

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

## STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 368.....

## Witness

Mr. Sean McGarry,  
25 Booterstown Ave.,  
Blackrock,  
Dublin.

## Identity

Member of I.R.B.;

Close associate of Sean McDermott and  
Tom Clarke.

## Subject

- (a) Biographical note on Tom Clarke;
- (b) Some activities of the leaders in  
preparation for the Rising 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ... S.39.....

CLARKE BROTHERS' SERVICE ONTOM CLARKE.

Tom Clarke was born in the British Military Barracks at Hurst Castle in the Isle of Wight in 1858. His father was a bombardier in the Royal Artillery, married as they say, "on the strength". In 1860 the regiment was transferred to South Africa and the Clarke family moved with it. The ship in which they sailed was in collision, they escaped unscathed and for seven years lived in various garrison towns in South Africa.

In 1865 the family returned to Ireland and Tom's father now Battery Sergeant was posted to the Ulster Militia stationed in Dungannon. Here he lived and on his discharge from the Army in 1868 he made his home. Tom always retained a great love for Dungannon of which he regarded himself a native. In his boyhood the Fenian tradition was still very much alive and there would seem to have been a strong centre of the I.R.B. in Dungannon. Tom was persuaded by his schoolmaster to become a monitor in the local school and might have been a teacher had he not been ordered to give his Sunday mornings to teaching Catechism. He had no objection to teaching Catechism but reckoned that Sunday was not included in a teacher's working week and so refused and the National Board lost a teacher.

There were several educational and recreational clubs or societies in the town, mostly sponsored, I think, by the I.R.B. which no doubt regarded them as training ground. One of them was a Dramatic club of which Tom was a keen member and he recalled with amusement his efforts as an actor.

About the year 1879 John Daly who was then organizer for the I.R.B. came to Dungannon when Tom and he met for the

first time. This was the beginning of an historic friendship which was to endure to the end. It was to Daly he owed his initiation to the I.R.B.

In the late seventies and early eighties conditions in the country were deplorable. There was no work and very little hope of it, so in 1880 Tom and some friends decided to go to America. He made his plans secretly and quietly, slipped away to Derry to join the friends who were to sail with him. Something went wrong with the ship and they were held up in Derry for a couple of weeks during which they had a gala time at the expense of the Shipping Co.

They duly arrived in New York. Tom went to the address of an old Tyrone man Tom O'Gannon who kept a small store in which he helped and in the back of which he slept for a couple of months, until he secured employment in a Brooklyn Hotel. He started at the bottom of the ladder. His principal duties consisted in lighting and maintaining about fifty fires daily. I have heard him tell with amusement his early efforts to have them all going in time. He succeeded and his efforts were rewarded in a very short time by promotion to a position which became vacant in the stores, to be followed shortly by his appointment as foreman. He had started to climb the ladder.

His transfer from the I.R.B. in Tyrone to the Clann arrived in due course and he was linked up with the Mapper Tandy Club. It was here he met John Devoy for whom he had a regard, second only to that for John Daly.

He was now extremely happy. He felt that at last he had attained a position in which his enthusiasm and energy could be devoted to work which would be of solid benefit to the

cause of Irish freedom. He was soon recording Secretary of his camp and his sole interest outside his daily work was the welfare of the organisation.

He started attending lectures which were given by Dr. Gallagher on "The Chemistry and Manufacture of Explosives", was a diligent student and attained considerable proficiency. There was a call to the students in this class for single men to volunteer for special and dangerous work for Ireland outside America. Tom volunteered at once but was not selected at the time. In the meantime he was prospering in his job. His employer had opened a new Hotel at Brighton Beach and had selected Tom as manager. He was all set to take up his new position when his call came. He was instructed to go at once to England and as far as I remember was not allowed to tell his employer.

I do not know what date he left New York, I fancy it must have been in February 1883 but the ship on which he sailed struck an iceberg and sunk. The passengers were rescued and landed in Newfoundland. All their belongings were lost and with the others Tom was fitted with a new suit, given a five pound note and landed in England with the name of Henry Hammond Wilson.

