a time to have represented the same division of the I.R.B, the North of England,¹³ and the representative of Ulster, Robert Johnston (a timber merchant, of Belfast)¹⁴ is not mentioned, evidently because he did not attend. The membership of the council during 1875-6 was thus made up as follows.

<i>Representative members</i>			
<i>Ulster</i>	Robert Johnston	<i>South of England</i>	John Ryan
<i>Leinster</i>	John Levy	<i>North of England</i>	} John Walsh W. McGuinness
<i>Munster</i>	Charles Guilfoyle		
	Doran (secretary)	<i>Scotland</i>	John Torley
<i>Connacht</i>	John O'Connor Power		

Honorary members
 John Barry
 Joseph Gillis Biggar
 Patrick Egan (treasurer)
 Charles Joseph Kickham (president)

The honorary members were coopted by the representative members, who were elected by their respective divisions for a two-year period. The president, secretary and treasurer together formed the council's executive, but Doran's notes give no indication of its working.

The organisation of the I.R.B. as reflected in Doran's notes and in his correspondence was manifestly weak at the top. The supreme governing body met only twice a year—in theory at six-monthly intervals—in the spring and in August.¹⁵ The president, whose general health was precarious, was usually absent, and on the one occasion when he was present the chair was taken by another member. The three members of the executive lived far apart from each other

¹³ See note 16 (below, p. 329).

¹⁴ *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, vi, 370, viii, 372; M. F. Ryan, *Fenian memories* (Dublin, 1945), pp 64, 181.

¹⁵ See note 3 (below, p. 325).

—Kickham in Mullinahone, Egan in Dublin and Doran in Queens-town. Of this triumvirate Egan was by far the most effective organiser, but it is clear from Doran's correspondence that Doran and not Egan was the key man in the council, and that he failed to maintain adequate contact with his immediate colleagues either by writing or meetings. An unheaded and undated set of proposals for reforming the procedure both of the council and its executive, in the handwriting of O'Connor Power, is among Doran's papers, and accompanies a letter of 12 September 1876 in which Power protested against a council decision of 20 August¹⁶. It may be assumed that these proposals belong to 1876 and that they express the dissatisfaction felt by some members with the manner in which the council's business was being conducted. They are as follows.

That no money exceeding the sum of £20 be expended by the executive for any purpose unconnected with the military or organising departments of the organisation without a vote of the majority of the S.C. authorising such expenditure.

That at least one letter be sent by the executive to the members of the S.C. every month, and that a reply be sent by the members of the S.C. to the executive, and that all such letters shall be direct, that a clerk shall in no case be employed, and that each member of the S.C. shall have the addresses of the members of the S.C.

That the correspondence received by the executive from the S.C. and all other allies or friends of the S.C. shall be preserved and laid before the S.C. at each council meeting.

That before any business shall be proceeded with at the meetings of the S.C. the resolutions passed at previous meeting shall be read, and the S.C. shall determine how many of such resolutions are to be preserved in the records of the S.C.

That at each meeting of the S.C. the time at which the following meeting shall be held shall be fixed by a vote of the S.C.

There is nothing to indicate that these proposals were ever adopted as the standing orders they were presumably intended to become.

Most significant among the recurrent items on the council's agenda are the I.R.B.'s relations with the home-rule movement and with American fenianism. Here the notes document the struggle between fenian supporters and opponents of the policy of cooperation with

¹⁶ See below, pp 294-5. Power's proposals are written on two pages of a four-page unit forming one folded sheet. One of the two remaining pages is blank and on the other the three opening sections of pt 1 of the 1873 constitution (below, document E, pt 1, § 1-§ 3) are transcribed, with a few minor variations.

home-rulers, and reveal its culmination in a resolution proposed on 28 May 1876 and eventually, after intensive debate, carried on 20 August by a majority of one. This resolution is not recorded in Doran's notes, but an accompanying statement on a separate sheet obviously fills the gap. In Doran's handwriting, with alterations in several places, it reads as follows:

Proposed by *Leinster*¹⁷
 Seconded by *South of England*¹⁸

Resolved that the countenance which we have hitherto shown to the home rule movement be from this date and is hereby withdrawn, as three years experience of the working of the movement has proved to us that the revolutionary principles which we profess can be better served by our organisation existing on its own basis pure and simple, and we hereby request that all members of our organisation who may have any connection with the home rule movement will definitely withdraw from it their active cooperation¹⁹ within six months from this date.

It is tempting to identify 'three years experience' in the above document with John Daly's time-limit, but the wording of the resolution may mean nothing more than that fenians had been supporting Butt for three years. In any case we now have proof that the understanding between Butt and certain fenians, of which there is evidence from other sources, had the 'countenance' of the I.R.B. supreme council, and that this 'countenance' was formally withdrawn on 20 August 1876. At this point two members of the supreme council, Biggar and Power, had been home-rule M.P.s and pioneers in obstructionist tactics in the house of commons for over two years; and two others, Barry and Egan, were well-known and influential supporters of the home-rule movement.

The decision of 20 August 1876 was carried by four to three, the majority comprising Doran, Levy, Ryan and Turley, the minority Barry, Biggar and Egan. Of the four absentees, Kickham would certainly have voted for, and Power against, the resolution, and Walsh would probably have been against it. So the split among the council members was very nearly down the middle; and Power contended that a two-thirds majority of those present was necessary to carry the

¹⁷ John Levy (see note 11, below, p. 328).

¹⁸ John Ryan (see note 18, below, p. 329).

¹⁹ 'their connexion' appears by mistake for 'their active cooperation', in Leon Ó Broin, 'A Charles J. Kickham correspondence', loc. cit., p. 253.

resolution.²⁰ But his plea for reconsideration did not succeed, and the split became permanent. Barry, Biggar, Egan and Power continued to be active home-rulers, and a few years later were to be found taking a leading part with Davitt and Parnell in the Land League, from which Kickham and his supporters held firmly aloof. The time-limit in the resolution of 20 August 1876—‘within six months from this date’—was equivalent to ‘before the next half-yearly meeting of the council’; and the resolution was enforced against the recalcitrant quartet at a council meeting held on 5 March 1877.²¹ Barry and Egan resigned but Biggar and Power refused to do so and were expelled. The date of this final rupture has hitherto been generally given as August 1877,²² but a police informant’s report, dated 12 March 1877, says that ‘last week’ all four members ‘were compelled to resign’.²³ The explanation of this apparent discrepancy probably is that at the March meeting resignations were called for, that they were forthcoming from two of the four members, and that the decision to expel the other two was taken at the next meeting of the council, in August. Doran’s notes unfortunately do not cover the council meeting of 1877, of which the March meeting seems to have been the only one in the series under review about which the police obtained information.

As to American business, Doran’s notes reveal the close connections between the I.R.B. and the United Brotherhood or Clan na Gael, the major fenian organisation in America, then dominated by Dr William Carroll and John Devoy, which led to the setting up of machinery for joint action. At its seventh annual convention, of 8-15 August 1876, at Philadelphia, Clan na Gael took the initiative in providing for the formation of a revolutionary directory to combine the forces of the Irish revolutionary movement throughout the world under a single head. Three of the seven members of this body were to be nominated by the I.R.B. supreme council, three by the executive body of Clan na Gael, and one by the executive of the fenian organisation in

²⁰ [O’Connor Power] to Doran, 12 Sept. 1876 (Doran papers); and see below, document (E), note 23.

²¹ Torley to [Doran], 27 Feb. 1877 (Doran papers).

²² *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, vi, 372-4, vii, 5, viii, 365; O’Brien, *Parnell*, i, 156-7; Michael MacDonagh, *The home rule movement* (Dublin, 1920), p. 125; Healy, *Letters and leaders*, i, 44; *Devoy’s post bag*, i, 312.

²³ S.P.O., Fenian papers, Government files memoranda of 1876-80, no. 47 (see C. J. Woods, above, xviii, no. 70, p. 276).

Australia and New Zealand. A year later a revolutionary directory had come into existence, its Clan na Gael members being Carroll, Devoy and Patrick Mahon. In pursuance of the policy of combined action Carroll was sent to Europe as envoy of Clan na Gael in November 1877, and he figures in Doran's notes as speaking at the meeting of the I.R.B. supreme council of (?) March 1878.²⁴ The notes also reflect one of Clan na Gael's most successful and sensational undertakings, the *Catalpa* expedition from Boston, Mass., which succeeded in rescuing six fenian prisoners from Fremantle, Western Australia, in April 1876.²⁵

Other matters that came before the council were relations with the North of England division of the I.R.B., finance, a project to form classes or clubs that might serve as a means of collecting money from home-rulers and as useful training grounds, criticism by the secretary of members' unpunctuality in delivering their periodical reports, criticism of the secretary for inefficiency, and the secretary's wish to resign—he gave notice of his intention to do so at the first meeting recorded in his notes but his resignation seems not to have become effective till the last meeting.

Two of those who appear in Doran's notes, Biggar²⁶ and Levy,²⁷ gave evidence before the *Times*-Parnell commission in 1889, and both admitted not only that they had been members of the council but named the other members, Biggar's list omitting Power and McGuinness, whom Levy's included. Biggar, who was one of the Parnellites accused by *The Times*, gave some clear and explicit details about his own membership of the council, which substantially agree with Doran's record. He said that he had joined the I.R.B. in 1875 and had been coopted to the council about a year later; Doran's notes show that he was a member by August 1875. He said that he had attended only two or three meetings, and Doran's notes show that he attended three. His object in joining the I.R.B. and accepting a place on the supreme council had been to win over fenian support for parliamentary action as exemplified by the obstructionists in the home-rule party; he had been expelled from the council in August 1877 after refusing to resign in accordance with the council's resolution withdrawing its support from the home-rule movement. He did

²⁴ S.P.O., Fenian papers, A files, nos 500-02; *Devoy's post bag*, i, 130, 149, 181, 198-9, 262, 268, 270-71; notes 33, 36, 38 (below, p. 332).

²⁵ See note 5 (below, p. 326).

²⁶ See note 17 (below, p. 329).

²⁷ See note 11 (below, p. 328).

not believe in physical force, regarding the idea of a rebellion as absurd, and did all he could to checkmate the theories of the ultra-fenians. At the same time he described his opponents on the council as 'earnest men' from whom he had never heard a single suggestion in favour of crime or outrage.²⁸ All this is consistent with the evidence of Doran's notes and with other independent evidence, including that of Levy before the special commission.

Levy had been one of the ultras on the council but had resigned from it about 1878, and it was as a hostile witness that he appeared before the special commission. His evidence is confused, self-contradictory and inaccurate at many points. For example, he said that he joined the council at the end of 1876, that the council held only three meetings during his three and a half years of membership, and that he resigned six months after the resolution was passed withdrawing support from the home-rule movement, all of which is a tissue of error. Similarly he said that Power and Carroll were present when the resolution was passed, though in fact Power was sick in London at the time and Carroll was in Philadelphia. Yet despite its palpable errors of detail, which are more easily explicable by failing memory and muddle-headedness than by an attempt to deceive, Levy's evidence does convey a sense of actuality. Thus, for example, in reply to the question, did you understand . . . that the supreme council . . . looked upon the members of the parliamentary party as unfit to sit upon the council?, Levy made the convincing reply:

Yes, we considered that they had a double advantage—that they had a knowledge of the workings of the organisation, and that they were more inclined to lead it for their own advancement than for the advancement of the movement. That was the opinion entertained.²⁹

However unreliable its details, Levy's account of the supreme council is not at variance with Biggar's evidence, or with Doran's record.

