

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 543

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 543

Witness

Martin King,
125 St. Ignatius Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Irish Citizen Army, 1915-1916;
Member of Committee which supplied information to
R.M. Fox for inclusion in his "History of the
Irish Citizen Army.

Subject.

Plans for disruption
of communications, Easter 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.970

Form B.S.M. 2

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W.S. 543

STATEMENT BY MR. MARTIN KING,
25, St. Ignatius Road, Dublin.

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I was employed as a Cable Joiner in the Post Office Service and, on that account, was familiar with the lay out of all telephone and telegraph cables.

In the latter part of 1915, James Connolly asked me, if he wanted to cut communications with England, how would he set about it. I told him he could cut them at Talbot Street or Lombard Street. He asked me if I knew these places and if I could do the job. I told him that, if there was anything I didn't know, my foreman, Andy Fitzpatrick, who was a Volunteer, would be able to tell me. He told me to pick up all the information I could about this matter. About this time I gave my official pass card to James Connolly. With this card, admission could be gained to all Government offices and buildings. I believe it was afterwards used for this purpose. I had considerable difficulty in obtaining a replacement of the card.

On Good Friday morning, 1916, Andy Fitzpatrick brought me on a tour of the principal trunk line centres, with a view to the disruption of communications on Easter Sunday. The places visited were Kevin Street, which carried the Wexford and Waterford trunk line, the canal bank near Portobello Bridge, where a pole carried the same trunk lines, pole near Boland's Mills on Grand Canal, which carried the Wexford and Newcastle (Co. Wicklow) lines. The cross-channel telegraph cables came in at Newcastle. We came into Brunswick Street and examined the cables in the manhole at the corner of Lombard Street. The cables there carried the underground wires from Newcastle to Westland Row. There was, in this cable, a special direct wire between Dublin Castle and London. We decided that the cables

should be cut at this point. We came from Lombard Street to Palace Street and inspected the box there. These were mostly police wires to all the city stations.

In the afternoon we visited Talbot Street, where the cross-channel telephone cables pass underground. We decided that the northern lines could be disrupted at Howth Junction.

The underground cable in the box at Church Street bridge, which took in the Viceregal Lodge and Under-Secretary's Lodge was to be cut.

A meeting of Volunteers, at which a Volunteer officer presided, was held at Frederick Street on Friday evening and was attended by my brothers, George, Sam, Arthur and myself, of the Citizen Army.

Each person - Volunteer or Citizen Army man - was allotted a task. Andy Fitzpatrick and my brother, Arthur, were to cut the cables at Talbot Street; Tom O'Donoghue and others the cables at Church Street bridge; my brother, Sam, with Volunteers the wires at Palace Street. George was to meet some Volunteers in Pearse Street and cut the cables in Lombard Street. I was detailed with some Volunteer engineers to disrupt communications at the Telephone Exchange.

The cables were cut in Talbot Street and Lombard Street but the Volunteers detailed for the Telephone Exchange did not turn up for the job on Easter Monday, so I reported to the Citizen Army Garrison at the College of Surgeons. I do not know if the other jobs were carried out.

At the meeting, I instructed the men to cut the cables close to the part where they entered the covering

pipes. If done in this way, repairs could only be effected by digging up the street.

A lot of the equipment was obtained by collecting old discarded equipment from scrap heaps, requisitioning new equipment from Stores and, after a while, handing into Stores the old discarded equipment.

The equipment was brought to Liberty Hall.

I was one of the members of the committee of the Citizen Army (Old Comrades) Organisation who supplied information to Mr. R.M. Fox for inclusion in his "History of the Irish Citizen Army", which was subsequently published in 1943.

Before the book was published, the proofs were read and agreed to by a committee of those who had contributed material, including myself. The committee, which was under the Chairmanship of Mr. John Hanratty, met on many occasions.

There were full discussions, as some of the members were not satisfied that certain parts of the book represented the facts as they knew them, and many changes were made in the proofs before they were finally agreed to by the committee.

In so far as it relates to matters within my personal knowledge, I regard the book as an accurate record of the activities of the Irish Citizen Army during the period, 1913-1921.

SIGNED:

Walter King

DATE:

21st June 1951

WITNESS:

John Keane

