

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 469

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 469

Witness

Sir Alfred Cope,
Westdown, Seaford,
Sussex, England.

Identity

Assistant Under Secretary for Ireland and
Clerk of the Privy Council, Ireland, 1920-1922,
Dublin Castle.

Subject

His inability to contribute to
the records of the Bureau.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. 8.1592

Form B.S.M. 2.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COPY/

Bureau of Military History 1913-21,
26 Westland Row,
DUBLIN.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ-MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 469

17th January, 1951.

Dear Sir Alfred,

I have received from Miss Foxe of our Embassy in London your letter to her of the 3rd instant, and I am very sorry indeed to learn that I will not be privileged to include any contribution from you in the archives of the Bureau of Military History 1913-21.

I fully appreciate your viewpoint. I agree with you that the history of a particular phase as written from the viewpoint of people who took different sides tends to be coloured by their respective aims and feelings, but that is one of the things which we in the Bureau are endeavouring to guard against by collecting evidence from every side,

As stated in my letter of the 18th November addressed to Mr. Dulanty, a copy of which, I understand, was sent to you -

"The Bureau is a fact-finding body, and is concerned with the ascertainment of the truth as a whole and not with any facet of it, and it is anxious, therefore, to get evidence from every person who has anything to contribute, no matter what his viewpoint past or present, and no matter what side he took in the period covered by the terms of reference".

If the evidence which we collect were to be all from the one side, the history to be based on it would naturally be one-sided also, but, as I have said, we are endeavouring to get evidence from every side, and that is why I have approached you.

I do hope that you will reconsider the matter. Even if you do not contribute anything to the Bureau I shall be satisfied if the documentary and other material which is in your possession will be so disposed of that it will be available to historians who are concerned with the writing or study of the history of that period.

I am very sorry indeed to hear that you are ill, and I hope that you will have a speedy and complete recovery.

It is very kind of you to remember me and to wish me well in what you describe, rather gloomily, I think, as my thankless task.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) M. McDunphy.
DIRECTOR.

Sir Alfred Cope,
Westdown, Seaford,
Sussex, ENGLAND.

ORIGINAL



IRISH embassy

33-37 REGENT ST.
LONDON, S.W. 1.

5th January, 1950.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 469

Dear Mr. McDunphy,

I send you herein Sir Alfred Cope's original letter and a copy thereof. It speaks for itself!

I also enclose copy of my acknowledgment to Sir Alfred and I return the duplicate of your letter to Mr. Dulanty and the enclosures thereto.

Yours sincerely,

Private Secretary.

M. McDunphy, Esq.,
Director,
Bureau of Military History 1913-21,
26 Westland Row,
Dublin.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAIRS 1913-21

No. W.S. 469

ORIGINAL

Westdown

Seaford Sussex

3rd January 1951

Dear Private Secretary

I am glad Mr. Dulanty is making a good recovery. Please give him my sincere good wishes. It is years since we met but I follow his doings as recorded in the London Press with interest and admiration - as a diplomat he is a genius.

As to the enclosed. I am sorry I cannot see my way to help. Over the years, I have had offers from various sources for my views and experiences but have turned all of them down because I regard the period (and also that following the Treaty) to be the most discreditable of your country's history - it is preferable to forget it: to let sleeping dogs lie.

It is not possible for this history to be truthful although I am sure Mr. Mr. Murphy will do his utmost to make it so - the job is beyond human skill. The R.H.

Coates

COPY.

(Original M.S. letter attached.)

WESTDOWN,
SEAFORD,
SUSSEX.

3rd January 1951.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRE MIL TA 1913-21

No. W.S. 469

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It is not possible for this history to be truthful although I am sure Mr. McDunphy will do his utmost to make it so - the job is beyond human skill. The I.R.A. must be shown as national heroes and the British Forces as brutal oppressors. Accordingly, the Truce and Treaty will have been brought about by the defeat of the British by the valour of small and ill-equipped groups of irregulars. And so on. What a travesty it will be and must be. Read by future generations of Irish children, it will simply perpetuate the long standing hatred of England and continue the miserable work of self-seeking politicians who, for their own aggrandisement, have not permitted the Christian virtues of Forgiveness and Brotherhood to take its place.