There were working in England when Tom arrived, Dr. Gallagher, Whitehead, Norman (Lynch) and Curtin. Whitehead had taken a shop in Leech St. Birmingham, ostensibly for the sale of paints and colours but actually it was for the manufacture of Nitro Glycerine. Tom and Dr. Gallagher came on Friday March 29th and removed some of the manufactured article which they brought to London. It was left in the cloakroom at Euston until Sunday, when Tom removed it to a room he had taken at Nelson Square. He returned to Birmingham

on Tuesday 3rd with a portmanteau, stayed in the Midland Hotel that night and on Wednesday morning drove in a cab to Lidsam St. for another consignment. He noticed a detective on watch outside Whitehead's shop, tried to persuade the latter to pour away the stuff but he would not hear of it. So Tom packed his portmanteau and went off in a cab to the station where he caught the 11.30 a.m. train to London arriving at 2.30 p.m. (confirmed by Rees at trial).

Norman arrived later loaded another trunk which he took with him on the 6 p.m. train also to London.

Tom brought his portmanteau to his room at Nelson Square, later in the evening he called to Dr. Gallagher. They went for a stroll together and saw a newspaper poster on which were the words; "Sensational arrest in Birmingham". One of them casually bought a paper and they went to Tom's room to read it. It told them that Whitehead had been arrested. They sat discussing the new situation. There was a knock on the door. It was opened by Tom. Inspector Littlechild with two detectives entered the room and they were both arrested. Norman was arrested later that night.

To say they were surprised is to put it mildly. Tom knew that, though there had been a man watching Whitehead's shop, he had not him trailed. He could not understand where the break-down occurred but he was soon to know.

Now I must make serious objection to a statement in Le Roux's "Life" of Tom Clarke". He says "If there was a master mind behind Dr. Gallagher in this dynamite conspiracy he certainly was an unmitigated scoundrel or a fool--". As soon as the police were satisfied that every one of the conspirators had incriminating evidence in his possession they swooped simultaneously in London and Birmingham. This in

itself shows that they had no difficulty in keeping the conspirators under close surveillance\*. This is an absurd and irresponsible statement. I have the story from Tom himself and as long ago as 1917 I made a careful study of the case and for the life of me I cannot understand how it came to be made.

It is certain that no suspicion attached to any of these men until nearing the end of March and it is likely that the arrest of two men Deasy and Flanagan at Liverpool with explosives and an infernal machine which they brought from Cork made the authorities believe that the explosives were coming from Ireland. The discovery came about in this way. Whitehead had been purchasing Nitric and sulphuric acid and Glycerine from a firm in Birmingham. He more or less drew attention to himself by asking on one occasion for acid of a higher gravity than that used commercially and was told he could not have it. On another occasion he returned Glycerine (from which he was supposed to be manufacturing hair-dressing) and paid twopence per lb. extra for having it purified. A salesman in this firm had a friend, one Sergeant Price to whom he mentioned his suspicions regarding these purchases. Price disguised himself as a workman, went to Whitehead's premises to make some purchase and did not like the look of things. He then approached his superiors who gave him permission to enter the premises surreptitiously which he did Monday April 2nd (a.m.) He returned on the morning of April 3rd accompanied by Inspector Black when they took samples which were sent to Woolich Arsenal for analysis. After that they put a man to watch the premises. (It was this man that Tom Clarke saw on his last visit). This man did not make the same mistake with Norman when he followed and who was trailed to his lodgings. The result of the analysis

having arrived Whitehead was immediately arrested. No documents of importance were found in the shop but in his lodgings next door the police found a note from Tom Clarke with his London address on it. (It was stated at the trial that this was in a wallet but Tom always said it was found crumpled up at the back of a fireplace). Birmingham police of course wired the address to London and that is how Tom and Gallagher came to be arrested. Norman's arrest naturally followed that night.

In Gallagher's room in his hotel were found letters from Curtin, Ausburgh and Bernard Gallagher (brother of Dr. Gallagher). They were also duly roped in. The tracing back the movements of all these men (except Tom Clarke) to their arrival was a small matter in the England of that day. Everybody was anxious to help and the police were not above supplying "aides memoires" in the shape of photos etc.

I feel it necessary to dwell at some length on this in justice to a little band of brave young men who were willing to sacrifice their careers and perhaps their lives in carrying out their campaign which they believed was to help the cause of Ireland in a decidedly hostile and at the time an exasperated and frightened country.