The two addresses that complete the collection here printed may be regarded as examples of a type of document issued by the supreme council from time to time.³⁰ The first, which continues the theme of the 'message' of 24 April 1868 (document A), expresses the spirit of those who were endeavouring to reanimate and reorganise the revolutionary movement in the teeth of division and apathy. The term

²⁸ *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, viii, 365, 366, 375.

²⁹ *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, vi, 374; also pp 371, 372, 373, 375, 379.

³⁰ See below, p. 320.

I.R.B. is not used, and council describes itself as 'the first really elected government of the Irish Republic'. It calls on the people to make greater exertions and to show more self-denial in helping with the great immediate task of accumulating arms, but it warns them against such 'silly exploits' as engaging in arms-raids. Members are to refrain from taking part in parliamentary elections except by special permission, but are recommended to endeavour to gain control of all local bodies such as municipal corporations. They should also make a point in all their dealings of giving preference to 'our friends' and thus make it the interest of many who were at present half-hearted or indifferent openly to join the national ranks. The address concludes with the announcement that 'negotiations with our friends in America are in a forward state'. The second address is a report on the 'national convention' of 16-17 March 1873, convoked with the object of convincing every man through his freely-elected representative that we are engaged in no idle work, but in a great undertaking which is being steadily accomplished'. About fifty delegates attended, representing all seven divisions of the organisation (here styled the I.R.B.) in Ireland, England and Scotland. The supreme council commits the work of the convention to 'the officers and men of the I.R.A.', and expresses the hope that every branch of the I.R.B. will be inspired to redouble its zeal by the unity of purpose shown by the organisation, the progress made in collecting arms, and the firmness with which treason has been punished. As to the strength of the I.R.A., the council feels it inadvisable to give details but claims to have 'an army capable of enlargement to any extent that equipment might permit'. This is in similar vein to the statement in document (A) that in 1868 the I.R.A. numbered 200,000. On the other hand, document (F) contains evidence that in January 1877 the Munster division of the I.R.B. had a total of only 1,742.⁸¹ Fenianism did, no doubt, lose heavily to the home-rule movement in the seventies, but the supreme council's references in its circulars of 1868 and 1873 to the strength of the forces at its command may be regarded rather as a mixture of propaganda and wishful thinking than as statements of fact.

T. W. MOODY
LEON Ó BROIN

⁸¹ See below, pp 322-3.

DOCUMENTS

The spelling of the following documents is printed as in the originals, but the use of capitals and the punctuation have been normalised according to the practice of this journal. All expansions and other editorial additions to the text are placed within square brackets. All historical notes are printed together after the text.

(A) MESSAGE FROM THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL TO THE IRISH PEOPLE, 24 APRIL 1868

Printed broadsheet, in S.P.O., Fenian papers, 2906R and 2944R. 2906R, endorsed in MS '5 May 68', does not include the last seven paragraphs printed below. These appear in 2944R, which accompanies a report from the constable at Tandragee, Co. Armagh, dated 28 June, explaining that three copies of the 'message' were posted up in the town and that he had seized the least damaged one. The sub-inspector at Portadown, in submitting the report to the county inspector, noted that 'fenianism cannot to any considerable extent exist in the neighbourhood of Tandragee'.

I.R.**MESSAGE FROM THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE IRISH PEOPLE**

We declare that the right of Ireland to self-government and independent nationhood is inherent and inalienable. Truly elected by representative men, duly chosen and summoned to seven distinct conventions, held respectively in different parts of Ireland, England, and Scotland, we possess authority thereby to act in the name and on behalf of the Irish Republican Army and the Irish people within Ireland, and resident in England and Scotland.

The objects for which the supreme council has been elected are :

1. To prevent the possibility of premature action. 2. To urge on the progress of preparation for action. 3. To restrain from the commission of acts of violence and outrage all who have sworn and who owe allegiance to the Irish Republic and its duly constituted government.

Deriving our authority from the army and people of Ireland, we protest and command that no agents nor officers accredited and commissioned from the United States, or elsewhere, should or shall be received, recognised, nor obeyed by the army of the Irish Republic, or by any owing allegiance to the Irish Republic, unless and until their authority is ratified by the military or civil authority constituted for that purpose by the supreme council.

We declare that no organisation, now existing, or which shall hereafter exist, in the United States, or elsewhere outside the territory of Ireland, has or shall have authority to legislate for, or bind, or claim obedience from, the Irish army or Irish people in Ireland or anywhere else resident in the three countries. The Irish Republican Brotherhood has been obliged to assume this position in order to prevent the possibility of disunion extending from the organisation in the United States into the Irish Republican Brotherhood, by which effort would be paralysed,

a simultaneous movement made doubtful or impossible, and the result disastrous to the hope of all faithful Irishmen, and ruinous to many who might be urged onward by enthusiasm and an ignorance of consequences.

We implore our fellow-countrymen in the United States to participate in none of those unhappy party differences which frustrate their movements, or render them of no practical account should they be so circumstanced that a union between their sections is likely to be postponed. We ask them in the name of Ireland, a perishing people, and a supreme God, to have a union of aim.

Our accredited agent shall explain to the heads of both sections of the organisation in the United States the requirements of the cause in Ireland; and Ireland shall judge between both, on the evidence supplied to the simple practical test—supply the requisites we demand to put our army in a position to assume active operations.

That section of our countrymen and their leaders, whomsoever they may be, who shall aid most promptly and most effectively, in the manner which shall be pointed out by our accredited agent, shall receive at our hands prompt and open acknowledgment. And when the day of Ireland's adversity is passed, they, we doubt not, will be acknowledged as among the most faithful of her patriots, the noblest of her people, and justly entitled to those rewards which a grateful people's government will not fail to bestow.

Without employing language of reprehension towards any who have heretofore assumed without election to control the vast power of the Irish Republic, we must not hesitate, in justice to the people and army of Ireland, who have called us to this position, and whose hopes are bound up in the deliverance of Ireland, to declare that a studied misrepresentation of facts and delusive promises have retarded events in Ireland more than all the power at the disposal of England. We can have no object in concealing from the government of England, or our fellow-countrymen in the United States, that the army of the Irish Republic in Ireland, and in occupation of the cities and towns in England and Scotland, numbers, at the present moment, 200,000 men, supported by the sympathies of 7,000,000. Their state of discipline is more or less perfect, their organisation is complete, their obedience prompt, and their spirit resolute and unsubdued, but their equipment, except in two divisions, wholly inadequate to the serious struggle in which they are engaged. When that equipment is complete, according to the moderate demand which we make through our accredited agent to the heads of both organisations in the United States, we shall then choose our time and deliver our commands to a military executive; trusting all to the bravery of our countrymen, the fidelity of our allies, and in the justice of our cause to an all-merciful God.

Misrepresentations and disorganisation are to be accredited with the failure of 1865,¹ and the disastrous outbreak of March 1867. Most unhappily the army in Ireland and in occupation in England and Scotland was represented in the United States to be almost complete in equipment, and, as a consequence of this unhappy misrepresentation, the Irish

organisation in the United States entertained other projects, and dispatched to Ireland supplies wholly inadequate. The military leaders discovered after some time that the army which they expected to lead to victory was entirely unprepared to attain even the most temporary success, except by fortuitous circumstances and such an expenditure of human blood as no Christian men would sanction. When this state of affairs was made known to the organisation in the United States, by some fatuity for which we cannot account, time was allowed to pass by, and the means which were transmitted thence, so far as we can now ascertain, were consumed in supporting those military leaders and others. Time and money were further consumed in abortive struggles to obtain justice for individuals in the courts of English law in Ireland.

Arm Ireland and Ireland is free. The rising in March, 1967, was caused, so far as we can learn, to sustain the influence of some individuals in the United States, and partly by the desire of some very brave men to precipitate the issue. But experience has established that wholly inadequate preparations cannot be compensated for by the most devoted courage, and happily this lesson was acquired before the rising had become general and beyond control. As a natural consequence of these exhibitions of weak councils, emissaries entered the ranks, and spies and traitors were found to carry out the views and objects of the enemy, regardless of all virtue, in open defiance of all faith and in complete violation of solemn oaths and that natural allegiance due by Irishmen to the Irish Republic.

Other events have been brought under consideration, and we feel called upon to pronounce our opinions. The rescue of two officers of the Irish Republican Army from the hands of English officials at Manchester was justified by the law of nations; and we are convinced the death of the police constable, who was in charge of the prisoners, was the result of accident, not of design. Furthermore, we declare the Irish Republican soldiers, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, had not a fair trial, even according to the laws of England, but were sacrificed to the prejudice of the court and the fears of the oligarchy, in the desperate expectation that their murder would affright and deter the Irish Republican soldiers from the course of duty and the pursuit of those rights which no nation can abdicate or relinquish with honour, or without imperilling the existence and happiness of the entire people.

By order of the supreme council
God save Ireland

Dublin, 24 April 1868

A more recent event we must deplore, and condemn, as one of those unhappy results of disorganisation which has sprung up in the United States and crept over through various agencies to these countries. The outrage at Clerkenwell, to which we refer, is, in our estimation, on a level with the monstrous brutality which dictated the bombardment of Kagosima; the employment of Indian savages, armed with tomahawk and scalping knife, against the American people in the war of independence; the infamous practice of Hessian mercenaries launched by England on

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their peaceful homesteads in the same war, and upon Ireland in 1798; and the many horrid practices of English troops and agencies against the people of India and the unfortunate negroes of Jamaica; and wholly outside the pale of civilisation and humanity. It is patent, from the very circumstances of this dreadful and deplorable event, that it was the work of persons, whoever they might have been, without authority, and who acted upon individual impulse, and in complete ignorance of the terrible power of the agency they employed. No language we could employ would express our horror and indignation respecting this event; and were the perpetrators within our control, and amenable to our laws, their punishment would be commensurate with our sense of justice. The indignations called forth by this deplorable event, and the anxiety of the government of England to arraign the guilty, has, however, a tendency to implicate and prejudice the innocent. The practice of rewarding treachery has also a tendency to produce a hideous array of perjurers in such cases, and procure the destruction of the weak, unfriended, and unknown. Against those things we feel bound to forewarn and protect. The creation of a feeling hostile to Ireland among the people of England was a result which, perhaps, was not unforeseen or unwelcome to the probable originators of the crime. Persons in England who deal in statecraft have seized upon this unhappy event, which, in all probability they foresaw and foreknew, as a circumstance well calculated to afford a temporary apology for their most guilty practice towards Ireland. They avail themselves of the opportunity to describe the flight of capital, the neglect of resources, the miserable payment of labour, and inadequate employment of the people, which they ascribe to such events; but which is, and ever must be, the condition of Ireland while under English rule, the perjurer and the mercenary.

The whole people of Ireland have been struck with the manly demeanour of those who were called upon to confront the power of England, standing in the dock, and, as it proved to many of them, on the brink of the grave.

What care we in Ireland, in England, and Scotland (standing as we do in the presence of the enemies of our race, who have avowed their resolution to grind us, and crush us) for wings and leaders and their accusations and recriminations which draw to no close; or what care those who moulder in their graves or pine in the dungeons of England for any except those who shall sustain their cause and take practical measures to liberate, or, at least, avenge them.

