

## JUSTICE IN IRELAND!

On Thursday of last week, in the House of Commons, at question time, an excellent example was given of that strict impartiality, unbiassed fairness, and even justice with which Mr. Lloyd George's Government treat the population of Ireland, Catholics and Protestants alike (says "S." in the *London Catholic Times* of August 3). It would be a pity if any readers of the *Catholic Times*, which for so long has been such a good friend to the Irish people, yet struggling rightly to be free, missed the opportunity of learning what was asked and answered. The following is the report:—

Mr. Shortt, asked by Mr. P. Meehan (Queen's County, Leix. Nat.) whether the Government had taken any steps to compel the surrender of the arms and ammunition held by the Ulster Volunteers, said: "The regulation in regard to possessing arms applies to the Ulster Volunteers in the same way as to anyone else. It will be enforced in Ulster in the same way as in the rest of Ireland, unless the arms are brought in and surrendered." Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E., Nat.) asked whether, as a matter of fact, any houses had been searched in Ulster or any arms taken up, and whether the right hon. gentleman had any information that those arms were specially manufactured by Krupps for the Ulster leaders and sold at half cost price. Mr. Shortt: "I have no information as to price or place of manufacture. I think some houses in Ulster have been searched." Mr. Devlin (Belfast, W., Nat.): "Have the Ulster Volunteers been asked to give up their rifles?" Mr. Shortt: "Yes." (Nationalist cries of "No.") Mr. Devlin: "If they have been asked, what answer has the right hon. gentleman received?" Mr. Dillon: "Has a sing'e rifle been given up?" No answer was given. Mr. Reddy (King's County, Birr, Nat.): "Why not prosecute them?" (Cheers). Colonel Sir J. Craig (Down, E., U.): "Is the right hon. gentleman aware that the War Office was very glad to borrow some of those rifles? (Nationalist laughter and cheers, and cries of "Made by Krupps"). Also, whether it is not better to provide against a similar contingency arising in the future?" Mr. Shortt: "No. I do not think that." Mr. Devlin: "In view of the declaration now made that these rifles are instruments of great military utility and have been lent or offered to the Government for the purpose of the War Office will the right hon. gentleman now ask for all of them?" (Nationalist cheers.) Mr. Shortt: "I do not know that they have been lent to the Government. I have already said that we intend to get them." Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S. Nat.): "Will the right hon. gentleman ask the Attorney-General for England where those rifles are? Sir Edward Carson will tell you." (Nationalist cheers). Several Nationalist members rose, but the Speaker, interposing, said a great many supplementary questions had already been answered. Mr. Meehan gave notice that he would raise the matter on the adjournment of the House.

Now, Sir, we Englishmen are constantly being told, especially just at present, that Nationalist Ireland is not doing her duty to us in this war. As an Englishman myself, most anxious that we should win a conclusive and speedy triumph over the Prussian Hohenzollerns—some of whom I hope to live long enough to see hanged in punishment of their crimes against

God and man—and equally anxious that England should grant self-government to Ireland, I feel that my own country is very largely to blame for the abstention of Ireland, so far as it exists, from participation in this world-conflict. We have treated the Catholic Irish as if they were dogs. Here we have our Government seizing arms from the Nationalists, yet allowing them to be retained by the Carsonites! A Catholic may not possess a shot-gun to kill crows.

If our Government is not afraid of demanding their arms from the Carsonite Orangemen and thus applying the law to all Ireland, why does it not do so? If it is afraid, then Carsonism is the greatest peril existing at this day in the British Empire; it is a standing example of contempt for law. But there is in all probability another reason for our Government's failure to enforce its own regulation in regard to the possession of firearms against the Carsonite Protestants; and that is its intention to continue the system according to which Protestants are to be maintained in their ascendancy in Ireland and Catholics there are to be repressed. I do not suggest, as some people think probable, that the men who are Mr. Lloyd George's masters desire to goad Catholic Ireland by insults and oppression into rebellion. For I can hardly conceive that any member of the ruling class, Liberal or Tory, would welcome the outbreak of a rebellion in Ireland; there is too much dread among them of a rebellion in England before the problems of social reconstruction are solved; and shooting down Irish Catholics would have most unpleasant echoes reverberating to and from the United States of America. Far safer, I think, is it to conclude that our ruling class, which is Liberal and Tory, aims at keeping the Irish Catholics in a condition of political servitude, in order that it may use the Irish question, when it is in a difficulty, to call off the attention of the British toiler from his bitter grievances.

There is only one political party in this country which is solid and safe for justice to Ireland—the Labor Party. That party will stand in some four hundred constituencies at the next general election. And unless the Liberals and Tories go to the polls as Coalition candidates the Labor Party should win handsomely. I hope it will, for Tories and Liberals have both betrayed Ireland. When the general election comes there should not be much hesitation by Irish and Catholic electors in Great Britain to vote for the Labor Party and justice for Ireland—and for England too. For the enemies of Nationalist Ireland are and have been and will be the enemies of democratic England. Of all our political parties Labor is the only one which means to be just to the people who work for their living and wish to live and let live all the world over.

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