Ireland has too many histories; she deserves a rest. Her present need is a missioner to teach her that Love, not Hate, is still the only password both to Earthly Happiness and the Heavenly Kingdom.

Please send my best wishes and sympathy to Mr. McDunphy in his thankless task. And tell him that although nearly 30 years have gone since we met, I remember him well and

continue to wish him well.

Your papers herewith.

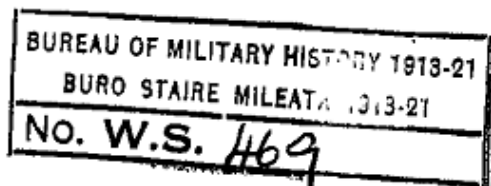
Yrs. ffly.

(Signed) A. Cope.

Regret delay in reply - due to absence from home.

Copy.

18th November, 1950.



Dear Dulanty,

The Bureau of Military History, of which I am Director, in addition to my being Secretary to the President, was set up by the Minister for Defence on the 1st June, 1947, with the approval of the Government, with the following terms of reference;

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

The enclosed leaflet will explain more fully the purpose for which it was created, and the general lines on which it is working. You will see from the first page that there is associated with it a very representative Advisory Committee, which includes among its members representatives of the Universities and others experienced in historical study and research, its function being to assist the Director by its advice with a view to ensuring that the material collected by the Bureau will be of the utmost value to future historians.

The Bureau has now been in operation for nearly four years and has collected a great deal of valuable material both in the form of personal statements and of contemporary documents. It is concerned, not only with matters of a purely military nature, as its title might suggest, but with everything which had a bearing on the national movement of the time, including of course, the creation and functioning of Dáil Éireann as the Parliament of Ireland in 1919, the operation of its various Ministries, and the various political activities which flowed from it or were associated with it right up to the Truce of 11th July, 1921, a turning point which led to the negotiations and signature of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6th December, 1921.

The Bureau is a fact-finding body, and is concerned with the ascertainment of the truth as a whole, and not with any facet of it, and it is anxious, therefore, to get evidence from every person who has anything to contribute, no matter what his viewpoint past or present, and no matter what side he took in the period covered by the terms of reference.

The part played in the developments of the period by Sir Alfred Cope, who was an Assistant Under Secretary of State in Dublin Castle, is a very important part of its history, and for that reason the Bureau is anxious to contact him, and if possible, to get his story together with any

documents either in original or in the form of copies which he may have at his disposal, and as I understand he is a personal friend of yours, I would like your advice as to how I should go about that, or better still, if you could facilitate me in that regard.

If it were his wish I could arrange for a representative of the Bureau to call on him. On the staff is a team of trained investigators including military officers of senior rank, ranging from Commandant to Colonel.

Sir Alfred Cope may perhaps remember meeting me in 1922 when, with all the enthusiasm of inexperience, I was engaged in creating a secretariat for the Provisional Government in my capacity as Assistant to the then Secretary, Lieutenant-General Diarmuid O'Hegarty. I may mention that both General O'Hegarty and Mr. William T. Cosgrave who succeeded the late General Michael Collins as Chairman of the Provisional Government, who were well known to Sir Alfred, are co-operating wholeheartedly with the Bureau in its work.

I would like to make it clear that any information presented to the Bureau, whether in the form of statements, letters or other documents will, except where the donor himself expresses a wish to the contrary, be treated with the strictest confidence until such time as the collection as a whole is released for study by historians, and that will not be for many years to come.

If Sir Alfred wishes, his story and/or any associated documents can be placed under my personal seal for a stated period of years, and that, in fact, has already been done in a number of cases. It is scarcely necessary to add that the giving of material to the Bureau in no way affects the right of a donor to use it in any way he wishes, whether by publication or otherwise.

Please accept my apologies for troubling you, especially as I understand that you have not been well. I hope that you are by now completely recovered.

Yours sincerely,

(M. McDunphy)

DIRECTOR.

John W. Dulanty, Esq., C. B., LL. D.,
C/o. Irish Embassy,
32-37 Regent Street,
London, S. W. 1.

