ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 585

Witness

Frank Robbins,
5 Fairview Terrace,
Fairview,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Irish Citizen Army 1913 - ;
Sergeant Irish Citizen Army, 1916.

Subject.

National events, 1913-1921, including the Easter Week Rising, 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No S.176

Form B S M 2

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY FRANK ROBBINS

5, Fairview Terrace, Fairview, Dublin.

On many occasions I have been asked when and how I became a member of the Irish Citizen Army. This is the story, and it is my earnest hope that it will be of value to our country's historical background and an inspiration to all who may read it. Whether or not, I would ask that it be remembered as one young man's contribution, in dark and strenuous days, to the fight for the reconquest of Ireland for the Irish people.

I first joined the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in about June 1911 when fifteen years of age, and through my constant interest in the work of the Union, even at this early age, I made many contacts with very fine people amongst the Dublin working class. Amongst the interesting and exciting periods of my early life was that of the big lock-out of 1913, which began in Horse Show Week during the month of August.

During this time there were regular meetings held almost daily in Beresford Place and at Liberty Hall. Amongst the many speakers who addressed the meetings one man attracted me most, and that man was James Connolly. His quiet way, his convincing arguments, and the coolness of the man generally, impressed me much more than did any of the other speakers. One night during October I attended a meeting in Beresford Place and heard James Connolly say that, as a result of the brutalities of the R.I.C. and the D.M.P. under the direction of Dublin Castle, it was now intended to organise and discipline a Force to protect workers' meetings and to prevent the brutalities of armed

thugs occurring in the future. This was the first open declaration I heard regarding the formation of the Irish Citizen Army. It was my intention to become a member of that Army, and I waited with interest for the first step to be taken. Sometime later Mr. James Larkin made an announcement on the same theme, but made the stipulations that the men who would be accepted as members would have to be of a physical stature of at least six feet and would have to pass medical and other tests; no boys, only fully grown men were wanted. I listened with consternation to this announcement because I knew that on account of my youth and my physical stature I was prohibited from becoming a member of the organisation towards which all the intensity of youthful idealism was driving me.

The organisation of the Irish Volunteers took place a short while afterwards. In that body I saw many young men of less physical fitness than myself. The temptation was for me to join such organisation, but, because of my Labour outlook, I felt such would not altogether meet my viewpoint. This battle went on in my mind for many months up to the day of the Howth gun-running and the subsequent shootings at Bachelor's Walk on Sunday ... July 1914,when I finally made up my mind that I would make a serious endeavour to be accepted into membership of the Irish Citizen Army. In the event of failure I would take my place in the ranks of the Irish Volunteers.

A day or two after the shootings at Bachelor's Walk I presented myself at the rooms of the Irish Citizen Army in Liberty Hall, and very timidly asked would they accept me as a member of that Army. To my great joy, the three men who were seated around the table - Messrs. Braithwaite, Seamus MacGowan and Seán O'Casey - told me that it was young

men like myself they were seeking. In the course of the conversation which ensued I made it known that were it not because of Mr. Larkin's description of the men he required, my membership would have commenced on the first day of the organisation of the Irish Citizen Army.

From that day onwards I entered into the work of training and arms drill with all the zeal of a young man. Along with others I busied myself in perfecting a large rifle range in Croydon Park, which was then leased to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. This rifle range, when completed, attracted a good many of the Irish Volunteers from the Father Mathew Park and other areas, and on Saturday afternoons and Sundays when not otherwise engaged Irish Citizen Army men and Irish Volunteers made good use of this rifle range for the purpose of perfecting their marksmanship. A miniature rifle range was also constructed in a large room in Liberty Hall and was used extensively during the winter nights by those who could afford the charge of three shots per one penny, and believe it or not this small sum was too much of a financial strain for many of our members to endure .

The supply of arms was very poor. This was, to a very limited degree, countered by some of us who were very eager, and who could afford to see in our hands more up to date weapons than the Howth rifle. (The German Mauser of 1871 was used in the Franco-Prussian War and was named the Howth rifle as a result of the gun-running). We set about organising rifle and revolver clubs, as well as uniform clubs. This was accomplished by paying a subscription of one shilling per week to the rifle club and sixpence per week to the revolver club. By this means a number of us

did not participate, particularly in comparison to the Volunteers. There may have been genuine reasons in some instances for the non-attendance of men at drills, parades, etc., because of shabby clothing and lack of proper footwear. Captain White tried to obviate these problems, but unfortunately only intensified the problem when meaner spirits endeavoured to profit from his generous nature. The real cause for this paucity in members was the aftermath of the 1913 struggle. A deep depression had set in among the workers, but Capt. White failed to recognise this important factor. More important still was the fact that the workers did not understand the ideals behind the creation of a Workers' Army which was entirely new and most revolutionary in character. Some months after the conclusion of the big lock-out, many victims remained unemployed and in serious plight, and Captain White anxious to alleviate their sufferings made an attempt to head what was known as a hunger-march to the Lord Mayor in the Mansion House for the purpose of drawing attention to the plight of these victimised workers. The hunger-marchers were put into military formation, and marching from Liberty Hall were met by Inspector Barrett and a large number of D.M.P. men at Butt Bridge who drew their batons and dispersed the procession by force. Several members of the Citizen Army were actually in this parade and stood by Captain White until they were beaten and overpowered by superior police force. The remainder being non-Citizen Army members and therefore not having the necessary training, fled from the scene. Captain White and the Irish Citizen Army men were given medical aid because of extensive wounds received from the police batons. The Dublin press made sure to elaborate on this for the purpose of decrying the Irish Citizen Army. For myself, although not a member of the organisation at the time, I was terribly upset on

reading about the incident, but was more than satisfied when I learned the facts as given above.

I was a member of St. Vincent's Football Club (soccer) operating in the Parish of St. Agatha, North William Street, as were also a number of youths from the locality.

My continual advocacy for the rights of the working class gained me amongst my football colleagues the nick name of "Liberty". When it became known that I had joined the Irish Citizen Army there were many sly smiles and witty remarks, and suggestions from time to time, "Why not join the Volunteers" and of the Citizen Army not being a suitable organisation for me, were scouted on every occasion. This criticism was often expressed in a more outward fashion from Dublin people by direct personal epithets, when they shouted "There is a member of The Run-away Army" when passing either riding on bicycles or walking to some centre of mobilisation. It happened to me on several occasions!

I remember one evening shortly after the outbreak of the World War No. 1 when Delaney, the Boer Commandant, was shot in an effort to join other Boer Leaders, De Wett, etc., and ultimately an insurrection took place in South Africa, I was wearing the Tri-Colour badge on my coat and a member of St. Vincent's Football Club twitted me about wearing the Boer colours. I insisted that he was wrong, and replied that the badge represented the Irish Republican colours. This caused some element of surprise to him as he was very National in his outlook but a great supporter - like all the other members of the Club - of the Irish National Party led by John Redmond. His name was Michael Smith (Tiger). On Easter Sunday, 1916, I had the great pleasure of talking to the same man at Liberty Hall, who, in a period of less than eighteen months had completed the cycle, became an

active member of the Irish Volunteers, took part in the Insurrection, was very active all through the years afterwards up to the evacuation of the British forces, and was the man who made the shears that cut the bolts on the gates of Kilmainham Jail which aided the escape of Frank Teeling and others. After the Insurrection Tiger Smith and I were reviewing our experiences and he told me that he was greatly impressed by the writings of Arthur Griffith. Prior to this conversation we had many long drawn out discussions as to the rights and wrongs of John Redmond's policy.

In September 1914,
// A short while after my joining the Irish Citizen Army Mr. Pat Fox appeared in the drill-room and told us on the previous night there had been an attempt made on the life of James Larkin, by spies of the British Government who were anxious to put Larkin out of the way and prevent him going to America where he would be a greater danger to the British Government. Fox then asked for volunteers to do duty at Croydon Park House, leased to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, where Larkin lived, and emphasised the point this was work which young men could do best. A number of the younger men, including myself, volunteered and we did guard duty every night for a number of weeks, until Larkin was seen safely inside Croydon Park house which often went to nearly midnight and necessitated some nights sleeping in the out-houses attached to the House. I remember Michael Donnelly, James O'Shea and Michael Kelly were amongst those who had volunteered. During all the time we were doing this guard duty we saw no sign of anybody trying to molest or interfere with Larkin, in fact, some time afterwards we came to the conclusion that no such attempt had been made on his life. All the British Government would need to have done was to prevent him going to America and they had all the power to do so under the Defence of the Realm Act.

the Ship Street area. With this concentration appeared the figures of James Connolly and Michael Mallin. It would appear from the faces and from the attitude of both these men - and later by one of Connolly's short addresses - that the scheme they had planned proved a success. We were accompanied by the D.M.P., as was usual during these exercises, and consternation took place among the officers of that body when they saw the way in which we split up at Liberty Hall without sufficient police force to cover the various sections that were operating. They were equally surprised when they found us all meeting together again. In the meantime they had gathered other forces to their aid. Our work for the night was not yet complete because we were marched from Ship Street to Emmet Hall, the Branch offices of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union at Inchicore, where we had the women's section of the Irish Citizen Army waiting for us with light refreshments. We stayed there and had a sing-song until the early hours of Sunday morning. The D.M.P. kept their vigil all through the night out in the cold.When they accompanied us back to Liberty Hall where the dismiss took place early next morning they had done approximately nine hours unbroken duty.

It was always the custom of the Irish Citizen Army when en route marches, even though not at full strength, to sing marching songs, such as; "Twenty Men from Dublin Town", "Wrap the Green Flag Round Me", "The Mountains of Pomeroy", "Clare's Dragoons", "O'Donnell Abú ", "Step Together", "Sinn Féin Amhráin", one of our own which went;-"The Irish Citizen Army is the Name of our Wee Band" and "The Germans are Winning the War Me Boys" composed by Madame Markievicz. It was not what you would call a song at all, it was doggerel. Madame Markievicz wrote the song "Armed for the Battle" and dedicated it to the Irish Citizen Army.

Another important way in maintaining the morale of the Irish Citizen Army and their friends was the holding of Concerts every Sunday night at Liberty Hall. Some of these concerts were built around plays from the Abbey Theatre repertoire and were performed by the Liberty Players - which included among others James Smith, Seán Rogan, Moses Whelan, Seán Connolly, Miss Mary Geraghty, Miss Rosie Pollard and Mrs. Barrett (Seán Connolly's sister). For the concert items among some of the singers were generally the names Seán (Gurra) Byrne, Andy Dunne, Joe Connolly, William Oman, myself, Miss Emily Norgrove, Miss ~~Eddie~~ Connie O'Hanlon, Miss Mary Hyland, and Miss Molly Reilly, with Madame Markievicz often giving a recitation. One of the plays produced was one of James Connolly's entitled "Under Which Flag". Michael Mallin organised a small orchestra from members of St. James Band and these players took part in the insurrection, James Geoghegan paying the supreme sacrifice. In 1948 the instrument played by Michael Mallin was presented to the National Museum having turned up after 32 years with the following inscription;-"By Capt. G. Hewson, Presented to Band, 18th R.I.Rifles, Taken at Liberty Hall, Dublin - Rebellion 1916".

One of our Saturday night manoeuvres consisted of a raid for arms, but only the superior officers of the Irish Citizen Army knew the real purpose of the manoeuvre. The operations on this particular night cut off the complete North-East side of the city from the canal bridge at Phibsboro' to the North Wall at the Liffey. The Baldoyle section of the Citizen Army, with others, took part in the actual raid on the drill hall of the George Rex, the British Auxiliary Home Defence Force at Sutton cross-roads, on the opposite side of the road from where the Sutton cinema now stands. The raiding party, to tneir consternation, found that all their work had been in vain because of the fact that

the arms which were believed to be there were none other than wooden guns. On that night the officers and men guarding the bridges which would give outlet to any British forces who might be informed of our activities at Sutton, were ordered to stop such forces by every means in their power. Dr. Lynn provided transport with her own car and drove out to Sutton to bring in the arms which, alas, were not tnere.

The internal organisation of the Citizen Army developed day by day. Formerly parades and drills were announced on notice boards in Liberty Hall. This method was superseded by the appointment of section mobilisers, and each section mobiliser was responsible for a given number of men living adjacent to his own home address. The city was split into two sections, North and South of the River Liffey, with an area mobilisation officer in charge of each side of the city. These men received their instructions from the chief mobilisation officer of the Army, Lieutenant Thomas Kain, all his instructions coming direct from James Connolly or Michael Mallin and being carried right down to the various leaders of the sections.

No drill or outdoor parade ever finished without a short address by either James Connolly or Michael Mallin, and such addresses would be pertinent to the work which had been done or was about to be done at a future date. At the end of each address Connolly or Mallin always invited questions or the making of suggestions. Out of this arose a suggestion that a box be placed at the disposal of all members of the Army who might be backward in asking questions or making suggestions, such to be answered or acted upon if desirable. One matter about which I was very worried was the fitting of the French bayonet to the Howth Mauser rifle, which had been adapted by the ingenuity of members of the

Citizen Army but not adapted efficiently enough, because the bayonet lay across the mouth of the rifle about three-quarters of its length, which would prevent the firing of any rifle ammunition while the bayonets were fixed. All bayonets were called in for adjustment, which was done by heating the bayonet blade halfway up and putting a bend on it so that it would be clear of the mouth of the rifle. Many other suggestions on matters like this came from the members and were acted on.

For some time James Connolly had been giving lectures on street fighting. He emphasised the various essential points to be observed, such as maintaining the water supply for human use and protection against fire or ensuring against the possible curtailment of the water supply; never to occupy a corner building without proper support from each side; the necessity for breaching walls so that the complete street of any length could be occupied and each house communicated with without having to enter on to the street. In this connection he made it clear when breaching walls of houses, no two breaches should be directly opposite one another because of the danger to our own forces} if any of our positions were occupied by the opposing force. Many other essential points were brought forth on this system of fighting, and, as usual, questions were invited. Out of such questions arose that of the necessity for instruments suitable and necessary to aid in this work. Sledge-hammers were regarded as one of the best instruments and members of the Citizen Army were asked to supply them, and to use their own ingenuity as to how this supply could be obtained.

A number of members of the Citizen Army were working in the Dublin Dockyard and other kindred employments, and very often it was found that two or perhaps three Citizen Army men would have their eyes on the one sledge-hammer. I have to confess that I did, without the knowledge or the sanction of the Dublin Dockyard Company, relieve that Company of many of

their 7-lbs. sledge-hammers, and for which I had the unwanted kind of prayers of many of my fellow-workers in the Dublin Dockyard who lost these valuable tools. Other articles among the many which the Dublin Dockyard Company lost from time to time were files, pieces of lathes, and borings, and latter being used in the preparation of home-made bombs.

With the Volunteer organisation spreading all through the country, the organisers of Feis competitions in various areas included in their curriculum competitions for the best drilled Volunteer Squad. The Irish Citizen Army entered for a number of these competitions, the first being at Tullow, Co. Carlow, about June 1915, and on this occasion two teams were to represent the Irish Citizen Army. The previous evening most of us had camped out at Croydon Park, Fairview, and proceeded to Kingsbridge early on Sunday morning. On our arrival at the station we discovered the train fully loaded with passengers. The station-master informed us that there was no room for us on the train, whereupon Commandant Michael Mallin dispatched a couple of men to look after the train crew and posted other men in strategic positions. Mallin then asked the station-master if we were still debarred from travelling to Tullow on that train, and suggested that extra accommodation should be provided. The station-master wisely agreed to this proposal.

At the Feis in Tullow we were subjected to a large amount of curiosity and conjecture. When our first team entered the grounds under Commandant Mallin, the display which was given was so thorough that Mallin, on presenting his compliments to the judges, was told to take his squad of British Army veterans away, as there was nothing to cope with us in the field. Most of the team knew nothing of the business end of a rifle twelve to eighteen months prior to

to that date, of which I was one. Our second team was given the honour of trying with the next best squad. The first prize was a flag and £5. We only got part of our prize and we got nothing for our second team.

Rumours were being whispered around Tullow that we were going to be attacked by the Redmondite Volunteers, and, as a precaution against this, Mallin marshalled the whole Army together and paraded right through Tullow, headed by the Fintan Lalor Pipe Band which was part and parcel of the Irish Citizen Army. No adverse incident of any kind took place, but rather did we receive the good-will and applause of the people assembled and who watched the march in Tullow town.

Another competition which the Citizen Army entered was that initiated by the Cumann na mBan in Dublin at an Aeridheacht held in Father Mathew Park, Fairview. The prize for the best-drilled team was a Bugle, and was won by the Irish Citizen Army and later inscribed. This Bugle was presented to Mr. Eamon de Valera in 1948 and who in turn presented it to the National Museum.

The Feis at St. Enda's, Rathfarnham, was another occasion worth noting,- when the Citizen Army had two teams. The judges on that day were Willie Pearse, the brother of Pádraig Pearse, Commandant Mallin and Eamon de Valera. The display given by our first team was so outstanding that the spectators present gave us a tremendous ovation on leaving the field. The display was both spectacular and efficient, but to our great surprise we were awarded second place. Prior to the competition rumour had it very strongly that Commandant Seamus Murphy's team were the likely winners, and so it turned out. We returned to Liberty Hall later

that day and the seething indignation broke loose when we paraded in the large front hall. After Connolly's short address a number of the members of the Citizen Army stepped forward to ask questions, which were all on the one theme. Lieutenant John O'Reilly asked why the Irish Citizen Army had been defrauded at St. Enda's on that day. Connolly's reply was characteristic. He said, "Why do you worry? Didn't the people indicate to you who the winners were"? This answer was not sufficient for the men and a number of them pressed other questions as to the total marking. At this stage Mallin came into the picture and stated that of the three judges he had given the least marks to the Irish Citizen Army. Mallin indicated that he felt he was justified in doing so because of his experience in military matters. It would appear from the discussion that if he had been less severe on his own team and less generous to the team which won there was no doubt as to which team would have been awarded the first prize; both Willie Pearse and Eamon de Valera gave almost 100% marks.

On occasions ripples appeared on the water, indicating some little personal grievance amongst members towards each other. I have already mentioned William Halpin. He was small in stature. He took it on himself to appear not exactly in the dress of an officer but in something similar, including a sword. He always endeavoured to impress upon his listeners, as well as on parade, his higher knowledge of things which were happening or supposed to be happening, and because of all this he gained the wrath of some members of the Citizen Army. Unknown to himself he was hit back by jocular individuals. After one of our many parades Connolly asked the usual question - "Has anyone anything to say?" Lieutenant John O'Reilly stepped forward to ask Connolly if Halpin was an officer of the Army, and if not why he did not march in the ranks the same as the other men. O'Reilly

insisted that this must not be tolerated any longer, and Connolly jocularly replied, "Every regiment is entitled to its mascot".

Connolly was not the only one who had a sense of humour for such occasions, and those who had used to the disadvantage of Halpin. On various occasions on our way home at night a centre of call was Holohan's shop in Amiens Street near the Five Lamps, where cigarettes and other necessities of that kind could be had. George Norgrove and Elliott Elmes prepared many a story for Halpin's benefit, the rest of our party always ensuring that Halpin was delayed somewhat so that the story concocted for his benefit would be given to either of the brothers Holohan for relay. We would eventually gather together again at the corner of Seville Place to hear our story relayed back to us by Halpin. Elmes was a droll character, small like Halpin, but of better build. He knew Halpin very well and always referred to him as "Robert Emmett" or"Napoleon". Many tears of laughter were shed by our little group because of the funny stories told by Elmes,and the way they were told was a treat.

There were two C.I.D. men who had the continual care of the Citizen Army in all their activities. One or other of them was present on all occasions in addition to the D.M.P. The first was none other than Johnny Barton, who was nicknamed "Calf's Head". He was shot some years later by the I.R.A. for persistent activities on behalf of the British Government. The other was named Kirwan and nicknamed "Sheep's Eyes". Both these detectives were always most diligent in their work on behalf of Dublin Castle, and on many occasions they had very cutting remarks made to them as they came along. I remember on one occasion we were resting after a number of hours spent skirmishing around

Santry and Ballymun. While sitting along the ditches and roadside resting "Sheep's Eyes" walked slowly from one end of the line of men to the other, endeavouring to get complete and accurate information as to our arms and their quality. A number of us considered it fit to open out our magazines and show him the contents. This was done in order to mislead him, as between the depth of the Boer Mauser and the Howth rifle there was little or no difference, the idea being to convey to him that all our rifles held magazines.

The women's section of the Irish Citizen Army was under the control of Dr. Lynn, Helena Molony, Madame Markievicz and Miss French-Mullen. Dr. Lynn and Miss French-Mullen gave very thorough instructions by lectures and practical demonstrations and were responsible for having the women very efficient for their task of the future. Later, lectures and demonstrations were given jointly to all the men and women of the Citizen Army by Dr. Lynn. The purpose of such lectures was to give to the men an elementary idea of first-aid, in the event of no competent first-aid assistance being available when necessary. These lectures had a fine psychological effect in so far as they blended the men and women of the Army much closer together.

Some weeks before the Insurrection I learned through a Volunteer source that James Connolly had been giving lectures on street fighting to Volunteer officers in the Dublin area. My informant was Michael Smith, and he made it clear that the lectures were of very great assistance to the Volunteer officers. He also said that each lecture by Connolly was looked forward to by them and that they were very appreciative of the clear and lucid manner in which he spoke.

Richard McCormack, John J. O'Neill, Christy Poole and Vincent Poole had been attached to the British Army in their

younger days. John J. O'Neill is not to be confused with the John O'Neill who was then No. 1 Branch Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and also a member of the I.C.A., but never attached to the British Army. Vincent Poole ceased to be a member of the I.C.A. either late 1914 or early 1915 because of his turbulent nature. They proved themselves to be very efficient drill instructors, and in Easter Week they proved themselves to be very fine officers. Their temperaments were poles apart, but that did not in any way hinder them from inculcating the necessary knowledge of arms and drill into the raw members of the Citizen Army which was more than 95% of the total number.

John O'Neill had been in a cavalry regiment of the British Army and saw service in India and elsewhere. He was very quiet and efficient, and was the most neatly dressed member of the Army. Untidiness was to him something intolerable, and if the quietly spoken aside word was not sufficient to make a change in the slovenliness of any member, that member was spoken to publicly in more directive and effective language. O'Neill had a complete knowledge of the Morse Code, and induced a number of the younger fry to take up the study of it. About half a dozen of the young members, including James O'Shea, George Oman and myself, had not only flag instructions but telegraph instructions as well. O'Neill was hoping to extend the course to the heliograph but the opportunity never arose.

Christy Poole and McCormack had seen service with the British Army in South Africa, and in the course of their instructions they emphasised time after time the need for assimilating knowledge of the drill necessary to meet a cavalry charge. They told many a story how the Boers had operated and the effect of mobile methods in upsetting the British Army calculations time after time.

This brings me to a dream which I had some three or four months before the Insurrection. I dreamt I was in a place like the Phoenix Park, at the Wellington Monument, yet it was not the Phoenix Park, and that the Insurrection was on. Information was given to us of Cavalry approaching our positions. Christy Poole was the officer in charge, and he gave the instructions to prepare for Cavalry. This we did, and were in position when the Cavalry charged on us. We had always been told when being given this drill that Cavalry would never face fixed bayonets, but in my dream to my amaxement the Cavalry charged on, jumped over our heads and never flinched for a moment at the fixed bayonets. We were then surrounded by the Cavalry regiment and had to surrender. I was sorely disappointed at this experience and had very harsh words to say about our instructors, who had always told us that the reverse would happen. At the first opportunity I told this dream to George Norgrove, Elmes and others the following night, but they laughed at me. After the Insurrection I associated my dream with the position which had been allocated to me at Stephen's Green and the ultimate surrender.

On Sunday evenings in the summer the Irish Citizen Army held Aeridheachta in Croydon Park, and no Aeridheacht finished without a mock attack on a lonely post by supposed Red Indians with all the war-paint, feathers and tomahawks well in keeping with the Red Indian tradition as written by Ellis, many of which I read as a schoolboy from the Charleville Mall Library. When they attacked the stockade they always wiped it out by fire. While the "Indians" were enjoying their victory, the Citizen Army representing the old-time American Army took them, in turn, by surprise, revenged their comrades who had been killed in the stockade, and wiped out the "Indians" responsible.

During all these manoeuvres the men posing as Indians and the Citizen Army used blank ammunition, which always took place in the dusk of the evening and made it very spectacular for the audience; it was particularly a delight for the young boys. This form of training provided much more than enjoyment for the spectators; it was also a source of training to the men and an inducement to those who were not participating to join the ranks of the Irish Citizen Army.

The man chiefly responsible for organising the "Red Indians" was Seamus McGowan, who had previously controlled a number of young men in an organisation known as the National Guard, which was a break-away from the Fianna. A number of these young men eventually came into the ranks of the Irish Citizen Army.

Michael Mallin and his family lived on the premises of the Inchicore Branch of the Irish Transport Union, adjacent to Richmond Barracks, which is now known as Keogh Square. Only a fairly high wall separated this building from the actual barracks ground. The close proximity was of great assistance in procuring rifles, through contacts made with a sympathetic Irishman who was a member of the British Army. By this contact we were able to increase our stores of up to date rifles with advantage.

On one occasion, in the Winter 1915, it fell to my lot to be detailed to visit Inchicore at 9 p.m., the instruction being to get there sharp on time, neither before or after the hour given. My journey to Inchicore was accomplished on a bicycle. On my way up Cork Hill, just at Christchurch Cathedral, a member of the D.M.P. stepped out and held me up because I had no light. My bicycle was not in perfect condition, the chain being defective, and I had no alternative but to halt. On being questioned by this member of the D.M.P., he asked for my name and address and was given a fictitious one. During all the questioning one has to

endure under such circumstances I was keeping my eye on the main purpose, to be at Inchicore by nine o'clock which could brook very little further delay. Thereupon I tried to impress on the police officer that I was on a very important mission of mercy, seeking a doctor to attend my mother who was very ill. He became suspicious and it seemed that very little would have made him reach a decision to take me to the nearest police barracks. My mind was made up that this must not be allowed to happen, and when it seemed certain that I must use my revolver he decided to let me pass on, with instructions that I must not ride the bicycle without a light. This instruction was derided, for I immediately hopped on the bicycle and set off for Inchicore. Arriving there on time, a Lee Enfield rifle was immediately strapped on my bicycle and I set off again to the city in less than a minute from the time I had entered the premises at Inchicore. Other members of the Irish Citizen Army made similar visits of this kind from time to time, but eventually the source dried up.

Shortly after joining the Irish Citizen Army we were summoned to a general meeting in the large room of Liberty Hall overlooking Beresford Place. Some of us had learned a couple of days prior to the meeting that an attempt had been made at the Army Council Meeting, by the then Secretary of the Irish Citizen Army, Mr. Seán O'Casey, to have Madame Markievicz expelled from the organisation and that his attempt had been circumvented by the activities of Mr. Thomas Foran. In this matter no assistance was given to Foran by Mr. James Larkin, who seemed to have sympathy with O'Casey's intentions. According to Foran, when Larkin was acquainted of the move, the latter showed no surprise but advised the former to keep clear of the difference. The advice , however, fell on deaf ears.

At the general meeting James Larkin presided, and during its course Seán O'Casey proposed that Madame Markievicz, because of her fraternisation with the Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan and her general bourgeois tendencies, was not a fit person to be a member of the Irish Citizen Army, believing her to be a spy within the ranks on behalf of the Volunteers, and requested her expulsion. Seán O'Casey handled the matter so tactlessly for himself by declaring in the course of his speech that he was afraid of no man, physically or morally, not even of Jim Larkin. This immediately brought the latter to his feet, and he poured forth his vituperation against O'Casey. The question ceased to be one of O'Casey V Madame Markievicz and became one of O'Casey V Larkin and, in effect, killed O'Casey's attempt to have Madame Markievicz expelled. That was the last that the Irish Citizen Army saw of Seán O'Casey and his few disgruntled followers.

