

S/11537

Personal.Talsarragh, Co. Donegal,
28th. April, 1923.

The C.M. General, Irish F. S. Army,

Dear Sir,

I am very much surprised and disappointed at receiving notice from your Department that I am to be allowed no compensation or weekly allowance in respect of ~~my son's~~ ^{the above} ~~service~~ ^{soldier} ~~of my son~~ ^{my son}, on the grounds, it is said, of "insufficient evidence in support of claim." I trust this is not the final word in the matter, as, if it is, I consider it very callous and unjust treatment.

When my son died, I took it as a matter of course that some decent and fair compensation would be allowed me for his loss. If he were in civil employment and had sustained fatal injuries through the negligence of a fellow-employee, the Company or Firm of employers would be legally bound to give reasonable compensation; and surely what a Government insists on in the case of Civilian employees it should practise itself, and thus set an example and a headline to its subjects. I know the financial embarrassments of the Free State Government and would be sorry to add to them by any unreasonable demand; but the desire and practice of economy, though so urgent and clamant, should not be allowed to supplant the principles of decency and justice.

If you kindly inform me what evidence is necessary to substantiate my claim, I shall be ready to supply it. All the neighbours and the troops in the local Barracks who knew my boy can vouch for the loss his death has been to me. They saw him early and late, week in and week out, diligently engaged at farm-work for me — work which now costs me a considerable sum to get done by hired labour. When he decided to join the Army, I did not grudge to let him go to help in restoring order and in supporting our threatened native Government. All the people of this district know that I have been a consistent supporter of the Treaty and of the Free State and that I have always acted, spoken, and written in behalf of both ever since the Plenipotentiaries returned with the signed Treaty from London. Opponents can and do now hurl the taunt at me that my loyalty does not seem to be very much

appreciated by the powers that be.

I have a family of ten to support, all the children being as yet only school pupils. I myself am the only wage-earner except my eldest girl who is serving her 2nd. year as Monitor in the local National School, a position which carries a salary of only £10 a year, a sum too little to keep her in books and boots. My own health is becoming very indifferent latterly; and if it should happen, through God's will, that I should be called away, I should leave a very helpless lot behind.

When my son's 6 months in the Reserves should be completed, he intended, if God had spared him, either to join the Civic Guards or compete for an appointment under the D. A. I. I. which he had been preparing himself for. Physically and educationally, he should have no difficulty in passing for either of these positions, and as for his character, his Officers in the Army and all others who ever knew him can testify as to that. As his father, I do not wish to say much on that head, and so will content myself by saying that he never, though in his 22nd. year, tasted spirituous liquor and that he was ever and always a good, obedient, industrious boy who never gave any trouble.

I trust that, in view of all the above facts, you will favourably reconsider my claim for a lump sum of compensation and let me know the result as soon as possible.

Another little matter. In the early days of February I forwarded, through Q.-M. Patrick O'Donnell of Ballyconnell Barracks here, a bill of costs for wake and funeral expenses which I expected to receive long since but of which I have heard nothing since. I saved the Authorities a considerable amount of expenses by bringing the remains home from Curragh Military Hospital without a soul accompanying me, and trust that the A/c. I forwarded will be paid without much further delay.

I am,
Sir,

Yours respectfully & expectantly,
A. J. Doherty.

P.S. The circumstances of my son's wounding and death having been already forwarded several times to H.-Q., I presume it is unnecessary to re-state them. A.J.D.