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Sir.—All the questions raised by Dr. Mackey in his letter (February 11) have been fully answered by me in my Trial of Sir Roger Casement now available as a Penguin, to which I would refer your readers. I would merely comment on three points here, First, Dr. Mackey observes that I have no qualifications to judge a disputed handwriting. On the contrary, I have very considerable experience gained during the Second World War in the examination of suspect documents in connection with my censorship work.

Furthermore, I also have some knowledge of the fabrication of documents to deceive the enemy, as readers of my book The Quiet Canadian will recall. It is this knowledge which so strongly reinforces my view as to the genuineness of the Casement Diaries.

Secondly, the late Serjeant Sullivan was quite explicit on the matter of Casement's homosexual tendencies when I interviewed him in 1957. Mr. Frank MacDermot was present at our meeting and can vouch for it Serjeant Sullivan made a similar statement when he met Mr. Rene MacColl.

Of course, I am aware of Serjeant Sullivan's subsequent recantation in The Irish Times. At the time he made it, he was in failing health and (I suspect) subject to considerable pressures. I do not believe that he can be considered responsible for this later declaration.

Thirdly, I did not state in my review of Dr. Mackey's book that some of the entries in the diaries are "fantasies". What I wrote was that "the only real issue in dispute now is whether Casement was recording actual experiences or to some extent the fantasies of a disordered mind".

I did not come down on the side of the "fantasy" theory, although I think it is quite possible. This at least was the reaction of the late Lord Birkenhead who led the prosecution at Casement's trial.

I would certainly support a plea to have the diaries inspected by independent forensic experts, as Mr. Pol O Croidhcain suggests in his letter. I am sure Mr. Wilson would agree, if the request were officially made by the Irish Government.

I would also advocate the handing over of the diaries to the present heirs of the Casement estate, who are the owners of the copyright in his writings if I were satisfied that such a course accorded with their wishes. However, I happen to know that the heirs have no desire to possess the documents and are quite content for them to remain in the Public Record Office.

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