

In these three counties a great many persons are under police protection. The improvement which was noticeable in the state of Clare in November is, however, maintained. Agrarian unrest is also reported in certain localities in Mayo, Westmeath, Sligo, Roscommon, and King's County.

The National Volunteers are spread over the four provinces. The strength of this Force at the end of December is estimated at 156,750 members, of whom about 147,050 are said to be followers of Mr John Redmond, and about 9,700 are Sinn Feiners and others opposed to Mr Redmond's policy. The membership is still declining, partly on account of political dissension, and partly owing to the dread of impressment for military service. There is at present no enthusiasm in this Force, which has neither organisation, nor officers, is utterly untrained, and practically unarmed.

The number of rifles approximately in the possession of the National Volunteers on the 31st of December was 10,117, an increase of about sixty since the date of last return, the 10th of December; of the total number about 1,435 belong to the Sinn Fein Section.

Mr John Redmond and Colonel Moore reviewed 5,000 Volunteers at Limerick on the 20th of December, after which Colours were presented to the City Battalion. Mr Redmond advised the Irish people to sink their differences and work for the good of their Country, and to support England in the present crisis. He urged those who could do so, to join the Army; but so far his appeal had had but little effect on recruiting.

On the 6th of December Messrs John Redmond, Gwynne, Hasleton, O'Malley, and Cosgrove, M.P.'s., addressed a meeting

meeting of over two thousand people at Tuam, County Galway. The meeting was boomed in the press and was intended to help recruiting, but though the Volunteer force in the county is nominally 8,000, only four hundred Volunteers attended.

The people as a whole are loyal to the Empire, and the minority of Sinn Feiners and other extremists who aspire to National independence and separation from England are probably more anti-English than pro-German. There is, however, reason to believe that in the event of invasion these extremists would, if able, assist the enemy, as a means of realizing their aspirations. It is known that Sir Roger Casement has been in communication recently with Irishmen in America in reference to a hostile landing in this Country, and it is probable that there has also been communication between members of the Clan-na-Gael in America and leading extremists in Ireland; but there is no evidence of any active preparation for an armed rising in support of an invading force.

Confidential information has been received from a reliable source in Ireland that a German force is expected to land in this Country. The same informant, however, also says that overtures have been made by Colonel Moore on behalf of the National Volunteers to leaders of the Sinn Fein Section proposing reconciliation, with a view to asking Government to recognize and arm the Volunteers for Home Defence. He further states that some of the leading extremists are reconsidering the desirableness of welcoming a German army in Ireland. They would prefer to see England so defeated and weakened on the Continent that she would be unable to resist the demand for Irish independence.

On the 19th of December a stranger who calls himself Colonel McBride of California arrived at Queenstown in the steam yacht "Mayonara", 580 tons, New York Yacht Club: he has