

AN TÓZSLÁC

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GET ON WITH THE WORK.

ALTHOUGH the war is now unmistakably nearing its close, the English Government has not yet definitely renounced its threat to conscript Irishmen for the English Army. The intense anxiety of the enemy to initiate a campaign of extermination against the Irish people is easily understood. He dreads Ireland's appearance at the table of the Peace Conference, and, daunted by the spectacle of national unity and determination presented by the Irish people in claiming their freedom, he longs for an excuse to lay Ireland prostrate, bleeding and helpless at his feet, before the day of reckoning arrives. His superior numbers and armaments and his military occupation of most of the important strongholds in Ireland encourage him to cherish schemes of slaughter; but he is even more of a coward than a bully. He realises that between him and the accomplishment of his amiable schemes the way is barred by the rifles of the Irish Volunteers.

After long hesitation, "letting I dare not wait upon I would", the English Government had determined to take the plunge. All preparations had been made for the immediate enforcement of Conscription in Ireland on the re-assembly of the British Parliament, when at the very last moment the new situation created by President Wilson's reply to Germany's peace note gave the English Cabinet a fresh attack of "cold feet". Police reports were submitted supplying estimates as to the number of armed Volunteers in Ireland; and the figures given startled the Cabinet. Reports from those able to judge stated that they were satisfied the Volunteers would resist Conscription to the death. The Cabinet were thus faced with the danger of creating a state of affairs which would establish Ireland in the eyes of the world as a belligerent at the close of the war. Faced by this contingency, the English Cabinet were unable to decide on so dangerous a policy, and the matter was "postponed".

It is probable that the same considerations will continue to carry weight with the English

Cabinet, despite the efforts of the military leaders to commit them to a fresh campaign against Ireland. In the meanwhile it is worthy of note that the military leaders are themselves rather nervous about the Irish Volunteers. Twice during the past month they have given credence to rumours about "risings" and taken elaborate military precautions. Fortunately for us, our information as to their movements and plans is far more accurate than their information with regard to us.

The duty of Volunteers is to pay no regard whatever to the daily rumours with regard to Conscription, but go on with their work to make themselves efficient soldiers, and hold themselves in readiness for every emergency. They need not fear that they will be taken by surprise if the corps they belong to is organised properly and working efficiently as a unit of the Army of Ireland. Whenever and however a blow is to be struck, full instructions will be received from Headquarters, and whatever orders are given will represent the considered judgment, based on accurate information and the matured plans of those placed in authority in the organisation.

Meanwhile Volunteers should not allow rumours anent Conscription to influence their activities. The Army of Ireland was not established to resist Conscription. Its function is to fight for the rights and liberties of the people of Ireland whenever and however opportunity arises. That fighting might be in the nature of an offensive as in Easter Week, 1916, or it might be of a defensive nature, as would be the case if the English Government attempted Conscription; but the Irish Volunteers should be ready **whenever they are called on** to stand to arms for the rights and liberties of the Irish people.

It would be well for Volunteer officers, in studying the military possibilities of their district and in the training of their men, to avoid concentrating their minds on the prospect of defensive action against Conscription. On the contrary, they should give full attention to that other most important branch of warfare, the

tactics involved in taking an offensive. The changed political situation has made Conscription, whether it is attempted or not, a side issue. The main issue is Irish independence—in other words, “the rights and liberties of the Irish people”, which the Volunteers were created to fight for. Our counsel to them at the present time is to shut their ears to Conscription scares and—get on with the work!

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

TRAINING NOTES.—Musketry—Accuracy in aiming comes from long practice, and close attention to the conditions for correct sighting. The shoulders of the back sight level with the tip of the foresight central, on a line with the shoulders of the back sight and touching the 6 o'clock mark on the Bull. When the tip of the foresight comes below the shoulders of the back sight, though still central, the group of shots come below the Bull on the 6 o'clock line, the fault is too fine a sight. When the tip of the foresight come above the shoulders of the back sight the fault is too full a sight, and the group is above the Bull on the 12 o'clock line, the reverse of the previous fault. A good method in correcting a man's fault in aiming is by the use of the Aiming Disc. A round disc $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, having on one side a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Bull, with a pin-hole in the centre and on the other side a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Bull resting on the pin-hole, the hole being sufficiently large to admit a pencil point through, and no more. A handle is attached to lower part for holding (about 12 inches long). Place the disc to your eye, and get men to aim at the side with the Bull resting on the hole, and by looking along the sights you can at once detect the fault, and in that way correct it. Remember, Foresight for directing and Back-sight for elevation.

Signalling: Flags—The flags used are of two sizes; the large flags, being 3ft. square, can be read, when using Morse, at a distance of five miles; the smaller flags 2ft. square, can be read at a distance of three miles. They are of two colours; dark blue for use with light background, and white with dark blue horizontal stripe, for use with dark background. The pole for the large flag is 5ft. 6ins. long, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter at butt, tapering to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. at top; for the smaller flag the pole is 3ft. 6ins. long, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter at butt, tapering to $\frac{1}{2}$ in. at top.

