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STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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Frank Dr o han,
Irishtown,
Clonnmel,
Co. Tipperary.

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STATEMENT OF MR. FRANK DROHAN.

Irishtown. Clonmel. County Tipperary.

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Statement of Mr. Frank Drohan,

Irishtown. Clonmel. County Tipperary.

I was born in Carrick-on-Suir in the year 1879. I came to Clonmel at the age of seven years. My father was a coach builder and we settled down in Clonmel. I went to school to the Christian Brothers. When I was about twelve years of age I left school and went to serve my time at the coachbuilding.

I was always interested in history, particularly the history of my country, and every book or scrap of writing of this kind that I could get my hands on, I read it. I don't think there was very much of the history of the country - and I went as far back as Tuatha de Danaan - that I have not studied. I read all about Oisín and such ancient heroes, the coming of St. Patrick and then what I imagined was the best of it, from the time of Brian Boru down along through the subsequent pages of our history. That was the background. I was terribly keen on all the history of my country. It was a kind of hobby with me, which seemed to have got into my blood because I was always talking about it as well as reading about it.

I think it would be in 1898 or 1900 that the Gaelic League was started in Clonmel. At this time I had been reading in the papers about the formation of the Gaelic League and its early activities and I said to myself, "We have a language and if I ever get a chance of learning it, I must learn it". An organiser came along to Clonmel and a Gaelic League class was started at a place called the West Gate. The organiser was a man named Concannon from the West of Ireland. I think he

was called Pádraig Bán at the time. I was only a young fellow, about eighteen years of age, at the time when I bought my first O'Growney book and began to learn Irish when the class was started at the West Gate. There was a fellow with us by the name of Davin, who had returned from America. He was a native speaker and always spoke Irish at all times whether the people understood what he was saying or not. His father could hardly speak anything else but Irish. Davin, Tom Fennessy, Davy O'Connor and a few other people had been responsible for getting the class started in Clonmel. A number of young fellows like myself joined in with them but it lasted no time, because we had no room or house of our own to work in and the right spirit was not behind it.

In the following year they started a class down in the Technical School. At that time it was the Mechanics' Institute. It was just before technical education was started and later this building became a technical school. I joined that Irish class. We formed a Committee. Fr. Nicholas Walsh, who died some little time ago in Tramore, was a native Irish speaker and he became President of the Branch that was formed in Clonmel. He was a very old man when he died. We, the younger element in the Branch, looked upon ourselves just as learners. This class broke down also. The whole trouble was the want of competent teachers.

The Irish National Foresters had a hall in Market Street and in that organisation there were quite a number of native Irish speakers. The Gaelic Branch got accommodation there and on Sunday nights we used get these Foresters who were native Irish speakers to come in amongst us, telling stories in Irish and suchlike.

It was Fr. Nicholas who had this idea as a means of teaching us the language. I used go there and I understood very very little of what they were saying, but still I was getting accustomed to the sounds. I was really determined to learn it, but that fell through.

The next place we went to was the building, now known as the Collins Hall, in Market Street. This was an old lumber room and belonged to people named Crowthers who were big Protestant people in Clonmel. The place went up for sale about this time and the Gaelic League decided to raise the money to buy it. They bought it and took it over. They got it quite cheaply. It was only a big loft. This was where the Clonmel Branch of the Gaelic League was properly established. They came to me and asked me to get any of the boys and girls who were interested to join. I got a number of lads and girls to join the Branch and start in earnest learning the language. From that time on it succeeded. That would be, I suppose, about 1903 or 1904. A man from Dublin, Seamus Ó Clandillon, came to Clonmel as a teacher of Irish in the Christian Brothers School and he got an Irish Class in the Technical School to help to keep him going. We used to attend his classes in the Tech. Later he was teaching in the Gaelic League as well as in the Tech. We had a kind of a club then in the Gaelic League Rooms.

Another man came to Clonmel from Dublin. He was Dinny Morgan, a brother of Paddy Morgan. He was in the old Sinn Féin movement and was one of the old Willie Rooney crowd. He had been in the Christian Brothers' Schools where that Christian Brother who wrote the Irish Grammar was teaching. They used to have the Grammar for their exercises at night. He had, therefore, a great

background knowledge of the language. He was really good but he had a very pronounced Dublin accent. He was with us for a while and he organised Sunday outings. We went out to various places each Sunday. In this way, we got the Branch on a solid footing and had a nice crowd of about fifty in it at this time.

Fionán MacColum came to us as an Organiser from the Gaelic League Headquarters in Dublin. After him we had Pádraig Ó Caoille. He was a teacher in The Nire, Co. Waterford. He did a lot of work around Clonmel for us. He was a native Irish speaker and a school teacher. He gave it up after a while and another man came along, An Fear Mór (Seamus Ó hEochaidh), whom I expect you know. He is the man who founded and is still in Ring College, Co. Waterford. He is a Limerick man and, I believe, served his time to the grocery or drapery in Dublin though I can't be sure about the latter. He joined the Gaelic League in Dublin and became such a good speaker and such an enthusiastic worker that he was made an Organiser. He was called An Fear Mór because of his size. He was well over six feet, with big broad shoulders and corresponding build. He was a real enthusiast for the Irish language and we all took to him when he came to Clonmel. We used go around the country helping him to form branches. At that time there were Branches in Carrick-on-Suir, Ballymacalbery, Clogheen and a Branch in Dungarvan. Up the country in mid-Tipperary there was a great man, known as Father Mat Ryan, who started a Branch. He started having Irish taught in the schools. Knockavella was his Parish and he had three churches, three villages, in that Parish. Up there there is a place called Ballagh, on the Dundrum side.

We used to go to every Feis. We used cycle and we even used to cycle down to Waterford and over to Dungarvan. The result was that all the Gaels in this part of the country knew me and I knew them, as well as some more of the lads. There were John Cuddihy from Dublin, Eamonn O'Connor who died here last year and, of course, Tom Fennessy. There were a couple of brothers of mine. There was a good number of girls there too. We started an amateur dramatic class and put on a few plays, one of which I remember was "An Doctúir". The result of the dramatic class was that it attracted at least four good young lads, Dominic Mackey, afterwards a Commandant in the National Army, Seamus O'Neill, at present a Superintendent in the Gárdaí in Galway, and a brother of mine, Bob Drohan, who was pretty clever when going to school and got a great knowledge of the Irish language.

I would imagine it would be somewhere around 1909 or 1910 when a man named Frank O'Meara came from Dublin to Clonmel. He was a Tipperary man, belonging to Ballyneill town near Carrick-on-Suir. He served his time at the drapery business in Dublin and while there he got into the I.R.B. He was enrolled into the I.R.B. in Dublin. He got a job then in Clonmel as draper's assistant and he joined the Gaelic League. He and I became great friends and we used go for bits of walks together. In that way, he brought up the question of the I.R.B. I had an idea that there was some such organisation in the country but I had never been able to make contact with it. I remember looking up such things back in 1888 and 1889 when some of the Dublin papers were seized, ones I had never heard of until then. I knew there was some revolutionary organisation in the background and felt that these papers

were connected with it but I was never able to get in touch with anybody belonging to the organisation at that time, which was during the Boer War. When this man, Frank O'Meara, made mention of the I.R.B. and I realised that he was connected with it, it was the first time I had established contact with the organisation. He brought up the question of the possibility of establishing the I.R.B. in Clonmel, enquiring whether I would be willing to become enrolled. It seems he had already written to Dublin to obtain permission to enrol me and to start a Circle in Clonmel. So I jumped at the suggestion. From what he told me afterwards, it seems that he had been requested to organise the I.R.B. in Clonmel, but, not being a particularly good organiser himself, he had asked whether he might enrol me and give me the job of organising the I.R.B., and the people in Dublin had agreed to this. O'Meara had become a member of our Branch of the Gaelic League in Clonmel and had got to know me there. I suppose he thought that, as I had been so successful in organising the Gaelic League, I would be equally successful in the organisation of the I.R.B.

I organised a Circle of the I.R.B. in Clonmel and then began to spread it around. I got Eamon O'Dwyer interested, took him into the organisation and gave him the powers to organise Circles in his own district around Ballagh. One thing I always insisted on was that no one took/drink was to be taken into the organisation because, having studied the Fenian organisation and how it failed even in my home town in Carrick-on-Suir, their meetings had always been held in publichouses where fellows like Talbot and Nagle and others got in amongst them and betrayed them. So I made sure that

nothing like that was going to happen in our day. I succeeded in getting a Circle formed there. There was a man named Pádraig O'Mahony, at present Secretary of the Kerry County Council or Board of Health, or something like that. He had been out in South America and he was an enthusiast. I found out about him and got him going on the I.R.B. in Cashel. I got a man named D.P. Walsh, who was afterwards Q.M. of the South Tipperary Brigade, to start a Circle in Fethard where he lived. There was only a very small crowd around there. There was a nice crowd up around Thurles and I got Jimmy Kennedy, the Town Clerk of Thurles at one time, to start a Circle there. A brother of Tomás MacDonagh was there at the time, Jack MacDonagh. He was in the Post Office. There was also a fellow named Eustace there. I tried to get it going in Carrick-on-Suir through a fellow there named Fitzgerald. He was an Excise man and he was a right good fellow but somehow it did not make progress in Carrick-on-Suir. I don't know whether he was a big fond of drink or what happened. I could never find out exactly what the trouble was. I was very sorry because later Fitzgerald evidently lost his job in the Excise. He joined the British Army, went out to France during the first World War and was killed there. I tried another fellow there named Healy. He used to do a lot of writing to the papers. He had been working in Dublin for a good while. He pretended to have been in the I.R.B. in Dublin and to know all about it, but he was not any use.

A man named Micheál Ó Concubhair came down there. He belonged to Árd Mór, Co. Waterford, and was an Irish teacher. He had been teaching in a number of places, and I got him to do his best in Carrick-on-Shir. There was no real branch of the Gaelic League there, so that he had no

preliminary organisation from which an I.R.B. Circle might be formed. The Gaelic League had been started there every now and again but as often died out. They did not seem to have any good leader there who could keep it together.