Some weeks later an announcement had been made that Mr. H.H. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, was to be the chief speaker at a recruiting meeting to be held in the Mansion House, Dublin, on 25th September, 1914. at which John Redmond and other Irish Parliamentary leaders were to be present to support the recruiting campaign for the British Army. The active Irish-Ireland leaders in the Volunteers, as well as James Connolly, were very keen on preventing this meeting taking place. On the Thursday night, the night before this meeting was to take place, the Citizen Army were paraded at Liberty Hall. While there, Peadar Macken and William O'Brien arrived with a document from the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, stating that a break had taken place. Prior to this document being read, a number of the Citizen Army members had been selected for a special job and the remainder were

dismissed. Haversacks, loaded with cheese sandwiches and other refreshments, were handed to each man. We were informed by James Larkin that we were to proceed to Stephen's Green, and would be met by a man whom we knew and would be also joined by a section of the Irish Volunteers. The combined forces were then to proceed to take over the Mansion House and hold it for the main purpose of preventing the recruiting meeting on behalf of the British Army, in Ireland's capital city, which was to be held on the following night. This announcement created unmeasurable excitement amongst those who were present. We were then told that we were to await further orders before leaving the building. It was then that O'Brien and Macken appeared. The latter read a message from the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers and made the announcement that the venture had been called off as the Mansion House had already been occupied by a section of the British Army and the key positions manned with machine guns. We learned later that the man who was to meet us and take charge of the occupation of the building was James Connolly.

An opposition procession with three short meetings was held on the Friday night. A wagonette with the speakers left Liberty Hall, surrounded by armed guards of the Irish Citizen Army and proceeded to Thomas Street, where the first meeting was held outside Catherine's Church. The procession then proceeded to the North side of Stephen's Green and South King Street, where the second meeting was held at the spot which had been arranged for the Wolfe Tone Memorial. Amongst the audience was a large sprinkling of Irish Volunteers carrying small arms. When this meeting concluded an effort was made to march the procession down Dawson Street, but was prevented from doing so by the police force, and it was turned into Grafton Street, which was practically lined with R.I.C. fully

armed and prepared for all emergencies. The procession had almost reached the junction of Nassau Street and Grafton Street when the Redmondite Volunteers swung around from the Mansion House direction. It seemed inevitable because of the close proximity of the two rival bodies that something would happen. James Connolly, who had been a speaker at the two previous meetings, had the procession turned up Dame Street in order to avoid a clash, where the wagonette stopped and he addressed the audience for a short while. This gave the Redmondite Volunteers the opportunity to disconnect themselves from the procession, and avoided what seemed an almost certain clash between the contending forces of Irishmen.

It is worthy of note that on this night the Citizen Army carried,as well as the Howth Mauser rifles, old Italian thumb-lock rifles and were served with ammunition suitable for the Howth Mauser but too big for the Italian rifles. Had anything occurred on that night which would have required defensive action on the part of the Citizen Army, they would have been unable to give it and would nave been slaughtered by the superior armed forces of the Crown.

The Parnell Anniversary, 11th October, 1914, was an occasion for a display by all sections of the Volunteers and the Citizen Army. The Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army combined in this commemoration with a march to Glasnevin. The National Volunteers (the Redmondites) also paraded to Glasnevin, but at a later hour. On the arrival at the North side of Parnell Square of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army and other kindred organisations, a public meeting took place, at which Professor Eoin MacNeill was Chairman. James Larkin presented himself as a speaker but

was refused admittance to the platform by the Chairman and informed that he was not a speaker at the meeting. He immediately hired a cab and brought it to the West end of the North side of Parnell Square where he addressed a meeting while the other meeting under the chairmanship of Professor MacNeill was still in progress. A short while after this, Thomas Clarke presented himself at Larkin's meeting and spoke from the platform there, the first meeting having concluded. While Larkin was speaking the National Volunteers approached along the North side of Parnell Square from North Frederick Street towards the A.O.H. Hall on the West side. This meant that they would march through the meeting, and immediately the order was given not to let them pass. The Citizen Army was called on to line right across the Square, where the Art Gallery now is, with fixed bayonets. In the meantime some of the leading officers of the Irish Volunteers who had remained for the second meeting endeavoured to persuade the National Volunteers not to make any attempt to pass through, but to proceed home by Frederick Street and Dorset Street. The officer in charge of the National Volunteers was very **adamant** against this proposal, and the situation looked very serious. Captain Monteith of the Irish Volunteers served four rounds of ammunition to fit the Howth Mauser to each member of the Irish Citizen Army who had taken up duty across the North side of the Square. Eventually, however, after some further consultation between the officers of the National Volunteers and the officers of the Irish Volunteers, the former withdrew their contingent from the position they had taken up and proceeded home by the way which had been suggested to them earlier. This was regarded as a victory by some,and by others as a very sensible decision,avoiding an almost certain clash between two bodies of Irishmen, but to all came a welcome feeling of relief which prevailed to the conclusion of the meeting.

Many members of the Irish Citizen Army were very annoyed at the treatment meted out to James Larkin in refusing him admittance to the platform and preventing him being a speaker at the meeting, particularly in view of the statement made that he had been sent an invitation to address the meeting. On enquiry later it was found that the letter had been addressed to James Connolly at Liberty Hall, inviting Connolly to be a speaker at the meeting. The letter was addressed to "Dear James", and when taken from the envelope could have meant any man whose name was James.

On one occasion Connolly had an evening visit from Mrs. Newman, a sister of Sir Roger Casement. She had been under the surveillance of the Detective Division of Dublin Castle. On hearing this, Connolly ordered a section of the Citizen Army who were at drill in Liberty Hall to turn out and take up positions on the far side of Beresford Place at the railway bridge facing Liberty Hall, with instructions that if any attempt was made by the police to raid the Hall, action was to be taken by the section detailed. Nothing unusual happened and the incident passed off quietly.

About the latter end of the third quarter of 1915 matters appeared to be tuning up, and Connolly ordered a complete mobilisation which he regarded as being of great importance. He addressed the members present and conveyed to them his opinion that the situation was now becoming dangerous and it might mean that the Citizen Army would have to fight alone without the aid of the Irish Volunteers or any other military force. He informed us that it was his intention to give every man an opportunity of privately answering three questions which would be put to him that night, and if such questions were answered in the affirmative each person would be given a secret number which would be embossed on a block to be carried round such person's neck

for identification purposes. Corresponding numbers and names would be handed to a trusted person, who would be able to identify them in the event of complete annihilation. Connolly added that he would prefer that any man who felt he could not conscientiously answer all three questions in the affirmative would say so frankly, as he, Connolly, wanted no one to be forced into a position which he could not face up to and their answers to the questions would be treated with strict confidence.

The members of the Citizen Army were then given an opportunity of proceeding to another room in Liberty Hall which had an exit apart from the door by which they had entered. Present were Michael Mallin, Lieutenant Thomas Kain and Connolly. I answered all three questions in the affirmative. The secret number given to me was "5". To the best of my knowledge, a summary of the questions would be as follows;- Was the individual prepared to take part in the fight for Ireland's freedom; would he be prepared to fight alongside the Irish Volunteers, and would he be prepared to fight without the aid of the Irish Volunteers or any other military force.

There have been several attempts made by individuals, not competent to do so, to place as a historical fact that there was open hostility between the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Irish Citizen Army. Never was the truth more far removed. In actual fact there existed the utmost co-operation between the two organisations because of the dual position held by James Connolly as General Secretary of the Union and as Commandant of the Irish Citizen Army. Any intelligent person would immediately see that a state of hostility could not exist under the circumstances outlined. In addition, when one considers that the greater part of Liberty Hall, the printing press owned by the Union,

and the columns of the "Workers' Republic" were used by the Irish Citizen Army during those active days, not to mention Croydon Park and other premises in Dublin, it is quite obvious that there could not have been hostility between the two organisations.

The misnomer of hostility apparently arose out of the fact that a short while prior to the hoisting of the green flag with the harp over Liberty Hall on Palm Sunday, 1916, a member of the Branch Committee named John (?) Farrell moved a resolution that Mr. Connolly be instructed not to hoist the flag as this action would be regarded by the British authorities as an open declaration of war, and would possibly result in the seizure of Liberty Hall by Dublin Castle.

There was a discussion on this resolution in James Connolly's presence during a meeting of the No. 1 Branch Committee. Eventually Mr. Connolly asked the Chairman - Thomas Foran, for permission for himself and Mr. Farrell to retire for a few moments to discuss the matter in private. This permission was granted. A short while afterwards Connolly and Farrell re-appeared before the Committee. The latter asked for permission to withdraw his resolution in view of a statement that had been made to him by James Connolly.

This is the only known incident of the alleged difference between Connolly and the No. 1 Branch Committee. If this was "open hostility", according to the minds of those who want to pervert historical fact, they can have it, but the judgment of reasoning and sensible people will be otherwise. This apart, there was a distinct cleavage after Easter Week between a certain section of the I.C.A. who were used against the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union for the personal aims of certain individuals. The personal aims

of the individuals varied to a considerable degree and were the exact opposite of what had been achieved by the I.C.A., up to and including Easter Week 1916, and had no relation to our ideals of that time.

On Friday, 24th March, I had just arrived back from dinner to work in the Dublin Dockyard, and was about to start on a rush job where a number of rivetters and platers were waiting on the completion of my work, when Elliott Elmes engaged me in conversation. We forgot all about our work while discussing the critical tendencies of the time. During the course of this conversation a messenger appeared from the foreman's office and told Elmes he was wanted in a very great hurry. Elmes was away for some minutes. When he came back he handed me a mobilisation order from James Connolly instructing me to get my section mobilised under full arms immediately, each man to proceed at once to Liberty Hall. The signed order had been given to him by Lieut. Ml. Kelly who had gained an entrance to the Dockyard on the pretext that Elmes wife had taken very ill and must get home immediately.

I knew it would be impossible for me to get out by the front entrance just then, so I had recourse to a longer route by the dry dock at Alexandra Road. Before leaving I asked Elmes to collect my bicycle from the cycle shed and meet me at the entrance to Alexandra Road. On my way out I remembered that I had forgotten to mobilise a couple of my section who were working there and had to go back to do so. Arriving at the entrance to Alexandra Road and East Wall I was surprised to find that Elmes was not there waiting for me, as he had a shorter journey to complete. All kinds of fears entered my mind, that he had misunderstood my instructions and had taken the direct road to his own home. A little patience rewarded and I saw Elmes, who was a very

short man, wobbling from one side of the road to the other on my bicycle in his efforts to reach the pedals.

My first job was to get home to obtain my equipment and mobilisation book which listed the men of the section. In this book was not only their home addresses but also the shops or factories where they were working. This order meant visiting the factory or shop or whatever place of employment each man was engaged in. It was a much slower process than mobilising the men at their own homes. Becoming very worried at the length of time it took me to complete my job I made a mental note for suggested change for the future were another occasion to arise. However, having done so I proceeded to Liberty Hall, and found many of the men whom I had mobilised already at their post. Every entrance and window at Liberty Hall was guarded by members of the Irish Citizen Army, and had every appearance of an active war post. So well did the members of the Citizen Army answer the call that Connolly and Mallin were proud and exultant of the result.

This activity brought from Maeve Cavanagh the following poem, published in "The Workers' Republic" of 8th April, 1916, which well describes the whole keynote of the mobilisation.

"The Call to Arms".

Make way, oh gaping, careless crowds,
Fall back, and let them by,
Fate even now may weave their shrouds
They go - to win or die.
Some moments since, at work they bent,
In factory, mill, or street,
Till Eire her Reveille sent,
Then thronged they to her feet.

Machines were stay'd, tools thrown aside,
Twas Eire's hosting day,
Ne'er bridegroom to a regal bride,
Went half so fleet as they.
With bandolier and trusty gun,
Each busy street they tread,
Whilst Englands craven garrison,
Looks on in hate, and dread.

They needed neither bribe nor threat
'Twas love their service bought,
Had yielded life without regret,
If but its gift had brought
The great shy bird of Freedom near,
To fold her wings at last,
And nest upon their land so dear,
Till Time should wind his blast.

They kept their vigil, brave and true,
No foe their fort assailed,
The British Bull-dog, loath to woo
New dangers, backed and quailed,
And slunk to kennel, baffled, sore,
Too scared to bark or bite,
To weave his dastard plots once more,
"Gainst men he dare not fight.

Men left their employment under the strangest conditions on that day. Some who were carters and had horses to look after turned them into the stables; others brought them to Liberty Hall. Many black-faced men cut a peculiar figure rushing through the streets of Dublin on bicycles or on foot with full equipment rifle or shotgun, bandolier and haversack etc.

Very few members of the Irish Citizen Army left Liberty Hall that night, and the guards were doubled. Those who remained behind slept in rooms on bare boards and without covering of anykind and rose with very stiff joints the next morning.

The cause of this sudden mobilisation arose from an attempted raid by the Detective Force in Dublin Castle to seize copies of the previous week's issue of "The Gael". The shop at No. 31 Eden Quay was a co-op. shop belonging to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, which sold shirts, socks and other wearing apparel and also Nationalist weekly papers. Adjoining the shop was the room of the printing press. There were two girls in the shop, Miss Rosie Hackett and Miss Jennie Shannon. The former went right through into Liberty Hall and informed Connolly of the raid. Connolly took his gun with him, came around by Eden Quay, and on entering the shop found the detectives with a

a bundle of papers in their arms. Connolly's command to them was, "Drop those papers or I'll drop you". They dropped the papers very quickly. He then ordered them out.

Inspector Bannin next arrived on the scene and Connolly demanded his search warrant, but he had not got one. On receiving the search warrant eventually it was discovered that the detectives were searching for "The Gael" a weekly Nationalist organ. There were no copies on the premises before the raid had taken place. All this was regarded by Connolly as a pretext. It was his belief that the real motive was to gain entrance to Liberty Hall through the Pressroom and seize the type and any other matter which came their way.

As a result of experience gained during the sudden mobilisation, I conveyed to Commandant Mallin that I had great fears of falling down on such another mobilisation. The number of men in my section had increased considerably during the previous months, My account of the length of time I had spent mobilising my men at their work was listened to, whereupon I was given Daniel King, another shipyard worker, as an assistant in the task of being responsible for the entire mobilisation of the section.

Prior to this sudden mobilisation a number of the unemployed members of the Irish Citizen Army were using their spare time making munitions. This number was augmented from a selected number of members who frequented the Hall in the evenings and were free from other duties. The work had been going on for many months, and it was found necessary to have a guard at the portion of Liberty Hall occupied by the Citizen Army for this purpose.

The munitions which were being manufactured were grenades, and bullets converted from ordinary shotgun ammunition. Bombs of all shapes and sizes were made from bagging cans, tin snuff-boxes, ~~tin~~ tobacco tin cans, and other

such articles. The bomb was prepared in this fashion; at the bottom of the can was placed dry sawdust, in the centre of the can was placed a small stick of gelignite with the fuse long enough to protrude through the lid, around the gelignite was packed, very tightly, steel borings, of which a plentiful supply was brought daily from the Dublin Dockyard. In the centre of the lid a hole was bored, which enabled the fuse to come through the top. On each side of the tin, or can, two holes were bored and one hole on each side of the lid. To one hole on each side of the tin were fastened one bicycle adjuster similar to those used for adjusting the back wheel of any push bicycle. The ends of these adjusters protruded through the lid which was also holed for this purpose and were fastened down tightly. The bomb was then complete.

Shotgun ammunition was melted down and re-cast to a particular size, which enabled four bullets to be packed into the space formerly held by the shot. Each cartridge was re-compressed and used to greater effect. A test showed that such bullets carried a distance of not less than 180 yards as against their former short range. One can see immediately that the effectiveness of the readjustment was to our advantage.

A man named Hughes who was reputed to have had experience in a South American Revolution put forth a suggestion for the making of a machine gun which would take our improvised shotgun ammunition. Every facility at our command was given to him to put into practical operation the plans he had in mind, and to that end an improvised lathe was placed at his disposal. Most of the material used for this work came from different engineering shops and the Dublin Dockyard in the city without the knowledge of the owners.

After many disappointments the gun was completed, and on being tested was found to be defective to a small degree. Under the conditions in which they were obliged to work, the process of overcoming the defect would take more time than could be afforded, the date of the insurrection was close! Connolly, not being prepared to take risks of this nature, gave instructions for the abandonment of the work of the machine gun.

On reporting to work in the Dublin Dockyard at 6 a.m. on the next morning after the mobilisation, I was met by my foreman who charged me with leaving my work and being responsible for keeping many men idle. He accused me of going to Liberty Hall to take up guard duty. This I did not deny. He then requested me to give him information regarding Elmes, Halpin, King and other men who had also left their work, but to this question, of course, I had no answer beyond saying that I did not know anything about them.

At that time I was an apprentice to my trade and a piece-worker. Arriving at the pay-box later on that day I discovered that my wages had been slashed beyond recognition. This was something I could not submit to and I went immediately to the office of the foreman, James Miller. He was helpless in the matter. The Yard-Manager, Mr. Creighton, who was the real culprit so far as the wage slashing was concerned, then came into the office but no appeal from the foreman would ease him on the decision he had made, whereupon I decided to part company with the Dublin Dockyard. The Manager and Foreman were informed of my decision to leave, whereupon it was intimated to me that I would be arrested under the provisions of the Munitions Act and dealt with according to this British law. I scoffed this threat and told them to go ahead,not fearing any action they cared to take. Needless to say no action was taken.

From that day until Easter Monday, with the exception of going home on Sunday mornings for a change of clothing, Liberty Hall became my temporary place of residence. During all that time I was very much engaged on guard duty and in helping to make munitions.

During our labours in Liberty Hall we had visits from Connolly, Mallin and Madame Markievicz. It was quite usual for Madame to drop in during the afternoons and present us with a bag of cakes for our tea. I recall her saying on one occasion during one of her afternoon visits, "I have already overdrawn my bank account for my next quarter's allowance to the extent of £45, and if this bally revolution doesn't take place soon I don't know how I'm going to live".

A few days before the insurrection Commandant Mallin brought in to our work-room a weaving loom and he, in his spare time, came in for the purpose of weaving some poplin. He told me he hoped to get the piece finished before the insurrection, and if this was accomplished he would probably get the sum of £10 for it. This money he proposed giving to Mrs. Mallin to help her tide over the awkward period while the fighting was taking place in the city.

On the day that the call to arms took place, Mr. Joe Stanley's printing works was raided by the police, and practically all the type of a certain kind was seized. The police, however, overlooked a number of frames of type already set up, and Martin Kelly, myself and some others whose names I cannot recall, proceeded to Mr. Stanley's printing works in Liffey Street with a hand-cart. We were carrying small arms. Our job was to get these frames of type, if possible without any trouble, but if we met with any opposition we were to deal with it. When we arrived at the works we found several policemen on guard outside. We knocked and were admitted.

Our appearance gave the impression of being ordinary workers and we then loaded the hand-cart and took the type to Liberty Hall without any interference.

Another incident worthy of note took place about a week before the Insurrection. I was one of a party detailed to go to the North Circular Road to a house several doors from Fanning's public-house at the corner of Russell Street and North Circular Road. As usual we carried small arms and our instructions were to have no interference from D.M.P. or any other forces in the promotion of a successful mission. On making enquiries at this house, I think it was Hanrahan's house, we were told to go round to the back, which we did by going down a small narrow back-lane. When we arrived there we saw a large number of cases in a shed. We took several of these cases, which we knew were loaded with shotguns, and returned with our handcart loaded to Liberty Hall.

Around this time there appeared to be quite a supply of money not previously available, and this was used for purchasing hatchets, jacks and other articles which would be useful in the Insurrection.

All these incidents were signs in themselves that we were getting very close to the day to which we were all looking forward.

The commemoration of the Centenary of the birth of John Mitchell/held in November 1915. Pearse, when speaking at this function emphasised the fact that insurrections in Ireland had always been just too late. Connolly, who was a member of the audience, rose and asked the question, "Will this one also be too late?". The Irish Citizen Army did not join in the Robert Emmet commemoration held in 1916, as heretofore, but Connolly and Mallin spoke in Liberty Hall, and during Connolly's oration he said, "In case anybody may

be wondering why there are two commemorations being held in the city, I would like it to be deliberately known it is because of the selection of the two speakers on the other platform that the Irish Citizen Army refrained from participating and decided to hold their own commemoration". He added that if the Citizen Army were present, these two speakers would have to be asked questions, the meaning of which might be misinterpreted. The two speakers Connolly referred to were Professor Eoin MacNeill and Bulmer Hobson. As far as Eoin MacNeill was concerned, Connolly had no quarrel with him because he believed his views were honest even though he could not agree with them.

Connolly went on to refer to MacNeill's notes in "The Irish Volunteer" which said that we of this generation, or our children could not expect to see the freedom of Ireland achieved, but would look forward to their children's children achieving it.

Connolly then said of Bulmer Hobson that he was the villian of the piece. "This man who in public is preaching red revolution, at the secret councils of the nation he does everything to retard those who are working for the day that we all so much desire."

I have already mentioned that Connolly brought the Irish Citizen Army together and gave us our secret numbers. From that day onwards our instructions were that on no account were we to lose our rifles, no matter what was to happen, that we should, if possible, avoid taking risks by coming to Liberty Hall or going home at night singly, and at all times must we have our rifles loaded so that we would be ready for action if any attempt was made by police or other forces to disarm us. These instructions were carried out to the letter.

One night some months afterwards one of the men left his loaded shotgun in the drill room at Liberty Hall, against the instructions given to unload on arriving at Liberty Hall. This neglect was the cause of an unfortunate accident, when a new recruit took up the shotgun, pulled the trigger not knowing it was loaded, and two of our members, John Conroy and John Hanratty, were wounded, Conroy in the arm and Hanratty in the legs and stomach. The former's wound was healed and he was well enough to take part in the Insurrection but the latter, still confined to bed, was unable to take his place in the ranks.

Captain Robert Monteith was formerly attached to the British Army and had completed his service. He was attached to Ordnance Department, Phoenix Park. When World War No. 1 broke out Monteith was invited to re-sign in the British Army, which he refused to do. It was well known to the British authorities that he was actively connected with the Irish Volunteers. He was then dismissed from his position in Ordnance, and shortly afterwards a deportation order was served on him - he was not to reside within so many miles of the Dublin metropolitan area. Monteith on being served with this order sought the advice of Connolly, and a Stop Press edition of the "Irish Worker" was issued. Connolly advised Monteith to contact his superior officers in the Volunteers immediately, and offered the opinion that they should stand by him and not allow his deportation. The Volunteer Executive, for tactical reasons, advised Monteith that there was no alternative but to accept the Deportation Order.

Connolly's reaction to the Deportation Order was to hold a public meeting in Beresford Place, with a complete mobilisation of the Irish Citizen Army, and threw out a challenge to the British Government, if they issued Deportation Orders to members of the Irish Citizen Army,such would be resisted in arms.

With the arrival of Palm Sunday, 16th April, came a day to which all Citizen Army and many other Irish men and women in Dublin had looked forward. Elaborate preparations with rehearsals had been made prior to this day, which was the day the green flag with the gold harp in the centre, without the crown, was to be hoisted over Liberty Hall. The whole function was carried out with all military ceremony. This was the first day Connolly appeared in uniform; prior to this he never wore anything of a military nature, apart from weapons, but a short pair of leggings.

A complete square was formed in Beresford Place outside Liberty Hall by the Citizen Army, and only those taking part in the actual ceremony were allowed inside the square. Many thousands of people were lined up outside this square, at Butt Bridge, Eden Quay, North Wall and Beresford Place. The ceremony proceeded amid mounting excitement, and Miss Molly O'Reilly, a young red-haired member of the Women's Section of the Citizen Army, dressed suitably for the occasion proceeded from the centre of Beresford Place where the flag had been presented to her by Connolly, walked right into Liberty Hall, with a guard-of-honour, up the main staircase and out on to the roof, where the flag was unfurled and hoisted, to the sound of rolling drums. When the flag reached the final position on the flag-staff, tremendous cheering from the gathered multitude rent the air, with individual cracks from revolvers, which one suspected came from members of the Irish Volunteers who were amongst the spectators. Connolly made a short address to those present, and this concluded one of the most memorable occasions which I experienced as a young man.

O'Donovan Rossa died about June, 1915, and his work in the past for Irish freedom was remembered by the older generation. The newer generation knew little or nothing

about him, but our minds were fired by the stories we now heard of his fight in the cause of Irish freedom. A short while after his death his remains were brought to Dublin to the Pro-Cathedral, kept there for one night, and then removed to the City Hall for Lying in State. A Guard of Honour remained in the City Hall during that period. It fell to the lot of the Irish Citizen Army to relieve a Guard of Irish Volunteers on the Friday evening, and we completed our 24 hours duty. I felt very proud of the fact that I was selected as one of the Guard supplied by the Irish Citizen Army. While the remains were in the City Hall there was a continuous stream of Irish men and women, young and old, seeking to pay their last respects to the great old Fenian. I remember my sister, Mrs. Costello, being in that long queue of people; she had come from the White Banks beyond the Pigeon House Fort, Ringsend, and appealed to me to allow her to go in out of turn. This request had to be refused because of our strict instructions on this matter. I felt disturbed having to refuse this request, but knew there was no alternative. In the Irish Citizen Army a higher degree of discipline was expected because it had been imbued in our minds by Commandant Mallin that the professional soldier carried out orders because he knew the punishment that would await him if he failed to do so, and Mallin exhorted us time after time that he expected from us discipline of a much higher degree, given freely because it was the right thing to do and not from any fear of punishment.

On Sunday afternoon the public funeral took place and again I was one of the Guard of Honour supplied by the Irish Citizen Army. The Guard of Honour was in charge of Captain James O'Sullivan, and the number comprising it was equally divided between the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army who marched each side of the hearse carrying the

remains of the wonderful old Fenian. The funeral procession through the city was very impressive. The inspiring message at this funeral was not that we were lamenting the death of O'Donovan Rossa, but that we were celebrating his triumph in the cause of Ireland and honouring this man who was going to his last resting place. The streets of the city along the route of the procession were thronged, and all the way from the starting point at the City Hall until the funeral reached Glasnevin Cemetery, many, many thousands of people paid their last respects to Rossa. At the graveside a square was formed, and Pearse gave his now famous oration known as "Pearse's Oration at the Graveside of O'Donovan Rossa". A firing party comprised of Volunteers and Citizen Army men fired three volleys over the grave and the last post was sounded by Bugler Oman of the Citizen Army. The reaction to all this was a further re-awakening amongst many of the younger generation. It gave a great fillip by way of new recruits into both the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers.

James Connolly was slowly gathering together the broken threads of the Union membership, and with this came a certain amount of re-organisation among the dockers on the Dublin Quays. From the outbreak of the war up to the period of this reorganisation the cost of living had taken a very big jump. In some cases decent employers were trying to meet the situation by giving small voluntary increases in wages to their workers, but these employers were few in number. As a result of the economic stress the Dublin dockers again turned their eyes towards Liberty Hall. The Union had no money and consequently was not in a position to engage in any long drawn out struggle, because of the repercussions from the 1913 lock-out. However, a claim was made by the Union on behalf of the dockers in the Burns Laird Line at the North Wall. This claim received scanty

treatment and a strike was declared. Connolly made arrangements for the strikers to do picket duty with arms. In this connection Citizen Army members were asked to give up their arms, an undertaking being given beforehand that they would be absolutely safe and that they would be used for a good purpose. While men responded to the request, they disliked the idea of parting with their rifles. This demonstration of armed pickets seemed to have the effect that Connolly desired, the strike, of short duration, being settled with a considerable increase in wages to the dockers concerned. Soldiers of the British Army were also to be seen going up and down the Quays of Dublin with arms, but while it appeared to be a dangerous situation no incidents of any note took place.