Let us digress for a moment and look at the state of England in the year of our Lord 1883. The people, press and politicians were in what would be called to-day "the jitters". Sensations followed one another in rapid succession; M.P.s were being arrested- Mr. O'Brien and Joe Biggar, the latter for calling Lord Spencer a bloodthirsty British Peer. There were sea headings in the newspapers; Moonlighting in Kerry, Fights with emergency men in Clare. A sack of dynamite was found in a Dover waiting-room. It

had been left by a careless quarryman, but no matter, it helped. Deasy and O'Flanagan were arrested in Liverpool with explosives and an infernal machine from Cork, several arrests in Cork followed. On March 6th an explosion occurred at the office of "The Times". On the same day considerable damage was done to an office of the L.G.B. at Whitehall. There were several others widely separated even as far North as Glasgow. And during all this time the trials of the Invincibles for the Phoenix Park affair were featured in the Daily Press and the Illustrated papers carried full page pictures. I mention these to give an idea of the prevailing tension and the coolness and courage required to undertake the work of these men. There is little to tell of the trial of Tom Clarke and the others. It opened on June 10th 1883. Tom defended himself (he said it would be all the same) Norman turned Queen's evidence - I will refer to him later, and on June 25th Dr. Gallagher, Whitehead, Curtin and Tom Clarke were found guilty and sentenced to penal servitude for life. As to Norman - Le Roux puts him down a great scoundrel who was wrong from the beginning, but I am inclined to Tom's belief that he was just a weak creature with no Irish background, who should never have been in the Clan, who wanted to save himself and was probably sorely tempted - Ansburgh who was only a casual acquaintance of Gallagher and had no connection with any organisation said in Court that Inspector Littlechild had offered him £500 and freedom if he would give evidence. Anyhow Norman had no information to give. When questioned by Tom in Court he admitted that he had never seen any of the accused except Whitehead and Gallagher. We must leave it at that for the present.

There has been considerable speculation as to what, apart from the manufacture of explosives, he and the others were to do in England. I must confess that I do not know. Tom



was asked several times but his invariable reply was; "No one will ever tell". I asked Devoy, whose reply was almost word for word identical and James Reidy could or would not say. Somehow I got the impression that none of them knew. It is certain that they had not started operations.

Tom started his prison life in Millbank but on August 28th 1883 he was transferred to Chatham, (his age on admission to Chatham is recorded as 22 years and six months) and here began an almost unbelievable existence. These men were convicted under the Treason Felony Act of 1848 and were singled out for special treatment. They were housed in the cells usually occupied by convicts under punishment for breaches of prison discipline and were treated as such-plus. These cells were located away from the main prison where supervision was slack and any refinements of cruelty overlooked by officialism were discovered by the warders who availed themselves of every opportunity to humiliate and degrade them. It was, I suppose, inevitable when authority singled out these men for specially drastic treatment subordinates felt that they would not be discouraged in the exercise of all the petty persecution they could devise. Tom spoke sometimes of the treatment, particularly of the damnable "silence rule" but he gave no idea of the general appalling conditions. In a report of "The Visitors of Her Majesty's Convict Prison at Chatham as to the treatment of certain prisoners convicted of Treason Felony" presented to both houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty in April 1890 this treatment is revealed in all its stark brutality. I have not time to go into details. I will say however, that according to that report, from his arrival in Chatham in August '83 until April 1890 Tom Clarke was under punishment fourteen times. When it is

realized that his normal treatment was little better than that of the ordinary convict undergoing punishment, it can hardly be realized what treatment under punishment can have been for a Treason Felony Prisoner. During the same period (1883-1890) it is recorded that he received hospital treatment four times, in one case for a period of 21 days after each of the four entries is the laconic remark "treated in cell". So much for hospital treatment.

Added to the rigorous, brutal and often degrading treatment was the psychological torture, experienced by every prisoner in like case. Of knowing that he is specially singled out and segregated for special care and subjected to extraordinary discipline, one's sense of justice and fair play resents it and it adds considerably to one's mental torture. Yet Tom, in spite of it managed in his own words to "knock a lot of fun out of it". In July '84 he received a great shock. He was amazed one morning to see his old friend John Daly at exercise. With John Daly was another new comer James Egan whom Tom had not known before. Henceforward in spite of rules, regulations, supervision and all the rest life became more tolerable because they established communications and hardly a day passed without something of interest happening. I have not the time now to dwell on this but some of it can be read in the little book reprinted from "Irish Freedom" and published with an introduction by P.S. O'Hegarty. This is some evidence of one man's triumph over the most appalling conditions.

In 1883 he was approached by Littlechild who offered him freedom and money and a free passage to anywhere if he would give evidence connecting Parnell with the Dynamitards. He told him to get out and said that he would rot in prison for two lives sooner than purchase liberty at the cost of

dishonour.

