

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAMPE B. S. M. TA 1913-21

No. W.S. 321

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 321.....

Witness

Mrs. Maire O'Brolchain,
Rocklawn,
St. Mary's Park, Galway.

Identity

Vice President of
Inghini na hEireann.

Subject

- (a) National associations 1898-1921;
- (b) Events of Easter Week 1916.

Note by her on Padraic O'Brolchain, her husband;
Notes on miscellaneous events of national
interest.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S.1237.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF MRS. MAIRE O'BROLCHAIN,

Rocklawn, St. Mary's Park, Galway - on certain incidents
in 1916.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 321

Easter Week outside the lines.

On Easter Monday morning we heard from P.T. Keohane (Gills) of the sinking of the Aud. It seemed to write Finis to all hopes of a Rising. Always in Irish history the ships are sunk and the guns lost. However, in the evening, on hearing that the G.P.O. had been taken we (my husband, Padraic O Brolchain, and myself) walked as far as the Rotunda. Thronging, milling crowds were in O'Connell St. Turning back, amongst the cars tearing in from the races, we caught sight of one from which the O'Rahilly was watching out. He looked anxious, tense, urgent, but smiled and saluted. On Tuesday, we read the proclamation of the Republic, pasted on the walls of St. Patrick's Training College - "Under the protection of the Most High God" were words to thrill any Irish heart.

We were heavy and sick because Eoin MacNeill's and Arthur Griffith's names were missing. That was the general feeling, when it was not actual hostility - James Connolly, a Socialist - almost like a Communist now - and his Citizen Army, and Pearse in revolt against MacNeill. The householders rushing round for food, fuel and light - gas cut off - were very bitter against the "fools" who incommoded them. But when the guns of the "Helga" were heard pounding on Liberty Hall, only the English and a few pro-English welcomed the sound. These ^{fighters} were our countrymen fighting for Ireland and must be helped. Some Volunteers - Michael Fleming, e.g., who would not touch the Rising on Monday - were off.

Padraic O'Brochain

My husband considered himself a Volunteer, though a change to Whitehall made attendance at Sandymount very difficult. He tried attending at North side, but preferred Sandymount. Pressure of private and office work, National Health, prevented regular

attendances anyhow. There was no question of victimisation of Volunteers in his office.

On Wednesday evening Mr. and Mrs. English told us that they had been trying to get to O'Connell St. - she to her Cumann Unit in Reis's which she had left easily that morning - he to join in G.F.O. Padraic then decided that he would appeal to MacNeill to call out the Volunteers and offer to go to Connacht, cycling, where he was well known, and his word would be taken. English offered for Wicklow, or Wexford and they hoped to get others. It seemed then as if the Rising would continue for a long time. Padraic saw Henry Dixon, P.T. Keohane, Domhnall O'Connor - old "Irish Irelanders". Dixon perhaps was I.R.B.* His daughter was in G.F.O. They approved warmly. P.T. Keohane offered some fire-arms and promised to take care of our family - 6 small boys - should Padraic not return. It was decided he should carry no arms and only verbal instructions. Fighting in the provinces would draw the British forces away from Dublin, while, I think, the Wicklow men were to be asked to move on Dublin. English was to report to P. Belton. Arthur Griffith had to be seen first. His approval would count in the country. He told Padraic that he had been to see MacNeill on Wednesday and that he was adamant in refusing to call out the Volunteers, but told Padraic that he might as well see MacNeill. Perhaps he would have changed his mind - anyway try and God speed. He told Padraic of the byways by which he had made his way through the Park, thinking that if a bullet found him in the back it would have been clear evidence that he was shot while running away from the fighting.