I had a number of fellows whom I knew from places like out beyond Cahir. It was a case of picking out the good men anywhere I could find them and, having established contact with them, leaving each of them organise his own Circle in his own particular locality. The same applied to Gaelic League Branches. I gave them a hand as far as I could, gave them books where they wanted them, but otherwise depended on them to work up their own areas.

There was another draper's assistant here in Clonmel, a North of Ireland man by the name of Seán Duffy. During the Black and Tan war he was killed with Paddy Maloney. Seán Duffy had been in with us in Clonmel but, having left and gone to Tipperary, we got things going in Tipperary through him. In that way, we were fairly good.

I was a member of the Committee for a number of years and finally became Vice-President of the Clonmel Branch of the Gaelic League. Every year we held a Feis and every year we brought somebody or other from Dublin as a sort of distinguished visitor to the Feis. The year before last, that is in 1950, we had a pageant of the Siege of Clonmel at the Clonmel Feis and, when President Seán T. O'Kelly arrived from Dublin to open the Feis, I was able to remind him that forty-five years before I had brought him down also to open our Feis there and that he had brought down a letter to me from Tom

Clarke on the same day. The President remembered his earlier visit there when he, as a member of the Coiste Gnôtha, the governing body of the Gaelic League, had come down to Clonmell to open the Feis in the same way. Chatting over this, the President told the story of his first visit to his aide-de-camp, Colonel O'Sullivan, who also remembered me as a fellow-prisoner in Frongoch in 1916

We had all kinds in the Gaelic League at that time, all kinds of political shades, but all of them were enthusiastic learners of the language. We started to organise historical debates, taking phases and incidents of Irish history for discussion, and thus encouraged the study of Irish history. In these debates, sides for and against were taken. These debates, which were conducted according to the usual debating societies' rules, were published in full, or in some condensed form, in our local paper at the time, the "Nationalist". The subject for the last debate, which was at the time the Volunteers were established and of which I have a very vivid recollection, was "The Young Ireland Movement -v- Dan O'Connell".

When any of us went to Dublin, we always made contact with some of the leaders of the national movement. I usually made an effort, whenever I went to Dublin, to call upon Seán McDermott and with his assistance to obtain any arms, such as revolvers, that we could get our hands on. It was in this way I was sent to Lalor's of Fownes Street where I obtained the first six-chamber revolver and 50 rounds of ammunition I ever owned. Others from Tipperary did the same kind of thing and in that way we got some few arms amongst us in the early days before the Volunteers were established.

Some time about 1911 or 1912 Seán MacDermott came down to Clonmel as an I.R.B. organiser from Dublin and with him we arranged the formation of a body known as the Munster Council. A Convention was held in Mallow at which delegates from all the Munster Counties were present. This Convention was to form the Munster Council and elect a representative of that body to sit on the Supreme Council. I think I remember the names of all those who were at that Convention. An old Fenian by the name of John Walsh came along with a man named John Matthews from Waterford. They represented Waterford. We held a meeting in a hotel in Mallow. It was on the day of an All-Ireland match and, of course, the place was crowded. Seán MacDermott presided. Mick Brennan, or one of the Brennan's, represented Clare. James Griffin represented Kerry. O'Connor represented Cork. George Clancy, afterwards Lord Mayor of Limerick, represented Limerick. I represented Tipperary. I am sure the details of this meeting would be given in Dermot Lynch's Memoirs. Dermot Lynch was present at that meeting and became our representative on the Supreme Council. At that time he was an Irish-American Insurance agent. I don't think he was representing any County at the Convention but I know he was there because I knew him well before that. He was elected by the Convention on the Munster Council and as the representative of the Munster Council on the Supreme Council. By the nature of his work, going around the country as an insurance agent, he was able to keep contact with everybody and do the work of the I.R.B. along with his own work.

This Convention fixed the movement in Munster. We were all in touch with each other, that is, the County representatives, and whenever any of us travelled

about we called to see each other and find out how things were getting along in the adjoining Counties. I was very much in touch with the Limerick crowd. Paddy Farrell, who was a creamery inspector, used come around here at one time. He lived in Ivy Cottages in Limerick and I was up there for a while with himself and the Herbert's. I was on a bit of a holiday and I stopped there with him.

I cannot fix the date of this Convention but I have a feeling that it was 1911 or 1912. It was certainly before the start of the Volunteers.

In November, 1913, the Volunteers were started and I got word to get the Volunteers started in Clonmel. I got this instruction both from the I.R.B. and from Eoin McNeill whom I had been in touch with through the Gaelic League. I had the basis of a little organisation in the three I.R.B. Circles which I had in the town but we had no hall.

At this time the A.O.H. had become very strong in the town. Lloyd George's National Health Insurance Scheme had come into being and the A.O.H., having become one of the National Health Insurance Societies, took on a new lease of life because of that. I did not know much about the A.O.H. at this time but, when I heard how the organisation had grown strong, I made enquiries. I did not know then but I found out afterwards that there were actually two Branches of the A.O.H. in Clonmel. Then an extraordinary thing happened. Our President, that is, the President of our Gaelic League Branch, became Chaplain to the A.O.H. Some members of our Committee became members of the A.O.H. and one member was made President

of what afterwards turned out to be the Workingmen's Branch That man disappointed me very much. However, the next thing that happened was that we were asked would we give the organisation the Gaelic League rooms for two nights a week. It was not clear what organisation it was that wanted the rooms, but actually it was the A.O.H. The Gaelic League rooms were maintained by voluntary subscription of the members of the Branch, by public collections every St. Patrick's Day and by holding concerts In this way we tried to cover the running expenses, such as, rent of the hall, purchase of Irish books and payment of teachers, without making it too big a burden on those whom we wished to encourage to learn the language. There was a good general response to our public appeals for money and we had never had any difficulty in paying our way. Of course, a lot of the money we got through public appeal had to be sent on to the Headquarters of the Gaelic League in Dublin, only a certain percentage being retained for our own expenses. When the A.O.H. had been using our hall for some time, I noticed that the enthusiasm of the Gaelic League members seemed to be flagging because in that year the public collection on St. Patrick's Day was allowed to fall through and also the concert. I became rather annoyed about this and I brought the matter up at a Gaelic League Committee meeting. I told them that, as far as I could see, it had now become a question not so much of how many nights we would allow the A.O.H. to use our hall but how many nights they would allow us to use it. It was apparent at this time that the A.O.H. was out to assume control of all organisations in the town and I pointed this out to the Committee.

As well as Fr. Nicholas Walsh, who was the

President of our Gaelic League Branch and Chaplain to the A.O.H., we had another priest as Vice-President, Fr. James Walsh, who was much more of an Irish-Irelander than any other priest there. On a particular night an attempt was made on the part of the A.O.H., through their members who were also Gaelic League members, to take over the Gaelic League Branch. I objected to this and pointed out that the Gaelic League was an independent body and should not be controlled by any other organisation. It was open to all Irishmen, no matter what their opinions were. The Gaelic League took them in and did its best to teach them the language, the music and the culture of Ireland. The result was anyway that we, that is, the Gaelic League, were given the exclusive use of the rooms for a couple of nights a week instead of, as it had been, us allowing the A.O.H. the rooms for a couple of nights a week. This, however, was not satisfactory because we were unable to exclude those who were not interested in the Irish classes and purely Gaelic League activities on the nights we were supposed to have the exclusive use of the place. We had a bit of a row about this one night at a meeting and Fr. James Walsh and those of us who wished to keep the Gaelic League as an independent body walked out of the place. We started a new Branch in St. Mary's. . Fr. James Walsh became President and I became the Vice-President.

At the same time I got an opportunity of talking the matter over with Seán MacDermott. I had not known much about the A.O.H. up to this and he explained the matter to me. It was alright, it seemed, according to its constitution. It was what might be described as a Catholic Fenian organisation. Having made these enquiries and

satisfied myself about it, I with some others of the lads in Clonmel, joined the A.O.H. After a short time, however, I found that a change had been made in the constitution and that any mention of an independent Ireland, which had been in the original constitution, was now omitted. Every Friday night when members were being elected, this amended constitution was read out but I said nothing because I thought perhaps I was not understanding it properly. I waited to discuss the matter with some of the lads. I asked them if they had noticed any change in the constitution but none of them seemed to have noticed it. On the following Friday night when we went in, we all sat together listening carefully to the constitution being read out and it was clear that a change had been made. I got up and asked when was the constitution changed and had we any say in the changing of the constitution. I was told we had not. I said, "It is an extraordinary thing that we have a Branch here of five or six hundred men and the constitution was changed without our knowledge. We appear to have no say in the matter". I proposed a resolution, which was passed, demanding an explanation as to why the constitution had been changed, but we never got this explanation.

It was about this time that the Volunteers began. I was concerned in starting the Volunteers in Clonmel and we thought it would be a good idea to get the use of this hall, which was now the A.O.H. hall, and start the Volunteers there. I thought that the A.O.H. membership provided a good recruiting ground for a Volunteer unit, so I read a paper there one night on the necessity for the Volunteers. Knowing I had to make a tactful approach in this matter, I left out all political questions in this

paper. I pointed out, for example, that if England had to withdraw her troops from Ireland, the country was open to invasion by any other foreign power and that it was up to Irishmen to train and arm for the defence of their own country. This was merely a method of gaining the interest of those to whom I spoke. The plea I made, however, was upset by the Chairman, Thomas Fennessy, who spoke after me. He said he did not think there was going to be any war. This, of course, was just before the outbreak of the European War in 1914 and, while I was assured through I.R.B. circles and the reading of John Devoy's paper, 'Gaelic-American', that war was certainly coming, Fennessy's speech destroyed the impression I had made on my listeners. Fennessy went on to say, referring to me, "This man was always a revolutionist. I have heard him myself in this very hall condemning some of the greatest Irishmen that ever lived, Daniel O'Connell one of them". Now this was wrong because what Fennessy was referring to here was one of the debates, which I referred to earlier in this story, where, for the purpose of debate, sides were taken and I with a number of others had taken the side of Young Ireland in a debate entitled, "Young Ireland -v- O'Connell". I did not condemn Dan O'Connell but I condemned his son, John. I stood up to reply to Fennessy's speech, being a big strung-up over the statements made, but I was refused the right to reply to the Chairman's speech. In consequence, I with a number of others there stood up and walked out of the place.