Irish men and women of to-day are to be seen paying homage to the name of James Connolly and acknowledging the wonderful man he was, but when he was alive and amongst us in the flesh he was not considered in any way wonderful. In fact, apart from the Irish Citizen Army and a very limited number of members of the Union, including some of the leading officials and some outside friends, he was practically ignored and unknown. At a meeting of a section of Dublin dockers who worked in the firm of Michael Murphy & Co. Connolly had a very stormy time. In those days Michael Murphy & Co. were regarded as being very fair employers. During the course of this meeting there was great opposition to the advice given by Connolly, and he was denounced by one of the employees as being a "master's man", and this view was strongly supported by some of the workers assembled. To be called a "master's man" is perhaps one of the worst accusations any ordinary man in trades union circles would have to face; it implies that that man is in essence a traitor to the workers he should be fighting with, and not against. Connolly, having suffered this opposition for

some time, finally left the platform, but before doing so said to the assembled workers, "You can go to hell and find somebody else who can do better for you". With that he left the room. This action of Connolly's brought the sensible portion of the meeting to a realisation of their position, and eventually they sent for him to come back and transact the rest of the business. This Connolly did, believing that he had taught the recalcitrant members the lesson they deserved, and were glad to accept the advice which they previously had rejected.

On Good Friday, 1916, between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, Commandant Mallin and myself were in one of the rooms on the river side of Liberty Hall, Mallin weaving poplin and I filling some shotgun cartridges. We were talking about the coming Insurrection and other matters, when suddenly Mallin said to me, "Robbins, would you like to take a walk with me?". I thought this was an extraordinary switch in the conversation, and consented to his request. We left Liberty Hall, and as we were proceeding along Amiens Street, Mallin said to me, "You'll probably see some people in various places along this street who you will know. On no account give them any sign of recognition". We continued our walk, over Newcomen Bridge Ossory Road, around the West Road direction, up by the Black Church at Castleforbes and back through Amiens Street to Liberty Hall. During this walk Mallin referred to a matter which had been worrying him considerably. He explained to me that when he was in India in the British Army he got malaria and occasionally at various changes in the seasons of the year the malaria affected him, so much so that when he was being visited with an attack he gave the impression that he was strongly under the influence of drink. It seems that some time before the day on which he was telling me the story, he had got an attack of malaria, and Connolly immediately came to the conclusion that Mallin had been drinking and spoke

very sharply to him. Mallin told me that his reply to Connolly was, "I gave you a promise when joining the Irish Citizen Army that I was finished with all that. I have kept my promise. I am not under the influence of drink". I asked Mallin why he did not explain about the malaria to Connolly and he said he was so hurt by Connolly's sharp talk to him that he preferred not to say any more about it.

From this story Mallin went on to say that he was sorely disappointed with Connolly for doubting his word, particularly in view of the fact that Connolly knew of Mallin's action in procuring his release from the hands of the I.R.B. The arrest of Connolly was something I knew nothing about up to this conversation with Mallin,and would imagine that those in the Irish Citizen Army who had any information were very few in number. Mallin then went on to tell me about Connolly's disappearance. He said that Connolly disappeared for a number of days, nobody knew where he was nor could any information be obtained as to his whereabouts. Mallin came to the conclusion that as there had been strained relations between Connolly and leading members of the I.R.B., who had charge of the Irish Volunteer Organisation and were very annoyed at Connolly's criticism of their policy, that they had all to do with his disappearance. He requested an interview with the Military Council. When before the men who comprised the Council, Mallin said, "Gentlemen, you probably know I am here in connection with the disappearance of James Connolly". He was asked, "Why come to us? Don't you think that perhaps the British authorities would be able to tell you more about it". Mallin replied that he thought he was in the right place to get the necessary information, as he understood the workings of the British authorities and felt sure that if Connolly was a prisoner in their hands there would have been other reactions from that direction, but seeing that there was no reaction from the British

authorities he concluded that they had nothing whatever to do with Connolly's disappearance. Mallin then told the Military Council that should Connolly not put in an appearance by a certain date the Citizen Army would take to the streets on their own. He also said to them, "In case you may think of arresting me as you have arrested Connolly, I want to tell you that that will not have any effect on the situation. There will be no more talking or interviews. There will be action". Eamon Ceannt, who was sitting near Mallin, asked him in a sarcastic tone, "And what could your small number do in such a situation?". Mallin replied, "We can fight and die, and it will be to our glory and your shame if such does take place". With that Pádraig Pearse banged the table, saying, "Yes, by God, that is so, and here's one who will be with you". The interview finished on a friendly note, but no admission was made by the Military Council that they knew anything about Connolly's disappearance. However, Connolly re-appeared within the period of time which Mallin had allotted.

Having finished this story, Mallin then said, "I felt very hurt at the sneering way in which Eamon Ceannt put his question. I hope that one day I will be in a position to show him how wrong he was in making that remark".

My own personal view of Connolly's disappearance is that he would not have left Liberty Hall of his own free will without informing Foran and O'Brien that he was going away for a few days, knowing how concerned the officials then in charge of the Union would be. Connolly was not a man to neglect his Union duties, and would have made some arrangements for someone else to carry out those duties had he planned to be absent for any period of time. I am, therefore, convinced that his disappearance from Liberty Hall was because of some restraining force. He never explained his disappearance,

beyond saying to one of his closest friends, Madame Markievicz, "I have been through hell those last few days, and I hope everything will be for the best". Thomas Foran told me some years afterwards when discussing this question. He put the query to Connolly why he went away without saying so. Connolly made the following reply: "In the Spring of the year an urge came on him to go on a walking tour and had succumbed to the desire".

According to Monteith's book, "Casement's Last Journey", he quotes Sean O'Casey as alleging Connolly to have said: "As soon as the old green flag flew from the roof, the Irish soldiers passing by would swing left, assemble before the Hall, and vow that they would serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland..." It was a childish thought for Connolly to have. I would like to take this opportunity of saying that there is no foundation in fact for this statement, that it arises out of pure imagination in the mind of Sean O'Casey, or perhaps not imagination but vindictiveness. Connolly and Casey were poles apart.

It was on Tuesday evening before Easter, between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., while at drill instruction in the top long room at the far end of Liberty Hall, that I was ordered before Commandant James Connolly in company with Captain R. McCormick, Captain J. O'Neill, Lieut. Ml. Kelly, Sergeant Joseph Doyle, James Joyce, James O'Shea and possibly some others.

There were one or two of this group who knew beforehand why we were so instructed and as to the nature of this order. Those of us who did not know were forming all kinds of opinions. Each in turn failed to interpret its real meaning.
We did not have to wait in suspense any great length of time. We went from the drill room, in company with Commandant Michael Mallin, a short distance fown the top right-hand passage into No. 7 Room, where we were received by James Connolly. He informed us of the part each one of us was to act in the Insurrection, which was planned to take place at 6.30 p.m. on Easter Sunday in Dublin, while 7 p.m. was fixed for the country. This time was

supposed to have been brought forward by a few hours,but no evidence exists to substantiate such statement and I only rely on the interview with Connolly to discountenance this story. While writing I can picture, and even feel once again how much I was affected by the intense, suppressed excitement. I mentioned my feelings afterwards to one or two of my comrades, and found that this state of feeling was mutual.

James Connolly then went on to explain that our Company would be in charge of Captain Richard McCormick, and our job was to check and delay the advance of the British military approaching from Portobello Barracks long enough to allow the main portion of the St. Stephen's Green Division to dig themselves into their allotted positions. Having done this, we were to fall back and place ourselves under the command of Commandant Ml. Mallin, who would have control of the fighting operations in the St. Stephen's Green area. The plans in detail of how the British military were to be checked were next elaborated. Sergeant Joseph Doyle was to have a section of sixteen men. His job was to take over the publichouse owned by Mr. Davey, Portobello Bridge, facing the Bridge from the city side and seek out the most advantageous positions in the house to dominate the Bridge, and allow the military to advance within reasonable distance, when the section under his orders would open a surprise fire, which was to be continued until the British troops retreated in surprise. In taking over Davey's publichouse, Sergeant Doyle was to have the assistance of James Joyce, who was a member of the I.C.A., and who was employed at Davey's as a porter. Lieutenant Michael Kelly was to have charge of another section, numbering sixteen. Their job was to take up position on the railway bridge crossing the Grand Canal, to support Sergeant Doyle's section, and also to cover their retirement. Captain John J. O'Neill was to support Lieutenant

Kelly by taking up position on the railway bridge overlooking Harcourt Road and thereby dominate any approach of the military along the South Circular Road. Capt. McCormack was to have his temporary H.Q. in Harcourt St. Station with the balance of the Company not previously detailed to the outlying posts, where he would be joined later by the various sections having completed their tasks.

I was detailed with a section of a similar number to barricade both ends of Hatch St. these positions to be manned in order to avoid encirclement which would prevent the retirement of the whole company to Stephen's Green. From Hatch Street we were to retire through the Iveagh House grounds and fall back on Stephen's Green where we would find Commandant Mallin already in position.

Connolly, having been satisfied that each man thoroughly understood his instructions, then gave a general direction in the following strain: that we were, if such chance came our way to encourage Irishmen in the British army to come over to our side. Regarding the R.I.C. and D.M.P., he left that question to our discretion with the words: "Remember how they treated you in 1913". For some years many of the D.M.P. had been carrying small arms, and the R.I.C. were a semi-military police force, well trained in the use of arms, and, therefore, in our opinion, placed themselves in the category of an armed force, to be dealt with as we thought fit.

In addition, James Connolly also made us aware of a shipload of arms, including some guns, with officers and men to operate them, coming from Germany. The utmost secrecy about these plans was to be maintained. When the interview concluded, I found myself extremely happy, though very excited. I have a recollection that when we left No. 7 room some of us tried to dance in the passage.

One of the last instructions we received was to go over the area of our allotted positions before the Sunday and make ourselves familiar with the surroundings. There was little sleep to be had that night. The greatest desire was to get out to survey the position entrusted to my care. The next day Captain McCormick agreed to accompany me, but did not do so until Holy Thursday. During the rounds our only conversation was the coming event on Sunday. From the talk carried on I got the impression that Captain McCormick was aware of the event before Tuesday evening's interview. In Hatch Street there was a car hazard and in my own mind I noted that the cabs and outside cars would prove useful for the barricades.

In the intervening days many incidents occurred, which helped to shorten the time and which I shall endeavour to mention later.

Easter Sunday morning arrived. Early afoot, the first job was to mobilise my section for 2 p.m. that afternoon. Having done this I then attended to my spiritual welfare, and also paid the first visit home for that week. I had a short private talk with my elder brother, who was attached to the Volunteers, and without giving anything away conveyed to him the importance of that evening's mobilisation. Knowing that there was a possibility of that morning's visit being my last I felt somewhat sad. I pictured all kinds of things, as one always does under such circumstances;- would I come through the campaign alive, I would cause sorrow and anguish to my parents, brothers and sisters and that they would be upset thinking and praying for my safety. Many other thoughts of that trend were continually passing through my mind. I could not dare to tell my mother and father, brothers and sisters of what I was about to do, or of what was likely to happen. I wanted to say goodbye to them all, yet how was it to be done with safety to my secret.

Then my thoughts turned to my comrades. I realised they had similar difficulties. I thought further along this line, and found that some had greater difficulties. They had their wives and children to say goodbye to. Those so placed had a much harder duty to perform than I, if they were not to break faith to the Insurrection Movement.

Reasoning in this way I felt strong enough to say good morning to my father and find my mother in the parlour, shake hands with her, and say I was not likely to be home again for a few weeks. Leaving the house, I secretly wished each, in turn, my last good-bye.

That morning, while talking to my brother, we discussed the MacNeill order cancelling that evening's parade. I advised him to ignore this order. When I arrived back at Liberty Hall the same matter was under discussion. Some were inclined to give it serious attention. Others were inclined to treat it less seriously; I was one of the latter. However, a little later on we knew the real significance of this order. Capt. Seán Connolly was on special duty leading to the room where the Military Council were meeting. The result of the meeting was known to him. In a terrific state of excitement he burst into a room where a number of us were; off came hat, belt and coat, and he cried in vexation. The whole thing was off! MacNeill's order cancelling the parade had ruined our hopes. How I remember the manner this information was received! Some cursed, some prayed that things would be righted, others went around gloomily, while others forced a smile, saying better luck next time.

The afternoon wore slowly on with discussions among many of us on the new trend of events. The order went round to Officers and N.C.O.'s to get ready for route march. This created fresh discussion and new hope.

Perhaps something was really going to happen! These thoughts were soon dispelled in me by Commandant Mallin privately explaining to a number of us that nothing was to happen that evening, but to hope for to-morrow.. Later the Bugler sounded the fall-in, and we were very soon marching in column of route with Connolly and Mallin at the head. The march was perhaps the shortest ever taken by the I.C.A. From Liberty Hall it went, to the best of my recollection, over Butt Bridge, Tara Street, College Street, Grafton Street, Stephen's Green, York Street, Aungier Street, Nth. Gt. Georges Street, Dame Street, up to the City Hall, turned sharply to left, bringing us almost to the Upper Castle Gate and wheeled to the right through Castle Street. The Castle Gates were closed, and the sentry on duty shouted, "Guard, turn out"! This they did and by the look of their faces seemed quite scared. We then proceeded on to Christ Church Place, down Bridgefoot Street over Queen's Street Bridge to the North Quays, past the Four Courts, Capel Street, Mary Street, Henry Street, O'Connell Street, down Eden Quay to Liberty Hall. While passing along the North Quays, Captain O'Sullivan, of the Irish Volunteers, stood to attention and saluted. There was a very close bond of friendship between this officer and the I.C.A.

On our arrival at Beresford Place Connolly gave his last public address, not only to the I.C.A. but to the general public. He referred to the secret session of the British Parliament which was to take place that coming week, and said the Irish question was bound to be under consideration, and also that there was likely to be a question of peace with Germany. He declared it was essential that Ireland should be represented at such peace negotiations. He concluded the speech by declaring that I.C.A. would stand at arms in the name of the Irish Republic until that claim was heard.

We were then ordered into the large front room. The Company Officers, receiving their instructions in turn, detailed a number of sections off for various duties. I was ordered to take charge of the Guard of Liberty Hall for twelve hours. The usual Sunday night concert was to be carried on as advertised so as to cover any extraordinary appearance from the many shrewd-eyed individuals who made it their business to watch all activities inside and around the Hall. Having placed the necessary number of men on Guard, the remainder of the Guard were detailed to the Guardroom.

Tea was almost ready when a message was brought that my father wanted to see me. I guessed immediately the nature of this visit and for the first time in my life purposely tried not to see him. A message was sent back saying it was impossible for him to see me as I was too busy. A second message was brought saying that he would wait until I was disengaged. This was followed up by a request from Madame Markievicz to come down to the Concert Hall, as the time was approaching for my turn to sing. Arrangements were made for another to fill my place, and I would go down later when my father's patience was worn out. However, I had to face the music in the end. It is not necessary for the reader to know the details of that wordy duel. It is sufficient to say that I did not go home, which was the object of my father's visit and arising from the anxiety of my mother, who was not enjoying good health and who sensed that something serious was afoot, which probably arose from the knowledge of her father's connection with the Fenian movement.

The night wore on slowly for us who were on duty. A very strict check was kept all over Liberty Hall and outside the building as well. Some of our scouts who were doing duty on the British Military Barracks reported all clear at a

very early hour on Easter Monday morning. Eventually the time arrived when we were relieved by Lieutenant Ml. Kelly and a squad of men.

Easter Monday morning saw Liberty Hall and its surroundings once again a scene of great activity. Members of the I.C.A. who the previous night had been given passes to go home were returning at an early hour. High officers and section mobilisers of the Irish Volunteers arrived early and the latter were leaving on their bicycles every couple of minutes with special mobilisation orders. One would imagine from the number of bicycles inside and outside the Hall that there was a special attraction for the cyclists of Dublin on that day. I was having something to eat about 11.30 a.m. when Capt. Seán Connolly came looking for me.

The previous day I had been complaining of my uniform having got too small, particularly the pants. Seán promised to help me as regards the latter. We adjourned to another room and I set about making the change. This job was half completed when Bugler William Oman sounded the fall-in at about 11.45 a.m. There could be heard a rush of feet from all directions throughout the Hall. That was a terrific moment. Fear of being left behind made me dress in the shortest possible time. Down the top passage I ran as fast as I could, while at the same time I was buttoning this and buckling up that.

When the main entrance was reached all my comrades could be seen lined up in Beresford Place. Just then a section of Irish Volunteers from St. Enda's with P.H. Pearse were passing in to the Hall. I was making for the ranks when Pat Fox caught my eye. This was the man I referred to earlier in my story dealing with Guard duty in Croydon Park during my early days in the Irish Citizen Army. He drew

a youth about nineteen years of age towards me saying, "Here is my lad; take him with you for the Irish Citizen Army. I am too old for the job". My reply was; "Right you are, Pat. Good-bye". Little did I know then that in less than twenty hours this youth was to breathe his last in this life in the cause of Ireland's freedom. Young Fox was handed over to Commandant Mallin before I took up my allotted position. We were not waiting long before James Connolly gave final instructions to the officers. These instructions were short, sharp and precise.

Captain McCormack had the Company moving immediately, and was making in the direction of Butt Bridge when Connolly ran after us and shouted; "Not that way, Mac! You might be slaughtered. Get there as quick as possible. The fight has started in some parts already". I believe we were the first Company of the I.C.A. to move to take up our positions.

As the company proceeded up Eden Quay, Lieut. Michael Kelly dropped back to chat with me. "Well, Frank", he said, "we're going to take up our positions at last. We are to be there by 12 o'clock". "Yes," I replied, "and we might as well have a song on our way". There was a group of us who when on all route marches made a practice of singing. This was encouraged by Connolly and Mallin as a good thing for maintaining the morale of our men. It was also taken up by the Irish Volunteers at a later stage. As far as memory serves, I was the only one of that group in our company on this occasion so it fell to my lot to carry this part of the programme through, and with a little help I succeeded in doing so. When passing the Ballast Office, I noticed by the clock that it was then 11.55 a.m. five minutes to get to our positions. "My God, Mick," I exclaimed, "we will never do it!" Captain McCormack must

Captain McCormack was giving instructions to me and remarked that that would be our first job, nodding over to the gentlemen in blue, were it not for the fact that MacDonagh asked him not to have unnecessary bloodshed. This remark remained in my mind and/was at least the cause of saving McDonagh's request one other life.

The next move was that the remainder of the company entered the station. Capt. McCormack and myself closed and bolted the main entrance doors. An order was issued to the general public to get up on the platform immediately, that the Irish Republic was proclaimed and that the building was now under its control. This caused consternation among the many holiday trippers including many women and children who became very frightened. While this order was being carried out my attention was drawn to the fact that a number of men inside the ticket office had locked the door against our men. The door was strong and an attempt to burst the door open failed, but a revolver shot into the lock had the effect of showing the men inside our determination to get there. The result was that one of them removed the bolts for us to enter. While this was happening some of the office clerks were making their way through another door leading on to the street; this was stopped immediately. One of these men had almost got outside when a hand fell on his shoulder and drew him back just as if he were a feather. All the doors were bolted and windows barricaded while one would look around. The next job was the restaurant and bar, and when going in that direction, I espied a staff officer of the British Army out for a holiday, looking out from the restaurant. My first impulse was to shoot immediately. Seeing no visible side arms, I called for his surrender. This man very foolishly ran back behind the door, at the same time shutting it. The fact that the upper portion of the door was glass helped to save his life, for on reaching it I kicked it open, called again on him to surrender, while at

the same time watching his figure as he flattened himself against the wall behind the door. When he surrendered, I handed him over to Captain McCormack, who was satisfied with a hurried search and much to my disappointment he was not made a prisoner.

I cannot recall if Captain McCormack obtained this officer's name. His appearance to the best of my recollection was - average height, well built, though somewhat stout, grey hair, between 45 and 50 years. If that man is alive to-day, it is not I who deserve his thanks for being so, but no other person than the late Commandant Mac Donagh. It is to be hoped that he appreciates this fact.

The lower portion of the station was cleared. Everyone, whether willing or unwilling, was now on the platform. An incident worth relating occurred there. Lieutenant Michael Kelly called on a soldier of the British Army to take off his coat and join his fellow-Irishmen in this fight for freedom. The soldier was about to do so when an old gentleman jumped between the soldier and Lieut. Kelly and endeavoured to impress on the soldier not to disgrace his uniform, at the same time he struggled to obtain Ml. Kelly's rifle. This attack was replied to immediately by Michael Donnelly, who lifted this gentleman's top hat off his head with a bullet and made him realise that it was serious business. Lieut. Ml. Kelly had instructions to send an engine down the line. He failed in this through the action of the signal-man, who locked the points. He then proceeded with three men to take up position on the railway bridge overlooking the Grand Canal, which was to act as a flank movement on the British troops should they endeavour to cross Portobello bridge, and also to cover Sergeant Doyle's retreat from Davy's when the job entrusted to him was carried through. Captain John J. O'Neill (since dead in recent years) with three men was in position on the bridge overlooking and commanding Harcourt Road and

South Circular Road.

My job was now to attend to the building of two barricades near both ends of Hatch Street. To accomplish this there were, not sixteen or twenty men as promised, but three men, whose names were;- No. 84, James Dwyer; No. 36, Patrick Lawlor; No. 79, Edward Tuke. The latter two were also members of the Fintan Lalor Pipers' Band, which was always regarded as part of the Irish Citizen Army. Captain McCormack took charge of the station, directing and surveying operations for the area. Patrick Lawlor was detailed to throw everything possible over the wall down into the street, while Edward Tuke, James Dwyer and myself went down the goods entrance on to Harcourt Road and around by Earlsfort Terrace. We had gone half-way down the terrace when my attention was drawn to a horse and van belonging to the White Heather Laundry. This we took with us around into Hatch Street, where signs of Lawlor's work were already noticeable. The horse and van were drawn across the roadway; when the horse was relieved of its burden it was sent away. On my tour of inspection with Capt. McCormack the previous week there were a number of cabs and hackney cars in Hatch Street. These were in my mind as likely to be very useful for making the barricades along with the materials from the station. I was, however, sadly disappointed on this score as Easter Monday was a busy day for the Dublin jarveys and there was not one cab or car in sight. Earlsfort Terrace motor garage was very much more friendly in this direction, there being a plentiful supply of motor cars of all makes, though the staff was very reluctant in helping us with the task on hands. Lawlor was not able to keep the supply going quick enough to build the barricades. This necessitated an order from me to Dwyer and Tuke to commandeer all the possible help to take the motor cars from the garage, while I got back to the Station with the idea of obtaining more help for

they sought to climb the railings. However, the key of the gate nearby was produced, which made their entry easier. I remember two of these men distinctly. One was Liam O'Brien now Professor University College, Galway, and the other Harry Nicholls, an engineer in the Dublin Corporation.

The next incident of note occurred at the south-east gate facing Leeson Street and Earlsfort Terrace. A dairy cart with a tub of wash for cattle drinking was passing by. The man in charge was ordered to back the cart right up against the gates. Having done this, he surprised us all by asking, "What else am I to do?" The reply was to unharness the horse and take it and himself home. The key of this gate was not to be had in time, otherwise one of the Dublin United tramcars would have provided useful material for a barricade at this corner. The driver was called on from inside the railings to stop the car. This he did, but not to our satisfaction. The car was approaching the city down Leeson Street, and was brought to a standstill opposite the laneway leading to the back of St. Vincent's Hospital. The driver whipped off the handles and changed to the other end, while the conductor reversed the trolley. It was the quickest bit of work on the part of tramway employees I have seen since or before that day. Observing their intention, the officer in charge, who, to the best of my belief, was Lieutenant Robert De Cor, gave an order to fire so as to prevent the men from taking the car away. Our firing had no effect whatever; they were not to be frightened and undauntedly stuck to their post and drove the property of the D.U.T.C. out of danger.

Shortly after this a messenger came to me with an order to report to Comdt. Mallin immediately. When I had done so, Comdt. Mallin instructed me to select four men of the Irish Citizen Army, along with eight Volunteers whom he would detail to me for the purpose of taking over the College of

Surgeons and searching the place well for rifles and ammunition belonging to the Officers' Training Corps attached to the College. The job of finding this number was well nigh impossible, because all the men had been appointed to posts with strict instructions not to leave them as they could not be spared for any other duty. After a little time the following were scraped together; Fred Ryan, John Joe Hendrick and David O'Leary (tne last-named some years later became attached to the Head Office of the I.T.G.W.U.) Before giving final instructions, Comdt. Mallin called on Countess de Markievicz, Mary Hyland (now Mrs. Michael Kelly) and Lily Kempston (now Mrs. McAlerney and living in Seattle, U.S.A.) to join the group. It was then I understood what Mallin meant when he spoke of volunteers.

By a stroke of luck, the caretaker of the College was busily engaged talking to a man at the doorway. When about to open the gateway Mallin gave an order that the party was to proceed as if going straight up York Street, otherwise the caretaker would "smell a rat", as the saying goes, and shut the door, thereby making the job much more difficult. As the gate was opened I glanced around saying, "Keep together and follow me". With one eye on the College of Surgeons door, I led the way in the direction of York Street, and with every intention of obeying Mallin's instructions. When we were half-way across the road, though the man in conversation with the caretaker seemed the worse for drink and very much unconcerned with the events that were taking place, the caretaker became decidedly nervous on seeing our party leave St. Stephen's Green. In fact he was using a little force to get the man out of the doorway and was succeeding fairly well, too well for my liking. Acting on the spur of the moment, I resolved to disobey our instructions. I took the shortest cut and shouted to the others to follow. Arriving at the steps, I saw the

caretaker had given his companion a push and slammed the door. I jumped from the pathway to the top step. As I did so a shot ran out and the bullet whizzed by my ear and entered the top right-hand side of the door. While it was a remarkably close shave for me, it helped to save the situation. It must have unnerved the caretaker a little, because he failed to shoot the lock home on the first attempt. The full force of my weight and strength was thrown against the door, which gave a few inches, enough for my foot to jam it from being closed. I then saw that there was a porch inside which the caretaker was using as a leverage to help him against our entry. He was very soon brought to his proper senses when the muzzle of my revolver was placed under his throat. There was no further obstruction and our party entered the College of Surgeons, which was to become a very useful Headquarters for the St. Stephens Green area.

Our first objective was the procuring of the rifles. The caretaker was closely questioned but no information was forthcoming. Threats were then indulged in, but this poor "innocent" knew nothing. He did not know of an Officers' Training Corps being attached to the College. He didn't even know that his signature was appended to the Covenant issued by Sir Edward Carson to fight Mr. H.H. Asquith's Home Rule Bill. He didn't even know that the orange sash in his rooms belonged to him, nor did he know where the keys of the premises were. The patience of our group was exhausted with this man. Had not Madame Markievicz taken control he would certainly have had a very rough time. Eventually we got some keys which turned out to be for the caretaker's apartments. He had an objection to going to the bedroom with his wife and son. But when he saw that this objection was about to be forcibly overruled he changed his mind. Here the three products of Carsonism were placed

safely under lock and key. A hurried search was made for the rifles, but proved fruitless. Door after door was burst open, all to no avail.

Tiring of this job, the three women left to report to Comdt. Mallin, asking for further instructions. Word was brought to hold on until further orders and take up position on the roof. A supply of bombs accompanied the messengers, who then took their departure. We were a short time on the roof when one of our party observed a young woman with a bicycle on the far side of the road waving up to us. On going down to the door a tricolour flag was given in by her. I could then see that the young woman was no other than Margaret Skinnider, who a week or two previously had come from Glasgow to be here for the fight.

