

JOHN D. KEARNEY AND IRISH-
CANADIAN RELATIONS DURING
WORLD WAR II

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents of Irish,
Scottish, and English origin.

Mary C. Hawley
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Abstract

On September 3, 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, the Commonwealth nation of Ireland officially declared its neutrality. Canada, despite her outrage and disgust with the Irish government's stance, maintained her relationship with Ireland and finalized the arrangements for a High Commissioner exchange between the two nations. From 1939 to 1941, Irish/Canadian relations were formal, and diplomatic. In March, 1941, High Commissioner John Hall Kelly passed away and was replaced by John D. Kearney, an energetic and charismatic lawyer from Quebec. Kearney, quite ably, transformed Irish/Canadian relations from diplomatic and formal to warm and friendly. He did this by befriending the Irish community, Irish government and Ireland's Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera. As a result, Kearney's developed relationships propelled Canada to a position of prestige and respect in the eyes of the Irish people and the international community.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The nation of Ireland has played a critical role in Canadian history since the early 1800s. From the earliest days of the Irish Famine and the Fenian invasions of New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario, to the exporting of ships, high-quality linens, Beleek china, and D'Arcy McGee, Ireland has helped shape and mould British North America into an independently-minded, culturally-rich Canada.¹ Through various acts of immigration, leadership, terrorism, Commonwealth relations, economic and research assistance, trade association, and war participation, Ireland with each act, has successfully established an intimate and connected relationship with Canada. However, in the case of World War II, this intimacy and connectedness became tenuous when Ireland declared itself a neutral nation on September 3, 1939.²

This declaration not only eliminated Ireland from participating in the war, but it also, subsequently, removed her from the text books of World War II history. Historians, as well as the general public of that time period, were not

¹ R. Douglas, Francis et al. Origins: Canadian History To Confederation. 3rd Ed. (Toronto : Harcourt, Brace and Company, Ltd., 1996) pp. 251, 257, 432-433.

² National Archives of Canada (NAC), King Papers, September 4, 1939.

interested in studying a nation that was neither committed to the Allied effort nor dedicated to fighting for European freedom. Instead, the war generations preferred to analyze the experience of the war torn nations, who were either participants or victims of the savagery of war. Sacrifice, life, death, fighting, triumphs, tragedies, and slaughters were what fascinated people of the World War II era and not surprisingly continued to fascinate those of the present generation.

War historians of present day have closely followed in the footsteps of their predecessors, and have written World War II texts specifically focusing on the Triple Axis and Triple Entente. It is rare to find a history text that delves into the experience and struggles of nations such as Switzerland, Sweden and Ireland, non-participatory countries of the World War II period. It can be argued that a neutral or non-participating nation in an international conflict probably has a rather mundane existence compared to the excitement and horrors of war. Unfortunately, this is not always true. Swiss banking procedures, and Sweden's difficult situation with respect to her key iron ore industry are regular features of World War II studies. However, little is known of Ireland's story between 1939 and 1945. In fact, for Ireland, a nation of legendary battles, and sacrifices, the World War II era represented a time of internal strife, Commonwealth discrimination, economic loss,

international isolation, and Triple Axis and Entente abuse. It also signified for Ireland a period of 'ambiguous' neutrality, inner strength, self-sufficiency, and pro-Ally sentiment.

Despite Ireland's pro-Allied sentiment, few nations were willing to interact with her in the midst of a world war. Canada was one nation that, regardless of her disappointment and dislike of Irish neutrality, was willing to continue a relationship of toleration with the Irish state. Canada and Ireland were not on extremely 'friendly' terms between 1939 and 1945, but were willing to be open-minded and respectful of each other's position, and continue to associate due to Commonwealth ties and a history of goodwill and friendship.

The relationship between Ireland and Canada evolved throughout the war. From 1939 to 1941 Canada and Ireland maintained a formal association, linked only by their Commonwealth mother, and their possession of each other's High Commissioner. However, from 1941 to 1945 their relationship blossomed into one of respect, kinship, and amiability. The second Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland, John D. Kearney (1941-1945), was able to establish warmer relations with Ireland due to an unprecedented closeness and fellowship with Ireland's Taoiseach, Eamon DeValera. DeValera, a cantankerous and opinionated politician, immediately liked Kearney because of his Irish

ancestors, Roman Catholic upbringing, warmth of character, and levelheadedness. Kearney was, in DeValera's mind, a kindred spirit, who would ensure that Irish-Canadian relations would flourish and prosper.

This Irish/Canadian relationship is a historical unknown in Canadian World War II history. Scanning the hundreds of books that have been written on Canada and its World War II experience, not one details the relationship of Ireland and Canada during the World War. Non-Canadian sources such as The Lost Years, by Tony Gray, Ireland in the War Years 1939-1945, by Joseph T. Carroll, Ireland in the War Years and After, by editors Kevin B. Nowlan and T. Desmond Williams, and In Time of War by Robert Fisk, all provide glimpses of key events in Irish history between 1939 and 1945, involving Canadian representation. However, these four sources do not paint a complete picture of the denigration and resurrection of Irish-Canadian relations during the war period. They are Irish war texts with snippets of information on Canadian participation in Irish diplomacy. They, therefore, are not ideal sources for a detailed study of Irish-Canadian relations during the Second World War.

Acknowledging that there is a lack of reliable and detailed books on the subject of Irish/Canadian relations, there is, however, one secondary source that exists that does provide reasonable information on the issue of

Irish/Canadian relations spanning the World War II era. An article, published in The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, rightfully acknowledges that there was an involved relationship between Ireland and Canada during the war, and that Canada's reputation was propelled to new heights because of her involvement with the neutral dominion. This article, entitled "Canadian-Irish Relations during the Second World War", was written by Fred McEvoy, an employee of the Canadian Department of External Affairs. McEvoy's work, although dated, is a reliable source for diplomatic information. However, it lacks extensive detail as to the experiences of the High Commissioners, and in particular, John D. Kearney's personal relationship with Eamon DeValera. Nonetheless, McEvoy's work is the only source to recognize that Canada had a productive relationship with the neutral Dominion of Ireland, and that in the end, Canada was a better nation because of her service and assistance.

Ironically, this lack of secondary sources in Irish-Canadian relations is no reflection of the material available to researchers. Indeed, there is a vast and largely untapped supply of primary documents available in various archives. John D. Kearney's diaries, speeches, and notes are available for a complete examination of Kearney's experiences and responses to life in a neutral Ireland. Other valuable sources include: William Lyon Mackenzie

King's Diaries, the Department of External Affairs - Irish Diplomacy file (Tomes of Documents on Canadian External Relations), the National Archives - Irish Diplomatic File, the Globe and Mail, the Halifax Chronicle, the Vancouver Sun, the Dail Eireann's Parliamentary Records, and the speeches of Eamon DeValera. Without these resources, Irish-Canadian relations would continue to be a historical unknown.

It is unfortunate that with the plethora of primary source information available, historians have not had the incentive to study such a topic as Canadian-Irish relations during World War II. It is understandable that the World War II generation may have hesitated to study such a topic, when Irish neutrality was still a controversial issue. However, with the passage of time, and the Commonwealth's forgiveness of Ireland's rebellious behaviour, it seems strange that so little interest exists for a nation that did contribute to the war effort, and did so primarily through the assistance of Canada's High Commissioner to Ireland, John D. Kearney, and to a lesser extent, Canada's Prime Minister, Mackenzie King .

This thesis sets out to help fill in that gap in our knowledge. Chapter 2 looks at the roots of Irish/Canadian relations, the creation of the Canadian-Irish diplomatic exchange, and the patronage appointment of a Quebec lawyer, John Hall Kelly. Chapter 3 continues this theme, but

introduces the passing of Kelly, and the patronage appointment of John D. Kearney, a Quebec solicitor. Kearney admits that he is unprepared for such a job, but is eager to take on the challenge of smoothing out relations between Ireland and Britain, and encouraging Ireland to enter the war. There was great hope within Canadian and British government circles that Kearney could succeed with such a task, when Kelly could do little, and in Chapter 4, it is revealed that Kearney lives up to their expectations. Kearney befriends Eamon DeValera, Prime Minister of Ireland, and within Chapter 5, is able to settle an Anglo/American dispute with Ireland, and smooth out the tenuous relations that existed between Ireland and Britain. In conclusion, Kearney was not able to force Ireland into the war, but was capable of establishing a strong and healthy relationship between Canada and Ireland. Through trade, mediation, and reprimands, Kearney gained the respect and admiration of Ireland and the international community.

Chapter 2

Canada, Ireland, and High Commissioner Kelly

The first four months of the Second World War were tense, stressful, and exhausting for Canada, and for its Prime Minister, Mackenzie King. Canada had earnestly joined ranks with Britain, and declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939. In the process of preparing for, and declaring war, Canada was forced to resolve a conscription crisis, mobilize military personnel, train volunteers, and organize materiel, transportation, and departure points for Canadian servicemen.³ Nonetheless, she was committed to assisting the Triple Entente in "overthrowing such a relentless foe as the Nazi murderers now running amok in Europe and on the high seas", and was determined to contribute all that she could to aid the Allied war effort.⁴

By December of 1939 Canada was cast in the role of a devoted and dutiful child, dedicated in service to her English mother. Britain praised her and her sister Dominions that "in this moment of supreme peril, probably their greatest since the days of Elizabeth, the children [had] rallied to the cause of the old mother."⁵ Canada, was

³ R. Douglas Francis, Destinies, Canadian History Since Confederation. 3rd Ed. (Toronto : Harcourt Brace and Company, 1996) pp. 287-288.

⁴The Globe and Mail, September 5, 1939, p. 6.

⁵The Globe and Mail, December 7, 1939, p. 2.

especially important to Britain, as she remained a significant supplier of servicemen, and financial and economic assistance.⁶

Canada was also regarded as an important contributor to the Allied war effort, through her participation in a diplomatic exchange with the highly controversial, neutral Irish State. Ireland was a 'thorn in the side of Britain', and was considered a disgrace and an embarrassment to the Allied war effort. Her neutral stance, declared on September 3, 1939, was disappointing to the Commonwealth.⁷ Since Ireland had endorsed Eamon DeValera as Prime Minister in 1932, trouble had ensued between Ireland and the Commonwealth, or more specifically, Mother Britain.⁸

The relationship that existed between Eamon DeValera and Britain was highly confrontational, stressful and traumatic at the best of times. Pre-dating his Presidential victory in 1932, DeValera's difficulties with the British government began in 1921 with his rejection of the Lloyd George's (Better) Government of Ireland Act, which established a distinct partition between Northern Ireland (Ulster or Six Counties) and Southern Ireland, and

⁶The Globe and Mail, December 13, 1939, p. 1.

⁷Maurice Moynihan (Ed.), Speeches and Statements by Eamon DeValera 1917-73. (Dublin : Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p. 416.

⁸Robert Fisk, In Time of War, (London : Andre Deutsch Limited, 1983), p. 20.

reclassified Ireland as an Irish Free State.⁹ DeValera was not satisfied with a partition between the North and the South, and as a result, encouraged an Irish Civil War between pro- and anti-treaty supporters.¹⁰

In the end, DeValera's anti-treaty followers were defeated, and the beleaguered loser responded to this loss with the formation of a new anti-partition political party, the Fianna Fail.¹¹ In 1927, DeValera and his party arrived on the political scene, and in 1932, they were victorious in the country's national election. DeValera was nominated to be the leader of Ireland, and as his first orders of business planned to destroy the foundations of the Treaty of 1921.

DeValera began his dismantling of the Treaty "with the removal of the Oath of Allegiance to the King from the Constitution, the suspension of land annuity payments to the United Kingdom Exchequer, and the downgrading of the role of the Governor General."¹² As a result, the British government retaliated and began an economic war between the two nations, which continued until 1938. In 1938, the tension eased when Britain's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain,

⁹Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 19.

¹¹Ibid., p. 20.

¹²Fred McEvoy, "Canadian-Irish Relations during the Second World War". Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. Vol. 5(2), 1977, p. 206.

offered to create an Anglo-Irish Treaty which pertained to the Irish ports of Cobh, Berehaven, and Lough Swilly. In 1921, when Britain established the territories of Ulster and the Irish Free State, Britain maintained that they would not relinquish the three Irish ports because they were occupied by British forces.¹³ The naval base at Cobh was particularly important in securing the south western approaches to Britain in any future war. In order to put an end to the economic war and all other conflict which existed between the Ireland and Britain, in 1938, Chamberlain exchanged the ports for peace.¹⁴ DeValera was thrilled, and promptly concluded the economic conflict that had been plaguing their nations for six years.

Britain was encouraged with the progress, but worried that it could not maintain a peaceful relationship with Ireland without the assistance of an outside party. Therefore, acknowledging that Ireland and Canada had always had healthy and friendly relations, Britain decided to pressure Canada and Ireland to exchange High Commissioners in order to create closer and more co-operative relations for the participating nations, as well as for the Commonwealth.¹⁵

Britain's request of a diplomatic exchange between

¹³Fisk, op cit., p. 6.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵McEvoy, op cit., p. 207.

Ireland and Canada was not that unusual or unheard of. In fact, in 1934, DeValera contacted the Canadian Prime Minister, R. B. Bennett, and suggested a possible exchange of High Commissioners for the following year. In his letter, DeValera stated that:

The friendly relations existing between us and the need for establishing ... trade exchanges on a ... permanent basis are in themselves sufficient reason for taking this step, and I shall be very glad to hear from you soon whether your Government would view with favour the mutual appointment of High Commissioners to our respective capitals.¹⁶

Bennett was intrigued by the suggestion, but was unsure of whether this was a wise move for Canada. He believed that "a suitable Canadian [High Commissioner] could be of distinct service in encouraging co-operative Commonwealth policy", but believed that at this time, "commercial prospects would not warrant such an appointment."¹⁷ Therefore, Bennett temporarily rejected the suggestion, but maintained that it might be possible at some point in the future.

Bennett's suggestion was approached once again on March 3, 1939, when Sir Gerald Campbell, the British High Commissioner to Canada asked Prime Minister Mackenzie King to consider conducting a diplomatic exchange with Ireland. King was curious as to what might have occurred in order to

¹⁶NAC, RG 25, Vol. 171, File 584-34, "Despatch No. 7, from DeValera to Secretary of State for External Affairs", June 19, 1934.

¹⁷Ibid., "Despatch No. 74, From the Secretary of State Canada to Secretary of State London", December 28, 1934.

resurrect this suggestion. Campbell informed King that DeValera and the Duke of Devonshire had conversed about improving Anglo-Irish relations, and that in their discussion DeValera requested that the north and south of Ireland be united.¹⁸ The Duke stated that that was not possible, but England would consider appointing a High Commissioner to Ireland in order to "bridge the situation".¹⁹ DeValera responded "that before that step was taken, he would, himself, prefer to appoint a High Commissioner to Canada to show his independence in the matter and to get full recognition from us."²⁰ Therefore, Sir Gerald Campbell wanted to approach the Canadian government, with the request that "the British Government would much appreciate it if we could see our way to agreeing to appoint a High Commissioner to Ireland. They would then follow our appointment by one from the U.K. to Ireland."²¹

King pondered Campbell's request, and responded that he "was quite favourable to appointing a High Commissioner and [that] we would welcome one here from Ireland, and would be doubly pleased if it would help the British situation."²²

¹⁸Ibid., "Memorandum to Dr. Skelton: Interview with Sir Gerald Campbell", March 4, 1939.

¹⁹NAC, Series J1, Vol. 342, King's Papers, Diary, March 4, 1939.

²⁰Ibid., March 4, 1939.

²¹Ibid., March 4, 1939.

²²Ibid., March 4, 1939.

He also stated in his diary that he,

was amused at having had this request come from England for [his] good offices and the good offices of Canada just at the moment that [he] was recalling how ready the British Government was to having Canada help her out of difficulties but how unwilling to recognize anything done.²³

Nonetheless, King was quite happy to help Britain strengthen Commonwealth relations with Ireland, and to assist Britain in establishing diplomatic posts in such a volatile state.

To begin the official exchange of diplomats, Ireland decided to send her High Commissioner to Canada before Canada had even designated one. The Irish Government, or more specifically Eamon DeValera, selected John J. Hearne, a legal advisor to the Department for External Affairs and a close and personal friend of DeValera's, to represent Irish interests in Canada.²⁴ King accepted DeValera's choice, and officially welcomed Hearne to Ottawa on August 22, 1939.²⁵

In retrospect, King should have questioned DeValera's appointment of Hearne, a character the British were not particularly fond of, for Hearne shared DeValera's dislike and distrust of Mother Britain.²⁶ He despised Britain for partitioning his home country, and limiting Ireland's independence. Therefore, when the opportunity arose for him

²³Ibid., March 3, 1939.

²⁴Fisk, op cit., p. 45.

²⁵The Globe and Mail, August 22, 1939, p. 1.

²⁶King Papers, Diary, March 4, 1939.

to relocate to Canada, Hearne jumped at the opportunity. DeValera had ordered him to establish strong ties within Canada, and the United States, in order to convince them to support Ireland in her bid to end partition.²⁷ Hearne realized that this would be a great challenge, and relished the chance to show North America that Ireland was not a nation of troublemakers, but rather peacemakers who deserved a united country.

While DeValera had established his agenda for John Hearne and had announced Irish neutrality at the outbreak of the Second World War, Canada was still reeling from her new found responsibilities. From September to December 1939, Canada remained engrossed in issues ranging from recruiting Canadian personnel and the status of the 'phony war', to Hitler's consumption of Poland and the Russo-Finnish conflict.²⁸

While making additional preparations for the allied war effort, King was reminded by Hearne to refocus on the task of designating a High Commissioner to serve in Ireland. The Hon. Ernest Lapointe, the Minister of Justice, approached King and suggested a man who, in his mind, would be an appropriate choice for the job.²⁹ This man was John Hall

²⁷Fisk, op cit., p. 45.

²⁸Martin Gilbert. Second World War. (London : Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1989) pp. 27, 49.

²⁹King Paper, Diary, December 5, 1939.

Kelly, a Quebec lawyer with a distinctive Irish background, and a strong Liberal backbone.³⁰ He was also well-educated, had extensive political experience, and was a devout Roman Catholic.³¹

King liked Lapointe's suggestion of an Irish, Catholic, Liberal serving in Ireland, and on December 5, contacted John Hall Kelly to offer him the position of High Commissioner to Ireland. Kelly reported that he was interested, and on December 28, 1939, King issued an Order in Council, stating that:

His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and under the War Appropriation Act, 1939, is pleased to appoint and doth hereby appoint, John Hall Kelly, Esquire, LL.D., to be High Commissioner for Canada in Ireland, as of and from February 1, 1940.³²

Ireland, subsequently, issued an 'Aide-Memoire' on December 29, expressing their gratefulness to the Canadian government in sending John Hall Kelly to serve in Ireland, but questioned what the appropriate title would be for a Canadian diplomat in Ireland.³³ Sir John Maffey, the British Representative in Dublin (as of September 1939), was

³⁰The Canadian Who's Who. Vol. 3. (Toronto : Trans-Can Press, 1939) p. 366.

