

# A REFUSAL TO MARCH IN VICTORY PARADE.

## NATIONALIST VETERANS' PROTEST

Between 2,000 and 3,000 Nationalist ex-soldiers, presided over by Sir H. Grattan Bellow, last night declined to take part in the Victory March in Dublin on Saturday, as a protest against the failure of the Government to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people.

The meeting, which was called by the Irish Nationalist Veterans' Association, was held in the Round Room of the Mansion House, and was primarily summoned to discuss and adopt a statement of the grievances and claims of the Irish ex-service men and to affirm the right of Ireland to national self-government.

Capt. Esmond proposed a resolution recording their unshakable devotion to the interests, the honour, and the welfare of the Irish nation, and pledging themselves never to desist from the struggle for the freedom of Ireland until the great principle was accepted of Ireland a free nation (applause). They would be false to their dead comrades, he said, if they did not protest against the treatment that was being meted out to Ireland by England. They did their part to resurrect ancient nationalities and to redress grievances in other oppressed nations, and on return they find in Ireland a larger army of occupation than Germany found necessary to keep down Belgium. They would do their best to reconstruct their nation despite Carson.

### DID NOT FIGHT FOR ENGLAND.

Lieut. Burns, in seconding, said they had not fought for England, but for small nationalities, and they fought for themselves first. What did they come home to? (A Voice—"Martial law.") They found an army of occupation in Ireland that they were asked to march out in Dublin with on Saturday. (Voices—"We won't do it.")

Sergt. Magee then proposed—

"That, in view of the failure of the Government to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people for which the Irish soldiers fought in the war, and of the methods now employed in the administration of the country and of those threatened for the future, this association declines to take part in the Victory March on Saturday next, in which, in the words of Lord French, they would be required to give the salute, not only to the Commander-in-Chief under whom they served, but to the Government and officials."

He said they wanted to coerce no man or prevent anyone who wished taking part in the demonstration, but as a body they would not go. This was to be a great national demonstration, organised to bolster up a Government whose first and great principle was the coercion of Ireland.

### RESPONSIBLE FOR COERCION.

Mrs. T. M. Kettle, in seconding, said Irish Nationalist soldiers were asked to march past College Green, their own House of Parliament, where their rights were bartered away, to salute Lord French, not as an Irish soldier, but as Lord Lieutenant and head of the Irish Executive, which was responsible for the rule of coercion in this country, and for the betrayal of every Irish Nationalist soldier who fought and fell in the war. Did any Irish Nationalist fight for any country except the country of his birth? (Cries of "No, no.") If they went on the side of England it was because they thought for the first time in her history the grace of God was operating in her, and she was at last about to take the side of honour in the world's conflict. She hoped, in honour of her husband's memory, not a single Dublin Fusilier would march in the procession. If it brought about an Irish settlement they would march proudly; such was not the case; but, on the contrary, they were asked to join and unite with the army of occupation.

### AN UNWISE PROCEEDING.

Capt. Adye Curran, R.A.M.C., said he was opposed to the committee or the meeting passing the resolution refusing to recognise the flag in the march past, and looked upon it as a very unwise procedure, inasmuch as the men were only entitled to Government pensions so long as they remained loyal subjects, and by refusing to recognise the flag they ceased to be loyal subjects, and were playing into the hands of the very men whom their grievances were against.

The speaker's remarks were received with tremendous hostility until he said, "Anyone who wished could go, but he personally would not march" (cheers).

Sergt.-Major Cahill said information had reached them that the Discharged and Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors' Association had also decided not to take part in the procession.

The resolution was put and declared passed, a small number dissenting.

### NO DISRESPECT TO LORD FRENCH.

Later, in moving a vote of thanks, Mr. T. Callan Macardle said personally he wished to make it very clear that the decision come to that night did not mean any disrespect was shown to the Lord Lieutenant, whose pluck, valour and generalship at a critical moment was the greatest asset that Ireland possessed, and he hoped and believed that the Lord Lieutenant's views regarding an Irish settlement would speedily materialise.

Sir Henry Grattan Bellow expressed his deep regret that the conditions of the country would prevent him taking part in the procession. He expressed his great admiration for the Lord Lieutenant who, when short of men, artillery, and ammunition, held up the German army and saved Europe. He hoped the action taken that night would not be construed in any way as disrespectful to an Irish soldier of world-wide reputation, of whom they were all so proud.

Letters of apology were read from Brig.-Gen. Hammond, Capt. Redmond, M.P.; Capt. Harrison, and the Lord Mayor of Cork.

### KINGSTOWN EX-SOLDIERS TO MARCH

At Kingstown Col. M'Cartney presided at a meeting of the Comrades of the Great War, at which arrangements were made to participate in the march.

A member said they should not take part in the victory parade until their grievances were remedied. The loyal Orangemen did not march last Saturday, because their grievances were not settled.

Col. M'Cartney said if the member laid a statement of his grievances before him he would do all he could for him.