

STATEMENT IN DEFENCE OF THE TREATY

**From Michael Collins' Own Story by the American Journalist
Hayden Talbot, originally published in 1923. The following
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to a "Proclamation by the President of the Irish Republic",
Éamon De Valera.**

It is likely that the Treaty may be beaten but that does not in any way indicate that I am without hope. Ireland is not going to be deprived of her right to live her life in her own way no matter who tries to deny or to defer that right. The Irish people have already decided that the Treaty meets with their approval as being the practical course to adopt at the present time. The Treaty has been signed by England, and surely it cannot be advanced that England is going to keep a treaty that she has not signed but is going to break a treaty that she has signed. This Treaty does give us a chance and does give Ireland a chance to work out its own future on something like fair terms. If the Treaty is beaten I have already stated that I as one of the plenipotentiaries am absolved from further responsibility. The Treaty is then dead, and those who have killed it have, of course, the position in their hands to follow their policy, and their policy is unknown to me. If the opposition throws the Treaty away they ought first to have the alternative Treaty duly signed to put against it. So far as I am aware there is not an alternative Treaty. A document has been produced as an amendment, but before that can be honestly put as a real amendment the president ought to secure the signatures of the English delegates and secure ratification of the new document by the English Parliament. Then it would be a Treaty. This course will make the new document equal to the Treaty, and even when the new document is signed and ratified by the English I am certain that plain people will scarcely see any material difference between it and the Treaty. One important thing must not be forgotten. If we offer this new document as our proposal for final settlement it commits us morally to finality. It puts a definite boundary to the march of our

nation, and that must not be done, and I as one Irishman and a public representative of this country cannot agree to that.

MICEAL O'COILEAIN.