

*[Dublin Castle Statement, date-stamped 9 JUL1921, coded 1029.
Typos etc. reproduced here.]*

Report on the Sinn Fein Outrage at COOLACREASE HO.
Nr. CADAMSTOWN

COOLACREASE HO. is owned by a farmer named Pearson, a Protestant and a Loyalist.

For some time past the family has received warnings from SinnFeiners. The family consists of PEARSON, his wife, 4 sons, 3 daughters, and, in addition, there were two cousins living in the house.

At about 16.30 on 30.6.21, a party of between 30 and 40 armed men arrived, some of them masked, bringing with them the two elder sons of PEARSON, whom they had found in a hayfield. They locked the whole family in a room and then proceeded to loot the house and the outbuildings. Whilst this was going on, Mrs. PEARSON fainted. When the daughter asked for water to bring her round, it was refused. Later, the Sinn Feiners brought some muddy water for her. Plenty of clean water was obtainable.

The house was then fired and the family allowed out. They were placed on a little hill just outside the back of the house. The two eldest sons were then taken, and in full view of the rest of the family were put up against a wall and shot, meanwhile the Sinn Feiners played ragtime music, on the piano and one of the sons' violins.

The shooting was carried out so that both men should die in agony, both being hit in the stomach and thighs. As soon as the shooting was finished, the SinnFeiners beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind them a blazing house, and a group of broken-hearted women looking after two dying men. One of them died in about four hours. The other lived for 12 hours and died in the hospital at BIRR barracks. The women were not even allowed to keep any spare clothing at all, all of it being burned in the house.

One of the daughters succeeded in getting the news to BIRR, and troops and police from BIRR and TULLAMORE arrived on the scene with all possible speed.

The father and one son were away in MOUNTMELLICK at the time, and steps have been taken to warn and protect them.

One of the cousins, a man, was chased by the raiders and fired at but it is not yet known whether he escaped or not.

The rest of the family was transported to BIRR, where the D.I. is making arrangements for their housing and safety.

The matter was left in the hands of BIRR detachment 1st R.S.F., and the BIRR Poluce, who are doing all in their power to trace the perpetrators of the crime.