Hatred to English rule, and not hatred to the English people, is confined to no rank, no creed, no province of Ireland. It pervades the conscience of the whole people, and is inherent and undying. That odious and accursed thralldom, which has doomed millions to misery, consigned hundreds of thousands to the grave, and precipitated millions into sorrowful exile, **MUST** and **SHALL** cease. It is not in the province of God that it should exist one hour after the soldiers of the Irish Republic are in a position to strike it down in the field, —that only place where it can be successfully combatted and finally destroyed. We entertain no antagonism to the liberties of England, or of Englishmen; we should be

glad, on the contrary, that the boundaries of their liberties were extended, for the growth of nationhood and freedom anywhere in the world is an incentive to imitation.

There is no brooding misery, no hopelessness in the minds of the Irish people, except such as arises from the conduct of those in the United States, who keep them in fetters by their differences and wast[e] of time and God-given opportunities for preparation; but, notwithstanding the past, they look forward now with confidence to their faithful allies and brothers in exile, and they call upon them, by the sacred memories of old homes, to press forward the work for their deliverance, and for the realisation of that holy and unchangeable desire which animates the bosom of every member of our scattered race: the desire to re-occupy the land from which they were driven by fraud and cruelty, by British bayonets and alien law—a law most inhuman and accursed.

What mind could have foreseen the greatness of American freedom looming through the smoke of battle on the heights of Lexington, or the future from that moment when Washington and Rochambeau received the sword of Cornwallis at Yorktown? And who shall now prescribe the limits of the future greatness of Ireland, the friend of France and the ally of the United States; her vanguard in Europe for the liberty and happiness of mankind. America laid the foundations of her liberties in the centre of human rights, and Ireland also has declared the spirit and principles of her independence.

We would append that document as it was agreed and subscribed to by the representatives of the Irish people on the 29th of October, 1860^{1a}; but, before taking such a step, we believe the country should be in a position to maintain its integrity with armed force. This declaration is the charter of our liberties, the constitution we have sworn to uphold and maintain at the expense of our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred homes!^{1b}

Dublin 1868

By order of the supreme council
God save Ireland

**(B) CONSTITUTION OF THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL, 18 AUGUST
1869**

Printed broadsheet, in S.P.O., Fenian papers, 6001 R; and in Doran papers

CONSTITUTION OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

Preamble

Whereas it is necessary to the well being of the Irish Republic to enact and declare the constitution of the supreme and executive government thereof. It is hereby enacted and declared and promulgated by the aforesaid government, of the Irish Republic, in council assembled, and by authority thereof, in the name of the people, that on this day, being the 18th day of August, anno domine [sic] 1869, and henceforth, the constitution of the Irish Republic, is and shall be as follows :

I That the government of the Irish Republic is and shall be composed of eleven members, to be designated the 'supreme council of the Irish Republic', and to be constituted as follows: seven of the said members to be duly elected by the seven electoral divisions of the Irish Republic, and the remaining four shall be honorary members and shall be elected by the Irish provincial representatives, and the enactments of the government thus constituted shall be the laws of the Irish Republic, until the territory thereof shall have been recovered from the English enemy, and a permanent government established; and the manner of election of the divisional representatives shall be as follows: the county or district centers shall be assembled in convention, and shall elect a committee of five of their number, who under the superintendance of an officer deputed by the executive, and under seal of an oath of secrecy, shall elect the member of the supreme council for the division whereunto they belong.

II That the executive shall be composed of the president, the secretary, and the treasurer, the decision of any two of whom shall be binding on the executive of the supreme council, and that the president's duty shall be to direct the workings of the civil and military departments, subject to the ratification of the supreme council.

III That the authority of the supreme council shall be unquestioned by those who have sworn, or may hereafter swear allegiance to the Irish Republic, and the supreme council is hereby declared in fact, as well as in right, the sole government of the Irish Republic, and has authority to levy taxes, to negotiate loans, make war and peace, and do all other acts necessary to the protection of the Irish Republic, and that the executive power shall never be entrusted to one man, but shall be vested in the president, secretary, and treasurer, of the supreme council, and that the members of the supreme council shall be bound to this constitution and to each other by an oath of fidelity and inviolable secrecy, and every act or attempted act to subvert the authority of the supreme council as aforesaid, shall be deemed treason, and punishable with death.

IV That the supreme council reserve to itself the right of treating with all friendly powers on all matters concerning the welfare of Ireland and the advancement of the Irish Republic, and that any interference, direct or indirect, with this provision shall be deemed treason.

V That every citizen or soldier of the Irish Republic and every member of the supreme council owes civil and military obedience to the executive of the supreme council, and the president thereof is in fact as well as by right, the president of the Irish Republic.

VI That each member of the supreme council is, and shall be finally elected, but may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the electoral body, and further, that any member of the supreme council may resign only with the consent of the supreme council, and the supreme council shall have the power to demand the resignation of any member, and should such member refuse to resign, the supreme council shall have authority by a two-thirds vote to remove him, and command a new election in his district; but that an honorary member can only be removed by a two-thirds vote of the supreme council.

VII That the military authority shall at all times be and remain subject to the civil government, and shall never be permitted to arrogate to itself the power of legislating, or restraining in any way the constitution, of the Irish Republic, as promulgated by the supreme council, and that all or any infraction of said constitution, shall be deemed treason.

VIII That the appointment, suspension and removal of all department officers shall be vested in the executive, subject to the approval of the supreme council.

IX That in the event of the supreme council being unavoidably reduced in number, the remaining member or members shall exercise the authority of the government until such time as the vacancies shall have been filled up, which shall be done as soon as possible.

X That in each of the seven electoral divisions aforesaid, a civil and military secretary shall be elected by the county district centers thereof, and who shall act under the orders of the member of the supreme council of the division. The duties of the civil secretary shall be to act in all respects as deputy of such member, and in the event of the removal of said member, by the act of the enemy: disability or death, said deputy shall assemble a convention of the division for the purpose of electing a new member, who shall be elected either permanently or temporarily, according to circumstances to be taken into account, and the said deputy shall exercise authority as member in the division until after said election, but shall not be eligible on the supreme council, and further, it shall be his duty to attend to the civil correspondence of the division.

XI That the duties of the military secretary shall be to execute all orders directed to him by the member of the division in relation to procuring, distributing and safe keeping of arms and munitions, always under the supervision and subject to the military director of the Irish Republic.

XII That the citizens, soldiers, &c., of each county or district shall be ruled by a county or district center, who shall be elected by the centers of the county or district, and said county or district center shall be elected permanently, subject to removal by a two-thirds vote.

XIII That in England and Scotland the towns shall be grouped into districts in the manner determined by the divisional representative of the supreme council, and that a district center be elected by each district, whose function, power and term of office shall be in all respects similar to those of a county center, and the district centers shall assemble in convention and elect a committee of five as aforesaid, who shall proceed to elect a member of the supreme council for the division. The voting in all cases to be by ballot, and the electors sworn to act according to their best judgment for the benefit of the Irish Republic, and to inviolable secrecy, regarding their proceedings in that behalf.

XIV That the county and district centers shall on or before the last day in each month send in a report of the position and progress of affairs to the civil secretary of the province or division, who shall forthwith forward it to the executive of the supreme council thro' the member of the supreme council for the division.

XV That the oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic shall be tendered according to the orders of the supreme council by their agents

or officers, and that no person shall be inducted into the army of the Irish Republic whose sobriety, truth, valour and obedience to authority cannot bear scrutiny, and that it shall be the duty of every soldier of the Irish Republic to state unreservedly his ability to obtain arms at once by purchase or otherwise, and that each soldier or citizen of the Irish Republic shall be bound to contribute according to his means for that special purpose, and also to the procuring of military material and instruction, as well as towards the expense of keeping up communications in each province or division to which he may belong, and for the purpose of maintaining the efficiency of the Irish Republic.

XVI That no member of the supreme council, or officer in the employment thereof shall be in receipt of salary from the funds of the Irish Republic.

XVII The divisional officers shall have the power to make all bye-laws necessary for the local organisation, provided said bye-laws be not opposed to the spirit of the constitution of the Irish Republic.¹⁶

XVIII That in each of the following large cities, to wit—Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Belfast, a committee of five be elected by the centers, whose duty shall consist in directing local organisation, subject to the supervision and control of the county center.

XIX That at each meeting of the supreme council the members thereof do hand in a summarised statement of receipts and expenditure of their respective divisions.

XX That no citizen or soldier of the Irish Republic shall receive any information save what shall be necessary for the fulfilment of his duty.

XXI That there shall be no state religion, but that every citizen shall be equally free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, and perfect freedom of conscience and worship shall be guaranteed as a right, and not granted as a privilege.

XXII That whenever it is contemplated to make any alterations in the constitution of the Irish Republic, it shall be necessary to give one month's notice of the meeting of the supreme council at which such alteration is proposed to be effected, and it shall require a two-thirds vote of the supreme council to make the proposed change.

Appendix

[This is in the copy in Doran papers but not in the S.P.O. copy]

At recent sessions of the council the following addenda was [sic] made to the constitution :

That the exercise of awarding capital punishment sought by certain local bodies is capable of being attended with danger to the peace and unity of the country, and is therefore reserved to the S.C. [supreme council].

That all losses which may result in the transmission of arms through negligence be traced to the department through the neglect of which the losses may have occurred, and that such department be responsible for the losses.

For the sake of uniformity and simplicity the following short form of oath is to be used by the organisation for the admission of members,

viz— 'In the presence of God do solemnly swear that I will do my utmost to establish the national independence of Ireland, and that I will bear true allegiance to the S.C. of the I.R., and the constitution thereof, and implicitly obey the orders of the officers of the S.C.I.R., so help me God'.

By order of the supreme council

(C) ADDRESS OF THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, JANUARY 1870

Printed broadsheet, in S.P.O., Fenian papers, 6450 R, accompanying a report dated 20 May 1870, by Chief Superintendent Daniel Ryan, G division, Dublin Metropolitan Police.²

ADDRESS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

The occasion for the re-assuming [sic] of the supreme council for this its second session, affords us an opportunity for placing before the people a brief sketch of the state of affairs previous to the re-establishment of the supreme council, and up to the present time. Everyone can understand how necessary this is, in order to realize what progress has been made, and that by duly profiting by the experience of the past, we might learn what to avoid and what to do in the future.

It is unnecessary to say that previous to the re-establishment of the supreme council, the state of our affairs was most deplorable to the heart of every true patriot. The once compact and powerful organization broken up into contemptible fragments, nothing but discord and disorganization on every side, every little fragment of the once grand organization at war with other fragments; and what was once dreaded and respected by the enemy, had now become dangerous only to those who, though desiring with all their hearts to serve the cause of fatherland, did not coincide in the views put forward by those who assumed the right of leading some one of the many fragments.

We need not here recite what steps were taken to re-organise. For you all know that the different counties in Ireland and districts in England and Scotland were called upon to elect their representatives. And the county and district representatives of each province and division in convention assembled appointed a committee of their number by which a member of the supreme council was elected and other provincial and divisional officers. And in this manner the four provinces of Ireland elected each a member of the supreme council. And these four members again constituted a committee by which four other members of the supreme council were elected, and these, to distinguish them from those elected by the provinces, were called honorary members.