It was quite a job to get the flag up in its proper place. The runners of the flagstaff would not act. I tried to climb up, but my efforts were a failure because of weight and unsteadiness of the pole. David O'Leary tried it next and proved more successful. It was a risky undertaking on his part, for if the pole had proved itself as rotten as the ropes there would have been another story to tell to-day.

As the day wore on those below in the Green were kept busy. Sortie parties were holding up all motor cars and vehicles and taking them inside the Green. A number of women, wives or relatives of Irishmen in the British Army, were bent on making trouble for our men. They lived in the vicinity and were aggressively pro-British. From the roof we could hear occasional hammering on the doors below. Our first impression was that it might be some messenger from Comdt. Mallin. Having found out that it was the trio in the bedroom looking for all kinds of things, we decided to take no further notice of their hammering, and eventually they

became quiet.

Evening came with nothing of a startling nature happening beyond the rifle fire from South-West corner of the Green and Cuffe Street, on the advance guards of British troops. Patrols of our men were moving around endeavouring to locate the positions of the military. It was nearly twelve o'clock when our little group on the roof decided to take turn about on sentry to provide against being taken unawares in case of sudden developments. This gave us a much-needed rest, even though it only meant two hours each.

I should have explained earlier that both David O'Leary and John Joe Hendrick were attached to other sections, but were not able to locate where these sections were. The former was attached to the London and the latter to the Liverpool contingent.

It was Hendrick who fired the shot that upset the caretaker and very nearly upset me. It might be well to say here that, although he was attached to the Liverpool contingent, he was also a playmate of mine when we were both young boys going to North William Street School, under the sharp but motherly eye of Sister Monica. Meeting him again after a number of years, under such extraordinary circumstances was indeed a very welcome surprise.

The dawn of Easter Tuesday was breaking, and the peacefulness which reigned supreme was suddenly broken by the fire of machine-guns which was replied to by our rifle men. Shortly after the first outbreak of firing my attention was drawn by someone shouting on the right-hand side of the College of Surgeons. On looking around I espied Captain McCormack, Lieutenant Michael Kelly and Michael Donnelly on the roof of Kapp and Petersons. The latter lived in this house and had gained an entrance with his own latchkey. Michael Kelly

shouted to take more cover, that the British Military had occupied the Shelbourne Hotel and were armed with machine-guns. The firing on both sides continued incessantly for several hours. The British Military had the upper hand of the situation so far as the Green was concerned, because of their superiority of arms. The occupation of the Shelbourne Hotel only gave them advantage over our men in the Green, and in no other position for that week, as events will prove, and that advantage could have been obtained just the same by the occupation of any other building in the Square. The contributing factor which aided the military in this respect was, not as some people foolishly believe to be, lack of foresight on our part to recognise the importance of taking control of this building. The real problem which Commandant Mallin had to contend with was the scarcity of men to occupy all the positions set out in the plans. I hope, at a later stage, to be able to revert back on this point and deal with it in greater detail.

The danger to our men would certainly have increased much more considerably had Commandant Mallin not acted promptly. The men in the trenches were instructed, by small numbers of twos and threes, to withdraw from the most dangerous positions till finally the military had only empty trenches to fire into. The British flagrantly ignored the Red Cross shelter erected on the previous day, from which a large Red Cross flag was flown. I take this opportunity of putting on record the utter disregard on the part of the British military, who were in occupation of the Shelbourne Hotel, for the Red Cross, in order to remove any doubts that may exist in the minds of some people as to the supposed chivalry of that Army.

Having gathered the little band of men to temporary safety, Commandant Mallin issued orders for a general evacuation of the Green to the College of Surgeons. My

first intimation of this movement was when our men were leaving the Green. It was then my job to get down from the roof and into the building. As the men were entering the building, Mallin issued instructions that they were to take up positions on the roof. Mallin and I then went out on to the pathway in the expectation of aiding other sections that had not yet arrived. During our stay here Mallin took off his hat and, speaking in a quiet and even tone, said; "Wasn't that a narrow shave, Robbins?" I certainly agreed that it was. There was a piece taken out of the front about an inch above the hat-band. When asked how it occurred, Mallin replied simply; "I was trying to get one of our lads, who had been wounded, into safety". It was afterwards I heard that Mallin had dashed out to one of the gateways opposite the Shelbourne Hotel to drag a wounded man to safety in face of a rain of machine-gun fire. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that this display of heroism has been recorded.

The opposing forces had by this time noticed our increased numbers on the roof of the College and immediately concentrated their guns on the building. Their range at first was very low, so low that Mallin and myself had to make ourselves scarce and get inside. One advantage to us was that the trees around the Green were tall enough to obscure the view of those in the Shelbourne Hotel. When inside, a number of men were set to work building barricades in front of the windows and hall-door. Necessity knows no law, and acting on this axiom,decided upon the use of books for this purpose. The amount available was more than sufficient. My next duty on re-entering the building was to go to the side-door leading out into York Street, which was the only one now available to the men and women who had not yet retreated from the Green and other outposts. This position was hardly taken up when knocking at the back gate

leading into the laneway alongside the premises of the Irish Direct Trading
//Mineral Water Co. drew our attention. On opening the wicket gate we saw to our great surprise a lieutenant of the Irish Volunteers, who had taken over the Turkish Baths with a section of men, and was reporting to Commandant Mallin. This was Commandant MacDonagh's reply to an urgent message the day before for reinforcements.

Men and women were now arriving by York Street entrance. After a short time my attention was drawn by shouts of men and women. On looking up York Street I found the reason for this commotion was that Capt. McCormack, Lieut. Kelly and Michael Donnelly were making their way towards us. They had left the premises of Kapp and Peterson's to reach the College. On the way they were attacked by a number of civilians. In this number was a young woman who had been extremely obnoxious not only then, but on the day before. This woman was the most daring of her kind. She followed our three men down the street and was using very offensive language. Being a woman our men on every occasion were endeavouring to ignore her. My patience was exhausted from the previous day's experience when watching her continual interference with our outposts. One thing stopped me from endeavouring to quieten her, and that was the fear of hitting one of our men. There was no danger of doing so on this occasion. With my mind firmly made up I ran into the centre of the roadway, dropped on one knee with the feeling that this woman would be a good riddance. Captain McCormack was the last of the three, and he was still on the roadway. I remember waving my right arm and shouting; "Get out of the way, Mac". Capt. McCormack, seeing my motion, though I can't say if he knew my intention, was moving away. Lieut. Kelly, who was now almost at the door, guessed my intention, and shouted; "Frank, don't shoot", while at the same time he ran out into the roadway and grasped my arm. I felt sore

over it and wondered would the consideration have been shown by the opposing forces if they were to be obstructed in the same way.

Another incident worthy of notice was that one of our men had been badly wounded, on the roof of the College, so badly that little hope was entertained for him. It was certainly a very tedious job to get this man down into the building. The name of David O'Leary deserves mentioning in the way he risked his life to help a wounded companion. When I opened the door to allow the ambulance men out with the stretcher and saw the amount of blood he lost, and which continued to ooze from his body, I said; "You're a gonner, and the Lord have mercy on you". Altogether he had received twelve rounds from the machine-gun fire, and I never expected to see him again. Later, to my great surprise, he was a fellow-prisoner in Knutsford Gaol. His name was Michael Doherty and he lived in Mayor St., Nth. Wall. He died about two and half years later as a result of the 'flu which was raging around the latter end of 1918.

In moments such as those, so full of excitement, one never thinks of time. Everything takes place like a flash of lightning, ever so much quicker than one would relate either in writing or by word of mouth. On this day the only recollection I have of eating was early on that morning before the retreat from the Green had taken place. The four of us then on the roof were feeling that we could very much improve ourselves with something substantial to eat. David O'Leary was entrusted with this job, and his task in the end proved very easy, because of the fact that there was no food on the premises to be eaten beyond two eggs and tea. Fred Ryan and myself were the first for breakfast, leaving O'Leary and Hendrick on duty above. Fred had some rations left from Sunday, which consisted of bread and bully beef. This, with an egg between us, was all that could be obtained, and I

afterwards found out that it was more than O'Leary and Hendrick had.

Another incident which I recall happened that morning when the retreat was taking place. A tall man with a beard was handed over to me by Lily Kempson with instructions that he was an important prisoner and to be well watched. It was Mr. Laurence J. Kettle, then Chief of the Dublin Corporation Electricity Department. The reason, I understood for making this man a prisoner was that one of the women who had been on duty watching the military barracks had identified him as a man who had paid many visits. His brother, Thomas Kettle, was an officer in one of the Irish Regiments of the British Army and it is reasonable to assume the purpose of such visits were to see his brother. Mr. Kettle's first experience as a prisoner was not very pleasant indeed, but later on during the week things were very much easier. One day when business took me to the College of Surgeons,I was feeling very tired and went into a room of a large size and threw myself into a chair to take a few minutes' rest, when Mr. Kettle walked up and advised me not to sit in that position as I was exposing myself to a possible line of enemy fire. Further, I understand, he passed some of his time making barricades from the unfailing supply of books. My first inclination was to ignore the advice, but seeing it was friendly, I accepted and appreciated it very much.

As the day was advancing so were our plans being made ready to put into operation. I was relieved of the position at York Street entrance with instructions to report for special duty. Our Company was to get ready to break through and occupy the houses beginning from the Turkish Baths, towards South King Street. We left the College of Surgeons by the back gate. The password being given, we were admitted into the Turkish Baths building, when the operation

of breaking through from house to house began. With seven-pound sledge-hammers we made a hole in each wall big enough for a man to get through on hands and knees. As the dusk fell a number of us were sent ahead along the back outhouses to gain entrance to some of the houses ahead, with instructions to work back towards the other party. By adopting this method the task was completed sooner. The reason for this move was two-fold, the first being that we should take occupation and thereby forestall a similar move if made by the opposing forces. The second was that on that very night plans were to operate to set Grafton Street and the Northside houses of Stephen's Green on fire. Several houses on the latter side had been occupied by the British forces, one of which was the United Services' Club, and had been giving a great deal of bother during the day. Hence the decision to set fire to the houses on that side of the "Green".

As we broke into each house we first thoroughly examined it to make sure that it had been vacated by the former tenants, and then secured each house by barricades wherever necessary. There was no shortage of supplies for making the barricades. Every article of furniture was made use of-sideboards, chairs, wardrobes, bedsteads, and any kind of material, good, bad or middling, so long as the desire of the moment was satisfied. The premises so treated included, the Turkish Baths and Messrs. Strahan's, and many others.

The barricading done, we set about making our other preparations. While making our tour of inspection in these houses we came across numerous articles that would be useful for the Red Cross Hospital, which had been established in the College of Surgeons. Among the items which were fairly plentiful were bottles of brandy and other spirits. Realising the temptation some of the men might be under to

make use of this stuff, because of such trying conditions, I gave strict instructions to the men under my control to hand over to me personally all the spirits they found. This order put the responsibility on to each individual, and, to their credit, it was loyally carried out, though, as I will explain later, I thoughtotherwise at one time during the night. This order was made known to Captain McCormack, who issued a general order all through the houses, as a result of which many bottles were handed to me to be taken charge of and afterwards to be brought to the College of Surgeons.

It was approaching 10 p.m. when orders were issued to Section Commanders in each house as to the plan of campaign. Every man in each section was to be in a favourable position before 10 p.m. The firing of two shots was to be the signal for an intense fusillade against the Shelbourne Hotel, United Services Club, and any other positions occupied by the British military. This firing was to act as a cover for two sections of our men, under Lieuts. Kelly - I.C.A., and Kavanagh - Irish Volunteers. The former was to set fire to the houses on the corner of Stephen's Green and Grafton Street, while the latter was to accomplish the same objective, beginning at Noblett's corner. The fusillade opened promptly at 10 p.m., and was continued for some time, when an order was brought through by Countess Markievicz to cease fire. The affair had been cancelled at the last moment by plans being misinterpreted on the part of Lieut. Kavanagh. During this lull in the firing I heard someone talking in a very high-pitched voice. I thought that one of our men had indulged in some of the spirits that had been collected, but on investigation found that Patrick Poole had been deafened by the noise of the firing and was under the impression that he was talking in an ordinary conversational tone.

The strain was now taking effect on a number of our men; Sergt. Joseph Doyle gave out completely for want of proper rest. This was not to be wondered at. In my own case, after the "cease fire" order that night, I fell fast asleep, lying face down with my rifle pointing to the Shelbourne Hotel. I had had only two hours' sleep out of a period of sixty hours' duty, and that was on the roof of the College of Surgeons on Monday night. Only the ideal which inspired us enabled all to suffer and endure so much until the human frame could no longer bear the strain. The need for a relief was felt by all men attached to Capt. McCormack's company, and this desire was communicated to Commdt. Mallin, who appreciated our need for rest and promised to do everything possible by the next day.

Wednesday arrived to find us tackling the job of breaking through other premises in an effort to reach South King Street corner. One of these houses was run under the auspices of the Alexandra Ladies' Club. When taking over this house we found that there were a number of ladies present. Instructions were given that they must get ready to leave. One of their number endeavoured to get permission to stay but was refused. It was thought afterwards that the profession of sympathy in our cause expressed by this lady was not sincere, but rather a blind to obtain information. Our reasons for suspecting this were strengthened by the fact that the ladies in question had hardly left the building fifteen minutes when the telephone rang, and, against all previous advice given by Connolly and Mallin in their lectures to the Irish Citizen Army, Capt. O'Neill lifted the receiver and spoke into the 'phone. I forget exactly what were the words spoken (as told by O'Neill) from the other end, but of course they were only a pretext. The conversation came to an abrupt ending by the opening up of intense machine-gun fire directly on the windows of this house. No doubt

this would have been fatal to some of us had not precaution been taken. When the ladies left the premises, the place had been made secure and an order given to retire to the next house, leaving only two or three in the Club, and these were not slow in throwing themselves flat on the floor. The trick was clever enough to bear fruit for the British military and bring casualties to our side had we not also shown a little foresight, to say nothing of having a little bit of luck thrown in.

This little experience was good for us, as our men were inclined to underrate the dangers of the exciting situation. Under no circumstances could we allow this sally to go unanswered. Some of our best shots were placed at vantage points. Each so placed had a spotter with the aid of glasses to watch the windows of the various buildings occupied by the military. Any moving object seen was subjected to a closer observation before being sniped at, and this method I believe had much better results than that obtained by the British forces in their onslaught on the Alexandra Club.

On that day we had a visit from Miss Nellie Gifford, (now Mrs. Donnelly, a sister of Mrs. Joseph Plunkett), who was attached to the College of Surgeons. Her purpose was to bring the rations we so badly needed and to seek utensils and other things which would be useful in the College. The visit was successful and as I accompanied her back to the College she told me that it was much more profitable than had been anticipated.

During this short visit to the College I saw Commdt. Michael Mallin leaving his quarters. He had just finished a Courtmartial on the officer in charge of the Turkish Baths for leaving his post without permission. The punishment meted out for this offence was reduction to the ranks and transfer to our company. When issuing these instructions to me

before the man affected, Comdt. Mallin gave some sound advice to him. Needless to say, I felt sorry for this man and hoped he would retrieve his mistake. It was on this day I learned that a search party in the College found a miniature shooting gallery of the British Officers' Training Corps attached to the College of Surgeons. This find augmented our supplies very considerably. Speaking from memory on this point, I believe we got 89 rifles and about 24,000 rounds of ammunition of all kinds.

I think it was on the day previous Lieut. Robert de Coeur and a small party of men had taken over a number of houses leading on to the West side of the 'Green' and York Street. A very effective measure was taken for defence by this section. Instead of barricading, as was done in almost every other place, the bottom portion of the house was left as if nothing unusual had taken place, the idea being to invite the opposing forces to select the house as an easy position to take with a rush. The stairway had, however, been conveniently sawn through, with sufficient left good to bear its own weight and no more. However, there was nothing doing here, as the opposite camp failed to appreciate the offer extended.

The day wore on with continual sniping from all our posts on the Shelbourne and Russell Hotels, the United Services Club, and other positions which we believed to be occupied by the British military.

Somewhere about 6 p.m., Lieut. Peter Jackson, with a small company of men, relieved our section at the South King Street end. Our relief was to cover a period of 24 hours. This order was received with welcome on the part of all concerned. Our base was to be the College of Surgeons. When we arrived there, the whole company was paraded in what seemed to be a lecture hall, which acted as our dining hall,

dormitory, etc. Before being finally dismissed, we had to pass through the doctor's hands. Miss ffrench-Mullen was appointed to this position, which she filled very efficiently. It might be just as well to mention that the writer proved to be a very disobedient patient, so much so that Miss ffrench-Mullen threatened me with arrest and courtmartial for refusing to take a drink of spirits, proffered as medicine. Madame de Markievicz was summoned to the scene and I was reported for having disobeyed an order given by a superior officer. With the explanation to Madame that I had a conscientious objection to taking spirits, the matter was passed over. When our Company was finally dismissed from duty we all sat down on the floor;a song was suggested, and was followed by a number more, when eventually, tea arrived. Having received something to eat, we all gladly turned in for a sleep. The bare wooden floor proved to be our only bed, with the carpet which was taken from it to serve as blankets. Many of us were so tired that we were unable to fall asleep for quite a long while.

On Thursday morning I was awakened by Lt. Michael Kelly and Jimmy O'Shea. The first bit of sad news I got was that Fred Ryan had been killed the night before. It seems that Commdt. Mallin had sent out a party to set fire to an antique shop in Harcourt Street, just around the corner from the Russell Hotel, with the object of also setting the latter place on fire, it being occupied by British military. I cannot say who composed the party, but two names apart from Fred Ryan stand out to this day. One was the late Councillor William P. Partridge, and the other Margaret Skinnider. Miss Skinnider received four bullet wounds and was in a very critical condition and not expected to live. It was Partridge who related the incident to me, and I can still picture him standing before me, with a bandage on his head, because of an accident which occurred, I believe, the

day previous through the falling of a trap-door while he was getting out on a roof. The evening before I had seen Fred Ryan and Margaret Skinnider during our little concert, and both were then in the best of spirits. To be given the information ten hours later that one was dead and the other dying would, under normal conditions, give any ordinary person a great shock, but under the circumstances existing one seemed to take such incidents in a much lighter manner.

I believe it was during the early part of this day that four men were picked out for a very special job, all to be the same height or as near it as possible. So far as my memory goes, the four chosen were Joseph Doyle, Owen Carton, Michael Kelly and myself. We were brought into the room used by Commdt. Mallin, and were contemplating our job to be entirely different to what it really turned out to be. We expected to have Commdt. Mallin address us, but instead it was Miss ffrench-Mullen who explained the reason for our being brought there. We were to change Margaret Skinnider from one bed to another without causing any further pain or upsetting her in any way. This was to be done by two of us going to each side of the bed on which she was lying. Two were to lift her by the upper portion of the body and two by the lower portion. She was to be raised high enough to allow the bed to be drawn out and another put in. It was "some" job. Each pair locked their hands in one another's, making a cradle underneath the body, and lifting it shoulder high, and having to remain in that position for a few minutes. When it was finished we gave a sigh of relief. Of the four I was slightly the shortest in stature, and for that reason believed to have suffered more. To understand and calculate the strain we had to undergo when carrying out this act, two points other than the weight of the body have to be considered, viz., the utmost care to provide against further haemorrhage and keeping apart far enough to allow the beds a clear passage between us.

With plenty of time on our hands during the day, we moved around the different posts inside the College in our own selected groups. While so occupied I noticed Chris. Caffrey come in. She had been sent by Commdt. Mallin with a despatch to the General Post Office a couple of hours previously but had failed to get through. Her journey was a very perilous one, indeed, and the story in connection with it is worth relating; but it would come best from herself, and I trust it, and many others, will be told by my old comrades in order to give the future historian material to work on, so that the part performed by the Irish Citizen Army will receive its proper place in history.

The shortage of food supplies was beginning to cause concern to those in control of that department, and orders were issued to outlying sections around the College to send along any surplus that might be available. The response to this order was practically negligible, as these sections were also beginning to feel the pinch, and in some cases their own need was urgent.

The day was wearing on, bringing nearer our time to resume active duty. Having had a last meal in the College, we were lined up to receive our instructions, and then we took our departure to the positions held the previous day. There was very little that could be done this evening before dusk, beyond settling down and discussing the problems ahead of us. One of these problems was the food shortage. Edward Tuke gave the information that there was a French pastry shop near Strahan's, but the actual position of it he could not give. It was decided, therefore, to go ahead next day with the breaking through of the remaining houses to find the pastry shop, with the hope of easing the problem. It was usual for a number of us to get out on the roofs every night to have a look at the city. On this night the sky

College end of York Street. Some of them seemed to have an idea that peace was near. As the evening drew on there was a talk among the officers of Commdt. Mallin being dissatisfied with our positions, and that the question had been discussed and projected plans arranged to fight our way past the British cordon on the bridges out to the Dublin hills, where the fight would be carried on along the lines of guerrilla warfare. There was no news of a decision being arrived at, but the suggestion was thrown out that all men with uniforms were, if possible, to obtain civilian clothes to further this object should it be decided upon. I could not believe any of the rumours floating around, and it was not until the next morning (Sunday), when I had actually seen some of my comrades already fitted out in the fashion suggested, that the truth began to dawn on me. Eventually I found myself doing as they had done. A funny picture I made in a suit of good Irish tweed about four sizes too big for me.

An order was sent later through all the houses to report in the College of Surgeons immediately. On reaching there the first thing that struck me forcibly was the awful gloom that set over the place since my visit of the previous day. A number of men and women who had then been gay and light-hearted were now crying. Several were asked what was the matter, and their only reply at first was that something terrible was going to happen. The first thought to strike me was that the British had planked a number of big guns outside and were going to annihilate us. Then the truth was made known. We were to surrender. My God! No! It couldn't be! Anything but that! Commdt. Mallin, William Partridge, Madame Markievicz and some other officers appeared. On the impulse of the moment I ran to Mallin and Partridge, hoping against hope that they would deny this talk of surrender, but they confirmed it as being only too true. Mallin showed a despatch which had been received informing

him of the surrender in the G.P.O. area. I suggested it was false and a trick. A ray of hope seemed to spring into Mallin's eyes, and he asked Partridge for his opinion. How sorely disappointed I was when Partridge shook his head saying, "No, the messenger who brought the despatch is to be trusted".

The whole St. Stephen's Green Division was paraded into the Long Room, when Mallin read out the news and addressed a few remarks to them, followed by Madame Markievicz and William Partridge. Commdt. Mallin in the course of his address said that it was quite possible for a number of the men and women then present to get back to their own homes, should they desire to avail of the opportunity, and nothing the worse would be thought of them for doing so. The most that could befall himself was to be shot by the British. This was only to be expected, and he hoped to meet it as an Irishman should. A small number of those present took the opportunity of getting away. Any who did this had a definite motive for their action. A few were given instructions to leave for different reasons, though much against their own will. When Mallin made the suggestion that anyone who desired could leave, some of my comrades shouted, "No! We have worked together, we have fought together and, if necessary, we will die together!" This statement got the general approval of all.

The next unpleasant task for Commdt. Mallin to perform was hauling down the tricolour and putting up the white flag to replace it. While carrying out this act he and those with him were sniped at from the British posts. The scenes that were occurring inside the College were of a heart-rending nature. Strong, brave, upstanding men and women, all of whom had taken risks of one kind or another during that week, not knowing and not caring if they would forfeit their lives, were broken-hearted. The act of surrender was to each one a greater calamity than death itself at that moment. Even the

torments of hell seemed slight and insignificant compared with the torture and suffering of mind that each one underwent. A British soldier appeared in the building to make arrangements for the surrender with Commdt. Mallin. This visit changed the whole atmosphere immediately. Instead of a continuation of the prevailing depression a new spirit of independence, hope and exaltation took its place. We were satisfied that all things that were possible had been done. There was nothing to be ashamed of. A manly part had been taken for the vindication of our principles. We had failed in our object; others had failed before, and they had not been ashamed or afraid of the consequences. Why should we?

It was in this spirit that we marched from the College of Surgeons out into York Street, between a strong force of British soldiers under the command of Major de Courcy Wheeler. At the head of the column was Commdt. Michael Mallin and Madame Markievicz who looked very picturesque in that strange and rare scene by the fact of her attire. She was dressed in an Irish Citizen Army tunic, a pair of riding breeches and puttees and a lady's hat with an ostrich feather around the band, part of which showed slightly over the top. Hundreds of people from around the vicinity were standing about, some out of curiosity, a small number sympathetic towards us, but the vast majority openly hostile. The order being given to march, we proceeded down Grafton Street, up Dame Street, in through the Lower Castle Yard gate. Our party were halted beside a big hole, freshly dug. It brought the wildest ideas into our heads. In answer to a question whether he thought it was for us, as some suggested, Captain McCormack said, "If I'm one of them, I'll call for three cheers for the Irish Republic" as they are about to shoot me". On being detained in the Castle for a while a fresh order was given to march, and we then proceeded out by the Ship Street gate to Christchurch Place, High Street, Thomas Street,

James's Street, when we reached Richmond Barracks in Inchicore. Throughout this journey we were left in no doubt as to the opinions of the vast majority of the citizens, which were expressed in no uncertain language, and the British military were given every encouragement to play havoc with us. Little did we think that the Dublin Citizens would ever go so far as to cheer British Regiments becuase they had as prisoners their own fellow citizens - Irishmen and Irishwomen - just as they were. Looking back and remembering these scenes along the route, particularly at Inchicore, the cheering and waving of hats and Union Jacks for the Staffordshire Regiment as they marched us in to Richmond Barracks, the cries of encouragement to the young Englishmen in that "Regiment" - to "shoot the traitors" and "bayonet the bastards",seems to be incredible and just one bad dream. But unfortunately for us then it was no dream! It was the stark naked truth. I discussed this experience with some of my comrades later and they were in agreement with my view, - that were the British Army to have withdrawn at that moment, there would have been no need for Courtmartial or prisons as the mob would have relieved them of such necessities. A very small section of those assembled did spread a ray of hope amongst us by raising their voices in our support. They were indeed blessed with stout hearts though considerably in the minority.

When inside we were subjected to a thorough search, even though we had been previously searched in Dublin Castle. While this was being carried out some remarks were offered by the searchers and considered by them to be good jokes, such as; "You won't want this any more; you are going to be shot presently". The search over, we went through an inspection as each one passed into a large room or hall, giving name, address and occupation. It was here Commdt. Mallin was separated from us, as well as some others. This was the last occasion on which the majority of us saw him alive.

Johnny Barton and a number of detectives were keeping themselves busy, particularly Barton. He did more than his duty when the official military inspection was finished. Even though he was present at the inspection, he came around to the room after it, and stood in front of each one in order to identify those whom he considered were officers or people of note. I remember two incidents that occurred close to me. The first, to the best of my recollection, was; As Johnny Barton stopped in front of Joseph Connolly he opened his conversation by saying, "What is your name?" though he knew perfectly well beforehand that he was a brother of Seán Connolly's. The next observation was; "Seán is dead". Joe replied, "He died for his country," to which Johnny retorted, "He was a disgrace to his country". For resenting this insult, Joe was separated from us. The second incident took place in this way; Stopping in front of Michael Donnelly, Barton began by saying, "I think I know you". The reply by Donnelly was, "So well you might". Johnny then said, "Do you remember the day you laughed at me when going down the quays?" This question was answered by the asking of another which was short and simple, "Hasn't the cat leave to laugh at the king?" He passed by Donnelly saying, "I suppose so".