Egan was released in 1893 making a break in what surely was a queer companionship for nine years- remember they had not spoken The Silent rule. Daly and himself carried on until 1896 when Daly was released. He made the best of a very lonely and desolate existence for the next two years until he was released in 1898. On September 22nd 1898 he was met at Pentonville Prison by Daly and Egan who accompanied him back to Dublin where after the usual round of receptions etc. he settled down with his mother and sister at Kilmainham. His immediate and supreme need now was to find some way of living but disappointment dogged him. I might here say that one of his greatest disappointments after his release was that there was no thought of a rising during the Boer War. He never understood it and never gave up thinking of it. Early in 1899 he was in Limerick where John Daly was mayor and the Freedom of the City was conferred on him. Coming back to Dublin his never ending quest for work went on day after day without success. His experience at this time would have broken the heart of most men but he went on ever hoping and ever hopeful. The summer of '99 found him again with John Daly, this time on holiday in Kilkee where in his own words he had the cheek to fall in love.

He became engaged. His happiness would have been unalloyed now if only he could find a job. At this time the Boards established under the Local Govt. Act of 1898 were being set up and the Amnesty Association put forward Tom's name for the clerkship of the Rathdown Board of Guardians. He had liberal promises of support. Public meetings were held and were addressed by John Redmond, Dillon, John Daly, Maud Gonne and a host of others. Everything

looked rosy but the position was given to a man named Pat Cunniam. I knew nothing of the election of course, but I have heard my uncle, who was not a politician say that Cunniam was a Farnellite and a supporter of Redmond. I often wondered later on how much of Redmond's tongue was in his cheek when a short time before he addressed a meeting at the Big Tree in Loughlinstown on behalf of Tom Clarke.

Tom was now an engaged man and something had to be done. He wrote John Devoy asking him to arrange for him a lecture tour in the States hoping thereby to secure a little capital on which to start some business. Devoy refused. This might have made another man disgruntled and bitter but there was no bitterness in Tom Clarke. He remained a steadfast friend and staunch admirer of Devoy all his life. I have never been able to discover the reason for this refusal of Devoy. James Hidy when he was in Dublin hinted that there was a reason and promised to discuss the affair with me but he never came to the point.

This was the last straw with Tom and with a heavy heart he sailed for America to begin life over again. He had hoped that the Clann would have helped him to start in business but they offered him instead a small pension which he rejected. He wanted to get married and he wanted a job. He took a small one at nightwork in the Clann offices but it was of little use to a man in his position. Shortly afterwards he came in touch with a Clann member who was foreman in a Furz works who engaged him as a pattern maker - he had learned this trade in gaol at small wages at first but later at full rate. With the two jobs on hand now, while not rich, he was fairly well off and things might have

gone smoothly for him but in 1900 he received an urgent summons to come to Ireland again as he was being proposed for the Superintendentship of the Dublin Abattoir.

He was assured of the support of the Corporation members which he was told was backed by Medmond, Dillon and the rest. He hesitated, he had been bitten before. He was doubtful and cautious. However after he had received several cablegrams he decided to return having made sure that his job would be open if he came back. When he arrived he was assured on all sides that everything was plain sailing but on the day of the election a last minute motion to have a secret ballot was passed and Tom did not get the job. At this juncture he almost decided to go to South Africa and join the Boers. It was with the greatest difficulty that he was dissuaded. As I have said he was sorely vexed that nothing was done here - not one blow struck as he himself put it. He returned once more to America and his two jobs and in 1901 he was married. He was supremely happy but it seemed that some ill-fate dogged him for in about eighteen months his foreman was dismissed and with him went all his subordinates.

Things were now desperate. Here he was, a married man with a wife and a baby son and only a few dollars weekly from his clann job. Mrs. Clarke took a small candy store where she worked early and late while he himself tramped about all day long seeking employment. He recalled this period with an air of sadness but somehow without bitterness and he told of going as a last resort to the street Cleansing Dept. for a job and of being turned down. He was nearer to despair now than ever he had been as he was worried and anxious about his wife's health.