Our countrymen in England elected to represent them two members, and the Irish in Scotland one member. And thus the supreme council of the Irish Republic was constructed of eleven members, viz eight from Ireland, two from England, and one from Scotland.

The measures necessary for carrying out those elections tended greatly to the re-establishment of harmony among the divided ranks of our countrymen, for all saw and deplored the terrible evils of disunion. And when this honest and earnest effort for union and re-organization was made by true and devoted men—the heart of the country, ever true in its instincts, recognising the folly and criminality of faction and disunion, rallied at once to the cry of union for Ireland. And the supreme council, the first really elected government of the Irish Republic, on the representative principle, found the way to some extent paved for the restoration of union and harmony. Nevertheless, much hard work remained for it to do. Faction had not been entirely quelled—in several places it still reared its vile head. Besides, in many places, on former occasions, money had been raised for the purchase of arms, and those to whom those sums had been entrusted, owing in some cases to urgent emergencies, in others to absolute dishonesty, did not apply the money to the money to the purpose for which it had been collected; and from these causes a widespread want of confidence resulted. A deplorable feeling of apathy, perhaps still more difficult to be combatted than either want of confidence or spirit of faction, had also grown up in other places consequent on the repeated failures in which resulted so many painful efforts for the maintenance of independence.

You know how the spirit of faction has been exercised. The good sense of the people will never long hesitate between the simple issues of union and dis-union. Unvarnished explanations and patient arguments presented in a spirit of conciliation, by men who had been tried and proved, speedily put an end to faction. And now, union once more restored, the supreme council assures the Irish Republic that, while patient argument and conciliation shall be carried to their extremes, should the necessity unhappily arise, the supreme council shall not shrink from the full exercise of those powers committed to it for the maintenance of union and harmony, and the prompt repression of faction, insubordination, and treason. Where want of confidence existed it has been successfully met and overcome by making prompt returns of arms for sums handed in for that purpose. Apathy too, is fast disappearing from the hearts of the comparatively few who were subjected to its influence.

From the foregoing brief resume you will see that the supreme council had not exactly a clear stage on which to enter at once and put into execution its programme of action. But much time and labour were spent in clearing the ground of the many impediments that cumbered it.

But, notwithstanding the great labour the supreme council has had to encounter in restoring union and harmony of action, much has also been accomplished in the direction of that goal to which our great aim now, and for a considerable time must be constantly directed, viz the procuring of arms and ammunition. It must suffice to say here, that the work accomplished in the provinces and divisions for even the past six months, presents a total result most cheering and gratifying to those who are devoting themselves to this labour of love. The spirit of self reliance, never before cultivated amongst our countrymen, is thoroughly aroused;

and, in a very short space of time, our hitherto despised, native resources have accumulated arms and ammunition greater in extent than what had been received from America during the many years that we were taught to consider ourselves incapable of doing anything but that abundance of all things necessary was to be supplied by our countrymen in the United States.

When we consider how hampered our energies have been owing to want of money to provide organizers in order to put the whole country into good working order, (and you yourselves know what very small resources you have placed at our disposal) the result of our labours really takes us by surprise; and we are stimulated to still greater energy and to still more earnest work. The splendid aggregate results to which we have alluded were accomplished as you know, by means of very trifling individual exertions on your part.

You know that with very few exceptions, you have individually done almost nothing. And since so much has been done with so slight an effort, you should now feel encouraged to throw yourselves into the work more earnestly, more devotedly, and with some self-denial. There is not a single member of the organization that could not contribute one penny per month for civil expenses, and threepence per week for arms.

Is there a single member who would feel that much if it were only taken out of what he spends on drink and tobacco? while the amount of work that can be accomplished by means of the resources that would be thus supplied is really very great. He is no true man then, who will not pay up those dues regularly and promptly. Our ambition is to place the Irish Republic in a respectable and dignified position—not depending on the cleemosynary and the charitable contributions of our friends in America: but self-supporting and powerful in its own developed resources. And this position, which you can speedily attain to, once gained, we shall instantly command the respect, the fealty and the resources of Irishmen all over the world. Pay up your dues then, regularly, and let those who can afford it, contribute to the arms fund each according to his means; and in six months hence, the Irish Republic shall occupy a position far exceeding your wildest dreams of to day.

The political horizon is now lowering, and apparently, storm clouds are impending over head, but the supreme council is full of confidence that, by prudent directions, with prompt obedience on the part of the subordinate officers and the rank and file, our barque shall ride out the gale triumphantly. While lacking these, disaster may overtake us any day. We cannot, therefore, too strongly impress on all officers the paramount importance of strict discipline, and on the rank and file the vital necessity of prompt obedience to all orders not inconsistent with the principles of the organization. And surely if ever a government had a strong claim on the willing obedience of its supporters, that government is the supreme council of the Irish Republic, which they have created by their own votes, and which the same votes can change or unmake at will. You would then be stultifying yourselves if you were to hesitate to render prompt obedience to the order of the supreme council. And, for your guidance in the present aspect of affairs we counsel you to abstain

entirely from all public demonstrations, meetings, processions, and political agitations of any and every kind, no matter by whom inaugurated, unless the approval of the supreme council shall have been first obtained through the proper officers, the supreme council reserving to itself to decide when an occasion for such action may arise, and in such case instructions shall be issued. Raids for arms are strictly forbidden by the supreme council—those silly exploits fit only to excite the enthusiasm [of] unthinking boys do great injury to our cause, while the resulting advantages, if any, are utterly contemptible. As a general rule you are also to refrain from taking part in parliamentary elections—but the peculiar circumstances of an individual member may at times make it allowable for him to vote—but permission (which on reasonable grounds shall never be refused) is to be obtained from the provincial representative through the proper officers. And as much mischief has been done from time to time by loose talk, a pledge of secrecy is hereby required to be exacted from each member and officer of the organisation, from the lowest to the highest.

The supreme council strongly recommends that persistent efforts should be made to obtain control of all local bodies such as corporations, town commissioners, &c, as a means of increasing the power and influence of the Irish Republic. Common sense would also point out to us the advisability of giving the preference to our friends in all our dealings, we should thus make it the interest of many at present half hearted or indifferent to openly join the national ranks.

In conclusion, we have only to add that our negotiations with our friends in America are in a forward state, and in our next address we hope to report most satisfactory results.

By order of the supreme council

January 1870

**(D) ADDRESS OF THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL TO THE OFFICERS
AND MEN OF THE I.R.A. [17 MARCH 1873]**

Printed broadsheet, in Doran papers

ADDRESS OF THE S.C.

The S.C. have to announce with pride and satisfaction the issue of the solemn convention of the Irish Republic, summoned by them on last St Patrick's day, wherein assembled the elected representatives of every province and district of Ireland, England and Scotland. In publishing the results of its deliberations, which mark an epoch in the history of our work, the S.C. feel they have cause to congratulate the men who have toiled long and faithfully in the cause on the solid progress which has rewarded their undying faith. The organization, which has withstood the shock of years of merciless persecution, which has beaten down slander, which has triumphed over apathy, timidity and treason, flourishes to day with new vigour, with fearless front, and builds up steadily the

strength that must eventually win victory. It is sustained by the imperishable faith of our race—that spirit of the martyred dead which cries out to us through centuries of slavery and shame to vindicate our ancient nation. That spirit *cannot* die. Our organization is directing it steadily and deliberately to the purpose of winning back our plundered birth-right. No obstacle will daunt us, no persecution can reach the *heart* of Ireland, or pluck from it its faith in nationality. The world quakes with changes full of hope for enslaved nations. Only let us bide our time, which must come. Let us only be patient, steady and resolute—yielding neither to childish impatience, nor to unmanly fears—let us show the courage and steadiness which conquer every obstacle—let us be true to our God, to our country, and to ourselves—and with his blessing we will crown our work with victory!

The S.C. convoked the national convention of St Patrick's day with the view of convincing every man through his freely-elected representative that we are engaged in no idle work, but in a great undertaking which is being steadily accomplished. When this circular and the voices of the delegates have proclaimed this fact through every branch of the organization, it cannot fail to inspire every man with confidence—to stir every district into new activity—to cheer those who have already worked and suffered, and to rally many a new recruit around the flag. On Sunday, the 16th March, our representative assembly met for the first time. About fifty delegates presented their credentials, comprising the D.Cs [district centres], C. Ss [county secretaries], and C. Cs [county centres] of the seven districts of the organization, the council being represented by an agent specially appointed for the occasion. After the preliminaries had been arranged, the representative of the council summarised in a comprehensive address the history of the movement since the foundation of the S. C., and laid before the convention the following brief message from the council :

'I beg to announce on the part of the S. C. that it has this day resigned into the hands of this convention the authority which it received from the people. Gentlemen, divisional secretaries, county centres and district centres of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the S. C. have commanded me to greet you as the representatives of the Irish Republican party of Ireland, England and Scotland, and while urging you to the consideration of all matters affecting the well-being of our beloved country, they pray that God may bless your deliberations and direct them to the end of achieving the freedom of Ireland.'

He then proceeded to introduce some amendments of the constitution which were fully discussed and finally referred to the consideration of the council. Until their decision is announced, therefore, the old constitution continues to be the law of the organization.

At the second day's sitting, full reports were received of the strength and progress of the military organization. It is deemed inadvisable to give a detailed statement of these matters in a circular; but the delegates are in a position to assure their constituents that the reports were of a most gratifying nature, and that the organization represents a very substantial quantity of the necessary materials of all descriptions, steadily and

securely increasing—an army capable of enlargement to any extent that equipments might permit, and—a very healthy financial state of affairs—a large balance being on hands in each district, affording good grounds for hoping that our special work, viz accumulating war material, shall be energetically pushed on.

A committee was appointed to investigate a misunderstanding by which a considerable section of the men of an important city were estranged from the administration. The happy result of this action was a settlement of the differences and a restoration of the men to the organization.

It having appeared that dissensions had arisen to a small extent owing to the spread of reports, impeaching the honour and integrity of some prominent members of the organization, a searching investigation was instituted by a committee of the convention. In *every instance* the accusations were proved to be wholly unfounded and the convention *unanimously* passed the following resolutions viz: 'in reference to a charge of untrustworthiness against Mr———, that——— in view of the fact that he has propagated slanderous charges against Mr——— which he was unable to substantiate, be held unworthy of credit in matters connected with the organization, and that the convention hereby declares its confidence in Mr———'.

And a charge of misappropriation of the funds of the organization having been made against Messrs——— after a very full investigation the convention passed the following resolution: 'that Messrs——— and —— have satisfactorily explained the financial matters with which they were concerned, and are deserving of the confidence of the S.C. and of the whole organization'.

The following important resolution was also passed: 'that in view of the statements concerning the civil, military and financial transactions of the organization as given by the representative of the S. C. and by the auditors appointed by this convention, (the C. Ss of the seven divisions) the resignation of the S. C. be not accepted, and that the convention hereby declares its fullest confidence in the S. C.'.

In order to facilitate the operations of the organization, a resolution was agreed to: 'that the divisions and provinces of the I. R. B. be accorded the privilege of purchasing and arranging for the transmission of their goods'.

In view of the probable embarrassment of the enemy in its foreign relations it was deemed wise to cast about for a suitable party to put our case in a proper light before foreign powers. And Mr S——— whose long and great services are well known to us all was pitched upon for that purpose, and a resolution was come to opening the way to the appointment of Mr S——— as foreign representative of the S. C.

