

Professor M'Donagh's Address

Professor M'Donagh, who was received with cheers and cries of "Go on the young blood," next addressed the meeting. Having stated that he attended that night as the representative of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, he went on to say that they had begun in Dublin and had three thousand men drilling and preparing to serve their country in this cause. Kilkenny was the first place they looked to in Leinster and all Ireland, for help in this movement, and from the meeting that night they knew they had not counted falsely in counting on Kilkenny. Personally, he owed a debt of gratitude to Kilkenny. It was in Kilkenny that he received his first baptism of Nationalism (hear, hear). Twelve years ago he came to Kilkenny and

it was in the national spirit of this town that he first learned what it was to feel the patriotism of an Irishman (applause). As Sir Roger Casement had said, the work they had to do was urgent, and it was their duty to set about it immediately. Their business was to drill and prepare themselves to be efficient in the cause of Ireland (hear, hear). The Irish Volunteers had been founded to secure the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland (applause). They had no rights and liberties to maintain at the present moment; they had been slaves in their own country. They were the only white people who were inefficient and unable to defend themselves against foreign aggression. If a foreign power came to this country, favourable or unfavourable to Ireland, 60,000 English territorials would be landed in this country. The Irish people would have to take them into their own houses, put them up, feed them and entertain them, to preserve Ireland, forsooth, for the British crown. The people were not going to have that. Within this year they hoped to enroll a quarter of a million men in the Irish Volunteers. The body he represented was not a political body; it was an Irish body, a National body. They had

no party or religious test. Their system was a territorial system. People of different religions, of different political parties, would drill side by side. The battle had not yet been won, and it was possible the Irish People might yet have to make a great sacrifice, perhaps the greatest sacrifice of all. This organisation of the Irish Volunteers grew out of an organisation instituted in this country since the days of O'Connell, under such leaders as George Henry Moore, who, in 1861, advocated Irish Volunteers

under the Fenian leaders; under Parnell and under the present leader of the Irish Party, and, to mention a leader more peculiarly his own, under the leaders of the Gaelic League (hear, hear). This movement was the culmination of those movements. The other night a Frenchman came to the hall in which his (speaker's) company was drilling. In France every citizen was a soldier, every man was trained to use arms, and this Frenchman could not very well understand how it was that the men he saw training in that company should think it necessary to spend their evenings drilling. He (speaker) explained that it was only the other day they got permission to do such a thing at all, and his visitor expressed his astonishment, but said the patriotism that inspired them was magnificent. The Irish Volunteer movement was going to give an opportunity to the manhood of the country to prove it -

self. There would be difficulty in getting the rifles, but it would not require an enormous amount of money to buy them. No man was too old or too young to work for his country in this matter. At the end of that meeting those who wished to enroll in the Irish Volunteers, should go up to the Town Hall and give in their names. Later on arrangements for drillings, etc., would be made. He laid stress on the fact that this was a democratic organisation. They did not want this country to be governed by force or by corruption, and if this Home Rule Bill was passed, the country would be governed for a long time by corruption, doles and bribes to every department of life in Ireland.

Continuing, Mr. M'Donagh addressed the meeting in Irish, after which he said it was not necessary to appeal to his friends of the Gaelic League to become Irish Volunteers. If a quarter of a million of Irishmen were trained and drilled in the use of arms, they would be able to give to Ireland whatever government they liked (applause).

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A vote of thanks to Sir Roger Casement and Professor M'Donagh concluded the proceedings.

After the meeting large numbers of those present adjourned to the Town Hall, where a good many were enrolled as members of the Corps proposed to be established here.