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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 538

Witness

Rev. Fr. Ml. Browne,
The Chancellery,
Archbishop's House,
Dublin, N.E.3.

Identity.

Secretary,
The Chancellery, Archbishop's House,
Dublin.

Subject.

Letters of Most Rev. Dr. Walsh,
Archbishop of Dublin at the time, on Irish
national affairs 1917-1919.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.245

Form B.S.M. 2

THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

15 February 1951

Rt. Reverend Monsignor,

I am desired by the Director to inform you that on 1st January 1947, the Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, was set up by the Minister for Defence, 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".

Associated with the Bureau is an Advisory Committee of persons experienced in historical study and research under the chairmanship of Dr. Richard Hayes, L.R.C.S.I., L.R.C.P.I., D.Litt., himself a distinguished historian. The personnel of the Committee is set out in the accompanying leaflet, which describes briefly the general lines on which the Bureau is working.

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 related fact or development, reaching back in many cases to the beginning of the century. The Bureau is concerned with the ascertainment of the facts as a whole and not with any restricted aspect of them, and it is endeavouring, therefore, to get evidence from every person who has anything to contribute, no matter what his viewpoint past or present, and no matter what side he took in the period covered by the Terms of Reference, and a great deal of valuable material has already been assembled and recorded here.

After the Rising of 1916, and during the difficult period which followed, up to the Truce on 11th July 1921, pronouncements were made from time to time by individual members of the Hierarchy, in Lenten Pastorals and otherwise, which played an important part in the developments of that period.

The Director is anxious to have an accurate record of these, in so far as they bear on the work with which the Bureau is concerned, and if there are extant copies of any made by His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin, he would appreciate it very much if they could be made available for inclusion in the archives of the Bureau. Many of these pronouncements were reported, partially at least, in the Press, but for historical purposes, it is important that complete and accurate copies, appropriately authenticated, should be on record.

I have the honour to be,
Rt. Reverend Monsignor,

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) P.J. Brennan
SECRETARY.

Rt. Reverend Monsignor Richard Glennon,
Chancellor,
Archbishop's House,
Drumcondra, DUBLIN.

ORIGINAL



THE CHANCELLERY,
ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
DUBLIN, N.E. 3.

4th. JUNE, 1951.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 538



Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter, to Mgr. Glennon, dated February 15, 1951, I wish to state that I have made a search in the Archives, Archbishop's House, for letters of ^{*}Dr. Walsh, bearing on national and political matters during the period 1913 - 1921, but I have found very few. His letters and Pastorals to the Clergy for that period have very few references. You will obtain some idea of the interest he took in national affairs from a study of his life, published by the Talbot Press (1928), and written by Rev. Patrick J. Walsh, M.A.

I enclose some letters and extracts that may be of interest.

Yours Sincerely,

M. Browne

(Rev. Ml. Browne).

Mr. P.J. Brennan,
Bureau of Military History.

* Most Rev. Dr. William Walsh,
Archbishop of Dublin and
Primate of Ireland.

P. Brennan
Secretary of the Bureau.

Letters of Most Rev. Dr. Walsh

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 538

Published letter (on the eve of a parliamentary election) in Co. Longford

(May 8h 1917) :

"The question may perhaps be asked why a number of us Irish bishops, Catholic and Protestant, have thought it worth our while to sign a protest against the partitioning of Ireland. Has not that miserable policy, condemned as it has been by the all but unanimous voice of Nationalist Ireland, been removed, months ago, from the sphere of practical politics ?

Nothing of the kind. Anyone who thinks that partition, whether in its naked deformity or under the transparent mask of "county option" does not hold a leading place in the practical politics of to-day is simply living in a foll's paradise".

P.S.

I think it a duty to write this, although from information that has just reached me, I am fairly satisfied that the mischief has been already done, and that the country is practically sold".

Dr. Walsh to Cardinal O' Connell, Archbishop of Boston, Nov.10, 1919 :

"I wish to contribute a hundred guineas to the Irish National Fund inaugurated under the auspices of the elected body known as Dail Eireann, our Irish Parliament. I cannot bear but think that, as far as people of our Irish race are concerned, their knowledge of the fact that I have subscribed to the fund would be of at least as much help as any money subscription of mine could be.

But as matters now stand in Ireland none of our newspapers dare publish the fact that I had subscribed. We are living under martial law, and amongst the numerous devices to which our present Government has had recourse in its foolish attempts to crush the national spirit of our people is the issuing of sundry military orders. In one of these they have given notice to the editors, or managers, of our popular newspapers of the fate that awaits any newspaper venturing to publish the names of contributors to the fund or the amounts contributed.

I, of course, am well aware of the deep personal interest that your Eminence takes in our Irish national affairs, and of the powerful help that you have given to our people in their effort to secure their rightful control of the government of their own country. I trust that your Eminence will not consider it a misplaced confidence on my part that I feel assured of your willingness to come to my aid by helping me to make known in America the fact of my subscription to the Dail Eireann Fund.

Freedom of the Press, the right to public meeting, the right of personal liberty, the right of trial by jury, no longer exist in this country except in so far as they can exist subject to the absolutely uncontrolled discretion of some military ruler technically designated the 'competent military authority'.

All this has had its natural effect - the driving of disaffection underground, with no less natural result that disaffection driven underground finds an outlet in crime. The 'competent military authority' does not seem to realise that there is no possible remedy for this lamentable state of things, so long as the source of all the evil, the present system of military rule, is maintained."

Letter to the clergy on the attempted assassination of Lord French :
(Dec. 19, 1919) :

Extracts:

"the melancholy protest of every Irishman who loves his country, and hopes to see the present rule of coercive government in Ireland brought to a final close".

.....

"Surely there is no one in Ireland so ignorant of the moral law as not to know that murder, both in itself and in its consequences, is one of the most appalling crimes in the whole catalogue of guilt. Surely there is no criminal in Ireland who does not know that this is the only light in which the crime of murder, or attempted murder, can be viewed by the faithful members of any Christian Church throughout the world".

.....

"Is there any rational man capable of deluding himself into the belief that such a method of seeking redress for the misgovernment of this country is likely to help the efforts of the righteous men who are working earnestly for the purpose of re-establishing in our own country the reign of liberty and justice?"

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