ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 400

Witness

Richard Walsh, T.D.
Balla, Co. Mayo.

Identity

Irish Volunteer Organiser, Co. Mayo, 1916-19;
Brigade Adjutant Co. Mayo 1918-20;
Connaught Representative on Irish Volunteer Executive 1917-1921;
Inspection Officer I.R.A. 1920-21.

Subject

National events 1913-1922.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S. 76

Form B S M 2

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY RICHARD WALSH, T.D.

Balla, County Mayo.

INTRODUCTORY.

RW

In giving this statement to the Bureau of Military History I should like to point out that I am relying solely on my memory. I have no written records of any kind in which to check up, and as the events I describe are so long back in years, I may be wrong. I can, however, say that I have made an effort to keep as close as possible to a factual story of what I can remember.

There may be various incidents during the years I am dealing with which may now have escaped my memory. I have given the matter of recording the events I now describe a lot of thought for years past, and I always had the intention of putting them on record at some time. I am delighted to avail of the opportunity of doing a job which I might never have done only that it was taken in hands by the Bureau.

I want it to be particularly clear that I am most anxious not to cast aspersions on any of the people with whom I was associated during the struggle for independence. Some of my closest friends during these years have parted politically from me since, and if anything I am saying here will cause offence to any of my former comrades, I can only say that it is not my intention to do so.

I am giving this evidence on the clear understanding that none of it is to be made public while I am alive. I have got an assurance from Mr. McCoy, a representative of the Bureau, that my wishes in this respect will be carried out.

I would like to state that I was never a paid organiser during the time I worked for the independence of the country.

I neither asked for nor got payment for my work on the military or political side of the Sinn Fein Movement.

IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD.

I was born in the year 1888. My first connection with the I.R.B. was made through a man named Frank Dorr, who then lived in Foxford, Co. Mayo. He was not a Connaught man born, and I am not sure of where he was a native. He was a traveller for the Foxford Mills (Providence Mills owned by the Sisters of Charity).

I was prominently connected with the G.A.A. at the time that Mr. Durr approached me. I was acting as County Treasurer for the G.A.A. and was subsequently Chairman of the County Board.

At a football match held in Foxford in the year 1911 or 1912, Mr. Dorr approached me, suggesting that I should join the I.R.B. He started off by telling me that my father had been prominently connected with that organisation in the 1860's and 1870's. This, I knew to be a fact. We had a lengthy discussion on I.R.B. affairs and, in fact, at some stages we argued out certain aspects of the I.R.B. programme. I personally expressed the view that I could not see any prospect of success for a policy of physical force. Our talk ended by Dorr informing me that I was then in the I.R.B. I replied that I did not think I was a member. This was a jocular exchange.

After this talk with Dorr I met men who, I suspected, were members of the I.R.B. I got the impression from them that they took it for granted that I was also a member of the organisation. After some time I accepted the position that - as Dorr had informed me - I was a member of the I.R.B.

In the early days of my supposed membership of the I.R.B. I did not attend any of the I.R.B. circle meetings and I had no information of any local I.R.B. circle in Balla. I knew, however, that a circle existed in Castlebar. I got to know this by the attitude of acquaintances of mine in Castlebar who, after I met Dorr, talked openly of matters which I knew from Dorr were the main points of policy of the I.R.B., such as the opposition to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, support for the infant organisation of Sinn Fein, and the encouragement of all Irish-Ireland activities. None of these acquaintances, however, asked me if I was a member of the I.R.B. and I never asked them if they were members. I, however, joined the I.R.B. eventually in 1917.

Major John McBride visited County Mayo some time between 1911 and 1914. He held a meeting in Ballina in rooms over the A.O.H. There was a fairly good crowd present. The subject of his discussion was the prospect of an early outbreak of war between England and Germany and Irishmen's duty, before war broke out, of military preparedness for striking for our freedom when we found England engaged in the war. After this meeting I noticed that some of those who attended it held a private meeting which John McBride attended I was not invited to this private meeting. I noticed, however that men from other parts of Mayo attended this second meeting.

During the years pre-1916 I had no other connection with the I.R.B.

FORMATION OF THE VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION.

I joined the Volunteers in early 1914, and due to my efforts, a Company was formed in Balla. The position in the country at this time was that the Ulster Volunteers had been

started and spread throughout a big portion of Northern Ireland and also in some places in Southern Ireland, such as Dublin City and Cork City.

At the start of the Volunteers in the fall of 1913, the initial meeting was held in the Rotunda. Young men attended from all parties who believed in self-government for Ireland. There was a Provisional Governing Committee formed on these lines at this meeting, and the Committee comprised I.R.B. men, Irish Party supporters, members of the A.O.H. under the control of Joseph Devlin, and also the opposition A.O.H. known as the American Alliance; representatives of the G.A.A. and Gaelic League were also on the original Committee. I would say that the definite guiding force behind the formation of the Volunteers were the I.R.B. who, for policy sake, kept in the background, so that others who disagreed with the I.R.B. policy would not be frightened away.

A short time after the initial meeting forming a Provisional Executive was held, another meeting of the Executive Committee was called. This meeting was found necessary to deal with the intense enthusiasm of the young men throughout the country in joining up in the Volunteer organisation. Each member of the Provisional Committee had been inundated with requests for help to form new companies and for speakers to attend at their formation. I think it could be said that in the history of Ireland, from the fall of Limerick to that time, no national movement ever started got such a spontaneous and enthusiastic welcome. Companies sprang up like mushrooms all over the country. It was a common sight, if cycling along a country road of an evening, to see groups of young men forming fours at every cross-roads. Older ex-British army men living in nearby towns and villages were induced into the Volunteers

to act as drill instructors. In fact, the movement grew so rapidly and displayed such strength and vigour that the then dominant political party, the Irish Parliamentary Party or the Redmondite Party, as it was commonly called, became alarmed. They, undoubtedly due to their political experience, detected the hidden hand of the I.R.B. behind the Volunteer organisation.

It is only right to say that the object of the I.R.B. had in acting as a driving force behind the Volunteer organisation was not an attempt to gain political power. It's only fair to the leaders of the I.R.B. to state that they carried on the Fenian tradition as they did through years of decadence which included the Parnell split, and the older men amongst them that saw the disastrous fate of the Fenians in 1867 welcomed the formation of an open military organisation based on broad national principles.

There was a lot of discussion amongst the organising committee of the Volunteers as to whether the Volunteers should be asked to take an oath of allegiance or pledge as to their future service in the Volunteer Force. The formula eventually adopted cannot be described as an oath in the sense that an oath is commonly understood. The best way to describe the formula is that it was an affirmation of a pledge of service to Ireland and the Irish people. It is right that it should be understood that the I.R.B. played a big part in preparing the formula adopted, which is contrary to what a lot of people would believe of the I.R.B. The I.R.B. did not press for a narrow point of view. Their attitude was to get the young manhood of Ireland to pledge their lives and service to Ireland and its people in the broad sense and, if the necessity arose, the great majority of the decent young men of the country would interpret their pledge in the unselfish and broad way.

So strong did the Volunteer organisation become in a short space of time that the Irish Parliamentary Party leaders became alarmed and demanded a major say in the control of the organisation. The Party's leaders - John E. Redmond's - demands were to some extent conceded by the original committee in charge of the Volunteers by the Parliamentary Party being allowed to nominate fifty per cent. of the members of the controlling body. The result of this concession in the interests of Irish unity by the original committee of the Volunteers was that large numbers of the Volunteers refused to accept their decision, and later, the large number of the Volunteers who refused to agree with the admission of the Irish Party's nominees were able to expel the unwanted members from the Executive Committee. The Redmondite supporters in the Volunteer organisation in many districts then formed a body known as the Irish National Volunteers, and the republican elements who remained loyal to the original committee were known as the Irish Volunteers. One of the stunts used by the Redmondite supporters in many districts was to propose a resolution of confidence in the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which Volunteers in a large percentage of cases could not accept and which, due to the introduction of such a vital contentious issue smashed up the unity existing in Volunteer units all over the country.

Whilst all this was going on there was no serious effort being made to perfect the military efficiency of the Volunteers. No efforts were being made to have the Volunteers organised in battalions, brigades, etc. Later on an effort was made to get the Volunteers into battalion units. A scheme was adopted to organise into battalions and regiments; the term 'brigade' was not used in the Volunteers before Easter Week, 1916.

In Co. Mayo there was no such thing as battalion or brigade organisation before Easter Week, 1916. There was something in the nature of a County Board established. To some extent the Volunteers in Co. Mayo were drifting to become another political party or organisation. This position remained up to the second half of 1915.

From the time of John E. Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge committing the Volunteers to the support of England in the war, a split was definite and clear in the Volunteer organisation. The anti-Redmondite party in the Volunteers in Co. Mayo broke away from the Redmondite section of the Mayo Co. Board which ceased to function. A statement had been issued to the effect that the Central Executive were not recognising the Redmondite nominees as part of the governing body at any future meetings. This position resulted in almost every company in the county having a row over the issues involved. A number of officers tried to evade the issue in local units by not pressing for any declaration of opinion on policy. The ultimate result of the split was that the overwhelming majority of the Volunteers supported Redmond's policy, and a considerable number from the towns joined the British army, especially men who had gone across to Britain for work there. The migratory system of working in Britain was common in the west of Ireland, and a considerable number of migratory workers were later conscripted by the British army in England and Scotland.

O'DONOVAN ROSSA FUNERAL.

From late 1914 a dry rot set in through the Volunteer organisation and the organisation rapidly disappeared. This condition prevailed all over the country up to the O'Donovan Rossa funeral. This event brought a large number of people

of every shade of nationalist opinion to Dublin to attend the funeral from all parts of the country. One of the outstanding and sensational spectacles of this funeral was the march through the streets of Dublin of a large body of Volunteers in military formation, fully armed. Padraig Pearse delivered his celebrated oration at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa. This oration is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding statements of the gospel of Irish freedom and nationality. Its effect on the listeners who were present and on the masses in the country who read it was tremendous. This oration soon became the favourite recitation at concerts and social entertainments all over the country. I have heard it recited in railway journeys to football and hurling matches. It was accepted everywhere as a brilliant exposition of our national faith.

Immediately after the Rossa funeral there was an increased interest being taken in the Volunteer Force, but nothing like the earlier enthusiasm. The fervour of the earlier days was absent, but there was steady work done in the re-organisation of old and the formation of new companies all over the country. Unfortunately, my health was bad in 1915, and I was not fit to give the help I should otherwise have given.

A marked result after the Rossa funeral was the tendency to carry armed equipment on Volunteer parades wherever arms were available. This tendency prevailed until the last great display of Irish Volunteer strength before Easter Week, 1916, was held on St. Patrick's Day, 1916. This general demonstration of armed Volunteer strength took place all over the country where the organisation and strength of the Volunteers justified a demonstration.

The National - Redmondite - Volunteers did not, to my knowledge, participate in any of the St. Patrick's Day

parades. As far as I can recollect, there was no attempt made by them to arm, except in one ridiculous exhibition of what we looked on as downright deceit when a quantity of old Italian rifles, practically the first rifles used by the Italian army, were purchased and imported into the country. Those rifles were obtained at 5/- each and there was no ammunition made then to fit them.

There was little change in the position of the Irish Volunteers from the Rossa funeral up to 1916 except a perceptible improvement in organisation. An argument used by some prominent officers in the Irish Volunteers early in 1916 was that the improvement noticeable in public support for the Volunteers would justify waiting for another twelve months when we would have the support of the great mass of our people and would have regained our pre-Split strength, which would greatly enhance our prospects in the projected rising. What influenced most men against this point of view was the certainty of a British attack on the Volunteer organisation. It was considered a foregone conclusion that the British would make an attempt to suppress the Volunteers. It is only right to say that a very strong argument for military action by the Volunteers was that Britain had denuded the country of her troops. This fact was later disclosed, after Easter Week, that when the rising took place, only about 6,000 troops were available in the whole country and that very little supplies of ammunition or war material was in hands.

A document was read at the Dublin Corporation meeting held a week before the rising in 1916, indicating that the British Government was planning immediate action against the Volunteers. I consider this document was of doubtful

authenticity. It looks, however, to have been one of the impelling causes for fixing the rising for Easter Week. I have it from the late Alderman Tom Kelly, who read the document referred to at the Corporation meeting, that he had doubts about the document's genuineness. He did not tell me his reasons for doubting it.

My own position was that the Volunteer organisation had collapsed in my native town after the split. I had friends on both sides and I felt when the local Volunteers started to disintegrate that any action on my part would only accentuate the position and really do no good. One result was that whilst the local Volunteer companies kept in being and held a few parades, the men of different views evaded putting the difference to a vote and the upshot was that the Company's activities petered out in a few months.

From the end of 1915 and in the early months of 1916 there was more interest taken in the training of the Volunteers. Liam Mellows and The O'Rahilly came to Co.Mayo and held a number of meetings in March and April of 1916. A big muster of Volunteers was held in Castlebar on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, and was addressed by Mellows and The O'Rahilly. After the public meeting was held in the street, a meeting of selected persons was held in premises in the town. This meeting was not attended by Volunteer officers only. I suspect that the I.R.B. had some of their men at that meeting. As far as I could see there was a good sprinkling of Volunteers who had no officer rank at the meeting. Both Mellows and O'Rahilly hinted pointedly that a rising with arms was in the offing. They said that a testing time was coming and that it was up to each person to do a man's part.

FIRST NEWS OF THE RISING IN BALLA AND IN CASTLEBAR DURING EASTER WEEK.

We heard first of the rising having taken place on Monday evening of Easter Week. We heard the news from a railway worker who came into my shop and told me that the rising was on; that trains had stopped running and that the Volunteers were fighting in Dublin. We held a meeting of the local groups of the Volunteers that night. We discussed the situation and had a check up on the arms we had, Our armament consisted of two .38 revolvers with about twenty rounds of ammunition for each. We could obtain possession of a German service rifle with sixty to seventy rounds for same, also a .22 rook rifle with some ammunition for it. We could also get ten to twelve shotguns with some ammunition. The sure and certain arms available were the two .38 revolvers. John McEllin (ex-Senator) and Thomas Murphy (a medical student, now practising as a doctor in Newport, Co. Mayo) and myself walked into Castlebar the next evening. A party of Irish Volunteers were, as far as we could see, occupying a hall in Castlebar, named the Rooney Hall. One thing which struck us forcibly in Castlebar that night was that men were coming into the hall every few minutes during the few hours we were there, offering their services. As far as we could judge the enthusiasm was high. We got in touch with the men we knew were officers, Michael McHugh in charge, William Mongey, and two men named Johnny McGowan and Johnny Watters. We asked them if they had any information for us or instructions to give us. They informed us that they had neither information nor instructions for us. The result was that we had to return home as we left.

We returned again to Castlebar at least on three occasions during the remainder of Easter Week on the same

mission and with the same result. We came to the conclusion that the men in Castlebar knew as little about what was heppening or what was likely to happen as we knew ourselves. I don't want to convey the idea that the men in Castlebar were not prepared to do their duty if called on. They found themselves in the same position as we found ourselves. They were waiting orders from men higher up in the organisation.

This state of affairs existed up to Sunday morning, the 30th April, the Sunday following Easter Sunday. The Castlebar Company were what might be called at that time a well-armed and equipped company. From the start of the Volunteers they directed their energies towards accumulating funds for the purchase of arms. They were able to purchase about 50 or 60 Martini and Enfield rifles. Those were single shot rifles and good serviceable weapons. The Compan was well trained and drilled. Some time im late 1915, ... Gresham, a prominent member of the Castlebar Company, died. The Company decided to give him a military funeral. For this purpose they left 20 of these rifles in the Rooney Hall on a Saturday night, as the funeral was taking place on Sunday. During the night men, who were formerly members of the Redmondite Volunteers, entered the Hall by stealth and stole the rifles left there. They dumped the rifles miles away in the town of Kiltimagh and nothing further was heard about them until Easter Week.

In Easter Week the Redmondite Volunteers formed themselves into what was called Special Constables, whose duties were to assist the British military and the R.I.C. against the 'rebels' as they called us. I received information previous to Easter Week as to the place those rifles were. I discovered they were in Kiltimagh. I instructed Sean Corcoran (who was subsequently killed in the Black & Tan war

to try and find out in what house they were. He did get some information about them and I instructed him to keep certain houses under observation. On the morning of Sunday, the 30th April, I was out on the Balla-Kiltimagh Road and whilst sitting on the side of the road a motor car passed me with four men in it. Two of these men, at least, were prominent Redmondite Volunteers - a man named Thomas Moclair, a newspaper reporter, and a man named Thomas Quinn, who was then Clerk of Castlebar Union. A third man was "Chappie" Burke, a motor mechanic, and also Joseph Quinn, an excise officer (no relation of Thomas Quinn) and a native of Co. Armagh. Seeing those men on the car I came to the conclusion they were going to Kiltimagh for the rifles and I returned to Balla and got in touch with my own men there. I set watchers on the Castlebar-Kiltimagh road and I sent down a special despatch rider to Kiltimagh to get in touch with Sean Corcoran and to keep us in touch with what was happening there.

After some time I got a despatch from Sean Corcoran telling me that those men were taking the rifles and that it looked as if they were leaving for Castlebar very soon. While I was considering this, Tom Murphy came hurriedly into my house stating that the motor car containing Moclair and his pals were after pulling up at McEllin's Hotel. The occupants of the car went into the hotel and Murphy stated he saw the rifles in the motor car outside. I decided to go down immediately and sent Murphy to collect all the men he could. We could only mobilise five or six men - Tom Murphy, Pat Fallon, Pat Keville, Michael Golden and Jim Reilly, who also co-operated. We took the rifles away with us out of the motor car. Moclair and his crowd saw us through the hotel window taking them, but did not make any move to prevent us. We heard later that Moclair and Tom Quinn at least were armed with revolvers. We heard that they requested the manageress of the hotel to go to the window and raise the sash to enable them to

open fire on us. She refused to endanger herself.

We brought the rifles to the old Courthouse, a part of which was used for recreational accommodation by the young men of the town. We left the rifles there for a short time. There were some young fellows in the hall when we arrived with the rifles and I asked them if they would co-operate with us in the dumping of the rifles and they all agreed. I then went to McKllin's house, a big business premises, employing a large staff. I walked into the dining room where the staff were having their tea, and asked them for their help. They all agreed to help me. I told them that the R.I.C. might be expected to act immediately they were informed of the capture of the rifles. They all got up from their tea and followed me down to the hall where the rifles were. In the meantime Thomas J. McKllin, who was then a young man of about 20 years, came over to me and whispered that we could dump the rifles in his place and that he would arrange for some of his staff to take them in. I was delighted to get this offer of help and I told him to go up to his place and wait our arrival. At the immediate rear of his house was a dense wood of considerable area. He left the hall with five or six of his staff. I asked the others remaining in the hall to collect the rifles and to follow me, which they did.

This particular Sunday, 30th April, was the eve of a big fair which was amongst the three or four most important fairs in Ireland and famous over the whole of the country. There was an unusually large crowd of people on the street, cattle dealers and others interested in the fair, and they all showed great excitement when they heard of our action in seizing the rifles.

We removed the rifles to the back of McEllin's premises. McEllin and his men were waiting there for us. We handed the rifles over to them. They were taken and brought into the buildings which were very extensive for a country town. That night McEllin and six men took down a wooden partition in one of the buildings. The rifles were placed inside the partition and nailed up, so that even though the premises endured a long and painstaking raid by the British authorities, the rifles were not found. McEllin's brother, John E. McEllin, ex-Senator, was not at the raid for the rifles, as he had been sent by me to Kiltimagh, and to follow up the first despatch rider sent there and find out what had happened there exactly. I was a bit worried when an answer had not come back from Kiltimagh by the first messenger I sent there; hence my reason for sending him. Had he been in Balla he would have been on the party seizing the rifles.

ARRESTS IN BALLA AND CASTLEBAR.
Negotiations in Richmond Military Barracks re surrender of rifles.

Great police and military activities followed all over the district within a few days of the this incident. In fact, the British authorities went to the extent of bringing in troops from the Curragh or Dublin into the area. A regiment, known as the North Staffords, arrived in Castlebar, and they went to the trouble of marching to Balla and camping there a whole day. Eventually six of us were arrested at about 4 a.m. on 16th May 1916, as far as I can remember, and we were taken to Castlebar and kept there for about ten days. After this we were taken to Richmond Barracks, Dublin.

After about a month in Richmond we were approached by a clergyman whose name, I think, was Fr. McMahon, an ex-British

army chaplain, with a suggestion that we should hand over the rifles to the British authorities. I don't know if this priest was the Fr. McMahon who was subsequently Chaplain of Mountjoy Prison in the Civil War period. The priest brought every pressure possible to bear on us to hand over the rifles unconditionally. It's only right to say at this point that nearly all the firearms in the possession of the Irish Volunteers throughout Ireland were being handed over to the British military and police authorities. As far as I have learned since, the people who sent Fr. McMahon to us were the relatives of J.T. Murphy, who assisted us in taking the rifles from the hotel at Balla. Murphy told us in Richmond Barracks at the time that his two uncles who were in the Civil Service, and his father (who was then chief clerk in Craig-Gardners, Accountants, Dublin) got the idea into their heads that they would all lose their jobs if the rifles were not handed over.

They brought all the pressure they could to bear on young Murphy, who was then about 19 years of age. I was the only man amongst the prisoners who really knew where the rifles were. I told the priest that even we did what he desired he had no guarantee whatever from the British authorities that any concession would be made to us if we agreed to his request. Together with that, I pointed out that if we did give them the information where the rifles were, we would have to involve the guardians of the rifles and endanger their freedom. The priest was most angry at my raising these points and told me that I was not the strong man I thought I was in dictating terms to the British Empire. I told him I was not trying to dictate to any person or trying to inflate my own importance. I also told him that I was not going to betray men that trusted me, no matter

what he or people like him could call me. He got a bit nasty over the argument and told me that I would be dealt with, which I looked on as a threat. I told him that as I was their prisoner, I was in their power and at their mercy. He finally apologised and stated that he didn't mean to use threats and asked me could I not think of ways of opening negotiations with the British. I then asked him whom he represented in talking to us, and he said that he represented some friends of the prisoners. I told him that I believed he was not in a position to give guarantees to any person in those negotiations and that he had no official status in the matter. He then left us stating that he would see people who had official status, and returned with an officer of Major's and Colonel's rank. This officer was aggressive and bullying in his manner and used threats of shooting. I told this officer that I was not impressed by his threats and he said he was not issuing threats, but his purpose was to use every means of getting control of the guns. He asked me if I was taking full responsibility. I told him I was and he mentioned then the possibility of my being courtmartialled. I told him I had no means of avoiding that. He then became more modified and asked if I was looking for terms and conditions. I told him I was not, and he asked me if I was the officer in charge of the eight Mayo prisoners, who included two from Castlebar - Michael McHugh and John Hoban. I told him I was not, as, strictly speaking, there was no officer in charge. He asked me then why I was taking full responsibility and I told him I was taking full responsibilit for the rifles. He said I was a hard man to deal with and that we were at cross purposes and did not seem to be getting anywhere. I asked him then what he suggested. He then told me he was discussing the matter on his own responsibility and could not officially promise anything. He said that, however, if he had his way and if he got the guns, he would let the rest out, but would not let me out.

Fallon then spoke up and said that if I was not let out they would not wish to be released. All the rest then expressed themselves similarly. The officer and the priest had a private conversation which we did not hear, and the officer said he could not agree to any arrangement without consulting his higher authorities, and that he would have to go and report what had taken place at our talk. The officer went away and the priest remained. He attacked me for my cheek in dictating to the British Government, as he termed it. I told the priest I held the key to the whole situation, as I alone could make the guns available. The priest left us in an angry frame of mind.

We were brought back to our billets in the barracks. When we had been some hours there we were brought down again to the square. Two military officers - the one we had already interviewed- and another, and the priest were present. The second military officer had brass or gold decorations on his cap and appeared to us to be a staff officer. I do not know either of the officer's names or their ranks in the army. The 'staff' officer listened to the priest giving a statement of the talks that had already taken place and the first officer who came to see us corroborated the priest. The 'staff' officer stated that I did not claim to be in authority over my fellow prisoners and I told him I could not claim that. He then said that if the men decided to hand over the guns I would have to agree to it. I said that was a different question. I was responsible for bringing the men into all the trouble and, that being so, I would do all in my power to bring them out of it. He then said he understood my attitude and appreciated it. I asked him what he wanted or what he suggested and he replied that if he got the guns we would all be released and that we should have a talk amongst ourselves. I then asked him were there other

conditions, such as signing guarantees in his mind, and he said "No". He then walked away and took the other two with him. The priest, however, wanted to remain with us and I told him we wished to be alone at our discussion.

At our discussion of the problem I told the others that I could not assume any control over them, that it was a matter for them to decide and that I was not in favour of handing over the guns, but if they wanted to do so, I would have to submit to their wishes. A fairly lengthy talk ensued. It was pointed out that all the other areas in the country were handing in the guns and that we were no better than those who were handing them over. It was also pointed out that Pearse's men had surrendered their guns, etc. Michael McHugh was definite in his support of my attitude in refusing to hand over the guns. It was eventually put to a vote and, as there were only two for not handing over the guns, the decision of the majority to hand them over was carried.

In about two hours' time the two officers and the priest returned. As I refused to convey our decision to the military, Murphy had to do it himself. The senior officer then asked where were the guns. I then told the officer that there was a lot more in it than that, and he sharply inquired what I meant. I told them that it was others down the country who had control of the guns and that if I told him where they were, he would send down and have those men arrested. He then stated I was most exasperating as I seemed disinclined to let down my pals. He asked me how I could get out of the difficulty and I replied that it was his business to devise a means. The officer then said that one of us could be released and sent down the country to get in touch with the people who had charge of the rifles. The police or military could be told where to pick up the rifles, and, when

the rifles were in the hands of the authorities we could all be released. We agreed to this. The officer then suggested that I should go to Balla and hand over the rifles. I refused to go. Murphy then volunteered to go. The officer took a note of Murphy's name and ordered us back to our rooms.

I then gave Murphy a letter authorising him to represent me in getting in touch with McEllin's. I gave instructions that the rifles were to be taken from McEllin's premises and left in the old churchyard to give the impression that they were hidden there. When the rifles were ready in the churchyard, Murphy was to go to the police and inform them of their location. I could not give Murphy any written instructions. The letter I gave him was addressed to no person, as he could have been searched and the authorities would get to know all about the rifles.

A short time later the Orderly Officer who first came to us arrived and handed Murphy a safe conduct and a railway pass to Balla. Murphy went off on his journey and carried out my instructions to the letter, after which he returned to Dublin on the first available train and reported his carrying out the terms of our agreement to the military authorities. He arrived in Dublin about 1 p.m. and that evening five Mayo prisoners were released - Murphy, Fallon, Reilly, Golden and Keville.

It looked that Hoban, McHugh and myself were to be sat on. Early the next morning Hoban and McHugh were released, so I felt I was for it. Late that evening I was told to pack up and I was marched to the barrack gate, as I thought, to join a batch for Frongoch. To my surprise when I arrived at the gate, I was met there by my pals

who had already been released, and I was free again.

I expressed my surprise to my comrades that I was not released with them. They told me that when they were released they were afraid to go home without me and that Murphy took them to see the priest who had been negotiating with us and that they all kicked up a rumpus about my being detained. The result was that the priest went to the military authorities and made such representations as secured my release.

POSITION AFTER EASTER WEEK, 1916.

When I returned home and for some time afterwards matters all over the country seemed very flat and it appeared as if all enthusiasm was knocked out of the National Movement. About September, 1916, things were again stirring and everywhere groups of young men assembled. The whole talk was about the Rising and what happened in it. Songs like "Easter Week", "The Soldiers' Song", "Wrap the Green Flag round me" and others of a similar nature were heard everywhere. The young people were thinking about the chances of having a further round with Britain.

The Volunteer organisation had in late 1916 practically ceased to exist to any great extent. There was a continuous rising tide of National Republican sentiment working in the country, which proved that the old Irish Party was a spent force and had little active support from the people.

About September 1916, I went to Dublin and met a man there who talked to me about the national position and asked me bluntly if I would assist in a movement got up to establish Irish freedom. I told him that I would be delighted to give any help and that I would work enthusiastically with men willing to engage in that object. When he heard this he asked me to accompany him to a meeting to be held that evening in an hotel known as "Fleming's Hotel, Gardiner's

Place. I attended this meeting in the company of the man mentioned - Paddy Ryan, a native of Ballaghaderreen, Co. Mayo.

At this meeting, as far as my memory goes, there were a score of men, or perhaps less, present. As far as I can remember, Cathal Brugha presided and also Eamon Duggan for part of the meeting. I was asked if I would undertake to organise the Volunteers in Co. Mayo and other parts of the West of Ireland. There was a subsequent meeting held near Christmas 1916. I cannot remember the exact date of either of these meetings, but the second was near the end of the year - it was shortly before the Frongoch internees were released.

At the first of these meetings, held in August 1916, a sort of provisional Executive was formed, with Cathal Brugha as Chairman; Liam Clarke was appointed provisional Adjutant General. Clarke, I think, was a North man and was badly wounded in the head during the fighting in 1916. He suffered a lot from his wounds and had mmerous operations about this time, but he did not allow his wounds to curtail his organisational work. He was subsequently in charge of the firing party at the burial of Thomas Ashe in 1917.

Before the second meeting, I had done a certain amount of organisational work in my area and had started three or four companies - the first in Castlebar, two others in Balla and Ballinrobe, and later, a company in Claremorris. Up to this time there was nothing like a proper headquarters in Dublin and all work done by leading men in Dublin was undertaken voluntarily after their working day was finished.

One day in 1917, in my own shop in Balla, a man walked in

and presented me with a letter from Michael Collins, stating that the bearer would explain his business to me. My visitor's brother was very prominent in Irish affairs in London, and he told me that his job in Co. Mayo was to organise the I.R.B. there. He asked me to give him a hand in pushing the organisation in the county. He told me that his proposition to me was Michael Collins' wishes and also that Collins looked on me as an I.R.B. member. I told the man that I had an open mind on the question of organising the I.R.B. I was not sure that I could be looked on as a member. Later, I found out that my admission to the I.R.B. in 1911 was most irregular as I was never proposed or passed as a member. The final result of this conversation was that my visitor took out a prayer book and recited the I.R.B. oath to me, which I repeated, and I became a fully fledged official member of the organisation.

On the instructions of this man I undertook the organisation of the I.R.B. in Co. Mayo amongst active Volunteers. There was a system of extreme caution in selecting members for the organisation and, on account of this cautious attitude, the members of the I.R.B. were kept small. My attitude in this matter was the result of the instructions I received from the man who came to my shop. I will deal in more detail with this matter later.

One of the first moves made by Collins after his release was his managing to get himself appointed as Secretary to Count Plunkett and also Secretary to the Liberty Clubs which contained all the extreme elements of the survivors of 1916, men who still visualised another resort to physical force, numbering many keymen in the local districts all over Ireland.

The next position Collins obtained was Secretary of the Prisoners' Dependents' Organisation. This position was of vital importance at the time, as the disposal of those funds brought Collins into close touch with important people all over the country.

From the start of Collins' organising activities, there were people, differing from him in their ideas, who suggested that he was building himself up with a view to being able later on to direct the Volunteers and the national policy. This feeling of suspicion of Collins started, in my opinion, at least in Frongoch, and possibly in some cases, it started before 1916 in Kimmage Garrison. As I was not in the Kimmage Garrison or in Frongoch, I have no personal knowledge of what happened there, but I heard afterwards that Collins, O'Hegarty, Mulcahy and some others had formed a group in Frongoch which practically ran the camp, and kept to themselves in one hut. On the release of Collins, O'Hegarty, Mulcahy, etc. in late 1916, this group got together again and were, to a great extent, responsible for the re-organisation of the military and political elements existing after 1916. This group did great work, which was undoubtedly due to careful planning by them whilst interned in Frongoch. Dermot O'Hegarty was the ablest man in the group, in my estimation. Collins was outstanding as a forceful personality who was able to get things done.

