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“RUTHLESS WARFARE.”

[The following article by a leading Volunteer at present in prison emphasises essential points in connection with the Conscription threat].

THE definite military preparations for resisting Conscription are being well looked after; but there must always remain something to be done in the matter of bringing public opinion up to the right pitch of desperate determination and keeping it there. It would be desirable, for instance, to eliminate all talk and all thought of passive resistance. Because passive resistance means in effect no resistance at all. And talk of passive resistance is simply an invitation to the Government to come on. To anyone who will consider the matter for a moment so much must be evident. If in any particular area there were to be nothing but passive resistance, it would mean that there, at any rate, the Government could go on without having to face any casualty list of killed and wounded. It would mean, moreover, that no reinforcements of troops would be required from England or Flanders, that in fact the police, having no armed opposition to fear would, without military assistance, be able in the course of a few weeks to get all the men required. Thus the Government, without any considerable delay, without having lost a man, without any diversion of large forces or any expenditure of ammunition would have laid their hands on all the men they wanted.

Nothing would remain to be done but to reduce to submission as many as possible of the captives. We know that the men who were taken from Frongoch, and who afterwards put up a passive resistance fight had a devilish tough experience. But we may be certain that what they endured would be only a picnic in comparison with the treatment that would be meted out in case of passive resistance *en masse* by Irish conscripts. The brutality would be unbounded, and there is little doubt that many would be sent to France and the firing squad would be brought frequently into requisition.

If a man is taken alive after doing his best in

the fight; then he may do what he can in the way of passive resistance; but a policy of passive resistance alone would mean that the Government without loss and with comparatively little trouble would be able to seize practically all the men they chose up to the limits of the population. Our active military resistance is the only thing that will tell, and any plans or theories or doubts tending to distract the minds of the people from the policy of fierce and ruthless fighting ought to be severely discouraged.

Once the struggle begins we should realise that it is more and worse than war. For war is the combat of one armed force with another. A conscription campaign would be an unprovoked onslaught by an army upon a civilian population, which would be given no choice but between murder on the spot and massacre after an interval. If England decides on this atrocity, then we, on our part, must decide that in our resistance we shall acknowledge no limit and no scruple. We must recognise that anyone, civilian or soldier, who assists directly or by connivance in this crime against us, merits no more consideration than a wild beast and should be killed without mercy or hesitation as opportunity offers. To prevent our people being divided, to prevent men being seduced by certain exemption if they will surrender, or promises of home service duty if they will attest or by similar treacherous devices of the enemy, we must from the first insist upon a clean cut amongst the population of Ireland. Any man who knowingly and willingly does anything to facilitate the working of the machinery of conscription, must be dealt with exactly as if he were an enemy soldier. Thus the man who serves on an exemption tribunal, the doctor who treats soldiers or examines conscripts, the man who voluntarily surrenders when called for, the man who in any shape or form applies for exemption, the man who drives a police-car or assists in the transport of army supplies, all these having assisted the enemy must be shot or otherwise destroyed with the

least possible delay. In short, we must show that it is not healthy to be against us, and that those who are not going to be against us must be with us. By thus producing the clean-cut and insisting that every man who stands for Ireland shall do his bit, we shall induce Irishmen in Great Britain to realise that when the tussle is on, their duty is not, certainly, to continue quietly making munitions, that in fact their only business with munitions is to send them crashing to the skies.

If we fight with utter ruthlessness and ferocity and fling the full strength of our people everywhere against the enemy, it is not improbable that he will recoil and seek to return to the *status quo*. On the other hand, he may repay our ruthlessness with increased barbarity, and in that case our losses will be greater than they might have been otherwise. But those losses will represent time rather than life. If more men die in Ireland at first than fewer will die later in the barrack squares and prisons and asylums of England, and on the shameful fields of France and Flanders.

In the long run I do not think that our loss of life will be any greater if we fight with fierceness and recklessness, and we certainly shall have gained something.

We shall have taught the tyrant Empires a lesson and have struck the most effective blow struck for the freedom of small nations in this war. We shall have made a fight for liberty, probably destined to be as memorable and as fruitful as that on the fields of Marathon which saved Greece and saved Europe.

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

ORGANISATION NOTES.—THE COMPANY (continued).—Section Commanders—In a Company at full strength there are six Section Commanders, viz. : the Company Adjutant, the Company Quartermaster and the Commanders of the four Sections.

Company Adjutant—Is responsible to the Captain. In a general way he may be regarded as performing the clerical or secretarial work of the Company. He must keep a register of the Company members, with a detailed record of their attendances at drills and parades. This record of attendances should not merely be the number of men present, but must show the exact attendance of each individual man. The manner of keeping this record should be :— Each Section Commander should call the roll of his own Section and report to the Adjutant, marking specially the late comers and the absentees. In addition the Adjutant must attend the

initial training of recruits, and in due course allot these recruits to their suitable sections.