Padraic got the impression that Griffith favoured an appeal to the Volunteers and so reported to his group. Travelling was increasingly difficult, but Padraic made his way sometime on Saturday morning to MacNeill. His brother, James MacNeill, and Bulmer Hobson were there. Padraic put his case as strongly as he could, but in vain. MacNeill always decided his course of action by the light of his conscience. During a close

association with him in the Gaelic League of five or six years, I had never known him to be influenced by anyone, or to try to influence anyone. His mind was too fine for resentment or bitterness and he could be trusted to see his opponent's point of view. He stated his case and let it rest, so it was now. There was no faintest tinge of animosity against those who had usurped his authority. His very definite refusal was given on the grounds that he could not call out unarmed men to attack those armed with machine guns. From that position he could not be moved, but did not seek to dissuade Padraic from joining up. There was some discussion about the morality of attack and defence, I think. MacNeill said he had decided not to go into hiding. He had fire-arms and had considered the question of resisting arrest - possibly, he said, he could kill two or three soldiers, but that would be of no use to Ireland, so too had Griffith decided who had said that he expected death from the courtmartial ~~and so~~^{so} also must MacNeill the clear-sighted.

After MacNeill's arrest, Padraic met Miss MacNeill (his sister) and offered to give evidence at his trial. He was not called and he thought his evidence would have been of little use anyhow.

MacNeill was, as usual, right in his refusal, for while Padraic was on a byroad far up in the Phoenix Park, the guns had ceased. He was limping behind a disabled bicycle, having met with the only accident of his cycling days. Meanwhile, many messengers called for news of him and in the evening Henry Dixon and another man called to tell of the surrender. Dixon assured me that the Volunteers were to be allowed to go home free and bearing their arms and (presumably) whatever ammunition was left - leaders not to be penalised. I demurred, but Henry Dixon, who belonged to a firm of solicitors, said "I might know that these were the only terms Connolly would accept for his men." Next morning English went off to Kilsallaghan. He donned his wedding suit, wishing to die for Ireland, but the Lancers were there before him to take

2.

Mulcahy in to Pearse. Before English returned, Padraic had gone, also saying it was a 'fake' surrender and he would stop it ('Pierce' instead of 'Pearse' was signed to the surrender). As he had to borrow a bicycle he was fortunately not in time. He met Robert Rooney and they took messages from some Volunteers to their homes.

They were very late returning and Sean O'Seagha said they had probably gone to meet the German troops that had landed in Balbriggan neighbourhood. Armed with a photograph of some British General in his breast-pocket, Sean had vainly tried to get past the sentries up Whitehall. Now it was dark; there was another road and he would try again. He was more positive even than Henry Dixon in his statements. There is no limit to the credulity of men. He did not seek or find the Germans, and I saw him next on the day of his release from Wandsworth.

A few weeks before Easter 1916, Sean Ó Seagha called one evening at Home Farm Road and told me he was 'on the run'. A case of pikeheads consigned to the Irish Cutlery Coy. - he was manager - had been seized. There had been an inquiry by Castle officials and he had said "They were wanted for sticking pigs - a great demand in the South". Shortt, Under-Secretary, made capital of this answer afterwards. Sean was allowed to go free, but expected arrest and search of his house. He had made contact with Volunteer. The Ó Seaghdha lived on a short road right opposite our house - Sean watched, my husband rushed to Fleming, the grocer, at Tolka Bridge. I went across to tell Mrs. O'Seagha. A detective lived straight opposite Ó Seagha. - another followed Padraic into Fleming's, but he and Fleming spoke Irish. Fleming sent a cart and removed firearms promising to send them to Kimmage that night. Shortly after, a number of Cumann na mBan arrived "to see the week-old baby". They were to carry off all the arms; Maire Walker was among them. Later, some Volunteers and Cumann na mBan stole into Fleming's back yard while detectives watched the front, and removed the arms to Seamus

O'Doherty, Connaught St. where Diarmuid O'Hegarty and other Volunteers guarded them. A man named Tobin moved them in the morning to Kimmage. Ó Seaghdha's house was searched, and the detective said "Fleming and the Cumann na mBan have got the firearms" but they did not search Fleming.

