**Ernley Blackwell memorandum to Cabinet**

**15 July 1916**

**TNA HO 144/1636/311643/53**

J. No. 20546

The exercise of the Prerogative on the ground of insanity.

Casement's diaries and his ledger entries covering many pages of closely typed matter show that he has for years been addicted to the grossest sodomitical practices.

Of late years he seems to have completed the full circle of sexual degeneracy and from a pervert has become an invert ‑ a 'woman' or pathic who derives his satisfaction from attracting men and inducing them to use him. The point is worth noting for the Attorney General had given Sir E. Grey the impression that Casement's own account of the frequency of his performances was incredible and of itself suggested that he was labouring under hallucination in this respect. I think that this idea may be dismissed. I believe the diaries are a faithful and accurate record of his acts, thoughts and feelings just as they occurred and presented themselves to him.

In many cases of murder particularly those of a sexual character it would be impossible to disregard entirely such evidence as these diaries afford of abnormality and disordered judgment. Often it would be easy to trace at least an indirect connection between an obsession of this kind and the actual crime. In this case I can trace none. No one who has read Casement's report to the Foreign Office on the Putumayo atrocities (at a time when his sexual offences were of daily occurrence), his speech from the Dock in arrest of judgment, his private letters to his friends, and the long closely reasoned and able comment upon the trial and the Lord Chief Justice's charge to the Jury (prepared with a view to his Appeal) could doubt for a moment that intellectually at any

rate Casement is very far removed from anything that could

properly be described as insanity.

His excesses may have warped his judgment and in themselves they are of course evidence of disordered sexual instincts but they have not in my opinion any relevance in consideration of his crime such as drunkenness, sexual excesses, jealousy, revenge, provocation etc., have in the case of crimes of violence.

He is able to take a detached and sane view of these excesses now. He describes them as his 'follies' in writing to a Priest and asks him 'to pray for him most of all in that regard and that any evil that may have come from his folly and imprudence may not live long'.

I do not believe that any tribunal of alienists who might be appointed to inquire into Casement's mental condition would be able on the strength of these diaries and certainly not upon any other ground to certify him insane or even to express an opinion as to his enfeebled mental condition or impaired judgment which having regard to the nature of his crime would afford a legitimate excuse for the exercise of the Prerogative of Mercy.

SEB 15.7 .16