

8550 - 23 MAY 1914

OFFICE

Subject

Home Rule Bill - Third

reading

Confidential

City of Belfast.

Royal Irish Constabulary;
Commissioner's Office,

22 May 1914

I beg to state that careful inquiry has been made as to the attitude of both political parties during the third reading and probable passage of Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons.

Under Secretary
Submitted

W. B. Connell
23.523rd May 14

(1) The Nationalists in Belfast will not have organized rejoicings. Any banniers, flags, etc will be in their own territory. The available city force will be on duty and the border line between the two parties carefully manned.

Under Secretary
Submitted

W. B. Connell

23.5.14.

Chief Secretary
J. B. D.

23.5.14.

Under Secretary

(2) The respectable Unionists and U. V. F. are anxious to avoid trouble. They will not give offence nor take it unless the

The Insp. General

The Chief Secretary is aware that General Macready's proposals have been well considered by him, & receiving as they do the support of the Lord Mayor the Chief Secretary cannot interfere even if he wished to do so. A.P.M. 25/5/14.

J. B. D.
26.5.14

Come into the most ground.

The U V F will be mobilized in their halls mainly to keep them in hands and off the streets.

They will be in charge of responsible persons. This will be done on both 26th & 27th and end longer if necessary.

- 3 The clergy here will be in the streets in nationalist territory. They have formed street committees under responsible leaders to keep their people in check and to prevent burnings in dangerous localities. The U I L and A. O. H. are co-operating.

The Lord Mayor and Major General Sir C N Macready disagree with my view that there should be a regiment in Victoria Bldg. I have given my reasons and urged for this strongly.

Two regiments will be available at Hollywood and special trains will be waiting to convey them also men from Carrickfergus and Dundalk to Belfast should it be necessary.

The police have a border line of about four miles to look after and are much scattered. Should disturbance break out in two or three places they cannot concentrate sufficiently quickly to prevent parties getting into collision and if this happens it is hard to say where the matter will end.

A regiment in Victoria Barracks that could be in the street in a quarter of an hour would make all the difference between peace and prolonged turmoil and rioting.

This is the first time Belfast has been left without troops on an occasion of such great political importance.

I feel that it is my plain duty to bring this matter under notice notwithstanding the view of the Lord Mayor and General who ^{not} ^{may} have any great ex-

presence of this sort of thing in Belfast.

They seem to think bringing in military would be provocative.

I know the Nationalist expect troops and that the Unionist would not resent their presence.

Party feeling is very high and the tension is great. Though everything humanly possible is being done all round to preserve the peace no one can account for the action of irresponsible and anything untoward happening even if un-
-premeditated will have serious consequences.

G. J. Smith
Commr.

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