

Look at things calmly and fairly for a minute. What are the facts? What are the figures as given—not by Irishmen, but given by the Secretary of War in the British House of Commons, when he said that two hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen—to be accurate, two hundred and forty nine thousand odd—were fighting in the British Army during the war. One hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand of those were Irish Roman Catholics. These men, believing that the Allies were fighting for liberty, for freedom of small nations—including their own—forgetting their past, forgetting their wrongs; forgetting that Irish men, women and children were shot down in Dublin three days before the war; they joined the British Army and fought as Irishmen can fight, and I never heard that one of these men proved to be a coward or a traitor on the field of battle.

Think what two hundred and fifty thousand men means. We are only a small people of four and a half millions or less. This means one-eighteenth of our population; one-eighteenth of your population would be about half a million; and I understand that is what you sent across the water, and who would dare say that Canada did not do her fair share in the war.

Take the men who refused to join. They said to England "You are fighting for the freedom of small nations; you ask us to fight; you say you are in need of men; you have two hundred and fifty thousand English soldiers in Ireland defending it against the Germans. We don't say that one Irishman is better than one Englishman, but we do say that one Irishman is as good as one Englishman any day. Take these two hundred and fifty thousand British soldiers out of Ireland and send them to France or Flanders and we will replace them by two hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen, and we swear before you and before the Allies and before High Heaven that no German or man of any nation will ever set his foot on Irish soil except over the dead bodies of those two hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen.

Did England respond to that request, to that test? No. Then these men said "When England does not respond she is not sincere; there is one small nation she can free without shedding a drop of blood, and that small nation is Ireland, and if she refuses, the only nation we know and want to fight for is Ireland."

They say these men were pro-Germans. As a matter of fact, they were pro-Ireland. Those thirteen hundred young men fought and died for Ireland and they knew they were not dying in vain because the Irish cause is now a world question; they cared not whether they died in Ireland or in France. No, Irishmen have no need to be ashamed of themselves; they believed they were fighting for the same principles as you were fighting for; for the same cause: for the liberty and freedom of their own small nation that they have been fighting for for seven hundred and fifty years.

Some would say "What about the Ulster question?" Ah! there's the rub. It seems to be a great problem now to know just where Ulster