

Although Mr. Kearney did not say so categorically he seemed to favour the latter alternative. He said that the Irish have an independence phobia. They think of everything in terms of whether or not it restricts their national freedom. As a completely independent people they would be ready to sign defensive alliances with the United Kingdom and with other countries. They might forego the advantages of Commonwealth membership but we would lose nothing by their independence. He thought that the United Kingdom had been much too reluctant to let go of Ireland. If the United Kingdom would push Ireland away instead of "hugging" her, Ireland would be on the British doorstep in no time.

Mr. Kearney said that the Irish felt that they were really closer to those of us in the Commonwealth than to any other peoples. In many ways they liked the common citizenship of the Commonwealth but they did not like being called British subjects. Their attitude was in many ways conditioned by their being a mother country themselves. He cited a remark made by John MacCormack to General Smuts. General Smuts had been explaining how the Boers had fought the British and then fourteen years later had fought alongside the British. John MacCormack said to him, "that could happen for South Africa because you are not a mother country."

3. TREATY PORTS

Mr. Kearney thought that it was not worth while at this stage in the war to attempt a bargain with Ireland on the use of the Treaty Ports. Plans had been discussed even within the past few weeks for making representations, but the United Kingdom seemed reluctant. He was inclined to feel that De Valera might agree, but of course the a price would be asked. Certainly it was absurd to attempt to say to the Irish at this time that it was now safe to come into the war on our side because we were definitely winning and there was less danger of German attack on their cities. This was not the sort of reasoning that would appeal to Irishmen. Mr. Kearney doubted also if we could wisely spare the forces which would be necessary to protect the Treaty ports.