

AN TÓISIAC

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THE FUTURE.

It is now clear that the war is drawing to a close; and England's threatened design to "conscript" Ireland, though not definitely dropped, has been postponed. It should not be imagined, however, even if the Conscription danger were finally past, which is far from being the case, that that altered state of affairs would involve any relaxation of tension on the part of the Army of Ireland. Rather there never was a moment since Easter Week, 1916, when it was more absolutely essential and imperative that Irish Volunteers should concentrate upon their work and bring their military efficiency up to the highest pitch.

The time between now and the Peace Conference is fraught with possibilities bearing on the fate of Ireland; and Ireland's only reliable guarantee against wrong, against either fraud or violence, is her own strength of mind and body embodied in the armed young men of Ireland. The freedom of Ireland depends in the long run not upon the play of politics, nor international dealings, but upon the will of the Irish people to be free and maintain their freedom. That determination is but a weak one, if they are not prepared to shed their blood in the enforcement of it.

A brilliant Irishman has said: "Nothing is ever done in this world unless men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done." This statement embodies a profound truth. The justice of our cause, the nobility of our ideals were not less strong in the early days of the war. But it was Easter Week, 1916, which, by proving to the world that we were prepared to kill and be killed for those principles, rallied the people of Ireland behind us, and placed the nation in the strong position with which she faces the world at the dawning of peace to-day.

This must not be forgotten. Our leader Commandant De Valera, during the Clare election declared the organisation, strengthening and arming of the Irish Volunteers to be the first plank of the Irish National platform. The most effective argument to bring before a Peace Conference, he pointed out, was that it was impossible to settle the peace of the world where Ireland was ignored; that there would be no peace in Ireland while England held our country.

The Irish Volunteers are the keynote of the situation. They are the reality, the grim reality that England cannot get rid of. They represent in concrete form the organised expression of the determination of the Irish nation to be free. They are the facts that cannot be got rid of by the most cunning of politicians or the most ingenious of statesmen. Beside them and their magnificent example of self-reliance and courage, all resorts to political expediencies sink into insignificance. Without the Volunteers no other National movement would be safe. Each individual Volunteer should realise his responsibility, the importance of his work to the future of Ireland, and should strain every nerve to ensure his efficiency. We do not know whether the Conscription danger is over or not yet; but whether this danger has to be faced or not, the Volunteers may be put to the proof in other ways between this and the Peace Conference; and it may be their lot, once again, to powerfully affect the future of Ireland.

It is possible that a changed situation may necessitate changed methods on the part of the Army of Ireland before very long. In any case let Volunteers leave no stone unturned in the effort to arm and equip themselves thoroughly and be prepared for all contingencies. The future of Ireland depends on them, and any slackening of tension or weakening of interest and efficiency at the present time might prove fatal.

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Óglaigh
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DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

EQUIPMENT—We will take the third head this time, i.e. Shelter and Clothing. Circumstances vary so much that it is impossible to make hard and fast rules. The equipment required for the shelter of troops may be judged from the following general hints:—

Choose if possible a building with big windows, standing in an unexposed position in dry and well-drained surroundings. Avoid hollow ground. Proximity of a good water supply is essential; the longer the time spent in one place the greater is the importance of this observation. Make sure that the roof is sound; plenty of ventilation is necessary. All doors and windows should be open during the day; if they are barricaded, rain-proof openings should be made in the roof. Plenty of air must be allowed at night. Give as good a bed as possible to each man. Clean straw or bracken with canvas over it gives comfort. Hay holds damp; even green bracken is better. In emergency a dry bare wooden floor for sleeping on should not be grumbled at. Two blankets per man are enough. They must be clean. Better go cold once or twice than suffer from vermin out of dirty blankets. Wash floors frequently, especially when many are together. Sometimes light a fire in the daytime in the sleeping room if the windows are small, to remove damp. If there is no fireplace light the fire on a large flat stone or piece of sheet iron supported by stones off the floor. Do not crowd men together, even to be warm, in cold weather. Provide a good closet of some kind—either water or earth. See that it is private and very clean, otherwise men may not use it and any irregularity in this respect is most dangerous. Provide also some accommodation for night use.

Plenty of water should be available, and if the source is at a distance regular supplies should be kept up. Slovenliness in this respect will not do. Have sufficient buckets, etc., to draw water, and remove dirty water to proper shore. All dust and solid refuse should be burnt. In standing camps a "destructor" will be found useful. This is made like a little lime-kiln, with holes in the side wall to admit air. Do not be short of fuel and the means of carrying it. Turf, wood, coal, coke, gas and electricity should be noted. Give as much light as you can up to "lights out." Note candles, oil lamps and flares, gas and electricity. Supply plenty of seating accommodation and tables. All buildings should be swept daily and washed at reasonable periods. Use disinfectants and soap freely. Fresh air and sunlight help well. Walls should be white-

washed. To sum up, make the men as comfortable as possible without making pets of them. (For further simple notes see "Field Service Pocket Book," pp. 43-54, also Kinsman's "Tactical Notes," pp. 225-237).