POSITION AFTER 1916.

In trying to describe the circumstances which led others to be suspicious of Collins, I would like to point out that when the sentenced men were released about mid-1917, a large number of men who were important leaders before 1916 again became available to carry on the work. These men included Mr. de Valera. The released men found that a lot of work

was being done in getting the scattered remnants of the pre-1916 organisation together, and that on the purely political side of the republican movement, energy was being dissipated by the rivalry existing between the parties which were out for breaking this country's bonds with England.

THE PLUNKETT CONVENTION, 19th APRIL, 1917.

The outstanding event in the early spring of 1917 was the Plunkett Convention which was called on the authority of Count Plunkett as head of the Liberty Clubs, and other organisations such as Griffith's Sinn Fein and P.J. Little's Nation League sent representatives. The real purpose of this Convention was to prevent disunity in the national effort throughout the country. The Convention succeeded to a great extent in preventing the clash of interests which existed in local areas between the three above-mentioned bodies in pushing the individual interests of their own organisations. A general agreement was carried that where a branch of one of the organisations existed none of the other organisations would attempt to organise in opposition. The stronger body in numbers of the three mentioned was Sinn Fein, as it was more associated in the public eye with the Rising of 1916 than the others. The result was that Sinn Fein spread more rapidly all over the country than either of the other two organisations. The Volunteers also expanded all over the country and worked hand in hand with Sinn Fein.

At the Plunkett Convention great enthusiasm existed and a display of determination to work for Irish independence and to fight for it, if necessary, was shown.

The organising of the rising national sentiment into anything like a solid national bloc was void of direction and leadership. The three principal republican organisations

were individually trained to take advantage of the rising sentiment, and their efforts were to some extent curtailed by selfish Party interests; they were actually blockading each other's efforts to make headway. This confused state of affairs was responsible for the calling of the Plunkett Convention in the Rotunda. I was not at this convention but I know that about 800 delegates attended from various parts of the country. The personnel at this Convention did not represent any particular group, but was called to embrace every person who believed in the broad principles of Irish independence, as set out by the leaders of the Easter Week Rising.

It was found during the discussions at the Convention that the contentious matters of policy of the three principal parties who were represented at the Convention should be left for the time in Abeyance. It was also agreed that the various organisations formed, or being formed, who, in their own views, subscribed to the 1916 Proclamation, should not be allowed to oppose each other. This was as far as the Convention could then go. It was believed, however, that another Convention would be held later to attempt to reconcile the outlook of the various groups and get a unified national policy going all over the country.

When Collins was released from Frongoch and came to Dublin, he found the position in the country in a fluid condition as far as the political outlook appeared. There were, as I have pointed out, three organisations working for the independence of the country. Each of the organisations had their own particular idea of what freedom meant. The Liberty Clubs - Count Plunkett's party - were out for the complete separation from England with physical force as their policy. Sinn Fein - Arthur Griffith's party - were out for economic and cultural advancement and an independent

sovereign government, with a possible close association with England as independent entities. The third party - Paddy Little's party - were out for what was known as Colonial Home Rule, with a status similar to what Canada, Australia and New Zealand then enjoyed. Of the three elements, the most extreme and, as a consequence, the most influential - as they had the support of the I.R.B. organisations - were the Liberty Clubs.

FUNERAL OF THOMAS ASHE - 25 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

The Ashe funeral was the occasion of a big influx of Volunteers to Dublin from all parts of the country. Special trains were run from all parts of Ireland and were arriving in Dublin practically all night before the funeral. The Volunteer Executive at the time was greatly surprised by the influx of men and organised plans to get officers from each part of the country to meet trains from their own districts and to take charge of the men coming into the city. The numbers coming were so large that it was impossible to get accommodation for them. Men had to camp out on the streets.

Ashe's funeral proved that there existed an unsuspected enthusiasm for the organisation of the Volunteers all over the country, which the men at the head of affairs had not suspected. The country at that time was travelling faster than the leaders anticipated.

Two premises in Parnell Square, Nos. 44 and 46, were made available to the Volunteers by their owners, the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League and the Foresters. Word was spread around to prominent men from each country district to call at the above premises after the Ashe funeral, where instructions would be issued as to organisation in their respective districts. In Parnell Square they were handed forms which were hurriedly typed and were to be filled in by

each man, giving his own name and the names of other responsible officers in the district who would be prepared to take control in the event of casualties. This, to my mind, was one of the most important incidents that took place after 1916. I remember distinctly the impression it made on me standing in No. 44 Parnell Square and seeing these men filling up their forms, men from the four provinces and some from outside Ireland.

Amongst the men dealing with the filling of these forms were one of the Prices of Dublin, Dick McKee, Harry Boland and others whom I do not now remember.

During all this time a careful watch was kept to detect if police agents were attempting to get into the hall. The impromptu nature of the business prevented, as far as I can remember, any interference from British agents.

As a result of the funeral of Thomas Ashe, there must have been about 500 new companies formed all over Ireland. I know this to be a modest estimate from my experiences subsequently on the Volunteer Executive.

EARLY 1917 &c. AND THE FORMATION OF A PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

We were now well into the year 1917 and, as companies of Volunteers started to spring up continuously all over the country, any urge the Volunteers got to organise was prompted by the prisoners returning from British jails. This enthusiasm for starting the Volunteer organisation was not confined to Ireland. Volunteer companies were formed in England, Scotland and Wales - anywhere Irishmen lived in such numbers as enabled them to start companies.

A small group of Volunteer officers from different parts of the country met in Fleming's Hotel in the early

Spring of 1917, about 30 in all. Cathal Brugha presided. Liam Clarke acted as Secretary or Adjutant to the meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to get a serious attempt made to organise the Volunteers, each in his own district and surrounding areas. A loose understanding was come to that a National Convention of the Volunteers would be held in about six months' time. It was strongly urged by the Chairman that events in the war areas in Europe demanded that the organisation of the Volunteers was an urgent matter, as Britain and her Allies were apparently up against it.

Amongst those present at this Convention were Cathal Brugha, Liam Clarke, Richard Mulcahy, ... Bereen from Sligo, Alec McCabe, ... Ryan from Ballaghaderreen, Larry Lardner, one of the Brennans from Clare, Archie Heron (?), Cathal O'Shannon and Liam Lynch.

The hundreds of Volunteer companies now being formed were each in direct touch and controlled by the Executive in Dublin, such as it was at the time. There was no local authority higher than a Company Captain.

The question of arms came up at this Convention. It was found after discussion that practically all arms in the country pre-1916 had been handed over to the British. The re-arming of the Volunteers was a big problem that had to be faced, but was never practically accomplished. All sorts of suggestions re arms supplies were put forward, some most fantastic. The only suggestion made in those early days that bore fruit to a limited extent was the proposition to keep in close touch with British soldiers doing garrison work in the country; to select men who could purchase arms from the soldiers if they could be induced to sell them; to steal the soldiers' arms if opportunity arose, and to take arms by force from them whenever possible. At that time Irishmen

coming home on leave from the British army always carried their rifles with them. It was suggested that we should get after these men and get them to give up their rifles and also desert from the British army and, in the event of their deserting, to assist them out of the country. It was an extraordinary thing that the British never seemed to tumble to what was going on until in various parts of the country incidents occurred of British soldiers refusing to give up their arms and force had to be used to take them. In some few instances soldiers actually used their arms when attempts were made to seize them by force. The British suddenly realised that big losses in rifles were taking place and steps were taken by them to prevent soldiers taking rifles home to Ireland with them.

After Thomas Ashe's funeral the leaders realised that any effort to re-organise the Volunteers would be taken up enthusiastically all over the country, and it was decided that a Convention would be held and the holding of a Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis would provide the occasion for holding a Volunteer Convention and also a means of camouflaging the holding of it from British eyes.

SINN FEIN ARD-FHEIS, 25th OCTOBER, 1917.

The national feeling grew stronger and stronger after the Plunkett Convention and the Ashe funeral, and the spontaneous growth of the Volunteers and the Sinn Fein organisation afterwards showed that both had achieved their purpose. When the great Convention of October 1917, was held in the Mansion House, Dublin, called the Sinn Fein Convention, members of the other two organisations - Liberty Clubs and the Nation League - were also entitled to attend. At least sixty per cent. of the delegates attending the Convention were members of the Volunteers. 3,000 to 4,000 delegates were present.

During the Ard-Fheis a private circular was sent around to a lot of delegates - I got one myself - asking us to call down to 46 Parnell Square used by the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. The purpose of the meeting in 46 Parnell Sqr. was to organise delegates to elect Separatists on the governing body of Sinn Fein. The leading spirits behind this move were Dermot Lynch and Sean Ó Murthuile. It was they who issued the circulars.

When the question arose of the three organisations working on similar lines, Mr. de Valera made a very diplomatic speech on the lines that there was room for all organisations working in the same direction, but that as Sinn Fein seemed more popular and more associated in people's minds with 1916, Sinn Fein would have a better following, and that the new organisation should be known as Sinn Fein.

IRISH VOLUNTEER CONVENTION, OCTOBER 1917.

On the evening of the last day of the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis a Volunteer Convention was held in Croke Park which lasted for at least 10 hours. All the delegates attending the Volunteer Convention had also been delegates at the Sinn Fein Convention. The large number of delegates at the Volunteer Convention, which numbered about 1,100, was partly due to the fact that the different companies had to be represented in the absence of Brigade and Battalion units in the country at that time. Delegates were also present from England, Scotland and Wales. The Volunteer Convention was held in a building in Croke Park, known as the Pavilion, and portion of this building was filled with hay. The large number of delegates seated themselves where convenient on portions of an open stand and around on the hay. Planks and forms were also used for seats. At the end of the building where the hay was a group of men assembled, of whom it could be said they were the men of destiny in the Ireland of our time. The Chairman of the Convention was Eamon

de Valera. Behind him, lying on the pile of hay, were Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack, Dermot Lynch, Eamon Duggan, Dermot O'Hegarty, Michael Staines, Liam Lynch of Cork, Terence McSwiney of Cork, Ernest Blythe, Joe McKelvey, Dick Barrett and Frank Barrett of Clare, Mick Brennan and one of his brothers of Clare, Sean MacEntee of Belfast, James Keaveney, Sligo, Alec McCabe of Sligo, Rory O'Connor, Dick McKee, Oscar Traynor, William M. O'Reilly and some of the McQuills of Dundalk, Brian O'Higgins, Laurence O'Toole, etc. All the prominent men in the republican physical force movement of that time were present. I have no records to go on so I have to rely on my memory.

I was selected as one of the Connaught representatives on the Volunteer Executive formed at this Convention. The business done at the Volunteer Convention was as follows:- A National Volunteer Executive was formed, numbering 19 men selected as follows:-

7 men resident in Dublin, named "resident members"
3 men from each province.

The powers of the Executive were as follows:- A decision by the Executive must be carried by a clear majority of the <u>whole Executive</u> (not the majority of a partial meeting of the Executive). This was necessary to give a vital decision on matters of a serious nature, such as a decision on peace or war. In other words, it would take at least ten votes from the Executive to decide such a vital decision. If this vital question had to be decided, and if ten Executive members voted for either peace or war, the vote was binding on the whole Executive even though some members were absent from the meeting where the vote was taken. A vote of ten members of the Executive was binding on each and all.

Each province elected its own representatives. The "resident members" were voted for and selected by the whole

Convention. The following, as far as I can remember, constituted the Provisional Executive:-

Connaught: Richard Walsh, Laurence Lardner, James Keaveney. (Father Tom Burke acted at one time as substitute for Lardner), Colm O'Gara acted as a substitute for Laurence Lardner on at least one occasion, and a man named Silke acted once or twice for James Keaveney.

Munster: Austin Stack, Diarmuid Lynch, Paddy Brennan (?). (Brennan refused to act on the Executive and had to be replaced by, probably, Con Collins.

Leinster: Seumas Doyle of Wexford, Peadar Bracken, Sean McGarry.

Ulster: Sean MacEntee, Joe Doherty, Paul Galligan.

The "resident members" were from the following:-

Rory O'Connor, Michael Staines, Cathal Brugha, Eamon de Valera, Chairman; Eamon Duggan, Deputy Chairman; William M. O'Reilly, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy.

Meetings of the whole Executive were held on an average once a month up to mid-1920. Sometimes meetings were held twice a month. The meetings were called by the President or Acting President, or on the instructions of the Resident Executive, who were supposed to meet once a week.

The functions of the whole Executive decided the policy of the Army, and there was no superior authority except a Convention of the whole army was called. A different situation arose when the Government of the Republic - First Dail - was established.

IRISH VOLUNTEER EXECUTIVE.

Shortly after the formation of the Executive in October, 1917, the question arose of appointing the personnel of G.H.Q. staff. The question of providing cash for paying the staff

also cropped up. When this question was being discussed I sensed the growth of two groups within the Executive. As far as I can remember now, the first meeting held to discuss this question took place in Fleming's Hotel about eight days after the Executive was formed. The question of appointing a wholetime G.H.Q. staff to take control of the Volunteers under the direction of the Executive was discussed and agreed on. It was also agreed that a special meeting would be subsequently held to go into the question of G.H.Q. staff personnel. It was decided, that the men selected for the staff should be men of outstanding ability and integrity, and that they should eventually be prepared to give up their civil occupations and devote all their time and ability to staff work. The question of wholetime work for the newly-appointed staff was subject to the availability of funds to pay the staff. At this particular time, the sole source of revenue at the disposal of the Volunteers was the 10/- affiliation fee required from each company on its formation. Efforts were being made at the time to raise funds in Dublin by concerts, raffles and other forms of entertainment. The revenue from these latter functions did not all reach the Executive, as the local units generally retained some of the proceeds. It would be no exaggeration to say that when the question of setting up a staff arose, the Executive had practically no funds at their disposal. Immediate financial assistance was essential to enable the Executive to carry on.

About two weeks after the first meeting of the Executive the second meeting was held, and it was decided at this meeting to appoint a sub-committee to go into the question of selecting a G.H.Q. staff, and also to explore the means of providing the finances to run the staff and to carry on army organisation work.

The sub-committee were asked to select what they considered suitable men who were willing to devote all their spare time, and when funds became available, to devote all their time to G.H.Q. work. When the staff would be appointed on a full-time basis they were not to have any other civilian employment to interfere with their work for G.H.Q.

The sub-committee, as far as I can remember, consisted of Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha, Rory O'Connor and Michael Staines. Eamon de Valera was asked to interview certain special men who might be difficult to approach by any other person. I am not very clear as to whom Eamon de Valera was to approach, but I think Dick McKee and Oscar Traynor were two of them.

At this meeting the question of procuring funds was discussed. It was assumed that the only available cash was in the hands of the I.R.B. The Sinn Fein organisation had funds available, but we could not ask for their funds as Sinn Fein at that time contained men not favourable to physical force and they might not have been enthusiastically inclined to give any financial help to the Volunteers.

When the question of approaching the I.R.B. for funds arose, Cathal Brugha approved of the proposition and pointed out that the I.R.B. funds were intended for such use as the Volunteers would now put them to. He also stated that people in control of the I.R.B. funds were most conscientious about the way the funds would be used and that they would have to be convinced that the funds would be used for the furthering of the cause of Irish freedom. He also said he had little doubt that they could be convinced that the funds would be used properly. Michael Collins stated that he knew the sources through which the I.R.B. organisation could be approached and influenced to advance the money.

There was another body mentioned which had control of funds which the Executive might get use of on loan; that was the committee of the Wolfe Tone Memorial Fund. They were supposed to have about £20,000 to £30,000 on hands.

In my opinion at that particular time, late in 1917, Michael Collins or the I.R.B. had little influence on the decisions of the Executive. I think that Collins, in late 1917 or early 1918, was not a member of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. He went on the Supreme Council later.

It must be borne in mind that Collins was released from Frongoch at Christmas 1916, and one of the first bodies with which he was connected was the National Aid Association, of which he was Secretary. He also became Secretary to Count Plunkett, who was President of an organisation known as the Liberty Clubs. This organisation was the public or outward expression of the I.R.B.'s policy. In other words, the Liberty Clubs were sponsored by the I.R.B. to give public expression and support to the I.R.B.'s policy of physical force as a means of gaining complete independence, meaning complete separation from English rule.

Michael Collins's position as Secretary to Count Plunkett meant that he was acting as Secretary of the Liberty Clubs.

The whole political outlook at this time was in a liquid state and the great bond of agreement between all republicans was a united desire to get rid of the Irish Parliamentary Party as soon as possible.

Amongst republicans themselves there were different interpretations of what freedom meant. Bodies such as the Nation League, to which Paddy Little acted as Secretary, would have been satisfied with Colonial Home Rule. They ran a paper called "New Ireland. The policy of Arthur Griffith was one of

sovereign independence and his paper was widely read. His paper advocated something like the Repeal of the Union and did not subscribe fully to an extreme republican policy.

Undoubtedly, Michael Collins stood for sovereign independent status for Ireland, totally separate from Britain, in 1917 and for a considerable time afterwards. This uncompromising attitude of his towards Irish freedom put Collins in alignment with the traditional policy of the I.R.B. and he became very close to the I.R.B. leaders.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

Early in 1918, the question of enforcing conscription in Ireland was debated in the British House of Commons. The Volunteer Executive took a serious view of this matter, especially when the British proposed the registration of all men of military age in Ireland. The Executive issued an order to the Volunteers that registration of Irishmen should be opposed. Various means at the disposal of the Volunteers to fight conscription were discussed by the Executive. Orders were issued to the Volunteers by the Executive to collect all arms and shotguns all over the country; also to raid all gun-shops. When all the available arms were collected into Volunteer hands, the position of the Volunteers as an armed force was little improved.

One of the plans made by the Executive for opposing the enforcement of conscription was that the Volunteers would immediately break up all commercial and other lines of communication, roads, railways, docks, etc. Orders were also issued to induce friendly shopkeepers in all areas to order additional stocks of non-perishable food so that the people would not be hungry. Volunteers were also asked to concentrate on inducing the farmers to provide food for human consumption. Plans were also made to replace the

signing. The reasons for signing would not be accepted as good if, for instance, he stated that he was following some other important member's lead. A similar procedure of giving reasons in the case of a member refusing to sign was also to be followed; he had to give sound reasons for not signing.

The actual decision of the Executive was that the most effective blow the Volunteers could strike in defence of their country to defeat conscription and the most destructive to the British was to make a personal attack on the lives of members of the British Cabinet, and to kill every one of them if possible. It was suggested that the most suitable place to carry out the operation and, at the same time, the most dramatic and accessible, was in the British House of Commons in London. In the event of the British House of Commons not being a feasible location for the operation, the Ministers were to be got wherever they were found. This order was not to be carried out until the actual proclamation for enforcing conscription in Ireland was issued.

An expeditionary force of ten men, of which Cathal Brugha was the leader, went to London and waited there for some time until the danger of conscription for Ireland passed.

The order containing the signatures of the members of the Executive was signed by every member of the Executive as far as I can remember. No member objected to signing it. The reasons given by each member were all similar - that the expedition to London was the most effective answer Ireland could give to the conscription menace. Cathal Brugha was factually Chairman of the Executive at this time, as Mr. de Valera was often absent from meetings on other

duties. Cathal Brugha insisted on taking charge of the expedition.

It must be borne in mind that the expedition to London had authority to act as soon as the knowledge came to them that the proclamation imposing conscription on Ireland was published. The document we signed authorising the expedition was drawn up in such a form that its publication would explain the reasons for the action and that the members of the Executive were taking full responsibility for issuing such an order as a representative Irish authority. As soon as the action planned was carried out in England, the document with the Executive members' signatures was to be published in Ireland.

This publication would be necessary to show to the world that the men who carried out the operation were acting on the orders of the only body that then had authority to authorise such actions on behalf of the Irish people, and that they were not just a crowd of gunmen acting on their own or taking orders from some unknown or obscure secret society.

The expedition fell through when the reason for it had disappeared and the men were then recalled. I cannot now remember the names of the members of this expedition. I do know that in addition to Cathal Brugha, Joseph Goode, London; Seumas Reilly, who later married Mrs. Holohan - the mother of Garry and Paddy Holohan - and, I think, Liam Lynch of Cork, were on it.

When the proposal for the expedition came up I cannot definitely say who first proposed it. I think it was Cathal Brugha. I know that Collins gave it his enthusiastic support. Mr. de Valera also supported it and made most useful contributions to the discussion; his ideas were

incorporated in the final draft authorisation which the Executive members signed.

During the conscription crisis and at its highest, a special courier, Fintan Murphy, was sent from Dublin to me so that I could travel with him to Ballina & contact a group of men there who had touch with other men living along the Mayo coast, along Blacksod Bay and Belmullet coastline. These men near the coast had informed the men in Ballina that they were in touch with German submarines operating around the North Mayo coast. All this matter of German submarines was shrouded in mystery and I knew nothing about it at the time. I went, as directed, with Fintan Murphy to Ballina and introduced him to a few men whom he wanted to contact. One of these men was a teacher named O'Leary. Another man we interviewed was a commercial traveller named Murray. We also saw Tom Ruane, who was then an active Volunteer; we saw a man named Lacken and another man named John Moran, who came from Belmullet and worked as a stone mason in Ballina. This John Moran was a very sincere man, but I suspect a bit credulous. The men we saw in Ballina were anxious to help and put us in touch with the men in the Blacksod coast area over fifty miles from Ballina. I never met the men from the coast area, and, as far as I know, Murphy did not actually meet them.

I did, however, get in touch with Michael Kilroy, who was both shrewd and reliable, and got him to call on the men whose names we got from the people in Ballina. The names I gave to Mr. Kilroy were a family named Ruane and Jack Foye. John Moran, whom I have already mentioned, was also sent from Ballina to try and contact the same people.

After I had investigated the matter I found that the rumour about the German submarines had started from a public meeting in Ballina during the anti-conscription campaign, which Darrel Figgis addressed. When the speakers at this meeting returned to a local hotel, two men - Ruane of Stonefield, Carratigue, and Foye, Belderrig, Ballina - followed them and asked for an interview with Mr. Figgis. These two men informed Figgis and the other men with him that they were in touch with German submarines. Both the men were small farmers and fishermen and were frequently at sea in fishing boats. They stated that one of the submarine commanders asked them could they put him in touch with Volunteer headquarters. When Figgis heard this he sent for the local Battalion Volunteer officers and put the Blacksod men in touch with them. This resulted in Moran of Ballina and Foye being sent to Dublin to contact Volunteer headqrs. to report the matter to them and find out what G.H.Q's. reactions would be.

Moran at that time was about 50 years of age. He was an old I.R.B. man and had little touch with the active Volunteers in Ballina. His natural reaction on reaching Dublin was not to go to Volunteer headquarters, but to call on some old I.R.B. men he knew in Dublin and make his report to them. One of the men he saw was a Mr. O'Leary Curtis, an old man then. O'Leary Curtis was politically all right and brought them to Harcourt St., the headquarters of Sinn Fein. He asked for Cathal Brugha who was not there at the time. He eventually saw Alderman Tom Kelly. Mr. Kelly brought him to one of the Nunans (probably our Ambassador in the United States). When Nunan reported the matter to G.H.Q. he was delegated to interview both men.

On thinking over this business afterwards, I believe that Michael Collins and Diarmuid O'Hegarty were not anxious

to meet Moran or Foye. The scare of the German plot was not in existence at this time, which I place early in May 1918. It was in pursuance of the policy of G.H.Q. to remain in the background which I believe prompted them to send Fintan Murphy to me.. If G.H.Q. as it then existed were anxious to contact the German Government through that Government's submarine commanders they had no mandate or authority from the Volunteer Executive or the Sinn Fein Executive to do so. The first mention of this matter at an Executive meeting was about the time that Murphy came to me.

Shortly afterwards at a meeting of the Executive, Cathal Brugha asked Michael Collins did he know of any intercourse the Volunteers or any other political group had with German representatives here, or was he (Collins) aware of any German agent working in the country. This meeting was about the first time the first whispers of what was known as the German Plot got about. Michael Collins was emphatic in his denial of any knowledge of these matters. He was supported in his denial by Diarmuid O'Hegarty and both stated that the prominence given to the German Plot in the British Press was laughable. Cathal Brugha did not appear to be satisfied with the denials. Brugha stated that, "my friend in the Castle went out of his way to come to me and warn me that the Castle knew everything that was going on and the British got this information through American Intelligence circles". Brugha also stated that "it may be easy to fool us, but not so easy to fool the British".

A story went the rounds after this that the Germans were prepared to land an expeditionary force of 80,000 men in Ireland. This plan was based on a feigned attack by the Germans on the east coast of England, Scarborough, Yarmouth,

etc. and thus to attract the British Navy from a close watch on the North Sea and enable the German expeditionary force to break through to the Irish coast.

About the same time as I heard the above story, Cathal Brugha told me at an interview I had with him (not during a meeting of the Executive) that he had heard the same story about an invasion plan and that he believed it. His whole attitude towards Collins's and O'Hegarty's denials was sceptical, and his general attitude towards Collins after this was one of suspicion. This incident at the meeting of the Executive was, in my opinion, the real start of the feud thats subsequently existed between Michael Collins and Cathal Brugha.

At the time the effort was made to procure funds for use of the Volunteers in setting up a G.H.Q., the difference between the I.R.B. and those not closely associated with the I.R.B., which subsequently became apparent, was not noticeable

The policy of engaging in the guerilla war was discussed by the Executive and agreed on.

The events which took place at Soloheadbeg and at Knocklong in 1919 were discussed at the Executive subsequent to the events taking place. The men involved had no authority from the Executive or G.H.Q. for those actions, acting as they did on their own initiative. We were not responsible for bringing the events about, and still a situation was created that men might be tried for their lives and on the question of standing behind them, it was decided that the Executive would stand behind them and, if necessary, give them all the moral and financial support which was required. As far as I can remember, both Michael Collins and Gearoid O'Sullivan attended at the Executive meeting and were asked to go into the whole matter, to get in touch with the

men involved and make all provisions necessary for their safety from capture and their legal defence if captured and brought to trial. I believe authority for the expenditure of £1,500 was authorised by the Executive, and authorisation for more was promised if the £1,500 was found insufficient. The feeling at the Executive at the time was that the men involved in these operations had, without proper authority, taken what was then considered a very serious action, the consequences of which might be difficult to control, and that the country as a whole would not be willing to meet. The Executive also felt that disciplinary action in matters of armed operations was essential, and it was a matter of grave doubt if the country was prepared for such a policy. It was felt that armed operations would require considerable preliminary planning, and there was doubt about our ability to carry out successfully such a policy. The limited supply of arms available to the Volunteers was an ever present problem which, to people who knew the position, would not prompt any sane hope for success.

MATTERS POLITICAL.

William Cosgrave fought a by-election in Kilkenny in the year 1917, I think, and undoubtedly he was the selection the I.R.B. favoured, and there was another candidate who was elected in Galway, and he was an I.R.B. man - a lawyer. He became Co. Registrar in Galway afterwards. He was George Nichols and he is now dead. I would say that Griffith got his first election as a result of I.R.B. support in Cavan. I am not sure about Dr. Crowley, whether he was an I.R.B. man or not. William Sears, who was selected for South Mayo, certainly was an I.R.B. man, and also Joe McBride, who was selected for West Mayo. Eamon de Valera was selected for East Mayo. He was in gaol at the time. De Valera was nominally in the I.R.B. but he never, to my knowledge, was enthusiastic about it or took an active part in it in any shape or form.

In fact, he had an objection to it until a comparatively short time before the Rising of 1916. He told me himself that when they were leading up to the Rising, on one occasion Tom MacDonagh asked him was he in the organisation - which was a term they used always - and he answered that he was not, so MacDonagh said that it were better if he were; that the position which he occupied at that time, Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, demanded that he should be aware of certain things that were being done and that he would be unaware of these things if he were not in the organisation, so he gave me to understand that he was formally introduced to and sworn into the organisation, but that he practically had no more connection with them. That was the extent of his connection with it. The I.R.B. did take an active part in the selection of republican parliamentary candidates in the General Election of 1918, and the previous by-elections, because there were by-elections, as far as I can remember, in the following places - first, Roscommon, where Count Plunkett was the candidate; the second, as far as I remember, was North Longford for which Joe Magennis was candidate. Joe was an army man. The third would be Kilkenny, for which William Cosgrave was candidate. The fourth was, I think, Cavan, for which Griffith was candidate, and the next by-election was Waterford, where we got beaten and where Dr. White was the candidate. He is still there, I think.

The next place was Tyrone, at which the candidate was the present Dr. McCartan. As far as I know, all the candidates were I.R.B. men with the possible exception of Count Plunkett and Dr. White. All those bye-elections occurred from the beginning of 1917 up to the General Election, which occurred in December 1918. At the 1918 election it was all over Ireland at the same time. The I.R.B. members were being put forward as Sinn Fein candidates. The term Sinn Fein was used in a very broad sense at that time. They did not strictly

mean Griffith's original Sinn Fein policy; it was broader than that. It more or less insisted that there should be one organisation, that we could not have separate organisations working for the same objective. It could be broadly called a "national republican movement". The I.R.B. activities and interference in the selection of candidates was caused by the fear, at that time, that men would be selected who would be weak on what they considered the national issue and would submit or agree to weak compromises. They attempted to influence the selection of candidates generally and succeeded in the majority of cases; they evidently visualised the struggle of which 1918 was a prologue. They wanted people elected that they knew would stand the test. Of course, a great many of the people in 1918, especially those in the Volunteer movements, did not foresee - in their anticipation of a fight - guerilla warfare; what they visioned was another rising on a national scale throughout the whole country.

Of course, after a time we began to see the impossibility of a general rising, as we realised the difficulties in that we had not sufficient war material to carry on an extensive or widespread struggle. In the time of the Conscription issue this aspect was very seriously discussed and we then fully realised our weaknesses and shortage of material, etc., and we had to draw our plans consistent with the position we were in. That led to the London expedition with a sort of tacit resistance throughout the country to be active when it was possible and that we would try to create a situation that for every man in this country that England succeeded in conscripting into her army, she would lose two or three one way or another through being occupied in Ireland, and then to make it as effective as possible in the way of propaganda.

Going back to the 1918 election, where we started, the question of the Republican government arose first and the formation of a declaration of independence. Before the general election a new factor entered into the situation and it was one of the unfortunate things which occurred, because I believe it had a very bad effect and consequence. That was the positive direct interference in the north of Ireland by the Catholic Church. Cardinal Logue interfered deliberately in arranging and directing the representation in the northern constituencies and, undoubtedly, as a result of de Valera's absence, he succeeded with, I believe, very bad results afterwards from the national standpoint. The result of his action would be no contests in the northern counties and the Redmondites went in in areas where they had little hope of success at an election. He issued a public statement that the Parliamentary representation in the north of Ireland should not be risked if the result would be the loss of parliamentary seats by the Catholic element, that if there was not an arrangement come to by the two wings of the Nationalists - as he called them - Sinn Fein and the Irish Party - it would result in the loss of seats and gains for the Unionist Party, and that he, as the privileged representative of the Catholics, could not possibly keep silent while this was happening.