I got Seamus O'Neill, a schoolteacher, to write another paper on the necessity for organising the Volunteers. We went up to the Foresters Hall with it to see if we might have a better result there but we found little enthusiasm here either. We decided to take the bull by the horns

and started a Volunteer Company independently.

In the meantime some gentlemen sent for me to enquire from me what had happened in the A.O.H. hall. It was only then I learned that there was a second A.O.H. Branch in the town, composed of shopkeepers, farmers and the more well-to-do people. The other Branch, which was composed chiefly of workingmen, used to refer to this Branch as the House of Lords. I found that this second A.O.H. Branch was in sympathy with us and, in fact, they helped us eventually to form a Branch of the Volunteers.

We took a yard in O'Connell Street where Woolworth's shop now is. It was idle at the time. We started a Company there, having got two ex-British Sergeant-Majors to train us. We got a field to carry out our training and we used go up there at night.

Then suddenly the A.O.H. members came along in large numbers to join the Volunteers, as happened in Dublin at the same time. They had got word from their organisation in Dublin to give their support to the Volunteer movement and join up, their idea being that they thought they could control the Volunteers in the same manner as they had taken possession of other movements. When there was an election, however, it so happened that I was elected as the Officer Commanding the Clonmel Volunteers.

Very soon afterwards the Great War began and the British Reserves were called up. There were troops leaving the town. At this time we had about 300 men in the Volunteers in Clonmel and we had a couple of months' training done. The Howth gun-running took place and, between one thing and another, our ex-British instructors

were getting nervous. However, they still kept on for a while as we were paying them for their services.

Then we got word, through the Volunteer Committee, that John Redmond's rifles were to be landed in Dungarvan, and that we were to pick a party to be ready to go down and take them over. The information I knew had come from the A.O.H., as the "upper ten" in the A.O.H. had the information. I picked a party and we were making preparations for the job. They were all young lads and rather raw, but I knew I could depend on one of these ex-British Sergeants, a fellow named Byrnes. Byrnes was more of a field man. The other N.C.O. was more of the barrack square type of man. We held a collection in connection with the rifles and, as everyone was in the Volunteers at this time, we got several hundred pounds. We had formed a Committee to govern the local affairs of the Volunteers and the A.O.H. were represented on it, but I had made sure that we had a couple of a majority on it. After the collection had been made and the Redmond rifles had been landed at Dublin, I was given a cheque for £200 from the Committee to go to Dublin and buy all the rifles I could. I called to Seán MacDermott, the O'Rahilly and a few of the lads to enquire what was happening. They told me for God's sake not to have anything to do with these rifles. They were only old Italian rifles with not a single round of ammunition for them. I did not make any effort to purchase these rifles, and I brought back the £200 to Clonmel.

About a week or two later Pierce McCann told me that they were getting in small quantities of Lee Enfield rifles through Hearne's of Waterford. He had been down

in Hearne's of Waterford and he brought back with him three Lee Enfield rifles. He had some business transaction down in Waterford which brought him there on this occasion. I gave this information to the Committee and again got the cheque for £200. I went to Waterford with two others, Seán Morrissey and one of the two Treasurers, who were Andy O'Shea and a chap by the name of O'Donnell. O'Donnell and O'Shea were related. O'Donnell belonged to the better-off class of the community, but, as a young man, he was a Volunteer. When we got to Waterford, we met Maguire who was manager of Hearne's. They had no rifles on hands at the time but were expecting to get them in. We had a bit of a discussion as to what we were going to do. We decided that it was better to have the rifles than the money and we paid over the £200 for forty rifles of the type that Pierce McCann had shown us, these to be procured as soon as it might be possible to import them.

In the meantime, having paid for the rifles and while awaiting for delivery of them, the Volunteer split came on. John Redmond's Woodenbridge speech brought this to a head. Tom Condon came down here. He was M.P. for Tipperary at the time and, acting on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary Party, did his best to sway the Volunteers in favour of Redmond. I did my best to try to keep them together but, when I would not agree to adhere to the Redmondite stand, the local Volunteer unit became split and I found myself left with a remnant of about 40 men, of what were known at the time as the Sinn Féin Volunteers, and the remainder standing by the Redmond policy. Many of those who remained on our side were mere boys as, of course, we were all young fellows then.

Now the question of the rifles I had paid for arose. One of our men worked in a shop where there was a telephone and, through him and the telephone, we kept in touch with Hearne's to learn at the earliest moment when the rifles would have arrived. One Saturday evening I got word that the goods had arrived. I called the lads together and I told them that we were going to go Waterford and collar the rifles. The Redmondite section of the Volunteers, of course, looked upon this purchase as being their concern but I had handled the details and we intended to collect the rifles quietly ourselves and say nothing to the others about it. Seán Morrissey, O'Donnell and myself went to Waterford by train to collect the rifles which we presumed would be in boxes of some kind. We had arranged that some of our lads would meet the train on our return and have some means of taking the stuff away from the train. I had warned them that, if we did not arrive by train, they should go out the road to meet us in case we should travel by car from Waterford.

When we arrived at Waterford we found the rifles were there and that it was a better type of rifle than the ones we had seen with McCann. They had a 10-shot magazine whereas the rifles McCann had were only 5-shot. There were 3,000 rounds of ammunition with them. Actually the number of rifles in the consignment was 32 together with the amount of ammunition mentioned. Apparently Hearne's or their agents had been able to purchase these arms somehow or other in England and imported them quietly as hardware but we did not enquire too deeply how or where they came from. We were very satisfied to get them.

Having decided to take the arms to Clonmel by road, we hired a motor car. Just outside Carrick-on-Suir we got a puncture. While the driver was mending the puncture, who came along but two policemen. I was armed and it was dark, but nevertheless we did not feel any too comfortable. I was quite determined, no matter what happened, that we would not lose the rifles. But luck was with us. They merely enquired what had happened, said they were sorry for our trouble, cycled off and left us there. We blessed ourselves and heaved a sigh of relief when they left us. We completed fixing the puncture and carried on to Clonmel where we were met by our lads as arranged. By the following morning the rifles and ammunition were securely hidden away.

There was a meeting held in Waterford on the following day, Sunday, and all the Volunteers in Clonmel went down there, that is, all the National Volunteers as the Redmondites called themselves. Joe Devlin was there the same day. After the meeting they called down to Hearne's to collect the rifles, only to find that the guns had been taken by us the night before. They threatened to take an action against Hearne's, but Hearne's pointed out to them that they were entitled to hand over the goods to the person who had conducted the transaction with them, who was myself, or to the Treasurer of the Clonmel Volunteers, and one of the men, O'Donnell, who was with me on the collecting of them had been a Treasurer when the deal was made. They came back to us and demanded the rifles from us, but the rifles were well hidden and we refused to surrender them. So there was no more about it.

A lot of the Redmondite Volunteers were by this time becoming shaken in their allegiance as they saw that the only outlook for that organisation was to provide recruits for the British army, and so the organisation had begun to dwindle away. We, on the other hand, that is, the Irish Volunteers or, as we were termed, the Sinn Féin Volunteers, were suffering a lot of insults from the other element who called us robbers and suchlike, referring to the seizure of the rifles, but we stuck it out and we held on to the rifles.

After a while we got a bit bolder and started training openly ourselves. We had about 40 to 50 men at this stage. We bought shotguns and we got a few more revolvers in Dublin. We were fairly well armed and everyone had something. I was always expecting the call to arms which did eventually take place at Easter, 1916. Before that we had various test mobilisations to assure that everything was working smoothly and to estimate what response might be expected to the call when it came, and I found I could depend on about 47 or 50, which was pretty good.

It was on Easter Saturday that I got the word. I don't know how it was that I did not get word earlier than that. A man named Con Deere from Dundrum - he was a returned Irish-American and was with Eamon O'Dwyer's crowd around Dundrum - brought us the news in the cryptic form that the "goods had arrived" and we were going out the next morning. I called the lads together.

I might here remark that Fr. James Walsh, who was our Gaelic League President, offered to hear the lads' confessions. There were some of the I.R.B. lads who,

because of their membership of this organisation and the Church's ban on it, had not been to confession for a long time. There was one man, Joe Boyle, who had come to Clonmel from the Midlands. He was a teacher living in Clonmel and he was told to call on me for fear anything would come off before he came back off his holidays. He told me he had been nine months without going to confession and he did not like to walk in casually to any Church. He asked if there was anyone I knew that he could go to. I told him that Fr. James Walsh was our Gaelic League President and was a good Irishman as well as a good priest. I said I would have a word with Fr. Walsh on this matter. I went to Fr. Walsh and discussed the whole question of the necessity for every one of us getting confession and the barrier that had arisen in this through I.R.B. membership. Fr. Walsh said that in his view such a thing was a matter for a man's own conscience. If he thought it was wrong, then it was wrong, but if, on the other hand, he thought he was doing right, then there could be no sin involved. He said he would be in the confessional at seven o'clock and to tell any of the lads who wanted to make their confessions to come along to him then, which they did.

On Easter Sunday morning I had all the officers in our yard, the coach building yard in Irishtown, arranging what we were going to do. I sent a messenger named John Mackey over to Fethard. The orders I had got to rise gave no details as to what precisely we were to do. This was left entirely to ourselves. There were no other Volunteer units surrounding us, although we had I.R.B. Circles in places like Fethard and Cashel. The Clonmel Volunteer Company was more or less isolated. Pierce

McCann had a little crowd of Volunteers up at Duallagh, and he had gone up to Dublin when he got the news on Saturday, to make sure that everything was alright, because Pierce was a very careful man. Knowing he had gone up, I sent Seamus O'Neill across to meet him when he came back. Seán Treacy from Tipperary also went to meet him. He brought down the news that the goods had arrived and we were going out. That was the message McCann brought back, that the rising was arranged to begin on Easter Sunday.

So I sent John Mackey over to Fethard on the Sunday morning to tell the Fethard fellows, the few of them that were there, to come into Lisronan and that we would meet them there and capture Lisronan R.I.C. Barracks. After that we would attack places like Clehiran and such outlying Barracks where there were only five or six police, as we felt unable to deal with anything in Clonmel itself where, in addition to a strong barracks of twenty or more police, there was also a military barracks. We aimed to move on towards Cashel then and link up there with Pierce McCann where we hoped to be able to take Cashel Barracks that night.

