

FIERCE FIGHTING RAGES OVER DUBLIN BUILDINGS

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DUBLIN, April 20.—Not for many months has Dublin experienced such intense firing as that which broke out at midnight last night and continued for at least two hours. While the street outside was being swept with bullets by the crackle of rifle, revolver and machine gun fire was waking echoes a dance largely attended was proceeding in my hotel. This fact illustrates the unique conditions which obtain in this city.

The extremists had organized a plan of skirmish which extended over the centre of the city and included attacks upon the headquarters of the Provisional Government in Merrion Square, the telephone exchange, the Bank of Ireland in College Green and the City Hall. In all of these buildings there are, of course, garrisons of Free State troops. There was no attempt to rush any of the premises and the virulence of the fire poured upon them therefore was an intensification of the rebel scheme to harass the regulars—a scheme which is in operation more or less every night.

The greatest concentration was at the telephone exchange, where the rebels, lying upon the roofs of adjoining low buildings and ensconced in windows of tenements which they temporarily seized, apparently used machine gun. Nests of attackers were quickly disposed of before the return fire of the garrisons.

The patrols and armored cars were soon on the street, but sporadic bursts of fire were frequent.

Two casualties among the Free State troops are reported and one among the attackers. The latter was captured and taken to a hospital.

In addition to the larger attacks sentries and individual officers of the Free State forces were sniped, one of them as he left a hotel in O'Connell Street.

The hostile forces engaged in the operations must have been considerable.

As the Four Courts rebels steadily disclaim any association with these assaults on the Free State troops, it can only be inferred that in Dublin strong independent guerrilla forces have been formed with their own special plans for embarrassing the provisional government.

A Free State patrol this morning stopped a party of forty heavily armed men leaving Dublin by lorry for Tipperary. They stated they had been on duty at the Four Courts since Friday.

"On giving their word that they did not fire any shots during the night they were allowed to proceed," says an official communique—a naive comment upon this peculiarly Irish crisis.

DUBLIN, April 20 (Associated Press).—Firing broke out tonight at 11:15 o'clock and at the hour of the filing of this dispatch was going on heavily at the Wellington Barracks, Beggar's Bush and elsewhere.

Despite almost continuous firing throughout last night, the citizens of Dublin today were relieved to find that little damage had resulted to property and that only three persons had been struck by bullets.

Buildings attacked, particularly the telephone exchange, showed numerous marks, but the offices of the Provisional Government, which were under fire both from the front and rear, escaped unscathed. Every night some disturbance arises in the vicinity of the Government building, as well as the Beggar's Bush Barracks, the headquarters of the official troops, but no serious attempt has been made to capture either place, which

a few men can hold against any forces not provided with artillery.

The inference is that the opponents of the Provisional Government are using the tactics which admittedly were employed against police barracks during the fighting of the Irish against the British. It was then boasted that a few men, armed with revolvers, could keep the whole force of police on the defensive, wasting their ammunition in repelling attacks the importance of which they exaggerated.

Although the Beggar's Bush Barracks could not be captured, its situation is such that a small number of snipers can seriously embarrass its personnel. The barracks adjoins a fashionable residential road, in some of the houses along which the snipers could secure an entrance and, mounting to the top windows, send their bullets over the walls and into the barracks square.

The troops frequently sally forth and hold up pedestrians and examine them for weapons. It is said that many of the pedestrians have been found carrying automatic pistols. Such persons have been locked up. Both in Dublin and out in the country the two factions each have prisoners on their hands who are trying to embarrass their custodians by hunger striking.

One aspect of the situation which is regarded as sinister is revealed in a statement published by authority of Rory O'Connor, that the section of the army operating under his executive is not attacking any barracks in Dublin or under Beggar's Bush control. O'Connor has been so candid in his admissions of responsibility for his acts, having owned up immediately that he carried out the assault on The Freeman's Journal and that he has directed the daily destruction since of copies of The Independent in punishment for its refusal to carry out his orders, that his denial of knowledge of the attacks on barracks has had much weight with the people, who assert that if O'Connor was connected with the attacks he would admit it. The conclusion drawn by those who accept O'Connor's word is that some force owing no control to any faction is operating independently against the Provisional Government.

It is admitted that such a contingency would add to the gravity of the situation, but an alternative theory, considered hardly less serious, is that some officers of the independent army are not informing their chiefs of their exploits. Limitation of O'Connor's denial to Dublin after the publication of news of numerous attacks on barracks in the country is taken in some quarters as admission of responsibility for these.

Sentries guarding several Dublin buildings are reported to have been fired at. The seizure in transit of explosives used by contractors for blasting purposes also has occurred. This repetition of tactics pursued prior to the truce has led to the cancellation of all permits for the transit of explosives, which has checked the activities of several industrial enterprises.