When signalling, stand exactly facing or with back to distant station, so that the flag waves exactly at right angles to line of sight to distant station. Keep pole upright and don't allow point to droop to front or rear. Butt of pole

should rest in palm of left hand, but in order not to tire the hands unnecessarily, you may grasp the pole a few inches above the butt with both hands, always making sure to hold the pole high enough to see underneath the flag when in motion. As it is most important to keep the flag unfurled when signalling, the beginner should learn to wave his flag, in sending either dots or dashes, so that the point of the poll describes the figure 8.

Scouting—While using your eyes, it is most necessary that at the same time you keep yourself hidden as much as possible from the enemy. All your movements should be carried out, as far as possible, under cover, keeping along hedges, banks, water courses, etc. If in open country, make your way quickly from one clump of bushes to another, or rocks, hollows, or whatever kind of cover exists, moving rapidly while on the open ground, halting under cover to have a look around. If you have to be in the open when in view of the enemy, remember two things: 1st, to choose an object or ground behind you of the same colour as your own kit. 2nd, to remain still, without a move, so long as the enemy is likely to see you. These two principles should be remembered whenever you are hiding, whether by day or night. You must be careful to have no glittering accoutrements about you, such as pouches, belt, buckles, bright buttons, etc., as one flash from any of these would betray you in a moment. At night be careful not to wear anything that rattles or jingles or shines. Everything must be muffled or dull somehow or other. Remember also a lighted match can be seen 900 yards at night, or a cigarette glow nearly 300 yards. Wear soft shoes or mocassins in preference to heavy boots that crash among twigs or stones. In selecting a look-out place always be careful to see that there is more than one way out of it, so that if you are cut off from the enemy one way you can escape by another. Trees must be used with great caution; they make excellent look-out places and afford good hiding places for the enemy as well as you. It is always safer before taking up a position in a tree to look around for possible footprints of the enemy. Don't select the first good look-out place you meet, but rather choose one that will not be conspicuous, afford good shelter, good look-out, and a back way out or second way of escape. In making use of hills, be careful of the skyline. It is best when on distant reconnaissance to time your movements: march by night and reach neighbourhood of enemy by dawn. At night keep as much as possible in low ground, ditches, etc., so that you can see enemy outlined against stars

or higher ground. At night the enemy will expect you to come by roads, etc., as these are principal guides in finding the way at night.

ORGANISATION. — The Battalion — Having dealt in detail with the Company, I will now go on to the next Volunteer unit—the Battalion. An ordinary Battalion comprises 4 or more (but not exceeding 7 Companies). As in all Volunteer Organisation this arrangement is not rigid. In certain districts fewer Companies than 4 are allowed to form a Battalion and in certain special circumstances, where conditions warrant it, more than 7 Companies may be allowed. It must, however, be clearly understood that any departure from the official scheme, whether allowed as a temporary arrangement or because of unusual conditions, can only be made with permission of General Headquarters. In grouping together a certain number of Companies to form the Battalion the things to be borne in mind are—

- (a) Military suitability.
- (b) Geographical position (forgetting county and political boundaries).
- (c) General convenience to ensure smooth and efficient working.
- (d) Territorial extent of the Battalion area.

In examining these points—(a)—is the most important, as better results will be secured in action if the units engaged have been well versed in each other's methods and capabilities during peace training. As a rule it will be found in actual practice that (b) naturally follows and arises out of (a); but there may be some exceptions such as places situated at long distances from centres, which are used as congregating points by reason of the existence of a railway station, etc. It is to meet the requirements of such places that we have to remember (c). The more officers and men are thrown together in their daily work and movements thus more they will talk and think of Volunteer spirit and Volunteer effort. Greater efficiency will inevitably result. For the routine work of Training and Development it is essential that (d) should be such an area as to enable the Battalion Officers to be at all times in close touch with all Companies in the Battalion, to exercise due supervision, and give all necessary attention. On this question Battalion Officers should examine their minds searchingly, and having before them the duties which will be outlined in these Notes in forthcoming issues, I think they will find that in country places at any rate it will not be possible for any set of Battalion Officers to do their duty by more than 5 Companies.

GENERAL NOTES.

A representative meeting of Volunteer officers from every part of Ireland was held in Dublin recently. A considerable amount of important business was transacted and a very successful meeting was held. The work of the various departments was gone into in detail, reports submitted, and suggestions for the more efficient carrying out of the various departments were submitted.

Before the above-mentioned meeting of Volunteer officers settled down to work it was found necessary to vacate the place of meeting and remove to another place owing to the activity of the enemy forces, who had practically surrounded the building. This removal was carried out in a prompt and disciplined manner and with wonderful success. So efficiently was it done that the enemy remained investing the original building for five hours later before they discovered their mistake.

The report of the Director of Organisation submitted to the representative meeting of officers showed how astonishing had been the growth of the Irish Volunteers during the past year. There are now 1,200 affiliated Companies as compared with 390 at the time of last year's Convention. This increase has not been confined to any portion of the country, but has been equally marked in every province and every district.