While we were going over these plans, John Mackey returned and with him were two men in a motor car. They were waiting for me outside the yard. These men were the bearers of a message informing me that the whole thing had been called off, that is, that the rising would not take place as planned. The two men were Paddy Heanahan of Fethard and John O'Shea, also of Fethard. This news startled me and my heart sank. I felt that this was a repetition of the Fenian rising, that somebody had given away the game or something like that. When I spoke to

these fellows I learned that the O'Rahilly had arrived down to Pierce McCann with McNeill's order cancelling the arrangements. The O'Rahilly himself had gone on towards Kerry with the word and had left Pierce McCann to carry the word on to Limerick, but Pierce, before he left, had sent word over to Fethard with instructions to convey it on to me in Clonmel. I knew there had been a few Volunteers in Carrick-on-Suir and I went over there to warn them of the cancellation of the arrangements. I knew there was one man there, Dr. Murphy, whom I could trust and I called on him but I learned from him that the Volunteers had died out there. The Redmondite section had taken complete control and there had been no other activity there for some little time. The A.O.H. in Carrick-on-Suir had taken possession of the few rifles they had and had them locked up in the A.O.H. hall. He suggested to me that I should bring a few fellows over there some night and he would arrange for some local assistance for us to raid the A.O.H. hall and take these rifles away. I told him I would look into the matter as soon as the present upset was cleared up. We went from there to Waterford but found they had already got word there of what was happening. We came back to Tipperary and found that all our crowd had been warned.

I called the lads together that night and warned them that it was likely that something further would develop from this situation and to make sure that none of them was caught with any information upon them in the nature of documents or the like, because I expected that, if anything had happened, some of us were likely to be arrested and I wanted to make sure that no such things as lists of names or copies of orders or any such information would fall into the enemy's hands.

On Easter Monday evening there was a circus passing through the town and I was standing at the door watching it when Tom Halpin, who is now Lieutenant-Colonel Halpin of the Southern Command, came along. He was at that time a clerk in the railway. He said to me that the Volunteers must not have all got word of the cancellation of the arrangements as some engineer or someone who had come up in a train had told him that the railway was torn up at Rathdowney or somewhere like that. We felt rather sorry for these fellows not having got word and having gone out on their own when nobody else was out. That night some people who came back from Dublin told us that there was fighting in Dublin, shooting all over the place, but we could get no definite information as to what was going on. We had stopped all our fellows from going to Dublin that day, to the races at Fairyhouse, but one man who was not a Volunteer but was a brother of a Volunteer had gone up to the races and had not returned. He could not get back.

We got word on the following morning, Tuesday, that there was fighting in Dublin. Not knowing what the situation was or what had happened, I decided that at any rate we should not be caught indoors and that we should get out into the country. I sent word around to the lads to be on the alert while I went to clean myself and get myself ready. There were a few of the lads idle at the time and I posted them at the different roads around the town, so that they might pick up any message that might be sent into us, but no news came.

On Wednesday night the news appeared in the local paper here, the 'Nationalist', that the fighting was all

over in Dublin and that everything was quiet. It was not "the rising" the paper said, but "the fighting". I afterwards learned that it was the District Inspector of the R.I.C. in Clonmel who had put in this notice and, of course, the 'Nationalist' had to publish it. Having taken this information at its face value, I came home.

On the following morning, Thursday, having started work - it was about ten o'clock - a man named Walsh brought word to me from Pierce McCann to say that he was coming in towards Clonmel and we were to get out to meet him. He said that the Volunteers were out in Limerick and out in Cork and that we should get out to the hills around and try to get in touch with some of them. He seemed to be so sure about all this that he sent some money to the Red Cross people attached to us to get bandages and dressings in preparation for the fighting to be expected. It was Dominic Mackey, I think, that was looking after this part of the business at the time. He was in charge of the Fianna in Clonmel. I found that there was a policeman walking up and down outside my house apparently keeping watch on my movements, but I did not mind that. We had a few apprentices in the place and I gave them the messages to bring out to the various officers to collect their men and making the arrangement that they were to meet me at a place called Rathsonan, about two miles out from the town on the Fethard side, and that I would be there waiting for them. I told them that anyone who could not get his rifle out safely should leave it where it was and we would get them later at night but that those who could do so should bring rifles and ammunition and full equipment. I had a couple of revolvers hidden and I got these. Putting a raincoat on me, I watched the policeman outside until he

had walked up past the house and had his back to me and, hopping on my bicycle, I sped away quickly in the opposite direction. This policeman was Sergeant O'Connell. When he saw me leaving, he reported to the Barracks at once and, observing also the movements of other Volunteers, we heard afterwards, they 'phoned for reinforcements of troops from Cork.

A good number of the lads had got out but, before we could decide how to proceed further, again we got word from Fethard to say that the information we had got from Pierce McCann was wrong, that Eamon O'Dwyer had gone to Limerick and found that there was nothing happening there. This message advised us not to stir when, in fact, we were already out, or at least a good portion of us were out. A brother of mine it was that brought out the news to us from the town. The man from Fethard, Mat Breen, had gone into our place with the word, and my brother brought it out to us. When I got the news I waited for Pierce McCann's man who came along soon afterwards and asked him what he thought of it. He said that McCann would come to meet us even if he came alone. I asked him how many Volunteers McCann had in the morning when he had left him, and he told me there were 13. I had thought there would be 30 or 40.

I told my fellows to get into the fields, hide themselves and keep watch for anyone that came or went. I told Walsh - that was McCann's man - to ride along the road on his bicycle and that I would follow him. I brought another man with me who rode between Walsh and myself. I was armed because we had to pass Lisronan Barracks and, when we came to it and I saw that they were not stopped, we passed on, saluting a big policeman with

a revolver stuck in his belt who was near the Barracks. We went on to Fethard where I was able to confirm that the news I had got was only too true. Then the trouble was to get our fellows back again and we did this the best way we could.

I decided I would not go back until I could find out what was happening. This would be on the Thursday of Easter Week. There was a young lad named Tommy Donovan serving his time in Clonmel as a mechanic. He was afterwards killed during the Black and Tan regime. He said he had an uncle in Cork who was more of a Unionist than anything else. I borrowed a motor bicycle from Billy Myles, one of our officers, and arranged that Donovan would go to Cork. I instructed him how to get in touch with MacCurtain or MacSwiney and find out what was happening there. He returned to me that night with word that the Volunteers in Cork were not out and could not get out and that I was not to stir. They promised to send me word if anything further developed. They were to send this message to me by a girl who would come up by train. So I still remained out and we kept hoping and watching for news.

On Sunday we heard of the surrender. I was not satisfied until we saw the paper and found that it was genuine and that the surrender was there. I sent word to all the lads that any of them that had arms should hide them away, or anyone that had books or lists of names should destroy them, because it was certain that some of us at any rate would be arrested. I warned them that it was an old game with the police to try to get information by telling one man that another had given them all the information, in order to get him to talk. I told them to

say nothing and give no information. What I thought at the time was that there would be a formal prosecution brought against us and that we would be brought up in Clonmel Courthouse where we might have the opportunity of making speeches from the dock and that kind of thing, before we were thrown into prison. I need not say that I was feeling very tired after the week's knocking around and the disappointment of it all.

I think it was on Monday night or coming on to Tuesday morning when a brother of mine came into my room and announced, "The police are here". As I expected this, I was not unduly perturbed. My father would not be allowed up the stairs before them and the first thing I saw was a big policeman entering the room. They pointed revolvers at me and ordered me to get up, which I did. I dressed myself and came down with them. One old policeman - he was not a bad sort of fellow at all - said to me, "Look here, Frank! You are known to be the leader of the Volunteers and I may as well tell you plain and straight, it is going to be serious for you. If you want to have any chance, you should surrender all the arms and ammunition you have, as you are known to have numbers of arms. In any case, I may tell you that we intend to search for these arms". I told him to search away. There were six rifles and three thousand rounds of ammunition in the works, that is, in our coach building yard. I knew the rifles were safe as they were well hidden, but I was not so sure about the ammunition, although as it happened, it was quite safe and escaped detection. The ammunition was packed in empty paint cans and varnish cans standing openly on the shelves of the paintshop, a full one here, an empty one there, and so on. The cans containing the ammunition were not detected. Even my own brothers

were unaware of where the rifles were hidden.

Having been arrested, the police handed me over to the military and I was lodged in the military barracks where I found Tom Halpin, Dominic Mackey, Jim Ryan, Phil Cunningham and Seán Morrissey already there before me. We were kept there for the night. One of the soldiers told us that there was another "bloody big fellow" in another room who, we found out afterwards, was Eamon O'Dwyer.

On the following day we were escorted by the military to Tipperary Barracks where we found that six of the Tipperary men had also been rounded up. Among them were Paddy Maloney, Dalton and a man named Ryan. I can't remember the names of the others.

That evening the twelve of us were removed to Cork. When we got out at the station in Cork, we fell in for a very hostile reception from a crowd of soldiers' wives and suchlike people. We were handcuffed in pairs at the time. One of the policemen said to me, referring to the hostility of the crowd, "Now look what you're getting for all your work!" I made no reply, but when we were coming around, I think it was Patrick Street, a different kind of a crowd came around to see us. They had evidently watched other prisoners being taken in and they tried to shake hands with us, wishing us good luck, and offered us cigarettes as we passed along. I remarked to the same policeman, "Now look what we're getting!" However, after we had been lodged in jail a hostile crowd surrounded the place that night and broke some of the jail windows with stones.

Cork jail was one of the worst I have ever been in. We were there for a week without ever seeing the daylight, so to speak. We were never let outside but kept in our cells all the time. After we had been a week there - it was on a Friday I believe - we were all brought out to the square where a large escort awaited us. We were placed on the train and brought up to Dublin where we were lodged in Richmond Barracks. We were put into barrack rooms which were rather overcrowded. As far as I remember, there were 25 in each room which I believe were meant to hold eleven soldiers. We were given a blanket each but otherwise no bed or bedding.