A conference was held between himself and John MacNeill. De Valera was in gaol at this time and had nothing to do with these negotiations. He sent for John MacNeill on the grounds that he was one of the vice-presidents of Sinn Fein and, since he was a northerner, he would have a knowledge of the conditions in Ulster. Cardinal Logue got MacNeill to agree that there were certain seats in the north of Ireland that were not to be contested by Sinn Fein, I think there were six seats in the North, but I am not sure. The result was that

the Irish Parliamentary Party won 6 or 7 seats. Sinn Fein won 73 seats and a seat in the National University - I think that was the 74th. Up to that, undoubtedly, from what I heard at the time, there were signs of a movement among the younger Protestants or Unionists tending towards republicanism and there was a sort of active organisation in the north amongst these young men opposing and being very critical of Carson and Sir James Craig and their crowd in the north. They showed to be friendly towards us and to take an interest in our activities, but when this thing occurred between MacNeill and Cardinal Logue, it killed that whole tendency. Peadar O'Donnell told me that in Derry or near it some of the local Unionists got in touch with our crowd and gave indications of a wish to discuss the position generally - what we were aiming at and what we intended to do.

They appeared anxious to get an outline on our national programme. A conference was held and things were discussed generally and agreement reached on economical and cultural programmes. They were not fully convinced on the language point, but neither were they opposed strongly to it. They would not kick up a big row about it, but they wanted to be sure first that we would keep the fight going until we would get full control of the country, economically or otherwise, and that we would not submit to compromises. They further stated that they appreciated our position in this way as they regarded the old Irish Party as being a tool of the Catholic Church backed up by the A.O.H., declaring the latter as no better than the hard-boiled Orangeman. They had a separate organisation which I think they called "The Orange Youth" or something like that. Lindsay Crawford, subsequently our Consul in New York, and a man named Sloan were on it. They had broken away from the old Orange Order and they had gone out on a programme of national construction - Irish in its outlook and Irish in its aims and objects.

There was probably a little streak of what today might be called 'Bolshevism' among them. In other words, they were extreme Labour. They discussed all those things at this conference and they adjourned the conference to meet again in about a fortnight or three weeks and, in the interval, Cardinal Logue came out and made his famous statement. MacNeill agreed to meet him.

When the conference with the advanced Orange crowd was due to resume their attitude was changed and they bluntly stated that they could not trust the republicans, that they were as bad as the Irish Parliamentary Party who were ruled by Catholic Church Authorities. They regretted having made the mistake of thinking that we were different and discovering we were not. Undoubtedly, this had, I believe, a bad effect and a more important national effect than people ever thought it had. Some of these men - I suppose the best of them - did actually come the whole way. Lindsay Crawford was one, and I think Sloan too. The latter, I think, died about 1920. There was another example in a writer named Newman (his pen-name was Herbert Moore). He reverted to Unionism, though, strange to say, he still takes an interest in the Irish language and Irish history and things like that. A few of them went that way, but most of them did not.

One of the men who, before our day, came over to Parnell - Joe Biggers - was one of the great lights of the Irish Party. His grandsons were authorities on Irish history and wrote some very interesting books. One of them became a member of Griffith's original Sinn Fein organisation.

The result of this agreement re the election, whilst undoubtedly bad, was a clever and cunning move by the old Cardinal.

~~As I have already pointed out,~~ The situation that existed

from about October or November 1920, until after Christmas 1920, was very intense. About February it eased off considerably. The Black and Tans were not so active from February up to the Truce as they were before that. In that period the feelers would have been thrown out for negotiations and the Duke of Devonshire came here, I think, under the name of "Mr. Edwards". Of course, everyone knew who Mr. Edwards was and what he came over for. With the usual cleverness of English diplomats, he made it his business to see the important sections of the population in the country as far as he could get in touch with them. He did see de Valera and Griffith, I think. I do not think he met Collins at that stage He saw other elements - the old Irish Party element. Our intelligence at the time was good and we were getting a very accurate synopsis of all those interviews. These feelers were proceeding and, of course, England, if it suited her, would deny that Devonshire represented her. I think, after he had seen de Valera, our people knew that he was going to see the Cardinal, and my information at the time was that our people sent a synopsis of the discussions with Devonshire to the Cardinal. The Cardinal was sent this information to put him wise as to what had taken place and what had been put forward as a national demand. He was given full information and warned as to the fundamentals necessary to present a united national front. In spite of that warning he more or less gave Devonshire to understand that we could be ignored and that if the issue were put before the people, the people would not heed us. It was the effect of the agreement, although the agreement took place three or four years before that. He found he could assert himself and he intimidated MacNeill into an agreement in 1918 and, finding that he could exercise strength in that way, he followed it up in 1921 with what I consider was downright treason. The Cardinal's anti-Irish

attitude generally was not supported by the Irish Bishops and especially by the Northern Bishops. Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, who succeeded him, Bishops of Clogher and Down and Connor, and Dr. McKenna and Dr. McRory were very national.

In a great many parts of the country the election was an overwhelming Sinn Fein Party, and the old Party organisation - such as it was - fell asunder in the country. If the election proved anything in Ireland, it proved we had the youth with us, the young men especially, because our organisation in that election worked like an army in every place and the old type of men - respectable shopkeeper and farmer, professional person - who had been very good in their day, vigorous and active politicians - were now all getting old; the old Party seemed to be unable to attract them, with the result that they were beaten fairly easily. But it would be wrong to say that they had not a considerable amount of support at that time, because they had. They got a fairly good vote in most places.

During the election contest there was a curious position amongst the people in the west of Ireland some of whom the old Party had always fought and to a great extent wiped out or weakened badly. These rallied to the support of the Party on the ground that they were the lesser of two evils, I suppose. The men I refer to were what remained of the landlords and their supporters who were opposed to the Land League. The small men in the country towns and the professional men, to a great extent, were all in this category and rallied to the Old Irish Party; but their support was ineffective. Possibly if there had been Proportional Representation at the time, as there is now, they would have placed us in an awkward position, because from my own experience of the election at the time out of 80 seats the Party would get at least 30 by proportional representation. We would probably have got about 50, but 30 seats would have weakened our position.

DAIL ÉIREANN AND CONTROL OF I.R.A.

When the Republican Government of Dail Éireann was set up in January 1919, the question arose for the Executive as to the recognition of Dail Éireann as the legitimate government of the country and the handing over of the control of the army to the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha, as being the legitimate military authority over the country and the army of the Republic.

The logical assumption of a reader of this document should be that the Executive should dissolve itself and hand over its functions to the Minister for Defence. Strange as it may seem, this did not happen. The Executive did not dissolve, it continued to function, and met at least three times after its acceptance of Dail Éireann as the government of the country.

When the question of handing over the functions of the Executive, regarding the control of the Volunteers, to the government of the Republic, arose in or about May 1919, four or five meetings of the Executive were held in rapid succession to discuss the question. These meetings disclosed very definite differences of opinion amongst the Executive members and generally resulted in very heated arguments. There was a very strong element in the Executive against handing over control of the army to the government, and the discussion revealed the existence within the Executive of two groups - one which may be described as the I.R.B., and the other the anti-I.R.B. wings.

Although it would be wrong to say when the question came to a final vote, that the voting was exactly on those lines, I.R.B. voted on both sides for and against the government's control of the army, it disclosed, to my mind, that there were two groups, at times, within the Executive - one associated with Michael Collins's views and the other with

the views of Cathal Brugha. It must be understood that Mr. de Valera, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, was not mixed up to any real extent in the disputes which went on within the Executive. It must be borne in mind that he was made a prisoner in 1918 in the German Plot round-up and was at least 12 months in Lincoln Jail. When he escaped and came back to Ireland he was only at home about two months when he went on a mission to U.S.A. He returned to Ireland about Christmas 1920. Mr. de Valera subsequently told me that on his return he found that the two groups mentioned above had defined themselves into definite opposing sides and that he was placed in the unfortunate position that, on account of group jealousies, he had to be careful about any statements made to him concerning either party.

I have stated that the Executive did not cease to function although we accepted the authority of Dail Eireann. The question of handing over the army to Dáil Eireann authority was left to the whole I.R.A. organisation, including the I.R.A. organisation in Britain. Each Brigade was ordered to hold a Brigade Convention and discuss and take a vote on the question of Dail Eireann's control of the army or continuing the control exercised by the Executive. These Conventions were held in all areas where the I.R.A. were organised, in Ireland and Britain, in or about November 1919.

It was decided by an overwhelming majority of the brigades that the army should be controlled by Dail Eireann. At a subsequent meeting of the Executive, called to consider the decisions of the Brigade Conventions, the Executive were forced to accept the majority decision. I believe, as far as I can remember now, that a resolution was also passed at the Executive meeting that the Executive remain in existence as an advisory body.

The first Dail met in January 1919, and it was at least between three and four months later before the question of the army and the relationship with Dail Éireann and the Government of the Republic became a vital question. There was an impromptu discussion at a meeting of the Executive on the question at which there was no decision regarding the relationship between the army and the government of the Republic. It was decided to call a special meeting to discuss this question. A meeting was held subsequently, as far as I can remember, in 46 Parnell Square. A very lengthy discussion took place as to the exact position of the army and whether it would or would not recognise the Executive of the Dail which was the Cabinet of the Republic.

The members of the Cabinet of Dail Éireann when this discussion took place were, I think, as follow:-

President	E. de Valera
Foreign Affairs	Arthur Griffith
Home Affairs	Liam Cosgrave *Last*
~~Justice~~	A. Stack
Finance	Michael Collins
Defence	C. Brugha
	~~K. O'Higgins~~.

At this second meeting, after a lengthy discussion, no decision was arrived at and the discussion was to be resumed at a further meeting to be held in about three weeks time. At a subsequent meeting, the question was further discussed and no decision made. At all those meetings the debates were heated and it was clear that there was an acute difference of opinion on the question. C. Brugha maintained, as we were the Executive of the I.R.A. for the time being, maintaining our status as being the army of the Reoublic, we could not refuse to recognise the government of the Republic to the fullest extent. It was proposed by members who agreed with C. Brugha that the army should take

an oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic. The members who ~~agreed~~ OPPOSED. this were led by Dermot O'Hegarty and held the opinion that Dail Éireann was composed of politicians who might if they - Dail Éireann - considered it expedient, abandon the republican position and compromise the I.R.A. by doing so.

It was pointed out that the Irish Parliamentary Party did try to gain control of the I.R.B. in former times, and if they did not get complete control or gain such influence over the I.R.B., that much harm was done to the I.R.B. organisation which became evident by the rise of the Invincibles who broke away from the parent organisation. A serious warning was given that the Dail was liable to change and could not be trusted to uphold the republican tradition and liability to compromise on this important issue was always present. Those discussions were carried out in a bitter and heated manner. It was eventually agreed on that we would recognise Dail Éireann as the parliament of the Republic and that the CABINET OF DAIL EIRENN ~~Executive~~ was to be recognised as the government of the Republic. BUT THAT THE ARMY EXECUTIVE REMAIN IN EXISTENCE This broad principle was acceptable by the whole Executive. When agreement on this ~~was~~ basis was arrived at the ticklish question of the form of oath to be taken by the army had to be hammered out. On the formula for the oath there was long and heated discussions. There was at least three formulas drafted and maybe four or five brought before the Executive for acceptance by them. I would like to explain that Dail Éireann had agreed to leave the drawing up of the oath for the army to the Executive. C. Brugha, being at the time Minister for Defence for Dail Éireann, stated, as far as I can remember, that the republican parliament would accept our formula for the oath. It took at least three months to decide what form the oath should take. The formulas put

forward for acceptance by the Executive were all drafted by D. O'Hegarty. I cannot now remember the wording of each, but I can remember that in every one of them there was a fault that gave a way out to any member of the army who wished to provide himself with an excuse to get out of his allegiance to the Civil Authority of the Irish Republic. Those formulas, as I have stated, created a very bitter and strained atmosphere in the Executive. At the end, a meeting which stands out in my memory was held on a Sunday morning either at 44 or 46 Parnell Square.

We met at about 9.30 a.m. and continued to discuss the matter until about 3 p.m. when it seemed there was little prospect of agreement and that this meeting would end up as former meetings did. It was suggested then that we adjourn for lunch, which we did. When we returned after lunch, most of us expected another long and abortive session. I should have stated that at all those meetings D. O'Hegarty acted as secretary to the meetings and kept a minute, or at least made notes, for record at each meeting. E. Duggan acted as chairman at all those meetings. He acted as chairman, possibly to give C. Brugha absolute freedom in his debating the question. A few minutes after we resumed our discussion, D. O'Hegarty produced another new formula for an oath which we had been discussing ~~for~~ ALL morning. It was read by another member of the Executive. Discussion had started on this before C. Brugha returned to the meeting as he was a little late for the resumption. Brugha listened to the discussion going on for a few minutes. He then got up, tapped the table to get the attention of the chair and the meeting, and produced a document which I, being close to him, could see was typewritten. He said this was a formula which he desired to put before the meeting and strongly recommended its adoption. He stated that it was the oath adopted by the United States of America and taken by members

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of the U.S. Congress, Legislature, civil servants, army and navy. The changes necessary to suit Irish requirements were very trifling. The discussion was dropped and Brugha's formula was read out to the meeting. As far as I can now remember, he produced a number of duplicate copies which were handed round to the meeting. We were asked to read them carefully and, after doing so, a short discussion followed. Brugha formally proposed his formula's acceptance, a proposition, as far as I can remember, Collins immediately seconded; O'Hegarty then withdrew his proposal and the Brugha formula was adopted unanimously by the meeting.

This agreement on the form of the oath caused a feeling of relief to all the members of the Executive as the position up to 3 p.m. that day looked hopeless, and the friction caused over this question was liable to do great damage. The atmosphere at meetings of the Executive after the question of the oath was settled became more friendly and less tense.

It should be remembered that de Valera was out of all those discussions as he was not available at the time the matter was discussed, being abroad at this time.

When the formula for the oath was agreed on by the Executive it was discussed by the Executive how the oath should be administered to the army and the possible reactions by the army to the taking of the oath. It must be remembered that the Executive was a body elected by the Volunteers and could be disposed of by the same people. The Volunteers at the start of the Executive were a military organisation without a proper government and later, when the oath question came up, a government for the Republic had been established. The Executive, when the question of the oath was passed, did not feel qualified in issuing orders demanding the army to

take an oath of allegiance to Dail Éireann. This argument was put forward by the O'Hegarty and Collins party to the Executive and it was seen that the Executive might cause trouble by pressing on the different brigades the taking of an oath of allegiance to Dail Éireann. The O'Hegarty party suggested the holding of a convention in each brigade to find out if the brigade were willing to give allegiance to Dail Éireann or remain under the authority of the Volunteer Executive. I feel that O'Hegarty and his supporters on the Executive hoped that by exerting influence through the I.R.B. organisation they would be able to manipulate the brigade conventions. I attended a few of the conventions and I sensed that prominent I.R.B. men were working on those lines.

I would like to state that as a body the I.R.B. organisation were not asked for any decisions on the question of the oath for the army. I was Co. Secretary for Mayo I.R.B. Co. Board and I got no orders to obtain a decision on the oath question. I have no definite proof that individual I.R.B. men were asked to use their influence at brigade conventions to influence them against giving allegiance to Dail Éireann, but as I have stated above, I have a hunch that some I.R.B. were prominent in opposing the oath of allegiance, probably under advice.

When the formula for the oath was agreed on, the meeting adjourned and it was arranged that a special meeting would be held to discuss the method by which the question of putting the oath to the different brigades in the country would be implemented. At the subsequent meeting held shortly afterwards it was decided that a national convention of the army should be held and the form of representation at that convention and who should be called to the convention was discussed. It was very evident that under the conditions existing it would be very foolish to call a convention similar to the convention held in

Croke Park in October 1917, which was based on company representation. The democratic nature of the representation at Croke Park could not now be repeated. It was decided that the national convention should be based on brigade representation; the national convention was called that each brigade would hold what could be classed as a brigade convention in each brigade area and the brigades' views on the question of the oath or no oath would be obtained. Before the Brigade conventions were held, G.H.Q. had sent on to each brigade a circular concerning the question to be decided. I do not, however, think that the form of the oath was included in this circular, but that the principles involved in the taking of the oath was outlined.

The Brigade conventions were held in each area and were based on battalion and company representation. I attended the convention of the Mayo Brigade at Balla at which 300 to 400 men attended. At this time Co. Mayo was all in one brigade ~~and the companies were members~~. The question of taking the oath was opposed by a small number of officers led by Joe McBride who was then county centre of the I.R.B. The overwhelming majority of the delegates were in favour of taking the oath, so it was not pushed to a vote as in all only about 6 officers were against it.

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The national convention was held in Blackhall Place, Dublin, and comprised, as far as I can remember, only three representatives from each brigade - O/C., vice-O/C. and Adjutant. I am not sure if Brigade Q.Ms. were also to be called. Those officers were all considered eligible, as by the Constitution of the Volunteers they were elected by the rank and file in each brigade area. Staff officers were appointed by the brigade staffs and were not considered eligible to attend. The question of the oath was discussed

and the taking of the oath was supported by a great majority of the conventions. The question was not, as far as I can remember, put to a vote. The opinion of the convention was definite and it was arranged that all brigade officers attending the national convention would meet again inside a few days and each officer take the oath. This was done.

At the next meeting of the Executive all Executive members took the oath and made arrangements that each of the provincial members should return to their areas and have the oath administered to all volunteers in the different brigades. Cathal Brugha, as Minister for Defence, presided at the Executive meeting. He took the oath himself first and then administered it to all Executive members. I have a definite impression that at this meeting Brugha stated that he had already gone to Arthur Griffith, as head of the government - de Valera being then in America - and administered the oath to him. He stated that this procedure was necessary to keep the constitutional position clear.

The procedure laid down for administering the oath was that each of the provincial members of the Executive was to call a meeting of each brigade council in his area and administer the oath to each brigade officer. the Brigade staff were to have the oath administered to each battalion staff and each battalion staff were to administer the oath to company officers, and the company officers would administe the oath to the men in the company. The county was covered in this way, as three members of the Executive were representing each of the provinces with the assistance of seven members of the Resident Executive were able to cover the whole country in a short time.

After the administration of the oath of allegiance the title of Irish Volunteers was generally dropped and the

designation Irish Republican Army was used instead. From the time the government of the Republic was set up the title Irish Republican Army was creeping into use, but after the administration of the oath I would say the popular title for the army was The Irish Republican Army. I have no recollection of any discussion at the Executive, either before or after the administration of the oath, of an official change of title for the army. The official heading on G.H.Q. stationery continued Oglaigh na hÉireann, Irish Volunteers.

After the administration of the oath to all Volunteers the feeling in the Executive was that some of the members of the Executive felt that some at least of the authority of the Executive had been taken away from them.

In dealing with the decisions by the Brigade conventions to accept control by Dail Éireann, or the Government of the Republic, the question of the Executive itself as to whether it should continue in existence or not, or if it was to have any powers, was not put for decision to the Brigade Conventions. It could be said that this important question remained undecided. As a matter of fact, in practice the Executive continued to function for some time and made important decisions.

On the question of the most effective plans for attack on the British Government's administration in this country, Dail Éireann had taken steps to deal with the functions of British Courts and the setting up of Republican Courts to supersede them. The Dail Courts took the administration of law and order to a great extent out of British hands all over the country. At a meeting of the Executive held about this time, they discussed the question of Courts and the means of support for Dail Éireann's efforts to break down British legal administration and the most effective and

spectacular way of doing so. A sub-committee of the Executive was appointed, the members of which were considered to have legal knowledge and a knowledge of British administrative methods. This committee was asked to report back to a subsequent meeting of the Executive the results of their deliberations and investigations. At the meeting where this sub-committee was appointed the question arose as to what departments of British administration in Ireland should be attacked, and what departments of British administration should be allowed to carry on. It was evident, for instance, that the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture should be immune from attack, as these departments were useful to the Irish people. The question of attack on the Irish Land Commission was discussed at more than one meeting. This question presented a difficult problem as, on one hand, we had the traditional struggle of the people for the land, and, on the other hand, we were faced with a very different problem in connection with the land from that with which the Fenians were faced. In the Fenian days the land was in the absolute control of a small body of men who could be classed as enemy garrison, and the mass of the people had no title to the land they worked. In the intervening 60 years the position had completely changed. The greater portion of the land had passed completely into the hands of farmers in the rural areas, so it was decided not to interfere with the Land Commission. To my knowledge, the withholding of payments of Land Commission annuities was not ordered by Dail Éireann, the Executive or Headquarters staff. This policy, where operated, must have been done by local I.R.A. orders. In consideration of this question we felt that if we interfered with the Land Commission in a drastic way, such as destroying the Land Commission offices and the Deeds offices, we should be striking at the right of ownership and the title deeds of every farmer, big and small, in the country.

The sub-committee appointed to go into the question of attacking British administration consisted, as far as I remember, of three men - Eamon Duggan, a qualified solicitor, Richard Mulcahy, ex-Civil Serwent, and Austin Stack a lawyer' clerk. This sub-committee reported back at a subsequent meeting and gave a lengthy report, verbally, on the questions put to them. They laid special emphasis on the necessity for attack on British Local Government administration. They pointed out that the administrative powers and authority of this British department were so great and entered so much into the daily lives of the people that by attacking this department, the biggest blow would be struck against British administration in the country and its effect would be soonest felt.

What made a discussion by the Executive urgent was that an election for all local bodies took place in early 1920 and practically 80% of those bodies returned a republican majority with control over three-quarters of the country. When the elections of the local bodies were over, the local bodies themselves in overwhelming majority passed resolutions pledging support to Dail Eireann, and refusing to give recognition to the British Local Government Department any longer.

The question of the burning of income tax offices and destruction of evacuated R.I.C. barracks was sanctioned by Dail Eireann and was enthusiastically supported by the Executive.

It was also decided at the Executive meeting that the Army should attack each government department in this country with the exception of departments which were useful to the Irish people, such as the Department of Education and the Irish Land Commission. The post office, being useful even for I.R.A. purposes, was to be immune from attack except

where I.R.A. for military reasons carried out raids or took apparatus for army use. The climax of this policy of attack on government institutions was the attack on the Custom House in Dublin.

I attended a meeting of the Executive about November 1920, as far as I can remember, and another in or about May 1921. The purpose of those meetings to my mind was to feel the pulse of the Executive members on the military situation as it then stood. The question of procuring arms was also debated. Several country members pointed out the scarcity of arms in their areas and the impossibility of obtaining them from G.H.Q. The resident members of the Executive were pressing for a more widespread military effort. As a result of this discussion of the Executive, I went to Britain about September 1920, with a written authority from Michael Collins to procure arms for the four Co. Mayo Brigades. I got what I believed to be a considerable quantity of arms for the four brigades in different parts of England, mostly in Liverpool. The arms were shipped to Dublin and arrived there safely. Instead of going to Mayo, the arms were disposed of by G.H.Q., the major portion going to Co. Cork. This matter raised angry protest from Co. Mayo officers.

I have gone into this matter at considerable length as it proves to my mind that the Volunteer Executive exercised real authority over the army at this particular time and probably later, say, late 1920.

In many Volunteer officers' minds there was an impression created that certain elements in Army headquarters and Dail Éireann were concerned that the activities of the Army would be subject to strict control, and that the initiative of all Brigade officers in the country should be limited.

About mid-1920 two contradictory orders were issued by G.H.Q. One was to the effect that any operation, such as a barrack attack or a serious ambush, should not be attempted or carried out until all the information what was available locally should be submitted to G.H.Q. for their approval, and that a senior Brigade officer should go to Dublin to go into all the plans with a representative of G.H.Q. before the operation could be sanctioned or authorised by G.H.Q. Many Brigade officers considered this requirement of G.H.Q. nonsensical, unnecessary and farcical; a Brigade officer was, or was not, capable of being in charge of his unit. If he was not, the proper thing to do was to remove him from his command. The second objection to this policy of obtaining sanction from G.H.Q. for operations was the very serious unnecessary risk undertaken by submitting their plans on paper and danger of the capture of the documents in transit or their capture in Dublin at G.H.Q. receiving depots. One of the greatest offenders in the loss of important documents was the Chief of Staff, Richard Mulcahy. On two or three occasions very important documents in his custody were captured by the British. One of these captured documents related to the blockade and immobilisation of the Liverpool docks. Another captured document gave orders for the poisoning of British transport horses in military garrisons in this country. The capture of these documents led to the Irish Chief Secretary reading the documents in the British House of Commons as anti-Irish propaganda for consumption abroad.

A number of operations throughout the country were stopped by the orders of G.H.Q. in pursuance of the policy of rigid control by them of Brigade officers and their plans. For instance, in some cases I am aware that local priests were able to influence G.H.Q. to stop planned operations.

The second order issued by G.H.Q., which was diametrically opposed to the order for submitting plans of all serious operations to G.H.Q., was the order at the same time to Volunteers to shoot all R.I.C. men on sight. I received this second order from G.H.Q. with instructions to give it personally to all Brigade officers and Battalion O/Cs. in Co. Mayo, which I did. This order to me entailed my carrying the actual G.H.Q. order all over the county, as it was so serious I had to show each officer the actual G.H.Q. order to convince them of its genuineness.

This order on its face value was so drastic that it showed a complete ignorance at G.H.Q. of the situation in country districts. The R.I.C. contained many decent men whose relations with the people generally were good. It also contained men who were being used and were most valuable for intelligence purposes. The Irish people were not so savagely ruthless as to carry out such an order. The R.I.C. men in many cases came from decent families, and the wholesale shooting of them would get a lot of our people up against us. The shooting of R.I.C. men during an operation was quite a different matter.

Regarding the account I have given of the differences of opinion etc. existing between Cathal Brugha and Michael Collins and Collins's friends, persons reading this would get an impression and form an opinion that would be very unfair to Collins and his friends. I do not wish to create the impression that the Collins group were simply self-seekers struggling for power and place. That would be neither fair nor just. There was one outstanding event during the period pre-1916 which, in my opinion, influenced the Collins group (the countermanding order sent out on Easter Sunday 1916 by MacNeill) which created in their minds the feeling that if the wrong people were in control of the Volunteers - such as

people with the peace-at-any-price outlook - in other words, if people of that description got into control they would always try and prevent active military operations being undertaken. Collins and the men around him justified in their own minds that there was a real danger of this happening, and undoubtedly the Collins party were suspicious, from this viewpoint, of men like Brugha. Brugha was an extremely religious man who had, perhaps, a fimely developed conscientious sense. He was most scrupulous and would consider every proposition put forward in regard to military action from the moral or religious aspect. It may be said "why did such a man go on the London expedition?" It must be remembered that we, the members of the Executive, in coming to a decision in favour of the London expedition, were influenced by the belief that the enforcement of conscription by the British government was nothing short of a direct attempt by them to destroy the Irish race, and this belief of ours was the dominating factor in arriving at such a decision. In the opinion of the Collins group, the London operation was absolutely clear and could not create in any man's mind, however scrupulous, a doubt regarding the morality of our action. They held that other situations might arise in which the moral issues might not be so clear and men like Brugha would always allow their scruples to govern them, no matter how necessary and vital it might be to carry out an operation. It is only right to add that I do not personally know of any operation that Brugha actually stopped.

I have already mentioned in my statement about Michael Collins succeeding in obtaining key positions in the various national organisations engaged as vital organs in the national struggle in 1917-18. The importance of the position of being Adjutant General to the Irish Volunteers in 1917-18-19 lay in the fact that the Volunteers were really not on a

proper military basis as far as organisation was concerned. As I stated before, the only organisation in the Volunteers in 1917 and early 1918 was generally company units. This company organisation put Collins in the position of being in direct touch with company officers (at least company captains) of every company in Ireland. This fact gave him great personal influence with a large number of men in the Volunteers, which was most useful to him later on.

When Richard Mulcahy was appointed to the position of Chief of Staff, one of the first tasks he had to undertake was to organise the Volunteers on proper military lines. He was asked to draw up a scheme of organisation and bring it before a meeting of the Executive so that it would be discussed and approved of or not by that body. He was given the right to avail of any assistance that he could depend on and obtain; as far as I know, a committee was formed of which Dick McKee and Oscar Traynor were members.

Collins's ability and capacity lay chiefly in the administrative line. I will agree with his devoted admirers, some of whom I have met, that he was at least one of the greatest executives we had in the republican movement. He was most energetic, painstaking, hardworking, systematic and punctual in his methods, but I totally disagree with his admirers and, I might say, worshippers, for attributing to him the gift of statesmanship and foresight. He had, in my opinion, none of those qualities, except to a very limited extent, if at all. His great weakness was his vanity and egoism. I have seen him being influenced by men who could be described as "Dublin Cuttles", simply because they praised and flattered him. During the Treaty crisis I was told a story, for which I cannot vouch. The story is to the effect that Con Collins of Limerick, a sincere, honest and fearless man, met Michael Collins in the house of a mutual friend in

Baggot St. Con Collins made an attack on Michael accusing him, Michael Collins, of bringing disaster on the country by splitting the national movement. Michael smugly replied to his namesake that he did not bring the country to disaster, but brought it to victory, and that he was then in the position to do as he liked and that he didn't give a d..... for Con Collins or for what people like him thought. Con Collins made a physical attack on Mick, knocked him down and had to be restrained and separated from him. Michael apologised to Con before he left the room where the incident took place. I do not think those men spoke afterwards. I have inserted this portion of my statement to give the reader my estimate of the personality and character of Collins as far as I knew him. I knew Collins intimately and I think it only fair to say that in many ways he had a great personal charm, and qualities that drew people around him and got loyalty and friendship from them. I will conclude by saying that I believe I am giving a fair summing up of his character. I had always, as the old saying goes, a personal gradh for him, but it never ran to the extent of blinding me to his faults. The great mistake made regarding Collins was that on the one hand his admirers attributed to him almost supernatural powers and talents, blinding themselves to all his faults. Taking the other side, the people who were against him would give him no credit for anything he did and looked on him and described him just as an English statesman - one of the Chamberlains - in referring to Collins, compared him to the last buccaneer. Each view was wrong, for on the one hand, he was described and believed to be a Godlike person, incapable of making a mistake; on the other hand, the other side - especially during the Treaty crisis - looked on him as a devil incarnate. The best thing to say about those two views is that Collins was a human being with all the faults and virtues of an ordinary man who loved and served his country sincerely. and well

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Dealing, as I have, with Collins's character as I knew it, I would like to stress that one of the skills he showed during the period of what can be described as his upward rise was his keenness in grasping what the key position was and then getting control of it.

First, he was Secretary to Liberty Clubs, subsequently A.G. to the Irish Volunteers, where at least 1,200 companies, scattered all over Ireland, had to be in personal contact with him as representing H.Q. in Dublin. Once the Volunteers were put on what can be called proper military basis - when battalions and brigades were formed - it meant that the companies were not in individual touch with H.Q. The position of A.G. lost the political power and influence previously existing.