So it went on until it was suggested to him that he should see Devoy and speak to him about the paper which had been talked about for years. He could be eloquent about this because he had for a long time seen the necessity for such a paper. He went to Devoy with the result that he was given a job with a salary; a job into which he could put his heart as well as his energies. It was to devise and submit a scheme for the starting of a paper with sufficient guarantees to satisfy the Glann authorities that it had a chance of success. He visited the clubs and several prominent Irishmen and within six months he had the satisfaction of seeing the first No. of the Gaelic American printed with Devoy as Editor in Chief and Tom as Manager and Assistant Editor. For nearly four years from now Tom worked harder than ever he had done in his life. As well as writing himself he secured contributors, did press cutting, sub-editing and was general factotum. James Heidy said he was a slave to Devoy and the paper, that Devoy was a hard worker himself and saw to it that others worked hard also but that he, Devoy was the very devil to work with. Tom never grumbled, however, the work was congenial and in spite of it and the long hours he found time to act as correspondence Secy. of the United Irish American Societies which he helped to form for the purpose of blocking the proposed Anglo-American Treaty. He later helped to arrange a combination of the Irish and German Societies to combat a second attempt to bring this about. In spite of all this activity there was still time found for training in the Irish Volunteers and he referred with pride to the fact that he had been commissioned as Regimental Adjutant of the second Infantry of that body.

Thus things went on until 1906, nothing which helped what he called the cause of Fenianism was too small for his attention. The straits became too great and for the sake of his wife's health and his own he was advised to live in the country. He tried farming for a while but could not settle down to it. He then decided to return to Ireland.

I rather think he was helped to that decision by the persistent rumours in America of a coming war between England and Germany. He longed to be here. The old feeling of humiliation at the failure of his generation (as he called it) during the Boer War was still with him and he wanted to do all that one man could do to assure that should another war come, it would be proved to the world that there were still in Ireland men who were willing to fight and die for Irish Freedom.

Tom and his family returned to Ireland in 1907. He first started business in Amiens Street and later came to the now famous shop in Parnell Street.

Shortly after his return he was co-opted to the G.C. of the I.M.B., but he was dissatisfied with what he found there. The members were not alive. He felt that the organisation was still in the rut out of which it could not see in 1900 and turned his attention to the younger men in whom he could see a spirit of restlessness and impatience and a growing sense of impotence imposed from the top. This became very evident after a meeting of the organisation in Clontarf Town Hall at which Fred Allan presided.

It was seen that Allan was president of the G.C. and it was known that Allan as Secretary to Lord Mayor Pile was in the carriage with the latter when he handed the keys of the city of Queen Victoria. Dissatisfaction was expressed in

the circles and explanations were demanded, the rank and file were informed that Allan acted under orders but nobody was satisfied. Tom was delighted that things were livening up but urged patience and caution. The time was not ripe for action.

He had felt all the time the need for a paper that would speak with a Fenian voice and it was through his efforts that "Irish Freedom" was launched in 1910 with Pat McCartan as its editor. He it was also who revitalized the Wolfe Tone Memorial Association and its clubs which were used to cover the public activities of the I.S.B. It was this organisation which took responsibility for the annual Emmet Commemoration Concert and resurrected the Annual Pilgrimage to Bodenstown. It was in connection with the Emmet Concert that Tom first met Pearse. A speaker was being sought, Pearse was suggested. Tom would not agree. Pearse, he said, might be a good Gaelic Leaguer but he had never been identified with the separatist. Moreover he had appeared on the public platform with John Redmond in support of I think it was the Irish Councils Bill. McDermott pressed Tom to see Pearse and have a talk with him. He agreed and McDermott brought them together. After a long chat in which Pearse said he supported Redmond and this Bill because it gave us control of Education and, he added; "if we can get complete control of Education we can get a Republic." Tom withdrew his opposition and Pearse spoke at the Concert in the Rotunda.

The oration like all of Pearse's set orations electrified the large audience and in the enthusiasm which followed McCartan jumped on the platform, proposed a resolution condemning the proposed visit of the King of England to Dublin. Tom Clarke followed McCartan and the resolution was passed by a sheering audience.



Now for some obscure reason the Executive of the I.R.B. had forbidden reference to the King's visit. McCarty and Tom were court-martialled and acquitted of the charges of breaches of discipline and the fight was on for the control of the organisation and the Paper. It ended in about three months in complete victory, the old crowd as they were called was completely routed.

A new S.C. was elected with Mackin as President, Tom Clarke Treasurer and McDermott Secretary. The three composed the Executive and controlled the organisation between the meetings of the C.C. From this time forward Tom became the pivot of the whole separatist movement. His idea was to familiarise the members with the idea of insurrection and to speed up recruiting. He was willing and anxious to make use of anybody and any organisation to spread what he always called the Fenian idea.

