

No. 373 NAI DT S5985

William T. Cosgrave to Edward Phelan (Geneva)

Dublin, undated

I am much obliged for your letter of 21st January and also for the copy of the article you wrote for 'STUDIES' - which was most interesting. I think the article will do much good here as the functions of the Interntl Labour Office may not be quite well understood and it is possible that the concluding sentences - in fact the last paragraph - will serve as a corrective to the view which may be prevalent regarding the International Labour Organisation. I think it was an excellent idea of yours to get 'Studies' to publish the article, as it is unquestionably the finest periodical in Ireland. May I take the opportunity of congratulating you on the work of the office as well as the article.

I am glad of your references to the Agreement of December last. We discovered that Article XII. did not solve what it had generally been believed it was designed to solve. As a matter of fact it made a solution of our difficulties with our Northern fellow-countrymen almost impossible. The settlement has, I believe, a much better effect than even we had supposed. The fever had to be abated. Already I am told there is a distinct sign of normal conditions appearing. A more cordial political understanding will come more slowly but I am certain more surely by reason of the settlement [than anything else]. It is the fact that Sir James won easily so far as territory goes. I am better satisfied, however, with the result than I believe he could be. And the financial settlement is eminently satisfactory. It was a great tribute to British statesmanship. What I feared more than anything was an appeal to the League. Putting myself in the position of, say, France or Spain, or even one of the South American members, my inclination would be to say go home and solve your domestic difficulties - that the League had more than enough to do to solve international problems. [There was an attempt to place the problem on an international basis.] It was originally an international question. But I am afraid the five years that elapsed made it no longer a question to be solved between the British and ourselves: it developed into a difficulty for solution between Irishmen. It is a good job that the matter has ended without any disorder. It is a good matter to be rid of Article V. It may not find immediate satisfaction to the people of the North who had been looking for political emancipation for five years. But if the seeds of ultimate unity have been sown, they have a better soil to grow in and fructify and in that sense as well as others. It is the best possible arrangement for our Northern friends.

With kindest regards and best wishes for the New Year.  
[copy letter unsigned]