³¹Ibid., p. 366.

³²David Murray (Ed.) "P.C. 4368". Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. VII, Part I. (Ottawa : Ministry of External Affairs), p. 8.

³³Ibid., December 29, 1939, p. 8.

considered a Minister Plenipotentiary which suggested a compromise between 'High Commissioner' (the traditional title for a Commonwealth diplomat) and 'Ambassador' or 'Minister' (the title for a diplomat of a foreign country).³⁴ Mackenzie King decided that the title 'High Commissioner' would be appropriate as Canada had already publicized that it was sending a 'High Commissioner' to Ireland, and that any alteration in name might concern other Commonwealth nations.³⁵

Ironically, the term 'High Commissioner' was the least of Mackenzie King's problems. The Globe and Mail had recently published an editorial stating that it questioned the appointment of John Hall Kelly, as he had "never [been] identified with Federal Affairs, but [had] a long experience in Provincial politics in Quebec."³⁶ The Globe speculated that Kelly received his position due to "political considerations", and that,

since we are embarking on external relations in a big way, the Government ought to give serious consideration to the promotion of career men in the Department of External Affairs, instead of handing out such plum assignments to politicians.³⁷

King did not comment on the validity of the Globe and Mail's

³⁴McEvoy, op cit., p. 207.

³⁵Ibid., p. 208.

³⁶The Globe and Mail, January 2, 1940, p. 6.

³⁷Ibid., January 2, 1940.

accusations, but it is quite apparent that King was promoting a political colleague of the Liberal Party who would support his decisions and serve his agenda. Nonetheless, King acknowledged that he had satisfied DeValera's request to send a suitable candidate to Ireland to serve the diplomatic posting, and therefore felt that the Globe's criticisms were true, but inconsequential.

Therefore, after wading through the criticism in the press, King requested that Kelly depart for Ireland, in order to establish himself a residence and a diplomatic office in his new country of occupancy. Kelly agreed, and within a few days, had himself and his wife, Eleanor, on a plane departing from Canadian soil.³⁸ Kelly was looking forward to his service in Ireland, as he was informed that he was responsible for maintaining good relations between Canada and Ireland, and representing Canadian interests.³⁹ He was convinced that this would not be a difficult job, and was eager to begin his new career as a member of the elite diplomatic corps.

Unfortunately, Kelly was mistaken in the assumption that his posting would be a relatively easy one. In June of 1940, in the midst of Germany's crushing of France, Allied nations began to question whether Ireland would be the next logical location for invasion. Canada's High Commissioner to

³⁸King's Papers, Diary, January 15, 1940.

³⁹Ibid., January 15, 1939.

Britain, Vincent Massey, was convinced that Ireland would be the next point of invasion, and "should German forces succeed in landing ... and gaining a foothold there, they could easily establish air bases from which they could gravely threaten western ports of great Britain."⁴⁰ Massey believed that in order to eliminate the possibility of a successful German invasion, Ireland and Ulster should meet and create a joint defence plan.⁴¹ He realized that this plan would anger Ulster and jeopardize Irish neutrality, but Massey was convinced that if Ireland was invaded, then Britain would probably fall.

Massey decided that he must express his concerns to someone regarding this matter, and decided to talk directly to Prime Minister King, instead of contacting John Hall Kelly. The British High Commissioner knew that King would at least have a complete understanding of the situation at hand, versus Kelly who was still learning about Ireland and Irish diplomacy. Therefore, Massey cabled King about his thoughts, and King responded on June 16, 1940, by writing identical, classified telegrams to Eamon DeValera and Lord Craigavon of Ulster, imploring them to consider his reasonable request.⁴² King's telegram read:

...I venture to assure you of the deep and friendly

⁴⁰Murray, op cit., "Telegram 868", p. 451.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 451.

⁴²Ibid., "Telegram, June 16, 1940", p. 452.

concern of the people of Canada for what the unbounded ambitions of Nazi leaders may shortly hold for the people of Ireland as for all other free peoples...

There is little doubt that their forces will shortly be directed against Ireland, because of its tempting value as a prize in itself and as a base for immediate operations against Great Britain. If that attack succeeds, it will mean that the individual liberties, the national aspirations, and the deep loyalties of all Irishmen, whatever differences may have divided them in the past, will be in equal and deadly jeopardy. The people of Canada who owe so great a debt to the men and women of Ireland, north and south alike who have shared in the building of our country, would feel that fate their own...

May I therefore be permitted to express the hope that you and Mr. DeValera may find it possible to meet and work out a basis upon which united and effective resistance could be offered in the event of invasion or attack.⁴³

Lord Craigavon, upon receiving the cable, responded that Ulster was committed to the Allied war effort, and that if a joint defence plan was to be established, then Britain would negotiate it on behalf of Northern Ireland.⁴⁴

DeValera, on the other hand, decided not to respond to King's articulate plea. Instead, Kelly relayed the message that DeValera had announced to the Dail (Irish Parliament) that he was unwilling to co-operate with the Canadian request for joint pre-invasion preparation plans, as it would violate Irish neutrality. He also stated that he would not relinquish or lease Irish ports, as Britain was pressing for renewed access to the key ports surrendered just two years before, and that "any attempt to bring pressure to

⁴³Ibid., pp. 452-453.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 453.

bear on us by any of the belligerents ... could only result in bloodshed."⁴⁵

Once Mackenzie King realized that his diplomatic effort to protect Ireland was a failure, he decided to distance himself from the politics of Irish neutrality and wait to see if Ireland would be invaded. Much to King's surprise, Britain became the Nazi's new target after successfully crushing Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and, most recently, France.⁴⁶ However, Britain was able to defend herself, and rise above the German devastation of her cities and countryside. As a result, Britain was more determined to conquer the Germans, and thusly pursued them to Crete, Africa, and to the confines of Germany.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Germany remained a powerful and destructive foe to the bitter end.

While King was mesmerized by the tragedies and triumphs of the war, he was also quite concerned as to the health of his Canadian High Commissioner, John Kelly. In the new year of 1942, Kelly began to show signs of fatigue and illness, and King was unsure as to whether he would recover.⁴⁸ King knew that Kelly found the diplomatic posting to Ireland rather stressful and difficult to deal with. He realized

⁴⁵Ibid., "Telegram 32, November 8, 1940", p. 453.

⁴⁶Gilbert, op cit., pp. 47, 49, 76.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 179, 186.

⁴⁸King's Papers, Diary, February 6, 1941.

that Kelly had thought it would be a reasonably easy job, but since Kelly knew little of Irish politics and diplomacy, the job became quite complicated and challenging. In fact, King found that he was playing the role of the Canadian High Commissioner, more than Kelly was. Nonetheless, King was hopeful that Kelly would rally, continue to train to be more competent, and continue to monitor Irish/Canadian affairs. King empathized with Kelly's plight, but regarded these challenges or 'growing pains' as part of the diplomatic experience.

Unfortunately, on March 10, 1941, John Hall Kelly lost his battle with illness, and died at his diplomatic residence in Dublin.⁴⁹ King was saddened by the news, and immediately extended his condolences to Kelly's wife. Mrs. Kelly cabled Prime Minister King that she would remain in Ireland until a suitable replacement was sought for her husband's Canadian posting. She also offered to assist the new High Commissioner, whoever that might be, make an easy transition into the diplomatic corps and the Irish community.

Mackenzie King informed her that he would select a replacement for her husband, but would have to postpone the appointment because of a crisis that was presently brewing between Ireland and Britain.⁵⁰ In May, 1941, the British

⁴⁹Ibid., March 10, 1941.

⁵⁰McEvoy, op cit., p. 210.

government decided that they might extend conscription to Northern Ireland, in order to increase their military numbers serving in Africa and Crete. This statement horrified DeValera, and as a result, he contacted Canada, insinuating that Britain was trying to create greater animosity between herself and the Mother Country than there was ever before.⁵¹

However, since King was still feeling the sting of DeValera's rejection of his joint defence plan, King remained reluctant to get involved. He did not like the idea of conscription in Northern Ireland, nor did he want Britain to request conscription for Canada.⁵² Therefore, King cabled his rejection of such an idea to Churchill, and essentially requested that Churchill refrain from approaching Canada with a suggestion to conscript. In the end, Churchill decided against conscription, and Ireland and Canada 'breathed a sigh of relief', realizing that both nations had avoided another tenuous situation that could have created unwanted and unnecessary stress in a time of great difficulty.⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., p. 210.

⁵²Ibid., p. 211.

⁵³Ibid., p. 211.

Chapter 3

The Creation of a Diplomat

In the summer of 1941, Ireland was in the midst of chaos and instability. Dublin was recovering from a May 31st bombing hailed as a German error of navigation⁵⁴, and the nation of Ireland was reeling from food, fuel and employment shortages.⁵⁵ Eamon DeValera, the Prime Minister (Taoiseach) felt overwhelmed by the tragedies that surrounded him: an unpopular neutrality stance, German threats of bombings and invasions, Fifth Column spy campaigns, British animosity, and shortages in every vital economic sector within Ireland. He was also saddened by the sudden loss of the Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland, John Hall Kelly.⁵⁶

With the war raging, and Ireland consumed by economic and diplomatic strife, Canada had no choice but to replace Kelly. After much pondering and concern, the Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice, recommended another person unknown to the world of Canadian diplomacy, John D. Kearney.⁵⁷ A Quebec lawyer from Montreal, Kearney was a

⁵⁴The Globe and Mail, June 4, 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁵The Globe and Mail, June 28, 1941, p. 15.

⁵⁶NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 2, "Jottings From Abroad" speech in John D. Kearney's Speeches and Presentations file, February 11, 1952, p. 2.

highly respected individual in the eyes of Mr. Lapointe. Bilingual, well-educated, articulate, Irish, Catholic, and -- of course -- a Liberal, Kearney was thought to be an ideal candidate for the post, much like the late John Hall Kelly, and King was satisfied with these credentials.⁵⁸

King knew Kearney as well. Over the last few years King observed Kearney as an outspoken individual thoroughly concerned with the plight of his Quebec in the conscription issue.⁵⁹ Kearney, well-read and worldly for his 48 years, had been following the press demands of Britain for more men, more materiel, and more co-operation from Canada and her Commonwealth sisters. He could easily recall, "the errors that had been committed during the last war in handling French-Canadian compatriots," and knew that if conscription was the only option to sustain Canada's burgeoning war effort, then Canada must be more respectful of French interests.⁶⁰ Therefore, in their last meeting on the conscription issue, Kearney forewarned Prime Minister King and his government not to press Quebec into

⁵⁷Kearney, *Speeches*, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Kearney, *Speeches*, p. 2. John D. Kearney was educated at Loyola College (B.A.), and McGill University (B.C.L.).

⁵⁹ NAC, MG 30 E 215, *John D. Kearney's Diary*, July 17, 1941 to August 13, 1941, July 17, 1941, p. 1.

⁶⁰Kearney, *Diary*, p. 1.

conscripting themselves into service for a war that was simply motivated by British interests.⁶¹

King, thoroughly impressed by this man's aggressiveness and eagerness to explain his ideas and beliefs, felt compelled to offer Kearney an opportunity to broaden his horizons and venture beyond Canada. Kearney was contacted by Mackenzie King on the afternoon of July 17, 1941, and initially laughed at the idea of the Prime Minister of Canada trying to contact him.⁶² In his diary, Kearney wrote that he was convinced that the phone call was a prank inspired by his golfing associates, who he was playing with that afternoon. Arriving at his residence at Manoir Richelieu, Murray Bay, PQ, his wife Pat informed him that it was quite true. At 7 pm. that evening, King tried once again and spoke to Kearney relaying the message that he would like Kearney to consider taking the position of High Commissioner to Ireland, as soon as possible.⁶³ Kearney informed him that he would respond to the invitation in a matter of days.

When Kearney fully realized what the Prime Minister had asked him to do, he decided to ask his wife whether he should take the job or refuse it because he had no

⁶¹Kearney, Diary, p. 1.

⁶²Kearney, Speeches, p. 2.

⁶³Kearney, Diary, July 17, 1941, p. 1.

experience in the diplomatic service. He was also rather concerned about Pat's health since she had suffered a nervous breakdown during the previous year.⁶⁴ In fact, Pat was in awe of the job opportunity offered to her husband and was eager for him to accept. She figuratively placed her husband in the lawyer's witness box and quizzed him about his reluctance to accept such a job offer.

In the end, she asked Kearney "at the beginning of the war or subsequently, [did you] tender [your] services to Ottawa, either in the army or any other capacity that may be required?". Kearney's reply was "Yes!" and she continued, "Did you mean it?". "Yes" he replied; and she fired back, "Have you been called upon to do anything which would permit you to say that you have fulfilled your undertaking?". "No" he responded, and she interjected with "Then there's only one thing to do [and that is] GO!".⁶⁵

With that cross-examination, Kearney decided that the High Commissioner's position in Ireland would be an opportunity of a life time, and an amazing chance to serve his country in its time of need. As expected, Kearney travelled to Ottawa on July 21st to relay his acceptance to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 2.

Affairs, Norman Robertson. The Prime Minister, however, was unable to meet him as he was preparing a new publication of Canada's war efforts, and could not be disturbed in the midst of its preparation. Therefore, Kearney was advised to return to see King on July 24, and was ordered to educate himself in the meantime about the relevant issues of Ireland and its neutrality.

In the three days that followed, Kearney learned about the use of the Gaelic term 'Eire', the Irish Question of partition between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, Irish neutrality, Irish political figures, and the Irish economy.⁶⁶ Despite the fact that he had Irish relatives still residing in Limerick who kept him informed as to the war topics of concern for Ireland, Kearney still felt quite naive about what was actually happening in this neutral land.⁶⁷ Through his analysis of Kelly's file, and the reading of Canadian daily newspapers, Kearney hoped that he could establish his own stance on the pertinent issues concerning Ireland.

⁶⁶NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 1, John D. Kearney's Irish Notes, p. 12.

⁶⁷Censorship was enlisted with the declaration of the Emergency Bill under the direction of Taoiseach deValera. All mail, newspaper articles, magazines, and newsletters were reviewed and blackened to comply with Irish Emergency Law. See Tony Gray, The Lost Years. (London : Little, Brown, and Company, 1997), p. 156.

In regards to the question of partition, Kearney believed that it could be easily resolved with compromise between the North and the Free State. He wrote, "it seems to me that a concession by the North uniting with the South might possibly be traded off for the ports [of the Free State]. (I) wonder if this avenue of approach has been exhausted -- hope not--[although I realize that] "Ulster's motto is 'No Surrender!'"⁶⁸

In retrospect, Kearney, despite his Irish roots, was dedicated and loyal to the idea of 'Mother Britain'. He had been raised by Irish parents, William and Margaret (Doherty), married an Irish woman from Cork, and had been raised with Irish tradition and cultural influence. However, he was a Canadian who lived under the influence of the Union Jack.⁶⁹ He had fought in World War I after the call from Britain for more men, and bravely served in the 25th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, eventually receiving the Military Cross.⁷⁰ He was dedicated to British causes, and

⁶⁸Kearney, Notes, p. 14.

⁶⁹ The Canadian Who's Who. Vol. XII. (Toronto : Who's Who Canadian Publications, 1972), p. 573. Kearney's life summary can also be found in Vol XIII of The Canadian Who's Who, pp. 534-535.

⁷⁰Ibid, p. 573.; also stated in NAC, MG 30 215, Vol. 2, "Annual Dinner of the British Legion Speech" in John D. Kearney's Speeches and Presentations file, February 12, 1944, p. 1.

this influenced his opinion regarding Ireland and its neutral stance. If Britain wanted the ports of Ireland to fight the war, Ireland should be willing to give them up when being given the opportunity to put an end to Irish partition in the process.

Kearney was also concerned as to the popularity of neutrality within the Ireland. According to a government paper, "the policy of neutrality [had] practically 100% backing in Ireland."⁷¹ It also reported that "DeValera, espoused it; Leader of the Opposition, Cosgrave, is at one with him; and Mr. Black, Leader of the Labour Party also [supports the notion] of neutrality."⁷²

However, Kelly's notes argued that one popular Irish politician was not actively supporting the notion of neutrality. James Dillon, one of William T. Cosgrave's lieutenants (Leader of Fine Gael, the Opposition), stated in the Dail that Ireland should put an end to its neutral stance. In acknowledgement of Dillon's public displeasure with neutrality, John J. Hearne, Ireland's High Commissioner to Canada, corresponded immediately with Kelly insisting that Dillon was not a man to be taken seriously, and that he should ignore his opposing opinions.⁷³

⁷¹Kearney, Notes, p. 18.

⁷²Ibid., p. 18.

Therefore, Kearney realized that the issue of neutrality was a controversial subject, even within the 'all-neutral' Ireland. He knew that his job would entail diplomatic romancing of the Irish government and he was unsure of whether he was the right man for the job. DeValera was known to be a brilliant, stubborn, and difficult politician to negotiate with. In fact, Kelly had highlighted an article about DeValera who was answering a number of questions about Irish neutrality and the Irish question. One question that was posed to DeValera was: "Would Ireland be willing to receive the ports if the North and the South were united in one Parliament?". The clipping stated that DeValera pondered the question and then coolly responded that, "No inducement can influence Ireland to give up her ports. We are entitled to a united Ireland as of right. Why should we have to pay for something which is by right already ours?"⁷⁴

⁷³Kearney, Notes, p. 19.

⁷⁴Kearney, Notes, p. 22. With the foreshadowing of the coming war, Chamberlain, out of desperation, made an appeal to deValera to allow Britain to rent or borrow the ports in order to maintain control over the coastal waterways. However, DeValera refused and stated that since Ireland was going to remain neutral in the event of a war, it would not tarnish its neutral stance by assisting a nation that would be at war.

In the end, Chamberlain, as well as Churchill, both attempted to bribe DeValera with the opportunity to end partition between Northern Ireland and Ireland, if Ireland was willing to offer its ports to Britain for war usage. This offer, not surprisingly, did not entice deValera, and was justly refused. See Robert Fisk, In Time of War.