As an instance - when Madame Markievicz came on the scene and was endeavouring to form an organisation for boys - an idea she got from Hobson - she was making little headway. She was known to have belonged to what we called the Castle Crowd and she was wont to indulge in the wildest imaginable talk. She often came in to talk to Tom in the shop and he was amused but did not take her seriously at first. One day she mentioned that she had got the name of a schoolmaster (O'Neill) who was a good nationalist and she was going to interview him with a view to getting a few boys to start her organisation. Tom thought it a good idea but pointed out to her that as she was a non-catholic O'Neill might look upon her with suspicion. In fact he said he might suspect proselytism and suggested that she ask me to accompany her. That evening he told me she would be calling to the office for me and I was to interview Mr.

O'Neill with her. She came next day and together we went to the schools in 66. Brunswick St. After a chat with the teacher who asked all kinds of very pertinent questions he allowed us to interview some of his boys. As a result we got promises from I think eight or nine among whom I remember only Samonn Martin and the three Fitzgeralds (Jimmy Theo and Leo). These boys formed the nucleus of Fianna Eireann. Later Madame Markievicz rented a hall in Camden Street and members of the I.R.B. were asked to help by sending boys to join and so it grew, always under the guidance of the I.R.B. which worked out in practice - Tom Clarke.

I have not time to go into details as to the various and numerous activities of our subject. I must however mention the fight for Irish in the University. McCartan took a most prominent part in that fight and was helped and encouraged by Tom when he started his paper "The Irish Student" and students who were I.R.B. members were the most active in the agitation which was started by them.

The mass funeral was also an undertaking in which Tom was the prime mover. He had cabled Devoy to have the arrangements left in his hands and had received "Carte Blanche". It was here he exhibited his great capacity for work, his power of organisation and his complete mastery of details. He roped in people from every national organisation and also from the labour bodies. At the first meeting of this Committee he was ready with a scheme out and dried. A sub-committee for this, that and the other and a general plan which was accepted and finally carried out. During the few weeks preceding the funeral his energy seemed to be inexhaustible and the plans for the route and the dispositions of the various participating bodies which appeared in the papers were actually drawn by himself on the counter in his shop.

I now come to the Volunteers. I would cheerfully leave them out but no paper on Tom Clarke would be complete without reference to them. I have heard several statements and claims made as to who first thought of starting a Volunteer organisation. I do not know anything of them but I do know that while the idea was in the air and everybody was talking about it the decision to write the letter which was brought by James O'Connor to the Leader was taken in Tom Clarke's shop and that to the day of his death the late D.P. Moran believed that the credit was due to himself and James O'Connor.

The feeling that Volunteers should be started here was universal and there was some impatience shown in the circles in Dublin but the G.C. had the matter well in hand. A decision had been made but it was not intended that Volunteers should be started under the soleegis of the I.R.B. Tom Clarke, McDermott and Pearse had been for some time working quietly and patiently interviewing people representing different aspects of National life including the labour movement; the object being to be ready to propose a provisional Executive that would be a cross section of the people.

This took time and tact and was successfully accomplished when the Volunteer organisation was launched in November 1913 in the rotunda.

The Provisional Executive was nominated and accepted and the movement swept through the country.

It had been already decided that no prominent member of the I.R.B. should accept office but Eibben allowed himself to be appointed Hon. Sec. This had to be accepted as a fait accompli though with bad grace and everything went well for a while.

The phenomenal success of the Irish Volunteers excited the jealousy and fears of Redmond and the Party who saw the youth of the country rushing to the militant organization and out of their influence, so through Joe Devlin they made overtures suggesting that they should be given representation amounting to control of the executive; they came first in a rather friendly way and later they threatened but they were turned down. Finally a public demand was made. Nobody worried much about this as it was known that the majority of the executive were against the interference of any outside body and it was believed would not tolerate it.

However, when the Executive met to consider the matter Hobson announced that he was going to vote for the proposal of Redmond. Some of those present (who should have known better) because of Hobson's position in the I.R.B. seemed to regard his attitude as official voted with him and Redmond's proposals were accepted.

I was with Tom when the news came and to say he was astounded is understating it. I never saw him so moved. He regarded it from the beginning as cold-blooded and contemplated treachery likely to bring about the destruction of the only movement in a century which brought promise of the fulfilment of all his hopes.

During his life he had had many, very many grievous disappointments but this was the worst and the bitterness of it was increased by the fact that it was brought about by a trusted friend.