Company Quartermaster—Likewise responsible to the Captain. His duty is to collect the weekly subscriptions of the members. He shall enter each amount separately against the member's name, and report the total each week to the Captain. He must keep a record of all Company stores, and must see that these are at all times in safe keeping and in good condition. He is responsible for the supply and *manufacture* of arms in the Company and for the general military equipment of its members.

From the Organisation point of view it is not necessary to deal with the duties of the Commanders of the four Sections, as these are almost entirely ones of military routine determined and decided by the particular class of military work being done for the time being.

Company Council—Composed of the Captain, who presides, the First and Second Lieutenants and the Company Adjutant and Quartermaster. This body should meet weekly. At it the Captain should receive reports from his Lieutenants on the work done during the week. The Adjutant should report on the attendance, and the Quartermaster should report the amount of subscriptions collected and the state of the equipment of the Company. The work of the coming week should be outlined and discussed. Although this Council has no authority over matters affecting the discipline and command of the Company, for which the Captain is solely responsible, it will be found that valuable hints and assistance will be given by Junior Officers and Section Commanders. Further, very satisfactory results will be achieved from the constant close association of the Officers and Section Commanders who are conducting the Company. Harmonious working and unity of action are sure to be secured.

NOTES ON TRAINING—Musketry—As a foul rifle will give bad results, even in the hands of a first-class shot, cleanliness is the most essential condition, both for the accuracy and life of a rifle. To attain this object each recruit must provide himself with a pull through. A length of cord 3 feet, with a brass weight at one end, and 3 loops at the other, the first loop, that nearest the weight, for wire gauze, the second for the flannellette, and the third for withdrawing in case of a jamb.

The wire gauze, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, is rolled lengthways, thus 2 and placed in the first loop, taking care that no jagged ends are exposed, that it is clean and well oiled, so as to avoid damage to the bore.

The cleaning flannelette, 4 inches by 2 inches, is usually placed lengthways in the second loop, and renewed as often as it gets soiled.

The oiling flannel is slightly reduced, 4in. by 1½in., the oil being thoroughly worked in with the fingers, so that the bore will be thoroughly oiled from breech to muzzle, to prevent the oil being squeezed out in the breech and getting into the action.

To clean the rifle, first remove the bolt, taking care to put it in a safe and clean place, then placing the muzzle of the rifle on the toe of the boot, drop the weight from breech to muzzle; when the wire gauze or flannelette enters the breech, grasp the other end firmly in the right hand, holding the muzzle in the left and taking care that the cord does not rub against the muzzle, draw the cord through in **one** steady pull, repeat till the bore is clean, then wipe out with clean patch, oil, and put away.

There are two kinds of fouling—external, which consists of a deposit remaining on the surface of the bore after firing, which can usually be removed with the flannelette patch only. Internal, is caused by the same deposit entering the pores of the metal, and takes daily cleaning with the wire gauze, which must not be used oftener than **4 times** at each cleaning, the bore being cleaned and oiled daily till all fouling disappears.

Internal fouling is also removed by pouring about a quart of boiling water and soda through the bore three or four times from breech to muzzle, using a funnel to prevent the water getting into the action, then thoroughly drying with a clean patch, oil and put aside, having released all springs.

ENGINEERING NOTES.—Railway Demolition.

—As I have already stated, Military Engineering may be classified generally under two heads, viz., Demolition and Construction, and it is intended in these Notes to deal first with the former, which will be sub-divided into:

- Demolition—1. Without the use of explosives.
2. By means of explosives.

Under this scheme, therefore, we take, to-day, Demolition of Railways without the use of explosives.

The first matter to be considered is the selection of the most suitable point of the railway, from the point of view of doing the most damage, and rendering repair difficult. The ideal point is one which fulfills the following conditions:—

1. It should be a short, sharp curve.
2. On a bridge crossing a river, lake or canal.

3. The line should be single track.

4. As far as possible from a highway.

It is possible to find a spot which fulfills *all* these conditions, but in Ireland there are not many bridges built to a curve. The first condition is the most important. A curved portion of the road *must* be selected in preference to a straight portion, carried by a bridge (unless the bridge be destroyed, which cannot easily be done without explosives).

The object of selecting a curve in preference to a straight portion of the road is to fulfil the second object we have in view, viz., to render repair more difficult. If a straight portion were cut, and if the enemy got the information, it would be a simple matter to repair it, as it would only be necessary to bring a train up to the destroyed portion, take up the rails behind the train, and lay them down ahead. This obviously cannot be done in the case of a curve, as it would be necessary to bend a rail to the proper degree to fit the destroyed portion.