Not only was Kearney leery of interacting with DeValera and his colleagues, he was also concerned about the economic situation which he and his wife would be ushered into. Kearney had read that tea was reduced to a fraction of an ounce per week, coal was available at only a half tonne per month, electricity was limited to 25% of its original output, gasoline was rationed, and automobile licenses were permanently cancelled for the duration of the war.⁷⁵ Kearney was not surprised about the rationing of some items, but was surprised about the extent of economic disparity that existed within the neutral state. Without a doubt, Kearney became concerned about his welfare in Ireland even on a salary of \$7 500 with additional allowances for car maintenance and the rental of a house.⁷⁶ Considering that Ireland was known for having a high cost of living, Kearney wondered if the remuneration for additional expenses and office requirements would be sufficient. Again, he was consumed by doubt as to his acceptance of such a position, but knew that despite the drawbacks and controversies, this would be a once in a lifetime opportunity.

By July 24, 1941, John Kearney had had the opportunity

(London : Andre Deutsch Limited, 1983) pp. 2, 21-3, 35, 98-103.

⁷⁵Kearney, Notes, p. 7.

⁷⁶Kearney, Diary, p. 4.

to meet with Prime Minister King, accept his offer, and negotiate his contract for a period of service as the Canadian representative to Ireland. King informed him that Britain had been quite concerned as to who might be selected for the position because Churchill regarded the post of "Canadian High Commissioner in Ireland about the most important in the Empire."⁷⁷ Churchill requested that King select the "best man possible for the job", and to proceed quickly because he wanted the Commissioner to be in Ireland before too much time lapsed.⁷⁸

He was quite honoured to be selected as the best man, but knew that he must address a number of issues with King before he prepared for his departure. Kearney informed King that he would resign from the Diplomatic Services when the war concluded, as he wanted to return to his law firm and his Canadian life style.⁷⁹ He was also concerned as to the extent of German infiltration into the Irish government and the Irish population. He had been pondering whether German agents were present in Ireland, and wondered if King knew what was really going on.

King was unwilling to comment on his concerns, but did

⁷⁷Kearney, *Speeches*, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁹Kearney, *Diary*, p. 5.

suggest that Kearney should attempt to correspond with Malcolm Macdonald, the British High Commissioner to Canada, and John J. Hearne, the Irish High Commissioner to Canada regarding the presence of Germans in Ireland.⁶⁰ As Kearney recorded in his diary, he was disappointed that King did not offer information to him about Germany, but was pleased that he had two contacts who might be able to satisfy his curiosities and provide him with 'inside information' as to what was occurring in Ireland.

Lester B. Pearson, Assistant to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, arranged an appointment with Hearne, and Kearney actively prepared himself for the meeting. He had been informed that Hearne was a "charming man" who was quick to extract personal or confidential information from an oblivious interviewee. Kearney was warned that one must be extremely cautious when conversing with Hearne, and he

⁶⁰Kearney, Notes, p. 23. John J. Hearne, Irish High Commissioner, was a well-known politician in Ireland, and highly respected for his creation of the 1937 Irish Constitution (a request for an alteration of the term 'free state' to 'Eire' or Ireland, therefore, representing the whole island; a change in Head of State with an elected President; a more representative Senate; and recognition of the Catholic Church as the church of the majority). Malcolm Macdonald was also an interesting choice for diplomatic service in Canada, as he was the chief negotiator in the 1938 Anglo-Irish agreement proceedings. He was actively involved in the return of the Irish ports (Berehaven, Cobh, and Lough Swilly) to Irish control under the direct orders of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. The Irish ports were returned to Ireland, on behalf of Britain, as an act of friendship and kindness. See Robert Fisk, In Time of War, (London : Andre Deutsch Limited, 1983).

heeded this warning. Kearney decided that he would act as a polite and curious listener when interacting with the Irish High Commissioner as he suspected that Hearn would report every word to DeValera when he departed.⁸¹ As Kearney expected, Hearne was a charming man. He was a 47 year old, smartly dressed politician who greeted him with "Come over here till I have a look at you", then "My, you are a grand man entirely!"⁸² Following their introductions, Kearney remarked that it was a very easy and satisfying experience to listen to Hearne ramble about life in Ireland and Canada.

The discussion, however, became somewhat troubling when Hearne launched into a conversation concerning the German presence in Ireland. Certainly, Kearney had been looking forward to hearing Hearne's views on this subject, but was quite shocked with what Hearne relayed to him. He stated that a Nazi presence within a neutral Ireland was quite mythical.

Yes, there was a German Legation still residing in Ireland, but it was not a 'packed one'. In fact, there were only six men in the German Legation with three stenographers. The British Legation contained fourteen [and] it was the biggest Legation in Dublin. But this was [quite] natural since Ireland's dealings were with England, [not Germany].⁸³

⁸¹Kearney, Notes, p. 24.

⁸²Kearney, Diary, p. 7.

⁸³Kearney, Notes, p. 24.

Hearne was also quite direct about the accusations that Britain and the Commonwealth had hurled at Ireland for allegedly refuelling German submarines on the Irish coast. His response to the accusations was that "the Irish asked the English to appoint a Naval Commission to investigate and it was reported that it was clear that no refuelling [had] occurred."⁸⁴

As the conversation continued down its troubling pathway, Kearney began to wonder what Hearne actually knew, and whether he was being completely truthful. Kearney raised his concern about whether he should allow his wife to travel with him to Ireland, considering her illness of the past year, and the volatile situation in Ireland. Hearne laughed and said "By all means --there will no invasion [of Ireland]."⁸⁵ He continued to justify this statement by saying "Germany's idea is simply to dominate Europe and leave England as she is."⁸⁶ Kearney added to his summation of the conversation, "By his tone, he implied that such a situation would be [considered] acceptable."⁸⁷

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁵Kearney, Notes, p. 25.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 25.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 25.

At the conclusion of their meeting, Hearne remarked that he was overjoyed that Kearney had Irish parents, an Irish wife, and was a devout Roman Catholic, as this would satisfy DeValera.⁸⁸ At that point in the meeting, Kearney knew that he had passed the Hearne test, and would be deemed acceptable to the Irish government and its leader. This satisfied Kearney as he was somewhat unnerved by the experience of meeting Hearne. However, Kearney was incredibly troubled by Hearne's nonchalant attitude about the Nazi consumption of Europe, and the presence of the German legation in Dublin. Kearney suspected that the "Germans were not carrying on normally in Dublin."⁸⁹ In fact, he believed that the Germans were probably "doing the same kind of job in Dublin as they did in Norway, Holland, and France. I am convinced that every cable sent or received by Hearne himself is read by the Germans."⁹⁰

Kearney, in hindsight, wished he could have questioned Hearne as a private citizen. He wanted to ask him:

If he were in the position of the Germans -- would he be foolish enough, if he wanted to do propaganda work, to increase the staff in the German Legation; or would he, undercover, spend money and use people such as the IRA and report secretly -- and would he not be sure

⁸⁸Kearney, Diary, p. 7

⁸⁹Kearney, Diary, p. 8.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 8.

that they should never be seen around the Legation?⁹¹ Of course, Kearney knew that such a question would tarnish his favourable reputation with Hearne and the Irish government. At this point, it was not recommended that he create a diplomatic incident before he had even landed on Irish soil.

Kearney was also given the opportunity to meet with Malcolm Macdonald at the British Embassy at Earnscliffe. While this meeting was not as productive or conversational as his previous one with John J. Hearne, he did learn a great deal about his fellow diplomats who were employed in service in Ireland. The American Ambassador to Canada, Hon. J. Pierpont Moffatt, a guest of Macdonald's, enlightened Kearney about the reputation of David Gray, the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. Gray was an aging businessman who had a familial tie to Eleanor Roosevelt. As a favour to her, President Roosevelt appointed Gray to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, which was rumoured to be a grave error in diplomatic circles. Gray evidently was a man who was "well-acquainted with the Irish of a past generation", and therefore, was extremely 'out of touch' with the Irish issues of today.⁹²

⁹¹Ibid., p. 8.

⁹²Tony Gray, The Lost Years. (London : Little, Brown and Company, 1997) p. 13.

In other circles, Kearney was forewarned about the diplomatic positioning of Sir John Maffey as the British Representative to Ireland. Maffey, an experienced politician and negotiator, was called out of retirement to serve in Ireland and observe the Irish in their neutral state. The Canadian Governor General spoke highly of Maffey stating that he "would be a man [that Kearney] would like", and Macdonald assured Kearney that although Maffey was old, he still handled Irish affairs fairly and respectfully.⁹³ Kearney suspected that he was probably one of the youngest diplomats in diplomatic service to Ireland, and most likely the only one who could not be reputed as a "has-been" diplomat.⁹⁴

While Kearney's initial introduction into the diplomatic services was generally contradictory and confusing, the second wave of his education proved to be rewarding, challenging and somewhat frightening. King was concerned that Kearney was not well informed about what his role would be as the Canadian High Commissioner. He knew that Kearney would perform well, and was knowledgeable about the partition, and the questionable German presence in Ireland, but was unsure of whether Kearney understood the

⁹³Kearney, *Diary*, p. 13.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

'whole picture' of Irish diplomacy. Therefore, King arranged for Kearney to attend a number of meetings, and dinner parties, in order to intensify his diplomatic education, and prepare him before his August 23 departure date.

In King's crash course of diplomacy, he first planned for Kearney to have dinner dates with such characters as H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, and Justice Davis of the Canadian Supreme Court. Both had a number of stories about Ireland, and in the weaving of their tales offered Kearney valuable advice or general comments as to what he may or may not experience.

For example, H.R.H. the Duke of Kent suggested to Kearney that the Commissioner's position in Ireland should be a relatively "easy post".⁹⁵ However, with his dry smile and sarcastic tone, Kearney knew that the Duke was not envying his newly acquired position. Justice Davis, on the other hand, was rather excited about Kearney's posting, but stressed that Taoiseach DeValera may be a difficult man to work with. On a recent trip to Washington, Davis had the opportunity to meet with Senator Wilkie, a man who had negotiated war arrangements with Eamon DeValera. Wilkie's only comment on his dealings with the Irish leader was that after a couple of hours of negotiation, he "threw up his

⁹⁵Kearney, Diary, p. 10

hands and said he could not make head or tail of him."⁹⁶ Wilkie believed that DeValera was "living in the past, and was ignorant of present-day realities and the need for quick action."⁹⁷

These dinner dates proved to be informative of the English distaste of the Irish, and that DeValera was an unamenable politician, but King knew that Kearney needed more of an 'insider's perspective'. Therefore, King arranged for two additional meetings with Malcolm Macdonald and John J. Hearne to provide a more indepth perspective of Irish affairs.

Certainly, Kearney's initial meeting with Macdonald was far from productive, but this second one had an air of seriousness and strict confidentiality. In their discussions, Macdonald now advised Kearney to be careful of Eamon DeValera, whom he described "as immutable as the Sphinx -- his word in international affairs was and could be taken at the foot of [a] ladder."⁹⁸ He also stated that "privately, [DeValera] was by no means pro-German and inclined to friendship with England."⁹⁹ However, Kearney

⁹⁶Kearney, Diary, p. 11.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 11.

⁹⁸Kearney, Notes, p. 29.

felt that that might be an outrageous statement as he truly believed that the German presence, whether in a packed German legation or in a spy ring, was fully endorsed by Ireland's Taoiseach. Nonetheless, as the conversation continued, Macdonald revealed that he too shared Kearney's concerns that a Fifth Column presence within Ireland probably did exist. However, he continued to argue that DeValera had never historically tolerated suppression of any kind, and certainly would not allow himself, his government or his people to undermine Irish neutrality.

At the end of the meeting Macdonald bestowed upon Kearney his 'pearls of wisdom' for success in his new posting. Firstly, "do not discuss affairs of State unless those to whom [you] are speaking are known to [you] and can be trusted and be ready to parry questions at gatherings because attempts will be made even if [you] keep off controversial subjects, to draw [you] out."¹⁰⁰ This was not a surprising statement to Kearney as he had previously been warned to be cautious and close-mouthed around the charming, yet suspicious character of John J. Hearne. Macdonald also suggested to Kearney that in order to survive his posting in Ireland "you could not and should not take yourself or your job too seriously."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰⁰Kearney, Diary, August 5, 1941, p. 21.

With these two recommendations, Kearney departed from Earnscliffe, the British embassy residence, and began to ponder Macdonald's parting words. He, not surprisingly, disagreed with Macdonald's lax attitude about his posting, but accepted the notion that Macdonald was the distinguished and experienced politician/diplomat, and he was not. Therefore, he could not entirely dismiss Macdonald's parting words.

Nonetheless, Macdonald's first 'pearl of wisdom' was certainly relevant for Kearney's next engagement with the stately John Hearne. Upon reacquainting with Hearne after their initial meeting, Kearney felt that Hearne had a detailed agenda, and desperately wanted Kearney's loyalty and support in executing his new found plans.¹⁰² Hearne was a political mover and shaker who expected Kearney to assist him in the sovereignty movement to withdraw Ireland from the Commonwealth. Hearne had agreed to Prime Minister King's request to meet with Kearney only to attempt to persuade the Canadian High Commissioner to promote Irish independence. Kearney, however, was not convinced by Hearne's argument and refused to participate in such an activity.

Hearne politely accepted Kearney's refusal, and realized that Kearney would not be a man who could be

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰² Kearney, *Diary*, August 11, 1941, p. 22.

seduced by Hearne's charms. Viewing Kearney with utmost respect, he informed him that he believed that the new High Commissioner "would get on swimmingly" with everyone in Ireland, and that he must remember to never fraternize with anyone in Ireland who is against the government, because it may cause a diplomatic incident.¹⁰³

And with those words, Kearney departed for the strange world of Canadian diplomacy. Through the words and stories of Malcolm Macdonald and John Hearne, Kearney felt a portrait had been created allowing him to visualize a state that was led by a difficult leader, who was steering Ireland through a present and a future that was questionable. He knew that he was appointed to the High Commissioner's post because he was Irish, Catholic, and a Liberal, and felt that these attributes may not make him the best man for the job. However, his task, as defined by the Governor General, Earl of Athlone, was to "smooth out the differences and difficulties" by encouraging the Irish to enter the war, and Kearney felt committed to attempting that exercise.

As John D. Kearney and his wife, Pat prepared for their departure from Canadian soil, Kearney began to ponder the war situation and his hopefulness for a quick conclusion. He realized that Russia was in the process of defending her territory, and was preparing to defend a possible invasion

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 22.

of Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. Nonetheless, as Kearney began to refocus on his present situation, he quickly scribbled a few parting statements into his first diary. He wrote, "I look upon my job as a wartime assignment. I ask myself when will the war be over. If the Russians hold out, I think it could end next fall. If not, then the following autumn will be when I return to Canadian soil."¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, for John D. Kearney, his educated guess proved far from accurate.

¹⁰⁴Kearney, *Diary*, August 23, 1941, p. 1.

Chapter 4

A Diplomat's Rites of Passage: 1941 to 1944

On August 23, John D. Kearney could think of nothing else but his duties as Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland. These, he felt were basically unachievable and unrealistic. As Kearney was informed, he was expected to smooth out the difficulties between the north and the south, and try to encourage the south to enter the war.¹⁰⁵ This, Kearney perceived as 'tall orders' and wondered if a "poor lawyer from Canada" could possibly hope to accomplish such momentous tasks when not one experienced diplomat, Prime Minister or President could do so successfully.¹⁰⁶

Kearney was still feeling overwhelmed and apprehensive about his diplomatic responsibilities as his plane touched down in Dublin on August 23rd, at two o'clock in the afternoon. He and his wife, Pat, gathered their luggage and departed for a nearby hotel in order to organize themselves for the coming days. They realized that it was imperative to locate a permanent residence as quickly as possible, in order to broadcast their Canadian presence within Dublin and begin their networking and assimilation into the Dublin community. This, Kearney hoped, would be an easy process.

In the initial days Kearney found it difficult to

¹⁰⁵NAC, MG 30 E 215, John D. Kearney's Diary, July 17, 1941 to August 13, 1941, August 5, 1941, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶Kearney, Diary, p. 13.

assimilate into the Irish community. A number of formal interviews, dinners, and scheduled meetings had to be attended in order for him to be officially inducted into the diplomatic corps. However, the first organized event that Kearney and his wife attended was a dinner party on August 24, completely unrelated to the diplomatic corps and Irish governmental circles. The dinner was hosted by the recently widowed Mrs. Hall Kelly, wife of the late John Hall Kelly, the first Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland. Kearney felt it was a great honour and privilege to meet and interact with the former High Commissioner's wife.¹⁰⁷ Mrs. Kelly eagerly greeted her husband's replacement, and welcomed him and his wife to their new life of diplomacy and privilege. She was departing from the Emerald Isle on September 1, and knew that this would probably be the best opportunity to meet the new couple, before they settled into their formal life.¹⁰⁸ They, therefore, dined together, educated one another as to the changing times of both Ireland and Canada, and concluded their meeting by wishing each other luck as they entered into their new lives.

Following his dinner with Mrs. Kelly, Kearney began to attend a number of official meetings and dinners. Beginning

¹⁰⁷NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 1, John D. Kearney's Diary, August 23, 1941 to December 31, 1941, August 24, 1941. In this diary, Kearney identified all entries by date, not page number. In the first diary, all entries were identified by page numbers.

¹⁰⁸Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, August 24, 1941.

on August 25 until September 17th, Kearney made the rounds of various Irish governmental representatives and diplomats. His first official diplomatic visit was on August 26th, in which he had an opportunity to meet An Taoiseach DeValera, and present his credentials.¹⁰⁹ Kearney described the meeting as uneventful, and he felt relieved that he had passed DeValera's inspection without incident.

According to Kearney's diary, surviving his first meeting with DeValera was quite easy compared to the stresses of meeting and greeting the remaining government representatives and diplomats who resided in Dublin. His whirlwind tour of the government and diplomatic corps included visits with: the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of Dublin, P.J. Doyle; the President of Ireland, his Excellency Dr. Douglas; the Minister for the U.S., David Gray; the United Kingdom Rep., Sir John Maffey; the Minister from Belgium, Mr. Goor; the Minister for Spain, Don Juan Ontiveros; the Hon. Consul-General for Denmark, Mr. Harald Osterburg; the Minister for France, M. Laforcade; the Consul-General for Sweden, M. N.L. Jaenson; the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner to Ireland, Mr. Ernest L. McColl; and Kearney's official Canadian governmental assistant, E. J. Garland.¹¹⁰ In addition to these various visits and meetings, Kearney was honoured with a formal dinner at Iveagh House, the home

¹⁰⁹ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, August 26, 1941.