The sad fact that great numbers of our brothers are constantly emigrating to America and Australia having been touched upon, the convention most strongly advised the immediate formation of branches of our organization in every place where the Irish emigrant plants his foot, in order to preserve his services to his country. Such branches would be of great use in developing a spirit of brotherly kindness among

our people in those countries, and would be of great benefit to those whom circumstances may compel to tear themselves from our beloved country. Of course, members of the organization would have a peculiar claim on the friendly aid of such branches. They would also serve, most usefully, in making known far and wide the reputations of those wretches who have laid hands on the funds of the organization, or otherwise misconducted themselves on this side of the Atlantic.

The backward state of several districts of the country has made it evident to the convention that it is of most urgent necessity that collections be instituted in all the working districts, to enable the executive to arouse to action those backward places. The most effectual way of doing which is by maintaining effectual organizers, for which purpose of course, funds are absolutely needed, and collections should at once be instituted for that object in every district in good order, the sums collected to be transmitted monthly through the proper officers to the executive.

The S. C. in committing the foregoing resolutions to the officers and men of the I. R. A. and in reviewing the labours of the national convention of 1873, cannot but hope that the unity of sentiment they display, the confidence they must inspire in the direction of the organization, the steady resolute progress made, the vigour with which goods have been accumulated and the unshrinking steadiness with which treason has been punished, will stimulate every branch of the I. R. B. to redouble its zeal, and by constant, unflinching, untiring devotion, to earn the triumph that *must* come to bravery and truth!

God save Ireland!

(E) AMENDED CONSTITUTION OF THE I.R.B. AND OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL, 17 MARCH 1873

MS in Doran papers

AMENDED CONSTITUTION OF THE I.R.B.

[This replaces the following, which has been struck out: 'Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and government of the Irish Republic'.]

Whereas the Irish people have never ceased to struggle for the recovery of their independence since the date of its destruction [the following is struck out: 'by the first English invader Henry II, the year of our lord 1172'], it has on this 17th day of March (the day of our patron saint, Patrick) 1873 been resolved by a convention of Irish patriots, held in Dublin and representing associations of Irishmen existing in various parts of Ireland, England and Scotland to reform the present revolutionary movement and to form from it an organisation for the purpose of overthrowing English power in Ireland and establishing an independent Irish republic, said organisation known as The Irish Republican Brotherhood and governed by a council entitled The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic. The

following is declared to be and promulgated as the amended constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and government of the Irish Republic.

[I] Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood

1 The I.R.B. is and shall be composed of Irishmen irrespective of class or creed resident in Ireland, England, Scotland, America, Australia, and in all other lands where Irishmen live, who are willing to labour for the establishment of a free and independent republican government in Ireland.

2 The I.R.B. whilst labouring to prepare Ireland for the task of recovering her independence by force of arms, shall confine itself in time of peace to the exercise of moral influences—the cultivation of union and brotherly love amongst Irishmen, the propagation of republican principles and the spreading of a knowledge of the national rights of Ireland.

3 The I.R.B. shall await the decision of the Irish nation, as expressed by a majority of the Irish people, as to the fit hour of inaugurating a war against England, and shall, pending such an emergency, lend its support to every movement calculated to advance the cause of Irish independence, consistently with the preservation of its own integrity.

4 The mode of initiating members into the I.R.B. shall be the tendering of the following oath of allegiance to its government :

In the presence of God, I do solemnly swear that I will do my utmost to establish the national independence of Ireland, and that I will bear true allegiance to the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic and implicitly obey the constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and all my superior officers, and that I will preserve inviolable the secrets of the organisation.

5 No one shall be inducted into the I.R.B. whose character for sobriety, truth, valour and obedience to authority cannot bear scrutiny.

6 Each member of the I.R.B. shall contribute according to his means for the production of war materials and also towards the expense of keeping up communication in the different divisions of the I.R.B. and for maintaining the efficiency of the supreme council.

7 In every case where arms are lost through negligence the department through the neglect of which the loss has occurred shall be responsible for the value of the arms.

8 The members of the I.R.B. resident in towns or parishes shall be directed and governed by an officer to be entitled a centre, and to be elected by the members of the I.R.B., each body of members electing the centre for their own town or parish.

9 The members and centres of the I.R.B. shall be directed and governed by an officer to be entitled a county centre, and to be elected by the centres of the respective counties; and in England and Scotland the towns shall be grouped into districts corresponding to the counties in Ireland and each district shall be directed and governed by a district centre who shall be elected by the centres of his district.

10 The I.R.B. shall be divided into seven electoral divisions, to wit—Leinster, Ulster, Munster, Connaught, North of England, South of England and Scotland; and in each division one civil and one military secretary shall be elected by the county or district centres, and the duty of the civil secretary shall be to act in all respects as deputy of the member of the supreme council of his division, and in the event of the removal of said member by the act of the enemy, disability or death the civil secretary shall exercise authority in the division until a new member of the supreme council shall have been elected in the manner provided for in the constitution of the supreme council; and the duties of the military secretary shall be to execute all orders received by him in relation to the procuring, distribution and safe keeping of arms and munitions.

11 The term of office of all officers of the I.R.B. shall be *two years* subject to removal at any time by a two-thirds vote of the electoral body.

12 The divisional officers shall have power to make all bye-laws framed in accordance with the spirit of the constitution which they may deem to be necessary for purpose of local organisation.

13 Each county or district centre shall, on or before the last day in each month, send in a report of the position and progress of affairs to the civil secretary of his division, who shall forthwith send it to the member of the supreme council for the division, by whom it shall be forwarded to the secretary of the supreme council.

14 In each of the large cities, to wit—Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, London and Glasgow—a committee of five shall be elected by the centres, whose duty shall consist in directing local organisation subject to the supervision and control of the county or district centre.

15 No member of the I.R.B. shall receive any information respecting the organisation except what shall be necessary for the performance of his duty, and no member of the I.R.B. shall be at liberty to make use of any such information he may accidentally acquire.

[II] Amended constitution of the supreme council of the I.R.B. and government of the Irish Republic

1 The supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and government of the Irish Republic is and shall be composed of eleven members; seven of said members shall be elected by the seven electoral divisions as marked out in the constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and the remaining four shall be honorary members and shall be elected by the seven, to whom alone their names shall be known; and the enactments of the government so constituted shall be the laws of the Irish Republic until the territory thereof shall have been recovered from the English enemy and a permanent government established.

2 The manner of the election of the before-mentioned seven members of the supreme council shall be as follows: the county or district centres shall be assembled in convention and shall elect a committee of five of their number, who under seal of an oath of secrecy, shall elect the member of the supreme council for the division whereunto they belong.

3 The term of office of the supreme council shall be *two years*; but any member may be removed at any time by a two-thirds vote of his constituents or a two-thirds vote of the supreme council, and any member of the S.C. wishing to resign will give one month's notice to his constituents and to the S.C.

4 There is and shall be an executive of the supreme council, composed of the president, secretary and treasurer of that body, the decision of any two of whom shall be binding on all.

5 The duty of the president of the supreme council shall be to direct the workings of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in all its departments, subject to the control of the supreme council.

6 The appointment, suspension and removal of all departmental officers shall be vested in the executive, subject to the approval of the supreme council.

7 No member of the supreme council or officers in the employment thereof shall be in receipt of salary from the funds of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

8 The authority of the supreme council shall be unquestioned by those who have become, or may hereafter become, members of the I.R.B., and the supreme council is hereby declared in fact as well as by right the sole government of the Irish Republic, and has authority to levy taxes, negotiate loans, make war and peace and do all other acts necessary for the protection of the Irish Republic; and the members of the supreme council shall be bound to this constitution and to one another by an oath of fidelity and inviolable secrecy, and every act or attempted act of any member of the I.R.B. to subvert the authority of the supreme council shall in time of peace be a grave misdemeanour and punishable accordingly, and, in time of war, every such act or attempted act shall be treason and punishable with death.

9 The supreme council reserves to itself the right of treating with all friendly powers on all matters concerning the welfare of Ireland and the advancement of the cause of Irish independence.

10 Executive power shall never be vested in one man, but shall be vested in the president, secretary and treasurer of the supreme council.

11 Every member of the I.R.B. and every member of the supreme council owes civil and military obedience to the executive of the supreme council, and the president thereof is in fact as well as by right, president of the Irish Republic.

12 In the event of the supreme council being unavoidably reduced in number, the member or remaining members shall exercise the authority of the supreme council until such time as the vacancies shall have been filled up, which shall be done as soon as possible, and the same for the executive.

13 The military authority shall at all times be and remain subject to the civil government and shall never be permitted to arrogate to itself the power of legislating or of restraining in any way the constitution of the Irish Republic as promulgated by the supreme council.

14 At each meeting of the supreme council the members thereof shall hand in a summarised statement of the receipts and expenditure of their respective divisions.

15 The supreme council shall have power to award capital punishment only in cases of treason, and the crime of treason is hereby defined as any wilful act or word on the part of any member of the I.R.B. or of the supreme council calculated to betray the cause of Irish independence and subserve the interest of the British government or any other foreign government in Ireland, to the detriment of Irish independence.

16 The supreme council shall appoint a secret court in each of the seven divisions of the I.R.B. for the trial of all members charged with the commission of treason or grave misdemeanours.

17 The supreme council shall undertake the punishment of all minor offences committed by members of the I.R.B. once the offending members have removed from the division whereunto they belonged; and in cases where members unlawfully appropriate moneys entrusted to them for national purposes, such members shall be expelled the I.R.B., and the supreme council shall draw up a list of the names of such members, and circulate it through all parts of the I.R.B., and forward copies of it to representative Irishmen in every part of the world in order that those who rob the treasury of their country may be held up to the execration of all honest men.

18 In the Irish Republic there shall be no state religion, but every citizen shall be free to worship God according to his conscience, and perfect freedom of worship shall be guaranteed as a right and not granted as a privilege.

19 The supreme council shall have power to alter or revise the foregoing Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic; but whenever it is contemplated to make any alterations it shall be necessary to give one month's notice of the meeting of the supreme council at which such alteration is proposed to be effected; and it shall require a two-thirds vote of the supreme council to make the proposed change.

By order of the supreme council

**(F) NOTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE I.R.B. SUPREME COUNCIL,
1874(?)–8**

MS in Doran papers; in Doran's hand, on 17 unnumbered pages of flimsy, buff-coloured paper, measuring 4.5 × 23.0 cm., held together by a paper-fastener, without binding or title-page. Page-numbers have been supplied in square brackets, and the words deciphered from Doran's shorthand are shown in italics.

[1874]^b

[August]^b

[p. 1] Meeting of the D.C.s [district centres]^a

There was a marked expression of dissatisfaction at the conduct of those who retained the funds and prevented their transmission previously, and a repudiation of any sympathy with their explanation by the general body.

F

At that meeting in *Manchester*⁴ Mr *Walsh*⁵ had to resign his seat—but was re-elected at end of same meeting.

Mr *Walsh* promises that the money will be revoted in May next.⁴

The promise of aid from our American relatives⁶ were [sic] then as for a long time previously being discussed.

A resolution requesting an immediate fulfilment of the promises or an abandonment of the negotiations was unanimously passed and an order made to have it made known to the proper quarters.

[p. 2] The secretary at this meeting gave notice of his intention to resign at next meeting but it would not be received.