I remember about this time that meetings of the Executive were held. C. Brugha drew attention at, at least two meetings to what he considered to be a fact that G.H.Q. had made contacts with some people working in Dublin Castle and accused Collins and some others of acting with those Castle contacts without any authority. Collins denied Brugha's charges, but admitted that he would take information from any source available, provided it was genuine and useful. One night at an executive meeting in Parnell Square, Collins surprised many of the members by resigning his position as A.G. and asking that he be appointed as Director of Intelligence. Certainly a lot of us were astounded that he should wish to relinquish the A.G-ship and take over the position of D.I. (DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE) I failed to see why he should resign the A.G-ship and I could not then see much importance in the position of D.I. Apparently C. Brugha seemed quite pleased with Collins's idea and offered no objection. When the meeting was winding up Rory O'Connor, who was sitting beside me, asked me if I

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had any particular place to go that night and suggested that he would like to have a talk with me. We left Parnell Sqr. together and went towards O'Connell St. On the way down city I was thinking of the events of the meeting. I was puzzled by the fact that Collins was dropping his position as A.G. for a thing a lot of us did not concede important or of much value. Rory O'Connor, by some remarks he dropped on the journey, showed that he was worried by Collins's action. After some fencing he said to me: "Dick, what do you think of it?" I said I didn't know what to make of it. We eventually went to the Royal Exchange Hotel in Parliament St. On our arrival, we went into a room by ourselves, got a drink and discussed the night's proceedings. Rory was very worried about what Collins's move meant. Eventually, after some discussion and the exchange of many views on the matter, the solution struck both of us simultaneously. We both agreed that the question of intelligence was very important and its organisation was necessary. We knew by this time that there were certain officials and officers in the Castle who were friendly disposed towards the Volunteers and the Sinn Fein movement generally and would be willing to help to the extent of their power to do so. This proved afterwards to be true, as subsequent history up to the Truce in 1921 proved. When summing up the events of the meeting, Rory O'Connor and myself came to the conclusion that whilst intelligence, its organisation and efficient establishment , was very necessary, it was also very dangerous as it had a boomerang quality that could hit back in an ugly way. It needed very close supervision and control. One of the implications of intelligence work is the impossibility of exercising absolute control over the agents working on intelligence and another is the necessity of giving an agent full confidence and freedom of action. Rory and myself, taking all those things into consideration,

and the statements made previously by Brugha about contacts made by Collins and Collins's friends with certain individuals in the castle, realised that the position of D.I. would give Collins an opportunity of establishing any contacts he liked and really placed him in the position that he could have intercourse with practically any individual he desired; that he could always use the excuse that he was seeing an individual or individuals for the purpose of getting information.

A very successful and efficient intelligence system was built up by Collins and, undoubtedly, the chief credit for that is, in my opinion, due to Collins. I doubt very much if any movement or organisation like ours in any country had at its disposal an intelligence system as good as we had.

Saying all this, O'Connor and myself considered at the commencement of Collins's control of intelligence that the danger would always be there that Collins and his group might use the intelligence system to make contacts to start negotiations with the enemy and make certain commitments that would prove a very serious handicap when proper official negotiations would be taken in hand.

BEGINNING OF BRITISH PEACE FEELERS.

I would like to point out that the British authorities had been using feelers to get into negotiations with the republican leaders for a basis of agreement. No definite proposition was made, but at least the British desired to talk matters over. I believe that Tim Healy, later Governor General of the Irish Free State, was engaged in trying to form contacts with some of our leaders. I heard from Collins about the end of 1919 that Tim Healy desired to meet him. Collins stated he refused to meet Healy as he wanted

to know beforehand what the subject of the discussion was about. A prominent judge named O'Connor, when disappointed later in his ambitions in respect of an appointment under the new Free State regime, expressed his bitterness about Collins and his friends who, in his opinion, had forgotten what he did for them in the work leading up to the negotiations for a truce. Another man named Kelly, a prominent legal man who then lived in Fitzwilliam or Merrion Square areas, gave the use of his house for meetings between Collins and Cope. I heard at the time that more than one meeting was held in this man's house. I also heard at the time that Lord Beaverbrook was the contact between the British cabinet and the political leaders on the republican side. I believe in 1919 and in early 1920 it was only a matter of the British feeling their way as at this time no proposals were made by the British or were being considered by our leaders.

The first semi-official approach - if you like to call it so - as far as my knowledge goes, was made as a result of an incident in a London Restaurant in the Strand, known as the Press Restaurant, which Pressmen frequented and were entertained on reasonable tariffs. This place was open night and day, and a visitor would in August 1920, be likely to meet newspaper men from different countries representing newspapers from the whole world. At that time in London there was a man representing a celebrated Chicago newspaper. This man got into contact in some manner with a man I knew well, named Patrick Moylett, Ballina, Co. Mayo, now residing in Dublin. Moylett was a businessman with several business premises in the west of Ireland, including a shop in Galway city which was burned by the Black and Tans, as he was prominently connected with Sinn Fein at the time. The Tans threatened him with shooting if he was not out of Galway within 24 hours. As the Tans had already shot several other men in Galway, including Fr. Griffin, before Moylett was

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threatened, Mr. Moylett left Galway and moved to London where he had another shop in Holborn.

The meeting between Moylett and the American pressman was, I believe, arranged by some person for certain motives, without Mr. Moylett realising what the motives were. The restaurant was crowded at the time by a lot of foreign pressmen. The man from the Chicago newspaper proceeded to interview Moylett about happenings in Ireland and things that happened to himself, going over the whole Irish position generally. Moylett was excitable and especially so when describing what his own experiences were in a loud voice which was bound to attract attention amongst newspaper men generally in the crowded restaurant. I believe that the gentleman from Chicago desired to draw Moylett out and attract a lot of attention to what he was told by Moylett and that the scene was stage-managed by him. The result was that Moylett was not only giving an interview to one prominent American paper, but that he was giving his opinion and a record of his trouble to scores of newspaper men representing papers all over the world. The matter eventually developed into what is recently known as a press conference by an important personage which considerably ~~flatt~~ flattered Mr. Moylett. One of the immediate results of this conference was that the American, shortly after Moylett had finished his story, told Moylett that he, the American, had a very important personage in view whom he would like Moylett to meet. He arranged a meeting between them. When they met subsequently, the important personage cross-examined Moylett very closely about Ireland and his, Moylett's personal experiences. It turned out that this important personage was a man named Cocker, or Cockerbourne, who held the British army rank of general and was one of the chiefs of the Imperial Intelligence Service. He gave Moylett a

letter to bring to Ireland and deliver it to one of the important leaders in Ireland in close association with the I.R.A. He also gave Moylett a safe conduct of some sort to prevent him being interfered with by the British forces, and Moylett was to bring back an answer to the writer of the message.

Moylett arrived in Dublin with the message and was put into contact with Collins to whom he gave the message and received an answer to bring back to London, which he did. Moylett did not know what the message or the answer to it contained. This record of Moylett's activities came to my knowledge accidentally.

I have mentioned already about Collins being appointed D.I. and my discussion with Rory O'Connor on the effects of Collins's new appointment, in the Royal Exchange Hotel, and, as we had more or less concluded our discussion, Dermot O'Hegarty came in. I could see he was not at all pleased to see me with O'Connor, who was known to be antagonistic to Collins's group. The three of us got into conversation about the general position and eventually developed a hot argument between O'Connor and O'Hegarty, so hot indeed that I became alarmed and concerned about it and I rang up the Clarence Hotel and asked Jem Gibbons and some of the "boys" I knew likely to be there to come over. Gibbons and a few others came over and "put oil on troubled waters".

The next time I made contact with O'Hegarty, under what I believe he considered suspicious circumstances, was the time Moylett was over in Dublin as courier. I think that O'Hegarty believed from the O'Connor incident that I was rather too inquisitive in probing for information on my own. I met Moylett accidentally in College Green. I was pleased to meet him, as I was friendly with him. He started to

describe to me all his adventures in London and elsewhere and he showed me the safe conduct he had from London, as he thought I was not completely swallowing his story, as indeed I was not, being a bit sceptical about Moylett's version of things, as he was liable to boast a little. Just as we were walking away, near Trinity College, Dermot O'Hegarty came on the scene and I could see by his expression that he was furious, that I had probably pumped Moylett. He immediately took charge of Moylett and bid me a curt good-day and took Moylett off with him. This incident of Moylett's contacts between London and Dublin, in my opinion, was the beginning of the official negotiations between London and Collins. I also believe that it was later that Cope came into the picture. I cannot, however, be definite. This Moylett incident took place about August 1920.

About October/November 1920, the Tan war had entered its most intense phase. The shooting of the British Intelligence officers on Bloody Sunday in Dublin had aroused public opinion in both England and Ireland to fever heat. I, with the officers and men of the I.R.A., had no doubt as to the necessity and justice of the shooting. Public opinion in England seemed to be aroused to a fierce denunciation of the shooting, and, at the same time, had an uncomfortable feeling that the events in Ireland were arousing too much world attention towards British policy in Ireland, which was not flattering to British dignity or adding to British prestige. The atmosphere resulting from the shooting of the British officers, strange as it may appear, created a situation favourable to the opening, or leading up to peace negotiation. The shooting was, in my OPINION both justified and an absolute necessity at the time, as the British Intelligence were beginning to work more efficiently and their Intelligence Organisation in town and country districts was producing results. It was evident

that the British were starting to get the principal I.R.A. officers throughout the country. In many cases, the men arrested were shot out of hand on various pretexts such as attempting to escape, etc. There was little doubt that the I.R.A. organisation could not for long stand up to the wholesale capture of their best officers and the morale of the rank and file was bound to suffer. The shooting on Bloody Sunday had the effect of dealing with the inner circle of British Intelligence and smashing up at its source the intelligence organisation being built up throughout the country. It had also the effect of demoralising the agents who were working for British Intelligence in the country and also scaring off those who were prepared to work for the British.

Collins at this time got into touch with a very prominent legal man named Kelly, who came from Tuam, and was also in touch with Tim Healy. Undoubtedly he got in touch with the legal man and the story at the time was that he was in the habit of meeting Healy at this man's house. Healy was a personal friend of Lord Beaverbrook and he, Beaverbrook, was one of the intermediaries active in leading up to peace negotiations. Healy was supposed to play a large part in the business. The story I heard at this time so fits in that I firmly believe that Cope met Collins in Kelly's house even before Brigadier General COCKER OR COCKERBOURNE's intervention in Irish affairs, which I have already mentioned in connection with Patrick Moylett's activities in Dublin and London. I think the position was that the road was clear before Cocker or Cockerbourne's name was mentioned in connection with the question of peace.

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In my opinion, the first moves for peace came from the British, and the Bloody Sunday events in Dublin accelerated the efforts to arrive at an understanding. The Bloody Sunday

activities had no great military significance as far as the British military position in Ireland was concerned, but it had a most embarrassing effect on British interests abroad. One of the greatest difficulties Britain was faced with at the time was what was known as the American debt. The British debt to U.S.A. totalled about £2,000,000,000. The annual burden on Britain in payment towards interest and principal of such a sum would have hamstrung her economic recovery. However, the publicity concerning Britain's relations with Ireland was having a paralysing effect on the British efforts to settle this debt question. Affairs in Ireland at this particular time were the supreme obstacle in the way of the people in America who stood for dealing with Britain in a generous way in connection with the debt. It should not be forgotten that the Irish had and have a considerable influence in American politics.

I have given my view of the events that led up to the truce and subsequent treaty. There was a school of thought in Ireland then whose viewpoint was that whatever settlement was being visualised between Britain and Ireland should be completed before the fighting would be called off - that there should be no truce - that we would get better terms if peace was made that way. It was said that the morale of the country would be better maintained and that there would be no danger of the demoralisation that did, in fact, set in during the truce, and the terms of the peace would be better. Britain was anxious to get peace on as favourable terms as was possible and her economic position made this question urgent. Britain's arrangement of a peace acceptable to the Irish would ease her difficulties at home and abroad. In my opinion, the effect of the truce, which was demoralising, and the treaty negotiated and the subsequent civil war helped Britain out of her difficulties and destroyed the great national unity of Ireland and, unfortunately, lost for

the time being the sympathetic feeling towards Ireland of friends abroad.

Conceding the aspects of the treaty and how necessary it was for Britain to bring it about, there was a group of us held at the time that the resolution of the Galway Co. Council was inspired from Dublin and that Michael Collins had something to do with it. Arthur Griffith was probably in it also and that Fr. Ml. O'Flanagan about the same time was influenced to send to Lloyd George a cablegram requesting a peace settlement. The idea behind those moves was the creation of an atmosphere favourable to a settlement. The effect of both the Galway resolution and Fr. O'Flanagan's cablegram was what I can term disastrous, as it created in Lloyd George's mind the feeling that there was a considerable mass of opinion in Ireland that would agree to a peace at any price. Fellows like Sir James O'Connor, who was probably then a direct British agent, and the author in later years of a scurrilous history of Ireland, got into contact with leading republicans. It was pretty well proved about the same time that a sister/of Sir James O'Connor - a Miss Walsh, afterwards a member of Dublin Corporation - endeavoured to bring about the capture and arrest of very prominent leaders on the Irish side; Austin Stack was one. I cannot think of the others now, but there were others.

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The leaders were staying in a certain house, and this woman sent a message to the Castle giving the information. This lady's brother-in-law, Sir James, got to know of her action and was able to give a warning which saved the men. The point I wish to convey is that Britain, whilst pretending a desire for peace and generous concessions would regard any expression or desire for peace from the Irish side as a sign of weakness and defeat and was, in fact, interpreted by Lloyd George as such.

The people in Ireland who were behind the idea embodied in the Galway Co. Council resolution, and Fr. O'Flanagan's trip to London, got frightened and withdrew into their shells when it became apparent that the immediate effect of their activities was to intensify the outrageous Black and Tan campaign and British military activities throughout Ireland generally. I believe that the Galway proposal was started behind the scenes by George Nicholls. Patrick Haverty of Moylough, Co. Galway, was the man, I believe, who was made use of as the proposer of the resolution. I do not think that Haverty initiated the moving of the resolution by himself and did not fully realise the implications which could be attached to it at the time he moved it. The resolution on its face proves that it was drafted by a man with legal training. It was certainly not the work of the men who moved it.

The next move I was aware of in this peace game took place after de Valera came back from America. He arrived in Ireland about Christmas 1920. It is doubtful if de Valera had been at home from, say, the middle of 1920, instead of from Dec. 1920, HE would have agreed to a truce. More than likely he would have tried to bring Britain to the point of agreeing to peace negotiations, not by us in Ireland showing any signs of surrender. In other words, he would have played at putting the British in the position that they were the people who were carrying on the war and carrying it on ruthlessly, and that we were only defending our rights as best we could. In judging this, we must remember the background that Britain had created in the world She had concluded a war which she claimed was in defence of the rights and liberties of small nations and self-determination for states large and small. The argument used by the people who were trying to bring about a truce before

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de Valera arrived in Ireland was that it would enable the I.R.A. to get arms and get proper military training. What really happened, as every responsible officer at the time will admit, was that the so-called training camps during the truce were a sham, and were used as holidays camp not for the purpose they were intended for, and the general effect was serious demoralisation of men and officers. It should be remembered that two of the most important terms in the truce agreement were those forbidding the transfer of arms from one place to another and the importation of arms from abroad. Therefore, if we made any serious attempt to import arms and were caught at it, we would have broken the truce in the most flagrant way and Britain would be justified in any action she would take against us. It was one of the things that amazed me at the time how this statement that we could arm ourselves took in some of our best and most intelligent officers. It ought to have been self-evident to any of those officers that no serious attempt was being made to arm the I.R.A. and that it was not seriously intended to arm the I.R.A., as the attempt could not morally be made.

This suggestion deceived all the best men in the I.R.A. and it ought to have been a warning to the country and all responsible leaders, civil and military, in the country. If a serious offer in the nature of a settlement was made by Britain, and if a considerable section of public opinion in the country were willing to accept it, the serious situation that would be created and the grave danger of a national split and the disaster it would lead to, which unfortunately did happen, should have been visualised.

In order to explain my viewpoint at the time all those negotiations and peace terms were being arranged, which I have outlined above, I have and had then a distinct

remembrance of a meeting which I attended before Mr. de Valera went to America at which he - de Valera - stated that he hoped that when negotiations with Britain would take place, as they would likely take place, the negotiations should be carried out whilst the fight was on as there would be a better chance of attaining our objective under war conditions than when war conditions were removed.

One of the extraordinary things that did happen was that the very same agreement, i.e., the agreement that the treaty would give us the chance to arm and that we could then resume the fight for an independent republic covering the whole of Ireland, ~~and this~~ undoubtedly took in a large number of men, some of them honest and some of them not so honest. It became the excuse of a lot of men who were out for a job. This thing went so far that the army, being established under the authority of the provisional government, was styled the Irish Republican Army. The official literature of the army had a heading of that nature. The idea was conveyed that the army was organised and got ready for the purpose of resuming the fight for an independent Irish Republic embracing the 32 counties, while, in reality, the army was bring created for one purpose, and one purpose only, and that was to enforce the treaty.

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TRAINING AND ORGANISATION OF THE VOLUNTEERS IN CO. MAYO.

When I got working at the organisation of Volunteer companies in Co. Mayo, and as the companies in existence gained strength and new companies got started, it became difficult for me to handle a large number of partially organised units. The clerical work involved became almost overwhelming. It would be well that the reader of this should know that men like me with no military training or experience in military organisation had to make use of whatever little

knowledge was available to us from our own experience or from articles on military matters in "The Irish Volunteer", or available through ex-servicemen who had joined the Volunteers, supplemented by British Army Textbooks. The only military knowledge I possessed was a rudimentary instruction I received in callisthenics. I received light training in the Volunteer period preceding 1916 in the handling and use of a rifle, forming fours and field drill. Beyond that some men got instructions in field signalling; otherwise we knew little of the science of military training.

My own local company - Balla - was exceptionally lucky in having an experienced sergeant of the Connaught Rangers as our instructor. His name was Tracey and he undoubtedly knew his job. He was a man of splendid physique and a decent type with a good national outlook. This man's instruction to the Balla Company gave us a better groundwork than we otherwise would have had. In 1914 we had two other men, Cahill and Dunne. They were only with us for a short time as they were in the Reserve of the British Army, were called up for foreign service and were later killed in action.

After 1916 and in 1917 the whole organisation and administration of the Volunteers in Co. Mayo fell on my shoulders. Were it not for the local assistance and help I got from the men of my own company, I would not be able to do the work. I received outstanding help from the following: Patrick Fallon, Pat Kerville, James Reilly, John E. McEllin, Thomas McEllin and Thomas Howley. I must also include two other men from Kiltimagh who gave me great assistance and help - John Corcoran, who was killed in 1921, and Joseph Sheehy, who has since died as a result of hardship and hard work in the Volunteers in 1920-21.

The Volunteer organisation in Co. Mayo in the year 1917 reached a total of about 70 companies. Early in 1917, those

companies were grouped by me into 13 battalions which subsequently increased to about 17 battalions. I cannot be sure of the exact figures as I have to depend on my memory. I was practically on the run from November 1919. I had to stop going near my own home and house about February 1920, as the place was being regularly searched and raided, sometimes as often as twice per day.

I had a talk with Michael Collins, Richard Mulcahy and Dermot O'Hegarty in Dublin about June 1920 and they advised me to divide up the Mayo Brigade which up to then embraced th whole county as it could not be worked in one Brigade unit. Previous to this talk I was not at all satisfied with the state of the organisation in the county, the arms available, and the training the men were receiving. We had only two service rifles in the whole county.

On my request, Michael Collins sent me ~~to~~ Peadar McMahon who, later in 1922, became General McMahon of the National Army and is now Secretary of the Department of Defence. Mr. McMahon, on his arrival in Mayo, started a series of instructional classes in each battalion area. Each class lasted for about 10 days. His instruction included callisthenics, field drill, and the one good rifle we had was used by him in giving the officers a good grounding in musketry and the use and care of a rifle. Mr. McMahon did his work well and I soon appreciated the great results his classes had when the officers he trained transferred the knowledge they obtained in his classes to the rank and file.

The Mayo Brigade officers, before the county was divided into separate brigades, were as follow:- Commandant Joseph McBride (brother of Major John McBride, executed in 1916); Mr. McBride was a fine Irishman, sincere and fearless. He was much too old for the position he held and was not fit

to move about as a Brigade officer should.

Vice-Comdt. Michael McHugh. Mr. McHugh was a good officer and would have been a most useful man but for his arrest about early 1920. He later attained the rank of Commandant in the National Army.

Brigade Quartermaster, Thomas Derrig. Mr. Derrig got into the public eye as he was a speaker at meetings in the 1918 general election. He was arrested about April 1920.

Brigade Adjutant. I was Brigade Adjutant. The whole brigade staff work came on my shoulders which I was able to do with the help of the local men, as I have already mentioned.

Special brigade services were not organised and their absence was a serious deficiency in the Brigade organisation. Early in 1920 - being on the run - I made it my business to go into each battalion in the Brigade and inspect each in turn. I would like to add that when I first organised the Co. Mayo Companies, I also organised companies in the county border districts in Counties Galway, Roscommon and Sligo. Most of those border companies remained with the Mayo Bde. as they had more experience of the Mayo Volunteers and officers than those in their own counties. About mid 1920 we began to obtain small quantities of arms.

BRITISH MILITARY STRENGTH IN CO. MAYO, 1920-21.

Claremorris is the principal railway centre in the west of Ireland with the Limerick, Sligo and Dublin-Westport lines passing through the town and an additional branch line running from Claremorris to Ballinrobe. Claremorris, because of its important railway facilities, was made headquarters of the Western Command of the British Army in Ireland from 1916

up to the evacuation of the British in 1922. Incredible as it may seem, there were times during which there were 30,000 troops in Claremorris. Buildings in the town were taken over for military accommodation and a large camp was built outside the town. Ballinrobe was occupied by Artillery and Infantry. Two barracks were occupied in Castlebar, Infantry and Cavalry. There was a garrison of a few hundred men in Balline and another garrison in Westport. A military post in Swinford was also occupied. From the abovem the reader will see that from the British point of view the defence of the west coast was well manned.

In the town of Balla a large mansion was taken over by the military and converted into a hospital for their men. This hospital had a protective garrison of about 250 men.

Large-scale military manoeuvres were carried out in Co. Mayo in the early Spring of 1918, as the British feared a German landing and an attack on them from the sea at that period. To understand the importance of West Mayo, I might mention that British Textbooks on military tactics stress the importance of a defence line situated to cover the west coast starting at Galway Bay connection with Lough Corrib continuing through to Lough Mask, then through Lough Carra, which is about 6 miles long and 2 miles wide. North of Lough Carra there is a gap of 10 to 12 miles when Lough Conn and Lough Cullen are reached. The line runs along the River Moy which is a large river and again reaches the sea at Killala Bay. This line, with its lakes and river barriers provide a serious obstacle to any hostile force. On the centre of this line is situated the town of Castlebar. In theory this line, if forced, would compel the defending force to fall back on the line of the Shannon.

As I was due for a tour of inspection of the Mayo battalions early in 1920, before going I discussed the

position in Co. Mayo with Collins, Mulcahy and O'Hegarty, in which we reviewed the position, and those officers left the new organisation a matter for my discretion and the wishes of the various Mayo officers, consistent with military security and the need for direct communication between the individual brigade and G.H.Q. in Dublin.

At each of the battalion meetings which I visited during my tour, I saw the battalion officers and company commanders, and I told each battalion officer what was in the offing and asked them to give the matter of forming new brigade areas their thoughts. I outlined a few alternative schemes of organisation and I told the battalions that the areas included in each brigade would be defined as far as possible to the wishes of the different battalions, and that there would be a brigade convention called of the whole county before any decision on the matter of dividing up the county would take place.

The convention was called in or about mid-July 1920 in the town of Castlebar. The attendance included all brigade and battalion officers and company O/cs. as far as it was possible to get them to come. It may be considered that the calling of such a big crowd of men to a meeting at this particular time might be dangerous. It would have been so were it not that circumstances played into our hands. At this particular time it was the custom of a local committee in Castlebar to have an annual athletic sports. The sports were held in the grounds of the local County Asylum. We took advantage of the sports meeting to hold our convention in the Asylum building during the time the sports were going on. The majority of the Asylum staff were Volunteers or sympathisers.

After some discussion it was decided that the county should be divided into four brigade areas named, roughly, North, South, East and West. North Mayo Brigade started at Foxford Battalion which straddled the Moy River and ran a line in the mountains more or less north of Lough Conn and included practically all Lough Conn. It covered Ardacoole and a place called Ross. It embraced the Nephin Mountains and from Nephin went into and covered all the Erris area to the sea and touched near to Mullranny on the other side of Ballina and north of Ballina went across the Moy into Co. Sligo and went to about 7 miles north of Enniscrone. It included Belmullet and Blacksod Bay area, Ballycastle and Killala. This was the biggest of the four brigades in the area. It was so big that during the Truce period it was divided into two brigades. Then the north west brigade was formed which included Erris and Ballycroy areas.

The East Mayo Brigade, starting at Kiltimagh, struck a line towards Foxford and embraced Straide, then turned east towards Swinford until it reached the Sligo border and included the Ballaghaderreen Battalion area including the town of Kiltimagh, Swinford, Kilkelly, Charlestown, Ballaghaderreen and Frenchpark.

The South Mayo Brigade, starting at Balla, struck a line about half-way along the Claremorris/Kiltimagh Road. It went in a line about 4 miles towards Ballyhaunis. The line went southwards from there towards Irishtown and Ballindine. It crossed the Galway border close to Irishtown and embraced some Galway companies. It crossed along the Galway border westwards to the banks of Lough Corrib. It included the following small towns - Shrule, Kilmaine Cross, Cong, Claremorris, Ballinrobe, Ballindine, Clonbur and Hollymount. At Clonbur, the South Mayo Brigade went into the mountains which lead to Connemara and included Tourmakeady and Partry

completely circling Lough Mask and Lough Carra, and embraced about half of the Ballintubber area, and from there through Ballyglass and into Balla.

The West Mayo Brigade went around the line west of the South Mayo Brigade embracing some of the lower portions of Connemara and into Louisburgh. It completely circled Clew Bay and included Westport, Newport, Mulranny and Achill Island. It came along the south of Erris right up to Glenhesk and went along in the direction of Castlebar and included the town of Castlebar; from there it moved south and included Ballyhean and Ballintubber.

In putting down these areas as I have outlined them in this statement, I am doing it from memory and not from any documents which I have not. I may be wrong in some of the details. I think, in general, I am right. One of the principal matters I was told to observe by the people in Dublin was the necessity of maintaining a communication link for each Brigade with Dublin and the only reliable link that Co. Mayo maintained with Dublin that never broke down was the railways. The men on the railways who carried dispatches and war material when it was available deserve the highest praise and too much credit could not be given to them by me. The outstanding characters - Paddy Daly, Athlone; Joseph Henigan, Ballina; Bob McManus, Ballinrobe, and Dan CARNEY ~~Kearney~~ of Dublin (lived near the Broadstone Station), cannot be too highly praised for the amount of work they did and the dangers they went through.

My idea in recommending this Brigade organisation, which was put into operation, was to maintain the communication link with Dublin. For that reason, the Ballyhaunis Battalion was put in with the East Mayo Brigade, although the officers wanted to be put into South Mayo Brigade. Being on the main line between Ballyhaunis and Dublin, it made available to the

East Mayo Brigade a direct link with Dublin. Foxford was put into the North Mayo Brigade for the same reason as Foxford linked up with the main railway line at Manulla Junction on the direct Dublin-Westport line and had a junction line for Killala including Ballina.

I am afraid I cannot recall the brigade officers of each brigade. I can, however, give the four brigade O/Cs.

South Mayo Bde.		Tom Maguire, Cross, Ballinrobe.
East	do.	Sean Corcoran, Kiltimagh.
North	do.	Tom Ruane, Ballina.
West	do.	Michael McHugh, Castlebar.

As far as I can remember, none but the brigade O/Cs. were appointed at the first meeting. Each brigade O/C. got instructions at the meeting to call a brigade meeting for his brigade area immediately and have all the vacancies on the brigade staff filled as soon as possible. I don't remember being present at any of those subsequent brigade meetings.

Also present at the meeting in Castlebar was Eamon Price representing G.H.Q. He announced that I was being appointed as a sort of Inspecting Officer to each brigade and that I had the right to go into any brigade and at any time visit any of the battalions constituting the brigade, and cause staff meetings to be held, and get a statement on how each brigade stood on all military matters, arms, etc. This was a right which I only exercised in a very sparing manner as I realised full well that the best policy was that whilst keeping an eye on how things were going, I should not be interfering too much in the internal working of each brigade when the brigade officers in each of the four brigades were appointed and the brigade staffs and councils started to function. I attended a meeting of each brigade council and I pointed out to them that the urgent and vital

and rumours went the rounds. Anyhow, since the country was divided into four brigades, it was not my particular responsibility to inquire into such reports. I, however, took the trouble to send a warning to the East Mayo and North Mayo Brigades, warning them to be careful in dealing with individuals of this man's description. I was afterwards told by officers of East Mayo and North Mayo Brigades that their brigade staffs had no contact with this man, but that some of the individual companies had contact with him.

The whole matter had eventually left my memory and certainly I have no hesitation in saying that, as far as this man's activities went, there was no adverse effect on the organisation in Co. Mayo. As far as I know, there was no man arrested, no house raided or men interrogated as a result of this man's association with I.R.A. men. When I went afterwards to investigate his activities in Co. Mayo, I discovered what I have stated above and also discovered that he had got into the good graces of two men who, although they were not in the I.R.A. or attached to the I.R.A. were important and prominent figures in the movement for national independence on the political side. Both men were much respected by the I.R.A. leaders and the advice of those two men would be considered with respect by all I.R.A. officers. The two men I refer to were Rev. Fr. Denis Gildea, D.D., who was then acting as curate in Foxford town in the Diocese of Achonry, and Dr. Ferrin, local dispensary doctor in FOXFORD, who was a native of Northern Ireland. The honour and sincerity of Fr. Gildea and Dr. Ferrin were above suspicion and both men were of the type that would make any sacrifice for the national objective. Being so honest and sincere, it made them vulnerable to be deceived by a clever trickster and double-dealer. The man whom I am dealing with as the chief character in this episode - his name, which I believe correct - was Fergus Molloy. As far as I could ascertain, Molloy was

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born in one of the Western States of the U.S.A. Both his parents were Irish and his father was a native of Foxford district, Co. Mayo. His mother - I can't say from what part she came. Apparently, Molloy lived and worked for some time near the Canadian border. This accounts for the fact that he joined the British army in 1914-1915 period in the first World war before the U.S. entered the war. Having, as far as we could ascertain, a university education - I don't know what university - but anyhow, he was not long in the British army until he got commissioned as an officer.

He was sent to France, and, as far as we could learn, did a lot of his training in France. After a comparatively short time he was posted to Field Intelligence, as he undoubtedly displayed a flair for intelligence work. He served with distinction throughout the war and was attached, as far as can be made out, to the British forces. He may have been, in the earlier part of his service, in the Canadian army. After the end of the war and about a year in German occupational work, he was drafted to Ireland. To understand his subsequent career it is very necessary to bear in mind one outstanding fact concerning the military movement of the Tan war days. We were the only physical force movement in Irish history that the British Intelligence or, say, system, did not get a man in the higher ranks to do their work for them. They failed to get any of the higher I.R.A. officers, as far as is known or discovered, to work for them from a battalion officer upwards. The only instance that I heard of was a battalion officer who operated in Dublin and cleared out to England when he was suspected and was subsequently shot on a golf links outside London. When this freedom from the attention of British secret service agents is appreciated, it will explain how far the British were prepared to go to succeed in doing what

they had done with all previous revolutionary movements in Ireland - in 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and in the Invincibles as late as the 1880s. It will be accepted by any person reading this that Molloy worked on a deliberate and well-thought plan concocted, I believe, in British Intelligence circles in London and in co-operation with Dublin Castle and British military headquarters in Ireland.