O'Rahilly sent ~~no~~^{us} revolvers after the raid on Lawlor's 1915, and it was Michael O'Hanrahan who collected them. ^{2.}

Padraic had carried a message to a youth named Ryan who lived in Clonliffe Road - from Bulmer Hobson. His sister took the message. Afterwards (1918) we met her on her honeymoon in Cushendall - she was married to Tobin who had moved the firearms from Seamus O'Doherty. Her brother in 1916 had gone on to Dr. Pat MacCartan and escaped when Dr. MacCartan's house was raided. The British soldier on sentry in the back garden caught him. The boy said "I'm Dublin, from Clonliffe Road". "I'm from Summerhill myself" said the soldier, "run out under the hedges". He escaped to Belfast and was working there under the name of Toal in 1918.

I forget the important part - what the message was.

There is nothing of military value in the following, but to me this record seems important. It has not been written until now.

On Sunday morning, April 30th, a Mr. Murphy, Civil Servant, married to Senator Concannon's sister, asked Padraic if he knew of any of the Volunteer families in need of money and offered him £10. It was generous from a salaried man and a sick man. Padraic knew of no one then, but on Monday we heard many tales of hardship. Many of the Volunteers round Drumcondra came from the poorer classes. They went out, as to an ordinary route march. Now the women were faced with hardship - weekly rent, food wanting - no money at all, and the British soldiers' dependants so well cared for, jeering at them, though in some cases, indeed, helping. The National Aid was for the moment not available. I think it was because Mrs. Tom Clarke ^{who held it} was in jail. Rumour again said the funds

had been seized by the British. Anyway, Mr. Murphy's £10 kept the wolf from ten doors at least, but everyone of them knew somebody worse off.

Then began a procession of callers to our house. "I heard you were collecting" - and contributions were handed in with promises of more. Willing helpers distributed it every evening - the rule being - no money left over. It cheered up the dependants and raised their morale to have the kindly young ladies and gentlemen looking after their welfare. Courtsmartial and executions roused, instead of frightening the people. Money poured or dribbled in and out. From Bishop St. came Mr. Kennedy almost daily with contributions he had collected from the till of his small shop. A friend of his, Miss O'Keeffe from Cranmer's Music shop collected £1 weekly for months, ^{from her own meagre salary} and gave it to me for the National Aid. "Thank God I had it" she said, when I found out.

A nurse told me that a young wife had made no provision whatever for her ^{coming} ~~young~~ baby. Every available penny had gone to equip her Volunteer husband. "And he had everything, even to the ground sheet" she said proudly.

Emily Scott, nee Gunning, a cousin of G. Reynolds, who died in Clanwilliam House, brought me the choicest clothes from her own and her sister's baby stores - handmade lace, hand embroidered robes and silk shawls. "Not half good enough for that child" was what she said. These were typical of the givers. But for the very few who came to seek, it was dreadful. A week before, safe-sheltered, bills paid, indulgent husbands in good positions ^{now} pressing landlords, unwilling tradesmen, helpless children, husbands who, if they returned, would be unemployed. Yet, these women were all proud of them. It made me ashamed of having a man safe at home.

Amongst givers P.T. Keohane was the most generous. For him, I gave about £100 until June 1917, and I think I was not the only one who distributed for him.

Then, when many willing workers had indexed cards of Volunteer dependants all over the city we heard that the National Aid Funds were safe, and all ready for distribution. So it ended. But among the dark memories of executions, and exile and deportations, one somehow got to understand - I say it in all reverence - what the spirit of the early Christians was like.

I read ~~in~~ Mr. Lennon's articles in the "Times" recently and I was particularly interested in the one about Sean Fitzgibbon as I had taught him Irish when he was in his teens and we had remained friends after.