¹¹⁰ NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 2, Speeches - "p.p.c. cards", November 20, 1945, pp. 1-3.

of the Taoiseach which was a grand and regal affair.¹¹¹

Once Kearney completed his official rounds, he settled into the routine of working and representing Canadian interests in the Irish diplomatic community. He was fortunate to have found a temporary residence called 'Gracefield' at Blackrock, which served as an interim office for formal and private meetings, and acted as a 'ground zero' location for working on diplomatic projects.¹¹²

As Kearney reveals in his typed diaries, it was necessary to infiltrate Irish government circles in order to begin his assignment of encouraging Irish participation in the war. Kearney began his infiltration project by a number of different means: offering to play golf with various government members at Castle Club, DunLaoghaire Golf Club, and at Foxrock¹¹³; attending various plays, such as, 'Swans and Geese' and 'The Fire Burns Lately', with members and their wives¹¹⁴; and always being present at evening or morning mass at the An Taoiseach's church.¹¹⁵ Kearney also became actively involved in Irish football, horseback riding, and learning the fine art of drinking Irish whiskey. He believed that it was necessary "to take a drink with a man in order to get close to him", but had to admit, that he did not like the taste of Irish whiskey, and often had to

¹¹¹ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 24, 1941.

¹¹² Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 3, 1941.

¹¹³ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 13, 14, & 23, 1941.

¹¹⁴ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 6 & 22, 1941.

¹¹⁵ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 5, 1941.

"disguise his dislike in order to assimilate into the group of tee-totalers."¹¹⁶

In the midst of socializing and assimilating himself into the Irish community, Kearney also travelled to Dorchester, England to meet with various Canadian government representatives. In Dorchester, he attended a dinner meeting with the Canadian Minister of National Defence, Col. J. L. Ralston, the Canadian High Commissioner to England, Vincent Massey, Col. Blackadder of Blackwatch, Major Colin Campbell, and members of the Canadian Parliamentary Society Committee.¹¹⁷

Ralston requested that Kearney address the group on the state of Irish affairs, and in the course of the discussion, the audience asked whether Ireland would come into the war. Kearney knew that DeValera had mused the possibility that Ireland may enter the war, by stating, "we are not dealing with some distant, vague possibility; we are dealing with what must by all reasonable persons be classed as a high probability."¹¹⁸ Therefore, the gathered committee expressed the opinion that if the Irish were considering the possibility of entering the war, they then would probably enter the war if the Americans decided to. Kearney admitted that he felt "it was possible..." that Ireland would come

¹¹⁶ NAC, MG 30 E 215, John D. Kearney's Diary, July 17, 1941 to August 13, 1941, August 5, 1941, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 25, 1941.

¹¹⁸ The Globe and Mail, October 20, 1941, p. 15.

into the war when the U.S. came in.¹¹⁹ Those in attendance were pleased with his statement, and encouraged him to continue on with this difficult task.

Following Kearney's excursion to England he returned home to Dublin, curious as to whether his prediction would come true. He knew that relations between the U.S. and Japan were quite poor, and after meetings with David Gray and the Japanese Legation, he felt that war between the two nations was inevitable.¹²⁰ Therefore, with the declaration of war between the Japanese and the Americans on December 7, 1941, Kearney waited with anticipation to see how Ireland would react.¹²¹ On December 14, 1941, Kearney's curiosity was finally curtailed by an eloquent and passionate speech delivered by DeValera in Cork.¹²² DeValera stated:

...strangers who do not understand our conditions have begun to ask how America's entry into the war will affect our state policy here. We answered that question in advance. The policy of the State remains unchanged. We can only be a friendly neutral. From the moment this war began, there was for this State only one policy possible -- neutrality. Our circumstances, our history, the incompleteness of our national freedom through the partition of our country, made any other policy impracticable.¹²³

At this point, Kearney decided to depart from his diplomatic assignment, and busy himself with other projects.

¹¹⁹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 25, 1941.

¹²⁰ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 30, 1941, and November 19, 1941. Kearney attended a dinner at the Japanese legation on October 30, and met with David Gray, U.S. Ambassador, on November 19.

¹²¹ The Globe and Mail, December 7, 1941, p. 1.

¹²²Moynihan, p. 461.

¹²³Moynihan, p. 462.

He was quite disappointed that DeValera had not decided to bring Ireland into the war, but understood that Ireland wanted to remain dedicated to her neutrality stance.

Therefore, Kearney decided that he must re-focus his efforts from the original 'tall-orders' of his Canadian superiors, and attempt a new project of sorts. Since his arrival in Dublin, Kearney had been contacted a number of times by R. M. Smyllie, editor of The Irish Times, who was desperately searching for a new source for newsprint.¹²⁴ On a whim, Kearney began newsprint negotiations, assisted by Sir John Maffey, the spokesperson for British newspaper interests, who were also interested in aligning with the Irish in a Canadian newsprint deal.¹²⁵ Surprisingly, by December 8, the majority of the arrangements had been made, and Kearney had agreed to ship newsprint from Saint John, New Brunswick to Dublin, Ireland on the Irish Shipping Limited's ships.¹²⁶

Satisfied with the arrangements of this profitable deal, Kearney then focused on a new and disturbing problem that had recently come to his attention. With his acceptance of the posting of Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland, Kearney quickly came to realize that he was not only representing the interests of the Canadian living, but also those of the Canadian dead. In the course of negotiating Canadian exporting opportunities, Kearney became aware of

¹²⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, November 26, 1941.

¹²⁵ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, November 27, 1941.

¹²⁶ Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, December 8, 1941.

the ever-increasing numbers of Canadian servicemen who were being found dead in Irish coastal waters.¹²⁷ The Irish government's Department of External Affairs had issued a statement, on November 17, 1941, that they were willing to "undertake the care and maintenance, including the temporary marking of all graves located in this country as a result of the present war where the graves are those of members of any of the belligerent naval, military, or air forces."¹²⁸

With further investigation, Kearney learned that eight servicemen had already been found dead on various Irish shore lines, and all had been buried with a small cross, or plot numbering.¹²⁹ These men, varying from a 2nd radio operator on the S.S. Ville de Gand to a Captain in the 2nd Light A/A Rgt. Canadian Army, were buried in a number of different locations throughout Ireland.¹³⁰ Kearney was

¹²⁷Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, January 6, 1942.

¹²⁸ NAC, RG 25, File 2977-40, Vol. 2937, Letter - Eire, Department of External Affairs, F. H. Boland to E. J. Garland, November 17, 1941.

¹²⁹Ibid., No. 389, E. J. Garland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, November 21, 1941.

¹³⁰Ibid., No. 389. The names, ranks, units, death date, and burial site of all eight soldiers are as listed:

-James Sorley Craig, 2nd Radio Operator, S.S. Ville de Gand, August 1940, Workhouse Cemetery, Carndough, Donegal

-Thos. Elvin Mitchell, Lieutenant, Carleton and York Regiment (Canadian), April 30, 1941, Protestant Cemetery, Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

-Francis Gordon Harrison, No.L. 25614, Corporal, Corps. of Military Staff Clerks, Can. Militia, April 30, 1941, Easkey, Co. Sligo.

-John Robert Townshend, Captain, R.C.A., April 30, 1941, Bun-na-Mairge Cemetery, Ballycastle, Co. Mayo.

-Duncan Bell, No.D. 93706, Corporal, R.C.A.M.C., April 30, 1941, Catholic Cemetery, Killybegs.

-George Morrow Dixon, Captain, 2nd Light A/A Rgt. Canadian Army, May 27, 1941, Protestant Cemetery, Ballinakill,

pleased that all of the men had been appropriately buried by the Irish government, but he was concerned that their small wooden cross markings or plot numberings were insufficient in recognizing these servicemen.

Beginning January 8, 1942, Kearney began a campaign to have all eight men and any other future Canadian victims of war on Irish soil buried with a plot marking that distinguished Canadian servicemen from all other victims of the war.¹³¹ Major General Sir Fabian Ware of the Imperial War Graves Commission became aware of Kearney's campaign and requested participation in the activity, in order to convince the Irish Department of Public Works that specialized crosses should be erected for Canada and all other Allied nations.¹³²

The Irish government had originally decided that one standard colour and style be designated for every belligerent country participating in the war. The German Legation had initially approached the Irish government and requested a field grey colour for all simple wooden crosses, and the Irish government agreed with their request.¹³³ In

Letterfrack, Co. Galway.

-Edward Gorton Robbins, Sub-Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Navy, S.S. Nerissa, April 30, 1941, Dunkineely, Co. Donegal.

-Douglas Robert Goodman, No. 60047, Observer-sgt., R.C.A.F., October 24, 1941, Mallow Protestant Cemetery.

¹³¹Ibid., Telegram - John D. Kearney to Imperial War Graves Commission, January 8, 1942.

¹³²Ibid., Telegram - War Graves Commission to Kearney, January 13, 1942.

¹³³Ibid., Telegram - Kearney to War Graves Commission, January 14, 1942.

fact, the Irish government decided to use the colouring of field grey as the official shade for all World War II crosses.¹³⁴ Therefore, all countries, whether those of the Triple Entente or Triple Axis were expected to accept the German's choice of field grey, and respect the selection.

Kearney met with Mr. Boland of the Irish Department of External Affairs and expressed his disgust with the colour selection. He did not like the German's dictation of field grey, nor the Irish's preference for colour consistency.¹³⁵ Mr. Boland argued "...that the grey coloured crosses were adopted as most serviceable...", and Kearney's request for a colour change "...would spoil the idea of uniformity...".¹³⁶ However, after a lengthy meeting between the two officials, Mr. Boland finally agreed to change the colouring of all Allied crosses to white.¹³⁷ This contradicted the Irish government's 'steadfast' belief in uniformity, but if it would bring closure and peacefulness between the Canadian-United Kingdom and Irish governments, then it was worth the sacrifice of Irish standards and rules on neutrality.

During this time period it became quite evident to Kearney and his diplomatic colleagues that Ireland was witnessing a number of external challenges to their neutrality. Certainly through the months of January to March

1942, DeValera and his Departments of External Affairs and

¹³⁴Ibid., January 14, 1942.

¹³⁵Ibid., Telegram - No. 50, March 7, 1942.

¹³⁶Ibid., March 7, 1942.

¹³⁷Ibid., March 7, 1942.

Public Works were challenged by the Canadian and British governments in regards to the creation of appropriate plot markings. However, during the course of these months DeValera was also forced to confront a situation that had haunted him since the days of the 1938 Irish-British reallocation of port ownership.

Since the outbreak of the war in September 1939, Britain was deeply disturbed as to why they could not rent or borrow the ports for the course of the war.¹³⁸ Churchill was continuously pondering bribes and deals to woo Ireland into offering their ports to the Allied effort.¹³⁹ Nonetheless, DeValera remained committed to Ireland's neutrality. Ironically enough, and much to the chagrin of Ireland's An Taoiseach, Northern Ireland was not as committed to the same notion of barring Allied usage of her coastal ports.¹⁴⁰ Londonderry, Northern Ireland was a useful site for naval shipping, trade, and as a base for small naval vessels.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, it was not a strategically valuable port; and therefore, the ports of Cobh, Lough Swilly, and Berehaven, located on the northern, southern, and south eastern coasts of Ireland, were thought to be of more value for the Allied war effort.¹⁴²

Officially, on January 26, 1942, American troops began

¹³⁸Gray, p. 11.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴⁰Fisk, p. 242.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁴²Gray, p. 25.

to arrive in Londonderry, and reorganize the port for American, British and Canadian occupation.¹⁴³ On January 27, DeValera publicly responded to the American presence in Londonderry, and was rather annoyed that the Irish had not been informed.¹⁴⁴ In a public statement, DeValera complained that "the Irish Government had not been consulted either by the British Government or the American Government with regard to the coming of the American troops to the Six Counties [Ulster]."¹⁴⁵ He felt that the American presence was unlawful as Ulster, according to Ireland's Constitution of 1937, was considered to be a part of the nation of Ireland or Eire. DeValera also announced that, "the people of Ireland have no feeling of hostility towards, and no desire to be brought in any way into conflict with, the United States."¹⁴⁶

Because DeValera and his government felt disrespected and ignored during the planning of the American occupation of Londonderry, President Roosevelt decided to forward his comments and concerns to DeValera in order to settle this Irish-American problem. Following their positive exchange on February 9, DeValera decided to accept the American presence in the North, and refused to comment or criticize the

¹⁴³Fisk, p. 242.

¹⁴⁴Moynihan, p. 464.

¹⁴⁵Moynihan, p. 465.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 465.

actions of the Allies in the Northern territory of Ulster.¹⁴⁷

Nonetheless, while DeValera remained determined not to publicly or privately criticize the Americans presence in Ireland, he was still openly concerned that the Allies activities would only solicit an unwanted response from the Triple Axis nations. DeValera was convinced that Germany would interpret the Londonderry port occupation as an invitation to bomb, threaten, and invade both Ireland and its sister territory.¹⁴⁸ Despite DeValera's paranoia over the possibility of an invasion, neither Germany, nor the Triple Axis, had a response for the Allied presence in Northern Ireland.¹⁴⁹ This brought tremendous relief to both the Irish and Northern Irish governments.

Throughout the chaos of the port occupation crisis, Kearney and his fellow diplomats had little contact with DeValera and his colleagues. They were privileged witnesses to the concern and anger of the Irish to the port situation, but could do little to assist or comfort them. While DeValera pursued the topic of the American presence, the Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland was pursuing answers to explain his wife's sudden and inexplicable illness.

Pat Kearney was in a battle for her life, and doctors could provide little information as to the illness that had confined her to bed. On March 8, Pat was officially

¹⁴⁷Joseph T. Carroll. Ireland in the War Years. (Newton Abbot : David & Charles, 1975), p. 103.

¹⁴⁸Carroll, p. 104.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 104.

diagnosed with poliomyelitis¹⁵⁰, and by March 23, doctors had collapsed one of her lungs hoping to aid her respiratory system.¹⁵¹ Kearney was informed that with this accurate diagnosis and efficient treatment, Pat would recover, however, it would be a slow and difficulty recovery. This did not dissuade Pat from encouraging her husband to continue on with his diplomatic duties, and to first and foremost, attend the upcoming Trans-Atlantic Conference in London, on April 27.¹⁵²

Kearney, feeling relieved by his wife's prognosis, ventured to London to meet and support the Canadian High Commissioner to Britain, as he approached the British Government to propose that they "make available additional space on British flights for Canadian government business."¹⁵³ Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner to Britain, was an active and dedicated proponent of improving flying conditions for Canadians abroad, whether travelling to Canada, the United States, Ireland, or to the nations of the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁴ This would seem to be a rather insignificant issue in the midst of world war, but for the diplomats of the Allied nations, communication by personal travel, mail, telegram, or secret communication was

¹⁵⁰Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, March 8, 1942.

¹⁵¹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, March 23, 1942.

¹⁵²Ibid., March 23, 1942.

¹⁵³David MacKenzie. "Sitting Pretty: The Creation of the First Canadian Transatlantic Air Service, 1935-1943. Aerospace Historian. Vol. 34(4), 1987, p. 256.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 256.

a necessity.

In fact, trans-Atlantic flights officially began in 1937, after an agreement was signed by Britain, Canada, and Ireland in 1935.¹⁵⁵ The three nations decided that a British-owned Imperial Airways (51% ownership) would be created with Canadian and Irish support (each with 24.5% ownership) and would provide passenger and mail service for the three countries.¹⁵⁶ However, with the arrival of the war, it became crucial that diplomats and telegrams reach certain destinations at certain times. Britain claimed that since she was the majority owner of the Imperial Airways, she should occupy the most space per flight. This outraged the Canadian contingent, but had little effect on the Irish. Regardless, Vincent Massey wanted to pursue Britain's claim, and convince them that it was unfair and preposterous.

Massey, unfortunately, met with a number of objections from the British government who were nonetheless sympathetic with the Canadian Commissioner's concerns for increased availability of additional space on British planes.¹⁵⁷ However, it was "impossible to allocate a specific amount of space on the British flights for Canadian needs."¹⁵⁸ Massey was with the British response, but informed both Kearney and Ottawa that "in view of the urgent demand for speedy

¹⁵⁵ Carl Christie. Ocean Bridge. (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵⁷ MacKenzie, p. 28.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 258.

transportation for Canadian official personnel and mails, further consideration should be given to [the] proposal previously advanced for an all-Canadian service."¹⁵⁹ This suggestion greatly appealed to Kearney, and upon departure, wished Massey luck as he would continue to badger both Ottawa and London for improved travel services for himself and all Canadians alike.

Following the Trans-Atlantic conference, Kearney began to experience a lull in his diplomatic duties. He believed that there were few events worth documenting in his diary, and that the importance of his position and his responsibility to convince the Ireland to enter the war was of little significance to anyone. Kearney's entries for the spring, and summer of 1942, suggest that he spent the majority of his time caring for his wife, golfing with friends, and studying the newspaper in great detail.

One particular event that Kearney highlighted within his diaries in the spring of 1942 was the announcement of Reinhold Heydrich's assassination by a group of exiled Czechs, who had been residing in Britain.¹⁶⁰ Heydrich was known as the Protector of Bohemia, and served as Heinrich Himmler's number two man.¹⁶¹ Heydrich loyally served Himmler, who was the head of the SS or Schutzstaffel, and was given the assignment of eliminating Jews, Slavs,

¹⁵⁹MacKenzie, p. 259.

¹⁶⁰Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, June 5, 1942.

¹⁶¹James L. Stokesbury. A Short History of World War II. (New York : William Morrow and Company Inc., 1980), p. 198.

Gypsies, the insane, the senile, and the mentally challenged from the European population.¹⁶² Heydrich organized the usage of mobile vans, and concentration camps to imprison his victims, and then systematically slaughtered them in order to ethnically cleanse Europe of those who were not of the Aryan race.¹⁶³

As a result of Heydrich's involvement in the attempted extermination of the Slavic population, a group of exiled Czechs ambushed Heydrich's car in Prague, and fatally wounded him.¹⁶⁴ The plotters were discovered, and killed; and in retribution, German soldiers "mounted a military operation against the village of Lidice, rounded up all of the inhabitants -- men, women, and children -- and massacred them as a warning and a reprisal."¹⁶⁵

The announcement of this senseless slaughter outraged John D. Kearney, but it horrified and disgusted the Irish population and government. Kearney commented that this incident forced the Irish people to reveal that they were "increasingly pro-Ally, and [only] at times pro-neutral", which was an incredible change in the moods and minds of the Irish citizens.¹⁶⁶ Even at golf matches, horseback riding afternoons, and dinner parties the leading topic of conversation amongst his Irish government friends and

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁶⁴Stokesbury, p. 265.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁶⁶Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, June 5, 1942.

associates was that of the Lidice massacre.¹⁶⁷ Horror, disgust, and terror filled the hearts of the Irish, and Kearney knew that this massacre, in his mind, was turning the tide of neutrality into pro-Ally support.

