

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 584

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 584.....

Witness

Timothy Brennan,
50 Waterloo Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Constable R.I.C. Tullamore, 1918-1920.

Subject.

- (a) R.I.C. anti-conscription campaign, 1918;
- (b) His dismissal from the R.I.C. 1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1853.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY MR. TIMOTHY BRENNAN

50 Waterloo Road, Dublin.

In the darkest days of the Conscription period I was one of a large body of R.I.C. on duty in Tullamore. A number of young men appealed to us as Irishmen not to assist in enforcing Conscription.

I openly answered the call. On my return to my station at Carlow I got in touch with Mr. James Reddy, Editor of the "Carlow Nationalist" and asked him if he would have printed a circular which I would send him from Dublin as I was going on leave to do my bit to kill Conscription. He said he would do all I wanted.

I came to Dublin to see Mr. James Caraher, a civilian friend of mine - his present address is Old Abbey, Drogheda. I asked him if he would post for me copies of a circular to all R.I.C. stations. I told him I would write the circular at once and show it to him before sending it to the printers. When he had read the manuscript he agreed.

I told him when he got the parcel he could open any envelope he liked to satisfy himself that everything was straightforward. I instructed him to put a number of the letters in each of his pockets and when passing a pillar box to post about ten of them, so as to spread the posting over a number of pillar boxes throughout the city. I now posted the manuscript to Mr. Reddy for printing and went on to Roscommon, where I had been given leave to go.

I got a parcel of envelopes and brought them to the R.I.C. barracks, Beechwood, where I knew the men held the same views as myself on the issue. The three constables

in Beechwood agreed to sit up all night if necessary to address the envelopes to every District Headquarters in Ireland and have them ready for me next day.

I posted the parcel of envelopes to Mr. James Reddy with instructions to put one or more circulars in each envelope and send them all to Mr. James Caraher in Dublin.

Mr. Caraher complied with my instructions, and when returning from holidays, by motor cycle, I called into all the important stations on the way and found the circulars had arrived. I told trustworthy constables that I was the author and had sent the circulars throughout Ireland. All were very enthusiastic. A few days afterwards conscription was postponed. I, as well as all Irishmen, felt happy.

I am handing in a copy of the circular issued.

In 1919 it was arranged to form a Representative Body for all ranks of the R.I.C. Provincial meetings were held to select representatives for each rank. At the provincial meeting for Leinster I was selected to represent the constables. The apparent object of the Representative Body was to meet and put forward all matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of the Force. In due course the Representative Body was formed. In accordance with the mandate I got from the constables of Leinster and from many outside Leinster I set out to work for the welfare of the Force. The letters I am handing in show the response I got. As can be seen, things were bad and not likely to improve. I issued a circular showing the mandate I had got. I have not got a copy of that circular. They must all have been distributed throughout the Force.

Continuing my activity, I issued a second circular from Carlow dated 6th July, 1920, three copies of which I am

handing in.

From that date I refused to carry arms when out on duty, although I went with men who were armed.

My circular reached Dublin Castle. I was told that it was sent there by County Inspector P. Marrinan who enquired at the same time if the constable responsible could possibly be still in the Force. I was then ordered to go to Dublin Castle.

I was brought in front of Mr. Cope, Under Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Smyth, Inspector General, and Mr. Rice, County Inspector for Carlow. The Inspector General suggested that I should repudiate the circular. I replied I was only acting for the welfare of the Force. It was then suggested that I cease my activities. I said I should continue to act for the welfare of the Force, for which purpose I was elected as a member of the Representative Body. I was asked if I got promotion would I cease. I said "No". Mr. Cope asked me would I take a good responsible position in another country if I did not want to serve further in the Force. "No" was again my answer. I said I would remain in Ireland and serve in the Force as long as I could, as I had the backing of the great majority of the force. The Inspector General said "You will destroy the Force and leave the men with families with nothing to live on". I said I would beg with my wife and child sooner than carry arms against my country. He then asked me to cease activities for a few days when some change would take place. No change took place.

I again got active. I was dismissed from the Force and cautioned that if I interfered further with the discipline of the Force I would be charged under the Defence of the Realm Regulations.

Immediately afterwards, County Inspector Marrinan was

promoted Divisional Commissioner and Carlow then came within his area of command. I am aware that he came to Carlow and tested all the men who were active with me. To those whose attitude pleased him, he presented Sergeants' stripes and immediately promoted them. Eight such constables were promoted and I may add that one of them was afterwards placed as Superintendent in the Civic Guards when that force was formed.

I tried to continue my activities with those men in Roscommon who had written asking me to do so. I was seen talking to one of them in Strokestown who had asked me to try to get a truce for a few days and let them develop my proposals.

The news reached home that I was seen talking to a policeman and that I had not been dismissed but had been sent home as a spy. Shortly afterwards my activities ceased.

SIGNED

DATE

Timothy Brennan
24th Sept 1951

WITNESS

J. Kearns Comdt.

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