

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 68

Witness

Michael J. Feeley

Identity.

Ex-member of R.I.C.

Subject:

Shooting of Thomas McCurtain,  
Lord Mayor of Cork,  
March 1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

To be kept under seal until 29/11/1972.

File No. S.454

Form B.S.M. 2

Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Burtain.

A Conference was held at Union Quay Barrack Cork on the 19. 3. 1920. The Conference was called by the Military Authorities to discuss with the police authority the I.R.A. activities of Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Burtain the then Lord Mayor of Cork. Representing the police were Divisional Commissioner E. M. Blaydon, County Inspector H. B. Maloney and District Inspector O. R. Swanzy.

In the course of the conference the military authority produced evidence to show that Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Burtain was present at an ambush (which did not come off) on Lord French the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin date

This the police authority were not prepared to admit as their contention was that Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Burtain did not belong to the extreme or military section of the I.R.A.

To support the police contention I was

directed to telephone for Sergeant Giligan  
and Sergeant Normoyle the Sergeants in  
charge of Blackpool police station.

This I did and both sergeants attended  
the conference. Both sergeants upheld  
the police view and stated that they  
had no evidence to show that the  
Lord Mayor was absent from work on  
the date stated.

After some discussion the military  
officers stated that the conference would  
come to an end and that they would  
again consult their informant pending  
reaching a final decision.  
Before the County Inspector left the office  
he told me that during the course of  
the afternoon that I would probably  
receive a despatch from the military  
and if I received such a despatch  
that I was to deal with it.

Shortly before 6 P.M. that same evening  
a military motor cyclist arrived with  
a letter from the Comptant Military Authority.  
The despatch was brought up to the  
office by the Barrack Orderly, and I  
signed a receipt for same, and the motor

Cyclist took his departure.

I now give hereunder to the best of my knowledge the despatch which stated "Our informant has again been consulted and he adheres to his original statement that Thomas M<sup>c</sup> Curtin was present at an attempted ambush on Lord French at Street in Dublin on.

The despatch further stated that their information was reliable and trustworthy and that their informant was above reproach as regards his information. In view of this Thomas M<sup>c</sup> Curtin was to be arrested and interned. Two police were to meet a party of military at St. Luke's R.I.C. Barrack (at time) and peace stated and they were then to proceed to Blackpool to the residence of Thomas M<sup>c</sup> Curtin.

I put the despatch in my pocket and about 7 P.M. that evening I went to the Metropolitan Hotel, King Street where the County Inspector was staying. There I met Mr. Maloney the County Inspector and showed him the despatch,

He rec'd it and handed it back to me and directed me to bring it to Mr Swanzy. As I knew Mr Swanzy would probably be at his home (Mc Tierman's Hotel Patrick's Hill) I went there with the despatch, knocked at the door and when opened I asked for Mr Swanzy. After a short time Miss Swanzy came to me and I told her that I wanted to see her brother. Miss Swanzy told me that her brother had retired to bed, adding at the same time you are no doubt aware of the fact that he has been out of bed for a number of nights lately as duty at present was very hard. In reply I told her that I was fully aware of this, and I told her that I would manage all right and not to trouble any further.

I left Miss Swanzy without further talk and without acquainting her of the business that brought me there.

I then went to King Street barrack and inquired for the Head Constable. The Barrack orderly told me that he was gone to inspect the guard at the Judge Lodgings. The spring assays were on at the

time and the Judges were staying somewhere  
around Twelve. I waited some time for the  
Head Constable to return but as he had  
not done so I asked for the District Inspector's  
clerk in order to get the keys of the  
District Inspector's Office. When I got  
the keys I went to the office got my  
despatch, placed it in an envelope which  
I closed and sealed and addressed it  
to the Head Constable and marked the  
envelope "Strictly secret and on no account to  
be opened by any one except the Head  
Constable" After a short time I left for  
home.

On my way home I met some police <sup>from the country</sup>  
who were in the City for duty at the assizes,  
talked with them for some time and  
left for home.

Next morning my wife called me out  
of bed, and told me that as she was coming  
home from mass she saw a number of women  
riding the beamers and as she passed  
she heard them talking about the police  
and the Lord Mayor. I got out of bed  
to my breakfast and left for Union Quay Barrack  
on reaching the barrack I learned that

on the previous night Constable Murteigh of Shandon Barrack was shot near Popes Quay Chapel and also that some time later Thomas M. Curtin the Lord Mayor was also shot.

Michael Dwyer.

Mr. Sergt. R. D. Dwyer  
27th November 1947.

P.S.

In view of the military information about Lord Mayor M. Curtin being present at the attempted ambush on Lord French it is interesting to note that in Dan Breen's book "His fight for Irish Freedom", he refers to Lord Mayor M. Curtin being present at an ambush planned for to "meet" Lord French in Dublin.

This would go to show that the military had reliable information when they attended the conference as I have stated on 19.3.1920. Their informant as they stated was a "reliable man"

ups. (over)

I should explain about the despatch  
and the necessity for sealing same that  
it was important that no policeman, <sup>except as I have stated</sup>  
should know its contents so that no  
information could leak out about the  
pending arrest of Lord Mayor M. Furtun.  
Strict secrecy had therefore to be  
observed.

MJG