When we were a week or more in Richmond Barracks we were again marshalled on the barrack square and marched out the Quays where we were placed on a ship for England. The Dublin people had been sending us in food and cigarettes and suchlike while we were in Richmond Barracks but when we were on the square getting ready to march off we were issued out with a small tin of bully-beef between every two men and six hard biscuits each. This was to be our rations until we reached our destination. It was about three o'clock in the evening when we were formed up on the barrack square and about 7 p.m. when we went aboard the cattle boat at the North Wall. It was about 9 p.m. when the boat put to sea and it would be 2 p.m. on the following day when we landed in Glasgow.

There was an escort of Scottish police to greet our arrival in Glasgow and we got such a hostile reception from the Scottish dockers and other citizens of Glasgow that I thought they were going to break through the escort and attack us. We were marched along the streets which was no great hardship to those of the younger ones amongst

us, but there were a few older men like Paddy Moloney of Tipperary and Dalton who were less able for the exertion. I asked one of the Scottish police walking along with us where we were going. He replied, "Barlinnie", but, with his Scottish accent, I thought he said Berlin and that he meant to snub me, and I asked no more questions. When we did arrive at the prison and heard its name, I realised that the policeman had given me the correct answer.

Barlinnie prison reminded us of the prison we had left behind us in Cork when we saw the cells, but the military had apparently taken over this prison, for it was military were in charge. I remember a soldier there who was a Galway man. I forget what Regiment he belonged to, but at any rate he had been wounded in the Battle of Loos. I think O'Connor was his name. He was a friendly kind of fellow. He said to us, "I have never yet put my hand in a man's pocket and I am not going to do it now but I would advise you to place the contents of your pockets outside the cell doors, because all must strip now and go for baths and your cells and clothing will be searched before you come back". We did this, leaving all our small belongings, cigarettes, etc., outside the cell doors, and so for a matter of about three weeks we had nothing to smoke. Daily when we were on exercise walking around in circles at two or three pace intervals, the guards who stood around with rifles while we were on exercise used ask us for cigarettes which we had not got ourselves. There were also in the prison a number of conscientious objectors, or "conshies" as they were called at the time. These were men who had refused to serve as soldiers through conscientious scruples and, having received terms of imprisonment for that, they got

a terrible time from the prison authorities. When we had been about three weeks there we were allowed to receive parcels of foodstuffs and some Irish families living in the neighbourhood had taken on looking after us. They received stuff that was sent from home or letters for us and brought these into us - letters from home and so on.

After some time we were again put on a train and sent off to Frongoch Internment camp. We were perhaps a couple of months in Frongoch when the sittings of the Advisory Committee began in London, and batches of us were sent up to London from Frongoch to appear before this body. An incident happened on this trip which showed the undependability of military guards who pretended to be friendly to us. A soldier of the escort to whom we had given cigarettes and who pretended to be very friendly offered to post any letters we wished to send to our friends. Of course, a lot of the lads gave him hurriedly written letters addressed to their friends and relations but we found, after we got back to Frongoch, that, in fact, none of these letters had been posted but were all handed to the Camp authorities. The old Colonel there, Colonel Lambert, gave us a great slating about this attempt to evade the censorship on our return.

Some releases began about the beginning of August and I, with the rest of the Tipperary fellows, was released before the end of August.

When we returned home, the Volunteers were a banned organisation but a bit of a revival began under the guise of Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin being a purely political organisation could not reasonably be objected to and we formed numbers of Sinn Féin Clubs around the district. This was before the end of 1916. Of course, we had the

I.R.B. going there all the time and in the I.R.B. Circles we continuously discussed and reviewed the possibilities as to what could be done to bring about a revival.

The first place I was asked to go to make a speech outside of Clonmel was Rosegreen. There was a very good crowd around there. It became the Headquarters of the South Tipperary Brigade at a later date. We formed a Sinn Féin Club there at that time. From there we went to Cahir and other places around. Eventually we went as far afield as Dungarvan which was in Co. Waterford.

The Dungarvan meeting, however, was later. It must have been 1917 because I remember on this occasion George Plunkett was to be the principal speaker at this meeting but, when George got up on the platform before the people, he became tongue-tied and could not utter a single word. I had to step into the breach and make a speech on the spur of the moment instead of him.

Actually we formed Volunteer Companies like this under the guise of Sinn Féin Branches in all the surrounding districts. We pulled along this way as best we could until the conscription crisis of 1918 came about which brought a large influx to our ranks.

The conscription issue brought priests, people and all together. Of course, we were the only driving force around which they could rally and we were able to use the situation to extend the Volunteer organisation considerably. I think we had about 700 men around Clonmel at that time. People used to bring us in all kinds of old guns and weapons to know if we could make any use of them.

We were responsible for arranging for the signatures to the Conscription Pledge, that is, getting the signatures of all kinds of people pledging themselves to resist conscription by every means in their power. We arranged meetings all over the place to fan the enthusiasm of those who were already come over to our side and to attract others. I had been advised by the Volunteer Headquarters not to appear myself on platforms but to make all the necessary arrangements and to let the politicians, who were good at that sort of thing, do the speechmaking.

In May, 1918, I was swooped on again and arrested. I was lodged in the local military barracks. On the following morning I saw Pierce McCann being brought in. They shifted me into the cells when Pierce McCann was brought in. Later that day the two of us were taken under heavy escort by a Company of Highlanders to Dún Laoghaire where we found that there were a large number of others who had also been arrested. We were all put down in the hold of a vessel. This was the big German Plot round-up. We were landed in Holyhead where we were held for a day or two and from there divided up, groups being sent all over the country.

Twenty of us were sent to Usk, amongst whom were Frank Lawless and Joe McGrath with whom I became very friendly. I was teaching them Irish while we were in Usk. Some other friends I made there among the prisoners were Peadar Hughes of Dundalk, Frank Shouldice, Peadar Clancy of Sligo, a fellow from Mayo, Mohan, Brennan Whitmore from Wexford, Tadhg Barry of Cork, who was afterwards shot in Ballykinlar, Jimmy Minahan from Dublin, a man named Reilly, who was rather elderly and who I think was the owner of a publichouse, Con Donovan, a Corkman who is an Agricultural

Instructor in Dublin, and poor Dick Coleman of Swords who died there. After we were a while there, the place was little like a prison at all as we made our own of the place.

I had never before been sick in jail but I now became an invalid through an injury to my leg. This occurred when we were playing rounders in the exercise ground where Peadar Clancy and I fell together and my knee got wrenched. I was just getting better from this injury when the great 'flu of 1918 attacked us and a number of the fellows went down with the 'flu. There were five or six of the fellows down with the 'flu in the beginning and the regular Prison Doctor had gone off to the war. The civilian practitioner who was supposed to visit us seemed to hate us. He came in to visit us very early in the morning, made a very cursory examination of any who claimed to be sick, and went away again leaving nothing in the way of medicine or anything to give them. In fact, he had given me a one-inch white bandage for my knee which had nearly ruined it, as another doctor later told me this should have been a much wider bandage. Under these circumstances, we arranged between us at dinner time each day who would stay up at night with the fellows who were sick to give them a hot drink or such things as we could manage from our own resources. We had nothing, of course, except what odds and ends were sent in to us from our people at home. We arranged in this way that two of us would stay up each night to attend the sick. I was not included on this duty roster, being more or less of an invalid myself.

On this particular day Dick Coleman and another man were appointed to stay up the night, but before nightfall Dick Coleman went down himself with the 'flu. I said I

was well enough able to hop around and that I would take his place. I did stay up that night. In the morning one of the prisoners, George Lyons of Dublin, was bringing water to his cell from the lavatory and spilled some of it on the steps. The kitchen being upstairs, we had to bring the grub down the stairs to the sick men. As I was coming to the steps leading down, I slipped where the water had been spilled at the top of the stairs. My knee went again and I fell down. I had to be carried back to my cell and was now as bad as ever.

Coleman got steadily worse. I remember well the night of his death. His brothers were outside the prison trying to get in to see him. Apparently they had been notified of his serious illness but, owing to red-tape, they would not be allowed in. He died there calling for his mother. There was no attempt made to isolate the sick men or keep them separate from those uninfected and when Coleman died he remained there amongst us. We knelt around and tried to say the Rosary but there was nothing only the bare floor and the coffin and just a couple of candles.

After this we got a bit vexed at the callousness of the authorities and we demanded that a doctor should be sent to the prison. I don't know what we really intended to do if this ultimatum was not met. We might have burned down the prison. At any rate, we intended to do something about it unless we got satisfaction. They sent down a doctor from London. He was a Trinity man and a Protestant, but he was first a doctor. He examined us all. He got me out to walk up and down for him and, when he saw the one-inch bandage, he noted that this was a wrong one and got me a three-inch bandage

instead. He inquired from the Governor what the prisoners got when going to bed at night, as they were all very run down. When he learned that we got nothing, he instructed that a supply of Bovril should be got and that each man should have a cup of hot Bovril every night. He also instructed that the sick men should be taken away from the rest of us and placed in another part of the prison. Seemingly the authorities distrusted this doctor because he was an Irishman, I suppose, and they sent down a second doctor, but he also confirmed the recommendations of the first man.

During all this time plans for an escape were going on and arrangements in connection with it were progressing. As the doctors had condemned the prison as unfit for habitation, there was now the prospect that we would be moved to another prison and this interfered with the escape plans. The escape plans envisaged the escape of all the fit prisoners. I, of course, being unable to walk, could not go on the escape nor could the sick men. It was arranged that I would remain to look after the sick men and that all the others would try to escape when the arrangements had been completed. Before the arrangements were complete for the escape and before a date for it could be fixed, we were informed one day that we were to be moved to Gloucester on the following Thursday. In these circumstances, while it was not possible to organise any mass escape in the emergency, four fellows decided to take the chance of going themselves. These were Joe McGrath, Frank Shouldice, Frank Thornton and Jack Clancy. These fellows made the attempt and succeeded in getting clear away. They were not missed until the following day when we were parcelling

up our belongings and getting ready for the move to Gloucester. Joe McGrath had usually acted as the spokesman for the prisoners and some of the prison authorities came along at this stage enquiring where he was. We said casually, "Oh! We don't know. He was here a minute ago". They went hunting around for him, finally discovering that not alone Joe McGrath but also three other prisoners were missing. We were all put into cells and locked up. We remained locked in the cells for three or four days while they sought frantically for the escaped prisoners. The Prison Governor could not be brought to believe that they could possibly have escaped. He thought they were hiding around the prison somewhere and so the search went on. The Prison Governor in Usk was not, I think, the regular Prison Governor. I never saw him in any kind of uniform. I think he was just an intelligent educated man who was sent down there to act as Governor when we were sent there. He had some queer ideas about us when we went there first, as I suppose to his mind we represented these wild Irish but, when we had been there a while, he used to come around amongst us, talking to us, and quite evidently he had acquired a new opinion of us at any rate. We found him quite decent. Now, however, the poor man was in trouble for allowing the escape of four prisoners and, when we were allowed out of our cells after three or four days, we refused to back into them again. The next thing was an escort arrived and we were brought to Gloucester.