As far as clothes are concerned all should be as strong as possible. Wool is preferable to cotton or linen. Use coloured stuff, not white. We do not get much choice in suits, but let them be comfortable. Flannel shirts are best; one spare one should be carried. Thick socks are good; thin ones allow blisters and other bad things to form on the feet very quickly. Wool should be carried to mend socks. If socks get hopelessly worn out use a strip of flannel wound round the foot. Half-a-dozen large coloured handkerchiefs should be carried. Use one as a muffler instead of collar and tie. Use flannels in winter. Change underclothes once a week. A ground sheet and an overcoat must be regarded as essential. Carry needles and thread and pieces of cloth and leather and buttons. A hat is better than a cap. A belt turns in very handy, even though suspenders may be used.

The most important item is a good strong pair of boots. They should be roomy. If they are too big extra socks will make up any deficiency, but if you have boots which are too small you have no remedy. A reasonable number of headed nails save sole leather and give security to foot-hold. Uppers should be fairly soft. Bought leather laces are not reliable. Oil boots with sweet oil or castor oil. Do not use machine oil. Leather or cloth leggings, though not essential, are a great protection; if you ride, protection of the knees from rain is important. For this use a piece of oil-skin, doubled, otherwise the constant rubbing lets in the wet.

ENGINEERING NOTES.—Railway Demolition. In the last issue of AN TÓGLACH I set out in detail the method of cutting a railway which is laid with "bull-headed" or reversible rails. In the case of the flanged rail—such as is laid on the Midland Railway—the method of unfastening each end of the rail is identical with that of the reversible variety; but the flanged rail is held to the sleepers by means of spikes driven into same—so that instead of having to remove wedges, it will only be necessary to raise the spikes about three inches.

This can easily be done by crowbars which have the end forked and slightly turned up, so that the two teeth of the fork will fit under the head of the spike. The bar should be at least five feet long to enable three men to work with it at once.

In addition to the cutting of the line, if possible, water tanks should be destroyed, also signals, points, and crossings. The question of running-sheds, signal cabins, and railway stations will be dealt with separately.

The following points are to be carefully noted:—

1. It is waste of time to lift a rail at a straight portion of the railway.

2. At least four lengths of rail are to be lifted, and if a whole curve could be destroyed it is to be done.

3. It is waste of time to cut a line and leave the rails, spikes, etc., lying around. The rails are to be dealt with in one of the ways already indicated.

The sleepers, being creosoted, will burn easily, and must be so disposed of. The bolts, spikes, and light material may be concealed as far as possible from the spot selected. The tools required are:—

1. Nor reversible roils—4 spanners, handles being at least 2½ feet long; 2 sledge hammers, 2 crowbars, 1 saws (cross cut if possible).

2. For flanged rail—4 spanners, as above; 1 sledge hammer, 4 crowbars with forked end, 1 cross-cut saw.

Next week I will continue the the Notes so far as they deal with demolition of railways without explosives. Meanwhile Officers shall thoroughly instruct their Companies and should inspect the railway with a view to visualising the rail-fastenings, etc., which these Notes have endeavoured to describe. Sketches should be made on the spot, and the sketches used in the lectures to Engineering Company.

NOTES OF TRAINING.—Scouting—Quickness of eye is greatly a matter of training and practice. It is the ability to see the object the object the moment it is within possibility of being seen. A good scout's eyes should constantly be glancing from point to point far and near, at the same time seeing everything and remembering what he sees, not merely looking at it and seeing nothing. In the country it is easy to see moving objects quickly, but one who stands still or is the same colour as the ground around him is very hard to see to the unpractised eye. Common sense and a little reflection will often suggest the most likely place to look for him. When you see a distant head bob up and down behind shelter or some other suspicious sign, do not stop and look at it, but go on with your occupation as though you had seen nothing. Be sure of what you see before reporting. Do not mistake cattle for horses, carts for artillery, etc. When looking for distant enemy, think where he would be likely to come, say, over a

bridge, or a bit of exposed road, etc. By watching such places as these you can often see an enemy four or five miles away without the aid of glasses. In approaching a place such as a house or farm, where you think an enemy may be in wait for you, act as if you saw something of him. For instance, stop suddenly, point him out to your companions. If he is there he will probably show himself or fire a shot or two at you, and so disclose his presence. Practise walking out in the country at night, listen to the sounds, find out their meanings, practise using your eyes to see things near and far. Walk without making a row like a bear in the thickets. Learn to keep yourself hidden and to see without being seen.

GENERAL NOTES.

Ní raibh éin tráith riamh ann ó cheud-chuir-eadh na h-Ogláigh ar bun go raibh an oiread son gadh leo agus atá fé láthair. Is iad na h-Ogláigh a bhainfidh amac saoirse na h-Eireann le cónamh Dé. Deálluigheann an secul go bhfuil deireadh an chogaidh ag druidim linn. Bhí na h-Ogláigh ann go treun, ag cosaint na h-Eireann le linn an cogaidh. Bídis ollamh san bhearnain bhaoghail i ndeireadh na treimhs. Ni chun cosc a chur leis an bPresáí do cureadh ar bun iad ach chun saoirse na h-Eireann do chur i n-áirithe do mhuintir na h-Eireann. Cuimhnighdís air sin.