He stated that pressure of business prevented him doing all that it was necessary to do to keep the machine in working order. That from his experience of the post it would take up one man's time entirely to do all that was required.

<i>Kickham</i> ⁷	}	<i>executive</i>
<i>Egan</i> ⁸		
<i>Doran</i>		

The secretary complained of want of punctuality on part of the members in not sending periodical reports and a general promise was made that this would be better attended to in future.

1875

[p. 3] June 13th The meeting as originally intended was postponed until the centenary to enable friends to attend both.

A special meeting of those who could conveniently attend was found necessary in consequence of the receipt of some communication from American friends.⁹

This meeting was held at the *Imperial Hotel*.

Present	<i>Power</i> ¹⁰	}	
	<i>Levy</i> ¹¹		
	<i>Egan</i>		
	<i>Barry</i> ¹² (chair)		
	<i>Doran</i>		

The delay of the compact was fully entered into. It arose from the request of signatures to it by the A[merican] friends.

Our friends again objected to sign. A resolution was passed in reference to the compact June 25, '74, to affix official stamps in lieu of sign[ature]/and that sec[retary] at once communicate this fact to sec[retary] A[merican] friends.¹³

[p. 4]

Mr [Stackpool¹⁴] attended this meeting and discussed policy with those present.

He was supplied with a copy of the resolution just carried and he promised to communicate at once with his friends.

At this meeting Mr *Barry* proposed that the body allow the formation of CLASSES so as to get assistance from those best able to afford it who were not disposed at present to associate with the general run of assistants.

He proposed the acceptance of money from H-R [home-rulers] who were willing to spend some in opening clubs wherever possible, as he considered those clubs would be useful *training grounds*.

[p. 5] The meeting was unfavourable to the proposal but [agreed] that Mr *Barry* could/give it a trial until next meeting and then report upon its working.

Mr *Levy* applied for similar leave also which was granted on the same condition.

June 14th Sent letter and copy of resolution to sec[retary] A[merican] friends.¹⁵

1875

August 8th Friends meet at *Imperial Hotel*.

Power in the chair

Levy

Egan

Doran

Barry

McGuinness (?)¹⁶

*Biggar*¹⁷

Hanrahan [i.e. Walsh]

*Ryan*¹⁸

Mr *Power* was going to A[merica] and it was decided to give him a discretionary power to treat with all parties friendly to the family interests.¹⁹

[p. 6] Resolution passed that Mr *Barry* be authorized to visit the districts in the N.E. [North of England] and to receive and transmit to the sec[retary] of C[ouncil] such/sums of the 20% cuts²⁰ as will be available.

The question of CLASSES being again brought up by Mr *Barry* it was resolved that C[ouncil] accept the offer of support of any body of *Irish nationalists* willing to contribute to the family income and that Mr *Barry* be the medium of communication with such body.

Scotland was not represented—and no return from it or *Con-naught*.

A resolution recommending that an address be issued²¹ was also passed and each one of the C[ouncil] promised to contribute a paragraph or two on the matters likely to be of most interest to their locality.

Mr *Barry* promised his suggestions on the financial arrangements of the future.

1876

[p. 7] May 28th Meeting of friends in *Imperial Hotel*.

Levy in the chair
Kickham
Doran
Barry
Biggar
Ryan
*Torley*²²
Power
Hanrahan absent in Australia

Mr *Power* called attention to the apparent neglect of the sec[retary] in not calling the meeting earlier—and expresses dissatisfaction at his passing through London without calling on him or *Biggar*.²³ Sec[retary's] explanation taken as satisfactory. Sec[retary] saw Mr *Ryan* on returning from *Paris* and this by appointment at the station.

Mr *Torley* stated that great dissatisfaction existed in his district by reason of the H.R. [home rule] movement and requested
 [p. 8] what/steps be taken in future

Mr *Ryan* made a similar statement and request, and stated also that if some immediate action was not taken in the matter the labours of the previous years would be destroyed.

A long discussion arose on this subject in the course of which Mr *Doran* proposed the following resolution.²⁴

This resolution caused great discussion in which Messrs *Biggar*, *Barry*, *Power*, *Torley*, *Ryan*, *Doran* took part.

Mr *Power* moved the following amendment.²⁴

A further discussion arose on this after which Mr *Barry* proposed another amendment.²⁴ Mr *Doran* objected to act upon it if passed as he could not act further with Mr *Barry*. Resolution and amendment withdrawn to come on a later meeting, and sec[retary] to write to B[?utt] on the subject of conference—this letter not written for reasons explained by [sec]retary and considered satisfactory.

1876

[p. 9] August 20th Meeting of friends.

Egan in the chair

Ryan

Levy

Barry

Biggar

Torley

Doran

Power was sick²⁵

McGuinness (?) resigned

Mr *Barry* reported that N.E. [North of England] postponed holding their convention in consequence of [d] the expected return of Mr *Walsh*, and consequently no levy of the 20 per cent²⁶ was made.

Letter read from *McCarthy*, Australia, stated [] were good. That the A[merican] gentlemen were on the ground. They all held council and succeeded.²⁷

[p. 10] Mr *Biggar* has no report. No practical work.

Reports from all others.

The resolution relative to the H.R. [home rule] policy was brought on. *Egan*, *Biggar*, *Barry* protested until Mr *Doran* would write to *Butt*.

Mr *Doran* explained that in recent experiences of H.R. [home rule] prevented him acknowledging *Butt* as the leader of the *Irish* people.

The majority of our friends considered that it would be throwing the whole matter into Mr *Butt's* hands and would give him the opportunity of shutting up the N[atationalist] party.²⁸

Mr *Biggar* stated that it was wrong to discuss the matter in the absence of *Walsh*.

The resolution was proposed and carried.²⁹

[August 21]

[p. 11] Order of business, 2d day

Reports

Request of Munster for convention

Travellers especially *Jane*³⁰

N.E. [North of England] district

Policy towards H.R. [home rule]

do on present affairs

Bis[hops]' letter³¹

Resignation of secretary

Appointment of successor

[p. 12]

Mem[orandum]
Jan. 28, 77 Mallow³²

	men	long	short	am.	cash
KERRY					
1 Tralee	75	12	4	0	9- 0-0
2 Ballyduff	30	2	0	0	1-15-0
3 Ardferit	20	2	0	0	—
4 Causeway	15	2	0	0	—
5 Firries	20	0	3	0	2-10-0
	160	18	7	500	13-5-0
CORK CITY					
1 North	100				
2 South	150				24-0-0
3 B[ac]kstream	40				
4 Blackpool	50				94-0-0
5 Douglas	40				
	380				118-0-0
[CORK COUNTY]					
1 Buttevant	25	1	0		
2 Cullen	81				4- 0-0
3 Clonakilty	12	12	0		15- 0-0
4 Castlemagner	50	3	1		
5 Carraghtuohil	22	3	0		
6 Dunmanway	0	15	0		
7 Grange	70	9	4		
8 Watergrashill	30	9	1		

[CORK COUNTY—*cont.*]

9 Mallow	20	7	5		
10 Macroom	60	6	12		
11 Midleton	50	20	12		
12 Littleisland	40	9	3		
13 Passage	65				
	525	94	38		19- 0-0
TIP[PERARY]	57	15	5		30- 0-0
LIM[ERIC]K	60	24			79-10-0
	1182	156	50	500	£259-15-0
W[ATER]F[OR]D	300	70			
	200	60	12		
	1682	286	62	500	£259-15-0
CLARE	60				
	1742				

[1878]⁸³

[March]⁸³

- [p. 13] Leinster passed upon.
 Moved by Connaught
 Seconded by S.E. [South of England]
 Carried
 Proposed by Munster
 Seconded by S.E. [South of England]
 that Mr O'C [O'Connor]⁸⁴ be elected sec[retary]
 Carried unanimously

Mr Carroll⁸⁵ returned thanks for honour done.

Moved that Mr K[ickham] be re[e]lected as chairm[an]
 1 Leinster
 2 Conagh
 Carried

[p. 14] **Mem[orandum]**

By cash
 March 3-10

Moved by Leinster
 Second[ed] by Conaught
 that Mr H be treasurer
 passed unanimously

Dr C. returned thanks—very much gratified. About 8 years ago,
 when fenian was expiring

- [p. 15] 1875 called to the chairmanship executive board³⁶/Never held.
 any communication, never will 50 to 100,000 men
 Organisation was not very Statement from secretary.
 Proposed by . . . , seconded by S.C., vote of thanks, treasurer.
- [p. 16] 500 C. 26,000 dollars for risk. 6 43,000 . . . / 35
 hundred dollars contributed by Australian friends.³⁷ Waited
 on Russian minister in Washington.³⁸ Arms for 75,000 men
 L— will do what he can to establish national power.
- [p. 17] Maps. American organisers / New York Herald.

NOTES

¹ Presumably James Stephens's refusal to fulfil his promise to lead a rising in 1865, when the ending of the American civil war seemed to offer favourable conditions to the fenians.

^{1a} We have not succeeded in tracing this document, and it seems highly improbable that any such declaration would have taken shape in a fenian context in 1860. Mr R. V. Comerford, to whom we are indebted, suggests that the date in the address is a misprint for 29 October 1867, at which time the emerging supreme council seems to have been centred on London and suggestions were being made of support from English radical elements (*Irishman*, 9, 23 Nov. 1867).

^{1b} 'our lives . . . homes' is borrowed from the concluding words of the American declaration of independence (4 July 1776), with the substitution of 'homes' for 'honor'. Presumably the change, ruinous to the verbal perfection of the phrase, was deliberate; or it may be due to a printer's error or to a faulty recollection.

^{1c} By-laws were made in accordance with this section, and with the corresponding section in the constitution of 1873 (below, document (E), pt 1, § 12). Two sets of such by-laws have come to light. (a) *Laws, rules and regulations for the government of the I.R.B.*, promulgated by the divisional executive of the North of England, 'which will be held binding upon every member of the I.R.B. resident in the said division, in addition to the constitution of the I.R.B., which is binding upon every member in Ireland and England and Scotland' (S.P.O., Land League papers, carton 10). This is a printed booklet of 12 pages comprising 49 sections. It was seized by the police in Liverpool from a fenian centre in October 1869 (S.P.O., Fenian papers, 4854 R, 4871 R). A copy was also found by the police among papers of John Walsh (see below, note 4) seized at Rochdale on 28 February 1883 (*Special. comm. 1888 proc.*, iv, 394, 405); and this was produced in evidence before the *Times-Parnell* commission

(*ibid.*, pp 405-10). The same document is also printed, without the preamble and lacking sections 22-4, in Pollard, *Secret societies*, pp 279-89). (b) A corresponding book of rules for the Leinster division of the I.R.B., consisting of 8 printed pages and 27 sections, was found by the police on a drunken prisoner at Robertstown, County Kildare, on 17 December 1875. A minute by the assistant inspector-general, R.I.C., notes that a similar printed document had on a previous occasion been forwarded to the government. (S.P.O., R.P. 1875/7583, 14249.)

² A memorandum on this report, dated 21 May, by Samuel Lee Anderson, describes the address as 'a reprint of the address, copies of which were found some time ago with J. Famony in Cork and John Martin at Carrickmacross. It is not nearly so well printed or on such good paper as the original issue, but the fact of a "second edition" of it being distributed tends to show that the conspiracy is still alive.'

