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SOURCE TWO

Transcript | Useful notes

Extracts from police reports on the situation in Ulster in 1913  
(PRO ref: CO 904/27/3)

There is a strong impression amounting to a certainty here that the Military will not act against the Unionists here that they will have the full support of the English Unionists and that many Officers of the Army and Navy will resign their Commissions to assist them in resisting Home Rule by force.

To sum up the situation you have in Belfast some 300,000 Protestants and 100,000 Catholics - the latter mainly depending on the former for a livelihood - of the Protestant population all are bitterly opposed to Home Rule which they regard as Rome Rule. All the men of means and influence, with few exceptions, are prepared to sacrifice money and their business believing that it would not be possible for them to live under an Irish Government. There are some 20,000 drilled men in the City. No doubt there are at least 3,000 rifles and ammunition, (see footnote), while almost every man and boy has a pistol or revolver of some kind. The game may be bluff on the part of the leaders but it is impossible to doubt the fanaticism and determination of the rank and file. Should the Home Rule Bill pass, even if they desire to do so, the leaders will not be able to restrain their followers or protect the Catholic population in the pursuit of their business.

My own opinion is that almost the entire Protestant population of Belfast are determined in their opposition to Home Rule. Many of them are prepared to resist it by force and most of them are willing to make great sacrifices rather than submit. I do not believe they would be mad enough to take the field against His Majesty's troops but short of this almost anything might happen. I am convinced that there will be serious loss of life and wholesale destruction of property in Belfast on the passing of the Home Rule Bill

## How to use this source

1 Study this source carefully. Ask yourself whether the source supports or contradicts the view that:

- The British left as soon as the people wanted them to
- The British left because of the actions of important individuals
- The British were forced out by peaceful political protests
- The British were forced out by armed resistance
- The British wanted to leave because the area was causing them problems
- The British left because they felt the country was ready to rule itself democratically

2 If you were an **admirer** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

3 If you were a **critic** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

4 Does this source suggest that Redmond was an effective leader of the movement for Home Rule?

5 What does the source suggest about the actions of the British?

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