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SECRET.**CONFIDENTIAL.****THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S MONTHLY REPORT FOR MARCH, 1917.**

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I.**GENERAL
CONDITION
OF THE
COUNTRY.****UNDER SECRETARY.**

I have to report that no appreciable change in the condition of the provinces was noticeable during the Month of March.

Political discontent continued to be a disturbing feature, but otherwise the general state of things was fairly satisfactory, although 220 persons were still in need of Police protection - 154 of these reside in the Counties of Clare and Galway, where agrarian agitation is usually accompanied with intimidation and violence.

In this area efforts were made to utilize the tillage regulations in furtherance of agitation for the abolition of the grazing system, resulting, in some cases, in the commission of outrages.

However, generally throughout Ireland the tillage regulations are working smoothly, and are willingly complied with by all sections of the community who seem to be of one mind as to the necessity for increased food production.

With regard to industries, the mills and factories of Ulster, as well as those situated in the other provinces, were all active; farmers are

said

said to be in prosperous circumstances, and there is no lack of employment.

The Ford Motor Company has already commenced to build on the site purchased from the Cork Corporation; the Furness Company has acquired possession of docks for ship building at Passage West; and it is expected that the railway extension from Athy to the Wolfhill Colliery will be proceeded with immediately. These are the only industrial developments of any magnitude reported.

The exorbitant cost of the necessities of life is a serious matter with the poor; but for the allowances paid to soldiers' dependents, there would be much distress.

In labour circles dissatisfaction is growing with regard to wages. It is obvious that in existing circumstances the old rates are totally inadequate, and many employers have increased them; but in rural districts farm labourers, who are extensively joining Unions, demand a minimum wage of 21/- per week, and in some cases 25/-.

Referring to the Table of Indictable Offences, I may remark that the number is not excessive; it will be sufficient to mention one case which is fortunately uncommon even in disturbed districts.

At 7-45 p.m. on 5th March when a Constable of the R. I. C. was returning from the Railway Station at Ennistymen, Co. Clare, 3 gun shots were fired at him at close range, wounding him in the head and neck. Activity on the part of the Constable in

supervising

supervising the conduct of local Sinn Feiners is believed to have been the motive for the outrage.

Only 871 recruits enlisted in the Army and Navy during the Month.

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(TABLE)

**RETURN OF PERSONS PROTECTED DURING EACH OF THE
PAST TWO MONTHS : -**

MONTH.	CONSTANT.	BY PATROL.
28th Feb. 1917.	39	176
31st Mar. 1917.	35	169

**RETURN OF INDICTABLE OFFENCES RECORDED DURING EACH
OF THE PAST TWO MONTHS : -**

NO. RECORDED IN	AGRARIAN.	NON-AGRARIAN.	TOTAL.
February, 1917.	10	116	126
March, 1917.	26	141	167

RETURN OF EVICTED FARMS UNLET, &c., ON 31st MARCH, 1917.

EVICTIONS IN MARCH.	TOTAL NO. OF EVICTED FARMS.	NO. OF SUCH FARMS DERELICT.	RETAKEN BY :-	
			OLD TENANT	NEW TENANT.
9	576	281	10	12

PART II.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

The Unionist societies were as usual since the outbreak of War inactive, and very little vitality was displayed by the Nationalists.

The United Irish League held no meeting of importance.

Some months ago it was announced that an all-Ireland Convention would be held in Dublin on Easter Monday to make arrangements for the re-organization of the National Volunteers, but the project was recently abandoned, and this Volunteer Force, though on paper apparently over 100,000 strong, is for all practical purposes dead.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin) is an extensive benefit society ramifying all over the country, and its members may be regarded as supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

As I stated in my report last Month, the failure of the Home Rule conversations gave rise to considerable distrust of the efficacy of Mr. Redmond's policy in the rank and file of his supporters; but it is very difficult to estimate the extent of this, in the absence of any declaration of public opinion in the constituencies beyond that which has been evoked by Count Plunkett's letter to the various public bodies.

A more hopeful feeling, however, has been created among the constitutional Nationalists by the recent

announcement

announcement that Government is making a renewed effort to overcome the obstacles to a settlement of the Home Rule question.

The County Inspector of Cork in his report on the situation in that County states - ".....The desire for self government has become intensified in the Nationalist community, and what is more remarkable is that some who were militant Unionists a year ago, now desire a settlement and peace."