When we arrived in Gloucester, there had been no sign of 'flu up to then. Soon afterwards it made its appearance and they blamed us for having brought it there. Pierce McCann, who was always a very religious man, used

to have a few of us up to his cell to say the Rosary at midday as well as saying it at night. One day Peadar Hughes came to me and told me that my friend McCann was down with the 'flu. There were five of them down with the 'flu. At that time there was a campaign at home to stop the hunting as a protest against the British campaign against us. There was a lot of controversy in Tipperary about this matter at this time and letters appeared in the local papers, the 'Tipperary Star' and the Clonmel 'Nationalist'. As Pierce McCann was very interested in this matter, I had brought the papers up to him and I read out the letters about the stopping of the hunting. Having said the Rosary then, he told me he expected to be taken out before six o'clock. I said I would come up and see him before he was taken out. Before six o'clock I felt that there was something the matter with myself and, when I went to have my tea, I could get no taste off anything. I mentioned this to some of the lads but they pooh-poohed the idea. So I said, "Well, the morning will tell whether I have got it or not". I went to bed. In the morning there were twelve of us down with the 'flu and the twelve of us were very bad.

We were taken out to a nursing home that night, and five of the cases that were considered not so bad were separated from us. One of these was Pierce McCann. There were Desmond Fitzgerald, Seán McEntee, Paddy O'Keeffe, and I can't think of the names of the others, but there were twelve of us altogether. Rory Haskins was another. He was a North of Ireland man and I believe had been an Orangeman at one time. He travelled around a bit and I suppose got a bit more broadminded. Going back to Belfast, he took a great interest in Irish dancing,

joined the Gaelic League and fell in love with the Secretary of the Branch, a Donegal girl, whom he afterwards married. He became a convert when he married and was consequently cast off by his own people. Subsequently he joined the national movement up there. We used to feel very sorry for him in prison because he had a voracious appetite and we wondered how he managed to make-do with the light fare we were getting. However, he was one of the 'flu cases in Gloucester that got very bad and I also was very bad.

I remember the nurse coming around to check my temperature and pulse and I noticed her making an involuntary exclamation when she noticed the temperature and whilst she was writing on the chart. I said to the lads beside me, "I must be bad". I climbed up to have a look at the chart and saw that it registered 104. I was in a kind of trance for about three days, delirium I suppose. I remember I was going through halls and all kinds of grand places during that time. When I came back to my senses, the doctor came along to me and asked how I was getting on. I replied that I was not as bad as they imagined I was. He said, "Who told you you were bad?" "Nobody", I replied. The nurse interjected, "Oh, Drohan! I didn't say anything to you". She was afraid she might get into trouble and I said to her, "No, nurse, you did not talk to me at all". I told the doctor in reply to his question as to how I knew that I had climbed up and had a look at the chart. He did not believe that I was able to get up to see the chart. He ordered the chart to be taken away.

Pierce McCann had died in the meantime. I did not know that Pierce McCann was dead until his mother and father

came in to see me in the room in the Nursing Home and told me about it. They were in a bad way about it, of course, as his death was a great loss to them. He had been the one of the family who worked the farm at home. As I said previously, there were five patients who were not so bad in one room and there were twelve bad cases in another room. McCann was amongst the five who were not considered so bad. His death seemed to be so unaccountable that we thought there might be an inquest or something to ascertain what exactly the cause of death was, but I learned afterwards that it was due to a chill. There was a park outside the prison and there were horses being trained or ridden around this park. Pierce, being a keen horseman himself - he used hunt with the Tipperary Hounds - was in the habit of getting up and looking out from the window at the horses and he must have caught a fresh cold in this way. There was some talk at the time that some injection or other that he got was too powerful a dose for a man in his condition, but whether there was anything in this or not I don't know.

Pierce McCann died on the 6th March, 1919, and within the following ten days or so there was a general release of the prisoners. I was considered so bad at the time that the doctor would not certify me as fit to travel when the release was ordered. He said that the British Government could not be responsible for me if I insisted upon travelling in my state of health but I replied that the British Government had brought me there against my will and I did not want to make them responsible for keeping me there any longer. I considered that it would be better for me to travel along with my comrades where I would have the benefit of their care and attention as well

as which some of the prisoners' wives - three or four of them, notably Desmond Fitzgerald's wife and Paddy O'Keeffe's wife were there to meet them and travel home with them - would be able to give me some attention on the way as I was lame as well as very weak from the 'flu. On the other hand, if I waited till some later date to travel, I would have to travel across England and home entirely alone. So I insisted that I should go along with the others. I was put to bed when I got on the boat where I remained until we arrived in Dún Laoghaire. There we were welcomed by a big crowd of the boys and I was given a drink of eggs and milk and whiskey to strengthen me for the further part of my journey.

My brother and Willie Myles came up from Clonmel to meet me and bring me home. I noticed on my trip from Dublin to Clonmel that a lot of popular sympathy for the prisoners had grown up. A commercial traveller I met on the train - I can't remember who he was or what his name was - when he learned I was one of the released prisoners, wanted to take complete charge of me, buy drinks for me at every station and so on.

When we landed in Clonmel there was a great welcome from the townspeople. I was met at the station by a big escort of Volunteers from Clonmel and from all around the country and I was escorted from the station down to my house by a procession. I noticed on that occasion that there were considerable numbers of people appeared in the procession to welcome me who had not hitherto identified themselves with Sinn Féin or in any of the national movements. These were big shopkeepers and well-to-do people whom I learned afterwards had lent their support to Sinn Féin during the election. Raymie Murphy, Mat

Feehan and John Dalton are a few of the names of such people that occur to me now. I was glad to see these people now identified with Sinn Féin as hitherto we were taboo to them.

In my absence in prison I found that considerable progress had been made towards popularising Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers. Under the threat of conscription a lot of people had flocked to our standard but, when this threat died away, a lot of these fell away too. However, they were no longer antagonistic even when they did fall away and a number of them remained on with us. We had our own hall in the town which was known as the Sinn Féin Hall. Willie Myles and Seán Morrissey were two of those chiefly responsible for keeping things going. We had at this time a right good lot of workers in the movement, fellows who were willing and anxious to do whatever they were asked to do and looked for no thanks. The earnest enthusiasm in those days is something to remember with pride. The pity is that we cannot have a revival of this spirit.

As soon as I was able to get around after my return, there was a lot of political work demanding attention. The organisation of Sinn Féin in the surrounding country was going ahead strongly and I was brought around to make speeches pretty often. As one of the released prisoners I suppose it was considered that my presence on the platform would be effective, though I would have preferred to get on with the Volunteer organisation.

Actually we did organise the Volunteers into a Battalion at this stage and I was elected its Commanding Officer. We started with three Companies and then we

organised a Company in Kilsheelin, another in Grange and a further one in Newcastle. This, the Clonmel Battalion, was the 5th Battalion of the South Tipperary Brigade. Willie Myles was Vice Commandant, James Kennedy was the Battalion Q.M. and Michael Hanrahan was Adjutant. Tom Halpin was Captain of one Company, Dinny Skehan of another and Dominic Mackey of a third. John Lonergan was Captain of the Grange Company. In Newcastle a Limerick man named Scanlon was the Captain of the Company. Scanlon was the manager of the local creamery in Newcastle. Paddy Stokes was Captain of the Kilsheelin Company. The organisation went on. We started a Branch of Cumann na mBan and we gave a lot of attention to the collection of arms, the conversion of sporting shotgun cartridges into buckshot cartridges and suchlike preparations for the new struggle which everyone could see was coming.

I had been engaged to be married before I was arrested in the previous May and so I got married then. I spent part of my honeymoon staying with one of my old prison comrades, Frank Lawless, at his home near Swords in Co. Dublin. My happy marriage did not last very long because my wife died of a heart affection about five months later. I got into rather bad health myself following that sad event.

It was now 1920 and I had been asked to take command of the South Tipperary Brigade but, being still lame and in bad health, I felt that I was not fit to hold this appointment and I declined it. This offer was made to me from Volunteer Headquarters in Dublin. I got word about it from Mick Collins. The man who was acting as Brigade Commander, Seamus Robinson, came to me about this along with Seán Treacy and offered to hand over the command of

the Brigade to me but I explained to them that, owing to my condition, I was unable to accept the appointment. I would have been only too glad to take on the job if I had been as fit and well as I was a year earlier. I was very fond of Treacy whom I always looked upn as a first-class man and had no doubt at the time that they would make a good job of it.

The Brigade had been formed at this time with Robinson in command and Treacy as the Vice Commandant of the Brigade. The Brigade Headquarters was at Rosegreen. A system of communications was established through which Units kept in touch with each other and with the Brigade Headquarters. There were certain houses appointed where messages could be left. As well as communications, an intelligence system was organised, an officer in each area being appointed to collect information in his local area and pass it on to the Brigade Headquarters.

My health began to improve a bit then. We got the use of a place outside the town on a hill belonging to a man named Larry Hallihan. Hallihan told us we could have the use of this place which was a hill farm belonging to him for the purpose of training. The Clonmel Volunteers began to use this for field training because, if any military or police appeared there, we had the nearby woods as a means of escape. This place was quite close to the town across the river. It is in County Waterford but not far from the town. It might be called Russellstown. There was a section of Volunteers there, in fact, in the locality. We went out there regularly at night to do our training and that brought us in touch with Ballinacalbery.