After a short time another shift took place to a different part of the barracks, where we received our first meal of bully beef and ship biscuits, as guests of His Majesty King George V. Our stay here was of short duration, possibly no longer than two hours. After that we were assembled outside on the barrack square, including other sections of comrades who had fought in other areas. Here again we were served with bully beef and biscuits. As a result of our first meal of the same kind everyone was thirsty, and two or three soldiers were kept going for about an hour supplying us with water. Eventually we were marched off, just as dusk was falling, to whither none of us knew.

When outside the barracks the column of soldiers and prisoners were halted. The British officer in charge, riding on horseback, came down the ranks, impressing upon the soldiers to carry out instructions and not to waste time with any prisoner who stumbled or fell. It took very little reasoning on our part to understand the full meaning of this order. The extent to which it was intended to carry out this order can be illustrated by a couple of incidents. The column was on the march again, four deep, two prisoners in the centre and a soldier on each flank, not to mention advance and rear guards. However, as it was proceeding towards the city a group of us near the end of the column began humming some of our marching songs, then some became bolder and sang. The singing was spreading right through the whole body when a number of N.C.O.'s came hurrying along, speaking in the usual British army fashion and threatening dire results. This damped our ardour somewhat. Some thought, while there might be an objection to singing, whistling might be overlooked; I think it was Robert de Coeur, and we set about testing the point. The answer was not long forthcoming, and in very forcible language, too, so strong that beyond carrying on conversation with a partner silence was maintained until a halt was called at the L.N.W. Railway sheds, North Wall, for deportation to England.

In concluding my story of the fighting as I saw it in the St. Stephen's Green area - it is by no means the complete story of all the fighting in that vicinity - it is only fit and proper to pay tribute to my late comrades, who will be remembered for ever among our glorious and immortal dead. Here's to the memory of Commdt. Michael Mallin, executed; Privates James Fox, Philip Clarke, George Geoghegan, Frederick Ryan, all of whom were killed in action; and James Corcoran, who died of wounds. The sacrifice made by these men will never be forgotten, and liberty-loving Irishmen of every

Week 1916 was an act of suicide. This opinion is offered by the people who knew little or nothing regarding the plans or even the circumstances of what happened in 1916. St. Stephen's Green itself was occupied for only about 18 hours, that is from 12 noon on Monday until about 6 a.m. on Tuesday, when the evacuation of these forces took place to the College of Surgeons. The College of Surgeons was occupied on Easter Monday at 3 p.m. by myself and three other members of the Republican forces, together with, for a temporary period, Madame Markievicz, Miss Lily Kempson, Miss Mary Hyland and one other woman whom I cannot now remember. We had strict instructions to hold the College of Surgeons, as it was an important part of our plans. Criticism seems to centre around the fact that the Shelbourne Hotel was not occupied. Actually, according to plan, the Shelbourne Hotel was to be occupied by Lieutenant George Norgrove, who was to have fifty men at his disposal for this job. At the last moment this part of the plan was dropped and Norgrove was detailed for other work at the G.P.O. and no alternative arrangements were made because there were no men available to cover and occupy the Shelbourne Hotel. The second assignment was because of the shortage of men at another important position, vital to the fighting of that week. The taking over of St. Stephen's Green on Easter Monday showed clearly how these plans were affected by the man-power not being at our disposal, and Mallin had to use the services of some members of the women's section of the Citizen Army not only to guard the gates of Stephen's Green but also to turn out citizens who were within the Green. Had we the number of people as set out in the earlier plans, the Shelbourne Hotel could not have been occupied by the British Army because it would already have been occupied by Norgrove and his men. Therefore, if any further criticisms are to be made so far as the Stephen's Green position is concerned, it must be remembered that what was to take place and what did take place were two different

things. To illustrate further how our forces were handicapped by the shortage of man-power, it is well to know that Seán Connolly's attempt to isolate Dublin Castle was with a force of 25 to 30 men. After the attack on the Upper Castle Yard was concluded this small number of men had to be divided into six sub-positions, with the City Hall as the main centre. When word was received in the G.P.O. that Seán Connolly had been killed and that they needed more men to try to cover the positions properly, Lieutenant Norgrove was taken from his second assignment and sent with a further batch of men to help the people in the City Hall, so that even the important job which Norgrove in the first instance was taken from, the Stephen's Green garrison,to perform in the G.P.O., had, in turn, to be neglected to aid the post that was in dire need of help.

I have been asked to record any information I have at my disposal regarding the shelling of Liberty Hall during Easter Week. Mr. Peter Ennis, the caretaker of Liberty Hall, was trusted implicitly by James Connolly and by the other officials of the Irish Transport Union. He was a native of Tinahely, Co. Wicklow. Before taking up his position as caretaker Peter Ennis was employed in the Dublin Docks. He was a very tactful man, and there were many occasions when he was obliged to use all his gifted ingenuity to overcome very awkward situations.

On Easter Monday, after the main body of the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers h ad left Liberty Hall to take up their positions at the G.P.O., the City Hall and Stephen's Green, a small number was left behind under the charge of Captain Seamus McGowan, to take all the supplies that were stored in the Hall to the G.P.O. In case of a surprise attack they prepared an escape by breaking through the wall in the top end room of Liberty Hall into the next house, which was then

and is now a publichouse known as the Colonial Bar, on Eden Quay.

Peter Ennis reported daily to Connolly in the G.P.O. as to the developments, if any, around Liberty Hall. Ennis used the side entrance at 29 Eden Quay instead of the front entrance in Beresford Place. He had the terrible experience of seeing Ernest Kavanagh shot dead by the British forces on Tuesday morning. Ernest Kavanagh was employed as a clerk in the National Health Insurance section of the Union, that portion of the Custom House facing the main entrance of Liberty Hall, which was occupied by British forces, and it was from there the shots were fired that blasted his life from this earth. He was responsible for many very fine cartoons in "The Irish Worker", signed E.K., and was a brother of Maeve Kavanagh. Peter Ennis had nothing extraordinary to report until Wednesday, when he informed Connolly of an attempt on the part of the s.s. "Helga" to shell Liberty Hall, and of her failure to do so because of the obstruction of the railway bridge running across Beresford Place to Tara St. station. The first effort on the part of the "Helga" was to fire a direct shot at Liberty Hall from the river, but it struck the lower portion of the steel framework of the bridge. The "Helga" then moved down the river in order to get an angle to allow her to clear the bridge and lob the shells over the bridge on to the roof of Liberty Hall, but this also proved a failure.

Next day Peter Ennis saw the preparations to shell Liberty Hall from the Liffey wall near Tara Street. The officer in charge found that the muzzle of the gun was not clear of the wall to give him a direct shot at Liberty Hall, and a number of soldiers then prized the copingstones, with the aid of crowbars, into the river. Ennis told me that when the first shell hit the building he thought that the whole place was collapsing around him, and he made his way to the top landing of Liberty Hall to try to escape through the hole, already broken since the previous Monday, into the Colonial

Bar. Ennis related how this hole in the wall, being near the ceiling of the next house and not on the floor level of where he was in Liberty Hall, caused him grave misgivings, but he was eventually forced to make the decision to throw himself from the floor space of Liberty Hall on to the bed below in the next house. During all this the shelling of Liberty Hall continued. He then went to the G.P.O. and reported the matter to Connolly, who advised him not to go back to Liberty Hall but to find some other place of abode. His brother was living in Marlboro St. which he made his temporary residence for some time afterwards.

The main damage done to the front portion of Liberty Hall and the house on the other side in Beresford Place was caused by direct shelling which took place from the South Liffey wall at Tara St., the shells entering the Eden Quay side of Liberty Hall, passing right through and exploding in the other house. The s.s. "Helga" was also responsible for some of the damage done while attempting to shell Liberty Hall by firing shells into the air from a further position down the river Liffey.

It seems extraordinary that the British military went to such trouble to shell Liberty Hall, as the only occupant was th caretaker, Peter Ennis, while across on the other side of Beresford Place in the Custom House the British army were in occupation, and all that required to be done was a small section of men to walk across Beresford Place and request entrance, or break entrance, into the building. This course would have been less expensive to the British army, and possibly the strength which they used to demolish an unoccupied building would have helped them elsewhere if used more intelligently than it was at Liberty Hall.

On Sunday night, April 30th, we were put aboard one of the L.M.S. boats. There were probably up to 300 or 400 prisoners all penned in the cargo/hold of the ship. One

bucket of water had been placed there, but before half of us had reached the cargo hold the supply of water was exhausted. We were a very tired and dishevelled group of men, very much in need of a wash up and a long rest. Before leaving Richmond Barracks we had been given some bully-beef, biscuits and water. The bully-beef created a great thirst on us all. Finding all the water used, I took the bucket with the intention of having it re-filled and made an effort to get up the gangway. On approaching the entrance to the gangway from the hold of the ship, I saw the top portion of the gangway well covered by British soldiers with fixed bayonets at the ready. Seeing my approach one of the soldiers immediately halted me. I told him I was seeking water as there was none in the hold, and his reply came quick and sharp, leaving no doubt of his intention, "You dirty Irish pig, get back into the hold or you won't require any water". This was rather a shock to me because, generally speaking, the ordinary British soldiers had shown a different attitude during the day towards their prisoners. Most of us then endeavoured to settle down with the object of having some rest, but there was very little space for this purpose. We made all kinds of attempts to be as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. A group of us managed in this way; two sat back to back, one at each side, and across our legs lay the heads or legs of other colleagues. In that position I went to sleep and did not awaken until the ship arrived at Holyhead early next day when I was stiff, cold and sore.

On looking around before we were taken from the hold of the ship some very revolting scenes met our eyes. During the trip some of the men had got sick, and, having no room, actually vomited on their nearest colleagues or on themselves. This will give an idea of how closely packed we were, there being no room for the sick men to find other accommodation.

While lined up at Holyhead railway station we were the subject of a great deal of curiosity. Most of the assembled people there showed by personal signs and remarks that we were anything but welcome visitors; according to them we were traitors, murderers, etc.

During the journey from Holyhead to Knutsford I made another attempt to get a drink of water. The last time I had eaten and had a drink of water was at about 6 p.m. on the previous day in Richmond Barracks. Some of my colleagues had used the cistern of the lavatory in the railway carriage for obtaining water to drink. Remembering my experience of the previous night aboard the ship I felt reluctant to speak to any of the British Army guards but finally made up my mind to ask for water. To my very welcome surprise the sholdier whom I addressed replied "Certainly", and unscrewing his water-bottle filled my cup with water. This action was very much appreciated by me and killed the bad effect created the previous night. It showed that there were still human beings among the soldiers of the British Army.

When arriving at Knutsford Prison arrangements to receive us were well in hand and we were allocated to separate cells. My cell No. was B.21. I had on each side of me Captain McCormack and James O'Shea, O'Shea's cell being the last on that side of the wing. On the opposite side, directly facing O'Shea's, was Lieutenant Michael Kelly's cell, and directly opposite mine was Michael Donnelly's.

Hearing the door of the cell slam, the double lock being put on, and I all alone, I realised for the first time that I was really a prisoner. Tired and despondent, I lay on the bed-plank and slept almost the round of the clock, but for a number of interruptions by the soldier guard on duty hammering on the door to wake myself and others like me, it being against the prison regulations for prisoners to sleep during the day.

No sooner had he passed by than I lost all account of his visit until the next hammering on the cell door.

Knutsford Military Prison was used for the detention of soldiers who had been convicted for various crimes and after some days we discovered that our guards were actually prisoners themselves. This duty was a welcome relief for the British soldier prisoners. A number of us who had brought in food, cigarettes and other things, found on arriving back in our cells on the first day we vacated them for exercise, that all these articles had disappeared.

Some days after our arrival at Knutsford the first daily exercises began. They consisted of a half hour each day walking around the prison ring three paces apart with Guards stationed at various distances from each other. Any attempt at conversation between the prisoners was immediately interrupted by the nearest guard shouting, "Stop talking, or you'll be punished by removal to the dark cells on bread and water for, so many, days". Still we always found some way of saying a few words of cheer to each other. Everyone was intent on keeping his chin up, even though everything connected with the prison seemed to be designed to create the opposite effect.

The daily routine was that we rose at about 6.30 in the morning. We then had to wait our turn to be taken from our cells in batches of two's to the centre of the wing where one of the soldiers would have prepared a half bucket of water, soap and towel for our face-wash. We were then bundled to our individual cells and waited until 7.30 for breakfast. The breakfast consisted of a pint of skilly and so many ounces of dry bread. Very often we would find on our plates one lump of what was supposed to be porridge and in the centre, raw meal. The only flavouring was salt. In fact salt and water were the two items which were plentiful in our cells at all times. At

twelve o'clock, after returning from half an hour's exercise, our dinner was brought along. Almost every day this consisted of two small potatoes, a very small amount of meat, and soup that was more like dish-water than anything else. The potatoes seemed to be of very cheap quality, hardly a day ever passed without having one or perhaps the two of them green. This meant that they had to be heavily salted to make them eatable. Tea was generally served around five o'clock and that also was skilly with a certain amount of dry bread. According to the prison regulations we were supposed to be given cheese and other things of that nature, but never once during my period was there cheese presented at my cell door. After every meal James O'Shea and I would have a conversation in morse code on the wall. Apart from the comments which we made on the meal which had been served, we often travelled into the realms of fancy and wishful thoughts. However, on one occasion I explained having got two very green potatoes which had to be peeled very much. O'Shea replied that he never peeled potatoes, and always eat them with the skins. The peeling, when such took place, was done with the prisoner's fingers; the use of knife and fork was unknown and not permitted by the authorities.

One morning while washing, one of the prisoner soldiers who was looking after me said, "You blokes are going to get improved rations as from to-day. You are going to get tea and bread and butter". I thought that this was in addition to the skilly and felt that it was one of the best things that I heard since my detention. But later, when breakfast was brought along, I looked out for my tea, bread and butter and skilly, I saw the bread and what was termed tea and no butter or /// porridge, much to my disappointment. A day or two later //We did get a small amount of butter regularly as from then onwards. I would have been better pleased with the porridge as it was in preference to the tea, which was of a substitute composition.

We retired every night at 8 p.m.

Our duties were to keep our cells clean, and for this purpose a small hand-brush was placed in our cells, which meant that we got down on our knees to sweep a cell in which there was no dirt because we never had an opportunity of dirtying it. Once a week we were obliged to scrub out our cells and were supplied with buckets, scrubbing-brushes and soap for this purpose. Each of our beds was composed of three planks, a centre plank with a division of at least two inches between it and the two outside planks. There was no mattress and at the head of the plank bed was attached a raised piece of wood for our heads. This was the only provision which was made to represent a pillow. To lie on this plank bed was enough to give anyone a chill, because the breeze came right up through the divisions between the planks and it was impossible to get a restful sleep at night. We were supplied with what was supposed to be two blankets. Both of the blankets supplied to me were so thin that they would have suited any dairy for skimming milk. One of the blankets in particular had several big holes in it. Fortunately for me, before leaving the College of Surgeons the British N.C.O. who had come to prepare the surrender for Major de Courcy Wheeler advised us to take warm clothing with us as we would probably be going on a long journey. This advice was acted upon by me and I took a carpet rug from the College of Surgeons which had formerly been the property of Strahan's of Stephen's Green. This rug proved to be a life-saver so far as I was concerned. With the changed conditions came a mattress and pillow, making life somewhat easier in Knutsfort Detention Prison.

We had been about two weeks in Knutsford detention barracks when we were all assembled in the main hall, and for the first time we got a glimpse of our other colleagues

who were detained in the several other wings of the prison, some of whom we could not recognise as they had grown beards in the meantime. From the centre of the hall, the Commandant of the prison addressed all the prisoners. Part of his speech went something like this; "His Majesty's Government knows that there are among you a number of innocent and loyal subjects of His Majesty, King George V. In order to facilitate these loyal subjects, a form has been prepared which will be given to each prisoner in his cell. Each prisoner will fill in this form, giving all particulars, and, if innocent, requesting his release which will have the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government". On hearing this a number of us saw that an attempt was being made to split our forces and to give an opportunity to those who might have weakened by their imprisonment to renege the principles for which we had all fought, whereupon the words were whispered, "Don't sign; don't sign; don't sign". This cry was taken up, and inside the space of less than a minute one could hear nothing else but the words, "Don't sign, don't sign, don't sign", until the sound actually dinned our ears. The Commandant of the prison immediately became alarmed and roared at the guards, "What's happening? What's happening"? Keep order". The guards endeavoured to do so, but the cry, "Don't sign, don't sign" continued, and we were all hurried back to our cells.

The forms were distributed later, but the number who took advantage of them was negligible, and may have been, as the Commandant said, people who had taken no part in the Insurrection but had been arrested innocently by the British forces in Ireland, as many men had on former and later occasions.

We had a visit from Major General McGregor to inspect the prison and hear complaints, of which he heard many, but little or nothing was expected from his visit. We were

all assembled in line. The Major-General asked were there any complaints while passing along each line. One man close to me saluted and said he had a complaint; he said that being a Roman Catholic he objected to eating meat on Fridays. The reply he got was, "We are at war, and these difficulties are bound to arise". I think it was the same man who complained that there was no Mass on Sundays. Another man complained about clothing, and some men were given second-hand clothing as an alternative. Things altered a little for the better. We were allowed a weekly hot bath, and Mass was provided for the first time after about one month's detention. We were all assembled in the Church and Douglas French-Mullen played hymns on the organ while 500 prisoners sang lustily, so much so that the people of Knutsford, we learned later, were amazed at hearing the volume of voices and hymns which a great many of them heard then for the first time in their lives. This gathering, although only lasting half an hour, was a great fillip to us all, and many a prison regulation was broken before, during, and after the Mass.

I have said earlier that a number of the Irish Citizen Army men took up the Morse Code under the direction of Captain John J. O'Neill (not to be confused with John O'Neill, Secretary of the No. 1 Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union). The Morse Code which we had assimilated became a means of communication between O'Shea, Ted Tuke who now occupied the cell formerly occupied by McCormack, myself and others. After the first few days in solitary confinement when we began to find our level, I endeavoured to communicate with O'Shea on the wall in Morse Code, but found that it was impossible to give the dot-dash in the way we had been taught. We, therefore, had to adapt ourselves to the circumstances. For the dash we scraped the wall. Eventually the skin on our hands began to break, and

we took the chance of using the small hand-brush for the purpose. Before this, my way of putting in the day was an inspection of the cell walls which were covered with inscriptions of sentenced British Army soldiers, giving names, length of imprisonment and the regiment to which they belonged. These inscriptions could only have been made with the aid of a pin or the fingernails. Another means of occupying my mind, and also providing extra exercise besides tramping the length of the cell was to stand on my hands and do a little walking in that way.

The first real piece of news that I got on the wall from O'Shea was that Mallin had been shot with others that day, and that Madame Markievicz had been sentenced to death but that the sentence had been commuted to life imprisonment. The reason which had been given for Madame's reprieve was that the British Government were too humane to shoot a woman. Naturally I asked O'Shea where he got the information and he told me he had got it from the British Corporal in charge of our section, who had been wounded at the Front. His name was Moy. O'Shea explained to me that he had brought Corporal Moy into conversation on the plea that he was not feeling too well, and during the course of a short conversation he gleaned this amount of information from the Corporal on the understanding that he would never repeat it. O'Shea and the Corporal continued to have short friendly talks. The fact that O'Shea's cell was the last one in the wing provided the opportunity, as well as his ability to coax information from the Corporal, or for that matter from anybody else because of his unusual approach.

Tuke did not know anything about Morse Code, and I took the opportunity of giving him the alphabet and the corresponding signs of Morse Code opposite each letter which I had previously written out and kept on my person until the opportunity arose. One day I said to Tuke, "As you go

into your cell look immediately for a little ball of brown paper. It contains the Morse Code and Alphabet. Pick it up and study it and I will talk to you on the wall". How it became possible for me to throw the ball of paper into Tuke's cell was because I always marched in front of him when returning to the cells. With plenty of time on his hands he was able to assimilate it quickly, and through this knowledge we were able to while away many of the long hours in our cells by carrying on conversations, sometimes of a frivolous nature.

About six weeks after our arrival at Knutsford prison, on a Saturday morning, we were told by the officer in charge of the guards that we could speak to each other, but they still kept us three paces apart when marching. This too was soon altered and we were told we could break up and walk around without any regulations. The buzz of voices had a tremendous effect on us all after our weeks of absolute silence. We got a feeling that everything was going around besides a slight dizziness; this quickly wore away in a short while.

The change from solitary confinement to the new regulations gave us considerable freedom in Knutsford Detention Prison. We were allowed out for two hours in the forenoon and for two hours in the afternoon. We could mix freely with any of our comrades and also carry on conversations without any restriction whatever. When we arrived back into the various wings of the prison on the first day of the changed conditions our doors were locked as usual, but we had freedom to shout and sing and to do practically any normal thing within the cell that an individual would desire to do. I remember that on the Saturday evening I felt like singing and had sung a number of songs at the highest pitch of my voice and was half-way through the song "My Dark Rosaleen" when a knock came to the cell door. The warder, speaking to me from the outside,

said, "There are some of your boys attending Confessions. Would it be possible for you to sing in a lower tone of voice?" This was indeed a shock to me, but I thanked the warder for giving me the information and said I would cease singing immediately. Only those the person having ~~ear~~ experience before and after the change of regulations could not possibly understand the extraordinary affect on us. The day before we could not make a sound, but now we were free to make all the noise we wanted and were only requested, as in this particular instance, instead of being ordered, to observe silence. In all circumstances failure to do so would have meant punishment for contravening the Prison Rules. It was at this stage that the Advisory Committee had been set up to enquire into every individual prisoner's case.

On the same Saturday morning our recreation was extended to a couple of hours, and to our great surprise we had our first visitor in the person of Mr. Alfie Byrne, M.P. It would appear that he had advance information of the changes which had taken place on that day.

On the arrival of Alfie Byrne, a number of the Irish Citizen Army who had been together in many operations prior to and during the Easter Week fighting were in a group, and seeing who our visitor was I suggested to our little bunch that we should go over and sit down on the wall and ignore him. This suggestion was accepted by all. Eventually, much to our disgust, the numbers around the person of Alfie Byrne increased which necessitated a change of tactics on our part, and again I suggested that this was too much for us and that we should go and break it up. We proceeded immediately to the group that was surrounding him and wormed our way right through. He was explaining that everything was going to be allright, that the Irish Parliamentary Party were doing everything possible to obtain

the release of the prisoners, and that they had a definite promise of Home Rule. I broke into his talk with the following words, "Listen to me for a few moments please. We have brought about a situation by blood and by the sacrifice of some of the greatest men in Ireland, and we are not going to allow you or the Irish Parliamentary Party to undo that good work. If any action of yours or of the Irish Parliamentary Party harms or interferes with the work that has been done, we will hold you personally accountable for it and we will deal with you accordingly". I then turned to the men who had been listening to Alfie Byrne and said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, allowing this man to fool you. Have you forgotten why you are here? If you haven't you will cease having any further conversation with him", whereupon the crowd broke up and left Alfie to himself. That was the last we saw of him in Knutsford Detention Prison. He did visit individuals afterwards in Frongoch Internment Camp, but that was something outside our control. The occasion at Knutsford was the only time in my life to this day I have spoken to Alfie Byrne, and this attitude is a personal choice because of his activities when the workers of Dublin were fighting for recognition of ~~this Union~~ Irish Transport & General Workers' Union. He and others tried to break their solidarity by forming an opposition Union which had the support of the Dublin employers.

On that Saturday a large parcel of sandwiches and cigarettes were sent into the prison by our fellow Irishmen and women in Manchester. This gift had the praise of every prisoner for the good people of Manchester. It was an unexpected treat and all the more appreciated.

On the following day, Sunday, I had a premonition that I would receive a visitor, but why I had this feeling I could not say. I knew that an uncle and aunt living in Warrington would be very anxious to see me, but not knowing the distance between Warrington and Knutsford I was not very sure if they

would come to see me. However, after dinner I was called to the visitors' room, where I found my aunt, her husband Thomas Kemple, my uncle James Whelan, and his brother-in-law Dave Sheppard. The first three named were born and reared in Irishtown, Dublin. My aunt and her husband were active in the Gaelic League dancing circles, and my uncle was a former G.A.A. footballer, having won All-Ireland medals and played for Isles of the Sea. Dave Sheppard's father and mother had emigrated from Ireland many years ago. After very hearty greetings the four of them laughed at my attire, which consisted of a lovely Donegal tweed suit many sizes too big for me. This with a small beard of downy hairs made me, I am sure, a very funny spectacle, as we were not allowed any shaving facilities, towels, mirrors etc. in the prison.

I learned from my visitors that they had started from Warrington, which was only eleven miles away, at nine o'clock that morning. They had walked all the way to Knutsford Prison, as the train service was so round-about they could not have reached Knutsford any sooner than two o'clock. My aunt, like most women, was dressed for the occasion including a new pair of shoes, and, having suffered the tortures of the damned during the first part of the journey, decided to walk in her stocking feet for the remainder of the journey. Arriving at Knutsford they found they were too late for visiting, and it was by special permission of the Commandant that they and others were allowed to see prisoners in the afternoon. They had brought me many good things which any young man like me enjoyed eating - home made cakes, sandwiches and other eatables.

After the interview my visitors proceeded to walk another eleven miles back to Warrington. I can never forget this kindly action on the part of my aunt and her husband, my uncle and his brother-in-law, who thought so much of me

that they should endure such hardship for such a short visit, but it was spirit of this kind, displayed by fellow-Irishmen and women, that gave us all great heart during our period of imprisonment. I had other visits from them under more congenial circumstances during my stay in Knutsford. I also had visitors from Dublin, and so had many of my prison comrades, all anxious to see us and to know how we were bearing up under the strain we were enduring, and very glad to see our reactions to it all.

The next incident of note was the service of an Internment Order notifying all prisoners of our transfer to Frongoch Internment Camp near Bala, North Wales. This camp had recently been occupied by German prisoners-of-war. On our arrival we found a German priest and a few invalided German prisoners, who left soon afterwards.

Our first introduction to the internment camp was when we were met at the railway station at Bala by some officers of the camp who instructed our guards as to how we should reach our destination. On arriving at the camp we were lined up and handed over to the Commandant. There was a Sergeant Major in charge of the camp arrangements who had seen long service in the British Army in many countries, and he proceeded along the ranks, questioned each prisoner, and searched him for articles which were prohibited in the camp, of which we had none because of our previous rigorous conditions in Knutsford Prison. The Sergeant-Major, as each batch of prisoners entered the camp, always insisted on looking for jack-knives, and because of this he was given the nick-name of "Jack-knives" by the prisoners. The Commandant of the prison was nicknamed "Buckshot" because he, like the Sergeant-Major, insisted on reminding each batch of prisoners arriving at the camp that all the guards were armed with buckshot and were all very good shots, also that they had

instructions to shoot any prisoner who would attempt to go near the wires that surrounded the internment camp.

It had been arranged that the prisoners would be transferred in small numbers, and by the time my name was reached the South Camp at Frongoch, near Balla, North Wales, was almost filled to capacity. When I arrived at the South Camp I was allocated to No. 5 Dormitory, and had for some of our companions Liam (?) Slattery and Henry Dixon, solicitor. The latter carried out daily a very rigorous time-table. Every morning at six o'clock, half an hour before the whistle went for reveille, he went to the shower-room and took a cold shower after which he walked around the compound, whether it was good or bad weather, until roll call. When this was finished he resumed his walk until breakfast hour. I would say Mr. Dixon was then a man over 70 years of age. Breakfast was at 7.30, dinner at 12 o'clock and tea at 6 o'clock. The food, although on ration, was very much more palatable than in Knutsford Detention Prison. Besides this, parcels were coming in to prisoners very frequently and there was always a nice snack at tea-time. In addition, for those prisoners with cash available, there was a shop which sold a limited number of commodities.