The plan was, when it was recognised by his superiors, that he was a trained intelligence officer willing to do their work; to go down into Mayo amongst his own relations and to profess deep sympathy for the Irish national movement and, being an educated and well-read man, to talk freely and openly and make suggestions as to what should be done and thereby gain the confidence of the people of the district. It was natural that such men as Father Gildea and Dr. Ferrin should get to know such a man. Molloy's mind and brain would single out Fr. Gildea and Dr. Ferrin and he was bound to be informed of their importance and their prestige in the National Republican movement. Both those men's sympathies and outlook were well-known to the British, as Dr. Ferrin was elected as a T.D. to the first Republican Dail, and Fr.Gildea was an officer of the East Mayo Executive of the Sinn Fein organisation. Molloy got into personal touch with both and became a constant visitor to their houses. It could be said that both fell completely under his influence. They accepted everything he said as gospel truth. He made it his special business to gain their regard and esteem. He carried on in this fashion for a considerable time after a seasonal period so that their suspicions should not be aroused. He told them that he was going to Dublin and he suggested offering his services to help the national movement and especially the I.R.A. For this purpose he suggested that both men give him a latter of introduction to leaders in Dublin and to tell him how he should get in touch with leaders. I believe it

was Dr. Ferrin who wrote the letter of introduction for Molloy with at least the approval of Fr. Gildea. I am not sure if Fr. Gildea also gave him a recommendation. I understand that the person they told him to call on was J.J. O'Kelly ("Sceilg"). All the part Sceilg took in the matter was to convey to Ml. Collins the letter or letters handed him by Molloy. There was an arrangement made by Molloy as to where he could be got in touch with later. From this out, Sceilg faded out of the matter and had no more to do with it. Molloy, as far as I can learn, was left under the impression that it would not be possible to meet Ml. Collins, but that he would be contacted by an important officer on Collins's staff, or an important officer - Collins's name was kept out of it.

Liam Tobin, who was then Chief Field Intelligence officer for the I.R.A., acting under Ml. Collins, Director of Intelligence, made contact with Molloy. Tobin told me that from the beginning he was suspicious of Molloy and did not like him. Tobin informed Collins of what he felt about the man, but Collins insisted that Tobin should keep in contact with Molloy. Tobin met Molloy again and Molloy came out with a story to the effect that he, Molloy, had occasion to call at Dublin Castle in connection with matters relating to his discharge from the British army, pension rights, etc. He informed Tobin that the Castle authorities had asked him to work for them as an intelligence officer, that they were aware that he had some connection with the I.R.A. He suggested to Tobin that he would do so, or pretend to do so, that he would keep in touch with the I.R.A. and pass any useful information that came his way in the course of his work on British intelligence to the I.R.A.+ All this time he was anxious to find out who Tobin was and who he represented. It will be seen by this that there was a certain amount of shadow boxing going on between Tobin

and Molloy, and it proves Tobin's ability and courage in dealing with Molloy that he survived this episode.

At subsequent meetings Molloy continued trying to find out who Tobin was and what was his position. Molloy started to suggest to Tobin that he, Molloy, should be furnished with some information that would prove to the Castle people that h was doing things for them. The information he asked for was something of little importance or danger to the I.R.A. which would look satisfactory to his superiors in the Castle. Tobin informed Collins of all the skirmishing between himself and Molloy and he informed Collins again that he would have nothing further to do with Molloy as he, Tobin, was placing himself in a dangerous situation in meeting Molloy and getting nothing out of him, and that Molloy, in his opinion, was a most dangerous British spy. Molloy, in the meantime, sent word to Tobin that he wanted to meet him urgently. It is not clear to me from the information I have got if Molloy was certain that Tobin was an Intelligence Officer for the I.R.A.+ It is more than likely that he suspected that Tobin was an Intelligence Officer.

Tobin went to Collins and told him that he had got an invitation from Molloy to meet him in Bewley's Cafe in Grafton St. Collins insisted that Tobin should keep the appointment. When Collins was so insistent on Tobin meeting Molloy, Tobin went to Bewley's on the evening appointed. At this time the evenings were beginning to get long and there was daylight up to 7 or 8 p.m. around the end of February or so. Tobin met Molloy as arranged. Tobin informed me himself that when he was walking up to Bewley's in Grafton St. he recognised several of Captain Hardy's intelligence crowd mixing with the people on the street. Captain Hardy was the officer in charge of the British Intelligence Murder Gang in Dublin Castle at this time. When Tobin went into the Cafe

and looked around the dining room he discovered there were at least 10 or 12 others of Captain Hardy's men sitting around at tables and apparently having a meal. Tobin told me that he immediately realised that he was trapped. How he was going to get out of the place alive he could not then see. He saw Molloy at a table alone and he moved over to him. Molloy appeared very friendly in his greeting. Molloy started an animated conversation stating that the Castle were beginning to get suspicious of him and were demanding results. He produced a document from his pocket and handed it to Tobin to read. The document contained a statement written in ink and seemed harmless enough to read. The statement was to be signed by Tobin and handed to Molloy and it could be interpreted as that Tobin had agreed to work and co-operate with Molloy in his work for British Intelligence. Tobin realised immediately what the plan was. He knew that if he signed the paper his life was forfeit; that he would be shot there and then within the cafe or else be made prisoner and brought somewhere else and shot; the idea being that his body would be got and this document on it. The fact that this document was got on Tobin's body would be published by the British for the purpose of conveying the idea to the I.R.A. that there was a spy or spies at G.H.Q.

Tobin read the document carefully, held it in his hand for some time to give the impression he was considering it. He knew he was in a tight corner. He parried the blow, as it were, by, as far as I can learn, stating that he was doing intelligence work for the I.R.A. or at least carrying out I.R.A. Intelligence orders by meeting Molloy. That being so, he could not sign the document without consulting his superiors. He played his part so well that he "bluffed" Molloy, and Molloy agreed that Tobin should consult his superiors as his position was similar to Molloy's as far as

Molloy's superiors were concerned, and that he TOBIN could see no difficulty in getting approval for ~~Tobin~~ HIS signing the document as suggested by Molloy. The result was that Tobin gave some excuse that he had to leave at once and Molloy suggested that he would accompany Tobin. Both men left the cafe together and walked down towards College Green with all Hardy's gang trailing after them. Tobin made it his business to be most gullible and friendly towards Molloy. In College Green Tobin succeeded in getting on a tram after a friendly farewell to Molloy.

The story as it was told to me by Tobin may have got a bit mixed and confused in course of time, but in the main I believe the details I have set down are as they were told to me. In going over the story a person is liable to suspect that Tobin had a line of retreat prepared for himself in case of emergencies and that some of the I.R.A. gunmen were detailed to cover Tobin's presence in Bewley's cafe. However, that may be, Tobin took no chances in meeting Molloy again. Two days afterwards, Molloy was shot dead in Wicklow Street, Dublin. This shooting occurred about 3 or 4 p.m. on 24th March 1920, when a considerable number of people were on the streets, and it was noticeable for the fact that the Dublin civilians showed an inclination for the first time to turn on our gunmen, and they had to make their getaway by more or less threatening to use their guns on the civilians.

As an interesting sequel to this shooting, Harry Boland was, some time afterwards, in U.S.A. and he was travelling through some of the Western States and, as a result of some information he got in Dublin, he visited Molloy's sister in a western city, as our people had got a letter from her in respect of a letter she had received from Molloy. Before Harry left Dublin he was asked by Collins to get in touch with Molloy's sister and, if possible, to see Molloy's letter

to her. Harry's business took him to the city where this lady lived and he called on her on the pretext that he was an insurance man representing British military interests. She received him in a friendly way and accepted Boland's credentials as genuine. Boland asked if she could show him any documents or letters she had of her brother's. She showed him a letter written by Molloy a short time before he died which described quite fully the work he was engaged on in Dublin and contained something in the nature of a will which gave her anything he was possessed of at his death. The letter did not disclose that he was possessed of much cash By the way she talked of him, it would appear that he had led an adventurous life and it indicated that he expected death. The letter contained matter showing that he had a certain amount of admiration and respect of the I.R.A. He stated that the I.R.A. were desperate men who would stop at nothing to attain their ends and that it would be foolish to undervalue them. He stated also that the toughest American gunmen she had heard or read of would look small compared with the I.R.A. gunmen.

Molloy's funeral was a lavish affair. All the barracks of the army of occupation in Dublin participated, escorting his remains to the boat for probable burial in England.

THE SPY. - QUINLISK.

In the start of this record of my experiences in the Irish Revolutionary Movement I have dealt with the possibility of Michael Collins having attempted to get in touch with the German government in an effort to procure military aid in our struggle with the British. Some sort of an agreement was arrived at, I believe. The nature of the terms of this agreement I know nothing of, except rumours I had heard. Those rumours originated from a fairly good

source. I have stated before that whatever communication existed between Collins and the German government, or the German military or naval authorities, were only known in this country to Collins himself and his very immediate associates. It is highly probable that Dermot O'Hegarty was aware of what was going on. There was great secrecy or reticence about the affair. I have stated that at a meeting of the Executive Collins was accused by Cathal Brugha and warned that this intercourse would cause trouble, that everything that was going on was known to the British and that they would strike when they thought suitable, and that, in face of this, the matter should be dropped.

I have already told of the fishermen on the west coast getting in touch with Volunteer officers in Ballina regarding this matter. The group of people on the coast who had done this were looked on as most untrustworthy and unreliable. They were a group of individuals who, to our knowledge, were engaged in smuggling and also in the poteen traffic. However, as I have already told, those people came into Ballina. They got into touch with a man named John Moran and one of them, named Foye, went to Dublin with Moran, who, being an old I.R.B. man, brought him to see an old man named O'Leary Curtis who had formerly been a big shot in the I.R.B. Curtis brought them to No. 6 Harcourt St. where they were introduced to, I think, Sean Nunan, our present ambassador in U.S.A. Collins did not see them directly himself. He refused to do so. They were put off with some excuse and they had to return without having made any direct G.H.Q. contacts. Fintan Murphy was sent down to me with the instruction that I should bring him to Ballina and get him into touch with I.R.A. officers there and try and find out if there was anything in the fishermen's stories. I took Murphy to Ballina and introduced him to the local

officers there who were most reliable, and they made arrangements to get in touch with the coast. I returned from Ballina when I had completed all the necessary arrangements of putting Murphy properly in touch as I did not want to direct suspicion to Murphy in Ballina, I being subject to police attention at this time. In addition to above, I have also described the supposed plan for a German attack on the east coast of England as a cover for an expeditionary force of Germans landing in Ireland. It is hardly necessary for me to go through all this again. I have repeated some of what I have already told as I wish to indicate what I believe was true, that one of the people used in Germany as a communication source between Collins and the German authorities - I am using the phrase German authorities deliberately - as I do not know, and had no means of knowing, if Collins was in touch with the German government or only in touch with German military or naval authorities. As I have stated, Collins denied having any communication with any German authority when he was questioned by Brugha at a meeting of the Executive in my presence. My knowledge of Quinlisk had its start in late November or early December 1918.

About a month approximately after the 1914-1918 World War ended, I came to Dublin to attend a meeting of the Executive. The principal place I used to stay when in Dublin at that time was a house, 44 Mountjoy Street, very close to what was then the railway terminus from the west - Broadstone Station - and near the old church known as the Black Church. 44 Mountjoy Street was a private hotel known as the Munster Hotel. All boarders who frequented this place were connected with the national movement. One of the constant boarders was Michael Collins. The proprietress was Miss McCarthy. She was an aunt of Fionan Lynch - now Judge Lynch. When I arrived in the hotel and when I was taking my tea, Miss McCarthy came into the room and inquired if

I had any objection to a man sharing the room I usually occupied. I agreed, and after a short time, a tall young man, very good-looking and of fine physique, carrying himself in fine military manner, entered the room with Miss McCarthy who introduced the young man to me as Mr. Quinn or Mr. Quinlisk. One of these names, I believe, was assumed, and which was the assumed name I don't know, nor can I be now sure which name Miss McCarthy used in introducing him to me. Shortly afterwards Collins came in and he started to introduce the stranger to me and I informed him I was already introduced. Before Collins left the room he called me aside and told me he wanted me to be nice to this man, which I agreed to. He informed me that Quinlisk had been in the British Civil Service in London, was promoted in the Service and later sacked for some misconduct. He then found himself stranded in London and joined the British army as a private. He was about 2 years in the army and had attained the rank of sergeant. When he was sent to France with the first expeditionary force at the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war he was captured by the Germans in the early months of the German advance in Northern France. He, later, as a prisoner of war, joined Casement's Irish Brigade.

The information I received afterwards about Quinlisk from, I think, Miss McCarthy, was that his father was a Head Constable in the R.I.C. then serving in Waterford, that when Quinlisk started life he started as a clerk in the Civil Service Excise Department in the City of London. He got this position in the usual way by passing an examination. It was apparent to me that Quinlisk was possessed of a considerable amount of ability. His manner of address would indicate to me that he had a university standard of educatior I have no means of knowing if he was a university man or not. As soon as I got to know much about him, I found that he was extra fond of drink. I think Collins's attitude in

introducing me to Quinlisk and asking me to be nice to him was his desire that I should keep an eye on him, as he later had a habit of questioning me about Quinlisk and inquiring as to what I thought of him. If this was so, I am afraid I was the wrong person, as I did not drink at that time and Quinlisk spent a lot of his time in pubs. What Collins needed for keeping tab on Quinlisk was a drinking companion who could be always with him. One of the questions to be asked about Quinlisk was - was he a British Secret Service agent all the time? Did he join Casement's Brigade on instructions from the British? Did he become a British agent only on his arrival in Ireland from Germany after the armistice, and if so, when?

I saw a lot of Quinlisk from I was introduced to him late in 1918. I spent at least 4 or 5 days each month in Dublin from I met him, and when in Dublin, I slept in the same room with him in 44 Mountjoy Street. I did not endeavour to probe him at any time into his past history. I made no effort to cultivate him as I did not like him and feared his close association with the boarders in No.44. Another reason I did not desire to get intimate with him was my fear that he would endeavour to touch me for cash which I could not very well afford to give him, as I was finding it difficult to finance myself at this time. I found out, however, that Quinlisk had no knowledge of the Volunteer organisation as he could not understand some of the news items appearing in the papers and, as far as I could see, took very little interest in current happenings.

Sometime during the Summer of 1919 he established contact with his own father who was, as I have stated, a Head Constable in the R.I.C. and then serving. The father made at least two visits to No. 44 Mountjoy St. to my knowledge. It is more than likely he met his son elsewhere.

It was then, I believe, he entered into the service of the British Intelligence on his father's persuasion.

He remained in 44, as far as my memory goes, from, say December 1918, until late July 1919. He had asked Collins early in 1919 to get him a job. Collins got him a job, as far as I can remember, in the New Ireland Assurance Co. He did not hold this job very long. In fact, he started to talk about going back to Germany and stated that if he got back he knew many personal friends occupying prominent positions there, and that if he got there his future was assured, He also spoke to me about a German girl he intended marrying if he could get to Germany.

I could see, about May 1919, that Collins was beginning to get tired of Quinlisk and that he would like to get rid of him. Quinlisk began to say that if he got sufficient cash for his equipment and passage to Germany he would go there. After some time Collins apparently decided to get rid of him and Quinlisk got £100 from Collins on the understanding that he would leave the country. About this time Collins expressed the opinion to me that Quinlisk was becoming a nuisance. He did not, however, tell me at any time what use Quinlisk was to him and could not understand then how Quinlisk was living or paying for his board. It did occur to me that Quinlisk was entitled to some gratuity or pension for his service with the British army. Instead of spending the £100, according to the conditions under which he got it, Quinlisk went to Galway Races and spent it practically all there. He returned to Dublin penniless.

After he returned from Galway with his money all spent, he went to Collins with another demand for more money. He was told by Collins very bluntly that he was finished as far as Collins was concerned, and would receive no further assistance from him.

I came to Dublin about this time and stayed in No. 44 as usual. On getting up one morning and coming down to my breakfast I met Quinlisk going out. When at my breakfast Miss McCarthy told me that Collins had just told her that he, Collins, was no longer taking responsibility for paying her for Quinlisk's digs and that she was, in future, keeping him at her own risk. Miss McCarthy, however, kept him for about 3 weeks as she did not like to put him out on the street on such short notice. Miss McCarthy's information that morning was very surprising to me as it was the first indication I had got that Collins was paying Quinlisk's keep to Miss McCarthy. It was a man named Donal Casey from Kerry who travelled for Todd Burns & Co. in Dublin city, and was the private depository for all Collins's correspondence and documents, who told me about the £100 Quinlisk received from Collins. I was told this by Casey when I informed him of what Miss McCarthy had told me about Collins washing his hands of any further responsibility for paying Quinlisk's bills.

To show that Quinlisk did not understand the situation in Ireland in 1919, or understand the men he was dealing with, I heard that he endeavoured to blackmail Collins and threatened him with publication of what he knew of Collins's activities. I was told at the time that Quinlisk called at some office devoted to army work and got kicked out. What I believe happened is that Quinlisk's father, in one of his visits to his son, found him in a temper and resentful against Collins's attitude towards him, and the father put him in touch with the Castle authorities with the object of his working for them.

It was notable that things began to happen in No. 44 Mountjoy St. and to Collins from this on. As Quinlisk had

had left 44, Collins told Miss McCarthy, Donal Casey and myself one night, after he came in, that the British were after him and intended to arrest him and that he intended to leave 44.immediately. As far as I can remember, Collins stayed that night in 44, but he left the next day. Collins had got his information from I.R.A. Intelligence which came from British sources. He advised me also to leave as a raid was to take place on 44 and the possibility was that I would be taken into custody, and if I was not taken, the R.I.C.+ and detectives would get to know me. This was on a Friday night. I left 44 and went to the Royal Exchange Hotel.

On the following Saturday Fionan Lynch called at 44 on his way back to Belfast Jail from which he had parole to attend a relative's funeral. Collins accompanied him to 44. Lynch decided to stay the night in 44 as he was not due in Belfast until Monday morning. I left for home on Saturday evening. No. 44 was raided about 5 a.m. on Sunday morning. Lynch was sleeping in the bed formerly used by Collins. When the raiding party entered the room they thought it was Collins who was in the bed. One of the raiding party addressed Lynch as Collins and told him to get up and dress. Lynch told him to go over to his trousers and search his pockets and see what they would get there. On finding Lynch's parole the raiders were not satisfied and called in a detective named Smyth who knew both Collins and Lynch and he identified Lynch who was then informed that he could remain in bed.

About 3 or 4 weeks later, when I was again in Dublin, Miss McCarthy was telling me all about the raid. She also told me, together with what I have already stated, that during the raid she was listening to Smyth giving instructions to the other detectives, and the instructions

were that they were to search Casey's room, going over all the furniture, carpets, chimney, clothes, etc., so that nothing would be missed. This pointed to one thing and one thing definitely, that a person who had been within the house and knew the habits of the household and everybody in it was the only one who could know that Casey was worth all this attention. As I have stated, about four weeks after the raid I was in Dublin and stayed in No. 44, and one night while sitting at the kitchen fire talking to Miss McCarthy, a knock came to the door and the doorbell rang. When she was going to answer the door she asked me to accompany her, which I did. At the door she inquired who was outside and a voice answered "Quinlisk". The voice outside inquired how Miss McCarthy was doing, how his friend Mr. Collins was and where he was staying, as he was anxious to get in touch with him. She answered him that he, Quinlisk, was already aware that Collins had left 44, and that she did not know anything about his whereabouts. Quinlisk started to laugh at this reply and expressed his sorrow for disturbing Miss McCarthy. He asked Miss McCarthy to give Collins his best regards and say that he, Quinlisk, would be pleased to meet him. Quinlisk went away from the door laughing.

The next day Miss McCarthy told me that Quinlisk was boarding in a house on the opposite side of the street. This information caused me alarm and I left there immediately and did not return to stay there any more. A few weeks afterwards Quinlisk left Dublin, and apparently the Castle came to the conclusion that his usefulness in Dublin was curtailed as so many of our people knew him. He went to Cork, and what happened there is now history.

All I have to add to the story of Quinlisk is a story I heard in an internment camp during the Civil War period.

The story was told by a man named Jim Hurley of Cork III Brigade, who subsequently gained renown as one of the greatest of the Cork County Hurlers. As far as I remember, and I am subject to correction in this, I understood from Hurley that he was present at the execution of Quinlisk. The story was that Quinlisk was taken prisoner by the I.R.A. and courtmartialled. Quinlisk was born and reared a Roman Catholic. He was asked if he would receive a priest to give him the usual rites of the Church prior to his death. He emphatically and scornfully refused. When being brought out to be executed he was handed a rosary beads by one of the I.R.A. present, which he took in his hands and broke and threw on the ground and shouted that if they had their minds made up to murder him to do so and not be acting as hypocrites. And so died Quinlisk. May God have mercy on his soul. All I wish to add is that I cannot personally vouch for the last part of this story.

EXPERIENCES IN GALWAY - IGO; HIS ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MURDER GANG AND THEIR MODE OF OPERATION IN DUBLIN CITY.

The County of Galway was the best organised county in Ireland during Easter Week 1916, where actually 500 to 600 men took the field. In contrast to this during the Tan War, the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries seemed to be absolutely free to run about and do any outrage they desired or liked to do in Co. Galway, and they did certainly make the local fellows feel the weight of their arms. Standing in Eyre Square, the centre of Galway, and taking a radius of from about 6 miles to less than 10 around, the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries murdered 37 men. The tragedy about this was that these men were not shot fighting. They were pulled

out of their beds at night, out of their shops or ordinary places of work. One man was pulled from behind his bar (publichouse), brought down to the docks in Galway, shot and flung into the tide. Wasn't the shooting of Fr. Griffin one of the most appalling outrages that happened in Ireland? They seemed to be absolutely free to do as they pleased, and, what was more, they seemed to be getting good information, because they hardly made the mistakes in the shootings which they made in other places in Ireland by shooting their own. I only know of one mistake. About 7 miles from Galway they went out and raided a country village. They entered a field where a man was working with a horse and cart; they collared him and they were about to put him against the wall and shoot him when another member of the Auxiliaries or police came to the top of a hill in time and shouted "That is the wrong man". They dropped the first man, ran up the road and on the other side of the hill they shot a man of the same name. Both were named Tom Joyce. The first man was the local battalion quartermaster and the second man was not in the Volunteers at all. He was a decent type of man, but he was not in the Volunteers; he had possibly national sympathies all right. Being practicelly in the same area and bearing the same name, it was easy to make a mistake. It was the only mistake they did make during that campaign. Any man they shot was an active enemy. EXCEPTING FR. GRIFFIN They made Galway undoubtedly an absolute hell while it lasted. R.W.

I had one experience in Galway where I had to go into the town, and I was not keen on it. I had seen the people I wanted and transacted my business, but I was not very anxious to keep on the streets and hence avoided them. I found curfew existed and it started about 9 o'clock. The time dragged before I could transact my business and I

R.W. wanted to be indoors after curfew. ~~This~~ A woman on the road out to Headford agreed to put me up. She knew me. There were two or three other women staying in the house with her - daughters, I think, who were working in Galway. I took a cup of tea and, after curfew, the military started to patrol the town and it certainly was bedlam. A lorry would dash down the street, a bomb would be thrown from it - these bombs were just blank cartridges. A yell of derisive cheering would ring out and there followed the smash of glass and a window being bashed in, etc. In the R.W. house where I was the three women, and especially the woman of the house, had my sympathy because they were terrified FEARING that if the military or police came in, I'd have been shot, which would probably have happened. They nearly collapsed at every burst, to such an extent that I told them to go to bed and put out the lights. After some persuasion they agreed, but I don't think they slept very much. I stuck it in the house until about 4 a.m. and then the noise and the patrol had died down, I thought. After 4 a.m. I left and I went out the country along the Tuam road. That was my experience of Galway.

Unfortunately the British had extraordinary information of Galway. A policeman was telling me that when it was all R.W over, that the police knew that Galway was one of the most dangerous counties in Ireland and that if the Galway men got going there was nothing they would not do. This tradition apparently came down from the time of the Land War in the 70s, 80s and 90s. Then, of course, they had an example of what happened in Galway in 1916. There were only two counties outside Dublin in what could be called a mass mobilisation took place, and these were Wexford and Galway. The result was that the English authorities kept a special eye on Galway and the police and military kept a special eye on it. It was a curious fact that the softer

they got things in an area the worse they treated the people. The result was that they concentrated on Galway town and the surrounding district. They had a military garrison in the local military barracks. Renmore was just on the outskirts of Galway town and then they had a large mixed force of Auxiliaries, Black and Tans and R.I.C. on either side of the town towards ~~Connaught~~ CONNEMARA. In the city, they had one great big central police station in Eyre Square. This place was strongly fortified and practically impenetrable unless an attacking force possessed artillery, which we did not have.

RW.

RW.

The start of hostilities was the attack ~~of~~ BY some of our fellows on a policeman at the railway station. This was brought about owing to the fact that an agent of ours had been sent to Dublin to try to obtain munitions for war. When the train came in, a fairly considerable number of auxiliaries and police entered the station and proceeded to search and interrogate the people getting off the train. Of course, that meant that our agent was bound to be intercepted and the stuff he was carrying would be got. Apparently to prevent this, a man named Quirke, who was not a native Galway man, opened fire on the police. I was given that version, but I have also been informed that Quirke had no gun; hence he could not use a gun; and also, there was a man named Broderick involved in the affair who was, I understand, a Post Office official. He was undoubtedly an I.R.A. man. These men evidently made a burst of fire from some ~~junction~~ POST, out SIDE of the station, but they were captured and, along with some others, were taken to the Docks. The Auxiliaries, Black and Tans and police were all drunk or very much under the influence of drink. They lined up the men they had brought down to the Docks and opened fire on them and, apparently, Broderick flung himself on the ground and escaped being hit, and the enemy being so drunk and, of course, a bit nervy, Broderick escaped, but he had to go on

R.W.

the "run" immediately. Quirke was shot dead and was thrown into the tide, from which his body was subsequently recovered. This was the technique of a very tough time for the town of Galway and its vicinity.

As I have stated before, up to 37 men were murdered by the enemy in that area. The police were a tough lot. They were, it might be said, supported by a man named Igo, who afterwards became notorious as being the chief gunman and hired murderer of Dublin Castle. This man was a member of the R.I.C. of some years' standing, although I won't be emphatic that he was by any means an old man - he was between 30 and 40 years of age. He was a native of North Mayo and he came, it could be said, of bad stock. His father was a rate collector who embezzled a considerable amount of public money, about £600 or £700, by pretending to be held up by ratepayers and that after a struggle he had to hand over the money to them. This was the class of an individual Igo's father was. It was discovered and proved against him that he was not held up; he just simply tried to embezzle the cash. He got a long gaol sentence. This happened about 1918. When the Black and Tan campaign started, he was released owing to the son's services. He has been living in Britain since. I heard a story about him recently from a man who went to the National School with him. This man told me that he was one of the most stupid boys in the whole school, but that physically he was very strong for his age and was the bully of the school. He had one quality that we were aware of at the time of the Tan struggle. He was a dead shot, possibly the best shot in all Ireland with a revolver and in western language in those days he was called a "two gun man", as he could use the revolver to advantage in each hand. He joined the police fairly young and, of course, his standard of education being low, he did not make much progress in them

in peace time. In other words, he got nowhere, and he was ambitious, and from what I have been told about him, he was very crafty for money. The time of the conscription crisis he made an effort to get in touch with our people and he told some priest in Galway that he would come in with us in the struggle about conscription. He professed himself as being most enthusiastic on our side and a meeting was arranged between him and our people in a house in Galway town in 1918. Collins asked me could I get to see this man. I said I'd try and I went to this priest's house where I met him. There were two or three priests present, and I think there was some other one present, but I let the priest do all the talking. I was an interested spectator. The next time I was in Dublin, Collins asked me what I thought of him and I said I didn't think much of him. I said: "You want to be very careful and not have much to do with that chap". The conclusion I came to was that this fellow in the ordinary way had not the ability to get promotion and I came to the conclusion he was out to climb and that he was not going to be particular as to the methods he used for that end. He was to help organise a movement in the police in the event of conscription. He was friendly with a lady who worked in a shop in Galway, the owner of which happened to be a distant relative of mine - Mrs. O'Donnell. He would walk into the shop on a very busy day and take the girl friend out. He used to bully Mrs. O'Donnell in that way and, as things had grown intense, she was afraid to do anything about it. The next thing was that when the "murder gang" in the Castle was organised and got going Igo was brought up from Galway and placed as second-in-command. The Commanding Officer of that gang was an Englishman named Hardy, an ex-British officer, who, after the war was over and he was demobilised, blew whatever money he got in the army and then got in with some sort of a crowd

of gangsters and they tried to bring off something in the nature of a robbery. Hardy was caught and got 7 years in gaol. He was taken out of gaol to come to Ireland and take charge of this murder gang. He accepted the offer. Not being aware of the conditions in Ireland, he said that if he thought they were going to be as terrible as they were he wouldn't have touched the job. The two of them ran this murder gang, and it is hardly necessary for me to go into the history of that unit. They lived in the Castle and they never moved outside of it except in groups of at least four or five. They kept that thing going for about 18 months and they got extra well paid and I was told they got bonuses. Their method of operation was when curfew started at 10 o'clock they would come out in groups of five or six and would go into the centre of the city, O'Connell Street and around it. They would do this about 9.30 and, when they got to the Pillar, to O'Connell R.W. BRIDGE ~~Brigade~~ and Parnell Monument, they would start firing revolvers in the air. I heard and saw them at this myself. Of course, the ordinary pedestrian did not realise that they were firing in the air and the first effect of this was panic to the people. They would stand at all corners of the streets giving access to O'Connell St. and when people got panicky, they commenced to run off O'Connell St. and down side streets. They then concentrated on the running people and, if they spotted one of them whom they thought looked suspicious, they grabbed him and brought him to the Castle and put him through a rough interrogation. Sometimes if the explanation seemed satisfactory, they let him go, but if they were not satisfied with his explanation, they kept him and sometimes they shot some of these men. They used also bring an armoured car down across the bridge and another up to the Parnell Monument and start firing guns into the air.

I want it to be clearly understood that this gang was a special gang in itself, not attached either to the ordinary police of the city, to the R.I.C., to the Auxiliaries or to the Black and Tans. They were what we described as "The Castle Murder Gang", picked from the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans, and in some cases, they got them from demobbed officers in England. Acting outside were the Auxiliaries who had a large barracks or a building which they used as a barracks just behind Rathmines Town Hall. They had another place somewhere at Whitehall. They had at least two other places in the city which I cannot think of at the present time As the situation became more intense they became more ruthless and thorough in their methods and they tried all sorts of stunts to terrify the masses of the people in Dublin.

To the credit of the Dublin masses be it said they only succeeded to a very limited extent. You had operations of this description being tried: a crowd of regular soldiers came out of the military barracks in martial order - say about 200 or 300. They came down as far as College Green, Stephen's Green and O'Connell Bridge. These formed into two lines of what is called 'single file', each soldier being about 10 or 15 yards from the man behind him. They proceeded to march down the streets keeping as close to the buildings as they could to give them room to walk holding their rifles 'at the ready'. They would march down from College Green. I have seen them go down as far as Findlater's Church. I have seen them again form into regular marching order and march back through the city from where they started. Occasionally in the march from College Green to Findlater's Church they would get an order to halt and would swing across the street in double file and would hold up all the pedestrians going north or south and interrogate them and search the men. At times they would be accompanied by lorries

containing more troops and also an armoured car moving with the rest and the lorries would also move with them. They would keep this up for maybe two or three hours. Of course, the result of it would be that all the people got off the street as quickly as they could in case anything might start and, of course, that is what the whole manoeuvre was for, to intimidate and terrify the populace.