Had these proposals of Redmond been rejected he would have to smash the organisation from the outside and his efforts might have caused a revulsion of feeling amongst his followers who were Volunteers but now he was inside and in control. A way out had to be found but it was a

deplorable one. It threw the onus of splitting the Volunteers on to the I.R.B. However it had to be done and we all know how it was done and how the ranks of the Volunteers were depleted. There was some consolation in the fact that those who remained in the Irish Volunteers after the split meant business.

In 1914 the Executive of the I.R.B. decided that arrangements for a rising should take definite shape. They formed what was called The Augmented Executive by adding to themselves, Pearse, McDonagh, Plunkett, Coenat, Tom Bunter, Sean Tobin and myself. Connolly came in later in this way.

As Editor of the mass funeral souvenir I called to Liberty Hall to ask him for an article on The Citizen Army. I had known him for several years and had given him a weekly article during the Dublin strike so we were friendly. He looked at me for a while then almost shouted; "What's the good of talking about Messes? Messes wanted to fight England when England was at peace. You fellows want fight when she is at war". We talked for a while and I left him with his promise that he would give me my article and my promise to talk over things with him later on. I told Tom Clarke how Connolly was feeling. Tom saw him and shortly afterwards he became a member of our Committee.

Connolly was a man of massive intellect, of great resource and courage and of immense value to the Committee but he was as temperamental as a Prince of Wales. He was impatient, irritable and petulant. The slightest upset annoyed him and he, I almost said, sulked. His method of approach to revolution differed from that of Tom Clarke. He wanted to shout it from the housetops, did not care how

soon it started or with how many men. He believed that once the standard of revolt was raised the people - his people - would rally to it and he was afraid of a sudden collapse of the war. He was wrong in both assumptions. Tom who had infinite patience in a matter of this kind had his hands full at times and Connolly was successfully humoured.

I must mention another matter which became of great importance later. It is Casement's visit to America and what followed. Tom was dead against Casement going to America. He blamed Hobson and McNeill for it. He did his best to dissuade him but to no purpose. Devoy who had been kept in touch with every development received Casement coolly. The latter got in touch with the German Minister and in the words of Devoy made a nuisance of himself until he received a Passport for Germany. When it became known here that Casement had gone to Germany Tom proposed that Plunkett should attempt to get there. Plunkett agreed to go, became very ill in Spain and it was a long time before word came from America that he had arrived. He found that Casement's idea given to the German Government was that there could be no rising here unless the Germans landed an Army. Plunkett was able to tell them that the possibility of a German invasion was not even considered and that there would certainly be a rising. He asked for arms, was told at first that none could be spared but eventually agreed to forward a cargo of Russian rifles with ammunition. On his return Plunkett brought with him some films which I enlarged and which were photographs of the agreement between Casement and the German Government for the starting of the Irish Brigade. This was all Casement's efforts in Germany achieved.

Casement was ill with malaria when Plunkett reached Berlin so they never met. Later on when the date was fixed and Casement heard of it in Berlin, he seems to have come to the conclusion that the Germans had deceived us, as he could not conceive that there would be a rising without an invasion and he persuaded the German Government to land him here with the results we all know. It must be said that Germany did everything she promised so far as she was able.

Things progressed more or less normally. Easter Week was nearing. There was a feeling of tension in the early part of the previous week. It seemed to clear up about mid-week. McDermott called to my office on Wednesday in jubilant mood. He told me that everything was going well, that McNeill had agreed to everything. Everybody was kept busy during the following days.

On Friday news came that Con Keating, Cheehan and Monahan who had gone to make contact with the German ship had been drowned, their car having run into a river in the darkness. There were tears in Tom's eyes as he told me. He had given the lads instructions on the previous day - and now they were dead! To his grief for them was added the disappointment at the fact that there would be no signal to the Germans. This however, though serious was not vital because it was always on the cards that the ship might never arrive. Next came the news of the arrest of Casement. This news vexed Tom. It was hard to guess what would come out of it. He said very bitterly; "They should never have let him go to Germany".

The worst blow of all was to come. It was the Independent of Easter Sunday. I had stayed with Tom in O'Mahony's Hotel

on Saturday night and left for early Mass on Sunday morning. On my way home I got the paper and read the order countermanding the mobilization. I walked home in a daze to find Mick Collins who had been staying with Plunkett and who came after Mass to breakfast in my house. I showed him the paper. He became dumb. We breakfasted in silence and left for Liberty Hall where we found the Military Council was in session.

There were comings and goings and rumours but nothing definite and as I had several things to attend to and intended to mobilize according to instructions I left word where I was going and went off. Later in the afternoon I picked up Liam Cullen who was mobilized with me and as we were proceeding to parade we met Jack Plunkett with an order that the mobilization was off.

