

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
DURO STAIRE MILEAT: 913-21
I.O. W.S. 468

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 468.....

Witness
Joseph Brennan,
Crinken House,
Shankill,
Co. Dublin.

Identity

Official in Dublin Castle pre 1921;
Governor, The Central Bank of Ireland,
1943 to date .

Subject

Civil Servants
and the British Oath of Allegiance, 1918.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1411.....

Form B S M 2

(COPY)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILE TA 1913-21
No. W.S. 468

S.1411.

19 December 1950.

A Chara,

About twelve months ago the Director sent you a copy of a leaflet which explains the purpose for which the Bureau was established and the lines on which it is working.

Among the minor matters which are being investigated by the Bureau is the Oath of Allegiance which Civil Servants in this country were required to take in 1918, and, as a result of which a number were dismissed from the Service.

The Director understands that at that time you were close to the centre of administration and it has occurred to him that you may be in a position to throw some light on this development. He would appreciate it, therefore, if you could let him have any information which you may possess on this matter, with particular reference to the points covered by the following headings:-

1. The text of the Oath.
2. The specific authority, statute, Order in Council, or otherwise, on which its imposition was based, and the date thereof.
3. The names and ranks, and, if possible, the total number and the Departments in which they served, of persons within your knowledge who refused to take the Oath and were dismissed or resigned as a result.
4. Departments where refusal to take the Oath did not result in dismissal and the reason for that exemption, and the names and ranks of those who refused.
5. The reason why, as a result of a challenge as to its validity, certain Civil Servants in the Department of Agriculture and probably elsewhere were merely suspended pending resolution of the points raised, and the steps taken to secure that clarification, e.g., reference to the law officers of the Government in Dublin or London.

The Director has asked me to explain that all information entrusted to the Bureau, whether in the form of statements, letters or other documents, will be treated as strictly confidential, and that their contents will not be revealed to anyone outside the Bureau without the consent of the donor, until such time as the Government decides to make the collection as a whole available for consultation by historians.

Mise, le meas,

(Signed) S. Connolly

a.s. RÚNAÍ

Joseph Brennan, Esq.,
Crinken House,
Shankill,
CO. DUBLIN.

THE CENTRAL BANK OF IRELAND

FOSTER PLACE - DUBLIN

BANC CEANNAIS NA hEIREANN

PLÁS FOSTAIR - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

TELEPHONE Nos 77026/7
TELEGRAMS CURCOM DUBLIN

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
THIS NO

17th January, 1951



Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of 19th ultimo (S.1411), I regret that I am not in a position to give a full answer offhand to your enquiry about matters which arose in 1918 in regard to the Oath of Allegiance but you may be glad to have the following information which is as much as I can give you from recollection without an opportunity of pursuing enquiries.

The text of the Oath of Allegiance is set out in Section 2 of the Promissory Oaths Act 1868. Section 9 of the same Act contains a general prohibition against the taking of the Oath of Allegiance except in specified cases which would not appear to include Civil Servants.

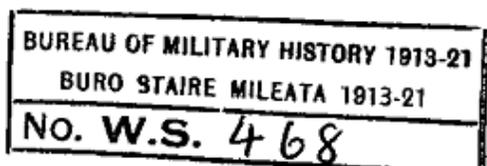
I cannot from memory throw any light on points 3, 4 and 5 of your letter and in so far as Civil Servants may have been asked in 1918 to take an Oath of Allegiance I am not aware under what authority this was done.

I might mention that on an earlier occasion which had no connection with any general measures in 1918 I was asked to take an Oath of Allegiance. I pointed out that under Section 9 abovementioned this would appear to be illegal and after my representation had been considered by the Attorney-General and the Lord Chancellor who agreed with my view I heard no more of the matter.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Brennan
Governor

The Secretary,
Bureau of Military History,
26, Westland Row,
DUBLIN.



An Roinn COSANTA



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913—1921

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~~Seamus Robinson~~

SEAMUS ROBINSON

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY
1913—1921

The Bureau of Military History, 1913-21, was set up by the Minister for Defence on 1st January, 1947, with the following terms of reference —

“To assemble and co-ordinate material to form the basis for the compilation of the history of the movement for Independence from the formation of the Irish Volunteers on 25th November, 1913, to the 11th July, 1921 ”

The purpose of the Bureau is not to write the military history of the period, that is a task for future historians. Its function is merely to assemble and collate in an objective manner the material from which that history can be written, and to ensure that that material is as accurate and as comprehensive as possible. Part of that task is to collect and preserve what remains of original documents associated with the armed struggle for Independence.

The period with which the Bureau is concerned falls naturally into three phases.

PHASE 1. The events leading up to the Rising of Easter Week, 1916, including the creation of the five organisations which took part, namely —

- The Irish Volunteers
- The Irish Citizen Army
- Fianna Eireann
- The Hibernian Rifles, and
- Cumann na mBan.

the circumstances leading up to their formation, and all developments up to the

Rising, including organisation, training, appointments, personnel, finance, acquisition of arms, etc.