Regulations laid it down that all prisoners had to be indoors by 9.30 for a check-over. This check was done first thing in the morning and last thing at night. The lights were put out at 10 o'clock. The younger spirits were always in trouble because of their activities after "Lights out". Within the camp organisation we had our own officers in control of the camp affairs, subject to rules laid down by the British Military. There was a tendency on the part of us in the camp to be rebellious and refuse to carry out orders. Many of us felt that this co-operation should not be given to the British military, but appeals were made from time to time by our officers who put forward the viewpoint that this was

something that we were doing for ourselves., that at least we should show discipline and do nothing that would prove to the British authorities that our officers could not control us. It took some time for many of us to accept this point of view, but eventually we did and things went much smoother than in the early stages of our internment. In fact at a later stage it was to prove a blessing when efforts were being made by the British authorities to select some of our colleagues for punishment or conscription into the British Army. Their task was made impossible by hunger-strikes and refusal to answer roll call, and it was the united action that brought these efforts to a successful conclusion.

We had concerts practically every night, and football during the mornings and afternoons. Looking back on it, one could say that the conditions in the camp were much better than in the prisons.

I had my first shave in about two months in the camp from James Mallin, who now trades under the name "The Frongoch Barber", Eden Quay. My face of downy hairs compared very unfavourably with most of my comrades, who by this time had grown beautiful beards of various hues.

At the evening concerts songs which we used to sing in Dublin, before the Insurrection, were eagerly sought by countrymen who were interned with us. This was probably how the songs of the pre-1916 period became so widespread all over Ireland in the next couple of years.

Our comrade prisoners of the North Camp made daily visits to collect letters etc., but the number coming down grew so rapidly that the visits were discontinued. After a short time more stringent rules were brought into being. The British authorities probably felt that there was some danger in large numbers of men coming from the North Camp on these visits and the change was considered necessary.

We enjoyed a new treat by way of route marches. These route marches took place about three times a week, which meant that we got outside the camp for fairly decent marches. These proved to be good exercises. They took us away from the camp surroundings giving an opportunity to admire the countryside, and also giving a certain amount of mental relaxation. The route marches were generally dictated by the available guard at the disposal of the Camp authorities. The guards were all men of advanced age who had enlisted in the British Home Guard. During one of these route marches, the officer in front discovered that he had left the guard behind and was marching at the head of the I.R.A. On realising this he called a halt to enable the British guard to overtake us. The officer left the guard behind unknowingly, but it was probably because of the singing of my colleagues. All the marching songs which we used to sing prior to the Insurrection were sung on the route marches. On one occasion there was no route march for an interval of several days because no guard was available to look after us, and the following story is alleged to have come from a young officer of the British Army. The Commandant was approached about giving his consent to a route march, and when it was found that the guard was not available the young officer is supposed to have said, "I don't want any guard with these Irishmen. I'll put them on their word of honour, and I can state now that I will bring back every man who marches out of the gate with me". The Commandant, however, did not agree to his proposal.

One of my Citizen Army colleagues, John Halpin, who worked as a pork butcher, was in the Insurrection and took part in the attack on Dublin Castle and was later with some other men to occupy Henry & James's at the corner of Parliament Street and Dame Street. He was in possession of a shotgun and when trying to ram the door the stock of the

gun broke. He got panicky, cleared away and reported back to the post office. Connolly then sent him to bring rifles to another post. Halpin was determined not to fail in this, but the incident which happened at Henry & James's seemed to obsess his mind. He went home again and he remained there until after the fight. There was an order issued by the British military commanding officer for all rebels to surrender themselves. Thinking this was his best course, Halpin surrendered himself at Dublin Castle and met Detective Johnny Barton, who asked him how many people he had murdered. All these things preyed on Halpin's mind and upset him considerably. Eventually he was transferred to the Camp, and like all other prisoners he was served with a knife and fork. When the first opportunity offered he endeavoured to take his life by attempting to cut his throat. Fortunately for Halpin, the knives we got were as blunt as stone, and beyond leaving a mark on his throat no other physical damage was done by him. He was taken to the Red Cross hut where a number of us kept him company for several weeks, when he was later transferred to a British mental home and afterwards back to Dublin. I would like to record in Halpin's favour that he was one of the early members of the Irish Citizen Army. He was absolutely sincere in his devotion to our cause, but when the time of trial came he had not the gifts of a strong-minded man. At least he tried to do what the rest of us had done during Easter Week, but the task was too exacting and beyond his capacity. His failure to do better was not through lack of effort nor in any way the action of a coward.

A short while after this we were informed than an Advisory Committee had been set up to investigate every prisoner's case, and to recommend to the British Government their decision on each of these cases. The prisoners were taken in batches in alphabetical order from the camp and

brought to London, which was a whole day's journey. Batches were sent each day, alternatively one batch of prisoners was sent to Wormwood Scrubs Prison and another to Wandsworth Prison. The batch of prisoners in which I was included was taken to the latter prison, and we were each given a separate cell. On my way to the cell I noticed a prisoner in British Army uniform polishing the floor, and he said to me under his breath, "Is the war nearly over?". I told him that by the look of things it was not nearly over, but that the Germans were hammering hell out of the British. The next thing I heard from the prisoner was a long-drawn out sigh of despair, as if he were saying, "Will all this never end". I learned next day that he and the other prisoners in Wandsworth were conscientious objectors.

On our second day in Wandsworth we were brought before the Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Judge Sankey, who afterwards became Lord Sankey.

On our way to the room where the investigation was being held we were met by a solicitor, whose name was McDonnell. He was engaged by our fellow-Irishmen and women in London to advise us as to how we should act and how we should answer the questions that would be put to us by the Advisory Committee I happened to be one of the first few of this batch to be seen by the Advisory Committee and I heard the advice which the solicitor was giving. My youthful impetuousness drove me to interrupt him and say that we were very thankful to our London-Irish friends for their kind thought in providing his services. Continuing I said I did not wish to cast any reflection on his advice nor on the good intentions of our London friends, but that I thought it was a waste of effort on his part and a waste of good money on their part to have him there; that, as far as we were concerned, we were not retracting in any way from the stand we had taken. This line

was followed generally by the remainder of the prisoners and our friend McDonnell's advice was discarded.

On entering the room where the Sankey Commission sat I saw a group of men along one side of a large table in the centre of a long conference room. I was ushered to the opposite side by the attendant and was placed beside a big chair facing Judge Sankey. To the best of my recollection the interview went like this;- Judge Sankey addressed me by my Christian name, and opened the conversation by saying, "Good-day, Frank. Won't you sit down". I did so and thanked him. He then said, "Your name is Frank Robbins?" My answer was "Yes". "Your home address is 39 North William Street, Dublin?", the answer was "Yes" again. "You are a member of the Irish Citizen Army?" he asked. The answer was again in the affirmative. "You did not reside at your home address since 24th April?"; I answered "That is not correct". With this reply there was a little rustling and shuffling of papers and I was asked to say when I had last resided at my home address. I gave them the date, Thursday, 23rd March. There was a further rustling and shuffling of papers. These straightforward answers seemed to have upset the Advisory Committee. Judge Sankey then said to me, "Frank, you are down here as having the occupation of a driller. Tell us what that means". I replied, "That is the designation of my trade in the Dublin Dockyard". "I thought it meant that you were drilling holes in soldiers", said Judge Sankey, at which there was a general laugh. His next question was in the form of a suggestion that I had been forced to take the part I did in the Insurrection against His Majesty's Government. I replied, "That is not so. I entered into the Insurrection of my own free will and knowledge of what I was doing". He then suggested that I did not take an active part in the shooting, that I was probably attached to the Red Cross. I told him that that was not so, as I did not know anything about Red Cross work. He then

wanted to know if I had fired many shots, and my reply to that was that they were uncountable. He then asked, "Do you think you killed or wounded many soldiers?", to which I replied "I could not say, not being at the other end"; this reply was followed by more general laughter.

After some other incidental questions, Judge Sankey turned to the rest of the Committee and asked had they any questions to put to me. None of them having any further questions to ask, Judge Sankey said to me, "Well, Frank, would you like to be able to go home to your people again?", and I told him that it was in his hands whether I would be able to do so or not. With that the interview ended, Judge Sankey saying, "Thank you very much, Frank. Good-day", and I was then ushered out through another door so that I could not communicate with any of the men who had yet to come in.

The first results of the Advisory Committee's work operated almost immediately, and while batches of prisoners were still going before the Committee for review, others who had already been before them were now being released and sent home. Those released under the advice of the Sankey Advisory Committee were supposed to be the least recalcitrant type as far as the British Government was concerned, but how the Sankey Commission arrived at their decisions is hard to explain because some of those passed over were more innocent of crime against the British Empire than were some who were released. Perhaps it was a case of the Commission shutting their eyes, taking a pin, sticking it in certain names and recommending the lucky names for release. I was released about the middle of August, 1916.

On our arrival at Westland Row I was never so amazed in all my life. The reception that was given to us by the Dublin people was beyond description. A very large force of D.M.P. were around Westland Row railway station, but they were simply

scattered with the surging of the throng of people on our appearance at the exits of Westland Row station. From there up to Tara Street not one of us could pass without some man's or woman's arms around us, kissing us, hugging us, slapping us on the back, and practically carrying us through the streets.

After my release from Frongoch internment camp, a number of us, including Michael Donnelly who had been released a short while before me, gathered together to pick up the threads of the Irish Citizen Army organisation. We held a number of meetings in Liberty Hall, and one of the first things we decided to concentrate on was the procuring of arms. How to procure the arms was the question, as there was neither money, contacts nor any other form of organisation. At last we laid the basis for the future and had one or two small successes in the short while I remained in Dublin.

A few days after my return to Dublin, in the belief of having committed myself beyond forgiveness and re-employment in the Dublin Dockyard, I decided to go to work as a fireman on the s.s. "Rammore Head", belonging to the Head Line Company. I completed the round trip from Dublin to Montreal and back to Belfast. After some weeks in Dublin I crossed to Glasgow, with some small financial assistance from the No. 1 Branch Committee, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Before leaving

reference to the murder, as he termed it, of James Connolly. Among some of the passengers going back to America were men who had been employed on the s.s. Marina, which was taking mules for the British Army from America but was sunk by a German submarine in the Atlantic. The stories of their experience, resulting in their rescue was most interesting.

On the day of my arrival in New York I contacted Thomas Skinnider. I handed him over the documents which his sister had given me, and told him of her expected early visit to him. That evening he brought me to the flat of Captain Monteith's wife and family, where we had an interesting evening, recounting old times in Dublin.

Before leaving me that evening, Thomas Skinnider gave me an open invitation and suggested I should avail of it and stay with him. I turned this matter over in my mind for a number of days, and eventually on the Sunday, the day before the "Tuscania" was due to sail, I decided to leave the ship. Not being able to take all my belongings with me I handed them over to the fireman whose courage I admired so much.

Next day Thomas Skinnider took me down to the Gaelic-American office to introduce me to John Devoy. Devoy was not there when we arrived but I met John Kenny, a very close associate of Devoy, and also Seamus McDermott, brother of Seán McDermott, and James Reidy. With these introductions over Thomas Skinnider then took me to a place called Greenville, outside Jersey City, where he had some very old friends from Donegal, and I was fixed up with a job in the Thompson Freight-yard. I will always remember the kindness of Thomas Skinnider. He advanced me my board and lodgings over a period of two weeks, and helped me with underclothing, which was so essential in New York at the end of November, it being practically the beginning of the winter.

I continued to visit the Monteiths, as they were the

only other Irish people of our circle that I knew, and not being in a presentable state I refused invitations from the family to go to some Irish Societies' functions. Eventually I was able to overcome this difficulty, and my first visit to an Irish Society was arranged by Miss Florrie Monteith when she took me to the Philo Celtic Society which met at that time at 59th Street and Madison Avenue. On my arrival there I was delighted to meet some of the men who had taken part in the Insurrection in Easter Week in Dublin. The Philo-Celtic Society was conducted on the same lines as our Gaelic League classes, one part of the evening being devoted to learning the Irish language, and the other part to Irish dancing, with Irish songs in between.

The President of the Society was a man named O'Rourke who came from County Mayo. He was looking for a singer, and Miss Monteith informed him that he need look no further, that I could sing many Irish songs. On being introduced by Mr. O'Rourke as coming from Dublin and would sing one song the crowded hall gave me a tremendous welcome. Having sung my fourth song the crowd was still looking for more but Mr. O'Rourke intervened. Among the songs I sang on that occasion was Connolly's "Call of Erin", "The Soldiers' Song" and "Step Together". That night brought me into the limelight of Irish-American Clubs, and many invitations were extended to me to attend the various functions which were held from time to time. My contribution was always a couple of the many songs which I have mentioned earlier in this statement.

"The Soldiers' Song" was later published by Father O'Reilly under the name "Soldiers of Erin", and sold at 25 cents per copy.

Shortly after this the Cumann na mBan in New York were having a function, and among those present was John Devoy. This was the first occasion I had the very great pleasure of meeting this wonderful old Fenian. Both of us seemed to strike a chord in each other, so much so that during my stay in New York he gave me many confidences and our friendship grew with time.

About the end of the year 1916 I met Liam Mellows for the first time. His address was given to me by Nora Connolly, who had been in New York since shortly after Easter Week. Mellows and myself became very close friends. He was recognised by all the 1916 exiles, as we were termed, as our leader.

Soon after meeting Mellows I, with the rest of the 1916 exiles, received an invitation to attend a Clann na Gael Convention, which, as far as I can remember, was held in the Hotel Astor. The floor and the balconies of the hotel were packed with Irish-Americans, all leading members of the various Clann na Gael Clubs. On the platform taking a leading part in the proceedings that day were John Devoy, Judge Daniel F. Cohalan, Laurence Rice, Richard F. Dalton, John Kenny, John Carroll and other well known Irish-Americans. The speeches made from the platform were all telling the story of Ireland's fight for freedom and how Easter Week was but another phase of that long struggle. The enthusiasm of the audience was rising to fever pitch, but the climax came when all the Easter Week exiles were taken to the platform, introduced, and the different areas in which we had fought were named. Then came the real purpose of the meeting. John Devoy and Judge Daniel F. Cohalan made a tremendous appeal for funds to carry on the good work. Various members of Clann na Gael in their enthusiasm, saying what they themselves were personally guaranteeing and what the various Clubs which they represented

would do, were almost shouting each other down in their anxiety to be heard. The gathering was a wonderful success.

About April or May 1917 Liam Mellows and I met by appointment at the residence of Mr. Patrick Kirwan, 73 West 96th Street, where Mellows was staying. When the family retired the purpose of the appointment became clear. Mellows told me that he was contemplating taking a trip to Germany by arrangement with the Revolutionary Directorate of Clann na Gael. The reason for this visit to Germany was to make arrangements for the landing of arms in Ireland. Mellows had in mind three areas in Ireland where he thought arms could be landed successfully, one on the coast of Wexford, one on the coast of Clare, and another on the coast of Down. He had chosen to give me, out of all the other exiles, this information, and in the course of his statement he said that he thought the job was too big for one man. Believing him to be asking me in a roundabout way to be a partner in this venture I immediately said if he was seeking assistance and thought me a fit companion he need not say any more, whereupon he replied that the people who were responsible for organising this venture had stated that it was a one man job, but that his purpose in confiding in me was that I would be of assistance in initiating him into the ways of dock life. He also told me that when he succeeded in obtaining a ship I was to give him one month and then make arrangements myself to return to Ireland and inform Michael Collins what was under way. Mellows was seeking a ship in New York which would take him to Montevideo where he would pick up a job on a ship going to Spain. Arrangements would then be made for a German submarine to pick him up off the coast of Spain, from where he would proceed to Germany.

Having told me all these plans, Mellows made what I regarded as an extraordinary request, saying "Frank, I want

you to understand that this conversation must be repeated to nobody, not even to James Larkin". I resented Mellows bringing in the name of Larkin, and said to him that there was in Irish circles in New York a great feeling of hostility to Larkin which I understood was because of his Socialist ideas. "If that is so", I said, "you must also be hostile to me because I am also a Socialist. Further, having given you my word that I would not mention your conversation to anybody I cannot see the necessity for bringing in Larkin's name". I then insisted that if Mellows knew anything regarding Larkin's conduct which was contrary to the interests of the Irish nation he should tell me, in fairness to all concerned. Mellows denied that the hostility was because Larkin was a Socialist. He praised the works of Connolly, and stated further that he himself believed in Connolly's Socialism although he did not understand it very well. Mellows admitted that there was something between Larkin and the Irish revolutionary movement. He requested me not to press him for an explanation then but said that on some future occasion he would tell me the whole story. Although I insisted further on this matter, Mellows refused to explain, pleading with me not to press for the answer but to wait for another occasion when he would tell me the whole story.

Knowing now of Mellows' intended visit to Germany he and I met much oftener than heretofore, and the opening topic of conversation was always, "Is there a boat offering for Montevideo?". Some days there was great hope of a boat, other days there was no hope.

Mellows did not understand the way of moving around the docks, and he and I toured the docks together. This was more or less helping him to rub shoulders with the seamen and dockers. Mellows was very pleased with my company because of the weariness of parading round the various places seeking employment. Having had my companionship on several visits,

he felt more sure of himself and said he did not wish to intrude any more on my time. It meant knocking off work any day I went with Mellows to the New York docks. He continued his efforts to get a ship which would take him on his journey, but no ship could be obtained.

Around the New Year 1917 I had an express letter from Larkin in reply to a letter which I had written him over a month previously. In this letter he asked me to meet him at eleven o'clock in the Continental Hotel, off 41st Street, New York. The express letter did not reach me until half-past ten that morning, and I had at least 1½ hours journey to go from where I was living in Greenville. Besides that, I was now on night work and was about to retire to bed when the letter arrived. However, in my anxiety to meet Larkin, I forgot everything else and set out for the Continental Hotel where I arrived around 12 o'clock.

In his letter Larkin stated that he had registered in the hotel under the name of James Lawson. On enquiring at the hotel I found that James Lawson (Larkin) was not in, and I decided that I would wait no matter how long it would take. After some time a middle-aged man arrived at the enquiry desk, close to where I was sitting, and I heard him ask for Mr. James Larkin. This gentleman insisted that he had an appointment with Mr. Larkin for that time. The attendants in the hotel made other enquiries but still the answer was that Mr. Larkin was not residing there. I thought it best to leave my seat, have a little walk towards the door and back again while further conversation was going on. I made sure I would contact the gentleman who was making enquiries about Larkin, and, the opportunity arriving, I told him that James Larkin was registered in the hotel as James Lawson. The man was surprised at hearing this, and at first regarded me with suspicion. However, having recovered from his surprise, he showed me Larkin's letter which did not indicate in any way

that he was staying in the hotel under an assumed name. The gentleman concerned was a Cork man named Twomey, and he and I became very friendly from then onwards. On learning that I was a member of the Irish Citizen Army and only recently arrived from Ireland, he was anxious to get all information concerning the fighting in Easter Week. We spend a number of hours together that day until finally he could not wait any longer.

James Larkin arrived at the Hotel around 8 o'clock that evening, I having waited eight hours in my anxiety to give him a message from Thomas Foran, General President of the Irish Transport Union. Larkin seemed less interested in hearing the message I had to give than in making wild charges against John Devoy, Judge, Daniel F. Cohalan and other Irish people in America. The interview took place in his room.

During his period of declamation Larkin included the names of Connolly, Pearse and MacDonagh. He then stated that Connolly had no right whatever to bring off the Insurrection as he, Larkin, had sent him a cable, over the signature "Mary", telling him to call it all off, whereupon I replied, "Mr. Larkin, you don't know what you are talking about. Connolly could do nothing else, and if you had been there you could have done nothing else either, unless back down which would have meant complete defeat of the Irish nation and the conscription of Irishmen into the British Army".

Larkin's reaction to this rebuff from me was to say that he felt very sore against Connolly for sending his sister, Delia Larkin, away from Liberty Hall, and said he intended to deal with the people responsible when he got back to Ireland. My reply to that statement was "Mr. Larkin, you have got one side of the story and I am going to give you the other side now", and I repeated the activities of Miss Delia Larkin and the

soreheads who supported her.

With this further rebuff Larkin then switched to a further condemnation of John Devoy, Daniel F. Cohalan and other Irish-American leaders. He said that in his opinion John Devoy, although a good man in the past, was now out of date and too old, and that Judge Cohalan and the crowd around him were just cheap American politicians. Then came a number of alleged incidents of escapes he had from time to time. Finally he drew his valise from under the bed and in a most dramatic fashion showed me two small sticks of gelignite, stating, "This is the kind of work we are doing here". Having gone through the preparations for, and taking part in the Revolution at home in Ireland, this dramatic episode left me cold, as I knew that the home-made bombs which we had prepared with similar sticks of gelignite had on several occasions failed us. A falsity seemed to ring through the whole of Larkin's statement, particularly when I remembered that only a few minutes before this he was condemning Connolly, Pearse, MacDonagh and other leaders.

This conversation having concluded, James Larkin took me to a Socialist meeting somewhere in New York. These Socialist meetings were held for the purpose of keeping America out of the war, and to advocate pacifism, of which Eugene V. Debs was the spearhead and who suffered much for his principles. The speaker having concluded his statement, Larkin got up and asked some question which was meant to be devastating to the lecturer, but which turned as a boomerang on himself, and the people laughed him into silence.

late in June or early July 1917,
Dr. Patrick McCartan came to New York/and I met him for the first time in the Gaelic-American office on the Monday, the day after his arrival. John Devoy, Dr. McCartan and Liam Mellows came in from lunch shortly after my arrival at the Gaelic-American office and I was introduced to the doctor by Liam Mellows.

there, and the plan was to bluff my way through. On arriving at the entrance to the docks I walked very smartly in without taking any notice of the guard. As I proceeded inwards I heard a voice shout "Halt". I paid no attention to this command, but continued my journey. The next thing I heard was a rush of feet, a few swear words and I was asked did I want a so-and-so bayonet into me. I casually looked around and said to the soldier "Were you speaking to me?" "Yes", he said in quite an angry tone, "where is your pass?" "Pass? for what?", said I. He answered, "You can't get in here without a pass", to which I replied, "But all I am looking for is a job. Surely one doesn't need a pass to get a job on a ship which I know has vacant berths for seamen and firemen". "You can't get in here without a pass", he said again. I said "Well, look here, I'm in a pretty bad state. I've been 'on the rocks' in this city since the week before last. I missed my ship through going to a party the night before she was due to sail. I got very drunk. When I woke the next day and came looking for the ship she had already gone to sea. I am living on friends here in New York, and that is something that I don't like doing. Will you please stretch a point and allow me to go aboard?" This story softened the soldier's heart somewhat, but not sufficiently to allow me to go aboard without a pass. He advised me to stand outside the gate where I could see the bos'n who passed in and out pretty often. When I could speak to him and once he O.K.'d me everything would be allright and I could go aboard. He asked me did I know the bos'n and I said I did. I realised then that I had said a little too much. I waited a while and then left because if the bos'n came along the soldier would see that I did not know him and would get suspicious. I went back to where I had left Mellows and McCartan and told them that my attempt had failed.

I do not know how the document was brought ashore eventually but there is a point of view held that it was through the influence of Clann na Gael that this problem was overcome. Dr. McCartan in his book "With de Valera in America" says he took it ashore with him on the ~~Friday~~ Sunday, the day the ship docked. Yet on Monday he was deploring its loss, and was party to, and in agreement with my effort to get it by boarding the ship. However, I have given the facts as known to me.

A few days later Mellows and I were walking together on our way to transact some business. I noticed that he was in very low spirits and I jokingly said to him, "A penny for your thoughts, Liam, or are they even worth that much", to which Mellows replied in a very despondent manner, "If I had known as much in Easter Week as I know to-day I would never have fired a shot". This immediately brought the response from me, "Ah, ah, Liam, you have been listening to Dr. McCartan". Liam was very angry at this remark; he actually stopped in the street and stated very emphatically that he had not been talking to McCartan. I said in reply, "Liam, no matter what part of the world you go to, two and two make four. Dr. McCartan was the only arrival in this country from Ireland during the last week or so, therefore I still contend that Mr. McCartan has been saying something to you, endeavouring to justify his own inaction, and the inaction of Pulmer Hobson and Eoin MacNeill and others in Easter Week". Liam still protested that I was wrong, and I suggested that if it was not a breach of confidence would he tell me what was troubling him. With that he told me that the Revolutionary Military Council had taken unto themselves powers to which they had no right; they had usurped the authority of the Supreme Council of the I.R.A. which was the only authority with power to declare the Insurrection, and they had set themselves up as a military junta and ignored everyone else. These were the reasons for his astonishing statement, whereupon I asked him would he like to hear my point of view on the

matter and replying he would be glad to hear it. I said, "Liam, you have been going around this country telling the Irish people and the American people that the Insurrection of 1916 has regenerated the soul of Ireland, that it has brought Ireland's case for freedom before the world and that Irishmen can never be conscripted into the British Army; that it has saved the manhood of Ireland from being drafted into foreign wars in the interests of British Imperialism. You have eulogized Connolly, Pearse, Clarke, and all the other men who gave their lives so willingly for Ireland's freedom. Now, if you believe this story of Dr. McCartan's, and I still repeat that it was Dr. McCartan who told it to you, you must go to all these people and you must, in all honesty, tell them that when you were speaking to them on this matter before that you were all wrong. You must tell them that the signatories of the Irish Republic were nothing but a military junta who had usurped the authority of another body and taken its power unto themselves. But before you do that, I would ask you to examine the whole matter thoroughly. I repeat to you that Dr. McCartan, Eoin MacNeill, Bulmer Hobson and a number of other people, through their inaction in Easter Week, are due to give an explanation to the Irish people. The only way by which they can whitewash themselves is by attacking those who are dead and, therefore, not able to defend themselves. If there is any doubt in your mind on this question, Liam, in Christian charity you must give the benefit of the doubt to the men who made the supreme sacrifice, and made it so willingly, for what they believed in. That sacrifice you and I must agree, is now bearing the fruits which we are looking forward to gather". Liam turned to me and said, "Thanks, Frank, I never looked at it that way. You have eased my mind considerably. I was very worried about the whole matter".

Some time later when speaking to Liam Mellows again on his projected trip to Germany he informed me that the venture had been cancelled and that a new one was now under consideration. On this second venture both he and McCartan were going to Germany. This trip was not to be via Spain, but via Holland. My instructions still remained as arranged for the first venture. The plans in this direction met with more success, McCartan being booked as a cook on one boat and Mellows on another.

On the night of the day that McCartan's ship left New York, Mellows was arrested. On his way to prison, he leaned out of the motor car in which he was being taken away, and dropped all the papers which he had in his pocket out of the window. The papers scattered over the street. This was done unnoticed by the detectives.

I had changed my residence from Greenville, Jersey City, to New York and at this time was working in the Edison Power Station at 201st Street, New York City. I was on night shift and when I arrived home to Miss O'Sullivan's apartments on Columbus Avenue, near 103rd Street, I learned that Miss Minnie Ward had called earlier and left some papers with Miss O'Sullivan, saying she would be back later. I was at breakfast when Miss Ward returned and told me of Liam's arrest and also that detectives had searched Mrs. Kirwan's apartment, where Mellows lived. On hearing this story my first desire was to transmit it immediately to John Devoy. When I arrived at the Gaelic-American office I found that the place was not open at that early hour of the morning, so I went on to Brooklyn to where Miss Nora Connolly and Miss Margaret Skinnider lived.

Arriving at their apartment I found that Miss Nora Connolly was out but I told Miss Skinnider about Mellows' arrest. Having concluded my story we got talking on general matters, and in the course of this conversation James Larkin's

name was mentioned by Miss Skinnider in very strong scathing terms. I asked her why she was condemning Larkin so much, and she in turn asked me had Liam or Nora not told me what happened between Larkin and Mellows. I told her that Mellows had requested me to keep silence as far as Larkin was concerned and that when I pressed him for a reason he refused to answer but promised to tell me on another occasion.