Among the revolutionary, or Sinn Fein party there was no indication of an improved spirit, but, according to Police reports, neither is there reason to believe that that movement made much progress numerically, or in the matter of influence - people with a stake in the country do not appear to be attracted by it. It consists for the greater part of idealists, including many Roman Catholic Curates, and of young men who find in its doctrines a convenient excuse for shirking their duty in the trenches.

The Irish Volunteers, who formed the revolutionary army, cannot resume their military character and functions while the Defence of the Realm Regulations continue in force; but the members meet together under cover of Gaelic Sports, and classes, at social entertainments, and in their halls at places such as Cork and Limerick, where they are in strength; and that they are still bitterly disloyal and hostile to British rule is beyond all doubt.

On March 7th. the Police entered the Irish Volunteer Headquarters at Cork and found a party of youths drilling: the Competent Military Authority has ordered 5 of the

leaders

leaders to be tried by Court Martial.

At Limerick, though meeting regularly in their hall, the Sinn Feiners have ceased to drill.

On the night of March 22nd. a party left the hall and joined by many others went to the Railway Station to meet three prisoners who had been committed to Limerick gaol by a Petty Sessions Court for offences against the Defence of the Realm Regulations. They mobbed the Police escort and pelted them with stones and bottles until they reached the police barracks, when a party of Police turned out and dispersed them.

Next night the return of Mr. Moran, a solicitor who had completed a term of imprisonment for an offence against the Defence of the Realm Regulations was the occasion of further disturbance. He was escorted from the Station to his home by a Sinn Fein mob who afterwards marched through the principal streets, singing seditious songs and attacking the Police patrols until they were routed by a party of police with batons. A few Police were injured with stones; 18 of the principal offenders have been made amenable and are awaiting trial for riot by a Special Court under the Criminal Law & Procedure Act. It is satisfactory that although this disturbance took place in the streets at night it was confined to the Sinn Fein element, the general public taking no part in it.

St Patrick's Day passed off quietly, and was not marked by seditious demonstrations. This was perhaps in some measure due to the effect of the new Regulation 51 B. under which the Police can be authorized to enter any place where an offence against the Regulations may be anticipated.

anticipated. Several Gaelic sports and Concerts were held in various Counties, but only one case of illegality in connexion with these Concerts was reported, namely, at Tullamore, where a little girl was put forward to give a seditious recitation entitled "VENGEANCE". Two of the promoters of the Concert will be prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Regulations.

The arrest and deportation of dangerous local leaders in February appears to have produced the deterrent effect which was desired, as since then Sinn Fein Suspects have displayed less activity.

Count Plunkett was on 12th March presented with the Freedom of Kilkenny City, and on March 17th he was similarly honoured by the Corporation of Sligo. At neither place was much zeal evinced in the ceremony, and the Roman Catholic Clergy of both Counties were conspicuous by their absence. Father O'Flanagan, a Curate in Roscommon, who took a prominent part in Count Plunkett's election, was present at Kilkenny and Sligo; he has since been forbidden by his Bishop to attend political meetings.

The Count as a party leader does not appear to inspire enthusiasm, and the unsympathetic reception of his letter by a large majority of the local bodies has disappointed his followers.

There is no evidence that arms have been imported, and now that the United States have entered the War there is less likelihood of assistance coming from the Clan-na-Gael in America. It is, therefore, difficult to imagine that a fresh insurrection is possible unless in the event of a German landing. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the rebellious spirit of the extremists is either

either subdued or reformed. They are only restrained by fear. Given a favourable opportunity, they could probably collect sufficient weapons to cause serious trouble, and while the present unsettled state of things exists, any relaxation of the Regulations or reduction of the Military forces in Ireland would be fraught with grave danger.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

In view of the altered conditions in America consequent on the entry of the United States into the War, the reports from correspondents during the Month of March possess less interest.