³ As already mentioned, Doran's notes begin with a meeting already in progress, the earlier part of whose proceedings, together with its date, are missing. On the pattern of the dated meetings—13 June and 8 August 1875, 28 May and 20-21 August 1876—we might suppose that the bi-annual meetings (*Special comm. 1888 proc.*, viii, 371-2) were normally held in May or June and in August. But we have to consider (a) that the meeting of June 1875 was a special occasion, and (b) that the meeting of May 1876 was abnormally late (see above, p. 320; below, note 9); and this suggests that the normal first meeting of the year was in March or April. The first meeting of 1877 was on 5 March (above, p. 295), and there appears to have been a meeting in March 1878 (below, p. 332, note 33). This would indicate March 1875 as the date of the first meeting of our series. But it had been decided that for 1875 the spring meeting should be combined with the August meeting, because so many I.R.B. members would be in Dublin then for the O'Connell centenary (see above, p. 318; below, note 9). Thus we assume August 1874 as the most likely date of the meeting with which Doran's summary notes open.

⁴ The phrase 'Meeting of the D.Cs.' might appear to be a description of the council itself, but in fact it signposts the subject matter of the three succeeding entries, all of which relate to business arising out of a meeting of centres of the North of England division of the I.R.B. For district centres in Britain see constitution of 1873, above, document (E), pt 1, § 9. The meeting here referred to is described in Doran's next entry as 'that meeting in Manchester'. There is a printed document among his papers that can only be an official report of this Manchester meeting. It is entitled 'Report of the annual conference of Cs and D.C.s of the A.O.O.I.R.B. Friendly Society held in O district, July 8th and 9th 1865', but internal evidence shows that both the identity of the organisation and the date of the conference have been deliberately falsified. The organisation was the I.R.B. in the North of England, and much of the business of the conference was concerned with complaints of unsatisfactory relations with the supreme council in Ireland. There is an unmistakable connection between a decision recorded in the conference report not to transmit the '20 per cent money' to the council

but to return it to the centres that had contributed it, and the dissatisfaction expressed at the council 'at the conduct of those who retained the funds'. This provides the context in which Walsh, at the same meeting of the council, promised that 'the money will be revoted in May next'. It is evident from the notes for 8 August 1875 (see above, p. 319) that the council continued to pursue the matter. As to the date of the Manchester conference, 1865 is out of the question: the supreme council was not then in existence, and the report cites the amended constitution of the I.R.B., which was adopted in 1873. If what is said in note 3 on the dating of the first council meeting of Doran's notes is correct, the true date of the Manchester conference is 8-9 July 1874.

⁵ John Walsh, of Middlesborough also known in fenian circles as 'Hanrahan', representative of the North of England division of the I.R.B. on the council. In response to an appeal dated 3 August 1875, smuggled out of prison by the seven fenians held at Fremantle, Western Australia, to M. F. Murphy, of Cork, funds were collected for a rescue effort, and Walsh, accompanied by Denis Florence McCarthy, went to Australia for that purpose early in April 1876. They offered their services to the *Catalpa* expedition sent for the same purpose in April 1875 by Clan na Gael from Boston, Mass., and played a part in the successful rescue operation at Fremantle on 17 April 1876. The letter from the Fremantle prisoners to M. F. Murphy, and a report by Walsh and McCarthy are among Doran's papers. Walsh later earned notoriety as a Land League organiser. A true bill for the murder of T. H. Burke in the Phoenix Park was brought against him by the Dublin grand jury in May 1883, but by that time he had fled to France. He died in New York. (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 105, 172-82, 219-23; Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel* (New York, 1929), 251-6; *Special comm. 1888 proc.*, iv, 394-405, 410-20, vi, 150)

⁶ The United Brotherhood, or Clan na Gael.

⁷ Charles James Kickham (1828-82), president of the council, journalist, poet, novelist and one of the founders of fenianism. Co-editor, with John O'Leary and Thomas Clarke Luby, of the *Irish People*, 1863-5. Convicted of treason-felony, and sentenced to fourteen years penal servitude, 1865; in English prisons, 1865-9. Released, March 1869, and returned to Ireland, to live in his native village of Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary, where his most famous book, *Knocknagow*, was written in 1870. Though almost blind and extremely deaf he lived an active intellectual life, and remained the most high-minded and undeviating exponent of apostolic fenianism to the end of his life. He was a leading spirit in the I.R.B. supreme council as constituted in 1869. (*D.N.B.*; *Devoy's post bag*; Doran papers; R. V. Comerford, 'Charles J. Kickham (1828-82)', M.A. thesis, N.U.I., 1972)

⁸ Patrick Egan (1841-1919), treasurer of the council, was managing director of the North City Milling Co. Highly intelligent, shrewd and discreet, with great executive ability, controlled energy and charm of manner, he quickly rose to the top of the business he had entered as a boy of fourteen. A deeply committed fenian, he was one of the founders of the amnesty movement in 1868, and one of the most important

advocates of fenian support for the home-rule movement. He later helped to found the Land League, which he served as treasurer (1879-82). Suspected of being involved in the Phoenix Park murders, he emigrated in 1883 to the U.S., where he had a second and distinguished career. (*D.A.B.*; William O'Brien, *Recollections*, pp 135-7; and other memoirs by contemporaries, *passim*)

⁹ The centenary of the birth of Daniel O'Connell (6 Aug. 1775) was celebrated in Dublin on 5-7 August 1875. The demonstration in Sackville Street on 6 August was the occasion of a fracas between the middle-class, catholic, whiggish organisers, who wanted to give the occasion a distinctively catholic character, and a combination of home-rulers and fenians, who were determined to emphasise O'Connell's achievement as a nationalist (R. B. O'Brien, *Parnell*, i, 147-9; Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, pp 265-9). A. M. Sullivan, Parnell, O'Connor Power, Barry, John Daly and Doran himself were at one in rallying round Butt as the symbol of this attitude. But Power and Doran subsequently had an altercation about the behaviour of nationalists at the platform (on the site now occupied by the O'Connell statue) from which the lord mayor, Peter Paul McSwiney, attempted to read an oration. McSwiney's voice was drowned by roars of 'Down with whiggery', 'No whig placemen', and 'Butt, Butt'; he eventually had to withdraw, to be replaced as speaker by Butt himself. Butt was followed by Power and Sullivan, who protested vigorously against the choice of O'Hagan, lord chancellor (1868-74) in Gladstone's first administration, to deliver the memorial oration, which, O'Hagan having decided not to attend, McSwiney had attempted to read. Power, however, publicly expressed the view that the heckling was unworthy of nationalists, and in reply to criticism from Doran (Doran to Power, 11 Aug. 1875, in Doran papers), reminded him that 'even whigs are men and therefore entitled to freedom of speech' (Power to Doran, 12 Aug. 1875).

The meeting of the council usually held in the spring had been put off (probably because of Doran's preoccupation with John Mitchel's visit to Ireland (Feb.-Mar. 1875) for the Tipperary by-election) to the week-end of the centenary celebrations, as most members would in any case be in Dublin then; but this decision was subsequently modified by the convening of a special meeting on 13 June to deal with urgent business from Clan na Gael relating to 'the compact' (see below, note 13).

¹⁰ John O'Connor Power (1846-1919), the representative of Connacht on the council, was the most dynamic and ambitious of the 'old fenians' who, after taking a leading part in establishing the supreme council, pioneered the policy of cooperation with the home-rule movement. A dominating figure in the amnesty agitation (1868-78); home-rule M.P. for Mayo, 1874-80, 1880-85. Of working-class origin and largely self-educated, he became one of the ablest orators and publicists of the Irish parliamentary party and scarcely less formidable as an obstructionist in the 70s than Parnell himself. But of all the opportunist fenians he was the most obnoxious to the orthodox, including such different personalities as John O'Leary and John Daly of Limerick. He twice visited the U.S. in 1875-7 as I.R.B. envoy (Aug. 1875-Mar. 1876, Oct. 1876-Mar. 1877).

On the former occasion he was involved in discussions with American fenians about the creation of a joint revolutionary directory; on the latter he accompanied Parnell with an address of congratulations from the people of Ireland on the centenary of American independence. Very active in the beginnings of the Land League. (Michael MacDonagh, *The home rule movement* (Dublin, 1920); F. H. O'Donnell, *A history of the Irish parliamentary party* (2 vols, London, 1910); T. M. Healy, *Letters and leaders of my day* (2 vols, London, [1928]); *Devoy's post bag*; D. A. Thornley, *Isaac Butt and home rule* (London, 1964); S.P.O., Fenian papers; Doran papers)

¹¹ John Levy, or Leavy, representative of Leinster on the council. Employed by Messrs Kelly and Dunn, hide, skin, leather and oil merchants, of Watling Street and Cooke's Lane, Dublin. He told the *Times-Parnell* commission that he remained on the council till 1880, but his evidence about its membership from 1877 is confused and self-contradictory. He was arrested on 7 May 1881 under Forster's coercion act and held in Kilmainham. On his release after three months he was prosecuted for embezzlement by Kelly and Dunn, and sentenced to twelve months hard labour. He is described by Desmond Ryan (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 90) as an informer, apparently because he gave evidence for the accusers before the *Times-Parnell* commission. (*Special comm. 1888 proc.*, vi, 370-80; Doran papers)

¹² John Barry (1845-), born in Wexford, the son of a coastguard. Went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne as a boy, did well in business, and rose to be chief traveller for Shepherd and Beveridge, floor-cloth manufacturers of Kirkcaldy, Fife, operating from Manchester. 'The ablest man of Irish blood in Britain' (Healy, *Letters and leaders*, i, 30); an opportunist fenian, he was foremost in organising the Irish parliamentary vote in Great Britain. Secretary of the Manchester Home Rule Association; founder of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, at Manchester, in February 1873. A strong supporter of Parnell, and largely responsible for getting him elected president of the Home Rule Confederation in Butt's place on 27 August 1877. Later involved in Land League, especially in organising support for it in Britain. Home rule M.P. for County Wexford, 1880-95. (Healy, *Letters and leaders*; O'Donnell, *Irish parliamentary party*, i; Davitt, *Fall of feudalism*, pp 226-7; Doran papers; Barry is the 'X' frequently quoted by R. B. O'Brien, *Parnell*, i)

¹³ Doran reported the matter to John Devoy, of Clan na Gael, on 30 June 1875 (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 114-15), enclosing a copy of the resolution referred to above, as follows :

Resolved that the compact of agreement between the E.U.B. (executive of the United Brotherhood, or Clan na Gael) and the S.C., proposed by the former body and dated 25 June 1874, be accepted by the S.C., and that the E[xecutive] of the S.C. do affix thereto the official stamp of the I[rish] R[epublic], and that the secretary of the S.C. do at once communicate the foregoing resolution to the secretary of the U.B. and tender to that body the assurance of the hearty affection of the I.R.B.

¹⁴ M. W. Stackpool, a member of Clan na Gael, who was in Europe in 1874-5 as envoy to the supreme council (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 69-70,

86-8, 93-4, 98, 131, 200). He favoured the compact between the I.R.B. and Clan na Gael, 'both for its moral effect here [in the U.S.] and because the S.C. are the only *legitimate* representatives of the party of action', though he considered that 'Butt and [A.M.] Sullivan are entirely too clever for the present S.C.' (Carroll to Devoy, 24 Jan. 1876, *ibid.*, p. 131).

