

EMPIRE IS BEGINNING TO GET
NATIONALISTS' TRUE MEASURE

They Cast Over Half Ballots Against Military Service Bill

STRANGE COURSE OF MR. REDMOND

Labor Was Suspicious, Fearing Industrial Compulsion, Also

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London, Jan. 3.—The past 48 hours has been devoted mainly to exhaustive post mortem examinations of the Compulsion Bill vote. The tremendous majority of 297 is accepted as conclusive proof that the country is behind the measure. Indeed, it needed no Compulsion Bill to determine public opinion. In this issue, as in many others, public opinion has largely been in advance of Parliament. The gratifying fact of this measure to compel the military service of single slackers is that the Government has consented to vigorous leadership.

In the vote upon the first reading of the bill itself we find the whole strength of the Unionist party, 244, ranged behind it. Of 184 Radicals, 122 voted in favor, showing the two national representative bodies of the country overwhelmingly in support of the measure. Labor gave eight votes for the bill and thirteen against. The Nationalists, under Mr. Redmond voted solidly in opposition, to the number of 56, and brought with them two votes of Independent Nationalists. Of the total of 103 ballots cast against the bill, therefore, no fewer than 58 come from Nationalist Ireland, which is not interested in the measure, as Ireland is specifically excluded from the operation of the bill.

Mr. Redmond's Course.

It is hard to find any justification for the Irish vote. It seems to be the policy of Mr. Redmond and his followers to disassociate themselves from any united action for the prosecution of the war and to oppose the Government at every opportunity. We imagine that Mr. Redmond by this course is doing much more to damage the cause of Home Rule than to assist it. It will be recalled that he refused to sit in the Coalition Government formed upon the defeat of the Liberal Administration, thus denying any Nationalist Ireland association in this attempt to wage united war and sink all party differences. In this latest issue of compulsion we find the Nationalists in opposition upon a subject which does not concern them. The Times says editorially to-day: "We have none of us time to deal with an aggravated 'Irish question' just now. It is quite sufficient for the moment to keep a careful record of the contribution of Nationalist Ireland to the defence of the Empire, and to leave the problem of Irish Government, which is still in suspense, to be settled by the Empire at a more convenient season." There is indeed no value in raising the Irish issue just now, but we think the Empire is beginning to get the proper measure of the Nationalist party.

"Peace at Any Price" Men.

An examination of the Liberal vote on compulsion shows that there were many abstentions. Out of a total of 259, only 187 voted, including tellers. The Morning Post to-day points out that of the 34 Radicals who opposed the bill no fewer than 22 belong to the "Peace at any price" party. In December, 1913, every one of these 22 was represented in the deputation of Radicals which waited upon the Prime Minister at Downing street to urge the necessity for a limitation of armaments.

The Labor situation is perplexing. While the Congress voted overwhelmingly against compulsion there is reason to believe that its antagonism was due not so much to opposition to the specific measure, but to suspicion of a capitalistic design to extend compulsion to the industrial field. As The Daily Chronicle says to-day: "The bulk of these men are as keen to pursue the war as any section of the community, and no less ready to find recruits; the work of the Labor Recruiting Committee proves it. Their feeling about the Bill seems as much one of suspicion as of hostility. The compulsion involved in the present measure may be exceedingly limited; but they fear lest it may not stop there. They fear still more lest it may extend to industry." The Chronicle urges that the text of the Bill should be more explicit, arguing that sincere and tactful attempt to remove the fears and suspicions of the labor world is one of the most important ways of promoting national unity at present. There will be no disposition to argue the wisdom of promoting national unity, but one wonders to what extent the present suspicion would have prevailed if such radical journals as The Chronicle had not labored so tremendously to raise the compulsion bogey.

Absurdly Misleading.

The Congress vote is not accepted as expressive of labor opinion. Several members decline so to accept it and assert the "card vote" to have been absurdly misleading as a representation of the working class attitude. The delegates, it is argued, were stampeded by extreme socialists and by Union of Democratic Control speakers to vote against the bill by the suggestion that its corollaries were the perpetuation of compulsory service after the war and the conscription of labor.