

BOY SCOUTS: ORGANISING NOTES

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In the following Lieutenant Mellows deals with the progress of the Irish National Boy Scouts.

Little by little the Fianna movement is spreading and taking root throughout the country. Already all the large towns have Slauighe of the Fianna, but we will not be satisfied with that progress, good though it may be, until every town, large and small, in Ireland has its branch of Na Fianna Eireann. And when that comes to pass we need have no fear for Ireland's future, for the Fianna will be turning out men fit in every way, mentally and physically, to carry on the work for Ireland's freedom – and carry it to a successful conclusion.

We are out to train the youth of Ireland to work for the establishment of Ireland's independence, and short through the time is since the movement was started, it is beginning in many ways to make itself felt. In Dublin the Fianna proved a great asset to the Volunteer movement by providing capable instructors and energetic workers for the new movement. In Athlone the boys showed the stuff they were made of by heading a great anti-recruiting demonstration protesting against the insidious methods adopted by the British War Office to try and seduce Irish youths from their allegiance to Ireland. The result of this demonstration was that the troops engaged in that recruiting campaign were removed from the town at the first opportunity.

Belfast is going already with its accustomed thoroughness.

In Kerry the movement is growing rapidly. The latest addition to the Sluaighe of the Kingdom was Ballybunion. A meeting was held there recently by the Empirates (Empirates would be more appropriate to establish a branch of the Baden Powell Scouts, who, by the way, exist in Ireland only for the purpose of teaching the boys that England, not Ireland, is their country, and that the Union Jack is the flag of the Irish as well as the free (?). Well, the Listowel Fianna, with

their president, Mr. Eamonn Leahy, attended the meeting in force, and when the enthusiastic Pro-Britishers, Britons, Shoneens, and Union Jack Wavers had waxed hearse over the glories of the Empire, Mr. Leahy rose up and explained the difference between the two movements – the Baden Powell and the Fianna, and concluded by asking the boys present who were not ashamed of their Irish birth and heritage and their nationality to step outside. And lo! The entire assemblage rose on masse and left the hall, and the sequel was announced in the next week's papers, when it was stated that a Sluagh of Na Fianna Eireann had been established in Ballybunion.

In Wexford the Slaugh organised by Mr Sean Sinnott over twelve months ago is still going strong. All the members now possess uniforms, and marches-out are a regular feature. The Sluagh are very proud of their hurling team, which has given a great lead to the games of the Gael in the town, under the captainship of Leader Paddy White. Gorey can know boast of possessing a Sluagh, which was established on Sunday, 11th January, and called after the County Wexford boy hero of '98 Miles Byrne. The Fianna Organiser attended and explained the aims and objects of the Fianna movement, his remarks being punctuated by frequent bursts of applause. Mr. Sean O'Broin was elected president of the branch, and Mr Sean Breen commander. Just 90 boys enrolled and a committee was appointed to manage the branch.

Sluagh "Thomas Francis Meagher," Waterford, has been doing exceptionally well of late. All the members are now provided with uniform, and good progress has been made in drill, Irish language, and Irish history. History lectures are a great feature in this Sluagh, and the instruction thereby imparted to the members is very gratifying. Sluagh "John Mitchel," Newry, which was reorganised last August, has been forging ahead. Large and suitable premises as headquarters have been secured and nothing left undone to make the work instructing and elevating to the boys.

The Tuam-Fianna, called after John McHale, are also making good progress. A big sports, comprising 13 events, including the 100 yards championship of Connacht, were brought off last October and proved a great success. The sports for this year are now being

organised, it being intended to hold them earlier in the year, probably during May. A dramatic class is a great feature of this Sluagh, "The Eloquent Dempsey" being the last piece to be staged.

In Tullamore the Sluagh is making fair progress, but the brunt of the battle has yet to be fought, as it is only three months in existence, and, of course, all the heavy work in connection with a branch occurs in its commencement. The boys in Tullamore, however, have got their teeth cut, and do not intend to forget the great object for which they enrolled.

As will be seen underneath, new Sluaighte have been formed in Cashel and Tipperary, and others are being organised in Carrick-on-Suir, Mullingar, and Armagh.

The Ard Coisde (Executive) of the Fianna are issuing a handbook for the instruction and guidance of the members of the Fianna. It will contain instructions and articles on swimming, knot-tying, first aid and ambulance work, signalling, camping branch management, organisation, drill and matters pertaining to Fianna work. The price will be 6d.

A great recruiting campaign for 1914 is under way, and a new appeal to the boys of Ireland (in Irish and English) and manifesto are being issued.

An Examination Board consisting of Capt. Padraic O'Ruain, Lieut. Sean Mac Aodha, Lieut. A. de Faoite, and the Organiser has been appointed to examine the boys throughout Ireland in the Fianna tests in order to secure uniformity.

LIAM Ó MAOILÍOSA.