PHASE 2 The Rising itself, including the plans and preparations for it, contacts with other countries, mobilisations, the countermanding order and its effect, and events up to the close of the Rising, the surrender, trials, executions, imprisonments, events in prisons, releases, etc.

PHASE 3. Subsequent events up to the 11th July, 1921, including the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers and associated bodies, the creation of the Irish Republican Army, and all military activities of that period, including attacks, ambushes, destruction of barracks, casualties, hospital treatment, trial and execution of spies, etc., the creation and operation of services such as active service units, intelligence, organisation, training, engineering, communications, purchase, capture and manufacture of arms and chemicals, administration, etc.

The military history of 1913-21 cannot be properly understood and assessed without a knowledge of other events which had an intimate bearing on the national resurgence of that period, and for that reason the Bureau is interested in every contributory fact or development, reaching back in many cases to at least the beginning of the century, including inter alia —

- (a) organisations such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Dungannon Clubs, Inghinidhe na hÉireann, Sinn Féin, etc ;
- (b) the Buckingham Palace Conference of July, 1914, the Irish Convention of 1917, the creation of Dáil Éireann as the Parliament of Ireland, its Govern-

ment, its Ministries, its Courts, and its relation to the Irish Republican Army, Conscription, Commissions of Enquiry by the British Government and by independent bodies in Ireland and elsewhere into the destruction of property, shootings, etc., the White Cross, the Prisoners' Dependents' Fund, etc.

With such a wide range of historic activities, the Bureau needs the fullest co-operation from those who, by reason of their intimate knowledge, through personal contact or otherwise, of the events or personalities of the period, are in a position to give authoritative information on the many unrecorded aspects of the struggle.

Because of the circumstances of the time, and of the difficult conditions under which the military and other National organisations operated, the amount of documentary material was of necessity very restricted, and some of it, unfortunately, has since been lost through destruction, deterioration or other causes. The collection, recording and preservation of such original documents as now remain are, therefore, matters of great importance. No original document which related to the struggle should be destroyed or allowed to deteriorate, even if it appears to be of trivial or purely local interest. The Bureau will gladly accept any such original document presented to it, and will take steps for its safe custody and preservation for the Nation. If the donor wishes to have a copy or a photographic replica, the Bureau will be only too pleased to supply it.

In any case where a person having custody of original documents does not wish to part with them, the Bureau would appreciate information as to their nature and contents, and would like to have permission to have them copied by photographic or other processes. If the owner prefers that the contents of certain documents should not be disclosed even to the Bureau for a specified time, but intends ultimately to make them available

to the Nation, it would be appreciated if the Bureau could be given a general indication of their nature and contents and of the owner's intention regarding them, so that a record may be made of their existence and of their present and intended location

It is realised, of course, that in many cases the available documents do not represent a complete picture of the events to which they relate, and for that reason much of the work of the Bureau will, of necessity, be concerned with the assembling of evidence, oral or written, from persons or bodies having first-hand information of any phase or aspect of the conflict, whether in Ireland or abroad. The Bureau will welcome communications in writing from those who feel that they can assist in this way, and would ask them to give an indication of the areas, periods or phases upon which they are in a position to give information.

All information entrusted to the Bureau, whether in the form of statements, letters or other documents, will be treated as strictly confidential, except where the donor himself expresses a wish to the contrary. This will not in any way affect the right of the donor himself to use the information in any way he wishes, whether by publication or otherwise. The Bureau, of course, will not undertake publication or enter into any arrangement for publication, but the Director will offer no objection to the use for that purpose by the donor of copies or photographic replicas of documents given to him by the Bureau.

Apart from statements of evidence prepared for the Bureau, original documents of prime importance include, *inter alia* —

1. Original signed letters, notes, memoirs, etc., in manuscript and typescript, including captured correspondence; and similar documents or fragments thereof in manuscript, unsigned, but with evidence of authorship

- 2 Operation and mobilisation orders, roll books, accounts, membership cards, etc, in relation to any of the various organisations.
- 3 Proclamations, deportation, prohibition and similar orders and other documents issued by the British Authorities generally or to individuals.
- 4 Orders and correspondence connected with them issued by the British Authorities to Local Government bodies
- 5 Posters or notices issued or served by the British Army, the D.M.P., the R.I.C., the Auxiliaries or the Black-and-Tans.
- 6 British Army and Police publications, such as :—
 - (a) Hue and Cry.
 - (b) Weekly Summary 1920-21.
- 7 Irish official publications, such as :—

An tÓglach 1918-1921.
- 8 Prison and internment camp journals, magazines, diaries, etc.
9. Passes and permits issued by the British and Irish Authorities at various times, including Easter Week, 1916.

Of importance also are —

- (a) Drill books and other instruction manuals and leaflets issued by the various organisations.
- (b) Pamphlets issued by various bodies in Ireland, U.S.A. and elsewhere, such as "The Friends of Irish Freedom," etc.

In the process of collection by the Bureau, it is possible that spare copies may accumulate, and it is desirable, therefore, that donors should in every case indicate their wishes as to the disposal of any of their contributions which may not be required by the Bureau, whether by return, or otherwise.

September, 1948.