The Clonmel area at this time comprised Clonmel, Kilsheelin, Grange and Newcastle. Kilsheelin was at the east side and Grange was at the west. We had no special instructors for this training but I was pretty good at this myself as I had been studying such things from the time we had to take over from the British N.C.O.s in 1914 and we had plenty of text-books and the like. The kind of training we did was close-order drill, tactical formations, attack and defence, and some rifle training. We had rifle shooting practice now and then and we did as much as we could on night operations. During my internment in 1916 I had learned a good lot of this from "Ginger" O'Connell who had given us lectures on all these things. I was very fond of "Ginger" (the late Colonel J.J. O'Connell). As well as having met him in Frongoch, I also met him afterwards in Gloucester.

A little later a new development occurred when, by reason of the fact that the R.I.C. were unable to deal with the ordinary crime in the country, we formed our own Police to deal with these things.

At this time also what were known as the Sinn Féin Courts were established. These were courts of law set up by the Dáil to take the place of the British courts which were not recognised by us for the purposes of ordinary legal processes. All this provided immediate scope for Volunteer activities, that is, the carrying out of regular police duties and the protection of the Sinn Féin courts when they sat, as well as making arrangements for the sitting of these.

In the purely political sphere, however, there was

great activity at this time. Elections for County Councils Rural District Councils and Town Councils were held and at these elections we were able to get a majority of Sinn Féin candidates elected through the proportional representation system of election which was in being then. Having a majority on the County Council and the Clonmel Corporation, we also thereby controlled Boards of Health, the District Councils and all subsidiary bodies that came under these. A lot of us did not want to take these positions as we preferred to confine our activities to purely Volunteer matters but, as no one else would come forward to act, we had to accept positions on these bodies. For one thing, we mistrusted a lot of what we called the old politician types who, seeing the turn of the tide, were now coming to our side in order to get themselves re-elected but, as we felt that most of these were undependable, certain Volunteer officers felt that they would have to stand themselves for election in order to ensure that the activities of these elected bodies would be in accordance with the national policy. We tried to establish a new system in local politics so that in future there would be no such thing as jobbery or corruption and agreements were drawn up and signed that where in future the making of appointments was concerned, jobs would go strictly in the order of merit.

In the summer of 1920 I got into bad health again and was under the doctor's care for about three months. Some time in the autumn the doctor suggested that I needed a complete rest and asked me if there was anywhere I could go for a complete holiday. I thought of the Irish College in Ring as I knew An Fear Mór. I was in

Ring for a short time when the burning of the Coastguard Stations took place. An Fear Mór became alarmed that, if the Coastguard huts near Ring were burned and I was found there, the British would burn the College in reprisal. So I left Ring and went into Dungarvan. Actually the huts at Ring were not burned then but they were burned some time afterwards. Having remained in Dungarvan a short time I came home.

Soon afterwards an order came from G.H.Q. that all officers were to sleep away from their homes to avoid arrest. At a Battalion Staff meeting, therefore, one Saturday night we discussed this matter and arranged a number of places where each of us would sleep, to commence on the following Monday night. This would be about the month of November, 1920.

Early on Monday morning - I was just getting up at the time - my sister-in-law having gone out to seven o'clock Mass, I heard a tap at the window. It was a fellow to warn me that the military were raiding houses down the road. I dashed across the street to warn Billy Myles who stayed in a house nearly opposite. I shouted to him to get up quick, that there was a raid on and that I had heard that Tommy Smith and Jimmy Kennedy had been caught and that the raiding party was then in at White's. A man named Jackie Murnane who saw the raid in progress down the street headed up towards my house to warn me and he came in then to say that the military party was on its way up to us then. My sister-in-law then arrived, shouting "Here they are!" The others were able to get over a wall and escape that way but I being lame had to go out the door and walk off quickly towards a turn where, looking back from the turn, I saw one crowd of the raiders

going into my house and another party into Myles'. When the raiders found my bed still warm they were some time searching for me around the neighbouring houses. On the other hand, we met some others who had left their homes for fear of raids and we kept ourselves out of sight until the raiding seemed to have stopped when we made our way down the back way to Myles' house and got a bit of breakfast. We had only finished our breakfast when the alarm was raised, "Here they are again!", and we had to push off the way we had come. We remained out from then on.

This was the beginning of my going on the run. There were Myles, Jim Ryan and myself together at this time, all in the same boat, and we got word that Dinny Skehan was also being looked for, as they had arrested a brother of his who had previously been in the British Army, in mistake for Dinny. Dinny, who was a railway clerk at this time, worked over in Fethard where he began work very early in the morning about seven o'clock, so that he was not there when the raiders went to look for him. We managed to get word over to Fethard to warn Skehan not to come home. So there were four of us now together on the run and our whole trouble was to find a place to stay. We did not want to stop with any friends of ours as we might be looked for there, apart from the fact that we would be only getting them into trouble. We stayed first at a lodge in the Asylum for a few nights but when the people got frightened when they saw the searching going on. There was a man named John Brown, an Agricultural Instructor. He was, in fact, Secretary of the Agricultural Committee. He was a Corkman and his wife was from the North of Ireland. They lived outside the

town of Clonmel and they had three children. My brother in the course of business was speaking to Brown and told him the trouble we were having to find somewhere to stay. Brown sent word to us to come out to him and he kept us for a week. This was a very generous act on Brown's part as, if this were known or we were found in his house, Brown might easily lose his job. As we did not like to stay too long anywhere, we then moved out to a farmer named Tom Hackett of Glenbawn who became a great friend of mine afterwards. We had chanced going into an early Mass one Sunday and we saw Hackett who had given us some help during the 1918 election. We decided to ask him would he keep us for a while until we could find somewhere else. He told us to come out that night to his place and we did. When we were about a week in Hackett's we had made contact with Volunteers in outlying places and they helped us to get places to stay. Splitting ourselves up, we stayed here one day and there another, as we did not like to be a burden on anybody and it was embarrassing to feel that we were endangering those whom we stopped with. It was at this time that an order came from G.H.Q. that the Volunteers were to be responsible for looking after the men on the run and from then on we had not much trouble as the local Volunteers made the necessary arrangements for where we would stay each night. Of course, we had to stay in our own Battalion area but we kept moving around all the time within.

Unfortunately my health came very much against me at this time and I was able to do little more than just keep getting around from place to place.

It was at this time the Columns were formed and I am glad to say that the thirty odd rifles that we had purchased before 1916, and which we still had, went a long way towards arming the Column. Things were beginning to get lively at this stage. Occasionally there was an attack on a police barracks here and there. The instructions were that officers were not to join the Flying Columns. However, I offered to join the Column though I was lame and in bad health at the time but the boys decided that I would be more of a nuisance to them than anything else and refused to allow me to become a member of the Column. As the command of the Volunteer Battalion as well as the Column called for an active and healthy man, I felt I could no longer hold this position and so I handed over my appointment to Billy Myles who had been the Vice Commandant. Of course, I was around with them, living with them and taking part in their councils and they told me everything that went on but I was no longer able to take as active a part as hitherto in military matters. I was laid up for a good while in Newcastle while I was on the run and they were bringing me around from house to house in an old car. If there was any sign of an impending raid, they would get an old car and bring me away up the hill until it had passed. In this way I managed to pull through.

In the meantime I was elected Mayor of Clonmel. That would be about the month of January, 1921. From then on I devoted a lot of time to providing accommodation for the Columns operating around the area. Seán Hogan's Column was the one which acted locally around about Clonmel but other Columns occasionally took a run into that area and through my official standing, as well as

everything else, I was able to make arrangements for their housing and feeding as might be required. Dinny Lacey's Column operated north of Clonmel but they occasionally came into the Clonmel area and we were able to look after them while they were there.

Ambushes and attacks of one kind or another became more frequent then as the war reached its height. One unfortunate incident happened at Two-Mile-Bridge. The local Volunteers had the mission of blocking the road by digging the trenches and cutting trees. A military patrol walking softly along in rubber boots came on them, opened fire on them and one of our lads named O'Keeffe of Moongoragh was killed. I was not satisfied about this occurrence as there was a feeling that those who were acting as scouts on the occasion had not carried out their job properly. It appeared as if they had run away as soon as they saw the enemy without warning their comrades, and so we held an inquiry into the matter. Another casualty we had was a man who got shot in the arm at the house of an ex-policeman where they went to collect arms. He was so bad that we had to get him to a hospital in Dublin but we managed to do this alright.

It was at this stage an order was received from G.H.Q. for a boycott of the R.I.C. Posters were to be got out calling on shopkeepers and the like to serve no policemen or their families. I objected to this order. I doubted that it was, in fact, an authentic order from G.H.Q. because I realised that it could not be carried out. I was told that, as a soldier, I should have to carry out the orders issued by Headquarters but, as I have said, I doubted that it was, in fact, an authentic order from

G.H.Q. I argued that we had not sufficient force at our disposal to protect the people who might try to carry out the terms of this boycott and who undoubtedly would be beaten up or burned out by the British authorities as soon as their action was known, nor were we in a position to compensate those who would inevitably suffer from trying to carry out the boycott, so that it was bound to fail and would, therefore, harm our prestige. The boycott was carried out in Tipperary town and a few other places and the results were just as I had forecast. The enemy burned the Irish House in Tipperary and beat up the inhabitants there and in a few other places, so that in a short time the whole business had to be dropped.

Our relationship with the R.I.C. was always a bit of a problem. We had had a District Inspector here by the name of Power O'Shea, a real bad egg, and there was a Head Constable named Hunter. Hunter also was a bitter type and very antagonistic. Both of these died about this time and we got a Head Constable in replacement named Maher and an Inspector whom I never met, but some of the lads met him and it seemed that he was in sympathy with us. He went so far one time, on hearing of my condition out in the country, as to send me word that if I would come home and live there quietly, taking no active part in anything, he would guarantee that the police would not disturb or molest me, but I sent word back to him that, as this would be the equivalent to a surrender on my part, I would do no such thing. Our Intelligence agents kept us informed of what was going on in the town and in the barracks there and we learned that the Black and Tans and military were being restrained by the Inspector and by the Head Constable Maher. This was following an ambush which took place

between Cahir and Clonmel at a place called Baron. Actually I had planned or, at any rate, selected the spot for this ambush though I was not in the carrying out of it and following this the military and some of the other Black and Tans and police wanted to shoot up the town and burn some houses but the Inspector and the Head Constable with great difficulty restrained them and kept them in barracks.