About Jan. 1924, he came to my house in Howth - he lived then in Howth too - and we had a talk about 1916. He told me that Pearse sent him to Kerry to land guns and he understood that MacNeill knew all about it. Pearse gave him orders to put them on a train that was going to Limerick and that some of them would go on to Roscommon and the West. He pointed out to Pearse that they would not be allowed to do that without opposition from the English and that might mean a Rising. Pearse smiled and said "Well, Sean". Sean went off. I always understood it was to Tralee he went. He said he could not get in touch with anybody and there seemed to be no arms there. He found the situation there very unsatisfactory. He went on to Limerick with the idea of getting some of the men there who were armed to go down to Kerry to help the local Volunteers. Then he said that when he opened the paper on Saturday morning and saw about the arrests, he knew it would make a difference and he returned to Dublin/^{to MacNeill}for orders. He left me with the impression that he went to him before going to Pearse, thinking that MacNeill knew everything. He was greatly surprised when he found that that was the first MacNeill knew about his own mission to Kerry and Limerick.

I am tired of reading about MacNeill being influenced by Bulmer Hobson, Fitzgibbon and others. As I have said already, he came to his decision on the merits of the case and according to the dictates of his conscience. The thought that a man like

Fitzgibbon, who was not a very forceful character, could sway him makes me laugh.

Sean went to see Pearse after his visit to MacNeill. Pearse looked changed. He was stern and had a set expression on his face. He informed Pearse that he was not going with them into the Rising. Pearse stretched out his hand and shook his, saying "Well, God bless you anyway, Sean". When he came to that point in his story the tears came into Sean's eyes. He said he felt very sore about Pearse deceiving him.

Sean was to ^{have} come again the following Sunday, but my father died on that day and I had no further conversation with him. He left Howth shortly after.

INGHINIDHE NA hEIREANN.

Inghinidhe na hEireann was founded on Easter Sunday, 1900, in Celtic Literary Society Rooms, 32, Lr. Abbey St. Dublin, by Maud Gonne and a group of young girls. Arthur Griffith was doing a month in jail for having "broken a stick" in assaulting Collis, who, in "Collis' Weekly" had libelled Maud Gonne. The young girls were nearly all sisters of Celtic Literary Society members and they wished to replace the stick - actually Griffith used a Zambok - a South African leather whip. I am giving the Bureau a cutting from a newspaper (Appendix A) describing the presentation of the walking stick to him on his release. I notice it states that the attack on Maud Gonne was in the "Figaro". I always thought it was in "Collis' Weekly".

I was in the Celtic Literary Society from 1896. They did not admit ladies as members, but they had certain functions such as Irish classes and special literary meetings that ladies were allowed to attend. The sisters of the members - as well as others - attended the social functions. I met there Ethna Carbery and Alice Milligan, who came from Belfast, and Maud Gonne

I had a small Irish class in the Celtic Literary Society.

I had learnt Irish and read Keating in Cong National School where my mother, who was a speaker of Irish, taught. When she was only 12 she taught the whole parish the catechism in Irish for Dr. McHale who gave her a special blessing for it. She was a friend of Boghan O'Growney and Douglas Hyde.)

Then Maud Gonne suggested that we form a society - that was agreed upon - and the name - and we took same objects as Celtic Literary Society - fostering of Irish language, literature, music, history and industries - adding "among the young". William Rooney, Acting Editor of United Irishman, was in outer room, and again Maud Gonne proposed that we give effect to his suggestion in the United Irishman that a treat be given to the patriotic children who had refused to attend at the treat given when Queen Victoria had visited Ireland seeking recruits for South African War. We decided to appeal publicly and privately to all interested. Then officers were appointed, Maud Gonne President, Ethna Carbery and Maire Ni Cillin (myself) V.P., Maire Quinn, Hon. Sec., her sister, Margaret, Treasurer. The Patriotic Children's Treat was held August - 30,000 children marched, according to press reports. Children's classes were held in 32 Lower Abbey St. and at other centres thro' city - one in a hay loft was a great success. Monthly literary meetings for members and their friends - papers on famous Irishwomen were read and discussed over tea.