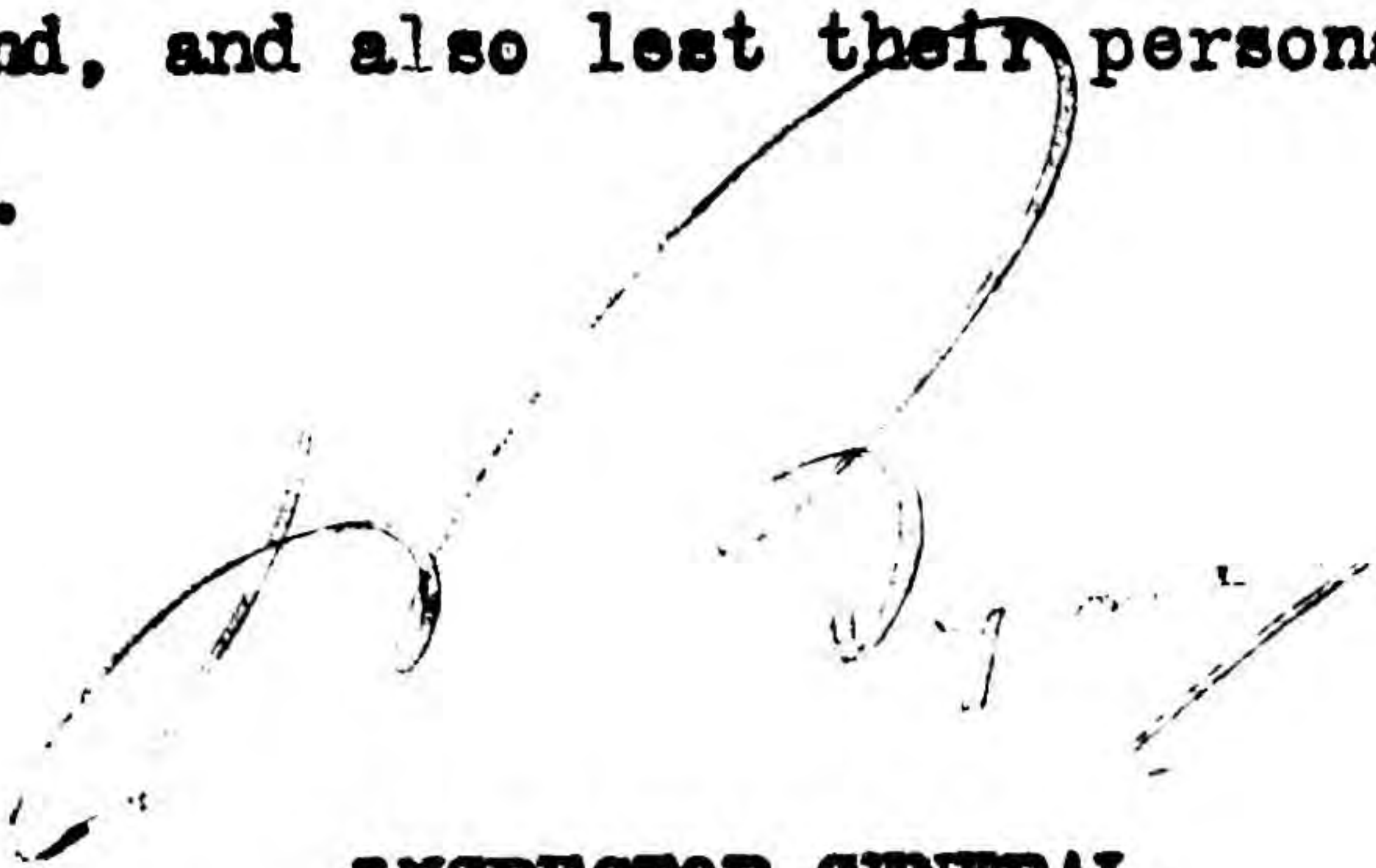
The long postponed meeting of the Clan-na-Gael Executive took place in New York on February 11th, and it is said that a good deal of attention was given to the purchase of dynamite. It appears that Count Bernstorff when leaving America took with him a message from the Irish insisting that Germany must come out boldly as an ally of Ireland, and send a military expedition, and pointing out that she can never hope for the freedom of the sea while Ireland is in the possession of Great Britain.

The correspondents referred to friction between the Irish leaders in America.

Mrs. Shesky Skeffington and others addressed several meetings in aid of the arms fund, and the German-Irish Societies were working hard to prevent war between the

the United States and Germany. It was alleged that they possessed means of communicating with Germany by wireless, and that the sailing of munition ships could not be kept secret as they had some Clan-na-Gael men in every crew; they also expected to be able by the autumn to send over a sufficient number of men trained in the use of explosives to cause serious damage in the United Kingdom.

But in the event of War they were very nervous about the safety of their arms fund, and also lest their personal liberty might be restricted.



INSPECTOR GENERAL.

11TH. APRIL. 1917.

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