The attitude adopted by the American President in his dealings with Germany and Austria is causing intense irritation and uneasiness to English politicians and the English people. He has pointedly ignored England and France, and all his replies to the German and Austrian peace offers have been issued without even a pretence of consulting the Allied Governments. The fact is that President Wilson's peace terms are far more unpalatable to some of the Allies than to Germany. One of his "fourteen points"—"the freedom of the seas"—means simply the beginning of the end for British Imperialism. England's Empire was built and maintained upon her naval supremacy. Her claim to dominate the sea-ways of the world was the basis of her usurpations, oppressions and spoliations. America, the only victor in this war, is determined that this state of affairs shall end, and England shall no longer claim the right to be "mistress of the seas". Furthermore, the question of Ireland's independence is closely wrapped up in the ensuring of the freedom of the seas. It was England's control of Ireland that enabled her to dominate the Atlantic.

England comes out of this war shattered in power and prestige, with her naval supremacy vanished for ever, her Empire facing the prospect of gradual dissolution, and the probability of labour troubles and social and industrial problems of the most serious kind keeping her hands full for a generation to come.

Large bodies of military, fully armed and equipped for active service, occupied many public buildings and various points of importance in Dublin on the night of Tuesday, 15th October. Furthermore, at 11.30 p.m. on the night in question the staffs of most of the principal telegraph offices throughout Ireland were ordered to go on duty in their offices and hold themselves in readiness. These military activities were in pursuance of orders previously given, as it had been arranged by the English Government and the military authorities that the Order to enforce conscription in Ireland should be laid on the floor of the House of Commons on that day—the day of the re-assembling of the British Parliament. It was felt, and rightly felt, that the Irish Volunteers would accept the publication of this Order as a formal declaration of war and act accordingly, and the military preparations were taken with a view to this. The plot to initiate a prolonged and ruthless warfare in Ireland in the hope of exterminating the most vigorous elements of the population and rendering Ireland impotent was deliberately planned, and there was no change in the English Government's intentions up to the Cabinet meeting on the Monday. However, the unexpected arrival of the German Peace Note and President Wilson's unexpected reply to it, creating an entirely new situation, disturbed the designs of the plotters, and Mr. Shortt, when questioned about conscription on the Tuesday, had "nothing to say".

The sinking of the "Leinster" in the Irish Sea by a German submarine has been made the occasion of violent diatribes against Germany by England's tools in Ireland. Their denunciations should rather be addressed against the English Government, which insist on using passenger ships for carrying troops, or rather troop ships for carrying passengers. The City of Dublin Steampacket Company have for a long time been under orders from the English Government to reserve places on board for 500 soldiers at each sailing. Frequently large numbers of civilians have been turned away from the boats to make room for soldiers. The spectacle of English soldiers sheltering behind

women and children is a revolting picture. The Press Censor has prevented the publication anywhere of the fact that there were soldiers on board the "Leinster". As a matter of fact there were nearly 600 soldiers and only a little more than a hundred civilian passengers.

Two American naval officers who were on board the "Leinster" at the time of the accident, told a number of people in Dublin that the English soldiers behaved with incredible cowardice and brutality when the ship was struck by the torpedo, trampling down women and children in the rush for the boats. In confirmation of this it may be mentioned that one of the rescued lady passengers was badly bruised as the result of blows struck at her by a soldier; and the body of one of the drowned women had a bullet wound in it. The American officers on the other hand paid a tribute to the fine behaviour of the crew—all without exception Irishmen or Welshmen.

According to the most reliable estimates based on official figures, the Allies' casualties since they started the offensive average fifty thousand a day; which means, if the offensive is kept up on the same terms continuously an average loss of 1½ millions a month! A London newspaper states that in military circles in London the view is taken that the German move for peace is *due to political rather than military considerations*. It declares that it is not the situation on her home front that is causing her anxiety. "The German army has more than 200 Divisions intact (close on 3,000,000 men), and if they were able to retire to the line running from Antwerp, in front of Brussels, to Namur, and so to the Meuse, they might maintain the struggle for many months, if the people were determined to continue." It should be remembered that the German offer to evacuate Belgium and France is nothing new. It constituted a feature of her former peace offer of twelve months ago.

The rise of democracy and republicanism on both sides seems to be the determining factor that is forcing the belligerents on both sides to peace; and the ruler most definitely committed to the principles of democracy and self-determination seems destined to have the greatest voice in a peace settlement. A good omen for Irish Republicans.

Tugaidh aire mhaith d'bhur ngunnaí, a bhuaichillí. Ní fios cathoin a bheidh gádh leó arís. Ná bódh éin mheirg ortha.