The Goddess Bride; Saint Brigid; Rose, wife of Fiach; M.N. O'Byrne, Margaret of Offaly; Maeve, Cliona, Macha; these were published in United Irishman - lifted into Boston Pilot, Southern Cross, and other American papers. A flag was presented to Major McBride, Transvaal Irish Brigade, a banner chosen for Inighinidhe and a badge - huge brass Celtic Brooch.

Historical tableaux packed the Antient Concert Rooms during Easter Week, 1901. Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery, the Fays, W.B. Yeats, all helping. Maud Gonne was in United States. Our first grief was the untimely death of William Rooney in May. The

classes were brought to Bodinstown. The children's choir for Easter tableaux was kept on for plays and tableaux in Autumn.

"Eilís agus an Bean Deirce", the first play in Irish to be produced in Dublin, was put on by Inghinidhe in August 1901, in Antient Concert Rooms with "Deirdre" by A.E. 1902; "Escape of Red Hugh" Alice Milligan; "Racing Lug" Cousins, "Laying of Foundations" by Fred Ryan; "Pot of Broth" by Yeats and "Hour Glass".

Maire Ni Siubhlaigh, Sara and Maire Allgood and others joined the National Dramatic Society. Maud Gonne was acting in "Caitlin Ni Houlihan" which Yeats had dedicated "To the memory of William Rooney" in April 1902, when word came that Ethna Carbery was dead. Maud Gonne was unable to speak the prologue, for grief.

Inghinidhe gave help to Yeats in founding native school of acting. Maud Gonne became a Catholic and married John McBride in Paris, and in 1904 Maire Quinn, Secretary, left for St. Louis Exhibition.

I ceased to be an active member about this time, but helped sometimes. A paper on "Eva" was read ^{by me} and a fund was raised by Inghinidhe to help with publication of her poems - an astonishing number of small P.Os. were received from the country. The "Bean na hEireann" ran a few years - getting many ads. also. Helena Molony ran it - about 1906 or so. Gaelic League and a Society in Fairview ran children's classes also and the Countess Markievicz and H. Molony had Fianna. Perhaps the whole youth movement of this century began with the Patriotic Children's Treat.

Anna Parnell read a paper on "Ladies' Land League", giving M.S.S. to Inghinidhe.

So, with varying fortunes on to 1913 when Inghinidhe were largely represented at the founding of the Volunteers - all signing their names in Irish.

I should have said earlier that our consistent support of Irish industries was very, very difficult for us.

Margaret Quinn, our first Treasurer, kept up her work after her marriage to Brian Callender until the Inghinidhe became merged in Cumann na mBan - afterwards too. There was no fear of disbanding while she held the reins.

Inghinidhe was well represented in Easter Week 1916, Elizabeth O'Farrell in the G.P.O. carrying the white flag to the British. Maire Ni Siubhlaigh, Chrissie Doyle, a pale middle-aged woman in Stephen's Green, Maire Perolz, ready always to dare; Helena Molony, the walking arsenal, as the British officer called her, going "to fight" with Sean Connolly, to find herself instead ministering to him, to hear his last words "Go on, we are winning". Sinead de Valera, chief of the waiting women at home.

The Inghinidhe was unique amongst women associations in that it took no interest whatever in Women's Rights or suffrage - just did what was most urgent for Ireland.

(Note - The Inghinidhe - or rather, individual members went militant on one occasion in 1903, when they helped to break up a parliamentary meeting in Rotunda. King Edward was coming to Ireland and Madam Gonne McBride, accompanied by National Council members, N. Dixon, E. Martyn and S. McManus, forced their way to the platform in order to make Lord Mayor Harrington promise that there would not be a civic welcome. Chairs and bones were broken in the ensuing rout and the interrupters were very unpopular. King Edward decided that he did not want a civic welcome. I am giving you a ^{copy of a} cutting from the 'Gael' of New York dated July 1903, referring to this matter (Appendix B)).