Despite this mood change amongst the Irish people, Kearney decided that it would be unwise to pounce on their unsettled minds and attempt to convert them into active participants in the war effort. They appeared to be disgusted with the German agenda of Slavic annihilation, but knew that they were neither emotionally nor financially prepared to enter a conflict that was being co-directed by the British. Instead, Kearney re-focused on his news and current events, waiting patiently for the next challenging assignment that would stimulate his love for diplomatic projects.

During the course of his patient waiting Kearney continued to document world events in his diary, highlighting such occurrences as: "the USA took a good clip at the Japanese at Midway Island" (June 8, 1942); "fall of Tobruk [to the Germans] top-line news today" (June 22, 1942); "Russians holding at Varaget" (July 20, 1942); "British advancing in Egypt" (July 20, 1942); "German bombers over Dublin at 12:45 am." (July 28, 1942); "All-India Congress Committee endorses Gandhi's "Quit-India appeal. Gandhi and his committee arrested" (August 9, 1942);

¹⁶⁷Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, June 10, 1942.

"Markop oil fields set on fire by the Russians" (August 9, 1942); and, "Russians still holding on to Stalingrad" (September 28, 1942)¹⁶⁸. Kearney provided little discussion of his feelings about Allied advances, or the German victories, but was absolutely devoted to documenting every triumph or tragedy around the world. This relaxing activity captivated his interest, and allowed him to be adequately rested in preparation for his new assignment, Canadian-Irish trade, bestowed upon him on September 5, 1942.¹⁶⁹

In January of 1942, Kearney had negotiated a contract in which Canada would ship newsprint to Ireland from Saint John, New Brunswick.¹⁷⁰ This newsprint would be transported on ships of the Irish Shipping Limited's fleet and would be organized and controlled by officials in both Canada and Ireland.¹⁷¹ However, in September the Irish government gave Kearney an ideal opportunity to become more actively involved in Canadian-Irish trade negotiations. The Irish government personally requested that Kearney cable Canada to place an order for twine from Saint John.¹⁷² Kearney eagerly cabled their request, and in the process, negotiated a twine contract for England, through Vincent Massey.¹⁷³ This trade opportunity greatly appealed to the wearied senses of John

¹⁶⁸Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, June 8, 22, July 20, 28, August 9, September 28, 1942.

¹⁶⁹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 5, 1942.

¹⁷⁰Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, January 8, 1942.

¹⁷¹Ibid., January 8, 1942.

¹⁷²Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 5, 1942.

¹⁷³Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 14, 1942.

D. Kearney, and was the ideal activity to stimulate him into active diplomatic duty.

Kearney knew very little about Canadian-Irish trade, but was encouraged by the Irish government's faith in his negotiating abilities to assist both Ireland and the United Kingdom during the war period. He wanted to become more involved with the trade arrangements and desired to learn as much as possible about importing and exporting in order to benefit both his diplomatic posting and his home country. Therefore, on October 21, Kearney began his trade education by travelling to the port of Dublin to see the first Canadian newsprint shipment arrive.¹⁷⁴ The newsprint, transported on the Irish Pine and Irish Oak, proved to be of good quality and was reasonably priced.¹⁷⁵ This pleased the Irish, and with that they immediately informed Kearney that they would continue to do business with him and his Canadian business associates.

This successful business arrangement allowed Kearney to establish important ties within the Irish government and business community. Kearney became recognized as a well-respected negotiator who was eager to help the Irish people construct a significant import/export market that would financially assist them during this time of conflict. Although Kearney knew little about the import/export market, he was eager to learn all that he could about Irish

¹⁷⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 21, 1942.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., October 21, 1942.

shipping, and what Ireland could use from its Commonwealth neighbour, Canada.

Kearney quickly became aware of the many benefits of Irish-Canadian trading. Ireland was desperate for newsprint, twine, lumber, grain, coal, phosphates, garden seed, tobacco, cotton, autoparts, tea, and scientific literature.¹⁷⁶ In order to gain access to these valuable commodities, Ireland established their own Irish Shipping Limited company.¹⁷⁷ Since 1941, Ireland had faced "a major supply crisis caused by the lack of shipping."¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the Irish government, "spent virtually its entire dollar holdings to establish a state-sponsored shipping company in an attempt to maintain Ireland's key supply routes across the North Atlantic."¹⁷⁹ Since Ireland's products were primarily imported from or via Great Britain, and the war had interfered with that trade route, Ireland was inextricably isolated at a time of great need.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶Raymond James Raymond. "World War II and the Foundation of Irish Shipping Ltd., 1941-1945". Eire-Ireland. Vol. 19(3), 1984, p. 54. Kearney's diary also documents the need for newsprint, coal, phosphates, and twine. The scientific literature that was listed as a needed item, was requested by the Emergency Scientific Research Bureau of Ireland. The Bureau was hoping to obtain published literature from the Canadian National Research Council regarding turf, peat, citric and lactic acids, electrolytic iron, alloy steel, calcium carbide, and lead battery research. Bureau's request found in RG 77, File 25-5-2, "Despatch No. 36", Irish Diplomatic Files, December 11, 1942.

¹⁷⁷Raymond, p. 59.

¹⁷⁸Raymond, p. 48.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁸⁰Raymond, p. 49.

Therefore, with the creation of the Irish Shipping Limited company on March 24, 1941, Ireland began the difficult task of locating and purchasing seaworthy vessels for the transportation of essential commodities.¹⁸¹ Since Ireland had limited funds (2 million pounds), she purchased a number of vessels that were reasonably safe, and spent months preparing these vessels for lengthy travel to Saint John, New Brunswick.¹⁸² Other possible destinations were Halifax, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, St. John's, Newfoundland, Philadelphia, Boston and New Orleans, but these ports were rarely visited, as Saint John was considered the main North American port for Irish cargo.¹⁸³

Once the Irish Shipping Limited company had designated Saint John as its regular Atlantic route destination, and had renovated the majority of its newly purchased merchant ships, the Company was eager to advertise that it had fourteen ships available, grossing 43, 516 tons.¹⁸⁴ These fourteen Irish ocean-going vessels were purchased from a number of different countries, and renamed for Irish trees or flowers. The ships, their new names, gross tonnage, former names, and country of origin are as listed:

¹⁸¹NAC, RG 24 Vol. 6749, "Serial 4-43, Official Records", Irish Diplomatic Files, January 29, 1943.

¹⁸²Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁸³NAC, RG 24 Vol. 6749, "Intelligence Report", Irish Diplomatic Files, November 29, 1942.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., November 29, 1942.

Name	G.T.	Former Name	Country
Irish Alder	2598	Piret	Estonia
Irish Ash	2088	Mathilde Maersk	Denmark
Irish Beech	2002	Cltvrtri	Yugoslavia
Irish Elm	4199	Leda	Panama
Irish Fir	1462	Margara	Chile
Irish Hazel	2503	Noemijulla	Panama
Irish Larch	3076	Haifa Trader	Palestine
Irish Oak	5589	Kest Neris	United States
Irish Pine	5621	Kest Hematite	United States
Irish Plane	4670	Arena	Panama
Irish Poplar	3384	Vassilios Destounis	Greece
Irish Rose	1863	Mall	Estonia
Irish Spruce	2502	Vicia	Finland
Irish Willow	1959	Otto	Estonia ¹⁸⁵

Every ship purchased from Europe, South America, Central America, and the Middle East was obtained on the open market for cash.¹⁸⁶ The two ships secured from the United States were purchased, after long and tedious negotiations. The United States was concerned that their interaction with the neutral nation of Ireland might incite anger within British/Allied governmental circles.¹⁸⁷ This was not the case, but the U.S. still harboured concerns for the development of a business relationship with such a controversial partner.

Despite American concerns and reservations, Irish Shipping Limited created a respectable fleet of merchant ships that were capable of establishing supply and trade routes for paralyzed nations confined in a war torn Europe. Ireland had hoped that if she could obtain supplies and

¹⁸⁵Ibid., November 29, 1942.

¹⁸⁶Raymond, p. 71.

¹⁸⁷Raymond, p. 68.

resources from Canada and the United States, she would be able to aid the United Kingdom and the Iberian Peninsula during the course of the war.¹⁸⁸

However, in order for Ireland to successfully retrieve valuable supplies and resources for the U.K. and the Iberian district, she was informed that she must follow strict rules and guidelines to ensure her security on the open ocean. One of the most important rules was that each ship must have its name, flag, and country of ownership displayed for all passer-bys. Her hull markings were as indicated: "forward with name and flag; amidship with flag - EIRE- flag; the deckhouse, pilothouse, poopdeck house and hatch covers all have ship name, country and flag."¹⁸⁹ Each ship was also required to be "lighted up like Christmas trees" in order to make identification easier for Triple Axis and Triple Entente vessels and planes.¹⁹⁰

The Irish Shipping Limited company was also informed that each ship must not travel too closely to Allied convoys, and is required to follow British routing instructions in order to avoid contact with military vessels.¹⁹¹ The routing instructions that each ship was provided with were very specific for their destination. If one was travelling to Canada, the directions were, "for ships to sail for Canada by Great Circle from Fastnet Rock

¹⁸⁸Raymond, p. 75.

¹⁸⁹Irish Diplomatic Files, January 29, 1943.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁹¹Ibid., January 29, 1943.

to 38.10 N-34.001 thence along 38.10N to cut into approaches to Saint John, Halifax, Sydney, and St. John's."¹⁹² For a trip to the United States, the Irish were instructed to follow "Fastnet to 40.00N 45.00W, and then to branch off to the chosen destination - ie. Philadelphia 60.00W."¹⁹³ If ships diverted from these pathways, Allied ships were given the right to stop the Irish ship, examine it, and report it to Canadian-British and American authorities.¹⁹⁴ Generally, once the ship reached its chosen port, the ship would be searched, and all crew would be interviewed and detained if necessary.

The Irish ships were informed that they must also "report by wireless telegraphy their noon position daily to NSHQ Ottawa via Louisbourg or Cumberdown radio stations."¹⁹⁵ The British were particularly concerned that the Irish ships would act as carriers for the Irish Republican Army or suppliers to the German front.¹⁹⁶ In fact, they requested that all port agents treat Irish ships with "circumspection and suspicion", and ensure that each ship travels with a master, crew and full list, bill of health, and route plan to inform the agents of who and what they are dealing with.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹²Ibid., January, 29, 1943.

¹⁹³Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., January 29, 1943.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., January 29, 1943.

The Canadian and American port authorities agreed that they must treat the Irish ships with great suspicion, and segregate them from all other ships arriving in Allied ports.¹⁹⁸ When each Irish ship docked, the port agents determined that they must observe all loading of supplies, and interview each crew member to guarantee that these ships were not carriers of enemy agents or enemy supplies.¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless, on December 8, 1942, all the concerns of British, Canadian, and American authorities were verified.²⁰⁰ Not long after the Irish Oak had departed from the Boston port, it was "stopped by 20 American officials and F.B.I. members who, upon searching the vessel, found 10 000 rounds of ammunition sewed up in sacking and labelled 'Canning food'".²⁰¹ This initiated an intensive and indepth search of every Irish vessel landing at either a Canadian, American or Irish port. It also unleashed a complete investigation of every port and port agent that the Irish had contact with.²⁰²

After investigating a number of Irish vessels, it was found that there were a number of "arms and ammunition dumps in Ireland and in Northern Ireland in possession of the IRA", and all were supplied by the cargo of Irish vessels

¹⁹⁸NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6907, "Secret- to Director of Naval Intelligence, Ottawa", Irish Diplomatic Files, December 7, 1942.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., December 7, 1942.

²⁰⁰NAC, RG 24 Vol. 6907, "To Secretary", Irish Diplomatic Files, December 8, 1942.

²⁰¹Ibid., December 8, 1942.

²⁰²Ibid., December 8, 1942.

arriving at all major Irish ports.²⁰³ A variety of Thompson machine guns (1920 pattern), ammunition, bombs, and bomb parts were found at these various dumping sites, and this deeply disturbed the British authorities.²⁰⁴ The British determined that all Irish vessels had contact with one particular port location, Saint John, New Brunswick, and that this port must be subject to a thorough investigation.²⁰⁵ As a result, for the duration of the war, the Saint John port was under close scrutiny of British, American, and Canadian authorities.²⁰⁶ It was never concluded as to who was funnelling weapons to the IRA through the Irish vessels, but this experience only attempted to reiterate the theme that the enemy was everywhere.

John D. Kearney, High Commissioner to Ireland, wrote in his diary that he was dismayed by the United Kingdom's assumption that the port of Saint John was the primary location of enemy activity. He believed that the alternative ports of Boston or Philadelphia were probably responsible for the IRA cargo.²⁰⁷ However, without proof, Kearney could not convince the British government to end their investigation of the Saint John port.

Overseeing Canadian-Irish trade had been a time-

²⁰³NAC RG 24 Vol. 6907, "DND Document", Irish Diplomatic Files, December 9, 1942.

²⁰⁴Ibid., December 9, 1942.

²⁰⁵NAC, RG 24 Vol. 6907, "Secret", Irish Diplomatic Files, December 16, 1942.

²⁰⁶Ibid., December 16, 1942.

²⁰⁷Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, December 21, 1942.

consuming occupation, but with the strict rules and regulations imposed upon Canadian imports, Kearney was forced to step away, and allow Canadian authorities to become more actively involved. Since Kearney was released from his import duties, he was now in a position to spend more time with his Irish friends and diplomatic colleagues, which was what he desired to do.

In order to reintegrate himself into the Irish community, Kearney was invited to attend a number of events. These events included: christening the new year of 1943 with DeValera and friends, rejoicing with colleagues over the news that the Germans had surrendered at Stalingrad (January 17), mourning with friends over the tremendous losses of Allied ships travelling across the Atlantic (February 23), dining with the British Legation to discuss civil aviation (February 25), having coffee after high mass with DeValera, Archbishop McQuaid, Bishop Wall, Sean T. O'Kelly (Tánaiste and Minister for Finance), Frank Aiken (Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures), Thomas Derrig (Minister for Lands and Education), Gerald Boland (Minister for Justice), and Sean MacEntee (Minister for Local Government and Public Health) (March 17); attending mass for the late King Alphonso of Spain (March 22), and lastly, dining at the home of David Gray with DeValera, O'Kelly, Archbishop McQuaid and Sir John Maffey (March 30).²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, January 1, 17, February 23, 25, March 17, 22, 30, 1943.

After three months of exhausting activity, and the relocation of office and home to a new residence at St. Brigid's, Kearney was feeling somewhat tired as he travelled to London to meet with Clement Attlee, the British Dominion Secretary. Attlee informed Kearney that the British would like him to continue "to maintain a laissez-faire policy in regards to Ireland."²⁰⁹ The British were pleased with Kearney's efforts in befriending and infiltrating Irish government circles, but realized that it was an impossible task for Kearney to attempt to lure the Irish into the war. The British acknowledged that they were wrong in assuming that anyone could convince the Irish to denounce their neutrality, and with that, bid Kearney farewell, reminding him to continue his friendly relations and infiltration.²¹⁰

Once Kearney returned to Dublin and sufficiently settled into his new home, he began to prepare for the upcoming Irish election for June 22. This was the first wartime election in Ireland and as revealed in his diary, Kearney was looking forward to seeing the results.²¹¹ In the past 21 months, Kearney had grown rather fond of DeValera and his colleagues, and he hoped for their sakes that they would be successful in their districts.²¹² As election day arrived, and the people flocked to voting locations, Kearney was fascinated by the peacefulness and relaxed atmosphere

²⁰⁹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, April 9, 1943.

²¹⁰Ibid., April 9, 1943.

²¹¹Kearney, Vol.1, Diary, April 15, 1943.

²¹²Ibid., April 15, 1943.

that accompanied the Irish election day. According to the Globe and Mail, the June 22 election was "one of the most peaceful voting days in the country's history."²¹³ In the end, DeValera and his party, Fianna Fail, were victorious, and DeValera was allowed to continue on as the Irish Prime Minister for another term.

Kearney forwarded his congratulations to DeValera and his cabinet, pleased that they were all re-elected. He also included special invitations to DeValera and all members of his cabinet, to attend the July 1st Dominion Day celebrations at Kearney's home, St. Brigid's. DeValera forwarded a note to Kearney thanking him for his congratulatory message and invitation, but unfortunately, had to decline due to the opening of the Dail on July 1st. Kearney was disappointed, but was pleasantly surprised when, at the Dominion Day celebrations, Sean T. O'Kelly (Tanaiste and Minister for Finance) and Sean MacEntee (Minister for Local Government and Public Health) made an appearance for their friend, John D. Kearney.²¹⁴

Kearney was overjoyed that his Dominion Day celebration was a great success, and that two Irish Cabinet members were able to attend. He was equally pleased when he learned, shortly after that Mussolini had officially resigned as leader of Italy.²¹⁵ Kearney expected that Italy would soon

²¹³The Globe and Mail, June 23, 1943, p. 3.

²¹⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, July 1, 1943.

²¹⁵Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, July 25, 1943.

surrender, and as of September 8, realized that his assumption had become reality.²¹⁶ Unfortunately, Kearney's joyous mood soon became downtrodden as he received news from home that Ireland was at the centre of a controversy in Canada.

Kearney received an article from The Globe and Mail which detailed Canadian outrage over the internment of Allied servicemen with German servicemen in the Irish prison called the Curragh. Canadian citizens were not pleased with Irish neutrality, nor the port arrangement of 1938. However, when Canadian citizens realized that their servicemen, primarily airmen, were being interned with the enemy, the Canadian response was that of horror.

As J.P. McAfee wrote in the Globe and Mail, "Perhaps the most curious internment camp in the world is The Curragh, which is natural enough since Ireland, in which The Curragh is situated, is perhaps, the most curious country in this warring world."²¹⁷ He explains that, "Allied and Axis soldiers who happen to find themselves in Southern Ireland are rounded up with strict impartiality and confined in the same camp which naturally is divided up with a high fence and a wide alley."²¹⁸ In fact, one Canadian airman, Chuck Brady, expressed incredible anger at being interned, after his plane, which was guarding a convoy carrying Allied goods

²¹⁶Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 8, 1943.

²¹⁷The Globe and Mail, July 9, 1943, p. 6.

²¹⁸Ibid., July 9, 1943, p. 6.

to Ireland, crashed. Brady stated that "It is because the Irish speak his language - almost - and because he is of Irish ancestry himself that he is angry."²¹⁹ Another young man, W. J. Wolf, stated that he "finds it hard to understand having been brought up on songs like 'Does your Mother come from Ireland' to accept detainment by a presumably friendly country."²²⁰

McAfee summed-up his article by stating that, "Ireland is not making any friends for herself [now or] in the afterwar period from among the Canadian, British, and American airmen who she has imprisoned."²²¹ In fact, surprisingly enough, Vincent Massey also echoed McAfee's remarks, insinuating that Irish neutrality and the attitude of Ireland towards Allied servicemen had left Ireland with a detestable reputation in the international community.

