

'robbed of their liberties,' that 'he not only believes but he is certain they will fight,' that 'his sympathies are wholly and entirely with them,' and that 'he should think they had the spirit of slaves if they did not fight'—a burst of hysterics, and, incidentally, of constructive treason, which the public of New Zealand would hardly have expected from one who has occupied the responsible position of Governor-General of Canada. However, he is not the only earl who sees red where Home Rule is concerned, and English Unionist papers, as we have hinted, are far from being safe guides on this subject. We cannot profess, any more than any other New Zealand paper, to speak with first-hand knowledge of the situation, but we have read fairly widely on the subject, and we are safe in saying that the almost unanimous testimony of competent and unbiassed witnesses on the spot is to the effect that there is very much more of farce than of tragedy in the Ulster 'preparations.'

Let us call one or two such witnesses, taken from various callings and positions in life. In another column we print the testimony of a Protestant woman, written not for publication or with a view to limelight or notoriety, but in a private letter to a personal friend. This lady, a resident in Ulster and a Protestant clergyman's wife, is, according to the *Dunedin Evening Star*, in an exceptionally favorable position for knowing the exact strength of things in the north of Ireland; and she declares that working men are being coerced by their employers into joining the 'Volunteer' force, that there is a great deal of fun associated with the movement, and that it will end in nothing worse than a few riots—the sort of thing with which the twelfth of July celebrations have already made us sufficiently familiar. A short time ago Mr. Harold Begbie, the well-known English author, acting as special correspondent of the *London Daily Chronicle*, was sent on a visit to Ireland to see with his own eyes the prospects and probabilities of the situation; and his characterisation of Ulster's 'Army of the Lord' stands as one of the most scathing things in modern literature. If any man living knows Protestant Ulster it is Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., who was an Ulster Unionist member for many years. Mr. Russell was one of the strongest and most effective opponents of the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893, but he has come to see that Home Rule is the only solution of the Irish problem. Speaking at a meeting of his constituents in North Tyrone, on January 6, he said that every one knew there was neither drilling nor arms in Ulster, and no more excitement about Home Rule than there was in England, that all the canards about arms and funds and marshalled hosts were airy figments intended to frighten the British electorate, and that they had failed in their object. There might be riots in Belfast, which could be easily stirred up at any time, but the Irish Parliament would have power to suppress them in twenty-four hours. And a military contributor to a recent issue of the *War Office Times and Naval Review*, of London, writing with special knowledge of Ulster, and with a direct and personal acquaintance with the personnel of the officers of the British Army and Navy, makes no end of fun of the 'rebellious' antiquities selected by Sir Edward Carson to head his 'Provisional Government' army. 'And since a Government,' he writes, 'even a "Provisional Government," cannot govern without force to back it up, a "provisional army" has also been formed and a general in command with, on paper, an imposing staff appointed, we had almost written gazetted. The person selected for this dubious and, we may add, dangerous position is Lieutenant-General Sir George Richardson, late of the Indian Army. Mr. Richardson has been floridly described by Sir Edward Carson, who, presumably, has signed the general's commission as "the General Officer Commanding" the Ulster troops, as "one of our greatest generals." And yet the world, especially the military world, knew him not! It is cruel to take this old man down from the retired shelf, strip off the cotton-wool,

set him on horseback for the world to laugh at, and dub him "one of our greatest generals." Of Sir William Adair, 'Adjutant-General,' the writer says in part, 'His career, like that of other marine officers, if in one sense successful has in another sense been unsatisfactory. In addition to his commission as General, this "active" Marine (now in his sixty-third year) has been sworn in as Justice of the Peace for the County of Antrim. It seems to me that Sir William Adair is jeopardising his £900 per annum and imperilling his life, if he proceeds to prance on a charger, hack or otherwise, as Adjutant-General of the Ulster Volunteers; if he is not shot in the first, or last, ditch he will certainly be hanged. . . . As I have remarked, General Adair has passed through the Staff College and has been an instructor on Military subjects both at Sandhurst and Greenwich. I dare to say, however, that while receiving, or giving, instruction in the art of war he was never taught, or called on to expound the precise functions during hostilities of infantry armed with wooden rifles and artillery provided with wooden guns. What he proposes doing with his extraordinary army, when he is in the field as Adjutant-General thereof, it will be interesting to see. A few companies of Marine "Jockies" let loose in Ulster will, I imagine, make short work of the wooden rifles, the wooden guns, and the wooden heads that have been so busy of late in that province. I sincerely hope it won't be the fate of the erstwhile Deputy Adjutant-General of Marines to be shot in action by the men of his own corps. Still that would be more dignified than an early morning interview with the hangman for the purpose of paying the penalty which the law prescribes for high treason.' From all of which it is evident that those who are in the best position to judge do not dream of taking the Ulster 'hot air' and Sir Edward Carson's gory talk at all seriously.

Reverting to the question of a settlement by consent, it may at once be said that three at least of the suggested solutions may be definitely ruled out—namely, the proposals for a referendum, for a dissolution, and for the exclusion of Ulster. The first two are rejected by Mr. Asquith; and the Irish Party, it may be safely asserted, will under no conceivable circumstances agree to the last. What the exact nature of the Government proposal will be it is useless at this stage to attempt to conjecture; all that can be done, in the phrase now so familiar to us in this country, is to wait and see. But whatever the Government offer may be, we are, as we have before remarked, thankful to think that it will be final.

Notes

The Scholarships Question

Taken altogether, quite a number of the pupils of Catholic schools have won Junior National Scholarships at the last annual examination; and the question as to whether they are to be allowed to hold these scholarships at Catholic secondary schools is a practical and pressing one. Several of the Education Boards have given the necessary 'approval' of the Catholic secondary school in their districts, but one or two of the larger Boards still obstinately hold out. To this class belongs the Wellington Education Board, which has just perpetrated a glaring act of injustice. A Wellington paper reports that a brief discussion took place at the meeting of the Education Board last week as to whether the winner of a Junior National Scholarship should be allowed to hold it at St. Patrick's College instead of at one of the secondary schools under the control of the board. The lad who had won the honor had written stating that he would relinquish the scholarship unless he could attend the college. The chairman (Mr. R. Lee) said that the board, to be consistent with its former decision, would only have to 'receive' the letter. The lad, he explained, had won