They also had parties moving about at night after curfew. These were in Crossley tenders and, of course, anybody they met on the street without a permit they brought to the Castle for interrogation. Every night there were raiding parties operating throughout the whole city and no house could say or guarantee that it was immune from a raid. The same conditions prevailed in any country town as prevailed in Dublin, the only difference was that in the country towns and districts they had not the troops at their disposal to carry it out in as big a manner as in Dublin. This method was more difficult to operate in the country and in many cases they were very nervy about it. They kept this going from the period of "Bloody Sunday" until about the following May, when things began to wear off a bit. Any time, in fact, around the streets of Dublin, day or night, you could not know but you might be searched and interrogated at every 20 or 30 yards. Often what appeared to be ordinary pedestrians turned out to be British forces in civilian clothes. Anybody thinking of this will realise how difficult it was to move around the city, day or night, and especially to move war munitions from one place to another or carry documents. I, myself, had an experience which was fairly typical of the period. There was a fight with some of the "Murder Gang" out of the Castle in which three of them were shot near the Dolphin Hotel. That evening I had to go into a publichouse in Parnell St. It was a resort of our people where you had a chance of meeting some of our principal

officers. I had arranged an interview with a man named Fitzgerald who was attached to our Q.M.G's. staff. I went down to his place that evening. It was down in that portion of Parnell St. opposite Dominick St. I was going in the side door and I got hold of a door handle and pushed it in front of me and I was aware of a man pulling it from me in a very rough way, and when I got inside the door, which was a swing door, I got a thump in the face. I looked up and saw that it was an Auxiliary. I turned and tried to get out and discovered there was another man behind me who also hit me. The two of them used me as a PUNCH-ball for about 10 mins R.W. At last I got away and as I came out the door I was hit again and just outside the door were two more Auxiliaries with drawn revolvers in their hands. The last fellow that hit me drove me as far as the centre of the road where I fell. I looked back and saw these two fellows with the revolvers in their hands waiting for me to get up. I had the good sense to stay where I was and not to rise, and while this was happening, a crowd of people were gathering. A number of them were dealers in Dominick St. and some from Parnell St They commenced denouncing the Auxiliaries and sympathising with me. I decided to let the crowd surround me and get between me and the two men at the door with the drawn revolvers, and when I was satisfied that I was covered by the crowd, I ran up Dominick St. I entered a house which was a Bar and the name was Reilly. I was covered with blood, and the barman washed my face and cleaned the wounds, etc. and he got a piece of sticking plaster for the cuts.

That night I brought a load of stuff down the country and the manner in which I got the stuff to the railway station in Dublin was chiefly due to the Dublin jarvey who drove me in a side-car to the Broadstone station. I had, as I have stated before, three or four friends on the staff of R.W. the Midland Great Western railway who STOOD to me more than

once. I brought this stuff up to what was then known as the Locomotive Entrance to the Broadstone station. Having deposited the stuff over to one of the staff, I took the jarvey down to a publichouse and two or three of the railway men came with us and we had a couple of drinks at the pub. I paid the jarvey who showed great pluck that night, because Dublin was that day and night in a very excited condition. The atmosphere was such that you felt that anything could happen. After the railway-men ~~going~~ HAD GONE, my friend, Dan ~~Kearney~~ CEANEY, who was an engine driver, told me that it would be too dangerous to try to get the stuff on at the ordinary loading point and he said that we would have to pull the stuff out to Liffey Junction, which we did - four of us in all. We divided the stuff into four loads and walked along the permanent way as far as Liffey Junction, about two miles. At Liffey Junction Station there was a goods train waiting. I don't know the name of the crew but they certainly were very fine fellows. They got the stuff into a wagon and I went in with it and we set off from Liffey Junction for my native village in Co. Mayo; we were 21 hours travelling. Fortunately I had a heavy coat and a rug, but I can assure you that travelling like this is not the most comfortable way in the world and not to be recommended for a joy-ride. We had no difficulty until we came to Athlone station and then we were startled and panicky when a railway-man from the station came out to meet us at the entrance to the station and conveyed the information that the British military were searching all trains, etc. from Dublin. I did not know what to do and I did not want to abandon the stuff, nor did I want to get caught, or leave the railway-men in the lurch. After some discussion I said that I should stick it out and they said they would get the wagon I was in out of the train. It was about the centre of the train. They arranged to dump it as a waiting wagon at the main track on the side run. The

R.W.

place, I wish it to be understood, at Athlone, was swarming with soldiers. There were British military sentries at all the key points of the station where goods or passengers who were passing were being held up and examined for what we used to call contraband. I would wish the reader to understand what happened. The wagon I was in was taken out of the train and dumped and the train was searched and the wagon was put back again. Therefore, I have always felt that these railway-men certainly did their part well that night. How they did it I don't know! From where they dumped my wagon on a side track I could hear the search going on and I could hear the British officers giving orders. Finally, after about three hours at least the military went away and, before they went, our driver started kicking up a row with the military commander, saying that he had to arrive in Westport by a certain hour, that it was most important and that the military commander was causing his delay. They were anything but polite to each other. The conversation was carried on in what is described as barrack room slang. Finally, the military officer told him that he could take his so-and so train out of the station if he liked. They then proceeded to get my wagon into the train - how, I don't know - but they succeeded. I arrived at my own station and, of course, the whole staff of the station were 100% reliable from our point of view, and the wagon was taken out of the train and shunted in to what was known as the Goods Store. From there the stuff was loaded and distributed throughout the country from my home town.

PURCHASE OF ARMS IN BRITAIN.

The first trip I made to Britain to purchase arms I got a letter of authorisation from Michael Collins addressed to old Neil Kerr of Liverpool. I understood that this man, Neil Kerr, senior, was then in charge of the acquisition of arms in the north of England. The letter I got ordered Neil Kerr to allow me to procure all the arms I was able to get and to afford me all the assistance in his power to do such work.

I set about getting all the arms I could. Acting on this authority, I succeeded in getting what was considered a considerable amount of arms. One thing I would like to direct attention to is the fact that in even a normal year 12,000 men from Co. Mayo went to Britain in the Spring of the year and returned to Ireland on the approach of Winter. A lot of those men, however, got married and settled down in Britain. I think I can say that I met men in Britain from every parish in the Co. Mayo who were willing to assist me in the work I was doing, and a lot who did assist me when it was within their power to do so. As a consequence of this I met with a considerable amount of success. At least that was the opinion of the men who were engaged at this work in Britain. What was my astonishment then to learn that the first cargo I sent to Ireland, instead of being sent to Mayo, as I was led to believe it should be, was sent to the south of Ireland. It must be remembered that all the money I spent on the purchase of those arms was provided by the Mayo Brigades and handed to me at a meeting held in my native place, Balla, at which the four Brigades then organised in the county were represented.

The authority given to me by Michael Collins on going to Britain was very implicit in stating the purpose of my business in Britain and where the arms should go when I

succeeded in procuring them. I complained to Paddy Daly and old Neil Kerr and Hugh Earley, all of Liverpool, of what had happened to my consignment of stuff. I was told later, by Paddy Daly, that the matter would be set right. I sent a second consignment, not as big as the first, as I was not at all satisfied at the way things were working out as far as Co. Mayo requirements were concerned. The same thing happened in regard to my second cargo. I then made up my mind to return to Ireland. I got back on a cattle boat from Liverpool to Dublin. A man named Sherlock who, I understood, was a native of Co. Sligo, procured my passage on the boat and also saw that I got off the boat unnoticed at Dublin. This man was an able seaman. He worked principally on the boats from London to Dublin. He made occasional trips from Liverpool and Bristol. I mentioned Bristol before as a port for export of arms to Ireland. Jack Sherlock seemed to be very nervous of Bristol as he found that some of the dock workers there were unreliable and dangerous. We were afraid, especially in this business, that they would get on to our system of export to Ireland and, therefore, render it impossible to send anything by boat to Ireland.

To go back again to what I can now describe as my dispute with G.H.Q. When in Dublin, I discovered I was getting a considerable amount of police attention. I found that it was very dangerous for me to get down to the west. Railwaymen, friends of mine, told me that the R.I.C. were on the lookout for me on the trains and advised me not to use the train going to the west. I, therefore, sent word to Co. Mayo with a trusty messenger - a man named Seamus Gibbons I told him the whole situation as it stood and asked him to get in touch with the Mayo Brigade officers and inform them of the position as I have outlined it. I told him to inform the officers that I had still a considerable sum of their

money in my possession and to inform the officers that if I worked in defiance of the authority of G.H.Q. I would have to do it at a risk; that I might probably be placed under arrest by G.H.Q., brought back and courtmartialled. I wished to indicate to the officers that I was willing to take my chances in working independently of G.H.Q., as I knew that brigades in Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and some of the midland counties had agents working in defiance of G.H.Q. The brigades met again in Mayo to discuss the situation. Gibbons was present at the meeting. It was proposed that I should cross to Britain again and Gibbons strongly supported the proposal. The result was that the next man who came to see me from Mayo was Tom Kittrick. He was then Q.M. to the West Mayo Brigade. He conveyed to me that I was to cross to England again and that before I left for England a man would come to me from Mayo with more money. A man named Pat Fallon came along. He was a native of my home town and local Battalion Q.M. and he had a considerable amount of money with him, something about £600. Most of that money was from the South Mayo Brigade of which Balla was part.

Fallon and I crossed to London, also Joe Goode, whom I have already referred to as being connected with Cathal Brugha's mission to London as one of the expeditionary force. Goode introduced me to a good many of the London I.R.A. who were working on the procuring of arms; to his own brother-in law, Joe Browne, a London-born Irishman; to "Blimey" O'Connor's family, who were all very much mixed up with all I.R.A. activities. The brothers Carr were also contacted. We got a certain amount of material from the Carrs. I got this consignment shipped from London to Dublin and I moved from London to Liverpool accompanied by Fallon. Fallon returned to Ireland from Liverpool. I cannot remember now if I went with him, but if I did, I returned again to London in a short space of time. Browne (Goode's brother-in-law), who had not

taken much part in the purchase of arms before this time, told me in a few conversations I had with him that he could get a number of revolvers and revolver ammunition. I told him to go ahead and get all he could. The result was that Browne opened two sources of supply through my exertions in London. Unfortunately, his contacts could only provide revolvers. From one source we used to get a new .45 revolver every week. This increased to two per week, and eventually the number per week rose to seven or eight. At the beginning in London, ammunition was not as easy to get as the guns. With the assistance of a man I knew in London, by the name of Sullivan, who was in London representing Cork Brigades, I made an arrangement whereby we could swap - he getting some of my guns, and I getting some of his ammunition. Sullivan and I were anxious to know where the guns were coming from. We started investigating to find out the source from which the guns were procured by Browne. The procedure in getting the guns was that Brown introduced us to the proprietor of a little bric-a-brac shop where the guns were handed to us and we handed over £3 for each gun. This was only a fraction of their cost price. In a couple of conversations I had with this shop owner I discovered in the first place that he was not English and, in the next place, that he was a very well-read and well-educated man, thoroughly conversant with international affairs, and he gave me very accurate forecasts of things about to happen in the international sphere. He always maintained ~~that~~, in conversation with us, that England was in such a position that she would have to make a genuine attempt to settle the Irish question, and that it was up to the Irish themselves to screw all they wanted out of her. I could not say what race he belonged to. He had at least a conversational knowledge of nine languages. I found out his linguistic ability from an English journalist who once saw O'Sullivan and myself leaving this man's shop. He asked

us about our knowledge of the man and told us that he was an extraordinary character and described to us his linguistic accomplishments. He later found out that this agent of ours was what is known as a "fence" - a dealer in stolen goods - and that jewellery was one of his specialities. On one occasion, when approaching the shop, we saw a police inspector in uniform coming out of it, which alarmed us very much. We passed the shop, as we were afraid to go into it. Browne, when we told him later of the police inspector's visit to the shop, laughed at our fears and told us it was all right and, as a guarantee of that fact, gave us the startling information that the police inspector was the source of supply to the shop.

About that time, we began to receive from the same shop perfectly new parabellum pistols and a plentiful supply of ammunition for them. The guns and ammunition came from a factory in the neighbourhood of Paris. All the packing and labels on both guns and ammunition bore French labels. Further, the boat which landed them in London was a French boat crossing to England at least once per week, and some weeks oftener.

I had a couple of addresses of places in the north of England which I intended to contact when I had the affairs in London working to my satisfaction. I left London and went to Manchester first stop. One of the first people I contacted there was Pat Fallon's brother, who had been conscripted into the British army during the 1914-18 war. I stayed a few days with him. He was a bit broken down in health, having contracted T.B. during his military service. He was given a small job. He introduced me to the manager of a publichouse in Corporation St. Manchester, named Anderson, a native of Ballaghaderreen, Co. Mayo. He also

introduced me to a family in Reader St. named Finegan. I think I got both those contacts working and in two weeks' time returned to them, when both parties had some guns for me including five rifles. From Manchester I travelled to Liverpool. There was a great crowd of Mayo men in the I.R.A. in Liverpool. I think there were more Mayo men in the Liverpool I.R.A. than from any other county. The men who principally assisted me there were Willie Malone, Westport, Tom Tighe, Ballycastle, ... Barrett, a teacher who was sacked from a school in Ireland for his political activities. I also met Hugh Early, now a Garda in Dublin; two or three brothers named Martin, who worked as tailors in Liverpool. I also contacted a big man named Collins, who subsequently held commissioned rank as a Captain in the Irish army. I procured AND shipped a considerable quantity of stuff from Liverpool to Dublin whilst I was there. R.W.

The next place I went to was Sheffield and from there to Bradford. I made contact with a man named Benson who was most useful to me in procuring arms. When I got the stuff I was faced with the difficulty of obtaining a safe place for storing it, and Benson introduced me to the principal of the Christian Brothers Schools in Bradford, who helped me by safely taking charge of my stuff. This school later became one of the principal "dumps" for munitions in that part of England. Benson also put me in touch in Leeds with a man named McNamara, who procured arms for me and also stored them. This McNamara had a brother in Dublin Castle who co-operated with Eamon Broy and gave valuable information to the I.R.A. Intelligence. Benson was a Roscommon man from the neighbourhood of Boyle. He put me in touch with a man named Quinn, who was what could be considered a big business-man. He was managing director of a multiple shop firm, Mason's, with many business premises around Birmingham

district with over 60 shops under his control. Quinn was a fine type of a successful Irishman. He never took any part in politics in the ordinary way. I was introduced to Quinn by Benson, who told me that Quinn, a native of Longford-Leitrim border district, took no previous part in Irish politics. When I first met Quinn I gave him Benson's letter of introduction. He arranged that I should go to his home with him that evening after he finished his day's work. At his home he told me he would be able to put me in touch with some person connected with the B.S.A. arms firm. I remained with him that night and I went with him the next morning from his home at a place named Dashwood Heath into the town of Birmingham.

When he arrived at his office he gave me the names and addresses of a few men who, he believed, were members of the I.R.A. He stated that he was not an I.R.A. man himself, but that he knew those men he was sending me to as decent, reliable men. He advised me to come back to his office about 12.15 p.m. that day, which I did. Shortly after I returned, as advised, he took me into an inner office and there took up a cardboard box and opened it and showed me eight perfectly new parabellum pistols, with a packet of ammunition for each pistol. He told me that a friend of his from the B.S.A. firm was calling to his office about lunch time and that the three of us would have lunch together. I told Quinn that I would have to procure a handbag to carry the stuff, and I went out and got a cheap bag to suit my purpose. On my return I found Mr. Quinn's friend from the B S.A. Company in the office and the three of us had lunch together. Mr. Quinn"s friend was the person who procured the parabellums from the B.S.A. Company. Mr. Quinn paid him for the guns and, as far as I know, Mr. Quinn was never paid - at least I did not pay him.

A parabellum pistol is a fairly heavy weapon and when a person has to deal with eight pistols and 50 to 60 rounds of ammunition for each, the lot makes a rather heavy load. I had bought a cheap travelling bag for the purpose of conveying those guns to London and I packed the stuff into the bag and had it conveyed to the railway station in Birmingham. I placed the bag in a luggage rack and took my R.W. seat in a carriage fairly crowded by people who appeared to me all English. Everything went all right until we arrived at a junction at which we had to change for a London train. When I attempted to take the bag off the rack the handle came off as the weight of the bag was too great. Fortunately it happened in this way, as if the handle had held until I got the bag off the rack it might have parted and allowed the bag to drop on the floor and the probability then would be the disintegration of the bag.

I proceeded to remove the bag with both hands from the rack when a typical member of the British middle class, who appeared to be a commercial traveller of between 50 and 60 years of age, sprang to my assistance when he saw I was in difficulties with the bag, and got hold of one end of the bag. My difficulty now was that the Englishman, if he realised the great weight in the bag, would get suspicious of me and the bag. I tried to dissuade the man from helping me and I struggled to prevent him getting the bag. It took all my self-control to avoid giving myself away, as a loss of temper would have been fatal as he might get suspicious and call in a policeman. In the end I convinced him that I was capable of managing the bag myself. When I arrived in London at Marylebone Station I got a cab and drove to the digs at which I had arranged to stay.

SECOND VISIT TO ENGLAND TO PURCHASE MUNITIONS.

On this journey I was deliberately disobeying G.H.Q.'s orders, as I was acting independently of G.H.Q. In this second mission I was fortunate in the fact that a lot of Mayo men were then domiciled in Britain. I had a lot of contacts through them and I got great assistance from them. The method of acquiring arms adopted by G.H.Q. was haphazard and depended a lot on chance. Anywhere guns could be procured they were purchased or otherwise obtained. Their system of importing arms was well organised and no losses took place. Their system of control of the arms was good and, in many instances, unfair, as most of the arms were sent to active areas, so that areas where a scarcity of arms existed could not carry out operations without arms.

In all, I went to England on three or four occasions. I purchased guns all over England. I had dumps in Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds and London. In all, the total quantity of arms I purchased was about 400 weapons (rifles, automatics and revolvers). Some of those arms were stolen from the B.S.A. Company in Birmingham.

From my experience in England I would like to point out where G.H.Q's system of collecting arms in Britain was faulty. Some of the agents were useless and showed a lack of initiative, waiting mostly for guns to come in instead of getting out and looking for them.

I was so successful in my efforts that an order was sent from G.H.Q. to England to arrest me for disobeying G.H.Q orders. The people in England who mattered and were connected with me at this time in my work when the G.H.Q. order arrived would not have it and told G.H.Q. so.

Paddy Daly (now Dr. Daly, Army Medical Corps) was then in charge of the north of England and had full control

for G.H.Q. of the handling of arms and their shipment to Ireland. He did his work efficiently and courageously and was an outstanding man who took great risks.

All the arms I purchased in Britain were commandeered by G.H.Q. on their arrival in Dublin, and none of the guns got to Co. Mayo.

One of the men who gave me great help was a London-Irish man named Joseph Goode, whom I contacted in Balla where he was working as an electrician. I found that this man could be most useful and I arranged with him to accompany me to England as a contact man in London. Goode originally came to Dublin in 1916 and took part in the Rising. He subsequently got work with Dockrell, Ltd. as an electrician. He gave me most valuable help in London. I stayed with his people, and the success of my efforts in London was to a great extent due to him and to his brother-in-law, Joe Browne, an ex-British army man, who had a small business premises near Euston Station. R.W. Browne had also a brother whose name I forget. He also gave me great help.

Immediately after the question arose, G.H.Q. were asked to get to work on the problem of getting arms and an organisation was started in Britain. Sam Maguire of London, who then held the rank of O/C. Britain - a sincere, energetic man - was apparently put in charge. Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy went to London and saw Maguire. Sean Russell, who was later - if not then - Director of Munitions, travelled back and forward to Britain on several occasions. This effort to obtain a reasonable supply of arms in Britain did not meet with the success that the Executive expected.

I cannot express myself too strongly about the futile efforts made to procure arms. The apparent failure of G.H.Q. to procure arms for the Volunteers caused widespread

resentment all over the country. The argument used by G.H.Q, when questioned on their apparent failure, was that they had got an organisation going in all districts in which arms could be procured in Great Britain manned by picked men. Most of these men were of Irish descent, born in Britain, whose business it was to get arms and send them across to Ireland. That there were very efficient men in this organisation there can be no denying; men such as Sam Maguire of London, two Carr brothers of London, Hugh Earley of Liverpool, and Paddy Daly of Liverpool - now Dr. P. Daly. Men like these did all in their power to procure arms, but they did not seem to meet with the success expected of them. There were other men in this organisation who did not pull their weight. There were others whose activities gave rise to grave suspicion, as large sums of money were unaccounted for in places like Manchester and Glasgow. On account of G.H.Q's meagre efforts to obtain arms, country brigades themselves took over the work of collecting arms in Britain.

When I was in England I met men there from various brigades in this country whose business there was the purchase of arms in defiance of G.H.Q. orders. My impression at the time I met these men was that any brigade in the country worth its salt would take the initiative of procuring arms into its own hands. There seemed to be nothing being attempted by G.H.Q. agents, and it would not have been for lack of money. There was plenty of money at the disposal of Dáil Éireann. I do not think that the army was ever hampered by Dáil Éireann in respect of cash for purchasing arms. I remember a prominent member of Dáil Éireann, William Sears, informing me that the question of providing funds for army purchases was discussed at a meeting of Dáil Éireann and that £50,000 was voted for this purpose in mid-1920, and that more would be voted, if necessary.

On this question I suspect that there were members of Dail Éireann who were not keen on the activities of the Army. I would not suggest that they were actively opposed to the Army policy, but I suspect that they were nervous that Army activities would cause them political embarrassment. Arthur Griffith would be the leader of this point of view in Dail Éireann, also Kevin O'Higgins and, I think, J.J. O'Kelly (Sceilg), was not happy about Army policy at the time.

Undoubtedly a large sum of money allotted for the purchase of arms in Britain was unaccounted for – about £10,000 to £12,000 approximately.. It is only fair to the men concerned in the purchase of arms to say that their side of the story could be truthfully explained by saying that a strict detailed account of expenditure could not be kept. Any person of common sense will admit that written records of the purchase of war material for Irish rebels to be used against His Majesty's government in Ireland could not safely be kept. Such documents would be dynamite; not alone would such documents involve danger to the person on whom they were captured, but they would also involve danger to all persons named. The men engaged in transporting arms from place to place would also be involved. The men who helped to put the material on the boats for Ireland and the seamen who took charge of them on the boat would also be involved, and the men who handled the material in Ireland would have to be mentioned.

It must be borne in mind that all the men having any connection with the purchase, transport, shipping and handling the importation of war material to Ireland were working men without any financial resources, who had to get cash to cover, at least, all out-of-pocket expenses.

The recent great war, where millions were spent from day to day, will give some idea of the costliness of providing

the sinews of war. Even small nations like Norway spent money lavishly. When such examples are evident, it is ridiculous to expect that a few thousands, which appeared to be missing when accounts are being checked, should cause so much suspicion then and since. The vast majority of the men working at procuring war material were both honest and sincere, and the impossibility of providing a strict account of how the cash was disposed of leaves men - the most honest of them -, open to challenge when charges of mal-appropriation of funds are made.

I will try and give an outline of the scheme or system generally adopted to provide arms in Britain. I would first make it clear to any person reading this that there was no such thing as a system established or working by which a Volunteer officer from any part of Ireland could simply communicate with the Quartermaster General of the I.R.A., requesting that he be supplied with so many rifles and ammunition for them, or revolvers or explosives or machine guns, or any other class of war material. Arms were obtained by the units throughout Ireland by purchasing them wherever they could be bought - from any person willing to sell. The next great source was the procuring of arms from members of the enemy forces, either by purchase or by getting them from men sympathetic to the national movement; also stealing or capturing them from members of the enemy forces during attacks on patrols or on their barracks.

There was an organisation for the procurement of arms built up in Great Britain from the members of the I.R.A. They were Irishmen born in Ireland or of Irish descent resident in Britain who worked under the authority of Sam Maguire, London O/C. I.R.A. Britain, who organised groups in most big cities and towns including London and especially around military centres such as Aldershot, Salisbury Plain and other localities of that class. Groups were also in existence in big seaport towns such as Liverpool, Southampton, Glasgow, Bristol, Birmingham, where

armament factories existed, and Newcastle-on-Tyne were also linked up.

As far as I know, the principal ports where arms and war material were received in Ireland were, first, Dublin Port, second, Cork, and occasional cargoes came through at Waterford. A substantial amount of stuff came through Belfast. How this was managed I do not know. Some stuff came through Derry Port, possibly more than through Belfast. A considerable amount came through Dundalk and Drogheda. I never sent stuff through to any port but Dublin. I heard, however, that the workers on the boats calling at Dundalk, Drogheda and Newry ports were sympathetic and handled munitions when called on. A small quantity of stuff went into Sligo port. As far as I could learn, this port was used to supply neighbouring northern areas

The methods of procuring the munitions in areas in England were as follow:- It was the business of the members of the organisation who were working at this job in Britain, and in fact, every member of the I.R.A. in Britain, no matter whether he was specially detailed for the work or not, to be on the alert constantly to spot arms or war material wherever it could be procured. The men specially engaged on the work gave what might be styled as close an examination as was in their power to the shops and premises of gunsmiths and dealers of firearms. Pawn shops and places of that description were to get attention and all arms were to be purchased or taken. A special effort was made to get in touch with soldiers in military centres and with sailors in naval centres. An eye was also kept on such organisations as rifle clubs, territorial drill halls, etc. In a few cases, small raids were carried out on such places, but nothing of much consequence was obtained as a result of those operations. A dribble of firearms and ammunition poured into what we would call the depots, for want of a better name. I discovered in knocking

about England that some of the men in areas where great activity was supposed to exist in the procurement of arms that the men engaged were taking things very easy. I found there was a lot of what can be described as laziness. There was a lot of talk going on and the political side of the national movement in Britain known as the Self-Determination League, was very active in their special job, carrying out all the propaganda they could, holding public demonstrations, collecting money of which they forwarded large sums to Dublin.

I certainly, looking back on it, have a great admiration for the work done by at least middle-aged men and women. A great many of those people had been out of Ireland for 30 to 40 years. A large number of them were born in Britain of Irish parents. I would certainly say that those people deserved the gratitude of the Irish people at home. As far as they were concerned, they gave unselfish service to the Irish cause. I have said so much about this because I came across I.R.A. men who were doing very little themselves, complaining of those people and criticising them, which I considered most unfair.

I have said that everywhere firearms could be obtained that it was the business of the members of the I.R.A. to take steps to procure them. The arms, when procured, were stored in the houses of friendly Irish people or in the business premises of people of this class, such as, for instance, Hughes of Liverpool, big grocers with branch shops spread over districts in the north and midlands areas of England. The Hughes's made a practice of employing only Irishmen in their business houses, shop assistants, van drivers, etc. Those men were very useful to us as they helped me more than once and stored material for me and transported stuff in their vans. When the stuff was

collected in what I can describe as the interior of Britain, it had, of course, to be transmitted to some big seaport where it could be transferred to Ireland.

No member of the I.R.A. was supposed to go to Britain to procure war material of any sort without the permission of G.H.Q.

DESCRIBING HOW MUNITIONS WERE SHIPPED TO IRELAND AND DISTRIBUTED TO VARIOUS AREAS.

I will describe the methods of shipping a cargo of war material from London to Dublin. The cargo contained about 66,000 rounds of ammunition of various calibres for rifles and small arms, a number of rifles, about 22 - not all Lee Enfields, about 30 revolvers of various sorts; also included were seven rifles used for shooting big game. The amount of ammunition for those was limited, about 30 rounds for each rifle. Together with above stuff was included dry batteries, principally used for exploding electric detonators, and much sought for by the I.R.A. for exploding land mines. Those batteries were procured by Irishmen working in coalmines or on big constructional operations where blasting was carried out and stolen by Irishmen from their works at considerable personal risk as they were under strict control as the firm using them had to obtain a licence to get them. The man using them had to obtain them from the Works Office and sign a docket for the article before he got the use of it. He used to return the article to the office and sign for its return and get a receipt for it. Those batteries were very portable. They were in a strong leather case made like a very large camera. The case had a lock on it. The man using the battery had the key for the lock. A strong leather strap was attached to the case and could be carried slung on the shoulder like a camera.

All this stuff was included in this particular cargo shipped from London. We went down to the London docks where the Irish boat berthed for the departure to Ireland. When we arrived there opposite the docks was a publichouse which was controlled by a strange combination. A Jew was manager and he was married to an Irish-Roman Catholic girl. She was violently Irish and violently Catholic. The Jew, like all his race, was cute and well able to conceal his feelings. There was no doubt however about his love for his wife and the wife induced her husband to give us all the facilities his house afforded. Those facilities included visits from Irish sailors to discuss ways and means. The wife received messages and the house was used for preparing the packages for shipment. The Jew's attitude was that he knew nothing about what was going on and would not discuss those matters.

At that time in the dock area in London the sanitary arrangements were primitive, to say the least of it. There was a lavatory inside the dock gates for the use of the dock workers and the ship hands going in and out. Inside the gate was a policeman. There was another policeman outside the gate; inside the gate also, in a little cubicle , were an excise man or two. Those excise men were on duty at all hours night and day. There was also at least one Scotland Yard man (detective) hanging around. You will see the considerable difficulty of getting anything either in or out of this London dock without examination.

The system adopted was that a man left the pub and went into the lavatory inside the gate. He met there a man working on the particular Irish boat by which we were sending the stuff. The excise men would not allow any man from the boat through the dock gates without examination. Strange as it may seem, they were not as particular about people from the shore going through the gate to the docks inside. There-

fore, when a man went into the lavatory from outside the gate no particular notice was taken of him. A man going from the pub into the lavatory could carry as much stuff concealed on his person as would not be noticed by any of the gate watchers. He went to the cubicle in the lavatory and his friend from the boat took the stuff from him and concealed it on his own person. The wrappings were specially prepared to facilitate rapid transfer from one person to another. The result was that the stuff was transferred on to the boat by this slow process. To rush matters would invite disaster. In the case of the rifles - these, when reduced to their broken-down condition, were rather bulky, but were still concealable on a person of suitable proportions. When the stuff was got on board, instead of being hid in secret receptacles, the stevedores who directed the loading of the boat - and who were almost all Irishmen, or of Irish descent, or of strong Irish sympathies - had the invoices of <u>all</u> cargo going on the ships. R.W. A list of packages or cases of goods - ~~munitions~~ going to Ireland - was copied from the manifest and those particular cases were opened slightly and in an unnoticeable way. The munitions were packed into these cases in such manner as not to affect the weight of any particular case or package to a noticeable degree. When the boat arrived in Dublin, or any other Irish port, there were men there expecting the cargo. The man in charge of the cargo of munitions was in possession of a copy of the manifest on which was marked the particular cases or packages containing the ammunition. He handed his list to the man in charge in the Irish harbour waiting to receive the munitions. In unloading the boat this man, with the assistance of the Irish stevedore, unloaded it in such a manner that the parcels or cases containing munitions were placed in a safe place in the harbour stores, first, that they would be safe, and secondly, that they would be accessible,

so that men coming into the store that night would know where to look for the munitions and remove them.. The extraordinary feature of efforts to import army stores into Irish ports was that the British authorities were well aware of this traffic and made great efforts to capture consignments. The docks in Dublin and at other ports were subject to frequent raids and searches and, as far as I have heard, they never made any captures. The reader will notice in my description of the work of shipping arms into this country that great attention was given to detail and the conclusion may be arrived at that too much detail work was involved. On consideration it will be seen that all this close detail was absolutely necessary; all the time whilst the struggle was on we were very nervous that the British authorities would get on to our system, as the most intense searching that could be possible in the ordinary way was carried on continually by the British. They never found any arms as far as I know on any of the boats coming into Irish harbours.