The object of selecting a spot where there is only one track is obvious, and the point should be as far as possible from a highway, because troops with heavy guns, etc., would be impeded by the necessity of crossing fields, ditches, etc. The object of selecting a spot near a river is, that the spikes, chairs, etc., can be cast into the river, and also the sleepers, care being taken to see that they get to the centre of the river and are thus carried away.

The method and tools to be used in carrying out this work will depend upon the class of rail used by the railway.

There are two kinds of rail employed.

1. The bull-headed, or reversible rail, which is the same on top and bottom, and is held in castings, called "chairs," spiked to the sleepers.
2. The flanged rail, which has a flange on the bottom, which is spiked down to the sleepers direct.

I believe I am right in stating that the only railway which used the flanged rail on practically its entire system is the Midland Railway, but this is a question on which Engineer Officers must inform themselves immediately.

The cutting of a line laid with reversible rails is as follows. It will be found that each rail length is fastened to its neighbour by means of two iron plates (called "fish plates") one on each side of the rail, and four bolts pass through holes in these fish plates and through the "web" of the rail. The bolts are held by nuts.

On each sleeper, between the two ends of the rail, will be found the iron casting, or "chair," referred to above, and the rail is held fast in the "chair" by means of a wooden wedge, slightly

tapered. The *outer rail* of each curve must always be first removed. One man armed with a spanner, having a handle two feet long, will unscrew the bolts at each end of the rail, and at the same time, two others will be driving out the wedges in the chairs, care being taken to ensure that they are being driven in the proper direction, as they are only slightly tapered. When all the wedges are out and the fish plates removed, the rail can be lifted out of the chairs which are spiked down to the sleepers. These latter are to be dug up out of the ballast, and either thrown into the river or set on fire. They should burn easily, being creosoted. The fish-plates and spikes are on no account to be left lying near the spot. The rails are to be dealt with in one of the following ways:—

1. The most effective method, though not always feasible, is to heat in a portable furnace and twist the rail.
2. It should be thrown into river—as far away as possible from the scene of operations.
3. It should be buried as far away as possible from the spot.

(The Notes on Equipment are held over).

GENERAL NOTES.

It is most important that **Company Commanders shall read the issues of "An tOglach" to their companies slowly and carefully, explaining and amplifying the various points dealt with, and going fully into details. With a view to securing this, Battalion Councils are directed to go over each number immediately it is issued and discuss the various points, so that each officer may have clear ideas on the subject.**

Mr. Shortt, the Englishman appointed by the enemy Government as "Chief Secretary for Ireland," recently summoned the editors of the Dublin daily newspapers to a conference with him. He informed them that he was fully aware that the savage sentences and other coercive measures carried out against the Irish Republicans were indefensible in law or justice, but that they were necessary in order to "crush Sinn Féin." He realised, he said, that this could not be effectively done without the "tacit approval" of the editors. One of the editors appealed to replied, with unusual spirit, that such proceedings would not receive his "tacit approval," and the paper he edits has not lent itself to the discreditable methods of falsehood,

silence and suppression with which the other papers are helping Mr. Shortt to "crush Sinn Féin."

At the present time, when the enemy and his Irish allies are making desperate efforts by threats, lies, cajollery, and economic pressure to induce Irishmen to act as traitors to their country by joining the English Army, it is well that some facts with regard to that Army should be made as widely known as possible. It was a fact before the war that the British Army was the most immoral and disease-ridden Army in Europe. Even in these days of Conscriptioin the same seems to be true.

The *London Daily Mail* in a recent editorial says:—"A year and a-half ago, when the new legislation dealing with the notifications and treatment of venereal diseases was being discussed, it was revealed that the casualties from this cause alone in our own Army had reached the appalling total of a quarter of a million" (!). According to the *Daily Mail* things have since got worse.

A Volunteer dispatch rider in Carlow, while carrying dispatches recently, noticed two policemen cycling after him. Realising the danger of their attempting to seize him and capture his dispatches, he decided to take the offence himself and, on reaching a lonely spot, he "held them up" with his revolver, compelled them to dismount, took the valves out of their bicycles and rode away in triumph. This fine sample of Volunteer efficiency should not be lost upon his fellow-soldiers.

We again remind Volunteer officers and men to take particular note of Volunteer activities, and give special attention to those who are making themselves peculiarly obnoxious to our troops. These men will be duly dealt with.

The Bulgarian surrender was the action of the small group at the head of things who dreaded the rise of Republicanism in Bulgaria, and with that want of patriotism so characteristic of privileged classes and Ascendancies in every country, conspired with the enemy to save their position. It is another example of how the cause of Republicanism and democracy is growing in every land in Europe and promises to be the main issue in determining the end of the war. Ireland is well in the world movement this time at all events.