It was during a London meeting in October of 1943 that Massey informed Kearney of Ireland's contemptible standing in the United Kingdom. He believed that Ireland had isolated itself, and forced a high wall between herself and England.²²² Massey's claim was also substantiated by Malcolm Macdonald, the United Kingdom's High Commissioner to Canada. While on a short trip to Ottawa in November of 1943, Kearney had the opportunity to meet with Macdonald who stated that Kearney was doing a fine job as a diplomatic representative

²¹⁹Ibid., July 9, 1943, p. 6.

²²⁰Ibid., July 9, 1943, p. 6.

²²¹Ibid., July 9, 1943, p. 6.

²²²Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 9, 1943.

for Canada, but he must, for political reasons, disengage himself from the Irish community. He argued that Ireland was too isolated from the Commonwealth, and therefore was regarded as a 'diplomatic pariah' in international circles. In Macdonald's words, it was best to fulfil one's occupational duties, and in the process, "leave Ireland alone."²²³

As Kearney wrote in his diary, he felt deeply disturbed by the negativism that had embraced him in his meetings with both Massey and Macdonald. He recognized that Ireland was a 'diplomatic pariah', but felt that distancing himself from his friends and colleagues within Ireland would be disadvantageous for himself, as well as his associates. In order to reaffirm himself as to the importance of his position within Ireland, and his interaction with the Irish community, Kearney requested a meeting with Prime Minister King. King embraced Kearney's return to Canada, and praised him for his valuable contribution to Irish-Canadian trade, and diplomacy. He stated that "it was a great comfort to him to have Kearney in Ireland", which eased Kearney's concerns.²²⁴

With this statement, Kearney wrote that he felt inspired to return to Ireland to continue working on establishing stronger ties between Ireland and Canada. He was going to continue to infiltrate the Irish community and

²²³Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, November 26, 1943.

²²⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, December 29, 1943.

befriend Irish government members because that was what he was originally ordered to do. However, he was unwilling to follow Macdonald's order to "leave Ireland alone". A professional diplomat would serve with dedication, loyalty, hard-work, and respect for one's peers. He would not adopt a "laissez-faire" attitude towards a nation that needed his assistance.

Therefore, Kearney believed that his responsibilities were, first and foremost, to represent Canadian interests to the best of his ability, and then secondly, to continue to assist Ireland in re-establishing itself within the international community. These occupational responsibilities were those of an ambitious, professional diplomat, but it was questionable as to whether he would be able to maintain these diplomatic traits under duress. In February of 1944, Kearney was tested by his peers and friends, and proved to be a diplomat of his word.

Chapter 5
The Life of a Professional and Ambitious Diplomat
1944-1945

On February 22, 1944, John D. Kearney had a leisurely lunch with friends, and enjoyed a beautiful Irish day. The next day, he woke up, had a light breakfast, and at 10 a.m. received a phone call that would transform his image as a well-liked, ambitious, unpolished representative, into a well-respected, proficient, seasoned diplomat.²²⁵ The call was from a very agitated Eamon DeValera, who demanded that Kearney rush to his office for an emergency meeting concerning a troublesome affair. Kearney's immediate response was that he would come, and would do so promptly.

In the process of driving to DeValera's office, Kearney wondered what this 'troublesome affair' could be. He knew that in the last few months the English and Irish had created a stronger, and healthier relationship.²²⁶ The Irish had done this through increasing the United Kingdom's shipments of supplies and resources, and transferring downed Allied servicemen to Ulster.²²⁷ The Irish claimed that if they classified the downed Allied airmen as participants in 'non-operational' missions, then there was no reason to

²²⁵Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, February 23, 1943.

²²⁶Gray, p. 213.

²²⁷Ibid., p. 213.

intern the men in the Curragh.²²⁸ However, despite these wonderful examples of Anglo-Irish friendship, few knew that the Irish were assisting the English.

Kearney wished that the international community, and the people of the United Kingdom could be informed about the peaceful and respectful relationship that had blossomed between the two nations. Nonetheless, he knew that the relationship was a fragile one, and could be easily destroyed by a word, an improper act, or a verbal misunderstanding. He also knew that the destruction of this delicate relationship could only have dire consequences for both nations caught in the midst of a never-ending war.

When Kearney finally arrived at DeValera's downtown office and entered the Prime Minister's private room, he was greeted by an enraged DeValera. Without pausing for an exchange of pleasantries, DeValera angrily explained that he had received outrageous notes from the U.S. Ambassador, David Gray, and the British Representative, Sir John Maffey, who were speaking on behalf of their home governments.²²⁹ The notes were politely worded ultimatums demanding that the Irish government expel the German and Japanese legations.²³⁰ This, of course, outraged DeValera, as this was an infringement on Irish sovereignty.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 213.

²²⁹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, February 23, 1944.

²³⁰Ibid., February 23, 1944.

It may seem strange that without warning, the American and British governments demanded that the Irish expel the Triple Axis legations. However, since the beginning of the war, the presence of the German and Japanese legations on Irish soil remained a contentious issue for Britain and the United States. As Tony Gray stated in his book, The Lost Years "the continuing existence on Irish territory of both a German and Japanese legation remained a sore thorn in British and American flesh, which became more and more painful as the launch of Operation Overlord (D-Day) approached."²³¹

The United States and Britain were terrified that the German Legation in particular would learn of the D-Day plan as they often used Ireland as an 'observation post' to watch Allied activity. In the past, the Irish government had had to reprimand Eduard Hempel, the German Ambassador, for Nazi spy rings, Nazi parachutists landing on Irish soil, IRA-Nazi interaction, German Legation overstaffing, Nazi bombing of Irish cities, Nazi destruction of Irish merchant vessels, and, most recently, transmitting radio messages from Bettystown, Co. Meath, near the border of Northern Ireland.²³² Therefore, following the seizure of the radio apparatus, relations between the Irish and the Germans

²³¹Gray, p. 214.

²³²Gray, p. 215.

became quite strained.²³³

At this point, the United States and Britain felt that it was the appropriate time to demand that Ireland expel the enemy legations, especially the German. Therefore, on February 21, 1944, David Gray arrived at Prime Minister DeValera's office and presented him with a note that requested:

that the Irish government take appropriate steps for the recall of the German and Japanese representatives in Ireland. ...We...hope that this action will take the form of a severance of all diplomatic relations between Ireland and these two countries. You will readily understand the compelling reasons why we ask, as an absolute minimum, the removal of these Axis representatives, whose presence in Ireland must inevitably be regarded as constituting a danger to the lives of American soldiers and to the success of the Allied military operations.²³⁴

DeValera, upon reading the note, asked Gray, "Is this an ultimatum?"²³⁵ Gray responded that it was not, and with this response, DeValera fired back, "As long as I am here, my answer to this request must be no."²³⁶

Since David Gray was unsuccessful in convincing DeValera to expel the Triple Axis legations, Sir John Maffey decided to approach DeValera with a similar note requesting an expulsion of the Axis legations. On February 22, Maffey ventured to DeValera's office, and infuriated him once again

²³³Ibid., p. 215.

²³⁴Gray, p. 216.

²³⁵Carroll, p. 142.

²³⁶Ibid., p. 142.

with a demand order from Britain to expel the German and Japanese legations from Ireland.²³⁷ DeValera informed Maffey that he felt that this was a blatant ultimatum and was outraged by such a request.²³⁸

He then attempted to "cause a split between Gray and Maffey by stressing the good working relationship he and Maffey had hitherto enjoyed, by contrast ... with the strained relationship existing between himself and David Gray."²³⁹ Maffey refused to listen to DeValera's remarks and this only reinforced his anger. As a result, DeValera alleged that the note was not only requesting the expulsion of Axis representatives, but was also an American and British attempt at depriving Ireland of its neutrality and pseudo-sovereignty from Mother Britain. Maffey attempted to argue that this was not true, but DeValera would not listen; and so the blossoming friendship of respect and kinship was suddenly destroyed, as a result of a number of choice words, and an 'allegedly' improper act.

The repercussions of such a diplomatic incident were sudden and severe. Following DeValera's meeting with Maffey, DeValera ordered:

all furloughs in the Irish Army were [to be] cancelled immediately ... ; special guards were [to be] placed over airfields, ports, and other strategic positions;

²³⁷Carroll, pp. 142-143.

²³⁸Ibid., pp. 142-143.

²³⁹Gray, p. 217.

bridges leading from Ulster into Ireland were mined, and the Irish local defense volunteers were mobilized and issued with small arms.²⁴⁰

DeValera also called emergency meetings with his Cabinet, Defence Council, and John D. Kearney, for Commonwealth support.²⁴¹

Once Kearney had been briefed on the occurrences of February 21 and 22, he calmly and respectfully informed DeValera that, in his estimation, the German and Japanese legations should be expelled, and that Britain and the United States had no interest in violating Irish neutrality or sovereignty.²⁴² In other words, the United Kingdom and the United States were not planning an invasion of a neutral Ireland because Roosevelt had promised in 1942, at the time the U.S. troops arrived in Ulster, that there would be no act of aggression against the nation of Ireland.²⁴³ Kearney believed, nonetheless, that the danger from the Axis Legations warranted this withdrawal.

Despite Kearney's arguments, DeValera was convinced that the United States and the United Kingdom were threatening Ireland with an invasion. After an hour and a half meeting of bickering and pleas for rationalization, DeValera requested that, if possible, he would like Canada

²⁴⁰ The Halifax Chronicle, March 11, 1944, p. 1.

²⁴¹Carroll, p. 143.

²⁴²Gray, p. 218.

²⁴³Ibid., p. 218.

to intervene and have the notes formally withdrawn by the United States and Great Britain. Kearney responded that he would have to confer with his Canadian advisors, but would take it under consideration. As they parted, DeValera reminded Kearney that, he would "summon the Dail...and receive their ratification for the renewal of the ancient struggle, this time, 'if necessary, against England, against America, against everybody", if something was not done."²⁴⁴

As Kearney recorded in his diary, he was eager, at this point, to depart from his friend, and run to the homes of David Gray and Sir John Maffey to find out what was going on. Kearney had no idea that Britain and the United States were planning to present DeValera with expulsion notes, and needed to know how they were going to proceed with DeValera's threats of conflict.²⁴⁵ However, once he had met with Gray and Maffey he realized that they were quite unprepared for DeValera's reaction and the controversy of their actions. Therefore, feeling rather isolated and powerless, Kearney went home and wrote to Mackenzie King until 2 am., asking whether Canada should intervene, or let the U.S. and Britain sort out the mess.

Once Kearney had relayed the story to Mackenzie King, Norman Robertson, the Canadian Secretary of External Affairs, and Hume Wrong, the Assistant Secretary, they

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 218.

²⁴⁵Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, February 23, 1944.

stated that the Canadian response was that "it was not in Canada's interest to become embroiled in a dispute with Britain and the United States over an issue on which Canada was in agreement with the end sought, though not the tactics."²⁴⁶ It was also stated that, "The question which Mr. DeValera has raised with you [Kearney] is not one in which we can intervene at this stage without risk of misunderstanding. Even if the notes were withdrawn such harm as has been done would not be undone."²⁴⁷

Kearney was relieved when he read his advisor's response to the 'Anglo-American note incident'. As he stated in his diary, he was not interested in becoming embroiled in such a controversy, nor did he desire doing DeValera's bidding. Kearney felt that under the circumstances, it would be most appropriate if Canada requested that all nations involved refrain from publicizing the events of this incident, and attempt to resolve it in private. Robertson heartily agreed with Kearney's suggestion, because there were no advantages "in giving publicity to an unsuccessful diplomatic manoeuvre from which none of the Governments concerned [could] get any glory."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶McEvoy, p. 217.

²⁴⁷ DEA, File 126(S), "Secretary of State for External Affairs to High Commissioner in Ireland (No. 4)., 25 February, 1944. As listed in McEvoy, p. 217.

²⁴⁸DEA, File 126(S), "Memorandum for Prime Minister from Robertson", 25 February, 1944. As listed in McEvoy, p. 217.

In order to guarantee that Ireland understood the Canadian position, Mackenzie King arranged a meeting with John Hearne, Ireland's High Commissioner to Canada.²⁴⁹ In this meeting, King informed Hearne that the United States and Britain were concerned solely with the secretive organization of Operation Overlord and the presence of U.S. troops in Northern Ireland.²⁵⁰ They feared that German enemy activity would threaten their invasion plans and their troops, and therefore they appealed to DeValera to eliminate the enemy from Irish territory. King also explained that the United States and Britain had believed that the presentation of formal notes would inform deValera that both nations were quite concerned, and that if DeValera shared in their concern, he would expel the Axis legations.²⁵¹ In parting, King stated,

that there was a long future ahead of all after the war was over and that any and every step in the way of co-operation now would be remembered to the good; but failure to co-operate on anything which might lead to a possible disaster or to serious ill consequence, would not easily be forgotten.²⁵²

While King was entertaining Hearne, Kearney was meeting with DeValera to see how he was fairing. DeValera remarked that he was impressed with the Canadian stance in the

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 217.

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 217.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 217.

²⁵²McEvoy, p. 217.

situation and would ponder Kearney's request to refrain from publicizing the details of the incident. Kearney was relieved that DeValera was receptive to Canada's decision, and was willing to contemplate the Canadian request for secrecy.

Following his meeting with DeValera, Kearney was contacted by Sir John Maffey to meet and discuss the ramifications of the situation. Maffey pleaded with Kearney to "keep in close touch with DeValera and act a 'lightning rod role' in this matter", since DeValera had little interest in communicating with either Maffey or Gray at this time.²⁵³ Kearney was honoured by the request that he act as a buffer in the situation, but was reluctant to get too involved in this delicate diplomatic matter. Regardless, as each day passed, Kearney became more and more embroiled in this situation. Each day, he was being asked to attend one meeting or another for one side or the other, and was becoming rather tired of this winless predicament. Kearney had hoped that once Ireland submitted an official reply to the Anglo-American letters, this matter would disappear. However, on March 10, after DeValera had issued his letter, officially rejecting the expulsion request, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) began to publicize the idea of a note exchange between the Irish and the Allied countries of

²⁵³McEvoy, p. 218.

Britain and the U.S., with Canadian mediation.²⁵⁴

As a response to the news leak of the note exchange, DeValera decided to publish the text of the British and American notes, along with his response. The three letters were submitted to Dublin newspapers, and DeValera's letter was the genuine favourite amongst the Irish press.

DeValera's letter stated that:

the American government should have realized that the removal of representatives of a foreign state on the demand of the Government to which they are accredited is universally recognized as the first step towards war, and that the Irish government could not entertain the American proposal without a complete betrayal of their democratic trust. Irish neutrality represented the united will of the people and parliament. It was the logical consequence of Irish history and of the forced partition of national territory.²⁵⁵

With the public release of DeValera's response accompanying the Anglo-American letters, the British and Americans were horrified. They had assumed that the private exchange of notes would settle the matter. Unfortunately, once the BBC had learned of the note exchange through an American reporter, DeValera believed that it was only appropriate to publicize the entire affair, and reveal all the embarrassing details. As a result, "an anti-Irish press campaign was launched in Britain and the United States, while in Ireland public opinion was both angry and

²⁵⁴Carroll, p. 147.

²⁵⁵Gray, p. 219.

alarmed."²⁵⁶ In Canada, the Opposition demanded an explanation of the situation, and the Canadian press portrayed the Irish rejection of the Anglo-American note as incomprehensible. As stated in the Vancouver Sun,

There seems more than ample justification for the firm request of the Roosevelt administration, made with the fully and publicly expressed concurrence of the Churchill Ministry.... [The note] would never have been dispatched if there had not been very good grounds for believing that the diplomatic establishments of the two enemy powers in Ireland are being used as bases for a highly organized system of espionage.²⁵⁷

With the public release of the three letters, and the rumours of war and invasions circulating throughout each participating country, Britain decided that it must act. Churchill believed that DeValera should be punished for rejecting the British letter, refusing to expel the Axis legations, and submitting the details of the diplomatic incident to the Irish press. Therefore, the British decided "that all travel between Britain and any part of Ireland, either North or South, except in a few special categories [would] be suspended indefinitely".²⁵⁸

The United States, inspired by Britain's vengeful behaviour, announced that they would not participate in the selling of a third merchant ship to the Irish Shipping

²⁵⁶Carroll, p. 146.

²⁵⁷The Vancouver Sun, March 14, 1944, p. 6.

²⁵⁸The Globe and Mail, March 13, 1944, p. 1.

Limited Company.²⁵⁹ The Irish had made an appeal to the United States after they had lost two of their largest vessels, the Irish Oak and the Irish Pine, due to Axis submarine attacks. As a result, the Irish were desperate for another merchant vessel of substantial size. The United States had a number of sizeable vessels, and were willing to sell the S.S. Wolverine, an 8 000 ton cargo ship.²⁶⁰ Unfortunately for the Irish, the U.S. believed that they could not sell to a nation that condoned the presence of the enemy on its shores, and threatened the lives of American troops stationed in Londonderry.²⁶¹ Therefore, the United States withdrew from the vessel arrangement, forcing Ireland into a desperate shipping situation.

Subsequently, after the Americans banned the sale of the S.S. Wolverine to the Irish Shipping company, the British decided to launch a supply war on the Irish Free State. The British announced that they were determined to isolate Ireland from the United Kingdom and the outer world, and would do so by: withdrawing all telephone service, banning all newspapers from England to Ireland, closing all border posts, censoring all diplomatic bags, eliminating courier service from Britain to Ireland, and establishing an official embargo on all goods shipped from Britain to

²⁵⁹The Globe and Mail, March 13, 1944, p. 2.

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 2.

²⁶¹Ibid., p. 2.

Ireland.²⁶² Therefore, Britain was attempting to "promulgate in Ireland a general climate of fear and dependence which would render the Irish more susceptible to British influence."²⁶³

While Britain was attempting to paralyse Ireland into submission, John D. Kearney was busy reporting each unlawful British act to Mackenzie King and his Canadian cohorts. King was angered by Britain's travel restrictions to Ireland, but was infuriated by Churchill's desire to strangle the lifeblood of the island's existence.²⁶⁴ He was also displeased with the British government's inability to forewarn Canada, or even the Commonwealth nations, that Britain was determined to punish Ireland, and possibly, compel her to leave the Commonwealth altogether.²⁶⁵

Therefore, King, with his government's support, decided to vocalize his anger, and write a letter to the Dominions Secretary. This letter stated: (1) that the Canadian Government was disappointed that they were not informed of the British Government's plans to isolate Ireland, and impose strict rules and regulations upon her; (2) the Canadian Government was concerned that Britain's isolation policy would force Ireland to leave the Commonwealth; and

²⁶²Gray, p. 219.