I had a considerable amount of luck during all this time. One morning I was coming in to Mass in a pony and trap, and they had been searching for us in the Asylum. This was at the beginning of my going on the run. After searching fruitlessly for us, the Infantry Company carrying out the raid went back to barracks and a Lancer Unit came galloping out the road. Those who were with me in the pony and trap got panicky and wanted to make a run for it but, as I saw that there were no police with them and realising that they would not know who I was, we just drove casually on and through them and they took no notice of us.

Another time while we were staying in Hackett's we were giving a hand with the farm work by thinning turnips. The same thing happened. A Company of military halted along the road and stayed leaning over the wall looking into the field where we were. They had been raiding a few houses in the locality apparently looking for us. Again I thought the only chance we had was to pretend no alarm but carry on with our work and again this had the desired effect because after a while they moved off without even questioning us.

About this time we became infected with itch (scabies) and, moving around as we were from one bed to another, spread this infection rapidly around everywhere. One of the lads brought out a Dr. Murphy to us. Dr. Murphy was a Volunteer himself and, of course, was ready to do anything he could for us. He gave us ointment to rub on the affected parts but explained that there was little use in this treatment unless we first had a good bath. We did not want to seek baths in the houses we were staying in. It was winter time. So now and again we began to take a run home so as to arrive home after midnight. The River Suir was running at the back of my house and I got a brother of mine to pick me up in a boat and take me across the river. I could then get in the back way unobserved into the house. Myles got somewhere else to go and Dinny Skehan was able to manage alright because he lived outside the town on the mountain road, about a mile from the town.

Having got into the house as I believed unobserved, I got a good wash, rubbed myself over with the ointment and lay on the bed for a couple of days. There was always a danger of raids, of course, but I believed they would never suspect that I was at home and so I decided to stick it out until Saturday morning. My sister-in-law was living then over at Myles' house and her cousin was looking after the garden for us and staying in my house. Another man named Willie Shaw and my brother called in occasionally and we put in the time playing an odd game of cards. Shaw was the local postman and a very good lad he was. While we were on the run when we wanted clean shirts or socks or anything like that, Shaw brought them out to us. He was able to pass freely by British parties and

patrols with his postbag on his back. They never thought of searching him or suspecting him of being our messenger. On this night when my brother and Shaw had just left about eleven o"clock - it was a very dark night - and as I was getting ready for bed, I thought I heard some sound. I put out the lights and slipped out to the kitchen. After a while I could hear English accents out at the back calling out, "Which door, sir?" "I think this is the one". I realised a raid was beginning. As they were apparently all around the back, it was reasonable to assume that they were also at the front, so that there would be no chance of getting out either way. I know there was nothing I could do then but wait and watch for any opportunity that might arise to escape. I heard them then banging at the door of the house next-door which was occupied by people named Dempsey. The Dempsey's at this time had a couple staying in the house with them. This was a labouring man who had married a farmer's daughter and she got thrown out by her people. So he had got a job in Clonmel and they were staying for the moment with Dempsey's. I went out the back door to see if there was any chance of getting away there, but seeing the military closing up toward the backs of the houses, I realised there was no chance and went back quietly into my own house without being seen by them. Then I heard a shot which was fired into the lock of Dempsey's door. Apparently when they did not get an immediate response to their knocking, they had shot the lock off and burst in the door. This man who was lodging with Dempsey's, and his wife, apparently alarmed by the raid, got up and ran out the back where they were caught by the military party at the back of the house. Dempsey himself was drunk at the time and was unable to give a satisfactory explanation of his lodgers. He was questioned

by the raiders as to where was the fellow who was in the habit of coming in the back way across the river at night. Apparently my movements had been reported but they were at the wrong house and Dempsey, being drunk, prevented the situation being cleared up immediately. Dempsey was not a bad sort of a fellow anyhow and he refused to give them any information. He said he did not know anything about what they were talking about. The other man and his wife did not know us and did not know what the questioners were talking about.

While all this was going on, I was listening anxiously to the sounds outside and taking a peep through the windows now and then. I decided to try to hide in a small nook in the house, not that I thought it would be of much use if they once entered it, but I felt there was nothing I could do. After a little while, however, the raid was over. I could hear them forming up on the roadside outside and moving away. Soon afterwards my brother came up and began knocking at my door. I made no move, however, to open the door as I suspected that, though the raiding party had evidently moved off, they might have left somebody behind to watch what happened after they had left. So I remained in the house until daylight when I made my escape from the place and did not again return there until after the Truce. So far as I could see, there were no police present with the military party on this raid either. The name over the door of my shop was Davin which had been my wife's name and I had not altered this name when she died. The name over the other door was Dempsey and, as there was no name of Drohan over either of these houses, the military had nothing to guide them in this way.

When things got bad and it became too dangerous to come into the town to hear Mass on Sundays, we got a dispensation from the obligation of hearing Mass but nevertheless whenever we could get the chance we used run across to the Monastery of Mount Melleray. They always took us in there and they always brought us to a place from where we could make our escape in the event of a raid. Actually the Monastery itself was never raided but the Lodge was raided and a shotgun which was held under licence by the lodgekeeper was taken from him. We were not the only party who dropped in there from time to time. I am aware that other people on the run and members of Flying Columns visited the Monastery occasionally and spent a day or two there.

I was not arrested again before the Truce came though I believe a great search for me went on all the time. After the murder of the Lord Mayors of Cork and Limerick, some people thought that if they could lay hands on me I would go the same way, being the Mayor of Clonmel, but I kept out of their way.

Some time around then there was a Parliamentary election to fill the vacancy created by Pierce McCann's death and I was elected and became a member of the Dáil. I think this must have been about March or April 1921. I was staying in Hackett's of Glenbyre at the time and my sister-in-law brought out the message to me that had been left at the house, that I was to go to Dublin where I attended a secret session of the Dáil in connection with the Truce terms.

Soon after I came home from that meeting, the Truce came about and then, of course, all the discussion that

followed the signing of the Treaty. I lost heart at this stage. I had never dreamt I should see Sinn Féin split and the wonderful movement that had been built up over the years so completely cleft, and men like Griffith, Collins and Cathal Brugha whom I had learned to love and respect descend to calling each other names. Myles and some of the others were in Dublin at this time and, discussing things with them, I told them it was apparent that we were going to have a definite split and that I was determined to have no part in it. I remember the appeal of Liam de Róiste which seemed to give some hope that things would be fixed up yet, but when I went into the Dáil the following day I realised that everything was in the melting-pot again. So I told the lads then who were going back that day to tell the people of Clonmel that we were going to have a split and that I had decided to take no sides in it. I refused to take sides. I could not have anything to do with it because I saw as good men on one side as on the other and all the talk that went on only meant one thing to me, that our splendid unity was broken.

To be candid, I felt I could not vote for the Treaty because there was too much of the English King in it but, on the other hand, I had a very high regard for the integrity and ability of men like Griffith and Collins, and so I felt I could not oppose them either, because I believed at the time that the greatest organiser we had ever had in the national movement and who had been personally responsible for the conduct of the war was Mick Collins. Rightly or wrongly, I believed Collins to be the one man who was responsible for the victory of our cause so far.

As against that, a very old friend of mine, Cathal Brugha had taken the other side. I had known Brugha from the very early days of the Gaelic League when he was only trying to learn Irish the same as I was myself. He was then travelling around the country as representative of a chandlery factory. Every time he came to Clonmel he came into the Gaelic League Hall there and we spent out time trying to perfect our knowledge of the Gaelic tongue, though at that time he had the Fáinne, which it was possible to have at that time without a very perfect knowledge of the language. Later the rule was made which required a better knowledge of the language before a person became eligible for the Fáinne.

I resigned then from the Volunteers as did also my comrade officers here, Myles, Halpin, Skehan and others.

Then the situation leading to the Civil War began to grow up. The Volunteers generally around Tipperary, or those of them who remained on, had taken the anti-Treaty standpoint. A lot of fellows were taken into the Forces the, like sort of conscripts, and we would not be allowed to adopt any neutral attitude. They looked upon it that, if we were not on one side, then we must be on the other, and so our lives were threatened. Skehan, Halpin, Myles and Tynan were ordered to leave the town. I don't know whether they may have taken compassion on me because of my age, but I was not threatened or ordered to leave the town and, in any case, I would not have gone. However, these men had to leave the town as some people, who were similarly ordered, were shot, people who should not have been shot at all. They, that is, Skehan and Halpin and some others, when they left the town went to Melleray, but they were no sooner in Melleray than some of the

Newcastle Volunteers came and ordered them out of Melleray. They made their way through Dungarvan to Waterford where they made contact with the forces then known as the Free State Army and joined up with these.

It will give some idea of the capacity of the officers we had in the old Clonmel Volunteers when I say that all the men concerned here in this matter subsequently made a name for themselves. Myles if he had remained in the Army might have gone anywhere, but he left the Army in its early stages and is now the Managing Editor of the 'Tipperary Star'. Cooney, who has lately retired from the National Army, retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. Both Skehan and Halpin served in the Army and both held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Dominic Mackey, who retired from the Army some years ago, had reached the rank of Commandant before he left.

Then came what was known as the Pact Election and, as Mayor of the town, I presided at several meetings in Clonmel, Cashel, Fethard and other places, thinking or in hopes that there might be some chance of bringing the opposite parties together again but, when I realised that this was hopeless, I washed my hands of the whole business.

The Anti-Treaty elements demanded that I should surrender my mayoralty and, as my health was again suffering, my doctor advised me to give up public life and not to attend this meeting of the Corporation at which this point was coming up. He said the controversy and argument that would go on would do me irreparable harm physically, but I pointed out to him that I must attend the meeting because I would not have it thought that I

was running away from the challenge to get out. I did, however, say that, when the next election came about, I would not again stand as a candidate for the mayoralty, and in fulfilment of this promise I dropped out from all public life on the following election.

Signed: P. O Drohan.
(Frank Drohan).

Date: 23 - 6 - 1952
(23.6.1952)

Witness: J.V. Lawless Col.
(J.V. Lawless) Col.