¹⁵ This was a 'rough pencil draft' (*ibid.*, p. 114); cf. above, note 13.

¹⁶ The shorthand reads 'M S', which can only mean 'McGuinness'; for McGuinness 'of Preston' (Ryan, *Fenian memories*, p. 64) is stated by Levy to have been a member of the council for the North of England along with John Walsh (*Special comm. 1888 proc.*, vi, 370, 378; 'for president' on p. 370, no. 57,254, is a printer's error for 'of Preston' and 'McInnes', on p. 378, no. 57,496, for 'McGuinness'). The anomaly of two members for one division appears inexplicable, but was ended with M S's resignation on 20 August 1876 (see p. 321).

¹⁷ Joseph Gillis Biggar (1828-90), a well-to-do provision merchant, of Belfast. A presbyterian who joined the catholic church, and home-rule M.P. for County Cavan (1874-90) when he joined the I.R.B. A hunchback of enormous courage, bluntness of speech and kindness of heart. Father of the obstructionist tactics in the house of commons perfected by Parnell. Became deeply involved in the Land League. Gave evidence for the defence before the *Times*-Parnell commission in 1889. (*D.N.B.*; Healy, *Letters and leaders*, i, 39-44; O'Donnell, *Irish parliamentary party; Special comm. 1888 proc.*, viii, 365-415, x, 419-21)

¹⁸ John Ryan, a Tipperary man living in London, who represented the South of England division of the I.R.B. on the council. He was one of two John Ryans in the I.R.B. in London, both shoemakers. (John Devoy in *Gaelic American*, 18 August 1906; M. F. Ryan, *Fenian memories*, p. 61).

¹⁹ He sailed from Queenstown on 26 August 1875 and arrived at Liverpool on the return journey on 14 March 1876 (Doran papers).

²⁰ See above, note 4.

²¹ Cf. above, documents C and D.

²² John Torley, manager of a large chemical works at Duntocher, in Dumbartonshire. He represented the Scotland division of the I.R.B. on the council. (Doran papers; N.L.I., MS 15337; John Devoy, in *Gaelic American*, 18 August 1906)

²³ From early April onwards Egan, Barry, Biggar and Power repeatedly urged Doran to summon the council. Doran, who was taking the waters at Bath in March, had not responded to their expostulations by early May, when Biggar and others themselves called the meeting that took place as recorded above. While in England Doran had passed through London, but did not make contact with Biggar or Power, both being then engaged in attending parliament. One of Egan's letters to Doran, of 3 April, says that the anxiety felt by himself, Barry, Biggar and Power to have an early meeting of the council is 'in reference to the understanding'—presumably the 'pledge' claimed to have been given by Butt in 1873 (Doran papers).

²⁴ Neither the resolution, as proposed by Doran, nor the amendments, are among Doran's papers, but presumably this resolution was the same as the one carried on 20 August; see above, p. 294.

²⁵ Power wrote to Doran on 12 September, from the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, complaining that he 'had not received a copy of the minutes of the late meeting' which Doran had promised to send him.

I have been anxiously expecting it, because it appears to me that the important resolution reflecting domestic policy is null and void from the fact that it amounts to an alteration of [meaning 'departure from'], I think, the third clause of the *Rules* that [the MS reads 'and that', but 'and' is clearly redundant] no such resolution can be moved without a month's notice having been given [see above, document (E), pt II, § 3]. If that notice had been given it would have been a serious question with me whether I should not have come over, notwithstanding my severe illness. As three out of seven were against the resolution, it is null and void on the second ground of not having been passed by a two-thirds majority. On stating this view to four others they have concurred with me, our returned friend being one of the number. On behalf of myself and the other four I therefore request that the ex[ecutive] will not publish the resolution referred to, until it has been reconsidered. I leave for America by the *Britannic*, from Liverpool, on the 21st inst. or Queenstown on the 22nd . . .

(Doran papers). The first of Power's objections would seem to fail because the resolution had been moved at the preceding meeting of the council, three months before, when he was present. The second objection had more substance but the clause in the constitution that he invoked related to expulsion from the council, and the resolution did not expel anyone; the explanation probably is that the report of the terms of the resolution that Power had received was inaccurate. The 'other four' were doubtless Barry, Biggar, Egan and Walsh ('our returned friend').

²⁶ Cf. above, under 8 August 1875.

²⁷ This entry evidently refers to a letter from Denis Florence McCarthy, in Australia, about the rescuing of the fenian prisoners at Fremantle; see above, note 5.

²⁸ This line of argument was openly voiced by Doran at a crowded and tumultuous meeting of the Home Rule League, held in the Antient Concert Rooms in Brunswick (now Pearse) Street, Dublin (on the site of the present Academy Cinema), on the evening of 21 August. The meeting was chaired by Butt, whose opening speech was interrupted by militant fenians with cries of 'Physical force', 'No more home rule humbug', 'What about the prisoners?', 'Three cheers for '98 and '67'. These were met by counter-cries of 'Put out that Dalyite' (a reference to the riot that John Daly had headed at Butt's meeting in Limerick on the previous 17 April), 'Put out that paid spy' (expressing a popular view that disturbances at home-rule meetings were organised by government agents), 'Three cheers for Butt and home rule'. Butt eventually managed to restore order and finish his speech, and it was in the course of the subsequent debate that Doran, amid loud acclamation from his supporters and furious denunciation from home-rulers, succeeded in intervening. He claimed that the home-rule movement had been fairly tested and had failed, and that Ireland should return to the principles of Tone, Emmet, Fitzgerald and O'Donovan Rossa. He made his speech in what the police described as a scene of the wildest uproar, lasting at least twenty-five minutes, and was cuffed and pushed until, thoroughly

exhausted, he ended with 'God save Ireland'. The home-rulers then had things pretty much their own way, and the meeting closed with a resolution, moved by John Ferguson, of Glasgow, supported by John Barry, expressing the adherence of those present to the principles of the Home Rule League as laid down in 1873 until something more acceptable was forthcoming. (*Freeman's Journal*, 18 Apr., 22 Aug. 1876; *Irish Times*, 22 Aug. 1876; *Irishman*, 22 Apr., 26 Aug. 1876; S.P.O., R.P. 1876/ 12453, 13229; Michael MacDonagh, *The home rule movement*, pp 112-14).

²⁹ The text of the resolution, as written by Doran on a separate sheet of flimsy paper, is given above, p. 294.

³⁰ The reference is to envoys from Clan na Gael, such as M. W. Stackpool (see above, note 14) and Denis Dowling Mulcahy, who visited Ireland during 1875-6. 'Jane' may be a code name for Mulcahy or for Dr William Carroll, chairman of the Clan na Gael executive, who had accompanied John Mitchel to Ireland in 1875 and was seriously contemplating a second visit in May 1876 but did not in fact return till January 1878 (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 167, 281, 296).

³¹ The only public document that would fit the description of 'bishops' letter' in this context is the 'Pastoral address of the archbishops and bishops of Ireland', of 20 September 1875, issued on the completion of the national synod of the catholic church in Ireland held at Maynooth from 30 August to 20 September 1875 (*I.E.R.*, xii, Oct. 1875, pp 1-18). The first meeting of the council at which this address could have been considered was that of 28 May 1876, but this appears to have been fully occupied with discussion of the council's relations with the home-rule movement. The same topic engrossed the council's attention during the first day of the next meeting, 20 August 1876, and the 'bishops' letter' was only one of a number of items on the agenda for the second day. There is no evidence that it was actually discussed. The address, signed by the cardinal-archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cullen, and the other catholic archbishops and bishops, ranges widely, but the relevant passage is unmistakable:

Avoid all secret societies, all illegal combinations, so severely condemned by the church. Such associations afford, indeed, a fitting shelter to infidels and revolutionists wherein to hide from the light of day their foul conspiracies against religion and society; but they have never yet formed a true champion of justice or of liberty. Their efforts have been even cursed with sterility. The sole result secret organisations have anywhere achieved has been the uprooting of the faith, the degradation of the national spirit, and the establishment of a tyranny, dark, treacherous and irresponsible, that presses on their unhappy members with a weight and a cruelty compared with which the evils they were ostensibly created to remove might be accounted liberty itself. In them is specially verified the words of holy scripture '*justice exalteth a nation, but sin maketh a nation miserable*'. The history of our own beloved land is a proof that to no other form of resistance to wrong, save that which walks openly and honestly as in the day, belongs the inheritance of success (*ibid.*, p. 16).

This, though it does not name the fenians, is more thorough in its condemnation of them than the decree of the holy office of 12 January 1870, which condemned 'the American or Irish society known as the fenians' (Patrick Corish, 'Political problems, 1860-78' in Corish, *Ir. catholicism*, v, 3, pp 42-4). The decrees of the Maynooth synod, published in 1876

after being confirmed by Pope Pius IX, included one against secret societies, and in this the decree of the holy office against the fenians is cited (*Acta et decreta synodi plenariae episcoporum Hiberniae habitae apud Maynutiam an. MDCCCLXXV* (Dublin, 1876), p. 142).

³² This memorandum may be connected with the 'request of Munster for convention', listed in the order of business for the council meeting on 21 August 1876. In the table 'long' = rifles, 'short' = revolvers, 'am.' = 'ammunition'. The reading 'Waterford', on the fifth line from the foot is conjectural. The figures in the next line have not been identified. Between the third and fourth lines from the foot the following has been intercalated: 'take credit for amn from the []'. The figures assembled in this table show that the organisation in Munster was in an extremely weak condition, and compared very unfavourably with those for the North of England as recorded in the report of the conference held at Manchester in July 1874 (see above, note 2). The corresponding totals are:

	<i>Munster</i> Jan. 1877	<i>North of England</i> July 1874
men	1742	3946
rifles	286	12
revolvers	62	1470
ammunition	500	27810
money	£259-15-0	£2929-9-3

³³ The rest of Doran's notes (pp 13-17) are undated, except for 'March' at the head of p. 14; and, apart from the matter on p. 13 and on p. 14 down to 'very much gratified', are decipherable only in patches. They appear all to relate to a meeting of the supreme council at which Dr William Carroll, of Philadelphia, chairman of the executive board of Clan na Gael, was present and made a speech. Carroll was in Europe as Clan na Gael envoy to the I.R.B. from December 1877 to May 1878, and was in Dublin in February, March and May 1878 (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 277-8, 296, 299-300, 307, 328). It is probable that the meeting in question was held in March 1878 (see note 34).

³⁴ Presumably John O'Connor, who was known to have been secretary of the supreme council from 1878 and whose election as secretary is probably what Carroll was referring to when, in a letter from Dublin to John Devoy on 5 March 1878, he wrote: 'Mr Garcia [John O'Connor] has been placed in charge of the domestic trade of his firm' (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 307). It would follow from this that Doran, despite his repeated intention to resign, did not succeed in doing so till March 1878.

³⁵ The sense would seem to require 'Mr O'C.' [O'Connor], but there is no doubt that the MS reads 'Mr Carroll'.

³⁶ Carroll was chairman of the Clan na Gael executive from 1875 to 1880 (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 125-6).

³⁷ Presumably refers to the *Catalpa* rescue (above, notes 5, 27).

³⁸ Carroll, Devoy, Millen and two other Clan na Gael leaders had an interview at Washington in November 1876 with the Russian ambassador in which they argued the case that it was to Russia's interest to help Ireland to win independence (*Devoy's post bag*, i, 209-12).