²⁶³Gray, p. 223.

²⁶⁴McEvoy, 221.

²⁶⁵Ibid., p. 221.

(3) the Canadian Government had supported Britain throughout the Anglo-American note incident, had allowed its High Commissioner to Ireland to act as a buffer between DeValera and Maffey, and felt that it deserved to be included in the decisions that would affect the well-being of Ireland and its people.²⁶⁶

As a result, New Zealand and Australia followed suit with similar letters, and Britain began to question their motives as for the complete isolation of the island, realizing that their actions had forced Ireland into a dire situation. Ireland was not only economically and technologically paralysed, but was also contemplating "ending all co-operation with the Allies".²⁶⁷ Kearney, however, was able to convince them (the British) that if the British put an end to their mistreatment of the Irish, then the Irish would not have to sever its connection to the Triple Entente nations.²⁶⁸ Therefore, Britain began to decrease the tension between the two nations, and work on re-establishing a stronger and healthier relationship with its Irish neighbour.

On the other hand, the United States was not as convinced that they should 'forgive and forget' the Irish as

²⁶⁶NAC, King Papers, Series J1, Vol. 373, "Dominion Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs", 1 October, 1944. As listed in McEvoy, p. 222.

²⁶⁷McEvoy, p. 222.

²⁶⁸Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, October 2, 1944.

quickly and conveniently as the British did. In fact, the American government suggested that the Irish be sent another note, in order to reinforce the Allies' belief that the Axis Legations should be expelled.²⁶⁹ Fortunately, David Gray had the good sense to know that a second note would have devastating consequences for Ireland and the United States, and therefore, should not be contemplated by the American government.²⁷⁰

As Fred McEvoy, a member of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, wrote: "All things being considered, it was a lamentable episode which did no-one any good. It was a totally unnecessary crisis fomented primarily by the Americans and abetted by the British."²⁷¹ Nonetheless, Canada's role in this affair proved to be that of mediation and an ever-present source of wisdom, politeness, and respectfulness for all countries involved. In fact, according to McEvoy, "Canada did its best to defuse a potentially explosive situation and managed to antagonize no-one in the process."²⁷²

John D. Kearney was the chief mediator between the Irish and Anglo-American parties, and was applauded for his efforts in defusing this volatile state of affairs. He was

²⁶⁹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, April 13, 1944.

²⁷⁰Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, April 15, 1944.

²⁷¹McEvoy, p. 221.

²⁷²Ibid., p. 221.

also the recipient of praise from DeValera, Churchill, Roosevelt, and King for his calm demeanour and professionalism in dealing with a highly contentious and controversial situation.²⁷³ Nonetheless, Kearney was simply relieved that the tensions between the Irish and the American-Anglo party had dissipated, and that he had survived the affair, personally and professionally.

Once he had adequately recovered from the tension of March 1944, Kearney returned to his rounds of diplomatic activities, dinner parties, visiting airmen at the Curragh, golfing and horse back riding. He also had a renewed interest in Irish Shipping and wanted to assist the Irish in placing orders for newsprint, wheat, and fertilizer, since they were relatively low in all supplies due to the Anglo embargo.

Apart from negotiating Canadian-Irish import contracts, and performing his formal diplomatic duties, Kearney was also continuing his hobby of documenting war events in his personal diary. He was particularly captivated by the allied offensive in Italy, the Allies' invasion of France, the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Adolph Hitler, and the Russian drive towards Berlin.²⁷⁴ Kearney was hopeful that if the Allied nations continued to meet with great success, the war might conclude in a matter of months.

²⁷³Ibid., p. 221.

²⁷⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, June, July, August, 1944.

Feeling rather optimistic and lucky, Kearney decided that he would like to venture back to Canada, and attempt to negotiate some substantial Canadian export deals for Ireland in order to fully re-establish them after the Anglo embargo.²⁷⁵ Kearney knew that this trip was unnecessary, but he thought the change in venue, and the opportunity to revisit old friends, would make it worthwhile. In fact, there were no critical situations brewing in Ireland that would warrant Kearney's presence, therefore, a trip to Canada to see friends and colleagues might be just what he needed, after enduring the stresses of the last month.

So, on August 18, 1944, Kearney boarded a carrier plane, and embarked on a three day journey to Montreal, Canada.²⁷⁶ On August 21, Kearney arrived in Montreal, and much to his chagrin, learned that Prime Minister King and Secretary Robertson were presently indisposed, and could not meet with him right away. As a result, Kearney travelled to Ottawa, and spent a few days visiting friends, dining with colleagues, having tea with Malcolm Macdonald (British High Commissioner to Canada), and enjoying a dinner party on his behalf, hosted by John J. Hearne.²⁷⁷

Unexpectedly, on August 28, Kearney was informed by Secretary Robertson that he and Mr. King would be available

²⁷⁵Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, July 30, 1944.

²⁷⁶Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, August 18, 1944.

²⁷⁷Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, August 28, 1944.

to meet with Kearney whenever it would be convenient. They met that very night, and discussed Kearney's desire to have Canada sell ships to Ireland, to aid the Irish Shipping Limited company's losses of the American S.S. Wolverine, and that of the Irish Pine and Oak. Robertson and King were surprised with the request, but were willing to ponder it and inform Kearney of their decision on August 31.²⁷⁸

On August 31st Kearney met with his advisors and was informed that Canada was willing to assist Ireland and supply her with ships for the Irish Shipping Limited company. Canada was also quite concerned about Ireland's economic plight, and was pleased to send additional loads of wheat and lumber, to aid the country in resurrecting itself after the British embargo. Once King and Robertson had supplied Kearney with the good news, they then inquired as to what his plans were when the war concluded. Kearney had easily forgotten that he had committed himself to a war-term appointment in Ireland, and was astonished and honoured when Prime Minister suggested that he remain within the diplomatic corps, but at a new venue.²⁷⁹

Confirming that he would be interested in remaining with the corps, Kearney was informed that King would like to relocate him to another jurisdiction after the war, since Kearney had been so successful in creating a permanent

²⁷⁸Ibid., August 28, 1944.

²⁷⁹Ibid., August 31, 1944.

posting within Ireland. King felt that Kearney's experience and level-headedness would enable him to be an ideal candidate to establish a new Canadian embassy somewhere around the world.²⁸⁰ Feeling privileged, and somewhat overwhelmed, Kearney thanked King and Robertson for all that they were doing for Ireland and himself, and departed from King's office, unable to believe how fortunate he was.

With the conclusion of his meeting with King and Robertson, Kearney decided that now would be an ideal time to return to Ireland to deliver the good news. While waiting in Newfoundland for his plane to be refuelled, Kearney heard the wonderful news that Allies had occupied Belgium and Holland, and were making great strides to rid Europe of Nazi control. He also heard a horrifying BBC broadcast of the Allies' takeover of a Polish concentration camp, and what horrors were to be found within its barbed wire confines. Kearney was sickened by the grisly details that were reported from Poland, and wrote that he felt overcome by grief for the survivors and victims of such a terrible experience.

Feeling tired and emotionally drained from his trip and the news of the concentration camp, Kearney arrived in Dublin on September 7, and knew that he required a few days of rest and relaxation from diplomacy and the news of the

²⁸⁰Ibid., August 31, 1944.

world. Once he felt collected and content, he contacted Sean Lemass, Minister for Supplies, Industry and Commerce, and informed him that he had negotiated the purchase of an undisclosed number of ships for Ireland, from Canada.²⁸¹ Lemass was jubilant when he heard the news, and thanked Kearney for his kindness. Kearney also reported that Canada was pleased to send lumber and fertilizer to aid Irish construction and agriculture, and did so out of sympathy for the Irish plight during the Anglo embargo. Again, Lemass was delighted.

Nonetheless, according to his diary, Kearney had one issue that he had to discuss with Lemass, which had outraged and exasperated his normally good nature. Kearney had learned in the past few days, that the Germans had been publishing a newspaper called the German Weekly Review, and had used one page of Canadian newsprint.²⁸² Lemass had no idea how the Germans had obtained Canadian newsprint for their Weekly Review, but stated that he would investigate the claim, and report to Kearney what he learned.

Within a week, Kearney had been contacted by the Irish government, and informed that no more newsprint would be used in the German Weekly news bulletin.²⁸³ Kearney was relieved that Lemass and his assistants were able to

²⁸¹Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 11, 1944.

²⁸²Gray, p. 83.

²⁸³Ibid., p. 83.

determine who was responsible, and put a stop to the thievery of Ireland's Canadian newsprint. He suspected that the German Legation was involved, but knew that he could never 'point the finger' without initiating a diplomatic incident.

Nevertheless, Kearney was heartened by the news that "Germany was giving up the ghost", and being forced to retreat to Mother Germany.²⁸⁴ According to the news, the Americans had had a number of successes against Germany and had pierced the Siegfried Line, completed the capture of German troops in Southern France, claimed the city of Brest (France), cracked the Nazis Gothic Line in Italy, and had obtained Rimini (Italy) from the Germans.²⁸⁵

Britain, during the course of the U.S. success, had a mixture of triumphs and tragedies, which began with the parachuting of British-American airborne divisions into Arnheim (Holland). Their goal was to obtain the bridge across the Rhine at Nijmegen (Holland), but were driven back to the south bank of the river due to an overpowering German force. Nonetheless, Britain did have the opportunity to celebrate its temporary victories at the Island of Lemnos, and within the Pelopennese district, but were discouraged by the time-consuming nature to achieve victory at one spot or

²⁸⁴Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 16, 1944.

²⁸⁵Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, September 16-November 2, 1944.

another.²⁸⁶

As for the Canadian forces throughout Europe, their victories outnumbered their losses, and their advances were hailed as great accomplishments for the Allies' campaign in Western Europe. The Canadians had overtaken Boulogne and Calais (France), had made a successful amphibious landing in rear of the Germans in the Scheldte river area (Holland, Belgium), claiming the city of Breskens in the Scheldte pocket, and Oostburg on the Scheldte estuary, and established a bridgehead across the Savio River in Italy.²⁸⁷ It appeared that the Canadian forces, assisted by the British were going to be able to overtake Belgium from Germany in a short period of time, but only if they continued to maintain morale, men and materiel for all that was yet to come.

While Kearney was pleased with the progress of the Allies, he was somewhat concerned about the Russians' by this point in the war. It had become painfully clear to the world that Russia was not only interested in ridding Eastern Europe of German domination, but was also keen on consuming this territory for herself. Poland had been usurped by the Red Army, and Hungary was in the process of being overtaken by an aggressive and relentless Russian Army, therefore, the world was simply waiting to see what Russia would overtake

²⁸⁶Ibid., September 16-November 2, 1944.

²⁸⁷Ibid., September 16-November 2, 1944.

next.²⁸⁸

However, while the world was questioning Russia's appetite for Eastern European countries, Kearney was distracted by the Canadian news concerning his friend and superior, Colonel J. L. Ralston, Minister of National Defense. According to the press, Col. Ralston had resigned from his post, following a trip to the Western Front. As the Globe and Mail reported:

Mr. Ralston saw the dire need for reinforcements for the men, and urged Mr. King to make good his promise to the people that conscription would be imposed when necessary. But because Quebec says 'No' the Prime Minister refuses to fulfil his obligation to the people of Canada. [Therefore], Mr. Ralston resigned, preferring the approval of a good conscience rather than the sacrifice of honour on the altar of political expediency.²⁸⁹

Kearney recorded that he was shocked and saddened that his friend and confidant had resigned. He agreed that if conscription were absolutely necessary, then young Canadians should be conscripted. However, he wished that conscription would not have to be an option. In an ideal world, Kearney was convinced that if military training was mandatory, and bilingualism was a requirement, then all young Canadians would have to serve.²⁹⁰ As a result, there would be no plebiscites or national division according to cultural differences within Canada.

²⁸⁸Gilbert, p. 616.

²⁸⁹The Globe and Mail, November 16, 1944, p. 6.

²⁹⁰Kearney, Vol. 1, Diary, November 27, 1944.

Kearney was amazed at the uproar that resulted due to the reintroduction of the conscription issue into Canadian society. As Kearney stated, "hell [was] popping in Canada on the conscription issue", and few knew how to calm the fears and concerns of the general population.²⁹¹ In the end, Mackenzie King decided that Col. Ralston's suggestion of conscription was the correct one, and on November 22, 1944, ordered 16 000 National Resources Mobilization Act soldiers, or Zombies, to be sent overseas to reinforce the Canadian forces.²⁹² Surprisingly, the French Canadian response to King's 'change of heart' was not that of anger or violence. Instead, Francophones were unusually accepting of King's decision as they realized that "[King] had tried to prevent a violent conflict between the races."²⁹³ All in all, King's decision to resurrect conscription was the appropriate choice, and fortunately for him, brought some closure to the conscription crisis of the war period.

From the first of January to the final days of March 1945, Kearney busied himself with a variety of activities. On a number of occasions Kearney was visited by a Canadian soldier, seaman, or airman, searching for a friendly face, a connection to home, or a place to stop and relax while on

²⁹¹Ibid., November 27, 1944.

²⁹²J. L. Granatstein. Conscription in the Second World War, 1939-1945. (Toronto : The Ryerson Press, 1969), p. 61.

²⁹³Granatstein, p. 64.

leave in Ireland. Kearney was honoured that they would choose to stop and visit with him and his wife, and he often liked to invite them to dinner, or social events at his home. For example, on January 16, Kearney met up with 10 Canadian lads, who were visiting Ireland on leave. After conversing with them, he decided to invite them all to dinner at St. Stephen's Green Club, where they dined, drank, and laughed at stories of life, love, and the art of war.²⁹⁴ As Kearney recorded in his diary, he believed that having the opportunity to interact with members of the Canadian military was one of the most wonderful aspects of his job.

However, while Kearney dined, drank and laughed, he realized that these men who had accompanied him to dinner were the fortunate ones. In Ireland, Canadian servicemen were still being interned in the Curragh, who were captured participating in the action of war. Fortunately, for interned Canadians, as well as all Allied servicemen, they were given the opportunity to have day passes, providing that they promised not to escape.²⁹⁵ Kearney sympathized with the interned men's plights, and the ridiculousness of Irish internment policy. He wanted to see their policy revoked, but knew that not even his friendship with DeValera could convince him to override the rules of Irish neutrality.

²⁹⁴NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 2, John D. Kearney's Diary, from January 1, 1945 to November 15, 1945, January 16, 1945.

²⁹⁵Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, January 17, 1945.

In the process, Kearney had also busied himself with the selecting and purchasing of a home for the future Canadian High Commissioner of Ireland.²⁹⁶ He and his wife had been residing in St. Brigid's, an economical and comfortable home, located in the heart of Dublin. Kearney liked his present residence, and decided that it would be an ideal place of residence for the upcoming High Commissioner. Therefore, he made an appeal to the house owner, a Captain Anthony, and revealed to him that the "Canadian Government would be interested in securing a fairly long lease or possibly purchasing it."²⁹⁷ Anthony pondered Kearney's offer for a number of days, but finally decided that he would be interested in selling the house and its property to Canada.²⁹⁸ Therefore, Kearney was the first Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland to establish the official Canadian residence for future High Commissioners.

While establishing a permanent residence for Canadian High Commissioners, and visiting with Canadian servicemen are important and significant aspects of a diplomat's job, another facet of a High Commissioner or Ambassador's job was that of negotiating import/export contracts between one's home nation, and one's nation of occupation. Kearney had successfully negotiated contracts for Ireland from 1942 to

²⁹⁶Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, February 6, 1945.

²⁹⁷Ibid., February 6, 1945.

²⁹⁸Ibid., February 6, 1945.

until 1945, and was pleased with the progress that he made in providing Ireland with essential supplies, and resources.

In September, 1944, Kearney had returned to Ottawa to discuss the possibility of selling shipping vessels to the Irish Shipping Limited company of Dublin, Ireland. The Canadian Government agreed, but Kearney did not follow up, due to the business of his schedule and the conscription crisis, in order to make formal arrangements for Ireland to purchase the ships. Therefore, on February 22, 1945, Kearney was contacted by Rodge McLagan, on behalf of the Irish Shipping company, requesting the sale of two ships from the Canadian government.²⁹⁹ He was concerned that sterling would be his only difficulty in the process of purchasing these ships, and Kearney informed him that he would do everything possible to help him with his financial situation.

By March 21, McLagan still had few financial resources, and contacted Kearney to see if he had had any success in finding sterling or dollars to help with the purchase. Kearney was told that the "Irish Government had some Canadian funds about which they were not talking", but a Mr. Leydon of the Ministry for Finance, would investigate to see if this money could be borrowed or used for the purchase.³⁰⁰ The money was granted to McLagan, but was only enough to purchase one Canadian vessel.

²⁹⁹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, February 22, 1945.

³⁰⁰Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, March 21, 1945.

Kearney decided that he must be more thorough and investigate every option that he had at his disposal in order to find additional money for McLagan. In a private discussion with DeValera, Kearney mentioned the plight of McLagan and the Irish Shipping Limited, and DeValera announced that the Irish government had U.S. dollars hidden in bank accounts, and that this money may be of interest to McLagan for his purchases.³⁰¹ However, once McLagan reviewed his financial records, he decided against borrowing the American money from the Irish government, and would use the supplied Canadian funds to purchase one ship from Canada, as long as he could have it within 6 months.³⁰² Kearney agreed, and said he would travel to Ottawa to 'close the deal' for Ireland, accompanied by John O'Neill, Chief Export and Technical Advisor of Irish Shipping Limited.³⁰³

In the midst of concluding the Canadian ship contract, Kearney received word that President Roosevelt had died unexpectedly on April 12, 1945.³⁰⁴ Kearney had never had the opportunity to meet the American President, but knew that Roosevelt was a role model and mentor for all. As Prime Minister King stated:

Few lives have been more closely identified with

³⁰¹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, March 25, 1945.

³⁰²Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, March 27, 1945.

³⁰³Kearney, Vol. 2. Diary, March 28, 1945.