Some months prior to this the Irish exiles in New York had organised a céilí and dance, the proceeds of which were to be given to the widow of Mr. Patrick Lively of Liverpool. Patrick Lively had been very helpful to our people when making their way from Ireland to America by underground channels, and this opportunity was being taken for the purpose of showing, in a small way, the exiles' appreciation of his work. Mellows was Chairman, Patrick Brazil (Waterford) Secretary, and I was the Treasurer. This is Miss Skinnider's story as told to me on that morning of my visit to Nora Connolly's apartment to inform her of Mellows' arrest.! James Larkin was one of many who attended the céilí, and it seems that during the course of the night Mellows and Larkin had a private conversation in one of the rooms attached to the hall. In the course of the conversation Larkin asked Mellows what was doing. Mellows asked him what he meant, and Larkin referred to the secret moves that were being made from New York, to which Mellows replied that he did not know what Larkin was talking about. Larkin became inflamed at this retort and said he knew that secret moves were being made and that he was being kept out of them deliberately. Further, he was entitled to know everything that was taking place and he insisted on knowing. He pressed Mellows to give him the information. Mellows still retorted that he did not know what Larkin was talking about, whereupon Larkin threatened to make it known to other authorities that something was taking place. To this Mellows replied, "If you want to be an

informer that is your business, but Irishmen have a way of treating informers", and that finished the conversation.

I waited until Nora Connolly arrived and I told her the story of Mellows' arrest as I knew it. I left their flat in Brooklyn and again went to the Gaelic-American office. John Devoy was not there but I told John Kenny that Mellows had been arrested the previous night, and was now a prisoner in the Tombs Prison. I got my directions as to the location of the Tombs Prison and proceeded there from the Gaelic-American office. I was Mellows' first visitor and I had quite an interesting experience. I was shown into a large room, which was partitioned by wire netting on my side and also on Mellows' side, but we could talk freely, or should I say shout freely. I never heard, before or since, so many different languages spoken in a single room in my life, and anyone who wants this experience should pay a visit to some prisoner in the Tombs. It was a regular "Tower of Babel".

In the course of my conversation with Mellows in which both of us were shouting at the top of our voices in order to hear each other, and even then it was most difficult at times, Liam spoke to me in Irish but having very little knowledge of the Gaelic language I could not understand him. He tried a number of times speaking slowly and distinctly, but it was of no avail. I knew he was trying to convey to me that he wanted something done and I was very upset that I could not understand him. He, on the other hand, was afraid to say in English what he wanted done, and , therefore, both of us had to be satisfied with being able to see one another and talk in the English language of things that were not important.

Later that night I learned through the Kirwan family that Nora Connolly, after seeing Mellows in the Tombs prison that afternoon, had called to their apartment and asked to be given

certain papers that were behind a picture. It appears that this was one of the few places that the detectives did not search, so Nora Connolly was able to retrieve the papers which Liam was so interested in and about which I feel sure he was trying to tell me in the Gaelic language.

When McCartan's ship arrived in Halifax some days later, in or around the time of the big explosion, he was arrested and after some time he arrived back in the United States.

While I was in America, Nora Connolly, whom I met on many occasions, had some interesting things to tell me of her activities. I remember on one occasion she told me of a visit she made to New York prior to the Insurrection of Easter Week. Around 1915 it was well known that concrete ships were being built in the shipyards in Belfast and possibly in other shipbuilding centres. Information leaked out that these ships were to be used for the blocking of the Zeebruge Canal which was the operations centre of the German submarines. Such a scheme, were it successful, would no doubt affect the activities of the submarines to the advantage of Britain and her Allies, and James Connolly thought it important enough to send Nora, his daughter, to New York to see John Devoy, and have him arrange an interview for her with Count Bernstorf. Nora Connolly's mission being of a highly confidential character, her father impressed upon her that on no account must she contact James Larkin before giving her information to the German Ambassador. She could then use her own judgement afterwards as to whether she would tell Larkin of her mission should she eventually see him.// John Devoy arranged the interview and Nora Connolly gave the information to the Ambassador for which he thanked her very much.

Having completed her mission, Nora Connolly thought it well to contact Larkin, so she sent him a wire to Chicago saying that she was travelling to that city and would like to see him.

She signed the wire with the one word "Connolly". On her arrival at the station in Chicago she met Larkin, who was very surprised seeing her and said he expected her father as he thought things had got too hot for him in Ireland and that he had cleared out. Nora Connolly's reply to that was that there was a man's job to be done in Ireland and that while such a job remained to be done her father would stay there. As a result of this conversation she did not give any information to Larkin regarding her visit to the United States.

James Larkin visited New York from time to time, and on one occasion, early in 1917, while there he and I were travelling in the subway and he asked me how I had been treated by the "Old Man",meaning John Devoy. I asked him what he meant and he replied, "Did he give you any money?". I told him that I did not get any money from Devoy, that I was working and had been working from the second day in New York after leaving the ship, and therefore did not need any help. Larkin questioned me further as to the wages I was earning, and so on, and I gave him the necessary information. He said to me, "There is nothing in that for you. Why don't you be like me. I don't do any work but I have plenty of money. I can get it any time I want it". Nothing more transpired on this matter until a week or two later when I was assembled with other exiles in Kirwan's residence in 75 West 96th Street and suddenly realised that all of the assembled lads had gone to another part of the flat leaving the brothers Hugh and Patrick Holohan and myself with the door shut. The next thing that happened was that Patrick Holohan produced a large roll of dollar bills and pushed them across the table to me saying they were mine. I said, "This is very nice, but who is the arch-angel sending me money to such an extent?". The answer I got was, "We are not at liberty to tell you", to which I replied "In that case I am not at liberty to take this money" and pushed it back to Patrick Holohan.

This started a long-drawn out argument between the two Holohan brothers and myself, in the course of which the excuse was made that I was the only one of the exiles who had not been given any help from the "Old Man". I told them that I had not sought help from anybody, that when I would seek such help,I hoped and I believed, that I would have the same good friends. Eventually I remembered that in the early portion of the conversation Larkin's name had been mentioned so I connected the last conversation I had with Larkin in the subway with this matter and then I got the whole truth. It turned out that Larkin went down to the Gaelic-American office and abused John Devoy for being a party to class distinction, stating that the white-collared Volunteers were being well looked after, but that the Citizen Army men were being left in want. I, being the only Citizen Army man in New York, immediately came to the conclusion that John Devoy must have thought that I complained to Larkin that I was not being treated fairly, whereupon I insisted that the brothers Holohan take back the money to John Devoy. I asked them to tell Devoy that I would see him in the course of a few days and that I hoped he would believe me when I said I had no hand or part in Larkin's visit to him, and had given no authority whatever to Larkin to mention my name in connection with such a matter.

When I called on Devoy a few days later I raised this matter with him, and told him that as far as this whole matter was concerned I never complained to Larkin, that I had no reason to complain, and that I did not come to New York to be a burden on the funds of the Irish organisation, funds which I knew would be of better use at home in Ireland than giving them to individuals like myself in New York. Devoy in reply told me he believed me and knew Larkin very well and knew he was capable of doing things of this kind. Devoy also told me that Larkin did not get it all his own way when he was making the complaint. I told Devoy that I would take the first opportunity of

speaking to Larkin on the matter, but Devoy advised me that it would be much better to say nothing and to ignore it. I did later on try to discuss this matter with Larkin, but in his usual way he brushed it aside.

The United States of America now being in the war on the side of Britain and her Allies was making feverish preparations to build her Army. A general holiday for a certain class of workers, or perhaps it was the 4th July, 1917, was declared in order to allow them register, irrespective of whether they were United States citizens or foreigners. The purpose of this was to get all the information of the available man-power in the United States. I, like millions of others, was required to register on this day. The office where I was obliged to register was in Ocean Avenue, near Greenville, Jersey City. On arriving at the registration office I found queues of men waiting their turn. There was quite a number of booths to accommodate those who were registering, and when it came to my turn the clerk asked me questions from a prepared form. Some of the questions, and my answers, as far as my memory goes were as follows;-

What is your name and address?	Frank Robbins, 81 Gates Ave., Greenville, Jersey City.
What is your nationality?	Irish.
Were you ever in the Army of your country?	Yes.
What rank did you hold in the Army of your country?	Sergeant.
Did you ever work in munitions factories?	Yes.
For how long?	About two years.

Then came the final question before signing the document; "Of what country are you a citizen?" My answer to that was "The Irish Republic". The clerk became nonplussed at this answer and said "Wait a moment". He brought the chief supervisor to the booth. The supervisor, Mr. McCarthy, in

real blustering Irish-American fashion wanted to know "what all this damn nonsense was about". By this time all the other files of people, as well as the police on duty, began to notice some heat of argument at the hatch. I replied that it was not nonsense, that I had answered the questions truthfully. He then said in real authoritative fashion, "There is no such state as the Irish Republic", to which I replied, "I beg to differ with you. The Irish Republic was declared in Easter Week, 1916, in Dublin". This argument continued for some time. Finally he said, "You are a British subject". I replied, "I am not, and should I sign that form as a British subject it will falsify every answer I have given above. I was not a Sergeant in the British Army, but I was a Sergeant in the Irish Republican Army. I never worked in British munitions factories; I worked in the munitions factories of the Irish Republic". Finally the pressure broke down my morale for the moment and I signed the document as a British subject, but not before I extracted from him that he would take the responsibility for the falsified document should the question arise later.

That afternoon I went to New York and met Liam Mellows at Kirwans' flat, as well as Miss Ward, a sister of Mrs. Kirwan's. I told them the story of my registration and they were quite delighted with the line I had taken without any tutoring. The three of us decided to go to the nearest registration booth for 96th Street and register there. This was a very small office with only one clerk in it. We all signed the papers as citizens of the Irish Republic and were accepted as such by the clerk in charge of the office. In the course of answering the questions Liam Mellows used his knowledge of Irish to advantage, and had the clerk tied up in a back knot. When asked his name, Mellows said "Liam Ó Maoilíosa" and the clerk asked him was that Greek. Mellows replied, "No, that is Gaelic". "I am afraid I cannot spell

that name. Would you mind writing it yourself" said the clerk. All this was delightful enjoyment to Miss Ward and myself. We left the office with the very best thanks of the man in charge.

My second registration was under a false name and I gave my home address as being Drogheda, County Louth. My purpose in doing this was that perhaps at some future date the false registration might be of use to myself or some other of the Easter Week exiles who were staying in New York at the time.

In the early part of 1917 I paid a visit to Mrs. Monteigh's flat at 3rd Avenue, 118th Street. When I was admitted Mrs. Monteith told me she had a surprise for me and brought me into the front sittingroom where I found Captain Monteith. My appearance seemed to take Captain Monteith by surprise. He gave me the impression that he had been suffering for some time from nerves, his bearing being as if expecting something unpleasant to happen. One could not blame any man for this, particularly Monteith who was to be shot at sight, if unfortunately arrested during his period on the run in Ireland it would have meant certain death for him. I was very pleased to meet him once again. The previous occasion on which I had seen Captain Monteith was during the incident to which I have already referred, between Irish Citizen Army and the National Volunteers on the Parnell Anniversary, which was approximately a little over 2½ years earlier. From then onwards Monteith was to be seen fairly often with the rest of the Easter Week exiles at different functions in New York.

All the Easter Week exiles were invited to a meeting of the Shamrock Club, at which John Devoy spoke. In the course of Devoy's address he made a special plea to all the young men who had recently arrived in America from Ireland to take out their first papers as American citizens. His

reason for giving this advice was because of the tremendous influence of the British Government in official circles in America, particularly in view of the fact that America would in a few days time be lined up on the side of Britain and her Allies. He felt that the Irish organisation in America could not succeed in a stand-up fight against this influence. Devoy referred to the fact that amongst the Easter Week exiles was a number of wanted men including Mellows, Monteith, Donal O'Hannigan and Michael O'Callaghan (Tipperary), and said that if the British Government applied to the American Government for Extradition Orders for these men he held no hopes of being able to defeat such a move. This was his primary reason for advising the obtaining of first citizenship papers. Were the British Government to apply for and succeed in getting Extradition Orders, these men would be brought home to Ireland, tried and executed. This would be have a damaging effect on the morale of the people in Ireland because it would show the power and prestige the British Government held with the United States Government. Devoy went on to say, "This is the last time I will speak about it, but I would ask the young man from Ireland to consider seriously the position, but whatever their decision may be I will abide by it".

Before leaving the hall that evening the Easter Week exiles met in a group. Finally it was decided that Mellows, Monteith and myself would be appointed as a deputation to interview Judge Daniel F. Cohalan, with the object of ascertaining if the procuring of first papers of United States citizenship would involve a repudiation of our citizenship of the Irish Republic, which we felt in honour bound to uphold.

Later we were advised that Judge Cohalan would see us on a certain evening at eight o'clock, but there was an error made in the date and when we arrived at his house we found that the Judge was giving a dinner to a number of very influential people, one of whom was Dr. Kuno Meyer, Professor of Celtic languages and a well-known German international figure. The Judge was surprised at our visit and upset having to disappoint us. He apologized very sincerely for the mistake in the date of the appointment, and advised us to go and see his assistant, Mr. Roderick Kennedy, at his office, which was a short distance from the house, who would give us all the necessary information. Captain Monteith seemed annoyed at this as he regarded it to be a ~~delicate~~ deliberate rebuff, and Mellows and myself were left to go to Judge Cohalan's office to talk the matter over with Mr. Kennedy. In the course of the conversation with Mr. Kennedy, it was quite evident to us that we would have to forego our citizenship of the Irish Republic; that position was clearly represented to us.

Having got this information Mellows and I left the Judge's office and discussed the matter fully before reaching any conclusion. Mellows then asked me for my opinion, and I said that I thought it would be better for him and others who were in a similar position to review the situation in a much more detailed fashion. I, not being one of the wanted men, had not to worry in that direction but Mellows and the others would be sought for. Mellows insisted on getting my point of view, which was that as far as I was concerned I would not take out the first papers of United States citizenship. Mellows took the same view, and that was the recommendation which was made to the Easter Week exiles and was accepted by them as the correct attitude to adopt in the matter, with the exception of Martin Walsh, who prior to this date had already taken out his first papers of United States citizenship.

Martin Walsh had been in the Asnbourne fight and was wounded during the battle.

Around this period Mellows and I were discussing various people, and on mentioning Captain Monteith's name I remember Mellows saying that the Captain had been called to a conference with the Clan na Gael Directorate, where he was interrogated closely as to his part in Irish affairs in Germany and later in Ireland. It appears that the Directorate were not too well pleased with the report which he made of his sojourn in Germany with the Irish Brigade and later when he arrived back in Ireland. This was a surprise to me but I made no comment as the information was given to me in confidence by Mellows and I now record the matter for its historical value.

On one occasion I accompanied Liam Mellows to Boston and surrounding districts. This visit was to resurrect a Clan na Gael Club which had fallen by the wayside. We successfully accomplished our business. The fact that Mellows had been given the job to do and because of his part in the Insurrection seemed to have been the deciding factor in rehabilitating this Club. Mellows introduced me as a member of the Irish Citizen Army, and I naturally had to say a few words to the men assembled, who were few in number but chosen men. The following day we paid visits to some of the outlying districts around Boston to contact some kindred spirits with the object of bearing fruit at a later date. This was my first official organisation work on behalf of the Clan na Gael.

Early in January, 1917, Martin Walsh and myself decided to join the Napper Tandy Club at the request of John Carroll, the Senior Guardian of the Club. There was no ritual of any kind for us. When we arrived at the hall for the meeting we were brought to the platform, and after the official business of the Club was finished John Carroll introduced us as two

young men from Ireland. Walsh and myself had to tell our story before we left the platform. This was my first attempt to make an address in public and since I had got no previous notice about it I certainly felt very embarrassed. However, what Walsh and I had to say seemed to have a wonderful effect on those present, although we told our story in a very crude way. Looking back, I would say that it was because of who we were and the part played by us in the Insurrection more than what we said that was responsible for the ovation given to us.

Shortly after America entered the war a meeting was organised in the Cooper Union Institute. This Institute was situated down town, around 9th Street and 2nd Avenue district. The meeting was organised by Mayor Mitchel,(a grandson of John Mitchel) and some of his Irish-American associates who were regarded as being of the shoneen type. On the platform that evening by invitation was a member of the Clan na Gael Directorate in the person of Richard F. Dalton, formerly from Co. Tipperary. His connection with the Clan-na-Gael was unknown to the organisers of the meeting. It was suspected by the Clan na Gael that this meeting would speak on behalf of and declare the loyalty of the Irish people to the United States of America, now at war with Germany, and that a call for conscription would be made. A resolution to this effect was proposed, and Dalton speaking from the platform opposed the resolution. While the meeting was for selected people and admission could only be gained by special tickets, all the Clan na Gael and Cumann na mBan in New York were provided with tickets which were printed exactly the same as the originals. By this means they were able to obtain admission to the meeting before it was realised that substitute tickets had been printed. Instead of the friendly atmosphere expected by Mayor Mitchel and his associates, they had an almost completely hostile meeting. Small Tri-colour

flags and United States flags suddenly appeared entwined in various parts of the building. Cheers for the Irish Republic were heard from all parts of the building. Ushers on duty attempted but failed to quell the excitement, and efforts were made to seize the tri-colour flags. The fact that each person who displayed the Tri-Colour had also a United States flag left the usners in a quandary as to what to do. Eventually the riot squad from the police department were called in and we got very severe handling. Seamus McDermott, a brother of Seán McDermott one of the signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, was badly beaten that night, in fact his jawbone was fractured as a result of the mannandling he received from members of the riot squad. Miss Sara McKelvey, a native of Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, and President of the Cumann na mBan was also badly manhandled, her clothes being badly torn on account of her refusal to evacuate the hall peaceably. Of the many casualties that night these two names remain fresh in my memory. However, our purpose had been achieved; the meeting was a complete failure for the organisers whose intention it was to announce the 100% allegiance of the Irish people to President Wilson's attempt to rescue England from a military defeat by Germany.

A great deal of credit must be given to the Cumann na mBan of New York under the leadership of Miss Sara McKelvey, Rose McDermott, Mrs. Molony (sister-in-law of Helena Molony) and Mrs. Alice Comiskey for their many successful efforts to raise money for the purpose of obtaining arms for Irishmen in Ireland. They were prominently associated with the big bazaar held in Madison Square Gardens after the Insurrection of Easter Week, and continued to collect money in many other ways such as by holding céilís, concerts and meetings. All these functions brought money to the coffers of the organisation and this money was handed over to the higher

Irish authorities in New York. Special mention should be made of their untiring efforts in visiting Celtic Park every Sunday, where there was always a gathering of Irish people to see football or hurling matches and other sports. A bell-tent was erected with a sign saying that inside the tent fortunes would be told for so much. The person who had all this wisdom to impart was Mrs. Molony.

The Clan na Gael organisation was also very active at this time holding various functions and meetings at which prominent speakers would attend. I remember a short while after Dr. McCartan arrived in New York he was one of the leading speakers at a meeting which had a packed house. On another occasion Mrs. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington was a big draw. At all these meetings I was called upon to sing Irish songs. My choice of songs at these meetings would include "The Soldiers Song", Connolly's "Call of Erin", "Wrap the Green Flag Round Me", and Madame Markievicz's song, "Armed for the Battle". These songs seemed to have a tremendous effect on the audience who were always anxious for more. I remember on one occasion at a Robert Emmet commemoration, at which Judge Daniel F. Conalan was the Chairman, I sang "Wrap the Green Flag Round me" and Madame's song "Armed for the Battle". Judge Cohalan called me to his side afterwards and in the course of conversation found out that I was working as a labourer in a freight-yard in Greenville, Jersey City. He told me in very emphatic terms that I was wasting my time in the country. I did not know what he meant, and informed him that it was not my intention to stay there very much longer. He then made it clear to me that he thought I had great talent in my singing and that if properly trained I would make a name for myself. He enquired then if I would be at the first anniversary of Easter Week at Carnegie Hall and I informed him that I would. He made me promise that when he concluded that meeting I was to go and speak to him

immediately and this I agreed to do.

At the anniversary of the Easter Week Insurrection in Carnegie Hall there was a tremendous gathering of enthusiastic people, including Victor Herbert and a number of the leading singers from his opera "Eileen", which was then running in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

After the meeting concluded I carried out my promise to Judge Cohalan and he immediately called Mr. Victor Herbert into the conversation with these words, "Victor, I want you to do me a favour", to which Mr. Herbert replied, "You know that is already granted with the asking. You don't have to ask any favours from me". The Judge then introduced me to Victor Herbert and said, "This young man has a soft, natural, untrained voice, and I believe you could make him a very fine singer. Will you look after him?" To this Mr. Herbert said, "I certainly will". Judge Cohalan then left Mr. Herbert and myself together. Mr. Herbert then plied me with questions. He asked me if I had sung in public and did I do much singing. My answer was in the negative. He then asked me how the Judge came to think that I had a voice which could be trained, to which I replied that I sang a few songs from time to time at Irish gatherings, but that I felt that it was not my voice but the songs I sang which had an effect on the people listening. Mr. Herbert said, "We will see about that". He next gave me his calling card, wrote on the back of the card "To be admitted whenever calling" and signed his name Victor Herbert. The address on the card was the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. One of the greatest regrets in my life is that I did not avail of this generous offer. For not doing so I was abused by my many great friends in New York, who made it clear that I was one in a million to get such a wonderful opportunity.

About March or April, 1917, all the Easter Week exiles received written invitations from "John Brennan"(Miss Gifford) to come to her flat in Amsterdam Avenue, New York. Most of the exiles availed of the invitation. Amongst those present were Liam Mellows and Patrick Brazil from Waterford, who some years later became Town Clerk of Waterford City. None of us knew the reason for the invitations until the appearance of "John Brennan, who was late for the appointment. After a short while we had unfolded to us her scheme for the launching of a new Clan na Gael organisation, the basis of which was to be the Easter Week exiles. The new organisation was to take the place of the old Clan na Gael which was then under the leadership of John Devoy. In making this proposal "John Brennan" gave her views that the Clan na Gael was out of date and required fresh blood in order to get things done on behalf of Irish freedom. A number of questions were put to "John Brennan", but her replies did not build any confidence within the minds of those present. When leaving her flat I remember Liam Mellows taking me aside and asking me what I thought of the proposal. I told him plain and straight that I thought it was mad-headed and foolish. I asked him, "How could we expect to build an organisation? We are unknown and know nothing about the conditions of the country, and we would not make any progress whatever. In fact, we would do more harm to the Irish cause than anything else". Mellows said that he agreed with me. We heard no more of this suggestion from "John Brennan", but as time went on signs began to show that some people were intent on creating yet another Irish organisation.

Towards the end of 1917 Mellows and I had a conversation regarding his arrest by the United States authorities and the prolonging of his bail. I took the view that his case would be continually postponed and would not be decided while the

war lasted. My reason for this view was that the United States authorities did not want to create any hostility amongst the Irish people if it could be avoided. Mellows agreed with this. I expressed the view then of the possibility of conscription being extended to Ireland by Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, and it was time for me to make my way home to Ireland. He also agreed with this possibility, and I decided to make arrangements early in the New Year. About the latter part of January or early February 1918 I was specially introduced to a Mr. Lynch, Secretary of the Seamen's Union in New York, by Marcus O'Sullivan, a Corkman who is now residing in his native city but was then a courier between John Devoy and John F. Ryan of Buffalo, a leading member of the Clan na Gael Directorate. After the formal introduction had taken place, O'Sullivan left Mr. Lynch's house. Mr. Lynch and I were sitting there for a short while without any conversation taking place. I, for the want of something else to do, was looking around the room at the pictures on the walls when suddenly the silence was broken by hearing some choice swear words, which could only equal the swear words I heard in the Dublin Dockyard some years before. It appeared that Mr. Lynch, before attempting to do any business with me, wanted to have a look into my eyes because he regarded the eyes of an individual as expressing his whole character. I remember my father saying something similar some years before this, so I obliged Mr. Lynch by staring him out of countenance, and when he had enough I encouraged him to have a little more. Finally arrangements were made as to what ship he would be able to have me employed on; it was the "St. Paul". A number of preliminaries had to be carried out before I could be fixed up; I would have to prove to the American Shipping Board that I had been a seaman, and would have to get the necessary official permission from them to apply for such work. All these difficulties out of the way,

there was then only the question of presenting myself for employment in the usual way, without any more conferences with Mr. Lynch.

On the trip home I had a companion in the person of Dónal O'Hannigan. Dónal O'Hannigan had been Vice-Commandant of the Louth Brigade pre-Easter Week. Needless to remark his activities and mine also as to taking jobs as firemen were kept secret and were known only to a very few people .

The"St. Paul" left New York on Friday, 15th February, 1918. O'Hannigan and myself shared the one seaman's bag, and with the exception of a slight accident to my head caused by falling coal we both arrived safely in Liverpool. When we were leaving the ship at Liverpool we had some revolvers at the bottom of the bag. It required a little bluff to pass the policeman at the docks to get our bag safely out. This was done by saying that I was taking dirty clothes to my sister's house on Scotland Road for washing before the return trip to New York. We had pre-arranged with a family named Murphy who owned a public house in the dock area, though some distance from where the St. Paul was berthed, to call there with our bag. An Irish official of the National Seamen and Firemen's Union, whose name was given as Barney O'Hea, helped us out with digs for that night. The following day we paid a visit to the shop of a famous old stalwart of Ireland's fight for freedom. His shop was situated on Scotland Road. At the moment I cannot recall his name. That night we left Liverpool and both of us arrived safely in Dublin the following morning, much to the surprise of our relatives and many friends.

As I have already stated McCartan and Mellows were making arrangements to get the preliminaries completed before they could seek employment on a ship. For this reason they presented themselves at the American Shipping Board to get

the necessary papers to prove that they were genuine seafaring men. They were acting under false names and addresses, and also had birth certificates and seamen's shipping papers showing that they had previously worked aboard ship. The seamen's books being duly checked by the official of the Shipping Board and still in his possession he questioned both Mellows and Dr. McCartan as to the ships they had been employed on and what they had been employed as. According to Mellows he answered all questions correctly, as he had them well established in his mind, but said that McCartan made a faux pas of his answering. When asked what his last ship was McCartan gave the name of the ship previous, as shown in the Seaman's Passport. The official made no comment. He also asked McCartan what he had worked as, seaman or fireman, and in giving this designation McCartan also gave the wrong answer. Mellows was very annoyed and worried about this, and said that from that day he had a feeling that they were being continually watched. On one occasion the letter-box at Kirwan's residence was opened, the mail was rifled and then thrown back into the hall-way. A number of other small incidents of this kind happened and eventually Mellows was picked up by New York detectives on the night of the day McCartan sailed.

Mellows also informed me that McCartan, who was employed as a cook, was ordered to report daily at 7 a.m. to the ship while she was in port in New York. This he failed to do, on many occasions turning up as late as ten o'clock.

I was speaking to John Devoy a day or two after the arrest of Mellows and McCartan and he were very worried over the whole situation. He said he had advised McCartan not to be visiting a certain German lady's house which was under police surveillance, but that McCartan had disregarded this advice and continued visiting the house. During the course of this conversation Devoy said to me, "Frank, McCartan will

never make a revolutionist. He can never make up his mind about anything which is very important, and I attribute this to his being an inveterate smoker".