The nature of their search was as follows: The moment a ship docked at an Irish harbour she was quarantined by the British until she was searched. Sometimes, I believe, they went outside the harbour in motor launches and boarded the ships to prevent anything being disposed of before the ships docked. In searching the ship, they searched every nook and corner in the vessel - the coal bunkers, the lifeboats, the crew's quarters, crew's luggage and clothes. The officers' quarters were also searched, as were those of all passengers - Irish or English, men or women. In fact, nothing that could be thought of was overlooked, with the exception of the cargo comprising all classes of goods or merchandise coming into this country, of which we took advantage. It never seemed to occur to them to search the cargo. It will be seen by this why we took such care in placing our stuff in the cargo and why such involved detail in planning was so necessary. Too

high a tribute cannot be paid to all the workers helping us on the boats for the unselfish and courageous manner in which they worked, risking their livelihood and their lives or liberty.

I think I have described fully the methods used - to my knowledge - in importing arms, and the great difficulties which had to be surmounted. There may have been other means and plans used to import arms, but I have no knowledge of them. It can be easily recognised that if the British undertook the work of searching the cargoes of every ship coming into this country the task would be so gigantic that the whole of the British armed forces in Ireland would be necessary to do the work properly. If the British got arms concealed in the cargo of boats it would be very difficult for them to connect any person or persons with the responsibility for importing them. It would be a farcical situation if the British had to charge some of the biggest importing houses in Dublin, for instance, with the importation of arms, as most of these houses were pro-British in outlook and void of any Irish sympathies.

The distribution of the arms throughout Ireland when they were landed in ports such as Dublin had to be undertaken by the men from the different brigades areas coming up to Dublin and taking them over from the G.H.Q. men and transferring them to their own areas as best they could. From once the men from brigade areas took possession of the arms, G.H.Q. held them responsible for their safety, and it was a serious matter if arms were lost in transit. From the beginning I, myself, conveyed whatever supplies I got to Co. Mayo by travelling with the stuff. The railway workers gave me every assistance in their power and, from my experience of the railway workers, they deserved the gratitude of the Irish people, as it was by their assistance

and help that we were able to travel all over Ireland and convey stuff to each of the 32 counties. The outstanding railway man who comes to my mind in connection with this work on the route from Dublin to Co. Mayo was Paddy Daly, a native of Athlone, district checker on the line from Athlone to Westport. The man who took from Dublin to Athlone was named Joe Henigan, a native of Ballina. They were exceptional men and stood up to all classes of danger. They were both under the suspicion of the British authorities and were being constantly searched and interrogated.

Whilst I was passing through Mullingar by rail going to Dublin on one occasion, I saw Henigan being severely beaten by auxiliaries at Mullingar Station. In fact, he was battered into unconsciousness by the butts of revolvers in an effort by the auxiliaries to get information from him. Daly was treated in the same manner on a couple of occasions. It could be said of both those men, as far as I know, that they never lost a man a parcel of munitions or a dispatch entrusted to their care all during the Tan war period - that is, any man who followed their advice and instructions was perfectly safe in their care.

There was a case of a man named ... Howley from Galway, who travelled by train and was shot dead at Broadstone Station in Dublin as a result of not taking Henigan's advice. Henigan advised Howley to get off the train before it came into the station and had the train slowed down to enable him to do so, but he refused to do so. A coincidence of the Howley shooting was that one of the principal men at his shooting was himself shot shortly afterwards in or about the same place.

Going back again to the obtaining and distribution of arms I cannot be too emphatic in stating that there was really no system established which could be called a system to obtain

arms and even the distribution was 'chancy'. It might be said, with reason, that it was probably better a system did not exist because if there was one the chance was always there that the enemy might get knowledge of the system and of course any system can be smashed if tackled in the proper way. The system really amounted to groups of men in the different quarters in Britain. They simply tried by investigation of a sort to obtain knowledge of anyone in the areas who was possessed of arms. It might be an ex-soldier who brought his rifle with him when he left the army, or it might be a shopkeeper or hardware merchant who, by accident or otherwise, happened to get possession of a rifle or a few rifles and was willing to sell them for a price. Occasionally it did happen in one or two places they got in contact actually with members of the British army who were Irish or had Irish sympathies who passed out an odd weapon to them, but only an odd one, or who sold it, and in these sources of supply there was always a tremendous risk in obtaining them, because the possibility was always there that the man from whom you bought or obtained a gun would give you away. You had to take that chance.

The distribution of them in most cases followed on those lines that all the guns obtained were transferred to the dock or ports like Liverpool, Southampton, London, Manchester Canal, or to Glasgow, or along the Clyde generally. There was a surer source of supply along the Clyde then than anywhere because there was a great Irish community in it who, as far as I knew, were very patriotic and would run risks to take chances. When the guns landed in Ireland they had to be distributed through the country and great care had to be taken. One of the most common methods adopted was to get hold of a man in the Transport Services in Dublin and, where possible, say, if they wanted to send stuff to the town of Athlone, in that case the Transport man got the

names of the principal merchants in Athlone, wholesale and retail dealers as they were, and when the shopkeeper's own goods were being forwarded to them, the weight was obtained from the Transport Office and the cases were opened, and a certain amount of ammunition and weapons deposited in the manner the goods might be placed in these cases, care being taken that the cases were not being overloaded; care being also taken that when they arrived at their destination the right person opened them and, generally, that was not the shopkeeper. Some amusing incidents occurred. This occurred about a certain shopkeeper in the midlands who once obtained a case of hardware from the local railway station. The case was opened under his own supervision and when opened it was disclosed that the case contained revolvers, ammunition and bombs at which the shopkeeper became very much alarmed and excited, and before anybody could step in, he ran up to the local police barracks and reported the matter. While he was gone to the barracks the assistants, who were Volunteers, removed the stuff and had got it out of the house to some safe dump so that when the police arrived there was no trace of the guns or war material, with the result that the police turned on the shopkeeper and accused him of being drunk, and he was a very sober man. Some of the stuff was actually brought from Dublin by car. One of the factors, of course, that helped the distribution of stuff from Dublin or any other big port was what was known as the Munition Strike. *

At a period in the Struggle for Independence when the British authorities were distributing troops throughout Ireland and arranging and re-arranging them there was, as a consequence, a constant stream of military on the trains. As the Struggle became intensified and got the full support of the Irish Labour Movement, the Trades Unions dealing with the railways made a declaration that, in future, they would

* The Munition Strike mainly affected passenger trains and the Goods trains were little affected.

R.W.

not carry any more troops or war material on the trains. The result was as follows: Trains going to Galway used to travel as far as Athlone. Trains going to Mayo used to travel as far as Castlerea. When the train arrived at Castlerea the military were there to board it and immediately they boarded it the railway workers got off the train, i.e., the driver, fireman, guard and checker, and refused to go any further. I have seen the railwaymen being hammered by the police and soldiers and refusing to budge, and it was an extraordinary sight to see the detachment of military lined up on the platform fully armed and those three or four ordinary workmen getting off and telling them they would not bring them any further.

The railwaymen, in my opinion, came out of the national struggle with honour and they have a right, as Irishmen, to be proud of their behaviour.

I have seen a man of between 50 and 60 years, a driver, being battered and kicked around the platform by a British military officer and an auxiliary officer, and the revolver being put into his mouth and he still refusing to budge. It is right to say that practically all communications from Dublin to any part of Ireland - from the Irish Army headquarters were carried by these railwaymen.

One night I came down from Dublin at the start of the Munition strike with a load of war material. Through some mischance I had forgotten about the strike. When I got to Castlerea it was dark and when the train stopped the usual procedure started - the military marched onto the platform and the crew got off and refused to travel any further. I then realised the position I was in; what was I do and how to get the stuff away? The station was full of soldiers and a certain number of police. It started to rain, which, I believe, helped me. I had arranged before I left Dublin that

a man named Doherty from Ballaghaderreen was to help me at Castlerea Station. At the station I looked out but could see no sign whatever of Doherty. I thought at first he had funked it and I did not know what to do, because I could not very well walk away and leave the stuff after me. After some consideration I decided I would chance it and I took the bag of stuff in my hand and walked across the platform, climbed the bridge and came down the other side. Passing through the doorway into the railway station in the passage were six police armed with rifles and revolvers. There was a considerable crowd of passengers and one thing that stood to me was that there was a fair the next day in Castlerea and these passengers were cattle-dealers, etc., so in passing through the police cordon and through the military I was taken for one of the cattle-dealers and, fortunately, there was no policeman from my own part of the country to recognise me. I walked outside the station and the rain began to get fairly heavy. As I passed, I heard one policeman say to the other did he know me, and apparently that was their purpose to identify anyone that passed and collar them if they suspected them. When I was abou 30 yards from the railway station a voice yelled out behind me to halt. It was then raining heavily. I did not heed the shout to halt, but kept going on and when I had gone about 20 yards more a man passed on a bicycle. I immediately recognised Doherty and I asked if that were Doherty. He replie "Yes", so I told him not to get off. I kept running alongside the bike and told him the situation as it stood. I told him to take the bag and I gave him the name of a house where I would R.W meet him down the town and to go as quickly as he could. The nigh was very dark and the lighting regulations at that time were not as good as they are now. I think there was no public lighting there then and the enforcement of the lighting regulations on bikes was not so strict as it is now. These factors helped to save me. When Doherty had gone on I ran to

the wall on the right-hand side of the road which was of loose stone. I shoved a breach of the loose stones in front of me into the field and I made a big noise and at the same time I ran as fast as I could and kept running on the grass margin of the road. Immediately I crashed the stones the police shouted 'Halt' and this time I heard a shot and I kept going. Of course I would have been spotted if I had rushed down the main street and was observed by people. It was then mostly an empty place. I knew I would attract attention, so when I got up about 100 yards, I got across the wall without making any noise (I knew the country), crossed the field down to the end of the town where I was to meet my friend I did not know until the next day that I was very lucky because I was told that the field took the form of a considerable hill, and on the top of the hill was what was the old Workhouse which had been turned into a military barracks, and all around this barracks was barbed wire barriers which, by good luck, I never hit into. I slipped into a vacant piece of ground at the end of the fences. When I reached the house where Doherty was waiting for me I said: "We'll try to get a car", but after consideration, we decided that would be dangerous because at this time the street was being filled with military and police and a car going out would attract attention.

After a few minutes we heard two or three lorries leaving the town along the road we were to go. That would be some time after 1 o'clock. We remained in the house, where we had a meal The owner of the house was very frightened and excited because she knew why we were there and she feared for us if we were caught, as in Castlerea the military and police had a very bad record. In eight or nine months sixteen men of the town AND DISTRICT had been murdered by the police two or three miles from the town. They were a very tough proposition.

RW

There was a story told about one Head Constable of the police that after being out all night on a raiding party in lorries he came in next morning about 9 o'clock with the body of a young fellow they had shot, on the lorry; when he came to the centre of the town, the car went right up the town, turned and came down again. When he came into the town he started shouting "Fresh fish! Fresh fish for sale!" That will give you an idea of the character of the men in this particular military post. We stayed in the house until about 3 a.m. We heard the lorries leave and they returned between 1 and 2 o'clock, so, after over an hour, we left the house and carried the bag of stuff into Ballaghaderreen - 12 or 14 Irish miles. That will give an idea of the difficulty of distributing stuff; that there was really no system established and that to a certain extent it was, as I have stated, 'chancy'. To my knowledge, I don't think there was any stuff got in transit through Ireland. It was just luck.

I left Ballaghaderreen that night after having a good sleep. I got a car which drove me to very near my own place. I left some of the stuff after me in Ballaghaderreen, particularly revolvers. I left more of the stuff in Swinford and Charlestown and also in Kiltimagh. When I came to Balla I handed the balance of the stuff to the local Brigade Q.M.

That gives an indication of the methods of the I.R.A. in obtaining war supplies. I often think that when documents like mine come to be read 40 or 50 years hence the people will accept a lot of this stuff with a grain of salt and will say that it could not have been done without detection; but such are the fortunes of war. An instrument that embraced every scheme of organisation and every possible protection would have fallen asunder. While taking a chance in the ordinary way one got through.

Things were very well done by the I.R.A. and I have no hesitation in saying that the chief portion of the credit was due to Mick Collins, through the establishment of a very efficient intelligence service, a branch of organisation that I think was never equalled by any other previous Irish revolutionary movement. Undoubtedly, it worked very efficiently. There were some parts of the country, of course, where it was not attended to and the result was that the enemy forces had no trouble in dealing with the I.R.A. organisation in those areas.

Another story comes to my mind regarding the distribution of stuff and I will finish with this matter afterwards. I was sent word by Collins himself that there was a cargo of material waiting for me in 46 Parnell Square, if I would go and collect it. I went to Parnell Square and there was a big box of hand-grenades, also a box of detonators. There were also about six or seven Webley revolvers. It was obvious that this amount could not be carried by one man. I went back to where I was staying and asked the landlady had she a box. She had a large leather bag which in the old days was known as a "case for a tall hat". The bag was made in the shape of the tall hat and lined with plush. The handles were on either side so that the bag was out a long way from the handle. I considered what I would do and decided that I would go and see my friend, the waiter and porter in Vaughan's Hotel, usually known as 'Christy', who is now, I understand, in the Army Headquarters restaurant. I told Christy the plight I was in. We were great friends, and he said that if I'd bring down the stuff to him we would pack it in straw in a couple of wooden boxes and get it to the railway station that way. I got this bag from the landlady and put as much stuff as I could into it. This was before I went to Christy and I had my mind made up to try and get back to my digs with the stuff. When carrying the bag I discovered that the weight went to one side and

the weight of the articles was so heavy that I found myself in the position that I could not walk straight with the bag. However, I reached the Rotunda Hospital where there used to be a car hazard. In those days there were no motors; only outside cars and cabs, but when I arrived at the hazard there was no car or cab. I placed the bag on the footpath and stood up against the wall of the hospital. I then observed an ordinary policeman coming along the other side of the street; he walked up and down the street three or four times and took a keen look at me and shrugged his shoulders. I waited for him to go. The ordinary policemen at that time were anxious to keep out of trouble, hence I guessed that this policeman would not question me.

I had to bring the stuff back to 46 Parnell Square again and leave it there and it was then I went to Christy in Vaughan's and he told me he would give me what assistance he could. I brought the stuff up and we fitted it into wooden boxes. When we had done that we could not leave it there because Vaughan's was subject to raids frequently, so, fortunately, I thought of a man who was working in the Dublin Corporation premises as a porter in Parnell Street or around that vicinity. This man's name was Kelly. He was born in the town of Westport, but left there at a very early age. I asked him to help me and he said he would and arranged a very clever plan. He went to the Corporation yard and got a horse-drawn rubbish cart and a driver. He brought the cart up to the back of Vaughan's and half loaded it with rubbish and we dumped the boxes into this and covered them with more rubbish and drove off to the back entrance of the Broadstone Station and delivered the stuff to my friend there. I got to Balla all right. The stuff was taken over by the fellows there and distributed through the country. This will give an idea of the difficulties of getting war material and, having got it, how difficult it was to distribute it and transmit it from place to place.

CATHAL BRUGHA AND MICHAEL COLLINS - RELATIONS WITH EAMON BROY, McNAMARA, ETC. - RICHARD MULCAHY'S WORK AS CHIEF OF STAFF.

C. Brugha, as far as I know him, could be described as a small man physically. He was a great athlete, cricketer, sprinter, jumper and gymnast. He had a great sense of justice and fair play. Once he came to a decision, right or wrong, he would not change; he would go to any trouble to right things when he found he was wrong. He had a habit sometimes in arriving at a decision rather hastily. He was inclined to be sometimes narrow and biassed in his views. He was not inclined to make allowances for common human weaknesses. Common human weakness to Brugha expressed to him unreliability. The name Brugha is the Irish form of the name Burgess. I did not and do not know anything about his ancestry. I would venture to say, in the event of his antecedents being traced, that he was descended from pure English stock. He would fall into what I could describe as the strict non-conformist English type.

Michael Collins, in his relations with Brugha and others, showed that he was a direct opposite in every way to Brugha. He was the type similar to a great number of Irishmen who had emigrated to U.S.A. and other countries without any influence or cash to back them and had, by their own ability, risen to great heights, by, oftentimes, questionable means. These men in most cases had a fierce race pride and were clannish in the tribal sense.

Due to Cathal Brugha's excellence in athletics in many of its branches, especially boxing, gymnastics, tennis and cricket, he attended all sports meetings and became intimate with Eamon Broy, who was then an athlete of some standing and both men became close friends. Broy was in very close touch with all that was going on and all that was being discussed in Dublin Castle circles, and Brugha got into his confidence

and got valuable information from him. Broy's first contacts with I.R.A. headquarters were made through Brugha. As early as the German Plot days, and probably much earlier, I knew definitely, from remarks made by Brugha, that he had important intelligence contacts with Dublin Castle, and I have no doubt that Broy was the man he was in contact with and from whom he was getting valuable information. I have no actual proof of this. Colonel Broy should be asked to clear the matter up.

Broy later got a man named McNamara, another police officer who also worked in Dublin Castle, linked up for intelligence purposes. Those two men were the most valuable and most reliable contacts that Michael Collins had in Dublin Castle. They took very grave risks in doing intelligence work for Collins. In fact, they were in constant peril and their lives would be forfeit if their activities for I.R.A. intelligence became known to their Castle superiors. On one occasion in 1921, during a British raid on Richard Mulcahy's offices in Molesworth St., a document from Broy was found and was traced back to him. The document was a carbon copy of notes made by Broy at a meeting of the Privy Council at which it was Broy's duty to take notes. Both Broy and McNamara were arrested and sent across to London and were prisoners in the Tower of London when the truce intervened to save them from execution. I want it to be clearly understood that in recounting this dangerous capture of documents I do not want to cast any reflection on Mulcahy. Mulcahy was, previous to 1916, a civil servant. His father was a civil servant and, as far as I can remember, his mother was also in the civil service, and, as a consequence, he had all the habits and traditions of the civil service. His training and background of civil service methods made him a fanatic for filing and recording all documents which came into his possession for future reference, and I know from contacts with him during the Tan war that he had a horror of losing or misplacing a document

In this respect he was the direct opposite to Michael Collins, who to my knowledge never carried around with him or kept in his possession anything more elaborate than a loose-leaf notebook which, to any outside person, would provide little information, as the entries in the book were something in the nature of a code of which no person but himself could make sense. Mulcahy's habit of filing and keeping records was most dangerous to himself and his associates in the conditions under which we had to work, subjected as we were to incessant raids and hold-ups. His methods would suit an established government with all the safeguards that a peacetime government office should possess, but were not safe under the conditions he was then compelled to work.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLLINS AND GRIFFITH AND THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY.

I have already described some of the preliminary unofficial negotiations which preceded the truce of July 1921.

I hold that the signing of the treaty by Collins in London was not the result of a sudden impulse, nor was it the result of a new or different situation arising which impelled him to make a decision on a matter which might involve this country in a renewal of the war with England.

Collins, to my knowledge, at an early stage after his release from Frongoch in 1916, talked about the Irish people getting into their hands the powers of partial self-government and by so doing gaining a tremendous advantage by the exercise of such powers for the completing of the struggle for our complete independence. Sometimes Collins, by his attitude, not at meetings or public gatherings, but at what might be called social affairs, seemed to think aloud and not to make his remarks with deliberation or forethought. There is no

doubt that certain observations made by Collins in the manner I have stated caused suspicions in the minds of some of his hearers and I have no hesitation in stating, in others caused alarm. I heard him passing such remarks as that it was his opinion that if the Councils Bill or Asquith's Home Rule Bill had been put into operation it would have been a great asset to us, as we would undoubtedly have got control of such bodies and services in the government of the country which could be used effectively as a lever to extract further measures of freedom. By recording this, I don't want to suggest that Collins was deliberately building up opinion towards a compromise. I would, however, suggest that his mind was working along lines of thought of which the best description would be the open road, i.e., preserving an open door which would enable the national representatives or authority negotiating a peace to have a free hand within certain definite lines. He seemed to my mind at times to be obstinately determined to preserve what we claimed as our national rights - sovereign independence for all parts of the national territory and at other times he, during his thinking aloud periods, seemed prepared to compromise on what we held to be the first principles of ~~republicanism~~ NATIONALISM. In my opinion, those remarks he made during such conversations were to some extent explainable as his cute habit of sounding persons whose status in their local areas were high and who had in either political or military circles great influence in their particular districts. In other words, Collins was trying to find out, as far as he could, how the country was thinking and what way opinions were drifting from time to time.

R.W

I want to be as just to Collins as I can, as far as I knew him, whilst holding certain viewpoints which differed from his. I would say that an important factor that influenced events as they developed towards the signing of the treaty was the growing intimacy between Collins and Arthur Griffith which

commenced before Griffith's arrest and re-appeared after Griffith's release. It should be remembered that Griffith had, to say the least of it, modified his own views considerably. As far as I know of Griffith's career, he was the son of a printer from Co. Cavan. I understand that his father was to a considerable extent mixed up in the Fenian movement. I am not sure if Griffith was born in Cavan or in Dublin. He was reared in Dublin for certain. Griffith, as a young man, took up his father's trade - that of a printer. He went to South Africa at an early age to seek a livelihood, about the time a gold rush took place there. He was in South Africa at the time the Jameson Raid took place. This raid can be described as an effort by British settlers and their associates - including, I am sorry to say, some Irishmen - living in the Boer Republic, to bring off a coup d'Etat. The interests of Dr. Jameson and his followers were adversely affected by the regulations and the controls enforced in the gold mines areas by the Boer authorities. Dr. Jameson's attempt was backed up and financed by Cecil Rhodes. The Boers grappled with and suppressed the Jameson attempt vigorously and would have executed Jameson and many of his followers but for the British government interfering in the matter and threatening a declaration of war on the Boer Republic. Griffith's sympathies were all with the Boers in this crisis and he became personally involved in the affair in this way. The anti-Boer group in Johannesburg wanted a newspaper to carry on propaganda on their behalf. They discovered that Griffith was a newspaperman by profession and he was offered the job of editing the paper without being informed of what the editorial policy of the paper was to be, with the result that the first issue produced by Griffith was violently anti-British and pro-Boer. The second issue was even more so, with the result that the body running the paper raided Griffith's office with guns in their hands and he only escaped with his life, through a skylight. A small body of Irishmen

stood by him until he was forced to leave the country a short time after this incident. He went to America and spent a short time there and returned to Ireland in 1897-1898. On his return, Griffith found Ireland in a bad way, suffering as she was from the aftermath of the Parnell split. The only real national lights in the darkness were the efforts made by the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association and kindred groups which included The Literary Society and dramatic groups such as the Abbey Theatre, then an amateur group who produced plays of national and historical interest in small halls in the city of Dublin, some in the Irish language.

In 1898 a group in Dublin started a movement known as the 1798 Centenary Movement which spread rapidly throughout the entire country, and meetings were held in many parts celebrating the battles of 1798. All those tended to strengthen the national spirit. Griffith and a small group in Dublin started a weekly paper, The United Irishman, in the year 1899, in which Griffith advocated the use of physical force as a means to the complete independence of the whole country. The propaganda of this paper was so effective that the British authorities on more than one occasion seized the complete issue of the paper throughout the country, wherever exposed for sale. The advocacy of physical force as a means to freedom seemed a forlorn hope at that period. The Boer War started in 1899 and lasted until 1902. This war struck a big blow at the prestige of England in world affairs.

Griffith, as far as I know, was then a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and at one time was fairly high in the councils of that organisation. This connection must have committed him to the policy of physical force.

Relations between England and France at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were

strained, as England looked on France as her arch enemy on the continent of Europe. In fact, the relations between those two countries were so strained that there is little doubt that the French government had made touch with the I.R.B. as they hoped that the I.R.B. could play an important part in diverting British manpower from the main conflict in the event of war and the I.R.B. felt that their big opportunity would arrive when England became involved in a European war. It appears to me that Griffith's experiences in the I.R.B. and the various disappointments in the matter of foreign aid to Ireland in her struggle for freedom made him give up hope that any resort to physical force would be a successful venture in the attempt to attain Irish freedom. The proof of his change of view was the publication in 1904 of his famous pamphlet "The Resurrection of Hungary" which was subsequently followed by "The Cross of Gold". Those two pamphlets can be described as his laying down for this country a policy of passive resistance.

In 1905 Griffith with others formed the National Council of Sinn Fein. At this time the Irish Parliamentary Party with the support of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Eireann) was the dominant political factor for years afterwards in Ireland.

When what was known as the Councils Bill was introduced in the British House of Commons, Griffith opposed its acceptance by the country, but more or less admitted that if the British enforced it we should use it for the purpose of extracting greater measures of freedom. He adopted the same attitude towards the two Home Rule Bills of 1912 and 1913. His policy seemed to be that whilst we refuse to accept or be a party to any agreement based on Home Rule, we should not oppose the setting up of an Irish government under the Home Rule Act when it became operative and, in fact, he

advocated that all should co-operate in working the Irish Parliament when set up and make the most of the powers that parliament would confer on the Irish people and use the whole machinery of the Irish parliament as far as we could for the achievement of complete national independence.

I have gone to some length in giving my diagnosis of Griffith's political growth as far as I have known him and from what I have heard of his early career both in Ireland and abroad. I have traced his political development from being an extreme advocate and believer in the physical force policy to what some people would describe as mild constitutionalism. Griffith, as far as I knew him, was an unselfish man, especially in regard to money matters. He made great sacrifices by his devotion to the national movement. He was a very able journalist. It was said that Northcliffe, the owner of the "Daily Mail" and a Dublin man, who apparently knew Griffith and his capacity as a journalist, expressed the opinion that Griffith was one of the ablest journalists he ever met. Whilst saying this for Griffith, in my opinion, he was a ruthless and, I might add, an unscrupulous political fighter. I would say also that he treated the old Irish Parliamentary Party most unfairly for, after all the abuse, he was responsible for, he turned around and signed a treaty and made a lie of his whole life and was the chief influence, as far as I know, in getting Collins also to sign the Treaty. One of the things to be remembered in his dealing with the Irish Party was his savage and brutal manner of attack on the Party's acceptance of partition for Ireland.

RW

After 1916, when the Irish Party brought about the famous convention in Belfast, at which they forced the Ulster nationalists to accept partition, he was the author of a phrase regarding that convention which will go down for generations in Irish history. He coined the phrase

"Black Friday" which is today being bitterly used by Ulster nationalists. It has been said, with what amount of truth I do not know, that when Collins hesitated about signing the treaty, Griffith intimidated him with the picture of an Ireland steeped in blood, brought about by the resumption of hostilities and by the ruthless force that England would use in suppressing any opposition to her desire to enforce her own form of settlement of the Irish question. In the account of the negotiations as they went on that became public we know that Lloyd George and Lord Birkenhead, supported by Winston Churchill, made a point of detaching Griffith and Collins from the main body of the Irish delegation which should not have been tolerated by the other delegates or by the republican government at home in Ireland once this procedure came to their knowledge. It can be said that the initial mistake was made by having a truce that whatever terms were being discussed should be decided on before the fighting was called off.

I.R.B. Organisation in Co. Mayo from 1917 to the Truce of 1921. - I.R.B. and the question of the Treaty, etc.

As I have stated, the I.R.B. organisation was never a great force in the County of Mayo in my time. My father in the sixties and seventies acted as Secretary and, as far as I can learn, Co. Secretary. He had a very strong straight code regarding this organisation. I think I was influenced in my feeling towards it to a great extent by him. He was deadly opposed to the "Invincibles" and was so determined in his opposition that they threatened to shoot him and would have done so if they thought it safe. What I mean by that is that they were quite well aware that his popularity and influence with the rank and file throughout the county were such that if anything happened to him in the nature of shooting there was a good chance that at least 20 or 30 men

would die, not by British action, but by Irish action. I want this to be written because it may be said that I did not act as I should when dealing with the I.R.B. I have already told how I was brought into it and that I became County Secretary.

When I came to Dublin after 1916 - in 1917 - I found nothing mentioned among the Irish Volunteers about the reorganisation and the revival of the I.R.B. At the end of 1917 or the beginning of 1918, I became conscious of the I.R.B. revival. Collins sent for me on one occasion and he put it up to me that I should take charge of the reorganisation of the I.R.B. in Co. Mayo. I was already conscious of the growth of two groups and I was a bit wary and on the alert against being utilised by any group in its own interest. I, therefore, was very careful and I told Collins that I was aware that there was a framework of an I.R.B. organisation in the county consisting chiefly of rather elderly men. He said he knew that and that they were no good; that he wanted to get an active crowd. I said all right, that I'd take it over with a few friends. I did so. I took it over with Michael Kilroy and Michael McHugh of Castlebar, Sean Corcoran of Kiltimagh, .. Keville of Balla and Tom Ruane of Ballina. In view of what happened afterwards, it is essential to look back on that period because the chief argument used in favour of our organisation of the I.R.B. was that it would be reorganised for the purpose of keeping the national movement straight and preventing a compromise that would be humiliating and nationally disastrous. Also, the I.R.B., I was given to understand, was to be used - and of course was used in some counties - to pick ~~to-pick~~ reliable men for the key positions, particularly in the army or in the Irish Volunteers, that trustworthy reliable men, from the national standpoint,

would be placed in the positions of Brigade officers, battalion officers, even company captains, etc. In view of subsequent events it seems extraordinary to look back on that now.

I went home to Co. Mayo after my talk with Collins. I collected this group of men that I mentioned and told them what I was asked to do and I gave them my views on the matter, that I was not a bit too keen on it. I told them, and was emphatic on it, that I was very anxious that if the I.R.B. was reorganised in the county we should control it, that is, the Irish Volunteers would control the I.R.B. in the county; that we would always be in the position that we had the appointing of the key positions in the Irish Volunteers and in the I.R.B.; that we would be very prudent as to who we would admit into the I.R.B. and that we were not by any means anxious to go out and let in a multitude.

In fact, there was a story told, which I believe is at least partly true. - it may have been exaggerated - about a prominent man from the next county to us, that was Sligo. This was in relation to Alex McCabe. He wanted to obtain a parliamentary nomination for South Sligo, and it was said that for the purpose of securing a majority at the convention selecting the candidate, that before the convention was held he went around the constituency into the ordinary farmer's house and forced, at the threat of the gun, the ordinary farmer to take the I.R.B. oath and pledge himself to support Alex McCabe at the convention. Now that, as I say, was probably exaggerated, but I think there was a substance of truth in it, that undoubtedly he did not stop at trifles to try to secure his nomination.

Well, we proceeded to reorganise the I.R.B. to such an extent that I think, although I am not sure, Collins became

suspicious of me because we really never got any communications from the I.R.B. Headquarters, neither were we in receipt of any instructions from them. I think that prevailed until after the Truce. After the Truce, when I came back home, I was just about a week there when I collapsed physically, and nearly mentally too, with the strain I had undergone for three years, and I was for about three months in hospital. During the time I was in hospital the famous Sean Ó Murthuile came around the county organising the I.R.B. He organised it to such an extent that I was removed from the position I held as Co. Secretary and Acting Co. Centre. The pretext used for this was my physical breakdown and that my death was expected. Unfortunately for those who engineered this appointment, the man put in my place was Tom Maguire, who was a great personal friend of mine. He was rather credulous, although a great soldier and a fine officer. He was not skilled in politics and had not much experience in that way. The result was that when I came out of hospital and got in touch with the boys again, Tom Maguire hardly ever dealt with any matter that he did not consult with me about.

A National Convention of the I.R.B. was held in Dublin about April or May 1922. All the centres in every I.R.B. Division, of which there were eleven in the organisation, attended. The purpose of the Convention was to discuss the Treaty. One of the strange things that happened was, after all the trouble of the Collins party in organising the I.R.B. and "rigging" it as they did in certain areas, when this National Convention of I.R.B. came to discuss the Treaty, there was a vote on the Treaty question and it was carried by only one vote, I think. The result was that the I.R.B. took no definite action because one of their most important rules was that a unanimous decision of the Supreme Council had to be obeyed by all units in the organisation and that if it was disobeyed you were liable to the death

penalty. When any important question was discussed where there was not a unanimous decision, you were at liberty to do as you wished, and all that could be issued by the organisation was a recommendation in favour of the majority decision. They could not issue an order; you had to obey an order. All they could issue was a recommendation. but of course you were free to accept the recommendation or not as you thought fit.

