

June 12th 1939

Brian Hannigan, Esq.,  


Dear Brian,

The Anti-Partition League was six months old on May 29th 1939, and I availed of the Council meeting last Thursday to submit a Report covering the first half-year of its existence. The apathy of our people towards the aims of the League was the theme song of the Report and the general tone of my statement unavoidably pessimistic. The justification for this you will realise when I tell you the outstanding liabilities of the Organisation amounted to over £87 on Thursday and that the receipt of a further £50 on Saturday under the terms of our guarantee will afford only temporary relief. We have therefore been obliged to make a second appeal for subscriptions to members of the Council.

Our failure to make satisfactory progress is due to a number of factors and not least, in my opinion, the lack of direction at the head, that is by lack of instruction as to how each member of the Council in his or her own way and faced with his or her own handicaps can help the movement. You quite properly stressed at our early meetings in the Charing Cross Hotel and the North-umberland Rooms the extreme importance of the Chairman's work in an Organisation such as ours and only accepted the invitation to become Chairman with great reluctance. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that you protested strongly against your appointment which you described as a stop-gap measure.

You will thus, I imagine find yourself in general agreement with the following extract from my Report, which I consider only fair to bring to your attention, though I should add that the Council did not arrive at any decision on the matter.

"The fact is that no Organisation of this kind can be run for anytime without an active Chairman and we undoubtedly made a mistake in forcing Mr. Brian Hannigan to accept the chairmanship in face of his repeated protests. We want as Chairman an individual who can spare some time for activities on League work, who is capable of allocating tasks to individual members and who will see that the tasks so allocated are carried out. The present anomalous position of an Organisation dependent on outside financial assistance and still lacking a man at the helm must be brought to an end and I think that no one would more readily agree with this than the present Chairman, Mr. Brian Hannigan. In the absence of a Chairman and of a Standing Committee, for which I appealed in vain at the Council meeting on March 16th, the tendency is to regard the Hon. Secretary or the Organising Secretary as "the Uncle Tom Cobley end all". This is unfair to Mr. Barry-Walsh and myself. It is unfair to the League. I realise that the selection and appointment of a new chairman will take some time, but I hold that a continuance of the present position should not be allowed and I feel sure that Mr. Brian Hannigan will welcome release from a Gibleertian situation where the Chairman of a Council never takes the Chair at Council meetings" ~~though I should add that the Council did not arrive at any decision on the matter.~~

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Secretary,