I found Tom Clarke afterwards and for the first time since I knew him he seemed crushed. He was weary and seemed crestfallen.

The shock of the morning's blow had been terrific. I accompanied him home that evening. He was very silent. After a while he recovered and discussed the affair. He regarded McNeill's action was of the blackest and greatest treachery. But having said all he wanted to say about it he did not refer to it again.

I do not propose to go into the pros and cons of the matter. Some of paper have been covered with mostly ill-informed statements and speculations and other some are I am told written for later publication. And so I leave it.

I have little to say about Easter Week. I have a very clear recollection of all that happened within my observation but after Tuesday I cannot for the life of me separate the days.



I would like however to say a word to Frank O'Connor. He says in his book "The Big Fellow"; "old Clarke, harassed and excited was blaming everyone for the mistakes which had been made". Now, I have no idea when O'Connor got that picture, for I can with certainty say that it is an utterly false one. I was with him continually for the first few hours of the occupation and I never knew him to be cooler. His normal air of business seemed to have been accentuated and he gave his orders decisively and as calmly as if he were in his own shop. As to complaints, I heard him discourage someone who spoke disparagingly of McNeill and he ended up by saying: "The fight is on, forget it now". I was out of the G.P.O. from Monday evening until Tuesday evening and several times later in the week and I found no change in Tom during all that time.

The G.P.O. evacuated we found ourselves in Moore St. On Tom's orders I stayed behind with O'Shilly to make sure the building was cleared. When I got to Moore St. it took me some little time to locate him. He was then like everybody else very tired and deplored the fact that the burning of the buildings had deprived us of a glorious stand up fight, in which he felt that even with our limited resources we could give as good as we got. I left him resting and did not see him again until McDermott sent for me. They were both together. Tom was very quiet, - McDermott on the verge of tears. McDermott said; "We have to ask the lads to give up themselves and their guns - to surrender". There was anguish and bitterness in that speech.

I could not say a word - only a short time previously I had been sitting on the side of Connolly's bed. He was in great pain and I had left him discussing the possibility

of a sortie in the rear of a British barricade- and now it was surrender. While negotiations were going on Tom seconded by McDermott suggested that some of us could escape. I decided to stay but I passed the word to several, that there was a way out. I remember telling Luke Kennedy who availed himself of what he regarded as permission and escaped. I do not know how many or if any others did the same. Everybody knows the rest.

The last time I saw Tom Clarke he had received his courtmartial notice. He regarded it as a formality so far as he himself and the other signatories were concerned but it contained a clause charging him with taking up arms etc. for the purpose and with the intention of helping the ~~enemy~~. He asked me to point out to everyone that this gave him a truthful plea of not guilty and to plead accordingly. This was passed round and I am sure most of the men who were tried did so plead. On the Tuesday he was taken away. I did not see him again.

I have tried to tell something of Tom Clarke's life but what shall I say of the man himself. I heard of him from Pat McCartan in Belfast and when I met him in 1907 shortly after his return home I was surprised. I had thought of an old man who was in gaol for Ireland some years before I was born. I was surprised, surprised by his youthful demeanour and the enthusiasm with which he spoke of the future, the eagerness with which he spoke of the work to be done for the Fenian cause. To him the Irish Nation was very real. He spoke of fighting for Ireland as casually as he did about any item of the days news. To fight England was to him the most natural thing in the world for an Irishman. He had wonderful energy, a great

power of concentration and a tremendous capacity for mastering details and a quick judgement. He made friends rather slowly and had few intimates but his friendship once given was solid and enduring. He was slow to condemn, always ready to hear the other side and was perhaps rather over-tolerant to his friends. His solitary confinement in prison made him a man of few words which made most people think him abrupt. He had no hankering after the limelight and any prominence was distasteful. He was always content to do the work and get it done; the credit could go anywhere. He had an exquisite sense of humour and entered into a joke with boyish enthusiasm. I heard some cynic asking: Had he any faults? Of course he had but others may find and point them out.

It is not for us who were the contemporaries of these seven gallant men who signed the proclamation in 1916 to appertain greatness nor indeed to say if any of the seven signatories were great. But, if one may hazard a guess, it is that history will write Tom Clarke as a great Irishman- Great in his love for Ireland, great in his faith in her destiny, great in his purpose, great in his achievement and great in his death.

Signed, Sean McFarney  
Date: 13/4/50

Witness: Colonel  
Date: 13th April 1950

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