It will be noted that President Wilson in his reply to the Austrian Peace Note gave the fact of the Jago-Slavs and the Czecho-Slavoks having been recognised as "in a state of belligerency" as a reason for the granting to them of the right of self-determination. The moral of this should not be lost on Irish Republicans.

A revolutionary movement is sweeping through Europe, based upon two elements—the desire of oppressed nationalities for independence and the rise of the working classes against present-day social conditions. As yet the Revolutionary spirit has chiefly manifested itself in Eastern Europe, but it is unmistakably sweeping Westward. Beginning in Russia, the movement has spread to Bulgaria, Germany and Austria, and is the principal cause that is bringing the war to an abrupt conclusion. But the cessation of hostilities will not see the end of the revolutionary movement. Rather the trouble will become accentuated, and in those countries where up this the discontent of the working classes has been silently repressed under the plea of "war necessities", the con-

clusion of an armistice will only see the blazing up of our suppressed revolutionary fury,

The Australian Socialist who recently visited "the front" in France and conversed with French Socialist leaders, assured us that the conclusion of an armistice would see the beginnings of revolution in France. The discontent has hitherto been kept in check by the spirit of patriotism. The French Socialists, whatever their grievances, would not fight with their fellow-countrymen until the foreigner was cleared out of the soil of France—an example which Irish Republicans would do well to note. But the evacuation of France by the Germans will only see the beginning of fresh troubles for the French Government.

Even in England an armistice will bring about an immediate industrial depression. The army may not, and probably will not, be demobilised, but the making of munitions will largely cease, and there will be widespread disemployment. The English working classes are the tamest and most submissive body in Europe, and it is idle to expect anything that could be called "revolution" in that stronghold of feudalism; but we may confidently expect very serious labour troubles, which will cause grave embarrassment to the English Government. Then the question of the continuing of Conscription after the war—a thing abhorrent to an unwarlike race like the English—will immediately arise in an acute form, and cause trouble in England's conscripted army. Irish Republicans are alive to the situation. We have seen the great Russian Empire, and later the great Austrian Empire, go to pieces with startling suddenness. The Irish Volunteers may, before long, play their part in bringing about the disintegration of the British Empire.

The epidemic at present raging in Ireland, in common with a large portion of Europe, calls attention to the great importance to Volunteers of a knowledge of hygienic principles. It has often happened in wars, modern and ancient, that disease has slain more soldiers than fell in actual fighting. The army whose health is best safeguarded is the most efficient army. Volunteers should note the precautions required to combat epidemics. Lectures on the subject would be appropriate at the present time.

Is iongantach mar atá na hOgláigh ag dul i méid agus i líonmhaireacht i nEirinn fé láthair. Is beag fear óg go bhfuil éan mhaithreas ann i n-éan chor na baineann le hArm na hEireann anois. Ach ní cóir dóibh bheith sásta le baint le Fianna Fáil agus drill a dheunamh. Ní cóir

doibh bheith sásta go dtí go mbeidh gunna agus piléir aca—pé cuma n-a bhfaghtar iad. Sibhse ná fuil gunnaí agaibh, faighidh iad ar ais nó ar éigin. Ní Oglách go gunna!

Agus sibhse go bhfuil gunnaí agaibh, tugaidh aire mhaith dhoibh. Ná bíodh éin mheirg ortha!

The country delegates to the Sinn Fein Conference in Dublin were afforded a fine example of the working of the Censorship. Arising out of complaints as to the treatment of the political prisoners at Belfast, it was proposed that the entire body of delegates should march "in military formation" through the principal streets and hold a meeting of protest. They accordingly lined up in fours inside the Mansion House and marched out through Stephen's Green and Grafton Street to College Green, where a public meeting was held, which was addressed by Father O'Flanagan. The vast space of College Green was thronged by an enthusiastic audience. So great was the crowd that all traffic was held up. The authorities, being taken by surprise, were unable to prevent the meeting, but all reports of or references to it in the public Press were carefully suppressed by the Censor. Those delegates who had been foolish enough to believe the newspapers were provided with a striking illustration of the fact that the Press is under the control of the enemy, who carefully suppresses, as far as possible, all news calculated to encourage or stimulate Irish Republicans.

In the first issue of AN tOGLACH we said:—"Volunteers with weapons in their hand should never surrender without a fight." A fine example of efficiency in carrying out this instruction was afforded by Mr. MacNellis in Cork. Attacked in his bedroom by several policemen, he inflicted a dangerous wound on one, and was only overpowered by numbers after a desperate struggle, in which two other policemen were also injured. The record of MacNellis as a Volunteer has been an excellent one; and his gallant defence against enemy aggression will evoke the admiration of every decent Irishman. The instruments of the English Government who attempt to interfere with Volunteer activities must be made to understand that they do so at their own peril. The fate of MacNellis will be watched with careful sympathy by the Volunteer Organisation; and any further outrage on this brave and simple-minded soldier of Ireland will be carried out at the peril of all those responsible for it.