During Boer War, Inghinidhe distributed anti-recruiting leaflets to soldiers and their girl friends, who usually walked past G.P.O. every night.

I have brought an article that I wrote in 1938 for the "Irish Press" about the founding of the Inghinidhe and the work done by them (Appendix C). When there is time, perhaps you could send me a copy of it. The Daughters of Erin referred to in it were an

Irish-American organisation. The motto mentioned was that of the Celtic Literary Society, which was as follows:-

"We're one in heart if you be Ireland's friend,
 Though leagues asunder, our opinions tend,
 There are but two great parties in the end"
 (i.e. Ireland and England).

John McBride, Easter Week.

John McBride in 1916 was staying with his old friend, Fred Allen. Allen, I heard, was an I.R.B. - very prominent in '98 celebrations. McBride's proudest possession, according to Mrs. Allen, was the Inghinidhe flag presented to him in 1900, when he was Major in the Transvaal Irish Brigade. He took great care - shaking it free from its wrappings, at intervals - always saying, when Mrs. Allen wondered at his enthusiasm, "I must mind the flag. It will wave over a free Ireland yet".

On Easter Monday she saw from the front window a boy come up to the hall door. Shortly afterwards, McBride told her that he was going out and did not know when he would be back. She saw him go out the gate and noticed a bulge in the pocket of his overcoat. Later she remembered the bulge when she knew that he was with Thomas MacDonagh in Jacob's Factory and afterwards like him was made prisoner.

Later a British military car came for her. She was to be questioned about McBride. The officers allowed her to take her sister to Kilmainham. She was questioned very briefly. Of her own knowledge did John McBride belong to any illegal organisation. He had never told her that he belonged to any organisation. Had she received any letter or verbal message for him on Easter Monday?. She had not. (The maid had answered the door bell). To her knowledge did he carry firearms on Easter Monday?. To her knowledge - No (the bulge was no proof and she had never actually seen firearms in his room).

So the ordeal was over and she hoped that her truthful misleading answers would set him free! John McBride was given permission to speak to her "on private matters", his guards, of course, listening. He was pleasant as ever. He should have been best man at his ^{brother's} ~~cousin's~~ (Dr. Anthony ^{McBride} ~~Gill~~) wedding and asked her to send on the wedding ring; then he told her to see that the bill for the wedding suit he had ordered was paid. She promised for the ring but said "Surely the bill can wait till you come back". He just said he would like the matter settled. Then he said "Goodbye" and suddenly pushed his hand across his lips, he said quickly in a lowered tone "Mind the flag" and he laughed. To her sister he had said lightly "I might not be back". Somehow I think it was to say "Mind the flag" that McBride had asked for her evidence - if indeed he had asked, and not the British. His was the loneliest death of all and there was contempt and rage for British hypocrisy on that 6th May when we heard of his execution. He was shot mainly - or entirely - for his fight in South Africa sixteen years previously. But still there was pride that he stood in his proper place with the young leaders. He had asked to see Henry Dixon who, when the officers came, was writing up the books of the local Vincent de Paul. He was expecting arrest and would leave his accounts in order. Deliberately he did not tell his family of his whereabouts. The officers had gone when he returned and he was turned back by the military when he tried to cross Capel St. bridge. So, except for perhaps some words to Father Albert, "Mind the Flag" was John McBride's last message.

Mrs. Allen did mind the flag and the "sight" of the captured cannon and the McBride papers so successfully that they were never found during the raids. The flag was rolled round her during the first raid, the sight and papers hidden in an outhouse. Afterwards for a few years the flag was stitched into a feather bed. She gave the flag and "sight" eventually to Joe McBride of Westport and his widow ^{after his death} presented them to the Museum.

There is another flag presented by Madame Gonne McBride.