On one of the many occasions when visiting Liam Mellows in 96th Street, New York, we were discussing the activities of the Irish movement in America. During this conversation Mellows said to me, "All that we can expect from the Irish in America is the continued financial help,and in addition propaganda and agitation to keep Ireland's case before the American people. He then went on to say "I fear for the Irish movement in America when the "Old Man" (John Devoy) dies. There is no one here to take his place. His death will be a terrible calamity. He is the life and spirit of everything here. He is a wonderful old character and I love him very much". This love was reciprocated by Devoy, who had also tremendous respect for Mellows. This was borne out very strongly when I met John Devoy in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, when he was on a visit to this country in 1924. William O'Brien, Cathal O'Shannon, Archie Heron and I were talking to him and in the course of the conversation he turned to me and said, "Frank, we have had a terrible time in New York since you were there. We have gone through hell, tearing the guts out of one another. There was a terrible story going around that I starved Mellows. I did not mind what other people said, but Mellows' silence hurt me more than anything else. A card or a line in a letter saying that this story was not true would have been something I would have appreciated very much. You know how much I loved Mellows, I loved him as if he had been my own son".

This story started around September 1919 and arose out of a letter to Miss Nora Connolly from Mellows. The letter in no way made such an accusation against John Devoy. It did refer to a break between Mellows and Devoy and to a bad bout of illness suffered by the former. Mellows had previously

left the Gaelic-American offices and took up a position in Carmelite Schools teaching the Gaelic language. Should Mellows have intended to convey the impression in his letter that Devoy was responsible for the alleged starvation the former would hardly have written a Christmas Card sending greetings in the most friendly terms to Devoy at Christmas 1919. This Christmas Card was taken home by me with thousands of other Fenian documents as a result of my first visit to New York for the Devoy papers.

Another very important point is that Mellows left the Kirwan family, with whom he had been residing for nearly three years, and took a room on the East side of New York City. Before leaving he had been taking bundles of his books away for some time without telling the Kirwan of his intention to leave, until the last day or so. By this veil of secrecy, none of his old friends knew where Mellows was living. Mellows was subject to spells of despondency and was inclined to be neglectful of himself. This starvation story was the product of imaginative-minded women, had no basis or foundation and was a terrible libel on our good Irish folk living in New York, not one of whom, no matter how strongly they might have disagreed with him, would have done everything possible to help him during his illness. The only reason why help was not given was that they did not know he was ill and did not know where he lived. Finally, a Mrs. McCarthy who was a member of the New York Cumann na mBan and a nurse, did learn about his illness and from that onwards helped to bring him back to good health.

In my opinion the cause of the break between John Devoy and Mellows was the influence that was brought to bear on Mellows by Dr. MacCartan and others.

An attempt was made by Mellows to interfere with the agenda arrangements of a gathering of the Friends of Irish Freedom. Mellows was not a speaker from the platform at this convention and it was his intention to make some form of protest from the balcony. This protest was built around the Irish Citizens Association. Larkin also took part in a protest at the same gathering, but I do not attribute the two as being working together, the latter being a genius of outstanding ability for anything of a disruptive nature.

Early 1917

// The Russian Revolution had taken place and a Government headed by Kerensky had been formed. This was heralded as the Russian people's fight for freedom and the abolition of Czardom. We were highly elated with this news and were very sympathetic towards the Russian people. We regarded this movement as being the end of Russian participation in the War,and visualised Britain's defeat as almost certain, and our independence as a nation in sight.

Shortly afterwards Larkin came to New York and I met him by appointment. He gave me, in strictest secrecy, a plan which he was about to operate in order to get to Russia. He intended representing himself as an automobile salesman for a big American company. When our conversation finished we paid a visit to John Donnelly's small printing works in 62nd Street, New York City. On arriving there we found several persons, including Donnelly and men working in the printing, together with what appeared to be members of the public on business. Larkin announced loudly that he was going to Russia, and a short while later gave the same information to Donnelly, and others within hearing, which he had given to me. His manner of announcing it I regarded as very peculiar, because of his insistence on strict secrecy when telling me his plans earlier that day. Then I thought that perhaps everybody present was well known to him and trustworthy.

However, later on that day there was no doubt in my mind that his action was sheer recklessness and in keeping with what he had done elsewhere. Why he acted so I can only guess. Was he endeavouring to be arrested for self publicity? His purile attempt to get to Russia a short while afterwards convinced me that he had no intention whatever at that stage to visit Russia. Having left Larkin, I went up to see Liam Mellows at Mrs. Kirwan's residence and found there James O'Connor, the present City Sheriff of Dublin. O'Connor had come across from the West and nad stayed in Bute, Montana, for a couple of days. While the three of us were talking, James O'Connor suddenly said, "By the way, did you hear Larkin is going to Russia"? I said immediately, "I was with Larkin to-day, in fact I only left him a short while ago, and he said nothing about that to me". "Oh, said O'Connor, "that is strange. Every third or fourth person you meet in Bute comes up to your ear and whispers into it, 'Did you year the news? The Chief is going to Russia?" This seemed very extraordinary to me, but when I recalled the incident earlier in Donnelly's printing works I felt that there must be a great deal of truth in what O'Connor had said, particularly as he had been only passing through the town of Bute. This whole affair gave me a rather poor view of Larkin.

About a month later I was visiting John Devoy in the Gaelic-American office and he read me a letter which he had received from Larkin, giving a most fanciful story of how he had taken a motor-boat out for the purpose of joining a ship in the Bay, by arrangement, but that the motor vessel had broken down and he had to be rescued by an incoming ship, and when he was taken aboard the captain, who was a Britisher, immediately recognised him and addressed him by name. The purpose of the letter was a request ~~from~~ to Devoy for forther financial aid to the extent of two thousand dollars. I

immediately protested to Devoy saying, "Under no circumstances should you attempt to give Larkin this money. If you have any money to spare, send it home to the people in Ireland". Devoy then stated very emphatically that the funds of the organisation were practically nil, because of the continued demands that had been made on them from Ireland and also because of the requirements of the organisation in America. Devoy then told me that a month prior to this he had given Larkin a thousand dollars from the Clan funds, and that James K. Maguire, the ex-Mayor of Syracuse who was a very benevolent man and a good Irishman, had also given Larkin a thousand dollars. When I heard this story from Devoy, I told him that I thought it was time he finished having anything to do with Larkin on matters of this kind.

Some time after the registration of all adults in the United States I received a communication to attend the doctor to be certified as to my physical fitness for military service. Having being examined by the doctor and declared fit he said he felt sure that I would make a good soldier. He was horrified when I told him that I had no intention whatever of joining the American Army. He intimated to me that his parents were Irish and that they always had the greatest respect for the American Constitution, and spoke of all the great Irishmen who had fought in the interests of the United States of America. My reply to him was, if the circumstances were the same now as they had been then and the American Army fighting the English Army, I would probably have been in the American Army before now, but that as the United States had entered the war to save Johnny Bull from being whacked by Germany, I had the strongest possible objections to serving in the American Army, particularly in view of the fact that only a little over twelve months prior to this I had been one of a number of Irishmen who had fought against England for the independence of Ireland in Dublin 1916. The doctor tried to dismiss the Insurrection of 1916 as being something like a Donnybrook Fair where shillelaghs were used, and was disagreeably surprised when he was informed by me that it was actually a real

war, where all the implements of war then used had been operating against the Irish Republican Army. He learned for the first time that many parts of the city of Dublin, particularly the centre of the city, were destroyed by field gun artillery of the British Army. However, when he found that I was obdurate in my objection to joining the American Army he shook hands with me in a very friendly way and wished me good luck.

A short while afterwards I received a communication asking me to state my reasons why I would not serve in the army of the United States. Having given all the reasons, the last question on the form proved to be a trap question, it was "Do you waive your objections to becoming a member of the United States Forces?" This question was a puzzle for many thousands of persons who did not clearly understand its import, and gave the answer "Yes," when they really meant "No". The next thing these men discovered, they were called for service in the United States forces.

I mentioned earlier that I was now employed in the Edison Electric Power Station at 20ist Street, New York. About four months before leaving for Ireland I found myself at loggerheads with the engineer of the plant, and if I am not mistaken his name was ~~O'Sullivan~~ Murphy. I was on day shift and noticed that he was following me around very closely during the early part of the day. Finally when we were some distance from all the other men in the fire-room he spoke to me. He charged me with carrying on anti-American propaganda, which included alleged statements to the effect that I was abusing the American people. He told me in very plain language that I had better stop this kind of talk or I would find myself in very grave difficulties, and possibly have him in trouble also for employing me. I denied the charges and told him that if my presence there meant any trouble for him it could be solved there and then and that I would help him by quitting the job immediately. This attitude took him by surprise and he replied that he did not desire me to leave the job, but was more or less warning me in a friendly way to refrain from any further

anti-American propaganda. I asked him to face me with the people who had given him this false information. I admitted that as far as President Wilson and his administration were concerned I had criticised them, not only there but anywhere I went. I told him that as far as the American people were concerned I had nothing but the highest regard for them and I could truthfully say that they were decent to me and to others in similar circumstances. I still contended that the American people did not want to be in this war, but that they were dragooned into it by the machinations of President Wilson and his advisers. To my amazement the engineer said, "Perhaps you are not along in that point of view, but my advice to you is to be careful whom you speak to here in this place".

A month or so after this I was again on day shift and I was passing the engineer's office when I heard him calling my name. He indicated that my presence was required in his office, and I felt that this was going to be a repetition of what had happened on the former occasion, so I made up my mind if such was the case I would quit the job. I was further convinced of this when I was brought to his private office, but to my surprise he told me that he was promoting me to a higher job. Having listened to him for some time relating my duties in the new position, I thanked him very much and suggested that he should seek somebody else for promotion. I told him I was about to go home and would only be able to hold the position he was offering for a short time, and so would cause him further inconvenience later on. He was mystified when I said I was going home, and finally when I explained that going home meant going back to Ireland he said to me, "You will be conscripted if you go back to Ireland. Don't you know that Lloyd George is about to bring in conscription for the Irish people? Why not join the American Army instead?" My reply was that I knew of Lloyd George's

intention to conscript the Irish people but that the young men in Ireland would fight and were not going to be conscripted. I then opened up my mind a little more because of his frankness towards me and said, "I have had letters from time to time from comrades of mine in Ireland, telling me how conditions are there. They inform me that conscription is likely to be brought in during the early part of 1918. As soon as conscription is brought in, the Irish people will oppose it tooth and nail. Colleagues of mine whom I fought with in the 1916 Insurrection will be taking part in that opposition, and I would feel, should I not go back to Ireland and take my place in the fight?. I was deserting them and personally would regard myself as being very cowardly". To my amazement he put out his hand said, "I don't agree with you, but at any rate I admire you". Shake hands. It is not often I meet a young man like you".

I was a little over a month home in Ireland when Easter Week came around and one of our Irish Citizen Army men who had taken part in the Insurrection died. It was decided that as many of the Citizen Army members as could be got would take part in the funeral, which was scheduled for Easter Tuesday. Since my arrival home I had obtained a job at my trade in the Ringsend dockyard, but did not go to work on Easter Tuesday because of the funeral of this young man. Lieutenant Michael Kelly and myself were in charge of the arrangements. The funeral cortege was on its way over O'Connell Bridge going towards Glasnevin when our attention was attracted by a crowd on the opposite side of the bridge. Something inside prompted me it might be of interest to make some enquiries as to what was happening, and Michael Kelly, who was the senior officer, gave me permission to fall out with instructions that if anything serious was happening I was to contact him immediately and he would give me assistance. When I arrived at the far side of the bridge and got close to the scene of the trouble, I recognised Michael Collins, who was in the custody

of a number of detectives. Believing that there would be no need of assistance from the Citizen Army I said, "Aren't you Michael Collins?" The reply I got was, "Yes, three cheers for the Irish Republic". With that I said to the crowd around, "Come on, let's rescue him" and at the same time I struck the detective nearest to me and to Collins, believing that the rest of the crowd would follow my example. There was only one attempt beyond my own on the part of a young man whose name I do not know, and to my knowledge have never seen since. To my amazement one middle-aged man jumped into the centre of the dispute saying, "Stop this, stop this. There is a legal way of fixing all this". I saw my hopes dwindling and looked up O'Connell Street to see how far my colleagues in the Citizen Army were gone. I knew by the time I would overtake them and obtain help Collins would probably be in College Green police station, so I resorted to further efforts to rescue Collins by trying to get the crowd to heave. One or two more blows were struck at the detectives, but seeing that the rescue of Collins was hopeless I made an effort to get back to the funeral procession, which by this time was almost at the Rotunda. I reported the matter to Lieutenant Michael Kelly who was prepared to send some men back immediately, but I felt that the time which had elapsed to overtake the Citizen Army was too long,and that Collins was near College Green police station by now and would most certainly be under lock and key by the time any organised rescue party got into that vicinity.

I arrived home after the funeral to find my mother dead. It was a terrible shock. She had been ill in bed for a long time, but since my homecoming was up every day attending to the household duties, as if nothing was the matter with her. Many of the neighbours had remarked that my return home had proved to be better than the doctor's prescriptions. I remember the morning of my arrival. My youngest sister let

me in, the remainder of the family had gone to work. The first thing I did was to go up to mother's bedroom, my sister having run up ahead of me as if she had seen a ghost. Having my first look, for what seemed many years, at mother, my mind registered, "You are not long for this world". Leaving the house on Easter Tuesday morning she seemed all right. I left her at the hall door talking to her cousin, saying I would be home at 1 p.m. for dinner.

We nick-named Michael Donnelly "The Bishop" because of the fact that when advocating socialist theories as against the present day capitalist system he always quoted scripture, his strong line on most occasions being the Sermon on the Mount, where it is said that it is harder for a rich man to get into Heaven than it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle. Donnelly worked as a casual docker at the North Wall. One evening he was very worried about a development that was likely to take place at what was known as the military boat, which used to discharge at the North Wall Extension. It was expected that this boat would be taking supplies into Ireland for the Black and Tans and the British Army, and Donnelly's view was that these supplies should be stopped at their source and no attempt should be made to unload any ship carrying arms to supply the British forces in Ireland. He and I discussed the matter at length, and we both agreed that some effort should be made to prevent the unloading taking place. Later in the evening Donnelly contacted William O'Brien and Thomas Foran and convinced them of the logic of his idea. The reaction of both these men was to send a telegram to the Union delegate, Larry Redmond, to proceed to the North Wall Extension next morning and hold up the ship. This was the germ of the idea that brought about the Munitions of War Strike of 1920.

Donnelly was a very active member of the Irish Citizen Army. He had all the basis of Connolly's teaching within him, and after Easter Week, 1916, he gave lectures on a number of

occasions to the new recruits who came into the Citizen Army on the Connolly way of thought. He had taken part in the big lock-out of 1913, had suffered very considerably for his National and Labour principles, and could have lived very comfortably with his own family who were fairly well blessed with this world's goods, but rather than give up what he believed to be right he chose the hard way of life.

Some years ago I was present at Donnelly's bedside in Steevens' Hospital when he died on a Saturday evening. Anxious to make his death known to his former colleagues in the Citizen Army and the Labour movement I thought that the best means of doing so would be through Radio Éireann. The officials at Radio Éireann accepted all the information I had to give regarding Donnelly's work for Ireland, and I felt convinced that I would hear it on the radio that night. To my amazement such announcement was not made, and on a written enquiry to Radio Éireann some days later I was informed that it was the policy of the station only to announce the deaths of well known people. What gratitude towards one who had given so much to our nation! In life no task was too great for him when it meant a further advance to the complete freedom of our country. Yet a national Institution could not afford to pay him a slight tribute in death.

late Feb. 1918
One of the first things I did on arriving back in Dublin // was to see Michael Collins at Bachelor's Walk and inform him of what had been tried by Mellows and later by Mellows and Mac Cartan in the way of arranging to get arms into Ireland. Collins and I discussed this matter for a short while, and we both agreed that it was a pity that these attempts had failed, as arms were very much needed to re-organise the whole Volunteer force. On another occasion, perhaps about eighteen months after this talk with Collins, I was deputed by Thomas Foran, General President of the Irish Transport Union, at Liberty Hall one Sunday morning to watch out for the arrival of Michael Collins, a meeting having been arranged with Collins and some others. Liberty Hall, because of the numbers of workers coming and going was regarded as being a safe place to have such a meeting. Foran's reason for asking me to look out for Collins was so that he would not be hanging around the Hall but would be brought right to the room where the meeting was to take place. I was watching for Collins for some time when Foran came to me and told me that word had come through that Collins would not be coming to the meeting as he had got information that Liberty Hall was on the list for raiding that morning. The raid, however, did not take place.

Meetings of this kind were held from time to time between leading representatives of the Labour movement and members of the Dáil Cabinet for the purpose of reviewing the situation.

A meeting of the Irish Citizen Army Council was being held in Liberty Hall in 1920 // and Madam Markievicz, being a member, attended the meeting. It was in progress for some time when word came through to Madam Markievicz to leave Liberty Hall immediately as a raid was contemplated that night by the British authorities. James O'Shea and myself were given the job of seeing Madam safely out of the building, no matter what took place. When Madam was handed over to us we saw a very old woman, dressed

in old-fashioned clothes and wearing an old Victorian bonnet. Her make-up gave her the appearance of a feeble old lady anywhere between 75 and 80 years of age, and, of course, she had to maintain that appearance when O'Shea and I were linking her out of Liberty Hall. We left her as far as Spender Dock bridge, where she insisted that she would be quite safe for the rest of her journey. This was about half-past nine or ten o'clock at night during the winter time, and around this part of the city the lighting facilities were bad. We were rather reluctant to let her go the remainder of the journey by herself, but she insisted on being left at the bridge, and went the remainder of her journey alone.

Having arrived home in Ireland, one of my first actions was to contact my old colleagues in the Irish Citizen Army. I had an early opportunity of discussing the conditions at that time with Michael Donnelly, Michael Kelly, James O'Shea and some of the other stalwarts. I found that the situation was anything but like what it had been during the pre-1916 period. There was a new outlook entirely different to that which had been moulded by Connolly and Mallin. The new members who had been recruited into the army seemed to lack the same spirit, the understanding and the discipline which was there before I left for America. The close co-operation which had previously existed officially between the Irish Transport Union and the Irish Citizen Army seemed to have gone completely, and it would not be any exaggeration to say, but for these stalwarts, an open hostile situation would have broken out. As it was, a number of incidents did occur and were encouraged by individuals outside the I.C.A. who used some of our misguided or partisan members on every occasion for their own personal interests. I found that practically all the women who had taken part in the 1916 Insurrection were not now members of the Citizen Army. This was due to the fact that new members had been recruited into the women's section who had very obnoxious pasts as far as Trade Union matters were concerned; at least two of them had actually scabbed in the 1913 strike. This, of course, was too much for the women who had lost their jobs fighting to uphold Trade Unionism in the past to accept, not to mention the trials and tribulations endured in the performance of their national duty by taking part in the Easter Week Insurrection.

Donnelly, some others and myself took an active part in trying to mend this difference, and succeeded, if not altogether in spirit, at least in outward appearance.

The Commandant of the Irish Citizen Army ~~I found to be~~ James O'Neill, was a carpenter and small contractor who had been useful prior to the Insurrection in several ways, and had been attached to the G.P.O. garrison during Easter Week. I regarded him as being chiefly responsible for the then existing situation and left him in no doubt as to my viewpoint. His failure was entirely due to his lack of ability to pursue the Connolly philosophy. When questions of policy arose, O'Neill's attitude was to procrastinate rather than take the line which would have been taken by Connolly or Mallin were either there to lead. The truth of the matter was that not having such men to guide the organisation, the majority of the men of 1918 onwards, strange as it may seem, in no way resembled or held the outlook which was dominant up to 1916 and which was responsible for the great deeds performed during Easter Week by the Irish Citizen Army.

To demonstrate this point, the Socialist Party of Ireland in 1919 decided to have a Connolly commemoration in the Mansion House on the anniversary of his birth, 5th June. They had invited many outside people, including the Citizen Army, to co-operate, and the services of all were promised. All arrangements for a concert had been made, when Dublin Castle decided to ban the concert. The Socialist Party, of which Connolly had been a member, felt they were bound to make an effort to hold this concert, and having made their intention known they sought the active co-operation of the Citizen Army for stewarding, etc.

On the night of the concert Commandant O'Neill called a mobilisation of the Citizen Army and said that while he had called the mobilisation he wanted to make it clear that any member of the Army who did not wish to participate was free to

refrain from doing so. This line was taken by O'Neill because of the organised antipathy by a section of members to the Irish Transport Union and to the Socialist Party of Ireland. In the background, directing this opposition was Miss Delia Larkin and P.T. Daly and every trick to gain their end was tried with a vehemence that never abated. O'Neill then wanted to know who were in favour of supporting the Socialist Party's effort to carry out the concert, even though banned by Dublin Castle, and who were against it. A division took place and more than half of the Citizen Army declined to give any assistance. It then fell to the lot of those who were prepared to take part in the function to make hurried preparations forthwith. This meeting took place about half an hour before the concert was due to commence. However, those who were taking part immediately assembled at points of vantage. We found that the Mansion House was completely cut off by the Dublin Metropolitan Police, who were armed with revolvers, and these gentlemen used force to prevent people gathering near the Mansion House. The result was that five of the D.M.P. were shot and wounded. This caused great consternation in the city. A number of people who had made arrangements to attend the concert were in the Mansion House from an early hour and could not be contacted. Finally, after a further hurried discussion, it was decided to abandon the attempt to hold the concert there, and we proceeded to the Trades Hall in Capel Street and carried out there the programme arranged.

The Irish Citizen Army, if my memory serves me correctly, held elections every ~~three~~ six months to elect a new Army Council. Early in 1918 on my arrival back from America, I was nominated for one of the positions vacant as a result of which I found myself one of the successful candidates. During the short period which I served I endeavoured, with the help of other colleagues, to bring the Army back to the state of mind which

operated when it was under the control of Connolly and Mallin. One of the matters which I pressed considerably was for greater co-operation between ourselves and the Irish Volunteers There was quite a lot of opposition to this policy. The outstanding point used against this line was that the Volunteers, as a result of I.R.B. activities, had been and still were endeavouring to bring about the absorption of the Irish Citizen Army into the Irish Volunteers and under I.R.B. control. There was a certain amount of truth in this allegation, the idea being that the I.C.A. was by arrangement with Connolly an integral part of the I.R.A. as from Easter Week,and should remain so. I always had understood that the anxiety was to have co-operation and both parties working together, whereas there was continued antagonism was operating to prevent such happening. A number of reasons were given why we should remain independent and keep the Irish Citizen Army in being as a separate unit. This was in no way objectionable to any of us, in fact we favoured it, but to strengthen the antagonism many other matters were raised, even the question of Connolly's kidnapping in January 1916 was used as a reason why we should remain an independent unit. However, while not getting official sanction, it was tacitly understood that I would explore every avenue for a better understanding between the two bodies. In this connection we arranged to meet Mr. Seamus Robinson, Mr. Archie Heron, the latter being active in the Fingal Brigade, and one other member of the Volunteers. I think it was Frank McCabe, then an organiser in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The meeting took place in Liberty Hall and problems were discussed openly and frankly, with the object of achieving the desired harmony between the two forces, and a better working understanding. In the meantime, while these discussions were going on, I lost my position at the next election of the Army Council and I cannot say to what extent these matters were further pursued. At that stage we had in contemplation the

operation of a more progressive I.R.A. policy covering the whole country. It was regrettable that no positive joint action resulted.

Signed: Frank Robbins

Date; 10th September 1951

Witness; J Kearns Gould.

MEMORIES OF EASTER WEEK 1916.

At least two writers, Seán O'Casey and R.M. Fox, have had the temerity to give to the world what they alleged were histories of the I.C.A. I am regretfully compelled, because of my personal knowledge of certain facts, to say that both gentlemen have given a distorted account of that period. One in particular, allowed his personal antipathy to Connolly to override good judgment. The second, because of his lack of knowledge and other individuals' antipathy, or lack of effort to search for the facts, by implication, makes a criminal error that the I.T. & G.W.U. was officially opposed to the I.C.A., when the complete opposite is the truth. Should we desire to obtain the real history from that wonderful drama performed by the I.C.A., then the fairy stories and the minds of prejudice must be elininated.

The time has come to state in definite language, had it not been for the goodwill and the part played by the active members and officials of the I.T. & G.W.Union, in the period from 1914 to 1916, it is questionable whether Easter Week would now be such a glorious chapter in our history. That wholehearted support continued to be given to the revolutionary Movement right down to the signing of the Treaty with Britain.

It would be true to say that at one period practically half of the accommodation then at Liberty Hall was used by, and in the interest of the I.C.A. A printing press was installed by the Union, a weekly paper the "Workers Republic" was edited by Connolly, many pages of which were speaking the policy of the I.C.A. Finally it was this same printing press which printed the Proclamation of 1916, the cost of which was paid by the I.T. & G.W. Union. A great many more matters of importance could be recounted, but I consider these sufficient to show the grave injustice done by these writers.

When facts such as I have quoted are written by historians, then, and only then, will the people of Ireland and the world be treated to the real history of that Glorious Easter Week.

A 1916 Landmark Demolished.

Some years ago I was passing down Castle Street. It was some time since I had previously passed that way. Whenever doing so I always looked for a particular building, and by force of habit my attention was attracted to an old tenement house which stood, or used to stand, at the corner of the laneway leading down the side of Dublin Castle to Ship Street. This tenement house had now been demolished. That dilapidated building had pleasant associations for me and had great historic associations for others who fought in that area during the memorable Easter Week, 1916.

It was to this house that a small section of men of the Irish Citizen Army retired after their attack on the Guardroom of the British Forces at Dublin Castle, and where they remained for some time. They occupied the cellar of this house as a temporary measure pending a reasonable opportunity offering to link up with Thomas McDonagh's command at Jacon's Factory.

With the opening of hostilities at Dublin Castle the British Guard was made prisoner and the Guardroom occupied by a section of the I.C.A. After some time their position became impossible when British reinforcements arrived and retirement was necessary, which was accomplished from a side door in Castle Street. Unable to proceed very far the cellar underneath Lahiff's shop was occupied.

While in the cellar of this house, Lieutenant Thomas Kane, who was in charge of the party, took stock of the position. One of the essential requirements was the procuring of water. Success was achieved in this matter by boring a hole in the lead piping running through their temporary abode, which was stuffed by a match-stick when not required.

However, I have departed from the real purpose of my story. I want to tell of my association with this old tenement house. Lieutenant Thomas Kane and his party never linked up Thomas McDonagh's command. The British forces made sure of that by capturing the whole party. Lieutenant Kane was our chief mobilisation officer. He had in his possession the complete list of membership, addresses, etc. of the Irish Citizen Army. Seeing that surrender was inevitable, this valuable information had to be kept out of reach of the enemy and a safe hiding place was found.

It was over eleven years later that my story begins. After many previous attempts to coax Kane along he and myself eventually turned up to Castle Street. Having made our plans we entered the shop attached to this house. It was a plumber's shop run by an elderly man named Lahiff. We told him we desired to see the cellar, and then changed the conversation immediately to what was known as the "troubled times". Old man Lahiff did practically all the talking from that. Seeing he was on our side the real reason for our desire to visit the cellar was given. On learning our purpose he warned us that the caretaker would be unfriendly, and suggested that we pose as Corporation Inspectors. To his surprise Kane and myself burst out laughing. We then told him if he had been unfriendly it was our intention to put over the same pretext.

Having got over the caretaker problem we proceeded to the cellar and spent some time there without success. Kane was inclined to give up the search. A little persuasion was necessary, and eventually our efforts were crowned with success. The books were found intact, to see them one would have imagined they had only been left there a few hours previously. These books were eventually handed over to Wm. O'Brien for safe keeping and are still in his possession.

I can no longer say, "There is old Lahiff's shop". Instead I must say, "There is the spot where old Lahiff's shop used to be".

Signed; Frank Robbins

Date; 10th September 1951

Witness; J Kearns Cmdt