³⁰⁴Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 12, 1945.

humanity in its needs, its struggles, and its aspirations. His services to the cause of freedom went far beyond the limits of race and bounds of nationality. He was an undaunted champion of the rights of free men, and a mighty leader of the forces of freedom in a world at war.³⁰⁵

He also commented that "Franklin D. Roosevelt was so close and good a neighbour, so great and true a friend of the Canadian people, that the word, when received, was as if one of our very own had passed away."³⁰⁶

As Canada mourned the loss of the American president, so too did the government and citizens of Ireland. Kearney, as expected, "wrote a formal and also a personal letter of sympathy to the Grays," and lowered the Canadian flag to half-mast in tribute.³⁰⁷ In fact, all of the flags in Dublin were lowered to half-mast, out of respect for the sudden loss of the American peacemaker.³⁰⁸

However, Ireland's tribute to Roosevelt was suddenly disrupted when DeValera and David Gray openly disagreed on Roosevelt's memorial service. Gray had planned for a public memorial service to be held in a Protestant church in downtown Dublin on an unspecified date. DeValera informed Gray that the Irish government would not be able to attend,

³⁰⁵The Globe and Mail, April 13, 1945, p. 2.

³⁰⁶Ibid., p. 2.

³⁰⁷Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 13, 1945.

³⁰⁸Carroll, p. 160.

unless the service were to be held in a Catholic church.³⁰⁹ Feeling angered and exasperated by DeValera's fault-finding attitude, Gray decided to cancel the service altogether.³¹⁰ Upon hearing of the cancellation, Kearney attempted to contact his friend, but was informed that Gray was too disgusted to communicate with anyone at the time.

Kearney felt tremendous sympathy for Gray at this difficult time. He knew that Gray and DeValera had rarely been able to get along, and had mistreated each other a number of times. Nonetheless, to quibble over the location of a memorial service for an American icon and friend of the Irish people, was disgraceful. Kearney knew that DeValera only argued over the location of the service to antagonize Gray. Unfortunately, it was enough to convince Gray that DeValera and his government were anti-American, unpatriotic, and completely disrespectful towards the desire of Ireland to mourn an international hero, and mentor.

According to Kearney's diary, Roosevelt's death was unexpected and tragic, and was the first of many well-publicized deaths to embrace the international community. Following Roosevelt's sudden passing, it became publicly known that as the Allies pushed the German soldiers into Berlin, Allied soldiers were discovering the burned, tortured, butchered, and gassed bodies of European Jews,

³⁰⁹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 15, 1945.

³¹⁰Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 16, 1945.

Gypsies, the senile, and intellectuals at various German concentration camps.³¹¹ The world's response was shock and disgust at the savage nature of Hitler and his Nazi followers. A third figure who experienced a very public death was that of Mussolini, Italy's President and war leader. Mussolini was assassinated by Italian partisans, and the world embraced the news with happiness and satisfaction.³¹² While, Mussolini was publicly murdered by his own citizens, Hitler chose to end his life by his own, in a private bunker established for himself and his partner, Ava Braun.³¹³ With the announcement of Hitler's death, the world responded with anger because of his cowardly departure, but were delighted and enthralled, that Hitler was dead, his army was dying, and their domination over Europe was over, at last.

When reviewing all the deaths, and the public's response to each, the Irish people were understandably most moved by the loss of Roosevelt, and the butchering of thousands at Buchenwald, Belsen, and Norjhausen. However, strangely enough, DeValera felt quite differently. Little was said about Roosevelt's departure or the findings at German camps, but much was said regarding the death of

³¹¹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 20, 1945.

³¹²Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, April 29, 1945.

³¹³Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 2, 1945.

Hitler.³¹⁴ In fact, DeValera was so moved by the news of Hitler's suicide that he "called on Dr. Hempel, the German Ambassador in Eire, to express 'his condolence' on the death of Adolf Hitler, which had been reported in that day's newspapers."³¹⁵ DeValera had acted without the blessings of his Irish government, but remained convinced that it was a logical act, and appropriate for diplomatic protocol. While the international community, especially the U.S., Britain, and Canada expressed outrage at his behaviour, DeValera argued that,

so long as we retained out diplomatic relations with Germany, to have failed to call upon the German representative would have been an act of unpardonable discourtesy to the German nation and to Dr. Hempel himself. During the whole of the war, Dr. Hempel's conduct was irreproachable. He was always friendly and invariably correct - in marked contrast with Gray. I certainly was not going to add to his humiliation in the hour of defeat.³¹⁶

Once DeValera's statement had been released, Sir John Maffey, the British Representative, commented that DeValera's actions were "unwise but mathematically consistent" with his previous behaviour.³¹⁷ Maffey also

³¹⁴ Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 3, 1945. It is documented that DeValera did not extend proper condolences to David Gray, the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. DeValera chose to send his personal secretary to extend the Irish Government's deepest sympathies to Gray, which outraged the American Ambassador.

³¹⁵ Gray, p. 232.

³¹⁶ Carroll, p. 160.

³¹⁷ Gray, p. 233.

suggested that,

DeValera's actions may have been prompted by the most recent assault on his principles', the request from the British and Americans that the keys of the German Legation in Dublin be handed over before Hempel had time to destroy the archive material held there.³¹⁸

DeValera did follow through, and obtained the keys of the German Legation, but it is interesting to ponder as to whether DeValera acted out of vengeance or sincerity when he went to pay his respects to the German Ambassador.³¹⁹

Nonetheless, while the world was celebrating Hitler's apparent suicide, the falling of Berlin, the German army's unconditional surrender in Italy, part of Austria, Denmark, Holland, and northwest Germany, and the conclusion of the war, Ireland was in the throes of embarrassment and celebration.³²⁰ The Irish people were angered that their Prime Minister was responsible for "the silliest act of the war."³²¹ When he visited Ambassador Hempel to express his regrets for Hitler's death, DeValera had "publicly [associated them] with an expression of sympathy for the death of a tyrant responsible for the murder of millions."³²²

However, on the other hand, the Irish were overjoyed that the war was over, and that their suffering in isolation

³¹⁸Ibid., p. 233.

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 233.

³²⁰ The Globe and Mail, May 8, 1945, p. 16.

³²¹ The Globe and Mail, May 4, 1945, p. 1

³²²Carroll, p. 161.

would come to an end. "A group of students at Trinity College celebrated the Allied victory by flying the British, American, Russian, French, and Irish flags on the roof of the University."³²³ Unfortunately, as they celebrated, another group of bystanders took offense to the College student's placement of the Irish tri-colour below that of the Allied nations' flags, and subsequently, began to riot.³²⁴ By the end of the Dublin's VE Day, flags of Ireland and Britain were on fire, the windows of the Wicklow Hotel, Jammet's restaurant, and the American and British legations were smashed, and police had arrested a number of rioters for disorderly conduct.³²⁵

The VE riots of Dublin were of minor significance in comparison to the demonstrations of the Irish following Churchill's victory speech of May 13, 1945.³²⁶ Churchill had prepared and delivered an eloquent speech, but in concluding, decided to address the issue of Ireland and its neutrality stance. He stated:

Owing to the actions of Mr. DeValera, so much at variance with the temper and instincts of thousands of Southern Irishmen who hastened to the battle-front to prove their ancient valour, the approaches which the Southern Irish ports and airfields could so easily have guarded were closed by the hostile aircraft and U-boats. This was indeed a deadly moment in our life and

³²³Ibid., p. 161.

³²⁴Ibid., p. 161.

³²⁵The Globe and Mail, May 15, 1945, p. 13.

³²⁶Gray, p. 235.

if it had not been for the loyalty and friendship of Northern Ireland we should have been forced to come to close quarters with Mr. DeValera or perish forever from the earth. However, with a restraint and poise to which, I say, history will find few parallels, his Majesty's government never laid a violent hand upon them though at times it would have been quite easy and quite natural, and we left the Dublin Government to frolic with the Germans and ... the Japanese representatives to their hearts' content.³²⁷

DeValera did not respond to Churchill's remarks until the evening of May 16, when he made a national radio broadcast. His broadcast proved to be one of his greatest speeches, and the nation of Ireland praised him for his eloquence, and strength in facing Churchill and defeating him with Ireland's neutral stance. DeValera's speech offered thanks to God, sympathy to the war-torn nations of the world, praise to Canada, the United States, and Britain for supplying Ireland with products, resources, and staples, commendations to all those who volunteered their services for the military, whether in Ireland or abroad, and a plea to the people of Ireland to produce all the food possible to assist the starving and impoverished of the world.³²⁸

DeValera then proceeded to discuss the remarks of Churchill in a polite and civilized manner. He stated that:

Mr. Churchill makes it clear that, in certain circumstances, he would have violated our neutrality and that he could justify his action by Britain's necessity. It seems strange to me that Mr. Churchill does not see this, if accepted, would mean that Britain's necessity would become a moral code and that

³²⁷Carroll, p. 163.

³²⁸Moynihan, pp. 471-473.

when this necessity became sufficiently great, other people's rights were not to count.

It is quite true that other great powers believe in this same code -- in their own regard -- and have behaved in accordance with it. That is precisely why we have the disastrous succession of wars -- World War No. 1 and World War No. 2 -- and shall it be World War No. 3...

It is indeed, fortunate that Britain's necessity did not reach the point when Mr. Churchill would have acted. All credit to him that he successfully resisted the temptation which, I have no doubt, many times assailed him in his difficulties and to which I freely admit many leaders might have easily succumbed. It is indeed, hard for the strong to be just to the weak, but acting justly has its rewards.³²⁹

In conclusion, DeValera emphasized Ireland's lone, long stand, by uttering:

Mr. Churchill is proud of Britain's stand alone, after France had fallen and before America entered the war. Could he not find in his heart the generosity to acknowledge that there is a small nation that stood alone, not for one year or two, but for several hundred years against aggression; that endured spoils, famines, massacres in endless succession; that was clubbed many times into insensibility, but that each time, on returning consciousness, took up the fight anew; a small nation that could never be got to accept defeat and has never surrendered her soul?...

Mr. Churchill is justly proud of his nation's perseverance against heavy odds. But we on this island are still prouder of our nation's perseverance for freedom through all the centuries. We of our time have pledged ourselves to the dead generations who have preserved intact for us this glorious heritage, that we too will strive to be faithful to the end, and pass on the tradition unblemished...

Meanwhile, even as a partitioned small nation, we shall go on and strive to play our part in the world, continuing unswervingly to work for the cause of true freedom and for peace and understanding between all nations.³³⁰

John D. Kearney was unusually silent about DeValera's

³²⁹Moynehan, pp. 474-476.

³³⁰Moynehan, p. 476.

visit to the German Ambassador, the rioting of Dublin youth on VE Day, and the controversial speech delivered by DeValera on May 16. However, following that speech, Kearney recorded in his diary, that he made an appearance on Sir John Maffey's doorstep and requested an opportunity to speak with him regarding DeValera's behaviour, and the attitude of the Irish towards the war. Kearney was irate that DeValera had visited Hempel and, surprisingly, informed Maffey that he was requesting an apology from DeValera for humiliating him in front of his colleagues, Canadians, and the international community.³³¹ Kearney believed that he, "who had always striven to be helpful" for the cause of Ireland, had been figuratively slapped in the face by DeValera's actions and words.³³² Unfortunately, DeValera regarded his actions and words as that of Christian charity, and refused to apologize to Kearney, the Allies, or the world for his controversial actions.³³³ This, subsequently, left Kearney feeling used, and abused by his dear friend, the Irish Taoiseach.

Nonetheless, Kearney maintained a quiet and professional attitude towards deValera. He discretely questioned DeValera's nonchalant stance with fellow diplomats, when it was announced that six Irish priests

³³¹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 16, 1945.

³³²Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 16, 1945.

³³³Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 19, 1945.

living in Malaya, had been burned to death in their group residence.³³⁴ DeValera's response to the tragedy was to do nothing, which angered the Irish people. Kearney believed that this was the ideal opportunity to expel the Japanese Ambassador, but refused to offer this suggestion to DeValera.³³⁵ Gray's response to such a recommendation was that "the Germans can bomb Dublin with impunity" and deValera does nothing -- "so why shouldn't the Japanese kill a few of their priests as nothing is going to be done or said by Prime Minister DeValera, therefore, leave the issue alone."³³⁶

Kearney was also intrigued by DeValera's interest in creating a "good-will programme between Ireland and Canada", in which Kearney would assist Ireland in finalizing the purchasing arrangements for a ship from Canada.³³⁷ In the beginning of the negotiations, Kearney was actively involved. However, since DeValera had visited the German ambassador, and refused to apologize for his actions, Canada had decided to postpone ship negotiations for the Irish purchase.³³⁸ Kearney agreed that he would assist in the purchasing arrangement, but that this would have to be his

³³⁴Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 21, 1945.

³³⁵Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 24, 1945.

³³⁶Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 25, 1945.

³³⁷Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, August 19, 1945.

³³⁸Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, May 3, 1945.

last diplomatic act for Ireland, as he had been offered a new posting in Oslo, Norway, and was anxious to take the opportunity.³³⁹ DeValera was disappointed in Kearney's decision to relocate, but was pleased that he was willing to finalize the ship contract and assist Irish shipping.

By October 10, after completing a trip to Ottawa, Kearney arrived in Dublin and informed the Irish Shipping Limited that their contract had been finalized, and a ship was in the process of being sent to them.³⁴⁰ As recorded in his diary, Kearney was relieved that he could complete all his diplomatic responsibilities to Ireland, and end his Irish posting, feeling proud of his professionalism and strength of character. He knew that he had arrived in Ireland, naive, somewhat bewildered as to his Canadian-British orders, and eager to please all friends, colleagues, and governmental officials. However, after serving as Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland for four and a half years, Kearney felt wiser, more experienced, and capable of standing up for himself, Canada, and that which was morally right. Serving in Ireland had challenged his intelligence, experience, and personal capabilities, and forced him to become a better and more professional diplomat and man.

In the end, this seasoned diplomat exercised his final

³³⁹Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, August 19, 1945.

³⁴⁰Kearney, Vol. 2, Diary, October 10, 1945.

diplomatic responsibility in Ireland, and attended a party hosted by DeValera to celebrate his departure and pay tribute to him as a friend of the Irish government and the Irish people. Kearney and his wife were presented with an old Irish punch ladle, two Irish sauce bowls, an illuminated scroll, and a beautiful candelabra.³⁴¹ After a number of toasts, speeches, songs, and tributes, Kearney was encouraged to take the stage, and offer some parting words of wisdom to his colleagues, associates, and friends. He began by thanking the Irish government, by stating,

One remembers longest the help which is given when the need is direst. When I recall the war years, on behalf of my Government, I am grateful to the Irish Government for its acts and evidences of benevolence. I am personally grateful to many of its Ministers for their whispered words of encouragement to me in the darkest days when ourselves and our cause seemed suspended by a thread.³⁴²

He then decided to extend personal thanks to various individuals that were in attendance. To DeValera, he asserted that he "was pleased to hear Mr. DeValera say that [he was] regarded as a friend. We have not always seen eye to eye and have had our differences - to disagree amicably I regard as an accomplishment for the parties concerned."³⁴³ In reference to his personal assistants, Ted Garland and Earnest McColl, Kearney offered his praise and suggested

³⁴¹NAC, MG 30 E 215, Vol. 2, John D. Kearney's Speeches, November 15, 1945.

³⁴²Kearney, Speeches, November 15, 1945.

³⁴³Kearney, Speeches, November 15, 1945.

that "in leaving them, I feel I am leaving behind a portion of what has been a happy family. They have halved the troubles and doubled the pleasures of our Mission, and I am loath to part with them."³⁴⁴

In parting from his friends, Sir John Maffey and David Gray, Kearney offered two distinct tributes, praising them both for their varying strengths. To Maffey, Kearney revealed that,

I have often envied my friend, Sir John Maffey his talents and experience, but I never envied him his Mission because I always felt that he was in the difficult position of having 'to live something down'. I saw him living it down day by day and, in doing so, I saw him living it up to the very best traditions of a battered but brave people. Due to his good offices, a new era of better and happier relations has been opened up for these two neighbouring islands.³⁴⁵

To Gray, Kearney thanks him for his incredible hospitality. "When I look at David Gray, the American Minister," Kearney states, "my mind goes back to 1941 and to days which were critical - not only in a national sense but for me personally - because my wife was very seriously ill. His kindness and that of his dear wife I shall never forget."³⁴⁶

In parting, Kearney expressed his gratitude to the Irish Government, and to all the members of the Diplomatic Corps for their friendship and courtesy. He felt that his successor, Merchant Mahoney, would greatly enjoy the

³⁴⁴Kearney, Speeches, November 15, 1945.

³⁴⁵Kearney, Speeches, November 15, 1945.

³⁴⁶Kearney, Speeches, November 15, 1945.

Diplomatic Corps experience in Ireland, and would relish the opportunity to interact with such friendly, kind and helpful associates, as Kearney had throughout his four and a half years.³⁴⁷ In conclusion, Kearney sadly remarked, "I take away many kindly thoughts of Dublin, and wherever I may be - one person more will be found who has a soft spot in his heart for the land of his ancestors"; and with that concluding statement, parted from his friends and colleagues, and ventured off to begin new adventures as a seasoned member of the diplomatic corps.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷Kearney, *Speeches*, November 15, 1945.

³⁴⁸Kearney, *Speeches*, November 15, 1945.

Conclusion

When John D. Kearney departed from his final Irish diplomatic function, he commented that 'Ireland would always hold a special place in his heart'. He believed that his posting as Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland had been a rewarding experience, and that he had contributed positively to Irish-Canadian diplomacy. However, this was an understatement. Kearney's contributions to Irish/Canadian relations were, in fact, immeasurable.

John D. Kearney, initially, a naive and unprofessional representative was capable of doing what no other diplomat had done in Ireland. He was able to successfully befriend Ireland's infamous Eamon DeValera, and infiltrate Irish government and community circles. Kearney was a popular and well-respected diplomat because he was trustworthy, level headed, sensible, and responsible. He was regarded as the ideal mediator for the 'Anglo-American note incident', and a courageous and passionate advocate of diplomatic and ethical behaviour.

Kearney was also a strong representative for Canada, and a capable negotiator for Ireland in her time of need. He was able to establish Irish contracts for Canadian exports, and aid the Irish Shipping Limited company when ships and supplies were desperately needed. He was always willing to assist when necessary, and the Irish community embraced him

for his generosity. Neither the British, nor the American Representatives could say that they were received and accepted by the Irish as positively as John D. Kearney was by the Irish people.

John D. Kearney not only befriended and assisted the Irish, he also strengthened Canada's reputation as a stable and open-minded country. With his help Canada was able to establish a strong and healthy relationship with the nation of Ireland, and to maintain this into the afterwar period. The Commonwealth and international communities applauded Canada's efforts to maintain positive relations with Ireland, which further confirmed Canada's reputation for positive diplomacy.

The development of Irish-Canadian relations at the hands of John D. Kearney, and to a lesser extent, Mackenzie King, makes for a fascinating story. It is a shame that so few know of the developed and complicated relationship that did exist, and that even fewer care. Irish-Canadian relations were a part of our Canadian history, and should be recognized for its human interest, and controversy for a complicated period in our past.

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