This was carried also in McBride's Brigade. It was sent to her by a Mr. Burgess, Pretoria (a brother of Cathal Brugha, I heard) and, as far as I know, he did not say how it came into his possession. It has the trade mark "Maguire, Donegal St. Belfast" who used to advertise flags, bunting, etc. in Alice Milligan's paper "Shan Van Vocht", and perhaps this is one that was carried in the 1898 procession in Dublin. Alice Milligan suggested that a printer, MacPeake, who emigrated after '98, may have carried the flag with him to Transvaal. He was in action in the Boer War and his son became a famous editor in United States. This was probably the flag of the Brigade before the Inghinidhe flag reached it during the summer of 1900.

I have here a newspaper cutting - a letter to the surviving members of the Inghinidhe from Maud Gonne McBride in the Irish Press (Appendix D), also a typed letter to me, asking us to attend at the presentation of the flag to the Museum. She made a mistake about this. The flag sent by Burgess was not the one presented to McBride and the Irish Brigade by the Inghinidhe. The latter never left McBride's possession and, as already stated is also in the Museum. When I visited the Museum in July it was not on show. Dr. Hayes McCoy produced it on request. That matter should be set right once for all. The Inghinidhe flag was made by Maire Quinn (Mrs. Dudley Digges) and her cousin, Mrs. O'Byrne, in the latter's house at Firhouse.

I remember Mrs. Griffith telling me that Una Casey - I have forgotten her married name - has a photo of Maud Gonne and John McBride with the baby Sean between them and the Inghinidhe flag - portion of it - showing in the background. She has also got a letter from McBride to her father, James Casey, who was, I think, first Secretary to the Gaelic League. You should ask her to give you those to copy.

The flag had come to console Major John McBride of the

Transvaal Irish Brigade at a time when he had been bitterly wounded by his countrymen in his native Mayo. Ireland gave loud expression to its Boer sympathies, but McBride only polled 427 votes against 2,400 for John O'Donnell, U.I. League, 1,600 voting illiterate; electorate 10,000 largely ignorance of abstention policy. Paul Kruger it was who put up the funds, but it was then too late for electioneering purposes. The national record of his mother's family did not count. Anthony Gill, her brother, was a famous '67 man. My father, who was also a '67 man, spent some time with him in Castlebar Gaol - John's kinsman, Gill of Mayo, fighting during the Jameson raid, had made history for the courage and daring of his men, afterwards the nucleus of the Irish Brigade.

John McBride, when the Boers were defeated, joined Maud Gonne in the United States, appealing to the Irish to go back to the ideals of '98, '48 and '67, to discard Parliamentary action.

Of England, then in the flush of victory with the wealth of the Transvaal, he said "The present generation will see the dismemberment of the British Empire and the establishment of an Irish Republic and nothing less will fully satisfy the hopes and aspirations of the Irish people". Courageous words in 1901! Life was not easy for him when he returned to Dublin in 1905, but he was always seen in gatherings devoted to the uplift of the nation. Quiet, friendly, courteous, but always lonely and detached. Maire Ni Siubhlaigh, who had charge of the six Cumann na mBan in Jacob's, gives a pleasant account of his kindness, consideration and old-fashioned courtesy during the last week of his life. He had dreamt the dream of Thomas F. Meagher - an Irish Brigade fighting for Ireland in Ireland: 50,000 he had said laughingly. The reality - behind closed walls, and never a chance for a single shot. Still, undefeated "Mind the flag" (it will wave over a Free Ireland yet) he must have added as he turned to face sentence of death -

"Yes, John - Le congnamh Dé".

Mrs. Wyse-Power, who knew that the Rising was coming, although she may not have known the exact day, told me that she had asked Sean McDermott to let McBride know when the Rising was to start and he promised he would. Desmond Ryan's account in his book "The Rising" shows that he kept his promise.

Witness: *S. J. [unclear]*

Mrs. Ryan W. J. Spolans
28. 10. 1949.