I have possibly travelled too fast, as one of the things I have neglected to say was that after Collins spoke to me at the end of 1917, or the beginning of 1918, about re-organising the I.R.B., a few weeks afterwards I was sent for by Cathal Brugha and I was asked by him if I was in the I.R.B. I said I was. I asked Cathal was he in it and he said he was in it before Easter Week, but that he was not in it now. He said he wanted me to get out of it and men like me, in key positions throughout the country, to leave it. He added: "It is no longer necessary; we have now an open military organisation in the Volunteers and there is no necessity for a secret one, and if it continues to exist it will only create trouble and do harm, because it will be a case of 'too many cooks spoiling the broth'". The result of these interviews with Collins and Brugha had the effect of my making up my mind not to be very enthusiastic about the I.R.B. I said to Brugha that whether I left it or not, in the Co. Mayo it still existed, and that being so I considered that it was better to be inside than outside it; that a crowd of men with me had taken up that attitude and that we could control it. He still said we were wrong and that it would be better to leave it. I said I would not leave it and he said it was no use pressing me on that point. From that on he did not mention it to me. Collins asked me once or twice what progress the organisation was making.

I must add that we in Co. Mayo never collected the levy that was made on I.R.B. members by the organisation. I think that levy came to 6d a week in about the years 1919, 1920 and 1921. Before that it was only 6d a month. To be frank about it, I think we did not pay the levy and that was partly the reason why we got no communications from headquarters, or no orders; that they simply treated us with contempt, but at the same time they did not want to antagonise us. There was no attempt by headquarters, as far as I know, to get a man into the county to reorganise the I.R.B. until after the Truce.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that there was a considerable amount of money in the coffers of the I.R.B. I have been asked by two or three people what happened to it, but I think I have heard an explanation. The same thing applies to certain funds that were in possession of Dail Éireann. They were not the same funds as were in the possession of the Sinn Fein organisation. The Sinn Fein organisation was simply a political organisation and its funds were its own. Dail Éireann was quite different. It was the national parliament which elected the national government which we accepted, and I never heard what happened the funds at the disposal of the national government. There is a distinct difference between the three.

Sinn Fein was a political organisation working for a political objective. Dail Éireann consisted of members of parliament elected to the national parliament. That was what we established it for, and Dail Éireann, in its turn, elected the national government. That government functioned in many ways and the British always refused to recognise its authority.

There were large funds at the disposal of Dail Éireann and - this is only an assumption on my part, but it has come out in the papers recently - ~~then~~ when the Provisional Government was established after the passing of the Treaty, they found themselves in the position that to carry on the government they had no funds at their disposal, with the exception of whatever taxes were collected by the government officials throughout the country, and, as the Treaty was passed in December 1921, half the year was gone.

The Provisional Government was not established until about February and that created a sort of financial vacuum, and when they went to the banks for a loan, the banks refused them. The position that obtained created a situation for the Provisional Government that they had to use any money they could lay their hands on.

There were four Divisions organised in Connaught - in the counties of Clare, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim. There were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Western Divisions. The 1st Division consisted - it could be roughly stated - of Clare and South Galway. The 2nd Division consisted of South Mayo, North Galway and North Roscommon. The 3rd Division consisted of Sligo, practically the whole of it, I think; the whole of Leitrim and a part of Roscommon. The 4th Western Division consisted of West Mayo and North Mayo with a small portion of Sligo and West Galway. So far as I know, in the whole of Connaught no Divisional officer supported the Treaty and I don't think any Brigade officer either supported it. A few Battalion Commandants and high Battalion officers did accept the Treaty, notable amongst them was Joe Ring, who was undoubtedly a fine soldier and a good officer. Unfortunately, he was killed in an action about the first week or fortnight of the Civil War.

I considered this thing about the money, that is, not paying their debts, was held out as a sort of blackmail, as they knew the more honest the men were, the more they worried over it, and I consider the withholding of payments was very mean tactics. As time went on during that period and the Treaty forces became better organised, especially in the military line, they built up a big army which they never should have been allowed to do, but they got through with the building of an army under a series of pretexts about it being used against England and never used against Irishmen. When they felt strong enough, of course, they struck. The arguments offered by the people on the Treaty side about the terrible and ruthless war that England was to wage against Ireland if we did not accept the Treaty were made on the platforms of rural Ireland. When it suited them to give a statement to the international press they spoke in a different tone.

As I have often asked myself, and others too, what would have happened if we did not accept the Treaty? My contention is, and was, that if we were threatened with overwhelming forces by Britain, the way to meet this was to tell our people in their helpless condition to dump arms and to go into the struggle on passive resistance lines and to make it impossible for any man or any group of men in this country to form a Free State government. A certain number of people might eventually lose their lives. Looking at the later Civil War casualties, we would not have lost anything like 2,000 men. England would have been in the devil of a fix, and that is why she jumped at the idea of getting a crowd of Irishmen to do her job - in the words of Birkenhead - "with an economy of English lives"

THE PURCHASING OF ARMS ABROAD.

As I have already stated, the system of procuring arms or transporting them was a factor which, to say the least of it, was capable of placing the I.R.A. at the height of its strength. I believe 50,000 or 60,000 would be a moderate estimate of the military organisation who would fight had they the means of fighting. There was really no big project put on foot, to my knowledge, on a large comprehensive scale, to land, say, even 1,000 rifles into the country. It was a time of national enthusiasm and men were looking around for something to do to prove their national fealty, and, despite the fact that there did not seem to be even an attempt to get an arms fund on a big scale, in most cases the men who were trying to arm the Volunteers were only dealing with scores of pounds when they should have been dealing with thousands. I held at the time that a comprehensive scheme could at least have been tried. I will admit that it might have failed and maybe ended in a disastrous way to the extent that men could be killed, but when we realise that there was something over 2,000 men killed in the Civil War, I don't think that number - in an all out effort to import arms - would have been killed.

The scheme which was tried towards the end - to send men to the continent to get arms there as they could be got at the time, and procure a ship or ships and chance a cargo or two into this country - could have been attempted earlier. There was at least one small ship procured which, I believe, is still at the North Wall; it was there up to a short time ago, anyway. The famous Charles Magennis was connected with it, and Bob Briscoe, T.D. was brought into it, and knows more about the details of it than, I believe, anybody alive.

A situation existed on the continent of Europe at the

time which made a project of that kind, to my mind, practicable. We were at the end of the greatest war in history. Certain small proportions of the garrisons of the great armies that had fought in that war remained in France Belgium, Germany and Austria. From what I have heard, they were like the soldiers of every age after a great war; living a rather wild life and discipline was by no means first class. They were undoubtedly subject to propaganda of every sort and, quite recently, some of the German officers of the present German army who went through the first World War (1914-18) have actually written accounts of the low discipline of the German army before the 1914-18 war was ended, and that this state of affairs in 1918 was one of the factors that led to its defeat. They gave accounts of the superior discipline of the German army in the recent war.

One of the things I am driving at is the state of affairs that existed in 1920, in those territories where there must have been millions and millions of firearms of every sort actually heaped around in dumps with scarcely any supervision, and, even where supervision existed, they were open to purchase.

Somebody should have been sent to France and Germany who was capable of working the thing properly. As things then existed plenty of men could be got in almost every country of the type of Captain Charlie Magennis, who was willing to take any chance for pay and for adventure, although it is not fair to give that description as being actually true about Magennis, as I believe, in spite of the man's faults, there was a big strain of patriotism in him.

There was an attempt made in the last few months of the war in that direction by sending Bob Briscoe and Charlie Magennis to Germany to procure arms. I have been told by

Bob Briscoe that the German officers who were appointed by the German government to act with the foreign allied officers - British, American, French, etc. - for the purpose of maintaining peace and order in Germany and to see the conditions of the Armistice carried out, were practically, in all cases, sympathetic to us, and if our people were trying to get arms out of Germany, these German officers would turn the "blind eye" on them. In fact, some of them went so far as to give our people an idea or description of a place where there would be sympathetic guards or sentries and when would be the best time to shift the stuff. This, to my mind, was not taken full advantage of, although two small cargoes of rifles did come in during the summer of 1922 before the Civil War, when it could be said that the Civil War was in the making, and all this stuff passed into the hands of the anti-Treaty forces.

This shortage of arms was used as an argument in favour of the Treaty. In fact, if the debates on the Treaty in the Dail are read and scrutinised, it will be found that this argument was used by such men as Mulcahy and, I think, R.W. Collins himself in favour of the Treaty, and also contending that England would have all the knowledge that she required regarding our strength and position throughout the whole country.

Tom Maguire, O/C. 2nd Western Division, attended a conference, called by General Headquarters staff, of the principal divisional officers in Ireland, held in Dublin. I remember speaking to him a few days before the meeting and he told me it was coming off and that he was travelling to Dublin the next day. He told me he would let me know what took place at it when he returned. He did let me know, because I was in the military barracks in Ballinrobe at the time and, to my amazement, he came out with a statement

made to him by both Collins and O'Duffy, that they were only playing a game of bluff, that they did not intend to accept the Treaty at all, that their purpose in pretending to accept it was to get all the arms they could from the British and to get the British troops out of the country and when this had taken place, we would resume the fight. In other words, they would attack the British.

I remember my feelings on hearing this statement which the unfortunate man, Maguire, swallowed "hook, line and sinker". I know the effect it had on me. I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I was inclined to laugh at the foolishness of the man to be taken in by this bluff, and at the same time, I pitied and sympathised with him for being so simple and honest. I asked him why not resume the fight now. The Provisional Government were getting arms from the British. At this time they must have got at least 30,000 rifles. I said to Maguire: "Why not fight the British now and destroy them and take to the hills again; where was the necessity to wait for the British troops to leave the country; did he or anybody else like him believe for a moment that if the British did leave the country they could be kept out with .303 ammunition; in other words, rifle ammunition. Could he not see that if the British wanted to land troops again, they could land them anywhere on the Irish coast under cover of their fleet, and that we had not one piece of artillery that was capable of damaging the smallest warship of the British fleet". Maguire got rather 'huffed' and, as I did not want to press the argument any further, I left the room.

Eoin O'Duffy came down afterwards and attended a meeting of the 4th Western Divisional Staff, and he came out with the same dope and, unfortunately, the men at the meeting believed it. Looking back it seems incredible that they would be gullible enough to swallow such statement

One of the things I noticed at the time - I don't want this to be taken as egotism on my part, I am only stating facts - there seemed to be a plan, as far as the West was concerned, that I be kept away from meetings like those attended by O'Duffy, and of meetings of Divisional officers. I was in the position that I could not protest because I was an officer without a portfolio. It was quite evident that I was not wanted at those gatherings. Another man in Connaught who was not wanted at any of these meetings was P.J. Ruttledge of Ballina.

In fact, at a meeting held in Galway at which O'Duffy presided (it was called by him), to which all prominent officers in the province of Connaught who, O'Duffy thought, supported the Treaty; also some other officers whom they thought they could persuade to support the Treaty, were summoned about March 1922, O'Duffy spoke very freely.

I was not at the meeting, but I was informed that he spok very freely and, although it was an Army meeting, the purpose of it was to secure support for the Treaty. O'Duffy was outspoken, because he was under the impression that every man who attended the meeting was pro-Treaty, in which he was mistaken. In fact, a considerable section of the men who attended were anti-Treaty, which was proved afterwards. O'Duffy stated that as far as Connaught was concerned, they feared two men and they feared their influence and their capacity or ability to turn the tide against the Treaty in Connaught. These men were Ruttledge and myself, and they seemingly wanted the men present to be on their guard against our machinations. Another mean piece of tactics they adopted towards gaining support for the Treaty was that after the Truce in July 1921, there was a General Order sent out to every brigade in Ireland. (The divisional organisations of the Volunteers did not exist in Connaught, in most cases,

until a considerable time after the Truce). The highest unit in the Volunteers, with the exception of a few areas, was the brigade. There was a general order sent out to the brigades to form training camps, at least one, in each brigade area. The purpose of this order was especially to train officers and, where possible, to train a number of men. It could be safely said that in each of those camps, as they were called, there were roughly anything from 40 to 100 men there at any given time in the period between August 1921 and the outbreak of the Civil War. These training camps were usually established in a vacant house, such as a disused mansion, that existed in Connaught and, I believe, in the South as well; in some cases Workhouses and buildings of that description which were in public use were taken possession of to establish training camps. The upkeep of these institutions as training camps was considerable. The men in charge were, I should say without hesitation, decent upright men.

When these men, the Brigade O/C. and Vice-O/C. etc. went into these camps and took charge of them, they got credit from the local traders to feed the men and to meet all other expenses. They were guaranteed by Headquarters that all these debts would be properly paid. There were funds there to pay them. Those expenses were considerable, and I wish to make clear that of course while the expenses were considerable they would not be on the same level as those incurred by the army.

The greatest number of men in each camp would be 100. The men in charge gave their word of honour to the local traders who supplied them with what they wanted that the goods would be paid for, and when at the end of five or six months the debts were unpaid and criticisms were going on, these men felt it very much. They were ashamed to walk down the streets where they could be approached by the local trades-people.

As the controversy over the Treaty waxed tense, an attitude was taken up by the pro-Treaty people in Dublin who were in charge of G.H.Q., that if the Provisional Government was recognised the debts would be paid.

I cannot understand what happened all the funds of the old Dail. There were two or three millions of money collected The National Loan was generously subscribed to here and wherever Irish people were. What happened all this money?

Dail Éireann was still in existence even though the Provisional Government was functioning. You had the strange position of Dail Éireann holding meetings and the Provisional Government, which was established, and actually operating in various ways, organising an army to enforce its authority. After the argument had waxed hot over those debts, a portion of them was paid, and I think there was altogether about £100,000 and £200,000 paid out.

The men continued in barracks all the time. I am not aware of any general order that was issued demobilising them and telling them to leave the barracks. A new crop of debts was created arising out of their maintenance in barracks and camps. As a result of conferences held by the Treaty and anti-Treaty sections of the army, an agreement was ultimately reached to call a national convention of the army either at the end of February or the beginning of March, 1922, with the two sections represented. Arthur Griffith, acting as President of the Republic, proclaimed the convention. An order was issued to all sections of the army which would have representation at the conference. As far as I can remember, representation was on a brigade basis. As a result of Griffith's proclamation, the pro-Treaty section of the army did not attend the convention, but the convention was held. Unfortunately it consisted of only one section of the army. This convention proceeded to elect a National

Executive Council of its own. This Executive proceeded to create a general staff of its own. In plain words, they proceeded to create an anti-Treaty army totally distinct and separate from the pro-Treaty section of the army. As a result, we had two forces in the country, two separate and distinct military forces that came to separate decisions on questions of national importance and influence just as was thought fit. The result was a definite split in the National Army from top to bottom. In my opinion, the man responsible for this situation, and history will blame him for it, was Arthur Griffith.

From the day the split occurred it can be said that the Civil War was inevitable. It was a certainty sure to come. As a result of the split, we had this situation in the country - on one side a military force under the control of the Provisional Government. That was the body established for the purpose of putting the Treaty into operation. This section started to organise a vigorous recruiting campaign throughout the country. They had various inducements to offer recruits. First, the military force established by them was paid. Their army was given uniform, fed and maintained in barracks. As a result of all those inducements they were able to appeal to the most selfish instincts in the nation. In addition to all I have set out were the prospects of a job of permanent employment of some nature in a newly-formed state. Their opponents, the anti-Treaty forces, in opposition to all this, had nothing to offer but the appeal to national principles and loyalties, and the wonder was, and will be thought so by the men who write the history of this period at some future date, that thousands of men in all parts of the country, north, south, east and west, thronged to the call of national principle and loyalty.

For some time after the convention was held, the split did not develop into bitterness in most parts of the country. For some time communications were maintained to some extent between the two sections of the army. The anti-Treaty forces continued to pile up debts by their efforts to maintain garrisons and military forces all over the country and negotiations went on between both sections, the anti-Treaty forces trying to get the Treaty forces to pay the debts. It is very hard to dissect and analyse the various elements that influenced the situation at the time, as, to my mind, it was evident that there were two outlooks or influences at work. One outlook, to put it bluntly, was demanding civil war and the liquidation of the anti-Treaty forces. There was another point of opinion on the pro-Treaty side who wanted to maintain national unity and avoid civil war. On the anti-Treaty side was the soreness created by the non-payment of the debts, and they maintained that the debts were created as a result of obeying the orders of General Mulcahy, Michael Collins and Eoin O'Duffy, when they were acting as the general staff of the army of the Republic.

The result of this squabble on the matter of debts, which only amounted to less than £200,000, the cheese-paring of the Treaty forces, precipitated what I consider was the first serious clash between the rival groups in the army. The anti-Treaty forces raided the branches of the Bank of Ireland throughout the country. The Bank of Ireland was the official treasurer of the Treaty party and the raids were all carried out in daylight. The man in charge in each raid made a definite statement to the bank officials and demanded a definite sum. The statement, I understand, was written and signed by the Divisional and Brigade officers in charge of the area where each particular bank was raided. Those raids were undoubtedly the first operations of what we can describe as the Civil War.

On the one hand the anti-Treaty forces raiding the banks - in the statement issued at the time - described themselves as the army of the Republic acting under the government of the Republic. The Treaty forces can be said to have been the army of the Provisional Government, although they consistently described themselves as the Irish Republican Army.

The money obtained in those bank raids was undoubtedly used to pay all the debts that had been incurred by the anti-Treaty forces. When the Civil War was over dishonest traders put in claims to the Law Courts for some of those debts and were paid a second time.

Despite the fact that there were two military organisations or armies in the country, attempts were being constantly made to prevent the terrible tragedy of the Civil War and for this purpose to bring about a working agreement between the two bodies and make that agreement based on the basic principles of what each side were constantly asserting as what they stood for. Those principles might be described as an united Ireland from north to south and from east to west, with complete national independence of a sovereign state for the whole country.

Discussions were held on the abolition of the partition of the country which had been brought about by England. In pursuance of this agreed policy, an arrangement was come to between the two military organisations to the effect that an exchange of arms would take place, i.e., the anti-Treaty forces would hand over their rifles and other weapons they possessed to the Treaty forces in exchange for weapons got from the British by the pro-Treaty forces. The reason stated for this exchange was that when the exchange was completed it was proposed to attack the British forces and the posts

held by them in the six Northern Counties. The British at this time had evacuated almost all Southern Ireland posts with the exception of a few coastal defence positions. The Provisional Government policy would be, in the event of the attacks on the Six Counties positions, to deny all responsibility for those attacks, and it was stated that to prevent their being involved in those attacks, it was absolutely necessary that none of the arms which the Provisional Government obtained from England should be identified if arms were captured during operations against British forces in the Northern Counties. I did not believe in this project or proposal of transferring arms. First I did not believe it was honest and nothing good could come of it and, secondly, from the beginning I believed the whole proppsal was only a trick by Collins and his pals to obtain the arms in the possession of the anti-Treaty forces. It was a slick trick and in many cases it nearly worked.

As the result of a meeting held by the staffs of the four western divisions of the Republican forces, the proposal to exchange arms was agreed on, and I have reason to believe it was accepted all over Ireland by the anti-Treaty forces. As a result of this agreement I was placed in command of a group of picked men sent as an escort for a consignment of arms of about 800 rifles and other small arms and a few machine guns with ammunition of various sorts to fit the weapons. I was instructed to proceed to a point within, I think, thirty or forty miles of the border, at a place near Clonmahon, Co. Sligo, at which there was an empty hospital. We took up our quarters in this building and had a guarantee from the Sligo Brigade of co-operation and assistance and active help, if necessary, to hold the guns we were protecting until an equivalent number of weapons was handed over to us. In fact, I think that the major portion of the

Divisional staff of the 3rd Western Division, including the Divisional O/C., Liam Pilkington, and two other men - one Brian MacNeill, later killed, and Seamus Devins, then O/C. of one of the Sligo Brigades., gave us every co-operation and took particular care that the weapons in our charge were not interfered with. I had made up my mind that under no circumstances would I hand over the weapons of which I was in charge until I obtained the weapons promised by the other people.

I think we waited there about eight or nine days. No person came near us from the other side, not did we receive any message or intimation as to what was happening or likely to happen in that period. After about eight days, Michael Kilroy, O/C. 4th Western, and Tom Maguire, O/C. 2nd Western Division, and Frank Barrett from Clare, O/C. 1st Western Division, with Billy Pilkington, O/C. 3rd Western, went to Sligo for, I understand, a discussion there. When those officers returned they informed me that the proposed exchange of arms was not to take place, and I was told to take the arms in my custody back to the military barracks, Ballinrobe, from where I first brought them. I will admit myself that when I got the order to bring back the rifles to Co. Mayo I was very pleased, as during the week I was in Sligo I had plenty of time to think over the matter. The more I thought over it the more I was convinced that the whole plan was dishonest and a trick, and that the policy of the Treaty forces and the Provisional Government was just to borrow time until they had an army ready to attack and smash us. I was more than pleased that no attempt was made to attack us and capture the arms in our possession. I would hate to have to fire on a fellow Irishman and fire I would, if an attempt had been made to take the arms without the arranged exchange.

At this time I felt that the anti-Treaty forces were

beaten. The Treaty forces had control of all the press, both metropolitan and rural. The Church, as a body, were against us, with the exception of an odd priest here and there. At least two joint statements had been issued by the Hierarchy condemning us. One statement went so far as to excommunicate the men in the anti-Treaty forces. One of the most tragic things, in my mind, that happened in that period was that after the Treaty was signed and published in the country there was really a considerable majority of the people against it and the pro-Treaty propaganda machine got to work and converted that majority into a minority. I state this and I defy contradiction.

During the week in which the Treaty arguments were first published I had occasion to travel through a big portion of the country, north, south, east and west, and nowhere did I find any enthusiasm for the Treaty, even the people in favour of accepting it did so in an apologetic way, using the argument of the stepping stone to freedom. As the situation crystallised and the forces of pro- and anti-Treaty intensified their positions, the national split clarified itself more and more. The greatest tragedy of all was that the anti-Treaty members of the army became very bitter against the men they called politicians regardless of whether they were for or against the Treaty. They took up an attitude of opposition and distrust of both sections in the political struggle that was going on in the country. This feeling, in my opinion, led to the formation of the two armies. It also led to the situation that men like de Valera, A. Stack and C. Brugha on the anti-Treaty side, and men like Cosgrave, Duggan and others of like calibre were ignored, if not possibly obstructed, in their efforts to make peace. This had resulted in a feeling amongst a considerable section of our people that de Valera, for instance, deliberately

fomented the Civil War. As a matter of fact, when the Four Courts were attacked, de Valera's responsibility for the position consisted in his going to the Gresham Hotel and reporting for service as a private in the ranks of the anti-Treaty army. As a matter of fact, a few weeks before he had been the major factor in bringing forward the Collins-de Valera pact on the political side which, had it been followed up by the military men, as it could have been, would in my opinion have averted Civil War.

Our organisation had to deal with a vast number of untrained men who had just a rudimentary knowledge of callisthenics or ordinary foot-drill. We had, as I have said, to supplement that knowledge by every means in our power. I have already outlined the steps we took in that direction, but the additional steps were the obtaining of military text books. Another matter connected with training that I have to mention was the use of military text books. The most common was what was called "The ordinary infantry manual of the British Army" which undoubtedly was a very well-produced book of its kind because it gave thorough, simple, explanatory instruction in ordinary field drill and e callisthenics. This book explained the use of the rifle and its parts in a most simple way in such a manner that anyone who could read English could understand it. I certainly say myself that I doubt very much if any army in the world had a simple volume which was as good as this book. Its simplicity was its chief quality. Of course, other and much more important and more advanced books were obtained. In fact I must have spent, at the very least, on military text books anything up to £30 or £40. The books were of various kinds. I want the reader to understand that this money had to be spent out of my own pocket. In some cases the units I gave the books to paid me, but in most cases I received nothing

for them. I only tell this to show how difficult it was to carry on because the masses of the people on the civil side of the national movement were great admirers of the military section and would sing patriotic songs about Easter Week and other periods of our history, recite patriotic poems about our national history; but I am afraid in a great many cases their admiration for the military wing of the movement did not go any further. In fact, as the operations of the Black and Tans became more intense a lot of these people became very frightened of being identified in any way with the military wing of our movement. I want it explained that this did not apply to the majority of the people by any means, but it applied to that vocal side, the notoriety-hunters and power seekers, who wanted to capitalise on the sacrifices of brave men, but when the Tan War became intense wanted to create a situation in which a man living in Co. Mayo could shout and cheer for the man who died in Tipperary, and vice versa.

Undoubtedly we have to look back with pride on the sacrifices and the things done, and one of the things I do look back on is that I don't believe there was ever a movement in Irish history from the days of Owen Roe O'Neill up to our own time that aroused the Irish race, at home and abroad, to such a standard of heroism and high purpose.

I have told how I got men in England to give me assistance, men who, in the ordinary way, would not touch Irish politics; who, in fact, would not touch any kind of politics and had not that type of mind; who did not, as they admitted, understand politics and did not want to. The thing about our movement was how some of these men came in whole-heartedly to give what help they could in the national struggle - simply because they were Irish they wanted to help the motherland. They had no personal ambition in the matter and they had no end, from the personal standpoint,

that they wanted to achieve. They did this for the Irish standpoint. They were proud of being Irish and of the fight that Irishmen at home were putting up against the greatest empire in the world. They took a pride in that and their attitude, if you asked them, was that they wanted, even in a small way, to be identified with that struggle. It impressed me at the time as being wonderful to come across men like Quinn from Birmingham and Benson from Bradford; to meet clergymen, doctors, lawyers and journalists, also big business men who all met in a common effort, each in his own special way, to help the common cause.

It was, as I said, a heroic age, and whatever mistakes or blunders were made at the end, it is well that we keep in mind that this generation that lived in Ireland were a great generation and can afford - I say it without hesitation - to raise their heads high in the face of their own people, or the people of other countries who lived in their day, and can without fear face the verdict of history.

The tragedy of the "Split" and the Civil War lay, in my opinion, chiefly in the fact that this magnificent spirit of service and loyalty to the motherland was rendered useless when operated in the furthering of party spleens, personal spites and ambitions, and it is only when we, as a race, return to the spirit that existed before the "Split" that we will make Ireland a nation such as Davis and Tone and the men who went before them, or came after them, wished to make her - an Ireland free and undivided, and Irish and Christian.

Signed: Richard Walsh T.D.

Date: 15th June 1950

Witness: John Mehory.

Leabán mionuairisce. m.s.b.

Cásaire _____

Director,
Bureau of Military History.

In my evidence to the Bureau covering the period 1912-1922 which deals with my connection with the Volunteer Executive from 1917 to 1921, and my intimate association with Republican leaders in those years, I have had occasion to express opinions on men and on the trend of events which to the reader may seem controversial and perhaps biassed.

I have tried to be fair to all my associates of those years. I have differed from some of them on occasion; this, together with the bad feelings subsequently engendered by the Civil War, may have left unconscious prejudices in my mind.

In order to be fair to the men I have differed from on matters then considered important, I would like you to give Mr. Diarmuid O'Hegarty a summary of the contents of my evidence which I have hereto attached, so as to enable him to give his version of the matters I have dealt with and I am most anxious that he should do this.

Richard Walsh 28.

(Richard Walsh).

28/6/50

Seen

Mrs should be filed with Mr Walsh's statement in the archives.

Send a copy to Mr O'Hegarty & keep a copy on the official file.

30 b 50.

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RICHARD WALSH.

Partial summary of contents of evidence for submission to Mr. Dermot O'Hegarty.

After Easter Week.

Ml. Collins's release from Frongoch; his association with Count Plunkett's Liberty Clubs and National Aid Association.

Reorganisation of the Volunteers; meeting in Fleming's Hotel; 2nd meeting in Fleming's Hotel; Formation of Provisional Executive.

Thomas Ashe's Funeral and its great influence on Volunteer Re-organisation.

How the Volunteers, Sinn Féin and other kindred organisations helped each other to grow.

Count Plunkett and Liberty Clubs; Ml. Collins and National Aid; Arthur Griffith and Sinn Féin; Paddy Little and Irish Nation's League.

Efforts to re-organise Volunteers and progress made.

Release of sentenced prisoners; De Valera's return; By-Elections.

Plunkett Convention; question of various republican and National organisations and how to get united effort on agreed lines.

Great Árd Fheis or Convention of Sinn Féin in October 1917.

Irish Volunteer Convention October 1917 and formation of Volunteer Executive; Personnel of the Executive and its functions.

Organisation of the Volunteers into more up-to-date formation; Brigades, Battns. and Companies.

Discussions at Executive re formation of G.H.Q. Staff.
" " " " procuring finances.

R.W.

Cathal Brugha and Michael Collins - their attitude towards each other at meetings of Executive; friction over question o of Volunteer leaders possible contacts with German government through German submarines off the Belmullet coast and Fintan Murphy's journey to Co. Mayo to contact those men.

Anti-conscription; its effects on national outlook and on the strength of the Volunteer organisation.

Discussions at Executive meetings on plans to resist conscription. The expedition to London under Cathal Brugha.

General Election, December 1918; formation of Dáil Éireann and government of the Republic.

Dáil Éireann appoints a Minister of Defence.

Discussion at Executive on the recognition of Dáil Éireann.

" " " " " control of army - Minister of Defence or the Executive.

" " " " " Oath of allegiance to Dail Éireann and formula of oath.

Agreement to hold brigade conventions on the question of oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann.

Discussion on policy for the army at Executive meetings.

Starting of military operations; taking responsibility for Soloheadbeg and Knocklong operations; boycotting British Courts and setting up of Arbitration Courts and Dail Éireann Courts; non-recognition of the British Local Government Dept., etc.

Question of arms discussed at Executive; purchase of arms in Britain; machinery set up by G.H.Q. for purchase of arms; dissatisfaction in brigade areas when cash was sent to G.H.Q. for arms and no arms provided.

Independent buying of arms in Britain by some brigades in defiance of G.H.Q. orders.

Disputes in Executive between Collins and Brugha; mishandling of funds for the purchase of arms in Britain, Manchester and Glasgow districts; also disputes between Collins and Brugha over Collins having contacts in Dublin Castle; other disputes between Collins and Brugha concerning army's allegiance to Dáil Éireann and the form of the Oath of Allegiance.

R. W.

(It must be clearly understood that C. Brugha never accused Ml. Collins of any misappropriation of funds in connection with purchase of arms or on any other heading.)

Collins resigns from position of Adjutant General and takes up the position of Director of Intelligence with Brugha's approval.

The rise of two opposing sections in the Executive and in the army over the differences between Collins and Brugha; Collins's control in the I.R.B. organisation and Brugha's disapproval of the I.R.B. organisation.

Unofficial attempts by prominent Englishmen to probe republican leaders on questions of peace. Paddy Moylett's activities in London and Dublin; Bloody Sunday's aftermath; the Galway resolution; Fr. O'Flanagan's telegram to Lloyd George; Tim Healy; Cope; Lord Derby; Archbishop Clune; Collins's interests in the peace moves.

De Valera's return from America; his independence of the contending sides in the Collins-Brugha dispute.

Griffith's friendship with Ml. Collins and his growing influence with Collins, which possibly influenced Collins to sign the articles of agreement.

Treaty and the peace negotiations.

R. W