**TNA FO 2/368/280-283 separate**

**Casement to Marquess of Salisbury (Irish Brigade in South Africa, Arthur Lynch mention)**

**5 March 1900**

Norham Castle

5 March 1900

My Lord,

When at Lorenco Marques recently, I was told that attempts were being made at Pretoria, through a Transvaal detective of Irish birth, to seduce the prisoners of war there belonging to Irish regiments, to go to the front with the Boer Army.

There were, on 27 January by Transvaal Government lists, 1078 prisoners of war at Pretoria belonging to Irish Regiments; and of these 575 belonged to Irish Fusiliers, of whom the majority had been captured at Nicholson's Neck.

It was among the men of this Regiment, I was informed, the anti-British propaganda was being spread by the Transvaal agent - but, my informant added, without any result.

The story may or may not have been true; personally I incline to believe such attempts were very likely made; I am certain they must have been futile.

They tally with frequent allusions to “downtrodden Ireland” which appeared from time to time in the “Standard & Diggers News” in connection with the so called “Irish Brigade” with General Joubert's forces, a runlet of Johannesburg tapsters and cornerboys swelled by driblets of Continental ruffianism.

They accord with the fact that quite recently the very jail in Pretoria was emptied of some of its prisoners (50 was the number published in the Transvaal papers) who had been asked to go to the front and had accepted liberty on this condition.

But above all, it seems to me the enclosed extract from the “Standard & Diggers News” of February 16th, entitled an Appeal to Australians, bears out the truth of the reported abortive attempt upon the loyalty of the Irish soldiers.

The Mr. Lynch making it, is I think, the correspondent of the “Morning Leader” who sallied out of beleaguered Ladysmith in search of news, and was captured by the Boers and sent to Pretoria.

About the same date a small body of Australians numbering I think sixteen were made prisoners in one of the numerous engagements around Colesberg.

Mr. Lynch's dishonest appeal is evidently addressed, in the first instance, to these men, but over their heads it was no doubt aimed at the large and growing bodies of colonial troops appearing in South Africa.

I may be wrong in believing the Arthur Lynch of the document transmitted to be one and same person with the captured correspondent of the “Morning Leader”, but I do not think I am wrong in believing that the document in question is only another proof of the methods of those in power at Pretoria to leave no weapon untried, whether commandeering or cajolery to induce men loyal to their Queen to be false to their allegiance to be false to themselves, and to dishonour their oaths on behalf of a cause which claims to be, above all else, the soul of simple loyalty to a high ideal of truth and independence.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

Roger Casement

The Most Honourable The Marquess of Salisbury etc etc Foreign Office